

## OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE ECCLESIASTIC COMPLEX FROM HUNEDOARA - THE CORVINS' CASTLE

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*This article covers the most important aspects of the chapel from Corvins' Castle in Hunedoara (documentary background and its consequences, building details, references on the rehabilitation works, archaeological research) in order to create an image as complete as possible regarding this important area of the monument. The most important time references for the 15<sup>th</sup> century (the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1443 and the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 1450) prove out the construction and the activity in a gothic chapel. The owner, John of Hunedoara, settles this unit on the map of the most important catholic religious buildings from the Hungarian Kingdom, due to the size and the the quality of details of this structure. Little documentary information regarding the period when the chapel was used is available (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century), but fortunately the 19<sup>th</sup> century sources offer valuable data about the original elements (the porch of the entrance, the border of the sacristy, the rampant of the tribune, the stalum, the windows) and the quality of the restoration works. The research regarding the parament in the chapel (1956, 1957) and the archaeological excavations (1956, 2000, 2001) brought further information concerning the initial aspect of the unit, the stratigraphy of the deposit, the chronology of the materials and structures which had been discovered. They also offered a real support for the quality improvement of the later rehabilitation works. The present image as the result of the restoration works from 1956-1968, 2008 gives arguments for the further rehabilitation of the chapel in order to make it useful again. Until now, the chapel- one of the most valuable examples of late gothic architecture in Transylvania – is the area which offers the most detailed information from the castle of Hunedoara, as a result of the team work between art historians, archivists, archaeologists and restorers.*

The restoration works which have been taking place in the Corvins' Castle in Hunedoara have caused the execution of some rescue excavations inside the religious complex, the refunction of it being one of the main purposes of the project. Presently, we will refer exclusively to the religious ensemble, situated in the north-eastern part of the castle, ensemble consisted of: chapel, vestry and valuable religious objects chamber. To the general presentation of archaeological research in the chapel (1956), in the

valuable religious chamber (2000) and vestry (2001)<sup>1</sup>, historical, documentary and architectonical observations were added, in order to correlate all the information regarding the religious complex.

**Bibliography framework.** Schmidt's opinions<sup>2</sup>, are sustained by important specifications written in Arany's monography<sup>3</sup> which textually affirms that: „*Hunyady János mint buzgó keresztyén a templom építésével kezdett a várhely felékesítéséhez, a templom 1442-tol 1446-ig készült el, míg a palota 1452-ben lon befejezve*”.

Gheorghe Anghel, one of the most representative personality in the domain of Transylvanian Middle Age historiography, affirmed that the year 1446 was the moment of chapel's construction<sup>4</sup>, insisting on the particular element given by the outside appearance of the altar, namely the crossing of two walls.

The most recent and complete synthesis referring to the castles/palaces' chapels in Transylvania<sup>5</sup>, is supplemented by a few particular notes, arising from constructive and functional characteristics of the religious complex from Hunedoara. The author insists on the relation of subordination of the defensive structure of the chapel<sup>6</sup>, and also upon the royal model of the chapel, which was copied by an important aristocrat (John of Hunedoara)<sup>7</sup>. Concerning Hunedoara region, in the absence of extensive research, we cannot determine inside the fortification, until the date of the current chapel, the existence of a place for prayer with its specific forms of manifestation (the chapel, images of icones, altar niches). However, we cannot eliminate the possibility of a severe deterioration of the citadel in that time. In the same time, in the absence of an inside chapel, a possible connection between the Parochial Church - in the proximity (Zarda Church) and the citadel, determined by the religious interests of the latter, cannot be ignored.

**Documentary Context.** One of the most important documents on the early stages of construction (dated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1443) - published by Lukcsics<sup>8</sup> - attested the fact that John of Hunedoara asked the Pope for the privilege of building „in castro de Hunid” a chapel sacred to St Mary. This moment is considered by some authors to be connected with the first mention of the citadel<sup>9</sup>. This document was renewed shortly (the 12<sup>th</sup> of april 1450) with another one in which the same John of Hunedoara asked for the privilege of building „in castro Hunod” a new chapel, sacred to St John The Baptist<sup>10</sup>. This last point was slightly mentioned in literature by one of the most authorised voice in the domain who supported the idea of a radical renovation. Subsequently, not only the chapel dedication but also the initial employees changed, raising indirectly the issue of the existence of two chapels inside the citadel<sup>11</sup>. Another point of view, brought up

<sup>1</sup> An extensive research regarding this sector from the castle of Hunedoara was published in the yearbook of Sebeş Museum (Terra Sebus, 1, 2009, p. 153-171).

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 13-15, 45-47, 52, 53, 57.

<sup>3</sup> Anghel 1986, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Anghel 1986, p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> Rusu 2005, p. 203.

<sup>6</sup> Rusu 2005, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> Rusu 2005, p. 209-210. Other examples of religious architecture built during Jonh of Hunedoara might be included in the so-called type `Doppelkapelle`, as much as the limits of archaeological reality and written sources of the 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century allows us (Șoimoș, Deva).

<sup>8</sup> Lukcsics 1938, p. 208, no. 775. Subject discussed later in Lupescu 2001-2002, p. 12. This detail singularizes Hunedoara on the background of the privileged relation between the pope and the chiefs of magyar nobility.

<sup>9</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Lukcsics 1938, p. 278, no. 1106; Velescu 1958, p. 62.

