



The Department of Medieval Studies of Central European University cordially invites you to the public lecture of the Faculty Research Seminar



Béla Zsolt Szakács

Central European University

Dating the Undatable: Village Churches and Their Mural Paintings in Northeastern Hungary

17:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 23, 2013
CEU—Faculty Tower #409
Budapest, V. Nádor u. 9.

The region of northeastern Hungary and its neighbouring territory in Ukraine, usually called Transcarpathia, is more famous for its poverty than rich its artistic heritage. The discovery of this territory was hindered by its frequently changing but never easy-to-cross borders. In 2012 a research project was launched in order to reveal and present its unknown artistic treasures to the scholarly world as well as to a larger public. During the field work, a number of lesser-known churches were documented; however, their simple architectural forms rarely serve as a solid basis for dating. Other churches with more spectacular details point to different periods, suggesting that Romanesque and Gothic features were used at the same time. This resulted in enormous discrepancies in dating, oscillating between the early thirteenth century and 1400. Their fresco decoration, the product of a local school, is a good starting point for interpreting them. While their style helps less in dating, an iconographical analysis offers starting points. Thus, it seems that the stylistically quite heterogeneous building activity was concentrated in a short period around 1300. The lecture will pose the question of how a crisis situation, as it was at the turn of the



Laskod, fresco of the north wall

thirteenth century, resulted in an unexpectedly rich artistic flowering.

Béla Zsolt Szakács has been active at the CEU Department of Medieval Studies since 1993. Being an art historian, initially he contributed to the Visual Resources research project and gradually became involved in teaching. Additionally, he teaches Pázmány Péter Catholic University, where he is presently the head of the Department of Art History. One of his major research interests is medieval iconography, exemplified in the publication of his doctoral dissertation on the hagiographical cycles of the Hungarian Angevin Legendary in 2006. Besides this, he is interested in Romanesque architecture in Central Europe. He has been invited to the international research projects: *Transferts techniques et technologiques dans l'Europe gothique* (INHA, Paris) and *The Route of Medieval Churches in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County and Ukraina (Transcarpathia)*.