THE BOLYAI NOBLE COURT. AN EARLY MODERN NOBLE RESIDENCE*

Letiția Cosnean**

Keywords: manor house architecture, Early Modern noble residences, limestone opening frames, medieval church architecture, noble chapel, Transylvania.

Abstract: Building works on the Bolyai noble court (Buia village, county of Sibiu) was carried out in different phases over more than four centuries. Based mainly on the archival and historical sources, specialists have suggested several hypotheses regarding the patronage and the phases of constructions of the noble court. A small fragment of vividly coloured wall painting preserved on the south-eastern side of the polygonal chapel's chancel indicated the existence of the chapel in the medieval period. This had shaped the general idea that the noble court developed gradually around the existing medieval chapel. Nevertheless, little information is available regarding the architectural configuration of the noble court between the yet unknown founding date of the chapel and the middle of the 17th century.

The present article, based mainly on the direct analysis of the ruins, aims at reconsidering the building's relative chronology and providing a critical evaluation of the monument. Three unpublished architectural surveys found in different archives (i.e. National Institute of Heritage – Bucharest, "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning – Bucharest, and KÖH Archive – Budapest) proved valuable sources in the hypothetical reconstruction of the monument's architectural configuration during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period (14th - 17th centuries). The study also includes a catalogue of seven limestone blocks incorporated in the castle's masonry - *spolia* and of a limestone door frame preserved *in situ*. The comparison of their dimensions and moulding characteristics indicated further elements of chronological dating, meanwhile allowing several reconstruction hypotheses of doors and windows frames. Moreover, starting from a brief account of the social life of its founders, the study illustrates the relation between elements of social identity and the architectural features of the noble residence.

Rezumat: Edificarea curții nobiliare Bolyai (satul Buia, județul Sibiu) s-a desfășurat în etape diferite pe parcursul mai multor secole. Bazându-se în special pe datele de natură arhivistică și istorică, literatura de specialitate a oferit o serie de ipoteze privind patronajul și fazele constructive. Un fragment de pictură policromă, în culori aprinse, conservat pe latura de sud-est a altarului a indicat existența capelei nobiliare din perioada medievală. Acest argument a conturat ideea unei dezvoltări graduale a reședinței nobiliare în jurul capelei existente. Cu toate acestea, puține informații sunt cunoscute despre configurația arhitecturală a curții nobiliare între momentul încă necunoscut al fondării capelei și mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea.

Prezentul articol, bazându-se în primul rând pe analiza directă a clădirilor, propune o reconsiderare critică a cronologiei relative a monumentului. Trei relevee inedite, aflate în diverse arhive (Institutul Național al Patrimoniului, București; Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism „Ion Mincu", București; Arhiva Institutului de Protecție a Patrimoniului Cultural - KÖH, Budapesta) au constituit un suport valoros pentru reconstrucția ipotetică a configurației arhitecturale în perioada cuprinsă între secolele XIV și XVII. Studiul prezintă ipoteza inedită privind existența într-o primă etapă constructivă a unui ansamblu rezidențial fortificat compus din capelă și un turn nobiliar de tip donjon. De asemenea, cercetarea de teren a relevat informații suplimentare privind configurația fațadelor curții interioare a corpului de vest și nord, definită printr-o succesiune de arcade la parter, după modelul curții princiare din Alba Iulia.

Studiu cuprinde și un catalog cu șapte blocuri de piatră de calcar încorporate în zidăria castelului – spolii și un ancadrament de piatră conservat *in situ*. Comparația dimensiunilor și a profilaturii a indicat elemente suplimentare de încadrare cronologică, permițând în același timp reconstituirea unor tipuri de ancadramente de uși și ferestre care au decorat ansamblul rezidențial în perioada secolelor XVI-XVII. De asemenea, bazându-se pe o sumară inventariere a datelor sociale privind ctitorii acestei curți nobiliare, studiul evidențiază relația dintre elemente de identitate socială și formele arhitecturale ale curții nobilare.

1. Introduction

"The castle is heading for certain dilapidation", noted Constantin Daicoviciu as a member of the Commission for Transylvanian Historical Monuments, in his assessment report on the court's state of preservation.[1] Unfortunately, his statement from 1929 is today fully confirmed. The noble court from Buia *(Bolya, Bell)* village (Sibiu County)[2] is in a ruinous state, totally abandoned for almost half a century.

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** Letiția Cosnean: PhD candidate at the National University of Arts, Art History and Theory Department, Bucharest, e-mail: letitiacosnean@gmail.com.

1 CMIT archive, C3.1840/1929.

2 We chose to employ the Romanian names of geographical places and the Hungarian form of personal names.

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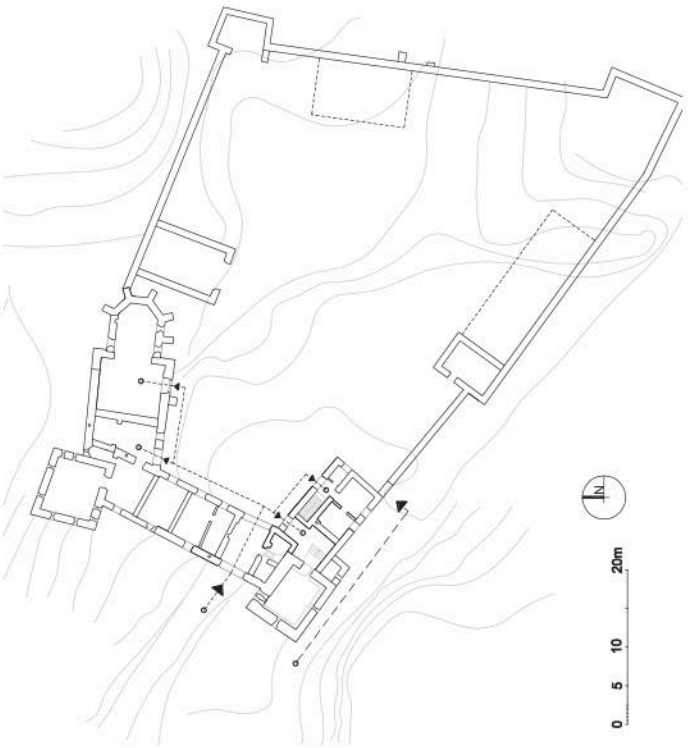


Fig. 1. Site Plan (drawing after 1928 and 1970 surveys, L. Cosnean).

Situated on a commanding position and isolated from the village by the river Calvasăr (*g. Kaltwasser, h. Hidegvyz*), the noble court follows an irregular rectangular ground plan shape with wings surrounding an inner courtyard (Fig. 1).[3] The residential buildings occupied the west and partly the south and north wing, adjoined by a chapel on the northern side. Annexes were added on the northern, eastern and southern sides of the precinct, presumably replacing earlier wooden structures. The precinct was fortified by a continuous system of tall walls with loopholes and corner towers of *old Italian* bastion-like shape. The eastern fortification structures of irregular shapes are preserved only as ground level ruins, while the western towers had a spatial structure similar to cannon towers, combining the residential function (wide openings on the upper levels) with defence elements (loopholes at ground floor level).[4] The main entrance gate was situated on the western wing, near the south-west tower.

The ground floor comprised the administrative areas (kitchen, storage room, servants' quarters, dungeon etc.), while the residential and representative rooms were located on the upper levels. Due to the frequent alterations of the buildings, one finds it difficult to reconstruct the functional diagram of the monument; however, based on descriptions preserved in a family chronicle from the 19th century,[5] one can identify the function of several rooms: the *Knights' hall* [24 and 25], a small chapel-room above the gate [16?], the priest's residence [29?] (Fig. 3).[6] The living quarters might have functioned in the rooms of the two corner towers. The first floor room of the south-western tower was decorated with a coffered ceiling[7] and had a small alcove in the eastern corner.[8] It

[3] The precinct of the noble court in Buia could not follow a regular rectangular ground plan due to landscape peculiarities. Yet, it is worth mentioning that modern military architectural features started to develop in Transylvania from the second half of the 16th century (see P. Kovács 2011, pp. 370-375); it was stated that under these influences, noble residences adopted the formal ground plan precinct fortified with bastion-like cannon towers on the corners (see Kovács 2006, pp. 83-85). Although the Buia noble court does not have a regular rectangular planimetric structure, with a conspicuous symmetrical trace, I believe that the initial architectural design of the castle was determined by the spatial structural organization of military fortifications. Moreover, starting with the late 14th century, royal and aristocratic residences were built as rectangular symmetrical courtyard structures throughout the Hungarian kingdom, mainly in order to meet the representative needs of their owners and less those of defence (see Buzás 2001, pp. 56-57; Szakács 2003, pp. 21-27).

[4] The presence of fortification elements in residential architecture was both an answer to a warfare period, and a representational tool for a social elite whose social and political identity strongly emphasized military values. Adopting features of military architecture in the structure of noble residences was widely used in the entire European cultural space (see Girouard 1978, *passim*, Schütte 1994, pp. 219-250; Johnsons 2002, *passim*; Szakács 2003, pp. 21, 26; Kovács 2006, *passim*).

[5] Oláh-Gál 2004, p. 24. The author offers the transcript of several fragments referring to the history of the castle from the chronicle of the Bolyai family written by Bolya Gergely.

[6] *Ibidem.* Original text *"Az észak-keleti szárny hátsó oldalán két egymás melletti bevakolt ajtó volt, és kívülről a fal megmeszelve a templom sekrestyéjéig, miből a látszik, hogy ott volt a Báthoriak, s Pernyeszi Erzsébet idejében udvari pap lakosztálya, és azokon az ajtókon volt a templombanlejáró fedett lépcsó és folyosó a pap számára".*

[7] The ceiling was recorded in the 1970 survey (UAUIM 1970, nr. 1125, plate: first floor plan).

[8] A possible a reminiscence of a shrine (see Rusu 2005, p. 204).

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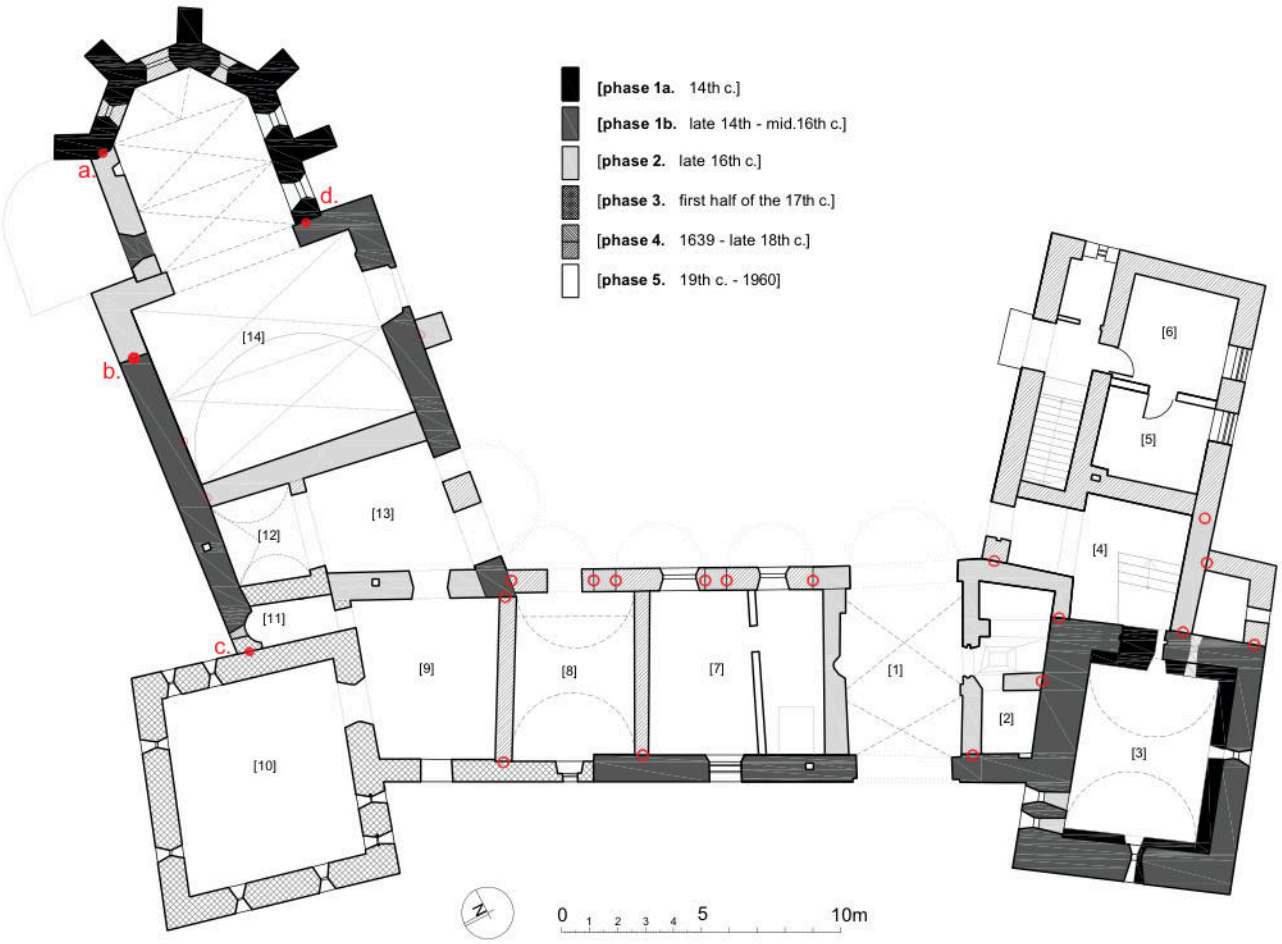


