

# Questions Related To The Research Of Greek Catholic Art: Debate About The Concept Of The Carpathian Region And Its Lessons

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## 1. Topicality of the subject

The artworks subsisting in the territory of the historical Diocese of Munkács (Mukachevo) are witness to the fact that although local peculiarities can be detected in this art, it is nevertheless tightly connected to the culture of the Byzantine-rite, and then later Greek Catholic bishoprics created in its vicinity to the North, East and South. The art of these bishoprics can be studied together, and may be considered as forming a larger and higher-level unit that can be clearly defined and distinguished from the more distant post-Byzantine spheres of art.

Our brief terminological overview is not intended to line up stylistic and iconographical properties of specific artworks in order to demonstrate the coherence of this region's culture, since this is already a recognised fact accepted by the researchers addressing this issue. In spite of this, due to the complex history of the church, the peoples and the art of this region, no consensus could be reached to date regarding a specific and definite concept describing this coherent artistic unit since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that is, since the day research commenced in this area. Obviously, this problem will not influence the more specific research tasks. However, when it comes to examining the preliminaries of a phenomenon or practice, and trying to locate the sphere within which such preliminaries may have occurred, then this issue will acquire real importance. It becomes even more important when topical – and today even more topical – questions are raised: precisely what items belong to the tradition of this region or the individual sub-regions? Can this tradition be regarded as the common heritage of those living in the region? Will not an inadequately chosen term counterpose the modern-time observer with his/her heritage, or isolate entire communities from the traditional source? Indeed, a clarification of the answers may offer important lessons and contributions, important from the aspect of Greek Catholic identity, plus the self-consciousness of the Hungarian or for that matter the Slovak, Ukrainian and Romanian Greek Catholics.

Thus it seems to be the right time to raise this issue. We have reached a stage not only in the methodology of art history, but also in that of cultural anthropology and historical science, where the clarification of individual terminological problems could be of fundamental significance with regard to conducting further research and pursuing a common thinking. The topicality of this issue, for instance, is indicated by – among others – the paper of Cyril Vasil’ reviewing the 20<sup>th</sup> century history of terms referring to Greek Catholics of various nationalities, in which he pointed out the fact that the creation of accurate terms for this church constituted a problem not only in the distant past.<sup>1</sup> As he observed, different expressions and terms could be seen in this regard even in the Pontifical Annals, and thus – despite it being inaccurate – still the Greek Catholic designation remains the most acceptable.

That the question of national or regional approaches is not only the problem of Greek Catholic historical research was indicated by the international art history quarterly congress organised most recently in Budapest in 2007, as its title question was ‘How To Write Art History: National, Regional or Global?’, and its first section and later lectures addressed the issue of defining the concept of an art historical region.<sup>2</sup> The international conference investigated the issue of whether it was possible to write a ‘national’ art history in a regional and international context, just as it is or has been done in the study of artistic styles or periods. This is because art history is in a certain sense a mental construction erected based on databases, exhibitions and monographs relying on the works of art that remain for us through history. Thus, in recent times, new aspects and synchronous approaches (in addition to diachronic, historical studies) have emerged in the general historiography of arts, which rely on the findings of cultural anthropology, Bildwissenschaft and post-structuralism. The modern approaches, ‘mappings’ in research that can be described with geographical expressions, signpost for us perfectly the possible direction of contemporary research, however they promise comprehensive and objective results only if they bring about a synthesis for a selected field, utilising the approaches and methodologies of several disciplines.<sup>3</sup>

Doubtlessly, it is a less and less modern way to categorise the phenomena as peripheral and central, progressive and ‘retarded’, or perhaps authentic and non-authentic, measuring the artworks of a region against an imaginary European trend or a classic standard or any other canon.<sup>4</sup> This attitude aggravates the exact

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<sup>1</sup> P. VASIL’, CYRIL SJ, ‘Etnicità delle Chiese sui iuris e l’Annuario Pontificio’, in *Le Chiese sui iuris. Criteri di individuazione e delimitazione*, Venezia 2005, 97–108.

<sup>2</sup> Comité International d’Histoire de l’Art international conference organised by the Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences *How to write art history – national, regional or global? International Conference of the History of Art*, Budapest, 21–25<sup>th</sup> November 2007. As for the methodology, see further: MAROSI, ERNŐ, ‘Zwischen Kunstgeographie und historischer Geographie: das Königreich und der Ständestaat Ungarn im Mittelalter’, in *Ars* (2007). 40/2, 135–143.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the methodology of synthesising, see DELUGA, WALDEMAR, ‘Etudes comparatives de la peinture postbyzantine en Europe Centrale’, in *Byzantinoslavica*, t. LVI, Praha 1995, nr. 2, 33–46.

<sup>4</sup> Preliminaries of this thought appeared much earlier, at the 22nd CIHA International Art History

evaluation of especially the Central European phenomena, including those of the Carpathian Region, and detrimentally relativises the culture of this area, when it measures them against benchmarks that people living in this region may have never even heard of.

## 2. The Concept of the Carpathian Region

### 2.1. First attempts at defining the region

The idea of the Carpathian Region first arose in art history in connection with the icon painting of this area. As early as at the dawn of research activities, it became clear that the icon painting of a wider territory attached to the range of the Carpathian Mountains, that is Southern Poland, the historical North-Eastern Hungary and Northern Transylvania, displayed unique features that – despite the existing and sometimes farther-reaching connections – highlight the independent, unique nature of this art, in comparison with the art of other Eastern Christian, Byzantine-rite areas. This difference, observable in the technique and style, manifested itself chiefly when compared to the more distant and well-known Russian, Bulgarian, and Serbian icon painting schools. But despite the close Moldovan connections, and with the exception of a narrower, close-to-the-border group of icons, its distinction from the Romanian icon painting became clear relatively early.

The focus of research was first directed towards artworks remaining in greater numbers from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Later on, the focus shifted onto early icons dating from the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish art historians Marian Sokolowski and Teodor Nieczuja-Ziemecki established a connection between the local artworks and Byzantine painting, but at the same time defined the icon painting of the Red Rus (Galicia and Lodomeria) as an independent school.<sup>5</sup> Even at that stage, the historians pointed to the mediating role of Moldova towards the Balkans and Athos, and on the other hand the connections with North Russian painting. In Lemberg, Ilarion Święcicki was the first to process the majority of icons in the years 1928–1929, and he classified them

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Conference of 1969 (cf. MAROSI ERNŐ, 'A magyar művészettörténeti gondolkodás korszakai' [Epochs Of Thinking In Art History in Hungary] in MAROSI ERNŐ (szerk.), *A magyar művészettörténet-írás programjai*. [Programs Of Hungarian Art History Writing]. *Válogatás két évszázad írásaiból* [Selection From The Writings Of Two Decades], Budapest 1999, 360–361.), however, with regard to judging the art of the Carpathian Region, the reservations were maintained much longer.

