

Features of *The Final Judgment* Representation in the 16th Century Moldavian Painting

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Abstract: The present research has in view an interdisciplinary approach, from a theological and artistic point of view, of the topic of *The Final Judgement* in some of the most well-known medieval monuments, churches and monasteries from Moldavia. Their walls were magnificently decorated in the 16th century, the scene of *The Final Judgement*, inspired by different Old and New Testamentar sources, occupies large areas, as a proof of the eschatological topic's importance since ancient times, represented on the monuments from Arbore, Bălinești, Probota, Humor, Moldovița, Voroneț etc.

Moreover, this topic has been of great importance during medieval times, the Renaissance and afterwards, both for the Eastern and Western areas, where various artists made themselves remarked through the usage of different techniques. The focus of the present research paper is represented by the medieval monuments during the reign of Petru Rareș (1527-1538; 1541-1546). This period marked the beginning of a change of vision – including the representation of *The Final Judgement*, the works of art being decorated with mural painting both indoors and outdoors. Thus conceived, the present study underlines the outlining of some representative aspects in traditional post-Byzantine iconography in Moldavia, the accent falling on the unique way of understanding and approaching this topic by the artists of that period.

Keywords: The Final Judgment; Painting; Iconography; Theology; Post-Byzantine Art.

Introduction

From the vast iconographic legacy of Eastern and Western ecclesiastical paintings in Europe, the theme chosen to be further researched is the *Doomsday*. This subject arose in Antiquity and has often been encountered in Christian art. *Doomsday* has been depicted through a wide variety of techniques, from mosaic, painting or sculpture to more unconventional approaches that are specific to modern and contemporary art¹.

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¹ In the year 2016, a group exhibition was organized at PG Gallery 192 (New Zealand), whose main theme was *The Last Judgment*, reuniting several contemporary artists, from different regions which brought forward original interpretations of this religious theme;

To be able to fully understand the meaning of this important theme of Christian iconography, we must first discover its possible correspondences in other ancient cultures, in which the religious part played a relevant role. The Egyptian culture is a rather pertinent example. Moreover, the theme of a possible *Last Judgment* was mentioned in the Egyptian Antiquity in *The Book of Dead*, a collection of spells, incantations and prayers, which was similar to a guide for the Afterlife and which also served as a model for the Christian images².

Within the belief system of ancient Egypt, the idea of a final judgment of the defunct had a rather particular significance that can be observed by looking at the different artistic representations of the previously mentioned theme, highlighting the important aspects of religious thinking and living, which are specific to this culture. A relevant example is the artistic portrayal: *The last Judgment of Hunefer* (1300-1290 B.C.), in which the scribe of the Seti I pharaoh makes his appearance. The composition presents some representative episodes from the Judgment of the scribe and he is depicted in the lower left-hand side of the image, led by Anubis, the god of embalming, to the trial. Immediately after this sequence, the heart of Hunefer is weighed by Anubis and it is lighter than the Feather of Truth which was taken from the goddess Maat's hair, who is known as the guardian of truth. Under the Balance of the Judgment appears Ammit, a hybrid creature that devoured the heart of the dead only if after the trial, the heart was heavier than the Feather of Truth, while god Thoth was the one who kept track of the result of Hunefer's judgment³. After the judgment's result was in favor of Hunefer, Horus took him to Osiris, who was in a canopy with Isis (Osiris' wife and the goddess of magic and marriage) and Nephthys (Osiris' and Isis' sister, the guardian of the dead) and Hunefer was given eternal life. In the top part of the image, Hunefer is depicted kneeling in front of many gods, his judgment's result being positive. This image highlights the possible similarities between the Egyptian and the Christian Judgment⁴. These

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/82893119/Exhibition-Review-Last-Judgement>

² Hugh Honour, John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, Laurence King Publishing, 2005, online version;

<https://books.google.ro/books?id=qGb4pyoseH4C&pg=PT107&dq=book+of+dead+egypt+last+judgement&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHyufPuPzeAhUHJ1AKHYfJBoIQ6AEIMzAB#v=onepage&q=book%20of%20dead%20egypt%20last%20judgement&f=false>

³ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013, p.80.