Fig. 2. Ground floor plan. Construction phases (drawing after 1928, 1967, 1970 surveys, L. Cosnean).

was connected to the upper level with a hatch, placed on the southern corner [15]. A carved stone framed door, placed on the northern side of the room was leading to a small barrel vaulted room, where a loophole facing outwards is still preserved. The carved limestone door frame is the only decoration of the kind preserved *in situ.*

The southern building was added at the earliest during the 18th century, and contained the stairs which granted access to the upper level, and rooms facing the river side (likely to accommodate a late living quarter).

Dungeons, spaces for punishment and torture have often been found in noble residences.[9] It appears that Bolyai castle accommodated a similar space too, called "*scythe dungeon*".[10] As the name implies, it was not just an imprisonment room. Situated on the ground floor, in-between the main gate and the south-western tower, the dungeon comprised three dark rooms, aligned in a sequence along the east-west axis; a wide chimney placed above the middle room was designed for casting the prisoners in "*the scythes and spears lined with prongs up*".[11]

[9] Rusu 2005, p. 368; *e.g.*: Haţeg keep, Bologa fortification.
[10] Bielz 1964, pp. 229-230, Fig. 3.
[11] *Ibidem.* We have to take into consideration that originally the chimney might have covered a kitchen fireplace.

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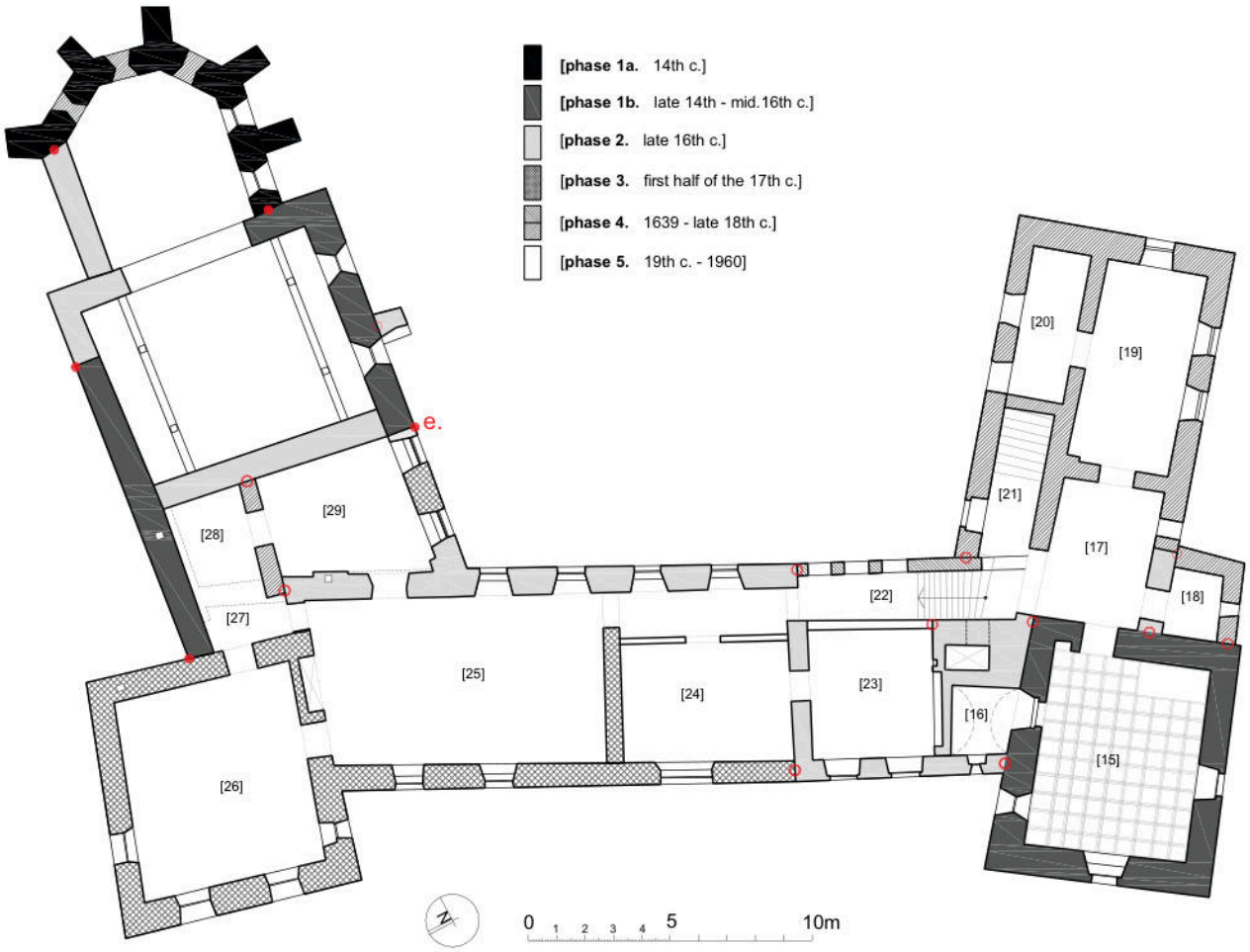


Fig. 3. First floor plan. Construction phases (drawing after 1928, 1967, 1970 surveys, L. Cosnean).

Two funerary family chapels were part of the noble court: (1) an underground funerary chapel dated before the 17th century, and (2) a 19th century independent chapel positioned outside of the precinct, on the western side.[12]

The walls are made of irregular river stone masonry with brick insertions, additions, or repairs. Only the annexes are built with a brick masonry structures, presumably on stone foundations. The thickness of the walls varies between 80 and 110 cm, except for the south-western tower walls which were ca. 130 cm thick at basement level. The size of the bricks varies; however we have noticed two average types: ca. 26.5 x 12.5 x 4.5 cm and ca. 23 x 15 x 5.5 cm. Most inner rooms had wooden beam floors; brick vaulted rooms were noted only at the ground floor level: the entrance gate [1], the south-western tower basement [3], the room adjoining the northern side of the south-western tower [16], and two other rooms from the northern and western wings [8, 12] (Fig. 2).

[12] Bielz 1964, p. 235.

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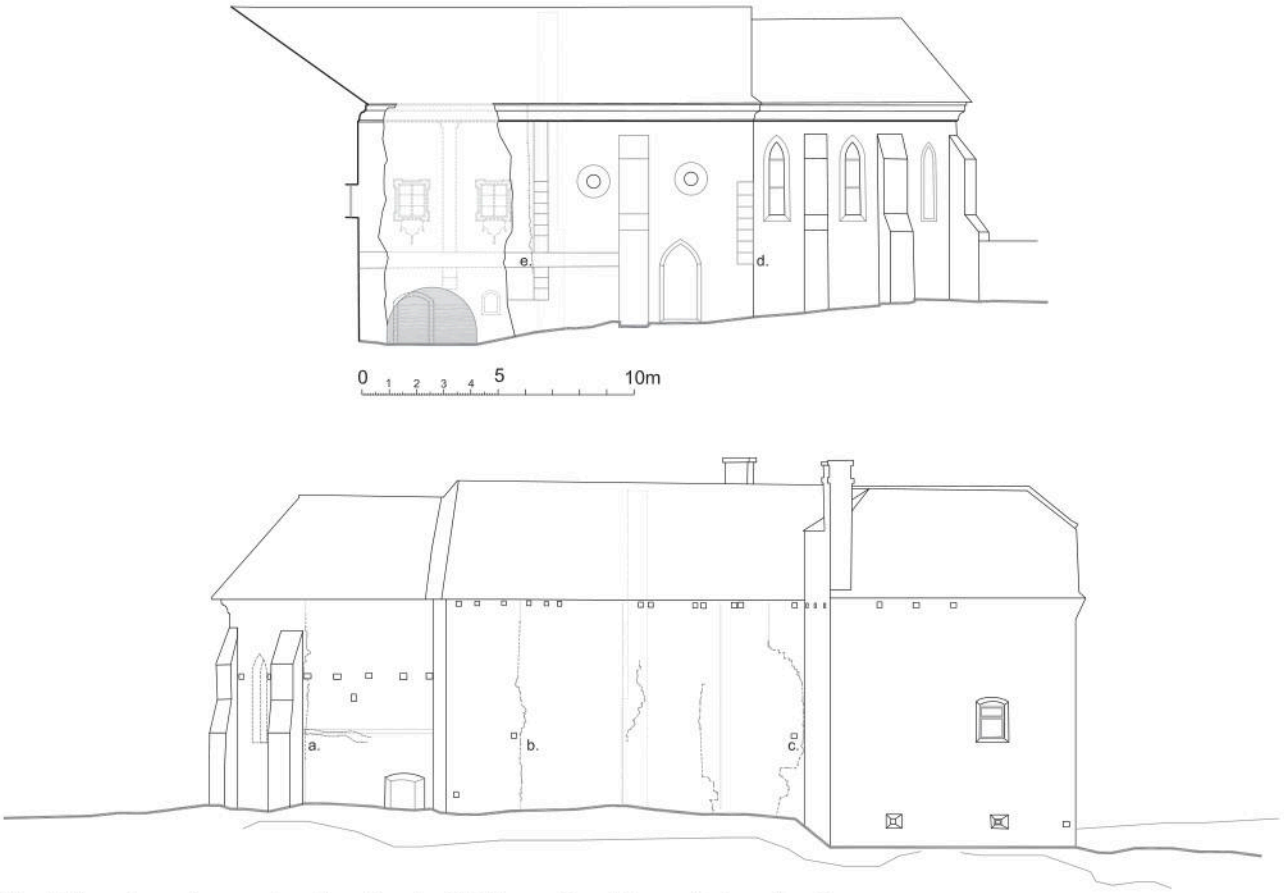


Fig. 4. Chapel – southern and northern facades. Visible remains of the sacristy's vault springer, and lines of adjacent, unconnected masonry (drawing after 1970 survey, L. Cosnean).

The chapel was a special component of the noble court.[13] Situated on the precinct's northern side oriented on the east-west axis, the chapel consists of a typical hall church comprising the altar (with a two-bay choir and a polygonal chancel) and a wider nave. A vaulted funerary crypt was situated below the altar. The entrance is on the southern side, and there is no evidence to indicate a previous entrance on the western side.[14] The altar is supported by stepped buttresses on the south-eastern corner, while remains of a sacristy vault springer can still be seen on the northern side (Fig. 4).[15] The inner space was covered with quadripartite ribbed vaults, decorated with stucco rosettes;[16] however, in the end of the 18th century, the nave vault was replaced with a painted coffered ceiling.[17] The southern wall of the nave has two round windows splayed outwards, bordered by a black and orange painted circles. The door which used to connect the choir with the sacristy was decorated

[13] General dimensions: Lt = 13.92 m; Lchoir = 7.27 m; lchoir = 5.15 m; Lnave = 6.65 m; lnave = 8.20 m. Wall thickness: choir - ca. 90-94 cm; nave lateral wall: ca. 1.10 cm; tympanum: ca. 70 cm. The dimensions refer to interior spaces.