<sup>5</sup> The theoretical question under review has been addressed in a considerable volume of literature, at least it is mentioned in most studies on icon painting, however in this paper we can only undertake to present the most typical views instead of giving a comprehensive bibliography. For a summary of the research history on early relics, see KRUK, MIROSLAW, 'Stan badań nad zachodnioruskim malarstwem ikonowym XV–XVI wieku' in *Sztuka kresów wschodnich* Tom. 2. (Ed. OSTROWSKI, J.). Kraków 1996, 29–55.

as belonging to the 'Galician' or 'Galician-Russian' school, using a term borrowed from the then contemporary architectural history.<sup>6</sup> Święcicki addressed both stylistic and iconographical correlations. He also compared the style of bronze crosses and encolpions found in the territory of Galicia from that age, with the contemporary artworks from Kiev and found that although from the aspects of iconography and style there existed a connection between the arts of Galicia and Kiev in the periods preceding the Mongol invasion, the local variants of the Byzantine archetypes could be found in both artistic groups. He expressed his belief that the local icon painting developed from Byzantine archetypes in the period between the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century, through the mediation primarily of imported icons and immigrant masters, in parallel with the schools of Kiev and Novgorod, but still as independent schools.<sup>7</sup> Soviet-Ukrainian researchers originate the early Galician relics clearly from the Kievan Rus art of the 11–13<sup>th</sup> century, disregarding the caesura caused by the Mongol invasion.<sup>8</sup> Research findings of the past decades and our modern times continue to emphasise the predominant role of Kiev in the early art of the region.<sup>9</sup>

In the future, a more accurate insight into the church history, church relations and the set of contacts of the Carpathian land might play a significant role in the clarification of art historical arguments that are based on stylistic coherence. Obviously, the fact that relic materials remaining from the early period of the region's art, that is from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, are scarce, aggravates further the efforts of exploring this coherence. The fact that the major collections are found in Poland, inspired the development of Polish research. Post-war Polish research has made firm references to the cross-country-border, cross-national-border connections of local icon painting (Janina Nowacka, Maria Przeździecka, 1965).<sup>10</sup> The authors substantiate with convincing examples that such interrelations established in the Middle Ages still existed in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## 2.2. Introduction of this concept to art historical research

Art historian and museologist Janina Klosińska, who was the first to complete a comprehensive processing of the icon collection of the National Museum in Cracow, during her studies of the region's icon painting, found that the icons made here in the 15<sup>th</sup> century could not be linked to the early Kievan icons neither

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Свенціцький, І., *Іконопис Галицької України XV–XVI віків*, Львів 1928, 5–9.

<sup>7</sup> Свенціцький, І., 'Галицько-руське церковне малярство XV–XVI ст.: (Матеріали і замітки)' in *Записки Наукового товариства ім. Т. Шевченка* (1914), Т. 121., 67.

<sup>8</sup> Логвин Г. – Міляєва Л. – Свенціцька В., *Український середньовічний живопис*, Київ, 1976, 8.; Батіг М., 'Галицький станковий живопис XIV – XVIII ст. у збірках державного музею українського мистецтва у Львові' in *Матеріали з етнографії та мистецтвознавства*, Вип. VI. Київ, 1961, 148.

<sup>9</sup> Свенціцька В. – Сидор О., *Спадщина віків. Українське малярство XIV – XVIII століть у музейних колекціях Львова*, Львів, 1990, 7–19.

<sup>10</sup> NOWACKA, M., 'Malarski warsztat ikonowy w Rybotyczach' in *Polska Sztuka Ludowa*, XVI. 1962, 27–43.; PRZEŹDIECKA, M., 'Dzieje rodu Bogdańskich' in *Збірник Музею української культури*, 1. Свидник 1965.

in respect of their layout, nor their choice of model, nor their colour scheme. The compositions of local icons remaining from the earliest times, constructed of contrasted and sometimes almost model-free colour patches, are very distant from the picturesque depictions characteristic of the Kiev school. Similarly, the classical Byzantine compositions of the Psalter of Kiev from 1397 did not inspire any followers in the vicinity of the Carpathian Mountains.<sup>11</sup>

Janina Kłosińska also demonstrated that not only the icons originating from the Polish and Ukrainian parts of the Carpathian Mountains are the ones that carry identical features, but also the icons preserved from Slovakia and the Máramaros (Maramureş) and Bukovina (Bucovina) regions of Transylvania. Thus, the artworks of sacral painting remaining in Transylvania, in the South Carpathians, also display features that are indicative of a connection with the icons of the West and East Carpathians. In addition to the stylistic and iconographic matches, the investigation revealed numerous common technical solutions in the practice of preparing and painting the icon board (e.g. the use of local colours and the silvered background pattern). The Polish researcher created the term ‘Carpathian school’ for the purpose of aligning the hitherto diverging and inaccurate terminology that sometimes talking about Ruthenian or Ukrainian art and sometimes used ethnographic references to Lemko icons, and in order to stop the tradition of referring to Polish or Slovak icons in general descriptive literature in relation to even the early ages.<sup>12</sup>

The term ‘Carpathian Region’ wilfully avoids reference to national or ethnic identity, all the more because in the Middle Ages, the national affiliations of artists, and also the users and orderers of church work art, arose as a fundamental question relatively late, and emphatically only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the sources, the relevant adjectives or descriptive names are not interpreted unanimously with regard to whether they refer to a nation or only to the inhabitant of a country.<sup>13</sup> The use of the ‘Carpathian’ term obviously requires a kind of consensus, like the one reached in the post-world-war-II art history writing of Hungary, to discuss the history of art of earlier ages not in a national context but at state level, using a geographical approach and the principle of chronological continuity, focusing on the totality of the works of the inhabitants living in the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> KŁOSIŃSKA, J., *Ikony. Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Katalog zbiorów*, I, Kraków 1973, 34–35.

<sup>12</sup> KŁOSIŃSKA (*op. cit.* at note 11), 11–12.