<sup>11</sup> Rusu 1999, p. 48.

the possibility of an existing chapel dated in 1443, near the citadel, namely on the eastern part of Sânpetru Hill<sup>12</sup>. The indirect arguments to sustain the theory were the stone foundations, which were described in 1831<sup>13</sup>, researched at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>, and a local tradition mentioned by Virgil Vătășianu<sup>15</sup>, resumed later by other authors<sup>16</sup>. Beyond the problems arisen from the information written in documents, an important issue regarding the chapel was to comply with the connection between the following terms: canon law, social prestige, economic aspect<sup>17</sup>.

The hypothesis of the existence intra muros of two parallel chapels - categorically exposed - remains the merit of the report concerning the restoration of the castle's chapel<sup>18</sup>. The authors, relying on the abundant information at European level, suggested that from functional point of view, a chapel served the senior's interests, and the other one to the garrison and the servants of the citadel. In the same report, the question of a possible 'oratorium' before the construction of the chapel<sup>19</sup> arose, possibly located, in the old tower gate floor<sup>20</sup>.

From the information offered by the written sources, the chapel did not appear in any documents in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, the largest amount of information was corresponding to the 17<sup>th</sup> century - some briefly presented - as drawings on the central wall of the apse (1623<sup>21</sup>, 1666<sup>22</sup> with black paint), or the first indications regarding the furniture of the chapel found in the collection of texts written by Bajoni<sup>23</sup>. In 1681, the chapel was not functional, and on its place a warehouse was disposed<sup>24</sup>. Three rows of chairs with wooden lectren, with the position of two wooden pews not specified, the latter dedicated distinguish to men and women, were mentioned in the nave area. Furthermore, a carpet in a good condition was discovered in the pulpit<sup>25</sup>. Related to this stone pulpit with stairs, built probably during the Gabriel Bethlen reign, the first information we own is also from Bajoni's inventory<sup>26</sup>. According to his predictions, the floor of the chamber was made of molten mortar, this situation being confirmed by the results of research regarding the chapel's restoration<sup>27</sup>. Also, between the ceiling joists were inserted painted boards<sup>28</sup>. There were two windows, situated one on the eastern side (a window with cornice decorated with „*denticuli*”, and the other on the south side<sup>29</sup>. The glasses of the windows were fitted in lead with four panes of glass and iron

<sup>12</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 2; Velescu 1968, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Kenderesi 1831, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Brassai 1861-1863, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Vătășianu 1930, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 2; Velescu 1968, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Rusu 2005, p. 203.

<sup>18</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 1-2.

<sup>19</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 2, reference 1.

<sup>20</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 140.

<sup>21</sup> The moment is simultaneous either with the ending of the rehabilitation/modification stage from Gabriel Bethlen period or with a consecration related to the interests of the Protestant Church.

<sup>22</sup> We have no information from the written sources about the amplitude of the actions from Nicolae Zolyomi's time.

<sup>23</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 50 (several types of iron objects are found in the chapel).

<sup>25</sup> Schmidt 1865.

<sup>26</sup> Arányi 1867, p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 92. One must observe that above this window there is another one, covered, with no precise date of construction because of the lack of minimal stylistic elements.

frames. Inside of one of the new created rooms, there was a green, enamelled tile stove<sup>30</sup>. Due to the same documentary source we discovered that the room had three doors, situated on the northern sides, respectively southern side: from so-called „Matia Wing” (the door with three stone steps in front of it) to the palace and the timber corridor<sup>31</sup>, connecting the room with the well house.

Another interesting element, offered by direct observations of architectural nature, carried out in the mid-twentieth century, demonstrated that the superior part of the chapel (nave, apse<sup>32</sup>), (the walls/brick wall segments and shaped stone items, resulted from the unused ribs) was contemporary or immediately after the moment of lowering the vault of the chapel in the Gabriel Bethlen period. Indirectly, these changes were confirmed by the presence of a layer of plaster applied over, similar to the one found in „The Bethlen Wing”<sup>33</sup>. Moreover, two rows of overlapped arches, with 2 m distance between them belonging to the same temporal period could be noticed. Some architectural elements exceeded the 17<sup>th</sup> century period and could be related to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (the presence of an area covered with pressed brick situated on the northern wall). Some authors believed that the division of space in the attic of the chapel (three rooms) was made in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and had the purpose to serve the needs of tax officials who were active here<sup>34</sup>.

Another land-record (1754), which documentary attested - besides the revival of the activity of the chapel by the Catholic Church<sup>35</sup>, was that until that moment various arrangements were made: the setting of a wooden floor, which buried the foundation of the choir loft columns under it, the lime-wash of the walls, columns and capitals, the painting of some brick-red crosses of establishment engraved in a circle<sup>36</sup> set on the walls of the nave, the construction of a new polished marble communion table, the presence of six golden wood candelabra and four wooden candelabra plated with silver, the setting of a metallic (iron) beam between the nave and the altar (?)<sup>37</sup> the presence of two chairs, one of them having engraved the name of Nicolae Zolyomi de Albis and the year 1654<sup>38</sup>, the construction of an onion shape red wooden towel with two bells<sup>39</sup>. All these interventions were connected with the date of the 7<sup>th</sup> of august, 1750 (*terminus post quem*), inscribed on the wall of the apse. However, some arrangements, such as an altar under construction situated on the left side of the triumphal arch, overrun this moment<sup>40</sup>. The portrait of John of Capistrano placed in the altar and an organ in the choir loft were contributions of The Franciscan Order members<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> The traces of the chimney may be found at the half of the southern wall.

<sup>31</sup> Bodochi 2008, p. 221. This door was painted both inside and outside.

<sup>32</sup> Parts of the gothic wall of the chapel were discovered only on the space between the northern and north-eastern windows, while unveiling the back of the vaults.

<sup>33</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 15.