⁴ Hugh Honour, John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, Laurence King Publishing, 2005, online version;

similarities and differences are separated into two different levels of interpretation: the one of religious, theological or spiritual (in general) interpretation and the one of artistic representations. Taking this into account, the presence of the balance that tilts one way or the other, depending on the deeds, the presence of the throne of the judgment, the presence of the judge and of the gods that were at the trial – correlated to and comparable with the Christian saints and apostles, represent just as many elements with meaning worth thoroughly analyzing but which, undoubtedly, is not the subject or purpose of this study.

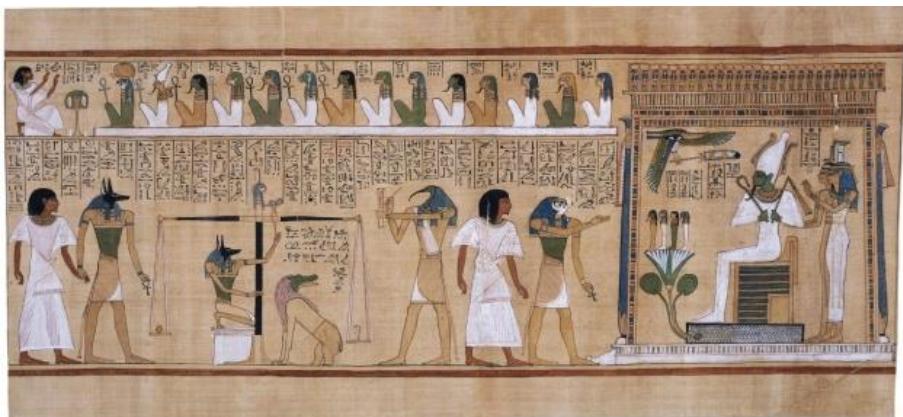


Fig. 1. *Last Judgment of Hunefer, Page from the Book of the Dead of Ani, c. 1275 B.C.E., 19th Dynasty, 44.5 x 30.7 cm, British Museum.*

Another example taken from Antiquity, referring to a well-known worldly judgment is the one of King Solomon (the son of King David and Bathsheba); although it does not have direct correlations to the meaning of *Doomsday*, it highlights the tension of such a moment and the judge's righteousness as a sign of divine justice. The Biblical text describes how Solomon asked God in a dream to give him the necessary skills to judge his people right. The righteousness of the King's judgment ability was tested when two lewd women who had just given birth and demanded justice, came to him. Both women claimed that they gave birth around the same time, but one of them killed her newborn, falling asleep on him and then replacing her dead child with the other woman's baby who was alive. Being in a difficult position, in order to find out the truth, Solomon decided to cut the living child in half, giving one half to each woman. After finding out the verdict, on the

one hand, the real mother was shocked and could not accept it and decided to give up her part so that her baby would not be killed. On the other hand, the other woman had nothing against Solomon's decision, showing her inauthentic feelings and malicious intentions. "And when all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice." (III Kings 3, 16-28).

The *Last Judgment* in Medieval Art

In Christian tradition, *Doomsday* is of major importance, this being the theme often found depicted as a stand-alone scene of décor on the inside or on the outside of churches.



Fig. 2. Giotto - *The Last Judgment* (1306), Scrovegni Chapel.



Fig. 3. Michelangelo - *The Last Judgment* (1536-41), Sixtine Chapel.