<sup>13</sup> Back in the times of Basil Tarasovich, bishop of Munkács (1633–1651), the captain of the fortress of Munkács, Ballingh, in his letter referred to those arriving from Galicia as Polish, although they were Ruthenian Greek Catholic bishops and priests. Ballingh determined the following conditions for the bishop: ”1/ Not to seek refuge from the Polish bishops in the future. (...) 3/ Not to keep so many and redundant Polish priests and students (...)”. HODINKA A., *A munkácsi görög-katolikus püspökség története* (History Of The Greek Catholic Bishopric Of Munkács), Budapest 1909, 797.

<sup>14</sup> MAROSI ERNŐ, ‘Művészet’, in *Magyar Művelődéstörténeti Lexikon* (Hungarian Art History Lexicon). *Középkor és kora újkor* (Middle Ages and early modern age), VIII. (Ed. KŐSZEGHY, PÉTER), Budapest 2008, 32. At the same time, in this study the focus was primarily on the art of the feudal estates making up the country, with reference to quality. The research relying on the modern concept of nation, considering the cultural relics of wider social layers is newfangled.

Discourses testify that this framework is unsatisfactory for examining the nations or ethnic groups, or their artistic roots which did not form independent states during their history. Researchers of Central Europe refer to the fact that nations in this position were forced to define their identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century against a counterpart, against another nation.<sup>15</sup> Still, we believe that the geographical approach is only seeking a solution as close as possible to the Medieval mindset, and offers a possibility for a common solution of much more general issues, such as the art and church relations of Central and Eastern Europe, their weight and the role and set of contacts of the local Byzantine church. All this will not exclude the possibility of identifying certain nations or ethnic groups as creators of the art of the Carpathian school<sup>16</sup> and is not intended to state that this local, Central European variation of the Byzantine tradition could not become a dominant factor in the formation of the identity of a nation, more particularly the Ukrainians.

In addition to the occurrence of matching art-forms, the Carpathian Region is also demarked geographically along the mountain chain from the Beskids to the Southern Máramaros (Maramureş) and the plains belonging to it on both sides, based on how far the so-called Vlach-Ruthenian legal system of the alternate pasture, and the scope of townships governed by that law, stretched. Thus in the North, as the furthest territory, the Southern areas of Belarus may also be included in the concept of the Carpathian Region.<sup>17</sup> It must be noted here, that one reason for the later interpretative disputes was that while not only Ruthenes, but also other nationals arriving from the Balkans, mainly ‘Vlachs’, participated in the colonisation of the region, and in particular the marches stretching between the Hungarian Kingdom and contemporary Poland, in several waves (from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) – the ‘Vlach’ term itself has not been regarded by international researchers as referring primarily to ethnical identity but rather to an activity, notably shepherding.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.3. *The concept examined applying an interdisciplinary approach*

The concept in question appears in other disciplines as well, not only art history. The term ‘Carpathian Region’ is used – sometimes in a narrower and sometimes in a broader sense – in history, linguistics and ethnography as well, where the term designates the same multi-ethnic community formed into a cultural unit through religious, economic and attitudinal connections. Toponomastic studies have revealed the ethnical composition of colonisations that weaved the country

<sup>15</sup> KISS GY. CSABA, ‘Közép-Európa, nemzetképek, előítéletek’ (Central Europe, National Visions, Prejudices), in *Debreceni Disputa* 2009/7–8. sz.

<sup>16</sup> Because of their great numbers, first of all the Ruthenians must be mentioned here without asserting a position in the dispute regarding the Ukrainian-Ruthenian unity or autonomy.

<sup>17</sup> CZAJKOWSKI JERZY, ‘Historyczne, osadnicze i etniczne warunki kształtowania się kultur po północnej stronie Karpat II.’ *Zeszyty Sądecko-Spiskie*, T. 1 (2006), 18–49.

<sup>18</sup> REINFUSS, ROMAN, ‘Łemkowie w przeszłości i obecnie’ in *Łemkowie. Kultura – sztuka – język. Materiały z sympozjum zorganizowanego przez Komisję Turystyki Górskiej ZG PTTK w Sanoku* 21–24. IX, 1983, (Red. GAJEWSKI JERZY W.) Warszawa-Kraków 1987, 9.

into a cultural unit.<sup>19</sup> It is primarily the Polish scientific community that recognises the reasons for the existence of this concept. In ethnographic research, Ukrainian ethnographers do not dispute the correctness of such conclusions either, especially when it comes to scrutinising a narrower area within the region.<sup>20</sup> Numerous publications and partial results substantiate the formal practical connections that unite this region, still the Ukrainian researchers refrain from using the term, instead, they regard these phenomena as parts or impacts of the Ukrainian culture. In Hungary, ethnographic research and cultural anthropology are mainly preoccupied with the study of phenomena within the Carpathian Basin. And this term still sounds so unfamiliar in the 'scientific vernacular', that one often comes across editors who consequently correct the term 'Carpathian area' to 'Sub-Carpathia', or publications in which – because of using the reproductions published in the catalogue of the first exhibition of icons from the Carpathian Region in Hungary – refer to, mistakenly, a Sub-Carpathian origin in the caption of a photo showing an icon from Poland.

More recently, the concept of the Carpathian region emerged in a more specific context in linguistic research papers, where researchers studying hand-written liturgical books managed to prove the existence of a local variant of church Slavonic, designating it as Carpathian church Slavonic.<sup>21</sup> Studies into the local liturgical melody treasure may yet bring forth new, important contributions to this topic.

### 3. Reception of this concept in art history research focusing on the given area

The concept of the Carpathian Region has been a controversial issue in past decades since it was first introduced by Kłosińska in 1973. Her suggestion divided even the Polish researcher community. Internationally recognised authorities of the study of icon painting, such as Professor Romuald Biskupski, rejected its application and referred to Ruthene masters with regard to the early artworks dating

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<sup>19</sup> Without trying to overemphasise the role of this phenomenon, we wish to refer to the fact that studies examining the medieval village names arising in connection with the Vlach-Ruthene colonisation of the Polish areas of the North-Eastern Carpathians have found place names originating from the Hungarian words 'pajta, kanász, telep, címer' (barn, swine-herd, habitation, crest) etc. KRUKAR WOJCIECH, 'Przyczynek nazewniczy do historii osadnictwa dorzecza górnego Sanu' in *Zeszyty Archiwum Ziemi Sanockiej. Z.2: San, rzeka ziemi sanockiej* (Ed. OBERC FRANCISZEK). Sanok-Zahutyń, 2002, 26.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Published within the framework of the international research program for processing the folk culture of the Carpathian-Balkan region is: *Гуцульщина. Історико, етнографічне дослідження*, (Ed. ГОШКО Ю.). Київ 1987.

