Reformations of Medieval Art
New Research on the Church of St. James in Levoča (Slovakia)*

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Abstract
This article seeks new perspectives on one of Central Europe's most important ensembles of late medieval art and architecture – the parish church of St. James in Levoča, where research on the furnishings as a system in sacred space has been hindered by the sparsity of written sources. By expanding the scope of enquiry to take in some unstudied sources from the Reformation period, it shows how a medieval topography and furnishings were retained and developed by a Lutheran congregation that proved unusually tolerant of traditional practices.

Keywords: Middle Ages, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, art and architecture, visual media, sacred topography, tombstones, altarpieces, Spiš, Levoča, Thurzo

One of Central Europe's largest collections of late medieval art in a sacred context is found in the parish church of St. James in Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau), a town in the Spiš region of Slovakia that was part of the historical kingdom of Hungary (Figs. 1-3). The church is noteworthy as an example of fourteenth-century architecture, but its exceptional status derives from its furnishings, which include extensive mural paintings and numerous winged altarpieces, along with a towering tabernacle, several groups of monumental sculpture, and many smaller works.[1] While the church's value as a source on artists and their workshops is well established, its potential for the study of artistic ensembles in sacred space remains uncertain: the sparsity of written sources before the mid-sixteenth century has made it difficult to ascertain how far the furnishings formed part of a medieval system – rather than being an assortment of objects that were either rearranged or brought into the church in later periods.

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[1] On the church with further literature: CHALUPECKÝ, I.: Kostol sv. Jakuba: stavebno-historický vývin. In: CHALUPECKÝ, I. – MUK, J.: *Levoča, Kostel sv. Jakuba: stavebně-historický průzkum* (unpubl. typescript, Pamiatkový úrad Levoča). Praha 1988; CHALUPECKÝ, I.: *Kostol sv. Jakuba v Levoči*. Martin 1991; BURAN, D.: *Studien zur Wandmalerei um 1400 in der Slowakei. Die Pfarrkirche St. Jakob in Leutschau und die Pfarrkirche St. Franziskus Seraphicus in Poniky*. Weimar 2002; *Gotika. Dejiny slovenského výtvarného umenia*. Ed.: BURAN, D. Bratislava 2003; *Renesancia. Dejiny slovenského výtvarného umenia*. Ed.: RUSINA, I. Bratislava 2009; *Národné kultúrne pamiatky na Slovensku: Levoča*. Ed.: KOSOVÁ, K. Bratislava 2016.

Fig. 1. View of the choir and sanctuary from the west. Photo: Archív Pamiatkového úradu SR, ORA Levoča (Archive of the Slovak Monuments Office).

Fig. 2. View into the sanctuary from the south. Photo: Collection of the author.

My purpose here is to address this problem through some unstudied sources from the Reformation period, when the church was used by a Lutheran congregation that proved highly tolerant of medieval furnishings (ca. 1544–1674, 1682–87).[2] The altarpieces, for instance, were at first kept shut, but remained in place and later started to be used again: a chronicle records how, in 1650, the town pastor resumed the medieval practice of opening them on important feastdays;[3] receipt books from the late 1660s and early 1670s show that this remained the case shortly before the Counter-Reformation.[4] This degree of continuity

[2] On the Reformation period in Levoča and the wider region with further literature, see: SUCHÝ, M.: *Dejiny Levoče 1*. Košice 1974; *Die Reformation und ihre Wirkungsgeschichte in der Slowakei. Kirchen- und konfessionsgeschichtliche Beiträge*. Eds.: SCHWARZ, K. – ŠVORC, P. Wien 1996; DANIEL, D.: Lutheranism in the Kingdom of Hungary. In: *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture*, 1550–1675. Ed.: KOLB, R. Leiden 2008, pp. 455–507; *Historia Scepusii II: Dejiny Spiša od roku 1526 do roku 1918*. Eds.: HOMZA, M. – SROKA, S. Bratislava – Kraków 2016; SEBŐK, M.: *A Humanist on the Frontier: The Life Story of a Sixteenth-Century Central European Pastor*. Abingdon 2022.

[3] See the chronicle of Gabriel Golnich (mid-seventeenth century): Spišský archív (Spiš Archive), Levoča (further SAL), kr. 6, inv. c. 50, published in *Die Chroniken der frühen Neuzeit aus der Zips*. Eds.: PIIRAINEN, I. T. – POLÁKOVÁ, S. Levoča 2013, here p. 124: *Ao 1650 war Doctor Schlegel Pfahr, und man hat zu seiner Zeit die altar aufgemacht, auf den hohen Festtagen es sind viel alte Leut gewesen, die das hohe altar nicht haben gesehen. An jtzo siehet es jung u alt.*

[4] Farský archív ev. a. v. cirkvi Levoča (Archive of the Evangelical Church, further FAECL), X.A/1. The annual receipt books of the "church father" (*Kirchenvater*), the member of the town council responsible for the church, are only preserved (near-) continually from the mid-1660s onwards. See the entries in 1667 (27.12), 1669 (9.6 and 28.12), and 1671 (unspecified date in December), which document bi-annual payments to the *campanator* (or *Glöckner*, an official responsible for the bells and furnishings, among other things) for "opening the altars" (*vor die altar aufzumachen*).