Moving forward from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages, the then *Doomsday* was rather common and frequently encountered in both the Eastern and Western Middle Ages. In Byzantine art, *Doomsday* was represented in mosaic – Santa Maria Assunta (Torcello), mural painting – Chora Museum (Istanbul), in religious paintings, icons – *The Last Judgment* (The Sinai Icon Collection). This theme also made its appearance in Western art in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, both in sculpture and in painting, such as the works of art created by well-known artists in some of the most representative monuments. That would be the case of the French sculptor Gislebertus (the work of art – *The Last Judgment* of Cathedral Saint Lazare at Autun), of the Italian painters Giotto (*The Last Judgment* of Scrovegni Chapel) and Michelangelo (*The Last Judgment* of the Sixtine

Chapel) or of the Flemish artists Jan van Eyck (with *Crucifixion and Last Judgment diptych*) and Hans Memling (the triptych *The Last Judgment*). The Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch must also be mentioned for his thematic triptych *The Last Judgment*. The oldest images of *Doomsday* on the territory of the Romanian Countries date back to the 14th-15th centuries and are kept in the Roman-Catholic Church in Ghelnița, the reformed church in Mugeni, the chapel of the rustic citadel in Hărman, the church “on the hill” –Sighișoara.

This scene is often found represented in the 16th century in the Moldavian churches and from *Tara Românească*, in Hurez, some of the most interesting creations inspired from this theme⁵.

Referring to the theological aspects of this study, we can mention the fact that between the representation methods of *Doomsday* in the Byzantine art or the Byzantine tradition and the Western art, there are some differences, such as the presence of the *Hetimasia's Throne* for the Orthodox and the existence of the *Purgatory* for the Catholics.

According to the words of the Savior, The Parousia of the Lord will be preceded by certain signs presented in The Pauline Epistles and the Revelation, such as the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, the rise of false prophets, and the fall of many from faith, the multiplication of transgressions among men, the coming of Antichrist, the coming of Enoch and Elijah on earth, many great catastrophes in nature and people, converting the Jewish people to Christianity and the appearance of the sign of God's son⁶. Christ will come to earth, with the angels, gathering people and dividing them, as the shepherd divides the goats from the sheep, putting the sheep to his right, and the goats to his left (Matthew 25: 32-33). The images of the *Last Judgment* had numerous sources of inspiration, starting from the eschatological writings extracted from the Old Testament (Isaiah, Ezekiel) and the Apocalypse of Saint John, in Eastern art these two major themes, that of Parusia and the Last Judgment being combined⁷.

Features of *The Final Judgment Representation in the 16th century Moldavian Painting*

The theme of *Doomsday* has a lot to offer as far as its discussion is concerned, so this is the reason why we will point out the analyze of the most

⁵ Vasile Drăguț, *Dicționar enciclopedic de artă medieval românească* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Medieval Romanian Art], 2nd edition supervised by Tereza Sinigalia, “Vremea” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, pp. 263-264.

⁶ Isidor Todoran, Ioan Zăgrean, *Teologia dogmatică. Manual pentru seminariile teologice /Dogmatic Theology. A textbook for Theological Seminaries*], "Arhidiecezana Cluj" Publishing House, 1997, pp. 346-348.

⁷ Codrina-Laura Ioniță, *Les quatre vivants de l'Apocalypse dans l'imaginaire des cathédrales médiévales*, în *L'imaginaire des catastrophes*, supervisor Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, Ionel Bușe, Symbolon 6/2010, p.110.

representative iconographic and artistic examples of mural pictures from the 16th century, on the territory of our country's Moldavian side. These creations had been made during the time of Petru Rareş, the illegitimate son of voivode Stephan the Great in a period of very tumultuous internal politics – being a bastard prince who “stirred up the enthusiasm of the masses and the hatred of the boyar” – and especially due to the context of the external politics, due in particular to the military glory of the Ottoman Empire, which had reached the point of maximum flourishing⁸. In this political conjuncture, somewhat disadvantageous to the development of the people's culture, the prince Petru Rareş made considerable efforts to consolidate his position at the head of Moldavia, by continuing the approaches taken by his forerunners, painting the already existing churches or building new ones, during his time as well.

The exterior iconography caused numerous issues because of the undeniable originality, this is why a great number of researchers⁹, both from the autochthonous and the foreign territory tried to find the inspiration sources that represented the basis of this extremely unique work of art. Several hypotheses from Iranian origins to Romanic influences, that came from Transylvania, to the ones from Bulgaria, Serbia or even the occidental ones, coming from the North of Italy, likewise the autochthonous ones, linked to the polychrome look of the façade¹⁰. Sorin Ulea said that the model used for exterior painting during the time of Rareş was, according to the Byzantine iconographic tradition, the Athonit prototype¹¹.