<sup>35</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> As a result of our observations, we conclude that these commitment crosses can be found under both choir and altar.

<sup>37</sup> According to an itinerary, the arrangement existed in 1844 (Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 16, reference 1).

<sup>38</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 53.

<sup>39</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> We think that Arányi's information about the existence of traces from the stone foundation belonging to the table from the altar, together with some rests of corbels, is somehow referring to this altar (Arányi 1867, p. 23).

<sup>41</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 17.

The latest date, inscribed on the apse (1820), might be connected to the visit of the imperial family (1817). On this occasion, the repairs were consisted of probably just a simple whitewashing<sup>42</sup>.

**The chapel description.** The chapel built in the late gothic style, was consisted of pronaos and nave, together forming a triangular shape, and also an altar with five inner sides, closed by two walls overlapping<sup>43</sup> at the exterior. Furthermore, four simple buttresses built from lime and stone can be observed at the exterior. The soles of buttresses were not archaeological confirmed on the southern side of the chapel<sup>44</sup>, but only on the northern side.

As mentioned in the earliest historiographical studies, the chapel included all architectural details (triumphal arch, polygonal apses, niches, sacristy, valuable religious objects chamber, doorframes, windows, pulpit, and tabernacle (?).

**Doors.** The access in the chapel could be performed through a rectangular door (2.08 x 1.27 m) framed by a gothic arch. A tympanum with the emblem of John of Hunedoara was embedded above the door. An archivolt with an accolade extrados overlapped the ogival arch-out of which two carved consoles broke through. The left side console represented a griffin while the right console the raven with the ring in its beak. The archivolt presented vegetal motifs (three leaves) symmetrical displayed (croquet) on each side and a fleuron in the upper side<sup>45</sup>.

The frame of the sacristy's door<sup>46</sup> had the same features as the one from the Knights Hall<sup>47</sup>. Due to this fact, the space between the chapel and the palace was regarded as a unitary construction.

**Windows.** Window openings had stone frames (dacite tuff) and their gaps were divided by mullions which varied in shape and profile (?) from window to window. During the restoration activities in the decades 6 and 7 of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one could notice that their position and axis inside the spring's field differed from the axis of these fields. The difference consists of 90 cm (the window of the nave, the north wall), 1 m (the window of the apse, the north wall), 3 cm, respectively 16 cm (the windows of the other side). Mullions were supported by a shaped colonette that divided the windows. During the restoration activities<sup>48</sup> some hardware nails (approx. 6 cm length, cca. 5 mm thickness)<sup>49</sup> were discovered in the superior part of the window, namely in the internal rabbets. These rabbets were spaces designed for embedding the stained glasses in the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>50</sup>.

**Choir loft.** This was supported by three arches, which was sustained by six walled consoles and two trachite columns. The base of these columns was represented

<sup>42</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> I. Möller identified this constructional feature (Möller 1913, T. IV-V) but does not give further details about this case. The plan was discussed again by Al. Bogdan and R. Heitel (Bogdan 1970, sketch 2). We note that on the northern side of the chapel, the two buttresses start from the upper side of a massive bricking which appears to be straight on the native rock. We think that the symmetric situation must be identified also in the present yard of the fountain.

<sup>45</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 4; Lupescu 2006, p. 92.

<sup>46</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> In our opinion, this plat band was replaced with an identical one or significantly modified when the first rehabilitation work took place (in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>48</sup> These modifications initially removed the filling from the space above the vaults which were lowered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>49</sup> The location where this material is stored remains unknown or written in the documentation sent to Institutul Național al Monumentelor Istorice (the National Institute of Historic Monuments-in the next pages INMI).

<sup>50</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 5.

by square plans. This idea was sustained by the discovery on each corner of simple crowns well preserved. Furthermore, keystones were fitted in the intercrossing of ogival arches. The most recent approach of this matter was made in the art history<sup>51</sup>.

Decorations representing vine leaves, bunches of grapes, respectively oak leaves carved the capitals of columns. Between the ground level of the stones, considered the basis of the three ogives and capitals, there were two metal bars (displayed lateral and transversal on the axis of the chapel)<sup>52</sup>. The handrail, having protective and aesthetic purpose, featured a decoration made out of curved lines that fit a series of cvadrilobes, at the exterior. Most of these elements were not fretted, offering the unfinished aspect of this work, which was notified by all those who had scientific connections with the monument<sup>53</sup>.

In the centre of the composition stood the carved emblem of the Szilágyi family. The railing (handrail) was wider than the balustrade and had a profiled section.

**Embedded elements.** The other architectural elements presented in the chapel also require a series of observations. Firstly, we focus on a niche (0.37 x 0.76 m) with the superior part shaped as a club, inserted into the south wall of the chapel probably used as *sacramentarium*. The problem of the unusual presence, in terms of its location outside the pulpit, was related to the chronological connection between the nave and the chapel's pulpit construction<sup>54</sup>. According to some recent authors, this niche has functioned as an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary or another saint, before building the actual pulpit<sup>55</sup>.

Another important element to be discussed was a fragment from an ogive niche present on the northern side of the pulpit (in our opinion) coming from a tabernacle or *sacramentarium*<sup>56</sup>. Some authors questioned any practical/cultic purpose of this element, even believing that the presences of blocks of stone with fretwork traces were rather related to further repairs<sup>57</sup>.

On the southern side of the altar, a *stalum* of 2.2 m height from the basis of its pedestal, embedded into the wall, was preserved. This bench was divided by ogival and trefoil arches in order to create three seats.