[14] Popa 1981, p. 67. The author mentions alterations of the Gothic hall churches from Bistrița area built in the period between the late 15th century and the early 16th century, after their conversion to the Protestant denomination; in most cases the main western entrance was replaced with a new entrance, generally built on the southern side. It remains to future archaeological excavations to find traces of a possible western entrance in an earlier period (most likely before the middle of the 17th century).

[15] The disappearance of the sacristy may be related to the patronage of the Protestant Tholdi noble familiy (1639-1860), who brought substantial alterations to the chapel architecture, adapting it to the new denomination.

[16] INP photo collection, no. 3097/1967; Roșca 1919; Bielz 1964, p. 231.

[17] Lángi, Mihály 2004, p.16.

with a Renaissance carved frame made of limestone; a fragment of its cornice was recorded by Debreczeni in 1928.[18] The polygonal chancel had three tall lancet windows, which were bricked up later on, while other two lancet windows, with larger proportions were placed on the southern side of the choir.

There are a number of similarities between this chapel and the Evangelical church from the same village.[19] St. Nicholas church, of smaller proportions[20] was also built on elevated ground, situated on a height of the village western hill. It is a hall type church, with a barrel penetration vaulted choir with polygonal chancel, and a wider nave covered with a 17th century coffered ceiling painted with floral motifs.[21] The entrance wooden door frame was carved in 1638 by carpenter Johanes Molitor, whose name can still be identified imprinted on a main wooden beam of Bolyai castle [room no.7] - *1669, July fieri fecit Johannes Molitor.*[22] Moreover, the moulding of the wooden door frame replicates the limestone door frame profiles of the Bolyai castle, another evidence of a direct connection between these two buildings.

2. **Relative chronology**

Previous studies have suggested different construction stages for the buildings part of the noble court: (i) during the 15th century - for both chapel and the western wing of the ensemble,[23] (ii) the late 16th century - for the noble court,[24] (iii) the "medieval period" for the chapel and the late 16th - first half of the 17th century for the residence.[25] It has been generally agreed that the end of the 16th century represents the *terminus ante quem* for the existence of a representative noble residence in Buia.[26] However, written historical sources reveal earlier accounts of a noble residential building on the Buia estate: (i) in 1296 "*a fortification*" was planned on top of a hill;[27] (ii) in the late 14th century manor houses are mentioned during the estate's division among several heirs,[28] and (iii) in the 15th century a family chronicle assigns the building of a *castle* to Bolyai Gáspár and his wife Bethlen Brigitta.[29]

The ruins of the buildings still carry the imprints of different building phases, but clear evidence regarding the founding of the Buia noble court is still hard to identify. The method used for dating the various building phases relies on the interdisciplinary analysis of different sources: the building itself as primary source, architectural surveys, written historical sources and the academic literature. Nevertheless, as the noble domain

[18] Debreczeni 1928.

[19] The almost simultaneous building of two churches in the same village was presumably determined by the ethnically mixed community. Buia village was part of the last territory occupied by the Saxon colonists (after the 13th century) (see Nägler 1992, pp. 224-225). This territory was formerly part of noble counties (*comitatus*), and did not cover a homogeneous or continuous area. Until the 15th century the status of many villages oscillated between noble possessions and Saxon properties. Therefore, part of the Saxon population inhabiting these territories, even though part of *Universitas Saxonum*, became serfs as the rest of the village population. During the late 15th - early 17th centuries a number of Saxon patricians received the village of Buia in their possession, thus one may presume that they had a significant role in the Saxon Evangelical church building: Johannes Lulay (1515-1521); Clara Thabiaschi (1521-1526); Marcus Penflinger (1526-1529); Knol György (1540); Antonius Schirmer (1603-1604) (see Entz 1996, *passim*; Bielz, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-228).

[20] General dimensions: Lt = 12.37 m; Lchoir = 4.58 m; lchoir = 4.48 m; Lnave = 6.70 m; lnave= 4.90 m; Wall thickness: Choir - ca. 85 cm; Nave - ca. 1.10 cm.

[21] Luca et all 2003, cat. no. 40.

[22] Bielz 1964, p. 229.

[23] *Ibidem*; Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 189; Karszag, Szabó 2010, p. 86.

[24] Kovács 2006, p. 86.

[25] Fabini 1998, p. 50; Lángi, Mihály 2004, p. 14; Lángi 2010, p. 52.

[26] The precise dating of this phase is based on a fragment of limestone door frame, bearing an inscription with Gálffi János name, the owner of the castle between ca. 1575-1593.

[27] Zimmermann 1892, pp. 201-202; Bielz, *op.cit.*, p. 225.

[28] Fabini 1998, p. 50; Bielz 1964, p. 226, Torpai 1998, p. 6. There are two distinctive parts of the Buia village - *Beel superior* and *Beel inferior*. The Bolya castle belongs to Buia de Jos estate (*Alsóbolya*). A tower survived on Buia de Sus *(Felsóbolya*) estate until the late 19th century (1875) when it completely disappeared.

[29] Bielz 1964, p. 226; Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 189; Fabini 1996. We have unsubstantial historical data regarding the possession of Bolyai family starting with the 15th century; therefore, we cannot precisely assess yet their patronage: 1394, Akus de Bolya heirs; 1494, Gáspár, Tamás and János Bolyai; 1521 – Zsigmond Bolyai.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

has often been confiscated, donated, sold, etc., the identification of its patrons has its limits too. The significant degradation of the architectural surfaces and the general state of ruin allowed for a thorough analysis of the walls' fabric and the historic plaster layers, revealing information inaccessible earlier, i.e. different masonry types, wall paintings, adjoining structures, blocked openings, reused carved stones - *spolia* etc. Nevertheless, a sum of details still needs to be elucidated in the future. A true-to-form architectural survey together with archaeological investigations may easily clarify many unsolved questions of this stage.

The architectural surveys preserved in the archives of the National Institute of Heritage (Bucharest),[30] and of "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning[31] consist of detailed representations of the architecture of the noble court, providing valuable information for establishing its relative chronology. These documentations include a general ground plan with topographical information, plans, façades and sections showing the spatial configuration, general dimensions, structural details and ornaments. One can note that the second survey (1970) has a more detailed representation of wall dimensions, spatial geometric configuration, and furnishings. Nevertheless the preciseness of the measurements in both cases is questionable,[32] most probably due to the difficulty of reading the complex structures resulted from repeated additions and repairs covered by layers of plaster. Based on field observations and measurements, I aimed at correcting the possible errors as much as possible.[33]

The court chapel is impressively large, especially when compared to a rural parish church. No written evidence regarding the foundation of the chapel has been yet found, thus it is uncertain whether it was a private chapel from the beginning, or it functioned initially as a parish church.[34] It has been agreed that the chapel was built during the medieval period.[35] The stylistic features of its planimetry (elongated polygonal choir surrounded by stepped buttresses), the lancet windows, the funeral crypt, and a sacristy added on the northern side of the choir indicate analogies with a large number of rural parish churches built or renovated during the 14th century and late 15th century in Transylvania.[36]

Analysis of the masonry fabric reveals several alterations and rebuilding stages. There have been identified clear separation lines between adjacent, unconnected sections of the wall, indicating different building phases: (i) at the contact face between the southern side wall of the choir and the chancel arch (Fig. 2, d);[37] (ii) at the south-western corner of the chapel, the chapel's southern wall is connected to the adjacent wall only at ground floor level, i.e. until ca. 220 cm, whereas the rest of the elevation shows two contiguous unconnected structures (Fig. 4, e); (iii) three demarcation lines between distinctive structures running through

[30] DMI 1967, no. 2656.

[31] UAUIM 1970, no. 1125. I wish to thank Dr. Ștefan Bâlici for his help in researching the archive of surveys and the photo collection of the History & Theory of Architecture and Heritage Conservation Department of "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urban Planning (Bucharest).

[32] The difference in the heights of buildings recorded by the two surveys can reach 70 cm. Another important detail concerns the thickness of the wall. The ground floor walls of the south-western tower have different thickness: ca. 95 cm for the southern and eastern walls and ca. 150 cm for the other two. The 1967 survey recorded a general thickness of ca. 95 cm for all four walls. Neither the height of the roof, nor the thickness of these walls could be verified on site. In the first case, the roofs have collapsed, while the thickness of the walls on the ground floor level was impossible to measure due to the imminent danger of the barrel vault collapsing.

[33] The on-site investigations (photographs, measurements, drawings etc.) took place during the years of 2009 until 2012. I wish to warmly thank Dipl. Eng. Radu Mara for his help in surveying the court ruins during the cold spring days of March 2012, and Ovidiu Calborean for his photo documentation of the castle, dated January 2006.

[34] Rusu 1997, pp. 56-62. Rural parochial churches were often founded by nobles on their estates and later some could become private chapels attached to a noble residence.

[35] Bielz was the first to emit this hypothesis; the discovery of the polychrome wall paintings on the altar's eastern wall confirm this dating (see Bielz, *op.cit.;* Lángi, Mihály, *op.cit*).

[36] Drăguț 1979, p. 72; Vătășianu 2001, pp. 513-557; Popa 1970, pp. 302-304, Fig. 2, p. 321; Burnichioiu 2012, p. 105. The hall church, with nave, choir and polygonal apse, with or without a tower on the west side became a frequent pattern for building, or renewing rural parochial churches in the second half of the 15th century in Transylvania (e.g.: Dârlos, Rupea, Lechința, Jelna, Tărpiu, Viișoara, Dipșa etc.).

[37] As the choir has an underground funeral crypt, it is possible that its structure has been erected separatedly even from the beginning, but plaster traces recorded on the contact face of the choir wall determined us to consider it as a structural adjoining of different phases.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

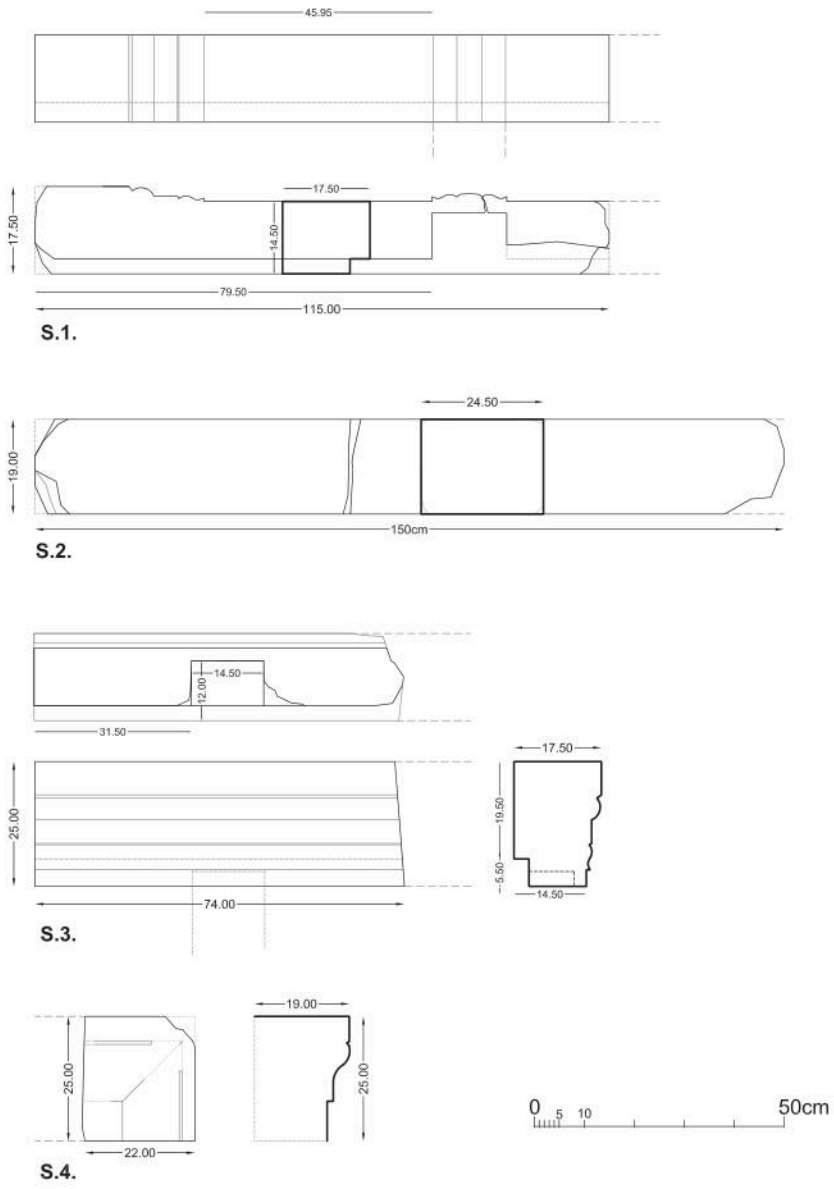


Fig. 5. Limestone frames' fragments. *Spolia* incorporated in the north-western tower (**S.1-S.4**) (L. Cosnean).

the whole height of the walls on the northern side of the chapel (Fig.4. a, b, c). The *a-b* section of the wall might represent a repair of the chapel, probably related to the addition of the sacristy (*phase 2*), whereas the *c* line related to a perpendicular wall[38] might represent the north-western corner of an earlier church (*phase 1*). However, the connection of the chapel with the court's west wing in the form preserved until today represents a later phase of construction, probably related to the building of the north-western tower (*phase 3*).