A distinctively particular aspect and with a certain importance is the complexity of the iconography of the exterior painting which outlines a great program of ideas. The iconographic program of Moldavian exterior painting, especially the unique, coherent and harmonious one was created by Petru Rareş and his cousin – Metropolitan Grigorie Roşca¹², as highlighted by Sorin Dumitrescu. The churches had been decorated with exterior painting

⁸ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I) [The Origin and Ideological Significance of Exterior Moldavian Painting]*, in *SCIA*, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, pp. 64-66.

⁹ Researchers such as J. Strzygowski, I.D. Ștefănescu, P. Henry, A. Grabar, V. Grecu, Sorin Ulea, Sorin Dumitrescu etc.

¹⁰ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I) [The Origin and Ideological Significance of Exterior Moldavian Painting]*, in *SCIA*, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, pp. 57-61.

¹¹ Sorin Ulea, *Pictura exterioară [Exterior Painting]*, in *Istoria artelor plastice în România [The History of Arts in Romania]*, vol. I, editor Academy Professor George Oprescu, "Meridiane", Bucharest, 1968, p. 370.

¹² Sorin Dumitrescu, *Chivotele lui Petru Rareş și modelul lor ceresc. O investigație artistică a bisericilor – chivotdin nordul Moldovei [The Shrines of Petru Rareş and their Heavenly Model. An Artistic Investigation of the Churches –Shrines from the North of Moldavia]*, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 12.

before the 16th century as well, but what differentiates the décor of these monuments from the rest and what makes it truly unique is the fact that starting from the reign of Petru Rareş, there had been entirely painted both on the inside and on the outside. Other researchers state that there is a rather important issue regarding the initiators of this vast iconographic program (referring more to the painting of *Probota*), seeing the presence of the image of Metropolitan Grigorie Roşca in this program just as a possible hypothesis or as a paternal signature, but, as art historian Tereza Sinigalia underlined, without having authentic pieces of information or some certain documented proof, “we are still in the land of ingeniously made up hypotheses, but with a limited credibility”¹³.

From the fundamental themes of the exterior iconographic program, we can mention: *Doomsday*, *The Ladder of John the Climax*, *The Mother of God's Akathist Hymn*, *The Siege of Constantinople*, *The Tree of Jesse* and *The Prayer of All Saints*. The scene of *The Judgment* is remarkably one of the most important works of art, this being highlighted by the positioning and the impressive dimensions the image has. More often than not, *The Judgment* is on the entire surface of the western façade, the *The Tree of Jesse* being on the southern wall of the church.

The meaning of the presence of *Doomsday* on the exterior walls of the churches during the time of Rareş was firstly a theological, religious education of the masses through images and secondly, it was an important political message that had to mobilize the masses for the anti-Ottoman war¹⁴. *Doomsday*, along with *The Mother of God's Akathist Hymn* and *The Siège of Constantinople* became an invocation: ”Just as Virgin Mary once saved Constantinople from being persecuted by the Persians, so she helps the Moldavians today to achieve a military victory against the Turkish invaders; and for their transgressions may God not forgive their enemies and evil-doers of Moldavia even in death, but may He throw them all into the never-dying fire of Gehenna”¹⁵.

In the scene of *Doomsday*, there are clear references to the punishing of enemies of Christian belief, namely the Jews, the Turkish, the Tartars, the Armenians and Latins, so that the enemies of Moldavia are put on the same level as the enemies of Christ. Taking into consideration the political context which was rather hostile during the time of Petru Rareş, this artistic

¹³ Tereza Sinigalia, *Mănăstirea Probota [Probota Monastery]*, ”Academia Română” Publishing House, Bucharest, 2007, p. 23.

¹⁴ Sorin Ulea, *Originea și semnificația ideologică a picturii exterioare moldovenești (I) [The Origin and Meaning of Exterior Moldavian Painting]*, in SCIA, X, 1, The Publishing House of the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania, 1963, p. 90.