**The apse of the chapel.** It had the shape of a closed polygon in elevation inside, with five sides of different measures (2.52 m, 2.06 m, 2.11 m, 2.11 m, 2.53 m), ranged from north to south and to the east (outside) it ended with two sides of a triangle. The decorative aspect of this area had been the subject of several studies, the most recent endeavour to this purpose being made by the art historian Radu Lupescu<sup>58</sup>. The presence of a fragment of wall, possibly belonging to a tower, situated in the north-eastern part of the altar, was offering a unique distinction. This was also encountered in the period representations until the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**The pulpit.** The base of the pulpit, situated on the south-eastern corner of the nave was the only evidence preserved. According to an opinion recently expressed, the pulpit was considered to be built in gothic style<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 92, 93.

<sup>52</sup> Arányi 1867, p. 49.

<sup>53</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 92 (briefly presenting the bibliography referring to this subject).

<sup>54</sup> The available bibliography does not offer any information about the real constructive relations and consequently the cronological ones between these two components of the chapel.

<sup>55</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Arányi 1867, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 93.

Regarding the other elements preserved (rectangular base, near the triumphal arch) the working assumptions were connected to the presence of a pulpit difficult to be precisely dated.

**Buttresses.** The discussions about this topic, involved a series of problems, set mainly by the absence of archaeological research and the lack of detailed information concerning the level of contemporary interventions in the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to direct observations it was determined at the elevation level that only the stone masonry of the north-west buttress was connected to the wall of the chapel. The stone blocks were arranged in an obtuse angle in relation to the axis of the buttress. Although, this aspect could be considered a general character, for the other three buttresses, the relationship between the stone masonry and canted stone blocks (large size stone) must be analysed. Radu Lupescu admitted the fact that the superior parts of the chapel's buttresses were altered as a result of the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century modifications<sup>60</sup>.

**The history of restoration work.** Arány had the merit to be the one who intuited the extent and the level of interventions performed in the chapel in the G. Bethlen period, thinking that: „the lowering of the vault was accomplished in G. Bethlen's time”<sup>61</sup>. Arány's constructional drawing based on observations and calculations' using the E. Henszelman's modular system was the first to suggest the original level of the vault<sup>62</sup>. This proposal for reconstruction was commented by the authors of the documentation for the restoration of the chapel. They questioned the estimated alteration of arches and the elevation of consoles<sup>63</sup> from the drawing because of several information gaps<sup>64</sup>.

These gaps, partially methodological, were corrected with several specifications: the brick vault was directly connected with the side walls and the window opening to the north was built in a later period. Later, Möller mentioned that the vaults had been lowered, in his opinion, with 1.56 m, without specifying the method of calculation he used<sup>65</sup>. Virgil Vătășanu initiated general comments on the chapel's consoles sustaining the idea that they were lowered in the same time with the modification of the vaults<sup>66</sup>.

**The results of the rehabilitation works from 1956-1968.** During 1956-1957, the traces of the original vault were identified in the walls of the chapel's attic, while removing the existing rubble<sup>67</sup>. Furthermore, it was established that some elements which had been used for rehabilitation during the 17<sup>th</sup> century (keystones, some of the arch ribs, decorated consoles of the starting point for the ribbed arches), were original pieces, later used for restoring purpose. Speaking again about the traces of the vaults, the authors of the rehabilitation project mentioned that on the southern and northern walls of the nave of the chapel, the traces of the arches were identified on both sides. They were symmetrical, had the same elevations<sup>68</sup>, and could be seen on the length of 1 m (right side), 0.5 m (left side), and 1 m (left side), 0.6 m (right side) respectively. The frame of the window from the southern side was discovered under the left part of the arch of the vault. This one had a stripe of black paint which initially used to double the rounding of the arches. No evidence of the arches could be found in the altar, but two

<sup>60</sup> Lupescu 2006, p. 92.

<sup>61</sup> Arányi 1867, p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> Arányi 1867, p. 81.

<sup>63</sup> Arányi 1867, T. VIII.

<sup>64</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> V. Vătășianu, account found in the archive of INMI.

<sup>67</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 13, plates 3/C, 4/C.

<sup>68</sup> The noticeable equal height of the vaults from the two opposed walls is a proof for the authenticity of the solution suggested by the restorers.

stripes of black paint of 0.45 m length<sup>69</sup> offered the possibility to reconstruct their direction. While cleaning the extrados of the vaults of the chapel, one could observe the some fragments of plaster were not destroyed. Those pieces had not been painted and could not be dated<sup>70</sup>. The foundation of the intrados of the chapel's nave revealed that the two consoles were stuck on a layer of bricks forming a square with very clear shape<sup>71</sup> offering further evidence that they were in the original position. In the same time, it was discovered that during the 17<sup>th</sup> century the triumphal arch had been given a round shape<sup>72</sup> and the threshold had been moved about 60 cm towards the nave.

The holes of the windows<sup>73</sup> on the southern wall of the chapel which had been blocked in with bricks in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were cleared again. The windows from the northern and north-eastern wall which had their size partially decreased in the same time (17<sup>th</sup> century) were brought to their original shape. In the project of the rehabilitation works it was mentioned the primitive way in which the restoration of the vaults had been done. This was exemplified by sudden breakings in the shapes of the ogives, their inaccurate directions and the excessive use of mortar. Furthermore, the original horizontal position of the consoles was modified leading to differences of height, the axe of the transverse arch was moved 20 cm towards the altar on the southern wall and 5 cm on the northern one<sup>74</sup>. Meanwhile, the restorers realised that lowering the level of the beginning point of the consoles and therefore the direction of the arches, the result was that the new arches were lot more flatter compared to the old gothic vault which was higher leading to difference of 2.12 m.