On the surface of the northern precinct wall one may notice three types of holes in the masonry. Starting with the north-western tower until the walls of the chapel's choir, a continuous row of putlog holes (ca. 19) was visible.[39] They might have been intended to take the supporting wooden beams of a hoarding built along the wall. Another row of putlog holes is still visible on the northern side of the chapel's choir until the second buttress, but situated lower than the previous ones. Their function might have served as well for supporting a system of wooden fortification corresponding to the choir, similar to the many examples of Saxon fortified churches from southern Transylvania.[40] Other type of holes can be seen spread over the wall's surface, without a special alignment (ca. 4); they might have been used for supporting some temporary scaffolding (Fig. 4).

[38] This wall was marked with a dotted line only on the 1970 survey; today it is preserved slightly above ground level, buried by debris, and impossible to investigate.
[39] Recorded in the 1970 survey.
[40] Amlacher 2002, pp. 78-79.

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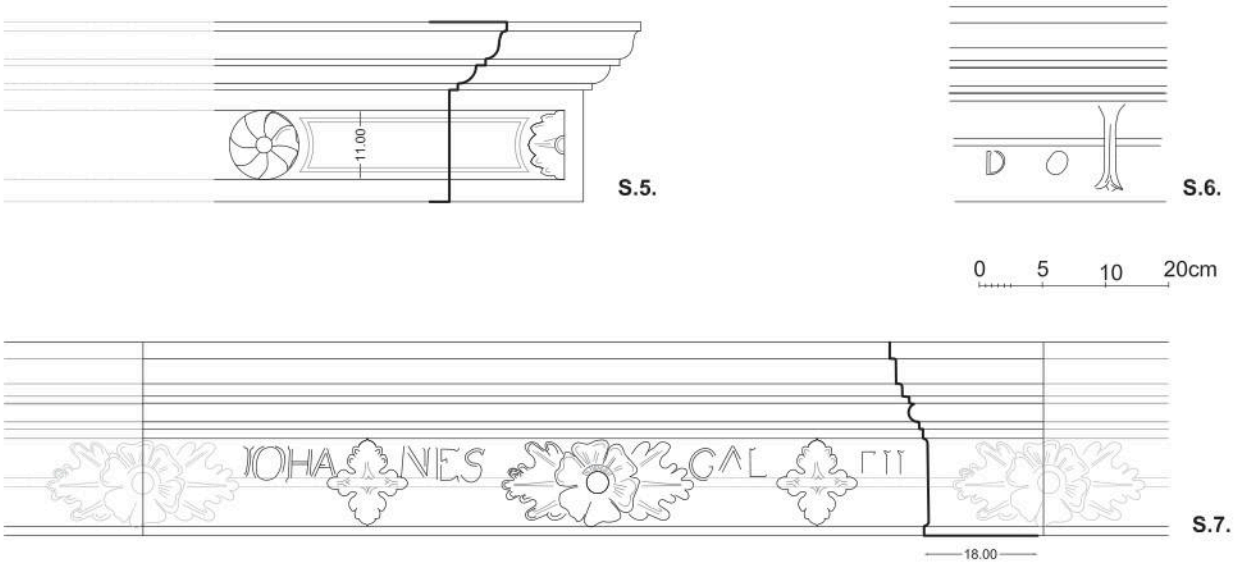


Fig. 6. Fragments of limestone frames of Renaissance type (catalogue nos. **S.5-7.**) (drawings after Debreczeni 1928, 253, L. Cosnean). Analogies: 1. Decorative motif of a door frame (Criș, Bethlen castle, 16th c.); 2. Rosette pattern on the Boghner chimney (Cluj-Napoca, 16th c.).

The north-western tower. The wedge-shaped bastion-like ground plan of the north-western tower can be related to the influences of military fortification architecture in Late Renaissance Transylvania.[41] Four carved limestone blocks were incorporated into the masonry on its northern corners (Fig. 5, S. 1-4). These reused fragments, together with three other limestone blocks (preserved only in the measurements sketches of Debreczeni Laszló) (Fig. 6, S. 5-7),[42] have been recorded in detail and critically analyzed based on a first-hand examination. Based on their dimensions and moulding composition it can be stated that they were once part of door and window frames, possibly carved by the same workshop. The inscription with the name of Gálfii János[43] on the front side of block ***S.7.*** offers a precise chronological dating for this group of items (*phase 2*), thus placing the building of the north-western tower during the next construction phase (*phase 3*).

The south-western tower presents a series of distinctive features, as compared with the north-western tower, indicating a different architectural design.[44] First, it has a rectangular ground plan (unlike the wedge-shaped plan of the northern tower); then, the width of the walls at basement level is of ca. 135 cm (compared to 95 cm); the third difference lay in the fact that the south-western tower has a height of ca. 11.90 m, comprising three levels, whereas the north-western one has only two floors and a total height of 8.20 m.[45] Finally, the collapse of the vaulted entrance gate revealed that the tower had originally been built independently, and those walls were added on the north-eastern corner of the tower during a later phase.

On the ground floor of the south-western tower, two loopholes on the northern side are blocked by the brick barrel vault, while on the eastern side two other similar openings have been filled with masonry. Furthermore, the masonry incorporates two different types of rectangular shape loopholes, placed at different heights (ca. 90 cm, respectively ca. 130 cm above the current ground level). The upper loopholes are wider and

41 P. Kovács 2012, p. 373; Kovács 2006, *passim*.
42 Debreczeni 1928.
43 Owner of the Buia estate ca. 1575-1593.
44 These details were not correctly represented in the first two surveys (Bielz 1964, Karczag, Szabó 2010, Kovács 2006), leading to a misinterpretation of their building phases.
45 The height of the towers was envisaged as the distance between the interior ground floor level until above the cornice, as it was recorded in the surveys.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

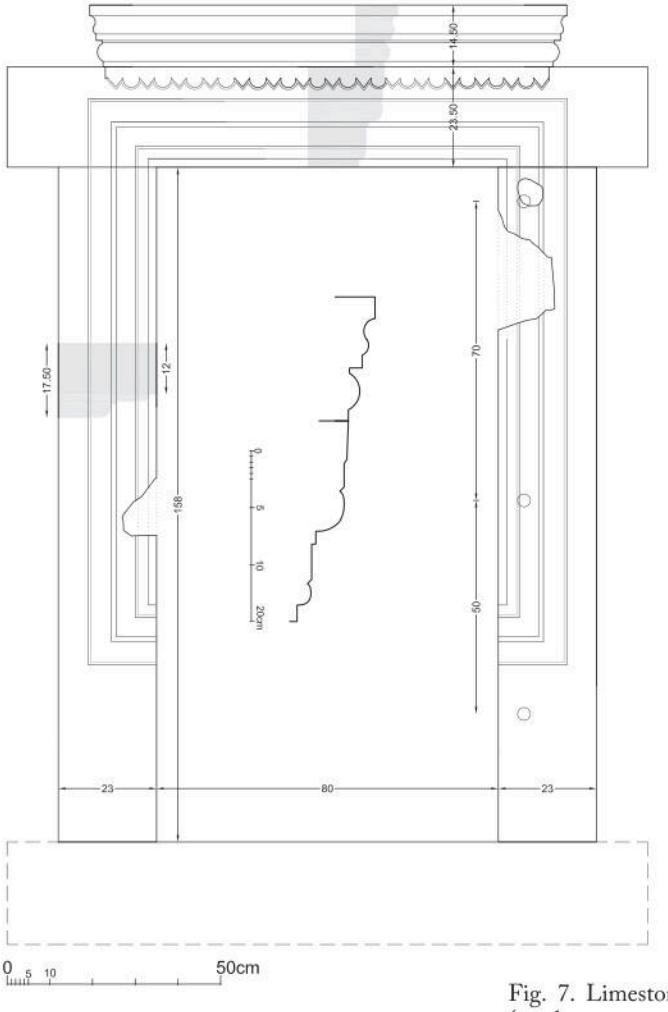


Fig. 7. Limestone door frame preserved *in situ* (catalogue no. **A.1.**) (drawing after original, L. Cosnean).

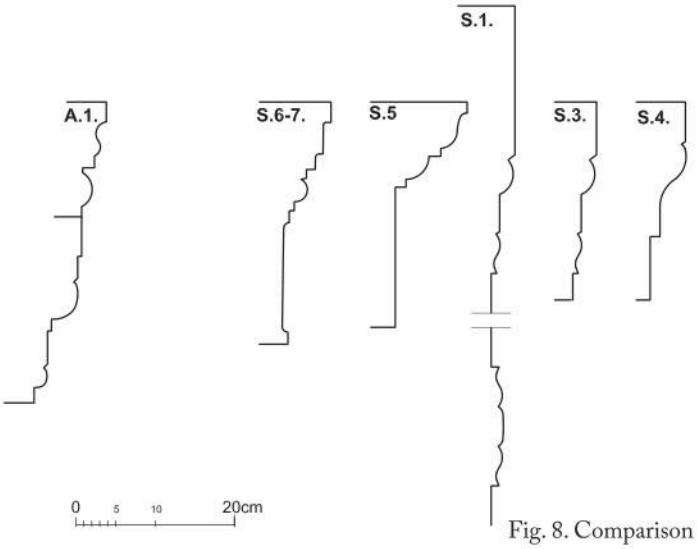


Fig. 8. Comparison of limestone blocks' mouldings.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.



Fig. 9. Court west wing – western and eastern facades (drawing after 1970 survey, L. Cosnean).

have similar characteristics to the ones from the north-western tower. The lower loopholes are still visible on the eastern, southern and western sides of the tower. On the eastern side the loophole is filled and overlapped by the access door, indicating its functioning during a previous phase of construction.

The second level was covered with a coffered wooden ceiling, recorded only in the 1970 survey, which might correspond to the painted coffered wooden ceiling of the chapel nave (late 18th century).[46] It did not communicate directly with the lower level, only with the upper level through a hatch, placed on the south-eastern corner of the ceiling. On the northern side of the room, an original limestone door frame is still preserved *in situ*, marking the entrance into a small vaulted room [no. 16] (Fig. 7). The pronounced shape of the moulding indicates the fact that the door frame was produced during the transition period from Late Gothic to Renaissance,[47] indicating a clear distinction from the group of *spolia*, and it could be largely dated from the late 15th until 16th century (Fig. 8).

[46] Lángi, Mihály 2004, p. 16.

[47] This door frame has already been mentioned and discussed in previous studies, but it was never illustrated. I. Bielz believed that the stylistic features of the frame belonged to the "Late Gothic vocabulary" (Bielz 1964, p. 229), whereas A. Kovács considered the frieze ornament "weird" and assessed that the frame's stylistic composition was produced under the influence of the Renaissance (Kovács 2006, p. 87).