¹⁵ Sorin Ulea, *Pictura exterioară [Exterior Painting]*, in *Istoria artelor plastice în România [The History of Visual Arts in Romania]*, vol. I, editor Acad. Prof. George Oprescu, ”Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1968, p. 371.

intervention might be considered a real act of courage and a kind of revenge for the enemies, them being put in the place of the doomed ones.

The iconography of *Doomsday* is modeled after the same pattern which reoccurs in all images from the territory of Moldavia, the most representative image being the one kept in Voroneț Monastery. In the top part, The Old God is depicted among angels that wrap a roll of Zodiac signs, a sign of the end of the worldly or conventional time and then the entering in eternity. Then the scene *Deisis* is described, Christ on the throne between Saint Mary and Saint John the Baptist, having six seated apostles on each side. On the left-hand side of Christ, from his feet flows a fire river which descends to the inferior part of the image. The third register is dedicated to the throne of Hetimasa (*hè étoimasia tou thronou*), a symbol originating from pagan antiquity – the throne of Jupiter – which in the religious Christian art which gained the meaning of the throne of the Judgment. The throne of Preparation, this Byzantine and post-Byzantine motif inspired from a pre-Christian motif of the sovereign throne was named "divus", representing the king, during his absence, to be venerated by his faithful people¹⁶. The empty throne depicted in *The Judgment* represents a symbol of sovereignty and of Christ's transcendence, making a reference to the promise of the Second Coming of Christ¹⁷. On this throne of Judgment, made similar to an altar, different objects with a major importance in *Doomsday* iconography appear, such as the lamb, the Gospel, the symbols, the instruments of sin, on top of which appears the image of the Holy Spirit in the form of a pigeon¹⁸. The Throne of Hetimasia is placed between Adam and Eve, the first kneeled people and to their right and to their left, two groups are placed, which are made of various characters waiting for their judgment, the righteous ones (prophets, martyrs, bishops) led by Saint Paul, and the sinful ones led by the prophet Moses (Jews, Turks, Tatars, Armenians and Latins). Under the Judgment throne is depicted the Judgment of God: the hand that holds a balance to weigh the deeds of all people – naked and of small proportions, symbolizing the souls -, the archangels and angels fighting the demons to save the souls.

The next registers to the right-hand side of Christ, intuitively, present Heaven, as a medieval citadel, Saint Paul holding the key and leading the righteous inside. In the Heaven put on a white background, appear numerous characters, including Saint Mary guarded by two angels, the crucified thief, the three patriarchs of the Old Testament (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) who hold the souls of the righteous in their arms and Emmanuel Christ.

¹⁶ Stefan Mera, *Hetimasia's Throne*, in *Anastasis. Research in Medieval Culture and Art*, vol.I, nr.1/November, 2014, p. 136.

¹⁷ François Bœspflug, *Dieu et ses images. Une histoire de l' Eternel dans l'art*, Bayard Éditions, 2008, p. 90.

¹⁸ Ene Braniște, *Liturgica generală [General liturgy]*, The Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church Publishing House, Bucharest, 1993, p. 502.

In the center of the inferior part of the *Doomsday* picture, King David can be seen, who wears a crown and a halo, playing the harp to ease the soul out of the body. In the inferior part of the fire river, a frightening beast of Apocalypse can be observed. On the left-hand side of Hetimasia's throne appears Archangel Michael, who announces the moment of Judgement, as well as some of the allegorical characters that represent earth and water, restoring the bodies of the buried, the drowned or the devoured by the animals.

The exterior painting is harmoniously thought, so that near *The Judgment*, other related images are represented, respectively *The Ladder of John Climax* and *The Customs of the Sky*.