Referring to the pulpit of the chapel, there is no clear information available from this documentation. The elevations of the rose windows and transverse arch were established in relation with the keystones. Once the stages of the rehabilitation process were determined, the level of the cornice from the time of G. Bethlen was maintained. The old gothic cornice with chopped profiles in front of the parament was revealed while pickling some plaster from a level which was lower than the one mentioned previously<sup>75</sup>. The bibliography which reffers to this sector of the castle of Hunedoara agrees with the existence of two periods of construction in the case of the chapel (15<sup>th</sup> century, 17<sup>th</sup> century). These conclusions are based mainly on the study of the elements of art history.

The archaeological contribution to this chronologies results initially<sup>76</sup> from the necessity of a plan for the identification of all the cultural material elements compulsory for the rehabilitation process<sup>77</sup>. The gothic architectural style reflects the privileged condition of the centre of the manor of Hunedoara, and the direct connection with the European cultural values. The alternative use of the chapel by Catholics and Protestants from the 15<sup>th</sup> until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, together with no significant change of functionality during the later times, led to the preservation of the unit. Even though we think that the reconstruction of the image of the chapel (building techniques and functionality) from the written sources is far from being complete, the period before the rehabilitation works from 1956 brought new information from the field of art history.

<sup>69</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 10-11 (the situation is previous to the rehabilitation works).

<sup>72</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Their mullions have not been replaced.

<sup>74</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Chefneux 1967, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Floca 1956.

<sup>77</sup> Sandu 1955, p. 2.



Up to the date mentioned before, no information from the archives was found referring to the existence of some important artefacts from the chapel of the castle of Hunedoara in the collections of other museums (Deva, Cluj, Alba Iulia, Sibiu).

***The structure of the wall of the chapel.*** Orban and Velescu agree that the stone mixed with smashed bricks stuck with mortar made of lime<sup>78</sup> was the `recipe` used for building the walls of the chapel<sup>79</sup>. A major problem for further research will be to clarify the structure of the parament in addition to the extention of the database referring to the mortar, the sources of raw material, the stone used for profiles<sup>80</sup>. The authors of the general report agree that the old theory sustaining that this chapel belongs to the category of fortified churches from the south of Transylvania<sup>81</sup> must be definitively taken out of discussion. In conclusion, the chapel, which reflects undoubtly the requirements of a complex residence, is considered to be finished in 1452. The beginnings must be related to the documentary background of the year 1450<sup>82</sup>.

***The archaeological excavation from 1956.***

***General features.*** The archaeological excavation from 1956 - the only one which had as purpose the research in this sector - revealed a series of partial results referring to: the level (elevation) of the floors (nave, altar), their structure, the materials which were used; observations about the segment of wall included in the first stage of the precinct; research in the underground chamber; information about the elevation of the base of the columns' stone imposts, columns which buttressed the gallery, their shape and substruction, and also their contemporaneity with the floor made of brick plates; the establishment of the threshold between the nave and the altar; unmodified initial planimetry<sup>83</sup>.

***Constructions with unknown functionality.*** O. Floca's archaeological research was due to prove a piece of information found in the general report written for the rehabilitaton of the chapel, despite that in his report very few observations on this subject were mentioned<sup>84</sup>. The authors of this report (C. Orban, O. Velescu) wrote about the rests of a construction located in the western side of the wall which was a part of the old precinct. Because of no clear archaeological or architectural evidence (plan, building technique, connection with other sectors of walls belonging mainly to the chapel) the chronology of this construction was established as `previous to the chapel

<sup>78</sup> Möller 1913, p. 15; Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 2; Velescu 1958, p. 62.

<sup>79</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 2 (from the building point of view this feature is considered to be defintory for establishing the contemporaneity between the western flank of the main castle and the chapel).

<sup>80</sup> These requirements are purposes for future scientists considering that starting from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century I. Möller (Möller 1913) noted that the base of the walls of the chapel was a lot larger than the elevation on top of it. C. Orban, O. Velescu - who were using some of O. Floca's observations-wrote in their report of the research that `where it seemed that the foundations of the chapel were larger (interior of the chapel), we were dealing with ramifications of the same wall` (Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 3). If the archaeological situation is real, a problem to be dealt with is the making of detailed plans using the elevations required by the exterior of the northern wall of the chapel (projections, consoles). Another interesting element appeared while rehabilitation works took place, when scraping some recent plasters (19<sup>th</sup> century) from the southern side of the chapel, between the south-western corner of the building which was set out with ashlar, and one of the buttresses. As a result of this intervention, the observations made by scientists during the 60's were proved once again. Furthermore, it offers the possibility of extending the data base regarding the mortar and the one with information about the castle.

<sup>81</sup> Schmidt 1865, p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> Because in the preliminary report of the 1956 research there were no published stratigraphic profiles from the chapel, we are not able to have a clear image of the dynamics of this space.

<sup>84</sup> Floca 1956, p. 2.

and probably from the same time as the wall dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>85</sup>. The quoted authors did not exclude a possible function as corner bastion or tower house for this construction propped to the wall of the old precinct<sup>86</sup>, which was demolished when the chapel was built<sup>87</sup>.

In this stage of research we are forced to be careful in making any firm statements about this essential aspect (our opinion) for the restoration of the place occupied by the chapel of the castle.