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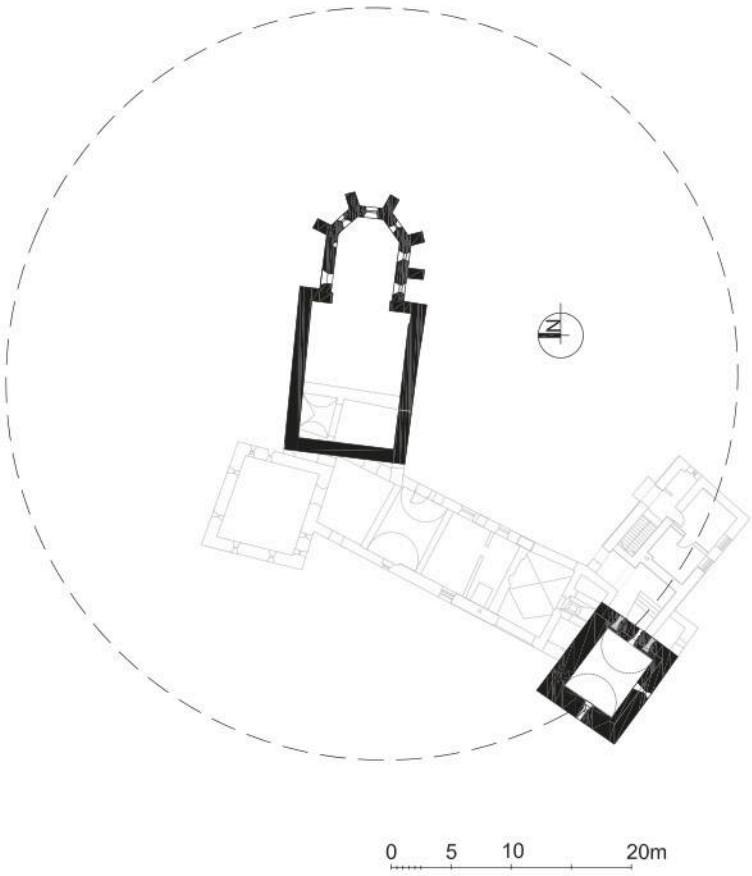


Fig. 10. Site plan - chapel and residential tower. Hypothesis regarding the first building phase (L. Cosnean).

The western wing connects the two towers with a 7.70 m wide building, two stories high. The decay of the plaster surfaces revealed a five bay archway on the first level of the west wing continuing on the north-western corner (Fig. 9). An inscription dated 1669 and placed on a 34 cm high wooden beam covering room [no. 7] reveals a phase of repair. It might have followed the Transylvanian warfare years of 1658-1661, which generally caused many damages to noble residences.[48] Three overlapping arches placed above the inner gate arch (today collapsed) represented a later addition, as another inscription with the year 1791 testifies.[49] On the western side of the wing, a number of six circular loopholes are situated under the cornice, while a rectangular shaped loophole is still visible on the right hand of the entrance gate. As the original configuration of the western exterior wall was heavily modified, we cannot know precisely if the rectangular loophole was the only one of this kind along the wall which survived, or it is a fragment of a fortified precinct functioning with the adjoining fortified tower.

3. **Medieval and Early Modern period. Commissioners and building phases.**

First phase: 14th century - middle of the 16th century

The structural analysis of the buildings indicates that the south-western tower and the chapel are the oldest parts of the castle. A large number of fortified residential towers were built in the late 13th century until around middle of the 15th century in Transylvania, accommodating noble residences.[50] Their characteristic features show many similarities to the south-western tower of Buia noble court: their height varied between ca. 12 m and 26 m; separate access to the first and second level; vertical communication only between the upper levels through internal wooden stairs; the number of openings increased with height; stone carved frames decorated the openings.[51] Moreover, the noble residential towers have been often associated with churches or chapels, and incorporated in fortified precincts. Therefore, I take into consideration the possibility that the chapel and the south-western tower were built together. Based on analogies of similar fortified structures,[52] I suggest

[48] Kovács 2006, p. 87.
[49] *Ibidem*, p. 86; INP photo 1967, no. 13.
[50] Drăguț 1979, pp. 82-84; Rusu 2005, p. 187; pp. 262-263: The author explains the lack of any written evidence regarding the founding of such fortified residential towers as a consequence that this type of buildings could have been erected without a "royal license".
[51] Rusu 2005, pp. 188-189.
[52] Popa 2002, p. 41; Rusu 2005, pp. 202-219. *e.g.*: Bologa, Câlnic, Aței, Cisnădioara, Feldioara, Viscri etc.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

that the first phase of construction might have extended over a large chronological interval, from the 14th century until the middle of the 16th century, and could have comprised the gradual building of a church and of a fortified tower (Fig. 10).

During the 15th century, *Miklós Vízaknai* (Nikolaus von Salzburg),[53] vice-voivode, deputy governor of Transylvania and *vice-comes* of the Szeklers, is mentioned as the owner of the Buia estate.[54] He had several properties in Târnava (Küküllő), Alba (Fehér) and Turda (Torda) counties,[55] a house in Sibiu *domum nostram cum piscina,*[56] a manor house in Albești (Fehéregyház)[57], and a noble court with house in Ocna Sibiului (Vízakna).[58] Following the Ottoman attacks, he ordered and subsidized repairs and rebuildings of several parish churches, *e.g.* Boarta (Mihályfalva) - 1448 and Teiuș (Tövis) - 1450.[59] The Buia domain together with all of *Vízaknai's* possessions were confiscated in 1467, when he was accused of betraying King Matthias, and was subsequently beheaded. His estates were entrusted to *János Ernst (Johann Ernst),* one of King Matthias' *familiaris.*[60] Miklós Vízaknai's social and political status, as well as his involvement in the rebuilding of rural parish churches, suggests that he might have had an important role in founding or extending a church in his own domain, i.e. the Bolyai court chapel.

During the first half of the 16th century, administrative documents recorded *building works* on the Buia estate (1511) related to Bolya Zsigmond,[61] a stone masonry house with a noble court – *"domo lapidea et curia nobilitari"*,[62] and even a *"second renovation"* of Bolyai castle in 1540 by Knol György.[63] In 1515 Bethlen Miklós sold the *Domo lapidea et curia nobilitari* to Johannes Lulay and his third wife, *Clara Thabiaschi*, the daughter of the Ațel (Ecel) Saxon count (*comes*).[64]

Johannes Lulay has acquired several important political and economical functions in the administration of Sibiu: town notary (1492-1494), *judex sedis* (1504-1506), *judex regis* and *magister Civium* (1507; 1513-1514), *comes saxonis* (1507-1521),[65] and count of the mint from Sibiu.[66] He was also a great mining entrepreneur of gold and silver in Transylvania, possessing a considerable wealth accumulated over a relatively short period of time. The Buia domain remained in his possession for six years, until his death (1521). He owned the Altemberger/Proll/Lulay/Pempflinger house from Sibiu,[67] which included a tall residential tower inspired by the architecture of noble keeps, decorated with carved stone door and window frames. Thus, it is possible he also ordered the carved limestone door frame preserved in the south-western tower to embellished his Bolyai *domo lapidea*.

After his death, Clara Thabiaschi remarried, taking as husband *Marcus Pem(p)fflinger* (ca. 1526),[68] another important Saxon political figure. He was count of the Saxons of Sibiu - *Comes Saxonis in Cibinum* (1522-1535),

53 Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 189; Karczag, Szabó 2010, p. 86; Beșliu 2006, p. 41.
54 Kovács 2012, p. 111.
55 Kovács 2012, p. 111.
56 Entz 1996, p. 404.
57 *Ibidem*, p. 285.
58 *Ibidem*, p. 509.
59 *Ibidem*, p. 493, p. 389.
60 *Ibidem*, p. 509; Fabini 2002, p. 50; Karczag, Szabó 2010, p. 86.
61 Entz, *op. cit.*, p. 248. Bethlen Miklós complained about these building works being carried out on his own estate.
62 *Ibidem*, p. 248; L. Gross 2003.
63 Entz 1996, p. 248. Nevertheless, it is quite unclear to which buildings or estates these mentions make reference to; it is possible that small manor houses existed on both estates of Buia – Buia de Sus and Buia de Jos.
64 *Ibidem*, p. 248, Gross 2003.
65 Beșliu 2006, p. 57.
66 Gross 2003; Áldor 2008, p. 20.
67 Beșliu 2006, pp. 55-56.
68 Gross 2003.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

and an active supporter of the Reformation and of King Ferdinand I (1526-1564) for the throne of Transylvania.[69] In 1529 King Zápolya János I dispossessed him,[70] and the estate would change hands, as royal possession or gift to the kings' *familiares*[71] until 1566, when Báthori István donated it to his nephew, Kristóf Báthori.

Second phase: late 16th century

As the captain of Oradea (Nagyvárad) fortress (1571-1575), Kristóf Báthory donated the Buia estate together with many other domains and assets to his faithful and close noble servant *Gálffi János,* as a sign of gratitude for his loyal and courageous services.[72] Gálffi János' old lineage noble family originated from Lunca Mureșului (Kocsárd) - Arieș seat,[73] and from the 15th century moved to Alba Iulia, where they became actively involved in building town houses, in the near vicinity of the princely palace.[74]

Gálffi János started his political career as the main scribe of King Zápolya János Zsigmond's chancellery during 1567-1569.[75] During Krisztóf Báthori's governance of Transylvania (1578-1581), he held the offices of treasurer (*supremus cubicularius*), royal judge of Arieș,[76] and princely counselor.[77] Starting with 1583 he became the princely court chamberlain and tutor of the minor Transylvanian prince Zsigmond Báthori.[78] Gálffi's second marriage, to *Perneszi Erzsébet* - the adopted daughter of Kristóf Báthory[79] (at that time voivode of Transylvania) -, confirmed him as one of the Báthori princely family *familiares*. In 1581 he will also received Uioara de Sus (Marosújvár) estate with the castle,[80] possibly due to his marriage with *Perneszi Erzsébet*. His social ties and political career recommend Gálffi János as a cultivated and astute peer, who probably benefited of high class humanist education.[81] The princely court itself was a place of contact with the new customs of elite social behavior, fashion and architecture. The offices of court chamberlain, prince tutor and princely counselor imply he was skilled with both Latin (used in correspondence) and Italian (at the court), and he possessed thorough knowledge of the state ceremonial and administrative apparatus.[82] Nevertheless, his ascending career suddenly came to a halt in 1593 when he was accused of betraying the prince and executed.[83]

His role in the patronage of Buia castle is undeniable. He received the possession after more than half of century of repeated donations and confiscations. The church repair from the north-eastern corner of the nave (Figs. 2, 4) might be dated in this period. Moreover, a fragment of carved limestone door frame (**S.7.**), still visible in a reused position in 1928,[84] bears an inscription with his name (Fig. 6). Comparing it with the *in situ* door frame, it is larger and has more refined mouldings, indicating a possible provenance from the castle's *hall* [rooms 24 and 25] (Fig. 3). A group of four limestone *spolia* **(S.1-4.)**, with mouldings of similar

[69] Bielz 1964, pp. 226-227; *Ibidem*.
[70] *Ibidem*; Fabini 1998, p. 50; Beșliu 2006, p. 57.
[71] Entz 1996, p. 248; Fabini 2002, p. 50; Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 190; Bethlen Farkas (1529), royal councelor Köröszi Ferenc (1532), and Knol György (1540), Báthory István(1558).
[72] Lukinich 1903, p. 227; Bitskey 2000: "I received four villages close to Oradea, one good house in Oradea, and excellent vineyards; (...) two Saxon villages: Bolkacs and Zsitve. Wine, wheat, large forests – wealth.(...) I have also received *the castle from Buia*, with all the belonging cattle, where I bought many other cattle as well (...)".
[73] Szinnyei 1891-1914; Bitskey 2000.
[74] Gálffy 2004; Rusu 2009, p. 79.
[75] Trócsány 1980, p. 27.
[76] *Ibidem*, p. 321, Nagy Iván, vol. IV, pp. 315-316.
[77] Trócsány, *op.cit.*, p. 27.
[78] *Ibidem.*
[79] Oláh-Gál 2004, p. 22; Nagy 1865, p. 245.
[80] Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 413.
[81] Haraszti 1931, p. 198: Most of the princely councilors have attended Italian humanist universities.
[82] *Ibidem*, pp. 194-206: The princely court of Alba Iulia started to adopt the structure and the customs of the Italian Renaissance court beginning with the rule of Báthori István (1571), educated at the university of Padova and at the Viennese court. During Zsigmond Báthori's period Italian artists almost invaded the princely court (musicians, architects, dancers, gardeners etc.). Later on, the nobles officially asked for their expulsion from Transylvania.
[83] Szinnyei 1891-1914.
[84] Debreczeni 1928, inv. no. 253. At the south entrance door to the chapel.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