<sup>21</sup> ŽEŇUCH PETER, 'Gréckokatolícke cyrilské rukopisné spevníky 18.–19. storočia v kontexte slovenskej kultúry' in *Gréckokatolícka cirkev na Slovensku vo svetle výročí* (Red. CORANIČ, JAROSLAV – ŠTURÁK PETER) Prešov 2009, 66.

from the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and used the term of Ukrainian icon painting to refer to the Polish and Slovakian relic collections originating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Jarosław Giemza<sup>22</sup> agreed with his position. Nevertheless, Romualda Grządziela and Ewa Klekot disputed it, emphasising the existence of Balkanian and Vlach elements, and they identified with the arguments expounded by Kłosińska, lining up even more evidence to substantiate that theory.<sup>23</sup> Mirosław Kruk, giving an overview of the entire problem, suggested two possible terms, especially to refer to the medieval period ending with the 16<sup>th</sup> century: those of the 'Western-Ruthene', and more emphatically the 'Vlach-Ruthene' painting, which terms referred to the colonisation of the region, and were not to be regarded as ethnical, but rather as legal-economic terms.<sup>24</sup>

Soviet and Ukrainian art history writing has refrained from using the adjective 'Carpathian' to refer to the art of the local church, including icon painting, and reflected on the term – actually rejecting it – quite late, only in the 1990s.<sup>25</sup> Several authors rejected the term claiming that its use would not only question the fact that this art was produced by this people, but also deny the existence of the Ukrainian nation itself. Two authors, Lidia Koc-Hryhorchuk and Volodymyr Ovsyichuk published two major criticisms of Kłosińska's views. Below is a brief summary of their key message. Koc-Hryhorchuk termed the concept of the Carpathian Region 'ahistorical', since the areas designated by Kłosińska overlapped with the boundary lines of the Ukrainian ethnical territory. On the other hand, she considered the line of thought absurd, by which each country, in the territory of which there were Ukrainian inhabitants, would be entitled to their cultural heritage.<sup>26</sup>

Ovsyichuk argued that the icon, as he termed it, was from as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, not only a religious work, but also an object of sanctity and unity that embodied the idea of the Ukrainian national fate.<sup>27</sup> This author was convinced that the birth of icon painting in this region could be traced back to Kievan art, therefore those who shared Kłosińska's conceptual view, and thus certain Polish,

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<sup>22</sup> BISKUPSKI ROMUALD, *Ikony w zbiorach polskich*, Warszawa, 1991, 6–10.; GIEMZA JAROSŁAW, 'Malowidła ścienne jako element wystroju drewnianych cerkwi w XVII wieku', in GIEMZA JAROSŁAW – STEPAN ANDRZEJ (red.), *Sztuka cerkiewna w diecezji przemyskiej. Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji naukowej 25–26 marca 1995 roku*, Łańcut 1999, 89–150.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. KLEKOT EWA, 'Wyobrażenie Twarzy Chrystusa w ikonie karpackiej', in *Polska Sztuka Ludowa - Konteksty* nr 2/1992, 17–32.; GRZĄDZIELA ROMUALDA, 'Proweniencja i dzieje malarstwa ikonowego po północnej stronie Karpat w XV i na początku XVI w.' in *Łemkowie w historii i kulturze Karpat II*, Sanok 1994.

<sup>24</sup> KRUK (*op. cit.* at note 5), 40–41.

<sup>25</sup> In the same year in which Kłosińska's catalogue was published, the first publication of SVIATOSLAV HORDYNSKY appeared during his emigration (Philadelphia, 1973), and later in German, *Die Ukrainische Ikone 12.-18. Jahrhundert*, München-Graz 1981.; ЛОГВИН – МІЛЯЄВА – СВЕНЦІЦЬКА (*op. cit.* at note 8).

<sup>26</sup> КОЦЬ-ГРИГОРЧУК ЛІДІА, 'Нове про найдавніші зразки українського іконопису', in *Народна творчість та етнографія*, Київ, 1991, №4, 59–68.

<sup>27</sup> ОВСІЙЧУК В., 'Janina Kłosińska. Ikony. Kraków 1973', in *Записки Наукового товариства імені Т. Шевченка*, т. ССХХVII. Львів 1994, 471–478.

Slovak and Hungarian researchers, actually robbed themselves from the chance of discovering the true historical development of the Carpathian icon.<sup>28</sup>

John-Paul Himka expounded in parallel the Ukrainian opinion about the Carpathian term, and the Polish literature using it; in his monograph, he described in detail some writings and books that took an emphatic position on this subject. In his objective analysis, Himka reflected on some statements made by Koc-Hryhorchuk and Ovsyichuk, sometimes correcting the comments of these authors and giving an accurate diagnosis of the standpoints and emotions underlying the individual narratives, as for instance in the case of Stepovyk's introduction (1996), in which one can read about the Ukrainian icon painting representing an elemental revolution against Byzantine totalitarianism.<sup>29</sup> Himka rejected the illusionary theory of continuity and suggested that this corpus could be objectively analysed if arranged in concentric circles: 1. post-Byzantine art, 2. Rus, i.e. Moldova and the Great Russian territories in the broad sense, 3. Rus, i.e. the Ukrainian and Belarus territories in the narrow sense, 4. the Carpathians and Galicia. As this author suggested, both terms could be used, depending on the area under review, the chronological boundaries and the approach.

The Romanian literature, notably Marius Porumb and formerly Corina Nicolescu, is also free from using the concept/term of the Carpathian Region, in connection with the icons from Máramaros, Transylvania, i.e. the artworks belonging to our scope of review, and links them to the national Romanian icon painting school. Nevertheless, both authors refer to the stylistic parallelisms that connect the icons from Máramaros to the icons of Slovakia and Southern Poland. Nicolescu explains this phenomenon by stating that these areas had once been adjacent to Máramaros.<sup>30</sup> In his monograph describing Transylvanian Romanian painting, Porumb published, among others, the icons of Ilya Brodlakovich, one of the greatest masters of the Bishopric of Munkács in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, who originated from Sudova Višná of Galicia, and whose works are currently kept in the Museum of Nagybánya (Baia Mare).<sup>31</sup>

Slovak art history research began more intensively addressing the issue of local icons from the 1960s, in connection with the cataloguing of them as historical monuments and the restoration of the Sárosi Museum's icon collection in Bártfa (Bardejov). In 1968, in the introduction to the first major icon exhibition cata-

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 472, 477.