**The floor with square bricks.** The first note made by the author of this research was that after the removal of a layer 18-20 cm thick<sup>88</sup>, a floor made of bricks was found covering the entire surface of the nave of the chapel, in different stages of preservation<sup>89</sup>. According to their type and size, the bricks had square shape, with the following measures: 29x29x7 cm; 24x24x7 cm; 22x22x7 cm (length, width, depth). In this situation, two observations were made regarding the aspect of the substruction of the floor dated in the 15<sup>th</sup> century: in the western and central sides of the chapel the bricks had a 3-4 cm layer of mortar<sup>90</sup>; on the surface situated between the wall of the old precinct and the threshold between the nave and the altar, one could observe a thick layer of filling covered by one of mortar which bound the bricks<sup>91</sup>. This pavement was not found in the area of the altar, but the level of the old floor (brick, stone ?) could be related with the level of the base of the *stalum* made of stone.

Grounding on evidence from the archaeological research (the level of the surface of the stones from the base of the two columns which sustain the gallery, the overlapping of the pavement over the wall of the old precinct, the relation between the base of the oldest plaster and the pavement made of bricks<sup>92</sup>), O. Floca concludes that this pavement was part of the construction works of the gothic chapel. As a result of this archaeological research, some questions found a partial answer (the date of the pavement made of rectangular bricks with parquet shape; the level of the foundations; the general look of the construction, the raw material, the structure of the lower parts of the walls of the chapel; the segment/part of the wall of the old precinct, the position of the threshold between the nave and altar, detailed information about the material found in the levels which were the subject of the archaeological research).

From Floca's report results that in the western side of the old precinct up to the entrance of the chapel, 18 cm deep under the brick pavement (mentioned earlier), there

<sup>85</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956 (the meaning we are focusing on is a necessity required by the stylistic purpose of the verb 'to buttress' found in the text of the report referring to the chapel of the castle).

<sup>87</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> There is no information in the written sources about the contents of this level.

<sup>89</sup> The area west from the altar was in a poor condition of preservation. Furthermore, the author of the research, as well as the writers of the general report for the rehabilitation of the chapel, focuses on the fact that the level (elevation) of the pavement is not uniform. This situation was explained to be a consequence of the presence of a previous building. We also think that the type and the quality of the substruction of the pavement, the intensity of circulation in the central area of the chapel, the existence of massive furniture, were some of the causes which led to this situation. Level 0 established in the central area of the inner court of the monument was a necessity in order to allow the researchers to relate all the data obtained during time (elevations STEREO 70, absolute elevation compared to the sea level). All the depths were counted according to this level 0.

<sup>90</sup> In the area of the segment of wall which coincides with the old precinct, the mortar of the substruction of the pavement is cast on the upper side of the wall (Floca 1956, sketch 2.b).

<sup>91</sup> Floca 1956, sketch 2 a.

<sup>92</sup> Floca 1956, p. 2-3; Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 5.

was another pavement made of rectangular bricks (29x11x6 - 7 cm) dating - on researcher's opinion - to an earlier stage of construction compared with the one which was the subject of rehabilitation of the chapel (Floca, sketch 2c)<sup>93</sup>. After direct research - which confirms that under the tribune one is dealing with the same chronology for both pavements - we have no information about the presence in this area of a similar pavement as the one from the nave, later taken out for further information.

An interesting artefact (a roman chapitel made of marble of Bucova, h=36 cm, width=55 cm, with no data available about the depth or the archaeological level) comes from the intersection point between the outer side of the southern wall of the underground chamber and the wall of the old precinct<sup>94</sup>. The particularity of this artefact consists in a change made in its narrow side, in the shape of a right angle, evidence of a later use (building material, filling material), different from the initial one.

The study of this report shows that some interventions were done in the altar of the chapel in order to establish the elevation of the pavement but no details necessary for our work were given. Bibliographic sources do not offer information about any mortar analysis coming from the substruction of the oldest pavement/plasters from the northern and southern sides of the chapel, or where the materials from this archaeological research are.

***The wall of the old precinct.*** During the archaeological campaign from 1956, a part of the wall from the old precinct inside the chapel was studied. This one was 1.9 m-2 m wide and was crossing the middle of the nave from south to north, having a slightly oblique direction, being superposed by the side walls of the chapel<sup>95</sup>. We have no information regarding the material which was used, the technique, the elevation of the base of the segment of wall, no signs of the date of construction (traces of scaffold feet, mortar lences), nor about the level of systematic demolition from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the holes from the wall, the possibility of later interventions and their largeness.

***The underground chamber.*** An important problem when talking about the construction works inside the chapel is the one concerning the underground chamber<sup>96</sup>, located in the centre of the chapel, towards the altar, with an approximately east-west orientation<sup>97</sup>.

The size of this room: length= 2.55 m, width=1.15 m, depth=2.4 m describes a rectangular space, matchlessly in construction elements (technique or material). The west<sup>98</sup> and the east<sup>99</sup> sides were made of stone and levelled with bricks. Meanwhile, the

<sup>93</sup> Floca 1956, p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> Orban, Velescu 1956, p. 3 (the authors do not give details about archaeological context, they consider the piece as a component of a rubble filling).

<sup>95</sup> Floca 1956, p. 3 (sketch 1). The conclusion of the mentioned author comes in addition to the I. Möller (Möller 1913, p. 13-14) ideas, who studied only some parts of the old wall of the precinct, parts which were placed in the exterior of the lateral walls of the chapel. Another evidence to place the building of the chapel in the second phase of construction during John of Hunedoara is the relation between the eastern corner of the chapel and the interior side of the wall of the precinct which is dating from John of Hunedoara period. Möller's observation (Möller 1913, p. 13-14), that the area located south of the chapel (between the wall of the old precinct and the one from the time of John of Hunedoara) was filled in the same time with the construction of the chapel, was not archaeologically verified. Though, indirect evidence could be the necessity of settling a functional space around the fountain which is generally accepted to date from John of Hunedoara times.