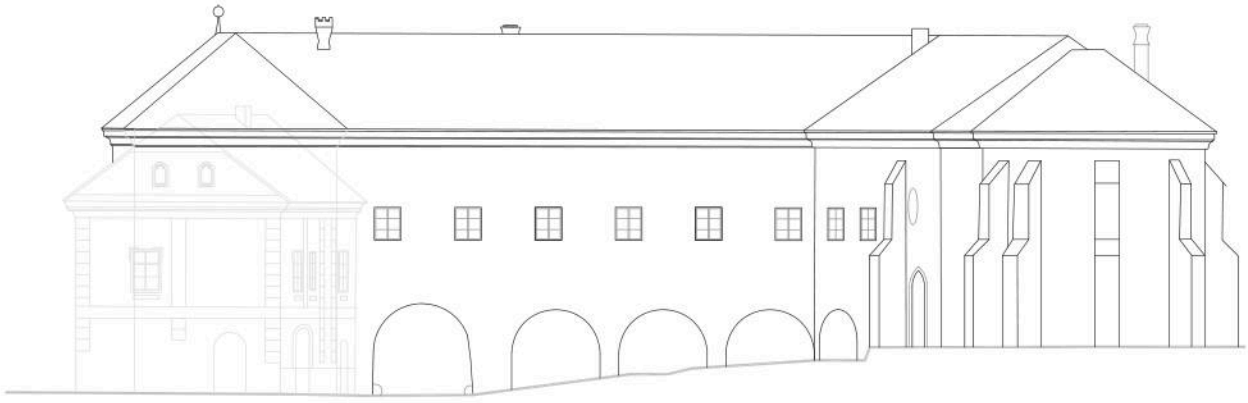


Fig. 11. Inner courtyard. Proposal for the late 16th – 17th centuries elevation (L. Cosnean).

proportions and formal composition testifies to the large framed openings which the castle accommodated. Therefore, I assume that the building of the western wing was already completed during this phase. In the same time, the western wing's arcaded ground floor reminds of the composition of the interior courtyard of the princely palace of Alba Iulia, where Gálffi might have found both the source of inspiration for his residence, and maybe also advice (i.e. court architects, military engineering, craftsmen).[85] A proposal for the formal reconstruction of this facade eliminated the overlapped arcaded openings from the first floor windows and continued the rhythm of the second level windows with two more openings (Fig. 11).

Third phase: First half of the 17th century.

After Gálffi's execution, the Buia estate - which at that time comprised ca. 30 villages between Târnava Mare (*Nagy-Kükülô*) and Olt Valleys – was further donated (*titulo donationis*) to the Walachian prince Mihai Viteazul together with many possessions.[86] Pernészi Erzsébet would try to recover the estate, but as the political scene of Transylvania was facing again a period of warfare, the estate was further donated and confiscated by the rapidly changing princely authority. The buildings must have suffered serious damage during this period, since Pernészi Erzsébet and her third husband, *Szilvássi Boldizsár*, would have to renovate and embellish the *ruinous* buildings during the third decade of the 17th century. Due to the presence of carved stone *spolia* at the base of the north-western tower, it has already been suggested that this tower was built during this phase too, presumably together with the rectangular fortified precinct.

The "resplendent manner"[87] renovation works included vast decorations of the inner and outer walls of the buildings with *Late Renaissance mural paintings*.[88] At the beginning of the 20th century, several scenes from the chapel's decoration were still visible: the chancel arch supported a representation of the *Last Judgment Day,* the Pernészi coat of arms, and a figurative depiction representing an angle-faced girl in profile holding

[85] P. Kovács 2012, pp. 169-171. The paper reflects on the princely building sites in the second half of the 16th century.

[86] Edroiu 1995, p. 295, pp. 299-302; Bielz 1964, p. 227. Donations of Transylvanian possessions to Romanian rulers of Moldavia or Walachia is part of an old tradition of diplomatic relations between the three principalities, and were intended to guarantee the mutual help against the Ottoman danger. In the worst case, the possessions from Transylvania proved valuable places for accommodating the princely and noble refugee families.

[87] Bielz 1964, p. 233, Oláh-Gál 2004, p. 22; Lángi, Mihály 2004, p. 14. An inscription inside the western wall of the chapel attesting to the renovation works paid by Szilvássi, proves to be a valuable instrument in establishing the relative chronology of the buildings, as one can record the plaster surface corresponding to this phase in different places (e.g. chapel, western wing, south-western tower), while its absence might indicate a later intervention (*e.g.* south wing).

[88] Bielz 1964, p. 232; Lángi 2010.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.



Fig. 12. Painted decoration on the chancel arch: profile of an angle-faced girl with flowers (after Bielz 1964, p. 233, Fig. 7).



Fig. 13. Painted decoration on the rib vaults of the chapel choir (photo 2012: L. Cosnean).

flowers in her hands, encircled by a medallion with a Latin inscription (Fig. 12);[89] inside the altar, a bright green undulated stalk with leaves and flowers decorated the vault ribs' sides, while the front side is enriched by green round pearls alternating with ovals, and connected through a black thread (Fig. 13). On the outer side of the chapel's south-eastern corner, one can still see fragments of a painted decoration suggesting a rustication pattern (Fig. 14).[90]

Even less decoration was preserved inside the residential rooms. Nevertheless, traces of a painted representation of Archangel Michael, near three cartouches with inscriptions and a foliage decoration were revealed during a campaign of inventorying the mural paintings of medieval Protestant churches.[91] The representation covered the upper half of the eastern wall from the first floor room adjoining the chapel [no. 29], but few traces are preserved on the southern wall as well. The Archangel is depicted as an angelic warrior with a sword in his right hand, probably standing over a dragon or a serpent (Fig. 15).[92] St. Michael was the patron of a large number of funerary chapels from Transylvania since medieval times;[93] his hypostasis as an angelic warrior slaying a serpent has been used for portraying the victory of good over evil, and in the same time for representing a model of the spiritual warrior's virtues. Therefore the inscriptions represented on his left side could have been quotations with moral content. Below the cartouches a wide border, which seems decorated with a floral and foliage Evolute-spiral pattern, delimitated the upper part of the wall. The lower part is much deteriorated; only fragments of grey (light blue) and red color could be distinguished. The function of the space is yet unclear, but the Bolyai family chronicle mentions that during the "Pernészi time" a priest's residence was located in the north wing, near the chapel, with a direct access to the chapel sacristy through stairs and a corridor.[94]

The inner spaces of the residential area seem to have been decorated with a large frieze under the ceiling,[95] while on the first floor of the south-western tower one can still see the large-scale decoration of a flower and a bird on the windows splays (Fig. 16).

[89] Bielz 1964, p. 232; Lángi, Mihály 2004, p. 14.
[90] Lángi, Mihály 2004, *Ibidem.*
[91] *Ibidem*; Lángi 2010, p. 52.
[92] The difficulty in identifying the shapes is due to the badly damaged state of the surface.
[93] Jenei 2004, p. 273.
[94] Oláh - Gál 2004, p. 24.
[95] Lángi 2010, *op. cit.*, *passim.*

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.



Fig. 14. Chapel's exterior decoration. Painted *rustication* of the south-eastern corner (photo 2012: L. Cosnean).

Szilvássi Boldizsár (*Balthasaris Cseszelicki de Szilvás*) (†1629), who, just as Gálffi, held high ranking political functions: princely counselor, administrator of princely domains and count of Turda,[96] wished to be buried inside the funeral crypt of the chapel. Ten years later, Pernészi Erzsebét would also be buried in the chapel, as a carved stone funerary slab testifies.[97] The funerary monument, conceived as a wall slab type[98] is divided in two



Fig. 15. Archangel St. Michael, outer side of the chapel's west wall (photo 2012: L. Cosnean).

[96] Nagy 1865, p. 727.
[97] KÖH Photo archive, Bolya castle, no. 10.700/1917.
[98] Mikó 1988, p. 124, pp. 134-135. As opposed to sepulchral tombs - the Transylvanian traditional funerary monument -, the wall slab type was first introduced to noble funeral art through Báthori Krisztóf's monument, created in the workshop of Wilhelm van den Blocke from Gdansk, and commissioned by Báthori István. Nevertheless, local workshops were already producing this type of funeral monuments for the Saxon elite.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.





Fig. 16. Mural painted decoration. Window splays on the first floor of the south-western tower (photo 2012: L. Cosnean).

equal fields: the upper part is decorated with the Pernészi de Osztopán family coat of arms (a unicorn with its neck pierced by an arrow) flanked by two angles holding a crown and foliage ornamentation, while the lower part comprised a Latin commemorative inscription framed by a decorated border.[99]

After the death of Pernészi Erzsébet, the Buia estate would belong to the Tholdi family until 1862.[100] The Protestant belief of the Tholdi noble family would soon reflect on the chapel's architectural alterations (a new decorative layer replaced the Late Renaissance paintings; new furnishing were introduced, according to Protestant rituals: a rococo wooden pulpit; the chancel was furnished with wooden tribunes similar to the ones on the western side of the nave; three altar windows were blocked).

The architectural and social history of Bolyai noble residence during the early modern warfare period closely reflects the social and political life of Transylvania at large: the frequent changes of power brought about subsequent generations of patrons with different iconographical representations; the warfare period determined the continuous use of fortification elements, adapted to the latest forms of the modern military architectural features (*i.e.* bastion-like cannon towers); the newly developed princely court from Alba Iulia offered a model of displaying a specific language of social representation in aristocratic residential architecture (limestone Renaissance frames, mural paintings, arcaded courtyard).

[99] Bielz 1964, p. 235; Oláh-Gál 2004, p. 24; KÖH Photo 1917, Bolya castle, no. 10.700/1917.
[100] Bielz 1964, p. 227; Bicsok, Orbán 2011, p. 190.

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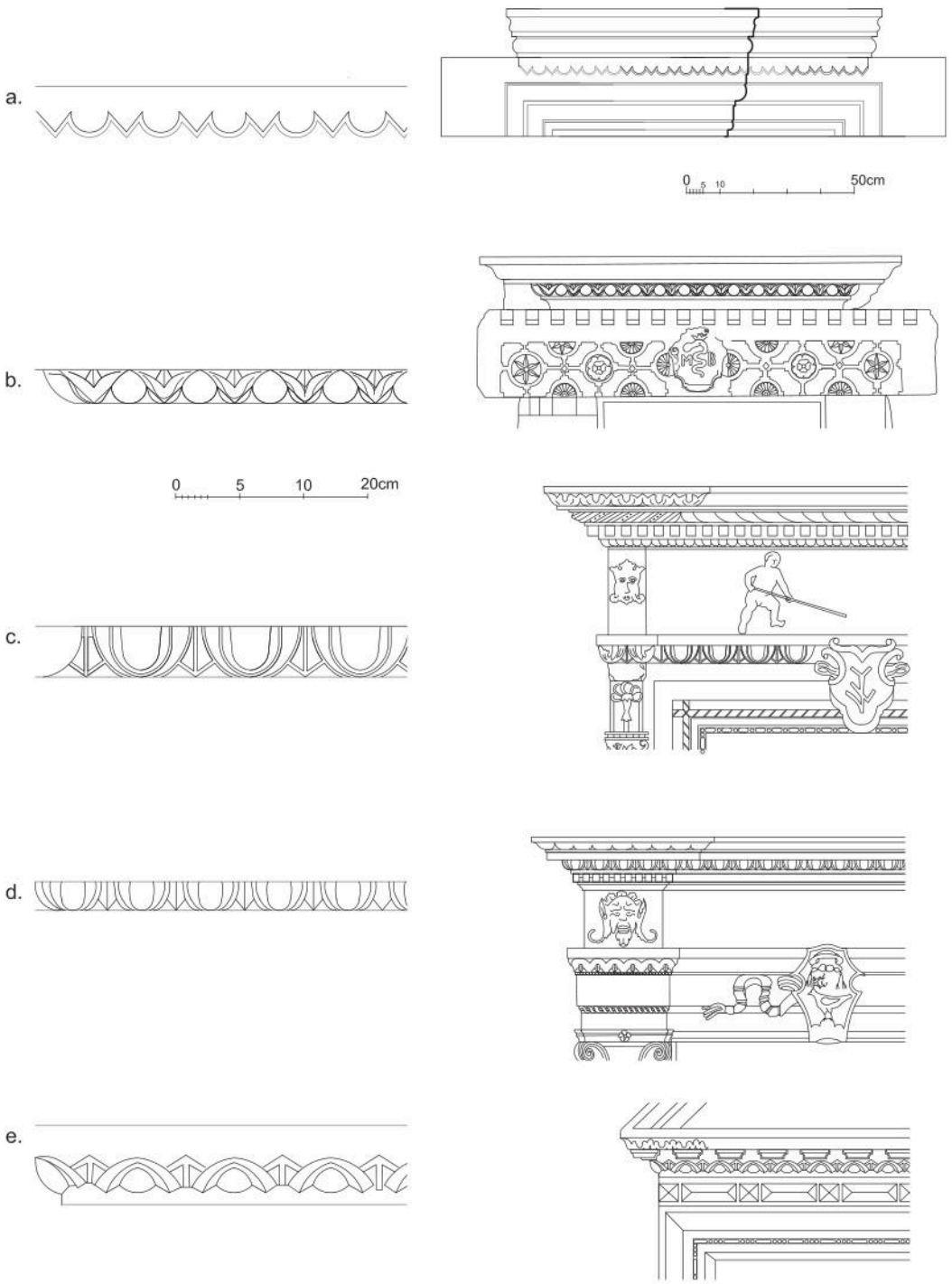


