

Elena Firea

Visual Strategies in Promoting New Saints in 16th-Century Moldavia

The current paper explores the visual strategies employed in mid-16th century Moldavia for promoting the cult of local saints. The analysis focuses on one case study, namely the external frescoes of the katholikon at Voroneț monastery. Depicted in 1547, at the commission of metropolitan Grigorie Roșca, the theme selection of the southern façade differs from other contemporary Moldavian churches by displaying the iconographic representations of two local saints: St John the New and St Daniel the Hermit. While the first benefits from an extensive narrative hagiographical cycle, culminating with the scene of the *Arrival of his relics to Suceava*, the latter was portrayed as a saint together with the ktetorial effigy of the metropolitan, on the most visible location for the worshipers entering the church. Since there is no evidence for the veneration of Daniel the Hermit as a saint before 1547, the main argument of this paper is that his depiction in the frescoes of Voroneț was skillfully orchestrated in visual terms to publicly proclaim his sanctity and to inaugurate his official veneration in Moldavia.