<sup>96</sup> Arányi 1867, T. VIII/B.

<sup>97</sup> Floca 1956, p. 3 (sketch 1). The use of the wall made of stone of the old borough, as well as the western side of the building, was the reason for the slightly deviated axe, compared to the classic east-west one.

<sup>98</sup> The wall of the old precinct.

<sup>99</sup> From the description made by the leading researcher it is obvious the existence of this side of the underground chamber, stuck to the wall between the nave and altar.

long sides were made exclusively of bricks, 0.75 m thick<sup>100</sup>. Establishing the depth of the underground room (2.4 m), the problem of a consistent stratigraphy in this micro sector of the chapel rises indirectly. In our opinion, the initial possibility of an excavation in native rock in order to obtain this depth must be eliminated from the start.

When the archaeological excavation began, the room was entirely covered by fallen pieces and rubble, mainly mortar fragments, building rocks (some of them with profiles), tiles, bricks, ceramics, etc. The researcher responsible for the excavation said that this mixed material belonged to different chronological periods. Some of them were the remains of the previous works of recondition made in the castle. Among the interesting finds from this area, which were mentioned in the report, one could find a small bronze cross and two coins (a polish coin dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and an 18<sup>th</sup> century Rákóczi<sup>101</sup> coin).

***The 2000 archaeological excavation.***

***The valuable religious objects chamber.*** The archaeological excavation was motivated by the installation of a toilet. Because of this, in the west side of the room, the wall was cut and arranged as an entrance to the new room.

Before the beginning of the archaeological intervention, we could notice that the native rock covered more than 60% of the room's surface. That is why a trench of 1x1m was opened in the north-eastern corner for stratigraphic information, and later extended to 2 x 1 m. On the north side of the trench, the foundation of the wall was found at 0.03m deep. It was made of two rows of small stones, with mortar, directly on native rock with no trace of being worked. In the upper part, this foundation wall was completed by a row of bricks (length=30 cm, width=15 cm), well worked and in a good condition of preservation. About the working technique, this wall is identical with the one found in the north side of the guardian's room from the same Matia Wing. At 0.2 m deep under the nowadays walking level, a conglomeration of sand-lime stone and lime-dolomite flags was found, partially covered by a lens of pure mortar with an addition of lime which used to cover this place. This was going deeper on the eastern side of the room, up to 0.33 m. The possible function of this work was to straighten the actual walking level which otherwise would have been difficult to use because of the natural environment consisting of rocks, not very high in the northern side. Native rock was situated exactly under this work. On the eastern side of the trench, one could see the traces of an intervention on the wall, looking as a filling, with dolomitic chalk and high quality mortar<sup>102</sup>. Very poor archaeological material was obtained, with no relevant chronological importance.

***The 2001 archaeological excavation.***

***General features.*** The necessity of the intervention required by the reconditioning plan led to the beginning of the rescue archaeological excavation inside the sacristy of the chapel. An important contribution to this aspect was also that among the information offered by the written texts and articles, one could identify several problems concerning the plan, the evolution of the building, etc. The financial costs of the reconditioning project was the reason for the limited objectives established for the campaign: to unveil an important part of the bricks from the floor, to establish the south side and north side

<sup>100</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know the dimensions of this type of bricks.

<sup>101</sup> Probably Francisc Rákóczi II, if the 18<sup>th</sup> century chronology is correctly established.

<sup>102</sup> This observation becomes more relevant in the context of archaeological research in the sacristy. We are talking about the perforation of the wall separating the sacristy and the room with religious objects, in order to realize an outflow using a culvert made of bricks.

limits of the foundations, to make brief observations about the parament, to excavate a certain area for vertical documentation. When the excavation in the sacristy of the chapel began, no credible bibliographic information was available related to the stratigraphy of this place. The only useful data was the one mentioned by O. Floca in his report. Due to the lack of coordination among the ones who realized the project and the team of archaeologists, we were forced to establish a local Waggriss for the chapel and the sacristy, in order to be able to measure the levels and the depths.

Two trenches were opened for detailed stratigraphic research (C1: 2.9 m x 3.34 m – these figures were necessary for a reliable historic information; C2: 2 m x 1.8 m), in the north side of the area and in the south-east corner of the sacristy.

The archaeological research in the first trench was due to offer a clear chronology of the levels of settlement inside the sacristy and also to establish the relation between the walls. The base of the walls was reached in the north-eastern and north-western points of the trench (-3.3 m, - 1.8 m respectively). The conclusion was that there existed a level of settlement of the interior followed by four thin levels of use dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Three stratigraphic profiles were documented (two profiles in the first trench-north-south and east-west oriented<sup>103</sup>, and one profile in the second trench).

With no archaeological support, a wooden floor and a 0.35 m thick layer of sand<sup>104</sup> was removed. Before taking out the floor made of bricks, one could notice that the stair of stone representing the connection between the frame of the sacristy and the interior, together with the one oriented towards the plinth from the eastern niche, are situated higher than the floor. That means that they are chronologically younger than this one. An entire floor made of bricks, almost completely preserved, and a plinth made of stone and bricks, using mortar (plinth-statue?) dined on the west side by a piece of freestone, were discovered. About the floor, it can be seen that in the south – western corner the bricks are missing. The good preservation of the bricks, connected to the previous information might be a clue for the practical use of this area (fireplace?). No evidence that could establish a clear chronological period of the excavated surface of floor was found. The only reliable observation was obtained from the mortar sample which preserved traces from the bricks taken out previously. The floor was made from a standard type of bricks (length=30 cm, width=15 cm, height=6 cm) placed in parquet (rectangular angle) with the only exception of south-west area where the bricks were placed angularly. The central part of the brick floor has the shape of a socket.