Fig. 17. Comparison of egg-and-darts decorative pattern carved in stone: a. Limestone door frame – Bolyai castle, Buia (L. Cosnean); b. Limestone door frame, 1646 – Bethlen castle, Criș (after Sebestyén 1963, p. 65, Fig. 33); c. Limestone door frame, 1552 – Teutsch house, Sibiu (after Sebestyén 1963, p. 226, Pl. 21); d. Limestone door frame, 1541, Wolphard-Kakas house, Cluj-Napoca (after Sebestyén 1963, p. 148, Pl. 12); e. Limestone window frame, 1646 - Bethlen castle, Criș (after Sebestyén 1963, p. 186, Fig. 31).

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

CATALOGUE. LIMESTONE FRAMES AND BLOCKS WITH MOULDING.

A.1. *Door frame with cornice* (Fig. 7).
Location: South-western tower, first floor, northern side;
Material: limestone;
Opening dimensions: 80/158 cm;
Pieces dimensions:[101] *mullions* L=158 cm, l=23.5cm, d1=12cm, d2=17.5cm; *lintel* L=150cm, l=23.5cm, d1=12cm, d2=17.5cm; *cornice* L=113cm; l=14.5cm, d1=(?)cm; d2=(?)cm;[102]

Limestone carved door frame, composed of five separate pieces – mullions, lintel, cornice, and sill. The mullions' moulding is comprised of a succession of slightly flattened profiles – two *ovolo* profiles framed on the upper part by a *fascia* and a flat *listel* on the lower part. At the base of the vertical mullions, the moulding is reverted at a right angle, towards the center of the opening.[103] The profiled cornice crowning of the lintel consists of *cyma recta* with pronounced curves flanked by two flat *listels*, followed by a *torus* framed by two fine, flat *listels* of different dimensions. Directly under the cornice, a lintel functioning as an architrave frieze is decorated with a geometrical ornament comprising a row of alternating triangles and semicircles. This decorative pattern might be interpreted as formally descending from the egg-and-darts motif of the classical Ionic *kymation* moulding,[104] probably the work of a local craftsmen.

The egg-and-darts ornament received various formal interpretations during the 16th century stone carved frames from Transylvania: (i) decorating the *ovolo* moulding of the cornice (e.g.: Bethlen castle, Criș, first half of the 16th century; Wolphard Kakas house, Cluj-Napoca, 1541), (ii) bordering the upper part of the architrave (Teutsch house, Sibiu, 1552 – Thomas Lapicida as stone carver), or (iii) as small corbels supporting the cornice or the frieze.[105] The geometrical principle of this pattern, as illustrated by the selected carved stone frames from 16th-century Transylvania, can be defined by a scheme of alternating circles and triangles (Fig. 17, a-e). A formal deviation of the egg-and-dart ornament through inversion of the orientation and hyperbolizing the dimensions can be seen in the decoration of a stone carved funeral slab, assigned to Iachint of Vicina, the first archbishop of Walachia,[106] and as decorative frieze made of ceramic tiles on the upper part of the northern façade of Făgăraș castle.[107]

Stone blocks embedded in the north-western tower.

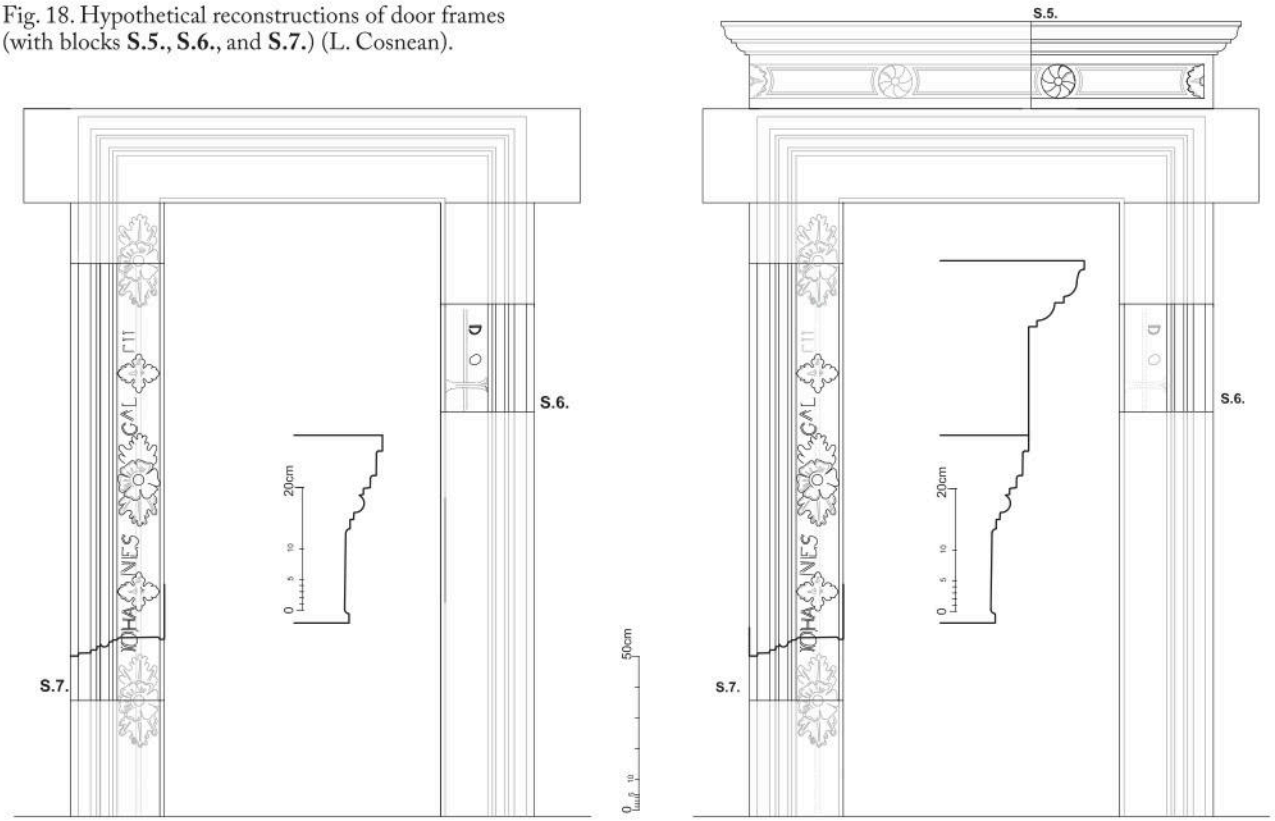
S.1. *Block with moulding, recess, and mounting groove* (Fig. 5).
Location: north-eastern corner of the tower, northern side, at a height of ca. 115 cm above the ground;
Material: limestone;
Dimensions: L=ca.115cm; d1=17.5cm; l=14.5/17.5cm;

Block with moulding on the front surface, broken at one end. Towards the finish side face, a moulding comprising an *ovolo* followed by a *fascia* and a *cyma reversa.* On the same surface, at ca. 45 cm from the previous moulding, another decorative moulding is adorning the piece – a wide flattened *torus*, symmetrically framed by a *cyma reversa*. On the side face (the visible one), a rectangular mounting groove (12.20x15x4cm) is aligned

[101] Abbreviations: L – length (the long side of the longitudinal section); l – width (the short side of the mullion visible face); d – depth; d1 – short depth; d2 – long depth.
[102] Inaccessible.
[103] Sebestyén, Sebestyén 1963; the reverse of the moulding towards the interior of the opening is a feature frequently found in the Transylvanian Renaissance stone frames.
[104] I owe this observation to an insight of Dr. Arch. Irina Băldescu.
[105] See Sebestyén, Sebestyén 1963, p .66 for more examples of local interpretations of classical vocabulary.
[106] Rădulescu 2011, Fig. 3, pp. 135-136: The frontal surface decoration of the funeral slab from Saint Nicholas princely church of Curtea de Argeș presents a similar simplification of the pattern, as a geometrical sequence of circles and triangles, with differences in orientation and dimensions. The funerary monument is dated to the end of the 14th century-beginning of the 15th century, presumably created by Transylvanian craftsmen Martin and Gheorghe, who facilitated the adoption of a funerary monument type from western Catholic art. (*idem,* p. 143).
[107] Sebestyén 1992, p. 51.

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Fig. 18. Hypothetical reconstructions of door frames (with blocks **S.5.**, **S.6.**, and **S.7.**) (L. Cosnean).



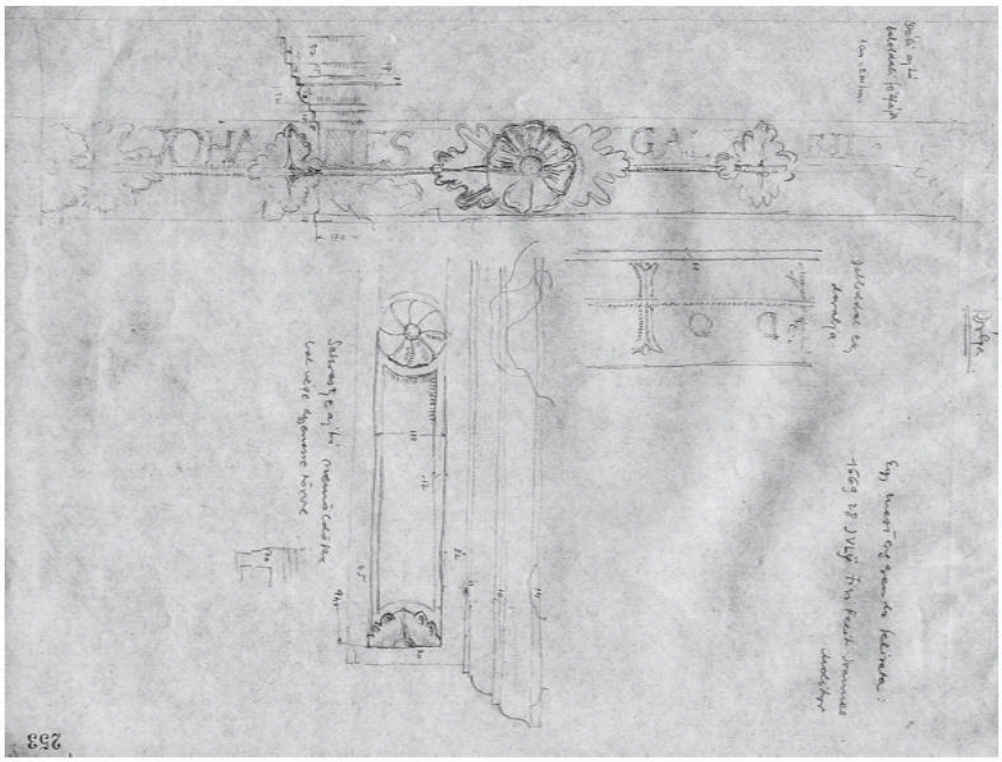


Fig. 19. Limestone fragments. Original measurements drawing by Debreczeni László, 1928 (KÖH plans archive, Budapest).