<sup>29</sup> HIMKA, JOHN-PAUL, 'Episodes in the Historiography of the Ukrainian Icon' in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies*, 29, № 1–2. 2004, 149–167. СТЕПОВИК Д., *Історія української ікони Х-XX ст.*, Київ, 2004. For details of Himka's standpoint and the application of his method, see further: HIMKA, JOHN-PAUL, *Last Judgment iconography in the Carpathians*, Toronto 2009.

<sup>30</sup> NICOLESCU, CORINA, *Icones roumaines*, București, 1971, 28.

<sup>31</sup> PORUMB, MARIUS, *Pictura românească din Transilvania – Die rumänische Malerei in Siebenbürgen (sec. XIV-XVIII)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1981, 88–89.; In a later monograph, the author clarified that the painter probably originated from Ruthene environment, and published in Romanian translation the Slavonic donation inscription of the icon, in which the customer was referred to as 'Andras'. PORUMB, MARIUS, 'Pictori maramureșeni din secolele XVII-XVIII în colecțiile Muzeului de Artă din Baia Mare', in *Ars Transilvaniae*, VI, 1996, 49–50.

logue, Štefan Tkač still wrote about East-Slovak icons and East-Slovak icon painting. In this same period, Myslivec and Melnikova-Papouková also used that same term. Their concept sporadically appeared in Ukrainian research too, as Otkovich wrote about Slovak icons and the relationships between the two peoples in one of his works.<sup>32</sup> This should be seen as a slip of tongue, since in general this author obviously shared the opinion of the mainstream Ukrainian research community.

As early as in 1971, the museologist of the Museum in Reklingshausen, Heinz Skrobucha, gave voice to the criticism of the Slovak national terminology, and pointed out the similarities that integrated the sphere of art developed alongside the range of the entire Carpathian Mountain.<sup>33</sup> Although numerous Slovak researchers referred to the fact that Eastern Christianity could be traced back to Cyril and Method, the view that linked 16<sup>th</sup> century post-Byzantine art to the colonisation of the region by Eastern rite Christian shepherding communities gained wide-scale acceptance relatively quickly.<sup>34</sup> In 1982, Frický in his dissertation paper reiterated Skrobucha's view and actually spoke of a Galician-Carpathian Region.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the expression 'Slovak icons', used sporadically earlier, eventually became frayed.

Another group of art historians (Ukrainian and Rusyn nationals), among them Vladislav Greslík, considered it important to emphasise that the local Eastern Christians, Rusyns (Ukrainians), maintained close relations from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward with the Ukrainian nation far beyond the Carpathians, and were aware of the fact that they were part of that nation.<sup>36</sup> The author considered local and Transcarpathian icon painting as forming an integral unit, and he spoke about Ukrainian icon painting, as such, using the two terms as synonyms.

The same way, Miroslav Sopoliga used the Rusyn (Ukrainian) term. This author noted that the intensity and territorial spread of the Eastern Slavonic influence in what is today the area of Eastern Slovakia, was still subject to dispute, and emphasised the area's autochthonous Slavic nature; he also connected the South-western groups of the indigenous Slavs of the 5<sup>th</sup> century with the Rus, as used in general from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and within that group, with the white Croats.<sup>37</sup> In particular, he emphasised the origination of Slovakia's Byzantine-rite Christianity from the Great-Moravian mission of Cyril and Method in the years 862–863. Pointing to the unification of the Kievan Rus in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, he emphasised that although the Western borders of the Kievan Rus could not be defined with absolute clarity, the Eastern Slavic culture left its clear footprint on this area, and now formed an integral part of Slovakia's culture.

<sup>32</sup> ОТКОВИЧ ВАСИЛЬ, *Народна течія в українському живописі XVII–XVIII століть*, Київ, 1990, 7.

<sup>33</sup> SKROBUCHA HEINZ, *Ikonen aus der Tschechoslowakei*, Prague, 1971, 16.

<sup>34</sup> FRICKÝ, A., *Ikony z východného Slovenska*, Košice, 1971, 8.

<sup>35</sup> FRICKÝ, A., 'Ikonopisné pamiatky na východnom Slovensku od 16. do 18. storočia – Ich vedecký význam a kultúrno-spoločenské vyhodnotenie', Bratislava 1982, 8, 13.

<sup>36</sup> GREŠLÍK VLADISLAV, *Ikony 17. storočia na Východnom Slovensku*, Prešov, 2002, 14.

<sup>37</sup> SOPOLIGA, MIROSLAV, *Perly ľudovej architektury. Pearls of Folk Architecture*, Prešov, 1996, 29–39.

Mikola Musinka mentioned the controversy about the concept in his reviews, but he also rejected the role of the Vlach-Ruthene colonisation of the region. Even the title of his review of a book by Štefan Tkač (*Ikony zo 16.–19. storočia na Severovýchodnom Slovensku*. Bratislava 1980) spoke for itself: ‘Whose icons are they: Slovak, Carpathian, Catholic or Ukrainian (icons)?’<sup>38</sup> In his criticism of the album presenting Greek Catholic churches in Hungary, titled ‘The Honour Of Your House’, he lined up yet new arguments. First, in his introduction, he mentioned the fact that the etymology of numerous Hungarian place names reflected their Slavic origin (Pécs, Balaton, Tihany, Oroszkő, Papi etc.), and then to the fact that in the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in the territory of today’s Hungary, people spoke Rusyn and followed the ‘Russian belief’ in dozens of villages, while the bishops worked hard to preserve the Ruthene spirituality of their believers. As the author put it: *‘the Hungarian political power did not like this, and almost all Rusyns living in the territory of today’s Hungary were actually Hungarianised during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Rusyn language survived only in the churches. So they decided to evict it from there also. [...] in 1912 Franz Joseph I, under pressure from the Hungarian government, signed an edict on the establishment of a separate bishopric with Hajdúdorog as its centre.’* He went on to state that Pope Pius X ‘*stipulated the use of old Greek, that is the old church Slavonic (sic!) language*’ for the new diocese, ‘*subject to using the Hungarian language in parallel*’. However the local church authority introduced only the Hungarian liturgical language and, as a result, the Rusyns became fully Hungarianised, as the author concluded; and then he went on to say that although the album published in the year Pope John Paul II visited Hungary did not mention Ukrainian culture at all, still – through its illustrations – it demonstrated that the icons of this place originating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, were linked to the Rusyn-Ukrainian icons of the Carpathian Region. When describing the individual icons, the author mentioned that on the initial holy picture of Pócs, which is now kept in Vienna, the old Cyrillic abbreviations (God-bearer, Jesus Christ) still remained, while in a number of other icons the Cyrillic letters had been replaced with Latin or Hungarian inscriptions. Thus, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century icon of John Evangelist, restoration work revealed such Cyrillic texts that were later replaced with Latin letters. Now, reflecting only on these two latter comments, it is widely known, that the rows of letters next to the images of God-bearer and Christ, as mentioned, are traditionally abbreviations of the Greek designations, and the same way, the much-later-dated inscription applied to cover the old church Slavic inscription on the evangelist’s icon originating from Máriapócs was also Greek, and not Latin. As the author commented, the stone churches erected in place of the wooden churches in Hungary, were actually Latinised, but their interiors in many places still contained original elements which resembled the interior painting of churches in the Carpathian Region, which should not come as a surprise, since the same masters, for instance Ignác Roskovics, worked here as well. But returning to the ‘deleted’ inscriptions, the author noted

