

ANA DUMITRAN, *Between Logos and Eikon. An Essay about Icon, Romanians and Protestantism in 17th Century Transylvania*

Abstract: This article analyses the few tokens of religious art from 17th century preserved in Romanian churches from Transylvania, considering the aggressive attitude of Protestantism towards image, the destructions caused by political and military events, and renovation works carried out to churches in the following centuries. Although restrictive regulations typical to Protestant spirit were not absent, these did not ban icons and mural paintings from churches. They addressed the attitude towards them, prohibiting only their worshipping and their investment with sacred character. The enactment of such restrictive laws itself is evidence of existence of religious images. Their number and the capacity of communities of believers to replace those destroyed or to endow churches with new ones depended primarily on economic, not ideological, causes. The acquisition of liturgical books was influenced by a more diverse and accessible offer. In spite of numerous social, economic and political crises in the 17th century, the presence of some peregrine painters, especially Ukrainian, but also of some who painted princely churches from Wallachia, imprinted a rather dynamic rhythm to the endeavour of embellishing churches. Artistic emulation from the following centuries and general development of Romanian society diminished dramatically the number of monuments that survived to invasions from 1658, 1661 and 1717 and accidental disasters. The small churches, especially the wooden ones, could not accommodate a growing population or were deemed too modest and replaced with new building. The old objects inherited from churches built in the previous centuries were kept temporarily and usually in poor conditions. One cannot blame the Protestant iconoclast attitude for the destruction of these paintings, even though the Romanian Church in seventeenth century Transylvania had to cope with it. The real culprits for the destruction of most of the paintings was the lack of care and piety for these paintings on occasion of each subsequent rehabilitation intervention, renovation, and embellishment of churches.

Keywords: iconoclasm, Ukrainian painter, icon, iconostasis, Hunedoara, Lupşa, Susenii Bârgăului, Cinciş, Dobra, Sălişte, Maramureş, Luca from Iclod.

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