From the research made in the two trenches very important aspects were revealed. The first result is that the stratigraphic units studied in these two micro-areas do not show a different development during the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to this general observation, the specific deposits from the 15<sup>th</sup> century are really rare. The functionality of this place was given as an argument of this aspect. Our research showed that in some areas native rock was covered by a layer of humus containing prehistoric material.

The foundation is placed on the native rock, without any excavated ditches which are usually necessary for the anchorage of the first layer/layers of stone. The observation that the prehistoric level is cut by the wall of the sacristy is confirmed only in the north-eastern point. The foundation was directly on the native rock in the rest of the area where the research reached the base.

Under the level 0, required by the topographic reality, general observations about the sides of the sacristy related to the aspect of the parament were identified.

<sup>103</sup> Roman et alii 2004, fig. 1, 3.

<sup>104</sup> Intervention probably connected to the recondition works from late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

According to these observations, the lower sector of the north wall foundation, between base and projection, is very carefully built from big pieces of concrete and river stone, with thin blankets and binder (lime and fine sand). The maximum height of this sector is 0.5 cm and 10 cm wide in the contact area of the north side with the east side of the sacristy, and is getting higher on the west side<sup>105</sup>. The second phase of building is characterized by a different structure including smaller blocks of stone, very little chopped, tied with mortar. During the third phase of building, the elevation of the wall was very carefully realized from local stone, tighten with thin blankets of mortar made from lime and sand in order to obtain an uniform parament. The stratigraphic connection between units studied in C1 and C2<sup>106</sup>, and information about the period of time they belong to<sup>107</sup>, are written in our preliminary report on the research made in the sacristy of the chapel.

In our opinion, building the walls of the sacristy-simultaneous with overbuilding the curtain wall of the old castle (?), is immediately followed by the level formed from chips and blocks of concrete, with very rare and small particles of mortar in some places<sup>108</sup>, and very little archaeological material, in order to set up the new space.

Important for the conclusions of this campaign are the coins identified in levels dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, two denari, from 1440 and 1443 (?) respectively, emitted in the times of Wladislaw I (1440-1444)<sup>109</sup>. The other coins from the same stratigraphic level were unidentified<sup>110</sup>.

We consider that it is a necessity to continue the systematic archaeological excavation in the chapel and the additional sacristy, together with the release of a reliable report of architecture based on the observations about the parament, mortar analysis, bibliographic research etc., considering that the reconditioning project of the Corvin's Castle from Hunedoara is financed from public funds<sup>111</sup>.

Translated by: Angela-Elena Brăneț, Roxana-Maria Preda

<sup>105</sup> Roman et alii 2004, p. 191.

<sup>106</sup> Roman et alii 2004, p. 197, fig. 3.

<sup>107</sup> Roman et alii 2004, p. 189-191.

<sup>108</sup> This observation might have been more significant if it had been possible to connect it with the ones from the chapel. The fact that this level can be found also in trench 2, north of the wall of the chapel, represents an indirect proof for the supposition that the stratigraphy in the chapel starts with a similar level.

<sup>109</sup> Purece et alii 2002, p. 165.

<sup>110</sup> Purece et alii 2002, p. 166, 167.

<sup>111</sup> Between 2009-2010 SC Grup Corinth SA did the latest reconditioning works in the interior of the chapel (stone elements). After finishing the photographic documentation, the stone elements were cleaned (with Alkutex cream), biocidal products were used (ex.: for the portal of the entrance it was used Alkutex Algae Remover), reinforced, injection of Funcosil Stone Strengtheners 300 into the fracturing was done. In some places (the portal of the entrance), 3 layers of Funcosil SNL were applied on stone elements for water repellency. The previous point-up bricking done with plaster was cleared and a new one was done. Certain elements, like the guard of the platform, the stalum from the altar needed some works to have their shapes reconditioned using Remmers mortars. Because of the poor preservation of the guard's rampant the workers had to dismantle all the elements which later were reassembled and the rampant was stuck with inox bolts. In the area were an initial shape could not be determined (ex: the tabernacle from the altar, some points in the platband of the entrance), no shape completion was done. The same procedure was used for the rehabilitation of the plat band in the sacristy. (We are thankful to Ștefan Nadia, restorer at SC Grup Corinth SA who kindly offered this information).

### Lista abrevierilor

ATS	– <i>Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis</i> , Sibiu
BAHC	– <i>Bibliotheca Archaeologica et Historica Corvinensis</i> , Hunedoara
BMI	– <i>Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice</i> , București
Corviniana	– <i>Corviniana. Acta Musei Corvinensis</i> , Hunedoara
EMEÉ	– <i>Az Erdélyi Múzeum-Egysület Évkönyve</i> , Cluj-Napoca
MedTrans	– <i>Mediaevalia Transilvanica</i> , Cluj-Napoca
MM	– <i>Magyarország Műemlékei</i> , Budapest
TG	– <i>Tudományos Gyűjtemény</i> , Budapest

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### **Observații privind complexul de cult din Castelul Corvinilor de la Hunedoara** Rezumat

Articolul tratează cele mai importante aspecte ale complexului de cult din Castelul Corvinilor de la Hunedoara (contextul documentar și implicațiile lui, detalii constructive, repere ale lucrărilor de restaurare, intervenții și cercetări arheologice), cu scopul oferirii unei imagini cât mai complete acestui important sector al monumentului. Până în prezent, ansamblul de cult - unul dintre cele mai valoroase monumente ale arhitecturii gotice târzii din Transilvania - rămâne cea mai bine documentată parte a castelului de la Hunedoara.