Churches have begun to be decorated with exterior paintings during the time of Petru Rareş, starting from 1530. Regarding the chronology of painting, we can mention the opinions of two leading art historians: on the one hand, Tereza Sinigalia who prefers a more prudent approach (Arbore, Bălineşti, Probota, Humor, Moldoviţa and Voronet), on the other hand, Sorin Ulea has a different opinion on the topic (*St. Gheorghe* – Hârlău, Probota, *St. Gheorghe* – Suceava, Humor, Baia, Moldoviţa, Bălineşti, *St. Dumitru* – Suceava, Coşula, Arbore and Voronet). Out of all these representative for the Moldavian medieval art monuments, we will only choose a few examples in which the scene of *The Judgment* holds a special place in the exterior iconography of the building.

One of the most interesting churches, both architectural and pictorial speaking, is the Arbore church, which, unlike most externally decorated churches, it presents an unusual iconographic program. Referring especially to the scene of *The Judgment*, we can highlight the fact that this does not appear on the Western façade, but on the Southern one, near the apse of the alter, which is decorated with *The Great Prayer of All Saints*. Another unique trait of this particular *Doomsday* representation is the lower register, where we encounter a complex *Deisis* – "The Queen stand to Your right", in which, besides Christ, The Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist, appear Angels, Martyrs and *Saint John the New* from Suceava¹⁹. This register of saints provides the observer with a certain continuity from the apse of the altar, with the *The Great Prayer of All Saints*, then passing under *The Last Judgment* and stopping near the church's entrance portal.

¹⁹ Tereza Sinigalia, Oliviu Boldura, *Monumente medievale din Bucovina [Medieval Monuments from Bukowina]*, ACS Publishing House, 2010, p. 106.



Fig. 4. *The last Judgment*, southern wall, Arbore Church. Detail.

Around the entrance portal, on the western façade of the church from Pătrăuți (Suceava), we can find the monumental scene of *Doomsday*, discovered between 1988 and 1989, when the plaster was pickled and the exterior painting was recovered²⁰. Unlike the scene of *The Judgement* from Voronet, which is very well preserved to this day, in Pătrăuți, a particularly important fragment is missing from the external mural. This was due to the fact that the church existed for approximately 150 years without having a roof, the infiltrations affecting the upper part of the painting²¹.

²⁰ Gabriel Herea, *Mesajul eshatologic al spațiului liturgic creștin [The Eschatological Message of the Christian Liturgical Space]*, Karl A. Romstorfer Publishing House, Suceava, 2013, p. 209.

²¹ Gabriel Herea, *Pelerinaj în spațiul sacru bucovinean [A Pilgrimage in the Sacred Space of Bukowina]*, Patmos Publishing House, Cluj Napoca, 2010, p. 142.



Fig.5. *The last Judgment*, western wall, Church *Holy Cross*, Pătrăuți.

In the upper part of the entrance portal, the throne of Hetimasia above the sculpted inscription, framed by Adam and Eve, has been well-preserved. Under the inscription, on the left side of the throne, the souls that will be judged, the fight held among angels and demons, the fire river, the allegoric characters and the animals which restore the bodies of the dead, appear. On the right side of the throne, Heaven is depicted, highlighted on a white background and the group of the righteous. This fragment of the scene of *Doomsday* is more deteriorated than the one on the left side of the throne of Hetimasia.

In Probot Monastery, *Doomsday* takes up a particularly extensive area of the iconography of the porch, namely the whole vault, the upper side of the northern and southern walls and the entire eastern wall. On the vault, the Sky with The Old God of Days are depicted and the angels who close the scroll of time, on which the zodiac signs are represented.

On the consoles of the vault appear cherubs and seraphs, followed by the Eastern, Southern and Northern lunettes of the Heavenly Army. The second level is marked by *Deisis*, the figure of Christ framed by The Mother of God, St. John the Baptist and the twelve Apostles. Then the throne of Hetimasia is depicted with the pigeon – symbol of the Holy Spirit -, the book and the tools of sin (the cross, the crown of thorns, the spear, the reed, the sponge and the nails used for the crucifixion of Christ). The Throne of Preparation is flanked by the first two people: Adam and Eve. On Christ's right side appear the

Righteous who are led by St. Peter to Heaven and on Christ's left side are represented the fire river and the Leviathan, which is for the sinful (the Jews, the Turkish, the Tatars, the Armenians, the Saracens and the Moors) and *The Resurrection of the Dead*²². The motivation behind this image, in which different exponents of various nations that were considered pagan or heretic back then, appear, refers to the tumultuous history of Moldavia, a rather small country, under the threat of the great powers that existed around its territory. Under these conditions, the picture had a significant antipagan political propaganda goal as well as the defense of the Christian belief one, these scenes referring to other exceptional artistic representations during the time of Stephan the Great, similar to the situation of the *Cavalcade of the military saints*.