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

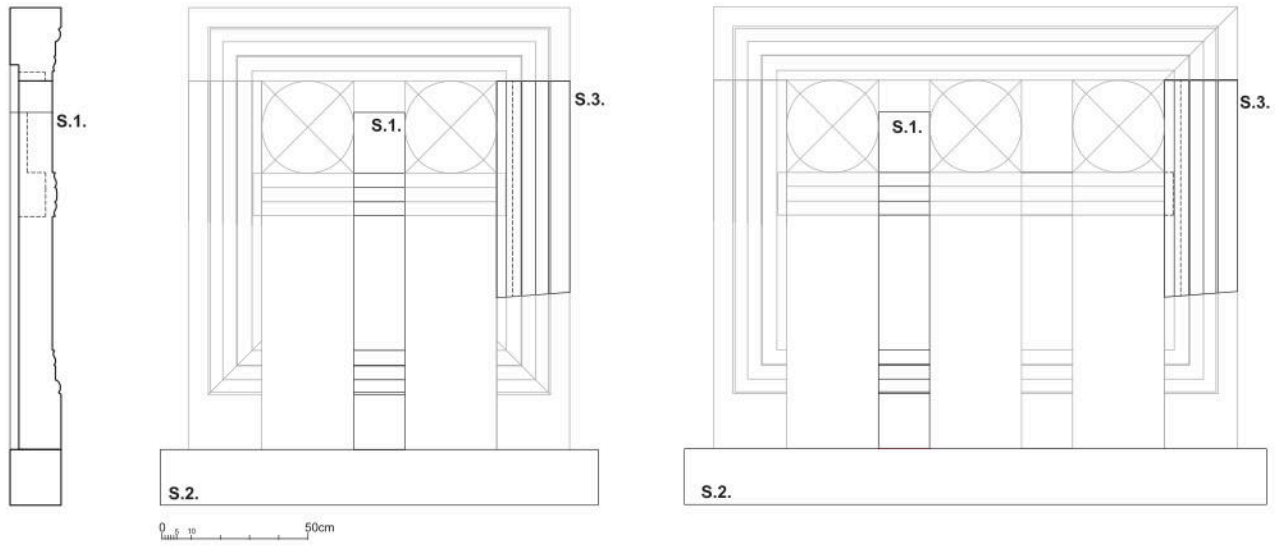


Fig. 20. Hypothetical reconstructions of window frames (with blocks **S.1.**, **S.2.**, and **S.3.**) (L. Cosnean).

with the middle profile, indicating a connection with an adjacent block, and a recess develops on the whole length of the block. Based on these observations, I have suggested two types of window frames comprising this block: a two or a three-light mullion window frame (Fig. 20).

S.2. *Simple block* (Fig. 5).
Location: north-eastern corner of the tower, eastern side, placed at a height of ca. 135 cm above the ground;
Material: limestone;
Dimensions: L=min.150cm; d1=19cm; l=48.50cm;

Simple block, with fine finished dressed faces. The surfaces are highly eroded and the fragment is broken at one end, therefore one does not know if the original block exceeded 150 cm or not. In the reconstruction proposal, the fragment is envisaged as a simple sill (Fig. 20).

S.3. *Block with moulding, recess, and mounting groove* (Fig. 5).
Location: north-eastern corner of the tower, eastern side, placed at a height of ca. 65 cm above the ground;
Material: limestone;
Dimension: L.=ca. 74cm; d=17.50cm; l.=25cm;

Block with moulding broken at one end. It has an identical moulding with the edge moulding of **S.1.** block: ca. 6.70 cm framing band, an *ovolo* profile, and a *cyma reversa* separated by a *fascia*. One of the side faces of the block presents a rectangular shape mounting groove similar to that on S1 block, with similar dimensions: 12 x 14.50 cm, indicating the connection place with an adjoining block, possibly even **S.1.** The proposed reconstruction using these two blocks (**S.1.** and **S.3.**) suggests that the **S.3.** block might represent the interior mullion of a two or three-light transom window frame (Fig. 20). A recess continues in a similar way on the entire length of the side face.

S.4. *Corner block with moulding* (Fig. 5).
Location: north-western corner of the tower, western side, placed at a height of ca. 60cm above the ground;
Material: limestone;
Dimensions: L= ca. 22cm; d=19cm; l=25cm;

A corner block with fine and elongated profiles - a *cyma reversa* framed on the outward part by an unequal border (5 cm, respectively 2.50 cm wide) and a flat 7 cm-wide fascia in the lower part. The moulding

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

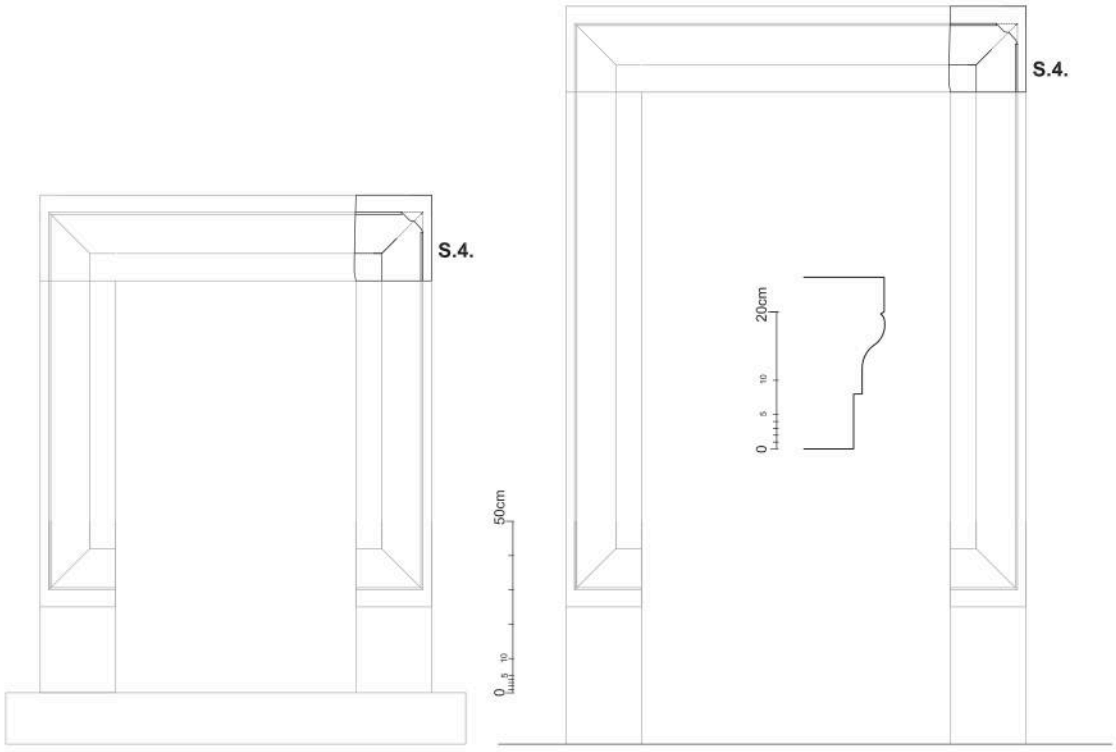


Fig. 21. *Hypothetical reconstructions of door and window frames (with block* **S.4.)** *(L. Cosnean).*

structure and composition is frequently used for window or door frames in 16th-century Transylvania (*e.g.* Lázoi chapel, Alba Iulia (1521),[108] Bocskai castle, Aghireș (late 16th century),[109] Wolphard Kakas house, Cluj (1534),[110] and Apor house, Alba Iulia).[111]

Based on the published repertory of doors' and windows' frames from the 16th and 17th centuries in Transylvania,[112] one can note that the windows mullions' width ranges between 16-20 cm, while the doors mullions' width between 23-30 cm, implying that the **S.4.** block might rather belong to a door frame, than to a window frame (Fig. 21).

Limestone frames' fragments from the chapel (today lost).

S.5. *Frieze with cornice - fragment* (Fig. 6).
Location: sacristy entrance door;
Material: limestone;
Dimensions: L=ca.60-95cm; d1=(?)cm; d2=(?)cm; l=28.50cm;

A block with frieze and cornice, broken at one end; the frieze consist of a rectangular band, bounded by a flat wide ribbon (ca. 3.5 cm) and decorated with half of rosette on the right edge, and a floral rosette with

[108] Sebestyén, Sebestyén 1963, p. 126, Pl. 1 – the door frame of the western entrance.
[109] Bicsok Orbán 2011, p. 186.
[110] Kovács 2006, Fig. 33, p. 32.
[111] *Ibidem*, p. 46, Fig. 57.
[112] Sebestyén, Sebestyén 1963, pp. 126-237, Pl. 1-56.

eight slightly curved divisions on the left side. The cornice consists of a *cyma recta* moulding, followed by an *ovolo*, separated by flat narrow *listels*, and is cantilevered ca. 9 cm over the surface of the frieze. On the original survey few traces are marked on the surface of the decorated side, indicating chiseled margins (Fig. 19).

S.6. - **S.7.** *Door frame fragments with inscription* (Fig. 6).[113]
Location: chapel entrance door – reused;
Material: limestone;
Dimensions: *left mullion* L=142.50cm; d1=18cm; d2=(?)cm; l=30.50cm; *right mullion* L=34cm; l1=18cm; l2=(?)cm; l=30.50cm;

Two identical carved limestone fragments with mouldings and inscriptions, reused at the chapel entrance (today lost). Bipartite composition with the lower register decorated with a stripe in flat relief, and the upper register comprising a sequence of fine profiles defined by a border crowning two fascias, and continued by an *ovolo* mouldings framed by flat narrow *listels*. The flat ornamented stripe is decorated with floral rosettes with six radial divisions[114] flanked by simplified *akanthos* leaves, alternated with a cross-shaped vegetal motif. On the upper half of the stripe belonging to the **S.7.** block, an inscription with the name of Gálffi János, spelled in Latin (J·O·H·A·N·E·S G·A·L·F·Ĭ· Ĭ) was realized with Renaissance ornamental letters. The **S.6.** piece has an identical moulding composition and dimensions, but only ca. 34 cm of it were preserved. The flat relief band comprises letters D·O·and traces of a stalk pattern.

The large length of the **S.7.** fragment (ca. 143 cm) suggests that the fragments belonged to a door frame rather than a window; it is likely they have functioned as the *muillons* of a door frame (Fig. 18).

Moreover, based on the profiles and formal analogies of the mullions fragments (**S.6., S.7.)** and the block with frieze and cornice (**S.5.**), I indicate two possible reconstructions: (1) a door frame composed of *a three-sided architrave*[115] surrounding the opening, crowned by the frieze with cornice; (2) a door frame simply composed as a simple three-sided architrave (Fig. 18).

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CMIT Archive	Commission for Transylvanian Historical Monuments Archive, Cluj-Napoca.

[113] Fragments **S.5.**-**S.7.** are no longer preserved on site; they were either transported to an unknown location or lost. Their survey was realized after a hand drawn survey by Debreczeni Laszló from 1928, found in the KÖH plans archive. The information regarding the decoration and the dimensions are not comprehensive; small details have been added by the author on the base of geometrical construction.

[114] The disposition of free rosettes alternated by vegetal motifs can be derived from the rosettes band where the rosettes are divided by chalices, as one can see in the decoration of a 16th-century stone window frame (Bethlen castle, Criș), or from the stone chimney of Boghner house, Cluj-Napoca (see plates from Sebestyén, Sebestyén 1963, pp. 188-189, p. 64, Fig. 6.

[115] Sebestyen 1978, p. 85. The author defines the "*three sided architrave type*" as a recurrent frame type found in Transylvanian Renaissance architectural decoration.

Excerpt from ARA Reports 4, 2013.

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