<sup>38</sup> The author addressed this same topic in an earlier book-review also: МУШИНКА, МИКОЛА, ‘Чиї це ікони: словацькі, карпатські, костельні чи українські?’ in *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 6, no. 1 (spring 1981), 79–89.

that in the icons from Hodász, as in many others, the old church Slavic texts remained only because these icons had been thrown out from the churches much earlier, and have been preserved in museums, and the afore-mentioned beautiful album was an example of assimilation.<sup>39</sup>

In the first presentation of the problem, György Ruzsa was likewise very careful in using the term 'Carpathian', as he had doubts as to the justification of the close stylistic unity of the icon painting of this area, and he also referred to the easy distinction between the Romanian and the Ukrainian national icon painting schools.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Márta Nagy shared the view expounded by Kłosińska, about the justification for using the term 'Carpathian school'.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. Architectural history implications

Looking farther, i.e. at the terminology used in architectural history, even the reputed Viennese architectural historian, Wladimir ZALOZIECKI, wrote about the architecture of the Area of the Carpathians.<sup>42</sup> The scientific processing of the 'Ruthenian' – as it was then called – wooden churches began by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Hungary. In the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term 'Carpathian-Ruthene' architecture appeared in the works of Sachaniev, in regard to the artworks from Sub-Carpathia.<sup>43</sup> Following the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the authors tended to refrain from using such national, ethnic terminology (György Domanovszky, 1936; Alajos Deschmann, 1990)<sup>44</sup>. But again, Zoltán György Horváth's and Sándor Kovács's book presenting Sub-Carpathia (2002) mentioned Rusyn wooden churches.<sup>45</sup> László Sasvári, in his Rusyn-Hungarian picture book, Churches In Our Rusyn Heritage, joined this standpoint, when he gathered forty selected Greek Catholic churches of North-Eastern Hungary, forming them into a group within the culture of an ethnic minority.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>39</sup> МУШИНКА, МИКОЛА, 'Спадщина українських церков в Угорщині. Сумні рефлексії над одним чудовим видання. Пам'ятки України', № 3–4, 1996. Today, this review can be read on the world wide web, too.

<sup>40</sup> RUZSA GY., *Ikonok könyve* (Book of Icons). *A nemzeti és a helyi iskolák a bizánci és a posztbizánci ikonfestészetben* (National and local schools in Byzantine and post-Byzantine icon painting), Budapest, 1981, 71–72.

<sup>41</sup> NAGY MÁRTA, *Ikonfestészet Magyarországon. Icon Painting in Hungary* Debrecen, 2000, 31.

<sup>42</sup> ZALOZIECKY, W. R., *Gotische und barocke Holzkirchen in den Karpathenländern*, Wien, 1926, 5–126.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. САХАНЕВ, В., 'К вопросу о типах карпаторусских церквей' in *Молодая Русь* (Прага), 1930, № 2.

<sup>44</sup> DOMANOVSZKY GY., *Magyarország egyházi faépítésze. Bereg megye* (Wooden Church Architecture of Hungary. Bereg County). Budapest 1936, 5–106.; DESCHMANN ALAJOS, *Kárpátalja műemlékei* (Art Relics Of Sub-Carpathia), Budapest 1990, 27–29.

<sup>45</sup> HORVÁTH ZOLTÁN GYÖRGY – KOVÁCS SÁNDOR, *Kárpátalja kincsei* (The Treasures of Sub-Carpathia), Budapest 2002, 215–257.

<sup>46</sup> SASVÁRI LÁSZLÓ, *Templomok ruszin örökségünkben. Церкви у нашому наслідстві* (Churches in our Rusyn heritage), Budapest 2001, 8. A citation from the book: 'The Greek Catholic ecclesiastical communities of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén Counties belonged to the

As pointed out before, there is no question that a nation, an ethnic group, has its own cultural heritage of built and visual artworks. We believe that it is appropriate to study these unique national characteristics, yet they can be accurately evaluated in this context only when examined together with all the cultural manifestations of the Ruthenian ethnoses.<sup>47</sup> The national considerations become inevitably secondary within the framework of sacral art, since we know of quite a few examples when the same church is commonly used by different peoples, and believers belonging to different ethnic groups co-habiting in the same diocese, and this is particularly true for Hungary, from the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>48</sup>

Looking back in time, in the Middle Ages, at the Western boundary of the Carpathian Region, the primacy of religious identity and the sense of belonging to a given country, or the crown, were obvious up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century among the mixed population living in the borderland, and the manifestation of national awareness was not needed, and actually it was pushed to the background. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the situation changed gradually, but the national separation and opposition began to emerge primarily on a feudal and economic basis. This initial demand was later followed by a break-through in the use of liturgical language, then, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the old church Slavic icon inscriptions were replaced by Romanian, and then the first Romanian liturgical books were printed, and the first Hungarian liturgical translations appeared (1793, 1795).<sup>49</sup> The awakening of a national self-consciousness came really to the foreground alongside the trends of idealism and romanticism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This manifested itself in various movements both on the Ruthene and the Hungarian sides. But we cannot really find examples for artistic separation within the sphere of sacral arts.