Out of all monuments decorated with paintings, we find in the 16th century, in Probotă, the most impressive and complex scene of *Doomsday*, which is depicted as a reminder for the faithful that they have to acknowledge their sins and be prepared for the divine judgment, just as the Righteous are²³.



Fig. 6. *The last Judgment*, Exonartex vault, Probotă Monastery.

Similar to Probotă Monastery, in Humor Monastery, *Doomsday* can be found painted on the porch, the Eastern wall being entirely covered in this

²² Tereza Sinigalia, in *The Restauration of Probotă Monastery 1996-2001*, publishing coordinators: Alfeo Tonellotto and Ignazio Valente, United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 2001, p. 374.

²³ *Ibidem*.

scene²⁴. In the upper part of the scene, Christ is represented flanked by Saint Mary, Saint John the Baptist and the twelve Apostles. The register under Christ is marked by the Throne of Hetimasia, by Adam and Eve and by the Righteous and the sinners. In the lower register, on Christ's right side are the Righteous led to Heaven, this part being slightly erased. From the Savior's feet flows the river of fire and on His left side are the sinners led to the Judgment by Moses. The tension of this scene is also accentuated by the angel that announces the moment of Judgment and the Resurrection of the Dead.



Fig. 7. *The last Judgment*, Exonartex of Humor Monastery.

In Voroneț Monastery, the scene of *Doomsday* takes up the whole western façade's surface, being one of the most representative, complex and well preserved image from the mural ensemble. This work of art captures the unique iconographic features mentioned before, presenting the Byzantine influences, correlated especially to the complexity of the image, to the succession of the registers and to the presence of the Hetimasia's Throne. In addition to these aspects, the portraits and vestiges of the characters representing the people called to the Judgement, in particular the Turkish, The Tatars, The Armenians and the Latins are of a great realism, reminding us about the attention payed to the details in the Western art. Besides some influences coming from other regions, we can also mention a few local particularities, such as "the tools and skills, in *Genesis*; the specific

²⁴ Vasile Drăguț, *Humor*, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1973, p. 24.

Moldavian dance and the dancers' costumes, from the parable, the insertion of some beliefs and local burial customs, in *"The Customs of the Sky"*²⁵, the image of King David, who instead of a harp, he plays a kobsa, as well as the three patriarchs' traditional wipes, in which the souls of the saved ones are held in the scene of *The Last Judgement*.



Fig.8. *The last Judgment*, western wall, Voroneț Monastery.

Conclusions

Concluding, we can mention the fact that this study's subject is extremely vast and it cannot be exhausted in one article, so we intend to continue this approach. Choosing from a multitude of well-known works of art, which had as their starting point the theme of *Judgment*, the ones chosen from the time of Petru Rareș were motivated by the outstanding artistic value of the works, as well as their truly original and unique character, which exemplarily contribute to the extensive imagistical patrimony of the autochthonous and universal medieval period. The exterior iconographic program, existent on the Moldavian territory during the time of Petru Rareș and Metropolitan Grigorie Roșca, impresses through coherence, complexity and courage. They had dedicated their entire exterior mural décor to the defense of the nation, having a punitive role for the enemies of Moldavia and

²⁵ Ion I. Solcanu, Autorii ansamblului pictural de la Voronet, Ed Academiei Rep. Socialiste România, Iași, 1984, p. 378.

a motivational role for the Moldavian people, who struggled with the anti-Ottoman fights.

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- Fig. 2. Giotto - *The Last Judgment* (1306), Scrovegni Chapel
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