In the study of wooden church architecture, the terms used to make a typological-formal distinction between the individual church forms are uniquely mingled. Among the architectural form-related terms we find some derived from mass and spatial forms (e.g. house-type church), and the other type – which otherwise originates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century – was named after the floor plan (e.g. cross shaped

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Greek Catholic Diocese of Munkács through many centuries. This diocese was predominantly the church organisation of Rusyns living in the Carpathian Basin.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>47</sup> This is the aim of a Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center publication, the *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture* (Ed. MAGOCSI, PAUL ROBERT – POP, IVAN), Toronto 2005, 5–595.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. UDVARI ISTVÁN, 'XVIII. századi történeti-demográfiai adatok Északkelet-Magyarország görögkatolikus népességéről' (18<sup>th</sup> century historio-demographic data about the Greek-Catholic population of North-Eastern Hungary), in UDVARI ISTVÁN, *Ruszinok a XVIII. században. Történelmi és művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok* (Rusyns in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Historical and cultural historical studies) Nyíregyháza 1992, 65–73.

<sup>49</sup> The use of Romanian as a liturgical language was initiated by the Protestant princes of Transylvania; and the Romanians insisted on using the traditional church Slavonic language for quite a long time. OJTOZI ESZTER, *A görögkatolikus Hittudományi Főiskola könyvtárának szláv és román cirill betűs könyvei. Славянские и румынские книги кирилловской печати библиотеки грекокатолической духовной академии* (The Slavonic and Romanian Cyrillic books of the library of the Greek Catholic Theological College), Debrecen 1985.; IVANCSÓ ISTVÁN, 'Legelső magyar nyelvű liturgiafordításunk. 200 éves Krucsay Mihály munkája' (Our first Hungarian liturgy translation. Mihály Krucsay's work is now 200 years old), in *Athanasiana*. 1. 1995. 53–76. PRIGYI ISTVÁN, 'A magyar görög katolikusok története' (The History of Hungarian Greek Catholics), *Vigilia*, 1994/ 10. 754–759.

floor arrangement).<sup>50</sup> A reference to nationality was used, where the use of certain church types overlapped in a special way with the area inhabited by a certain ethnic subgroup speaking a (sometimes later developed) dialect (e.g. Lemko, Boyko type churches). A third name given to a church type uses geographical references (Tisza-side or Máramaros).

## 5. A summary of arguments and counterarguments. Temporal and spatial contexts and boundaries of the concept of the Carpathian Region

As indicated by the above sketchy presentation of the views and standpoints related to the concept of the Carpathian Region, there are fundamentally two differing opinions. One refers to the fact that like in other territories of post-Byzantine culture, it was primarily one nation in this region, notably the Ukrainian identity, that unfolded itself within the framework of the Byzantine rite, and owed its subsistence in the Polish Kingdom to the fact that it managed to preserve its religion. Therefore, it is claimed, each and every element of the icon and post-Byzantine culture in the Carpathian region is part of the Ukrainian national culture, and by reversing the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, the artworks of the local post-Byzantine culture should be classified as part of the Ukrainian heritage. This claim was not only expanded spatially, but also in time, applying it to the medieval artworks as well, disregarding the fact that linguists date the separation of the Eastern Slavic languages, the Belarus, Ukrainian and Russian, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

It was Miroslaw Kruk who pointed out the dangers of the separating impact of the principle of ‘pure’ (national) tradition voiced in this opinion, as he claimed this might lead to the necessary exclusion of certain objects from the region’s art-treasure – for instance, in this case only the Armenians should have the right to address issues related to the Armenian cathedral in Lemberg – while on the other hand he also saw a risk in that by creating the concept of ‘pure’ artistic tradition, the – otherwise region-integrating – common elements and artworks that are deemed to be alien from such tradition might begin to be destroyed.<sup>51</sup>

According to the other view, while the Ruthene element is emphatically present in the culture of this region, one should not disregard its multinational character, which is the result of colonisation/settlement based on the shepherds’ right to

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<sup>50</sup> Since these are distinctions by form, these names were by convention internationally spread. ГОБЕРМАН, Д., *Памятники деревянного зодчества Закарпатья*, Ленинград, 1970.; КОВАЧОВИЧОВА-ПУШКАРЬОВА, БЛАНКА – ПУШКАР, ІМРІХ, ‘Дерев’яні церкви східнього обряду на Словаччині’, in *Науковий Збірник Музею української культури в Свиднику* – 5. *Annales Musei culturae ukrainiensis*, Svidnik 1971.

<sup>51</sup> KRUK (*op. cit.* at note 5), 42.

alternate pasture.<sup>52</sup> This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the concept of 'nation' or 'national culture' cannot be used with full clarity before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, neither in Eastern Europe, nor in Western cultures. Therefore, especially in the case of medieval art, the use of a geographical-historical terminology, like the 'Byzantine' or 'Cretan', seems to be more appropriate in addition to the option of approaching the topic with national – Serbian, Bulgarian, Russian, Greek, Ukrainian – adjectives.

Between these two viewpoints we find the Rusyn standpoint, which distinguishes itself from the Ukrainian nation, as an independent community, a summary of which can be found in the publications of Paul Robert Magocsi. This author does not talk about an extended region, but primarily about a stateless nation living in a territory attached to the slopes of the Carpathians, which is characterised not only by its unique dialects, but also the practice of its Easternrite Christianity. The author, referring to the view that this area was Christianised at least a hundred years earlier than Kiev, stresses the fact that this community was independent culturally and ecclesiastically from the Kievan Rus, and belonged rather to Central Europe.<sup>53</sup>

The grandiose exhibition organised in the Hungarian National Gallery in 1991, titled: 'Between East and West. Icons in the Carpathian Region in the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries' demonstrated in practice the unity of this region. Seeing the materials selected from collections in Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, the stylistic and iconographical unity of this region could be tangibly experienced. Our viewpoint expounded in the catalogue, in connection with the development of the region's art, evoked the anticipated responses from the researchers of opposing views.<sup>54</sup>

In our opinion, based on the colonisation right and the formation and set of contacts of the local church organisation, the entire region – in the broad sense – is an integrated territory that can be defined as stretching from Belarus to Transylvania. At the same time, since this relates to primarily the sacral art of a multinational area, predominantly supranational terms and notions should be used when discussing this Central European artistic unit. Therefore, for the present, the term 'Carpathian Region' seems to be the appropriate expression for circumscribing the art in question. This however will not exclude the distinction of local phenomena and schools within that scope, and will not question the role of certain nations or ethnic groups in, for instance, the formation of the Ukrainian national culture and identity.

The set of traditions of this sacral art of a local tradition dating back many hundreds of years should be studied by applying an ecclesiastical historical and

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<sup>52</sup> CZAJKOWSKI JERZY, 'Słowo o historii,' in *Ikona karpacka* (Ed. CZAJKOWSKI, J.), Sanok 1998, 5–10. The author sums up the lessons of several earlier researches in this introductory paper.

<sup>53</sup> MAGOCSI PAUL ROBERT, *The people from nowhere*, Uzhhorod 2006, 29–37.

<sup>54</sup> PUSKÁS BERNADETT, *Kelet és Nyugat között. Between East and West. Ikonok a Kárpát-vidéken a 15–18. században. Icons in the Carpathian region in the 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kiállítás a Magyar Nemzeti Galériában. 1991. július–szeptember*, Budapest 1991, 5–80. (Exhibition catalogue in Hungarian and English).

liturgical approach. The application of this approach will reveal that this is not a peripheral art, but a synthesis adapting creatively all the different influences, and that under the supervision of the local Church, a culture was created here, at the meeting point of Eastern and Western cultures and Christianities, a culture that could survive through centuries, and was able to respond effectively to external and internal changes.

Such a discussion, which is based on regional thinking, will ensure the correct evaluation of an art that is often considered to be provincial, and restore its significance even in the European context. The concept of the Carpathian Region is inadequately represented not only in post-Byzantine art researches, but also in Byzantinology, although this region does offer locally made artworks, manuscript books and icons dating from the middle and late Byzantine periods. Probably it is time to position this art next to the well-known national schools, giving these schools the rank they deserve based on their temporal and spatial scope.

The change in attitude during the shift from the medieval to modern ages can be examined in this regional context. Although the periods within the art of this region are well-distinguishable, in my opinion the period of the unions should not be regarded as a caesura. This is because the union issue is only one of the factors that impacted the attitude in the region. The modern-age Renaissance and then the Baroque trends emerged in the Orthodox areas as well.<sup>55</sup> It is important in the study of these trends – and the researchers all agree on this – to examine the pre-union and post-union artworks and phenomena in an integrated approach.

In addition, the common ‘Carpathian’ concept or term could be used not only with reference to fine art genres, but also in relation to other liturgical-purpose art disciplines. For instance, it could be used as a summarising term both in icon painting and architecture. That the complex research methodology is appropriate is clearly confirmed by Magda Keletiová, the art historian of the Slovak National Gallery.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The geographical limit drawn for the Baroque style in the general art history of Eastern Europe (see SZÉPHELYI F. GYÖRGY, ‘Barokk’, in *Magyar Művelődéstörténeti Lexikon. Középkor és kora újkor*, [Hungarian Cultural History Lexicon. Middle Ages and early Modern Age] I. [Ed. KÖSZEGHY PÉTER], Budapest 2003, 218.) needs clarification, since Orthodoxy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century did use a number of elements of fine arts and architectural forms, sometimes relying on typical iconographical solutions. Cf. *Le baroque de l’Europe occidentale et le monde Byzantin. Colloques scientifiques de l’Académie serbe des sciences et des arts*, vol. LIX. *Classe des sciences historiques*, vol. 18. (Ed. MEDAKOVIC DEJAN) Beograd 1991.

<sup>56</sup> KELETIOVÁ, MAGDA, ‘Zbierka ikon v Slovenskej národnej galérii.’ in *Pamiatky múzea* 1999/3, 55.

## 6. The importance of clarifying this term for the research of Greek Catholic tradition

We consider this topic particularly important in this region, as it has become fragmented by church-administrative, political and (from the start of modern age) national-ethnic boundaries.

The study of the region's specific icon and book painting, as well as architectural artworks, doubtlessly revealed that a unique, independently sustained, Central and Eastern European (post-)Byzantine art developed in the Carpathian Region in the Middle Ages, i.e. in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the very fact that this art was preserved through centuries in the borderland between East and West, despite all difficulties, demonstrates its independence.

This art synthesised, adapted and translated to members of the local church, Northern and Southern, Eastern and Western elements from the very beginning, in such a way that it was able to respond to new challenges arising in every epoch. Like the thousand-year-old Byzantine culture and the Byzantine and then post-Byzantine art of the 'peripheries', the sacral art of the Carpathian Region was also shaped by the dominant influences characteristic of each epoch. The changes appearing in the art of each area, not following an identical chronology, and manifesting themselves in different manners, reflected the search for a balance between the traditional and the modern, where the still used and understood elements and forms of expressions of the century-old tradition were supplemented with those more appropriate for the given age.<sup>57</sup> Thus, through the adaptation of various influences, a unique, local church tradition and culture developed in the Carpathian land.

Robert Paul Magocsi arrived at a conclusion that resembled our standpoint. In his paper he addressed three possible directions, purism, adaptation and assimilation, and believed that the leaders of the historical Bishopric of Munkács followed the middle path and thereby marked the direction appropriate for the future as well, as a result of which the preservation of the Eastern rite and then the Greek Catholic church identity was and has remained the strongest trend – sometimes even overriding national identity – and this was what preserved this community all through these ages.<sup>58</sup> The close bonds to the Byzantine rite

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<sup>57</sup> This is what I wanted to refer to in the title and postscript of my monograph (*A görög katolikus egyház művészete a történelmi Magyarországon. Hagomány és megújulás* [The Art of the Greek Catholic Church in the Historical Hungary. Tradition and Renewal], Budapest 2008) and not to the shift to academism, as László Sasvári's review suggested. SASVÁRI LÁSZLÓ, 'Könyv a magyarországi görög katolikus egyház művészetéről' (A book about the ecclesiastical art of the Greek Catholic church) in *Tanulmányok a magyarországi bolgár, görög, lengyel, örmény, ruszin nemzetiségek néprajzából* (Studies from the ethnography of Bulgarian, Greek, Polish, Armenian and Rusyn nationalities in Hungary) 7. 2008. (Ed. ÉPERJESSY, ERNŐ), Budapest 2008, 191–192.

<sup>58</sup> MAGOCSI PAUL ROBERT, 'Adaptation without Assimilation: The Genius of the Greco-Catholic Eparchy of Mukachevo', in *Logos: A Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, vol 38. (1997) Nos. 1–4, 269–281.

acquired a dominant, culture-creating role in the region, despite the often unfavourable social conditions.

For the smaller and larger communities living in the Carpathian Region the discovery and common summary of the elements of this local tradition is not only an obligation towards the past, but it may be critical for building their common identity and perhaps even achieving Christian unity. And following the clarification of the fundamental issues, it may be time for reevaluating the Byzantine art of the Carpathian Region and its contributions within the more general sphere of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art.