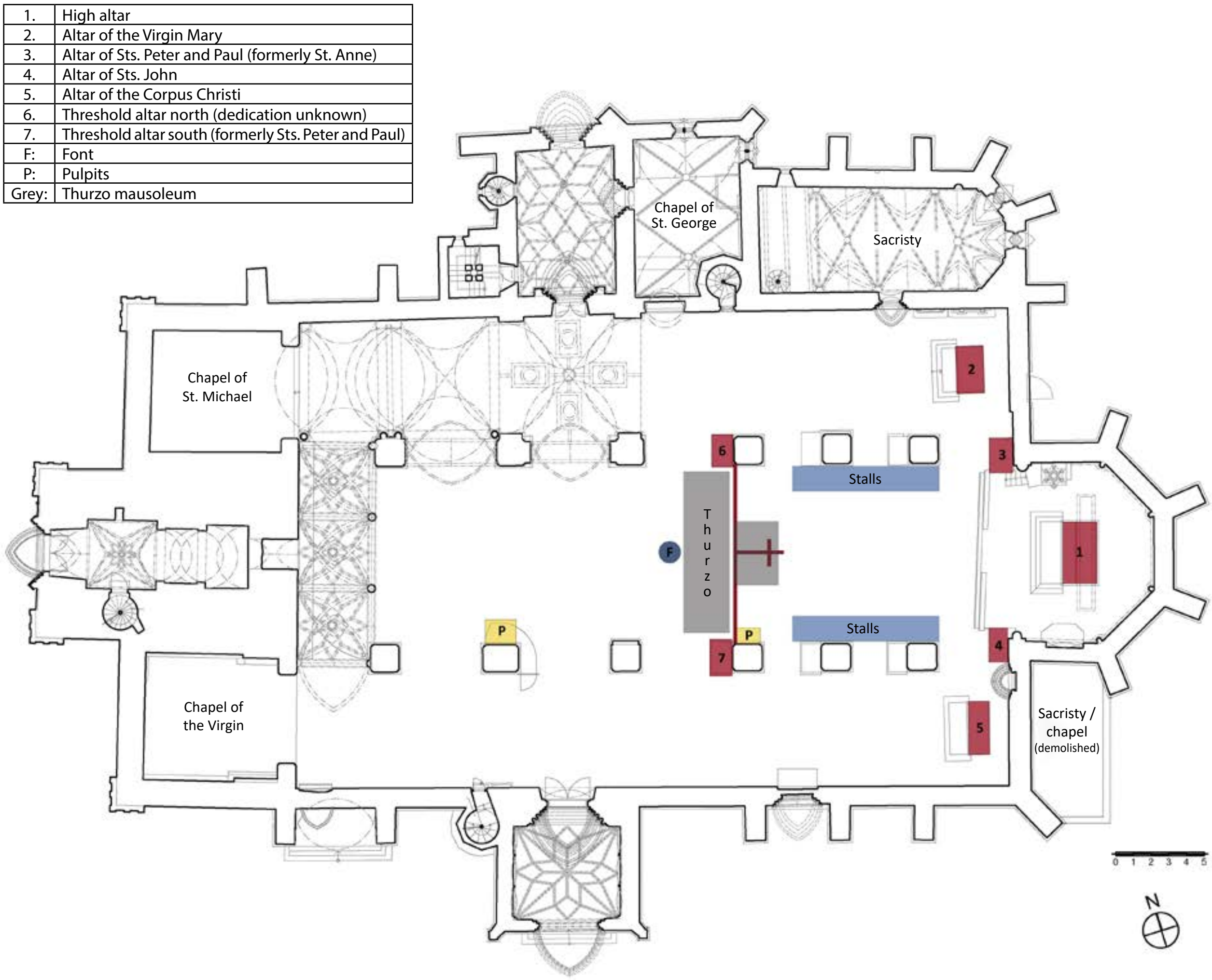

Fig. 3. Groundplan of the present-day church with proposed position of altars and furnishings. Photo: Magdaléna Janovská, adapted by the author.

is rare in reformed churches, where theatrics involving large casts of heavily gilded saints were generally avoided. The case of Levoča therefore has potential for the study of not only medieval ensembles, but also the visual cultures of protestantism.

The sources cast light on different aspects of the church's interior. A seventeenth-century groundplan maps out the site's topography and particularly its tombs. A series of seating registers (1621-83) shows how the congregation's stalls were fitted into the site and its tombscape. A series of receipt books (1660s onwards) shows how the church was used and maintained on an everyday basis. Further sources, such as chronicles, add detail and colour.

1. Patterns of burial

I begin with the groundplan, which is the earliest known representation of St. James' and a rare example of its type (Figs. 4-5).[5] The plan is fairly large – on a sheet of paper measuring ca. 77 x 62 cm – and is drawn to a scale of ca. 1:70-1:80. There are inconsistencies, but it is clear that care has been taken: many measurements are recorded and pick up on irregularities in the church's design, such as the different lengths of the bays of the main arcade, each of which is noted between the

5 FAECL, V.D/2 (Karten, Pläne, Bilder III), folder I, 1.3.3.

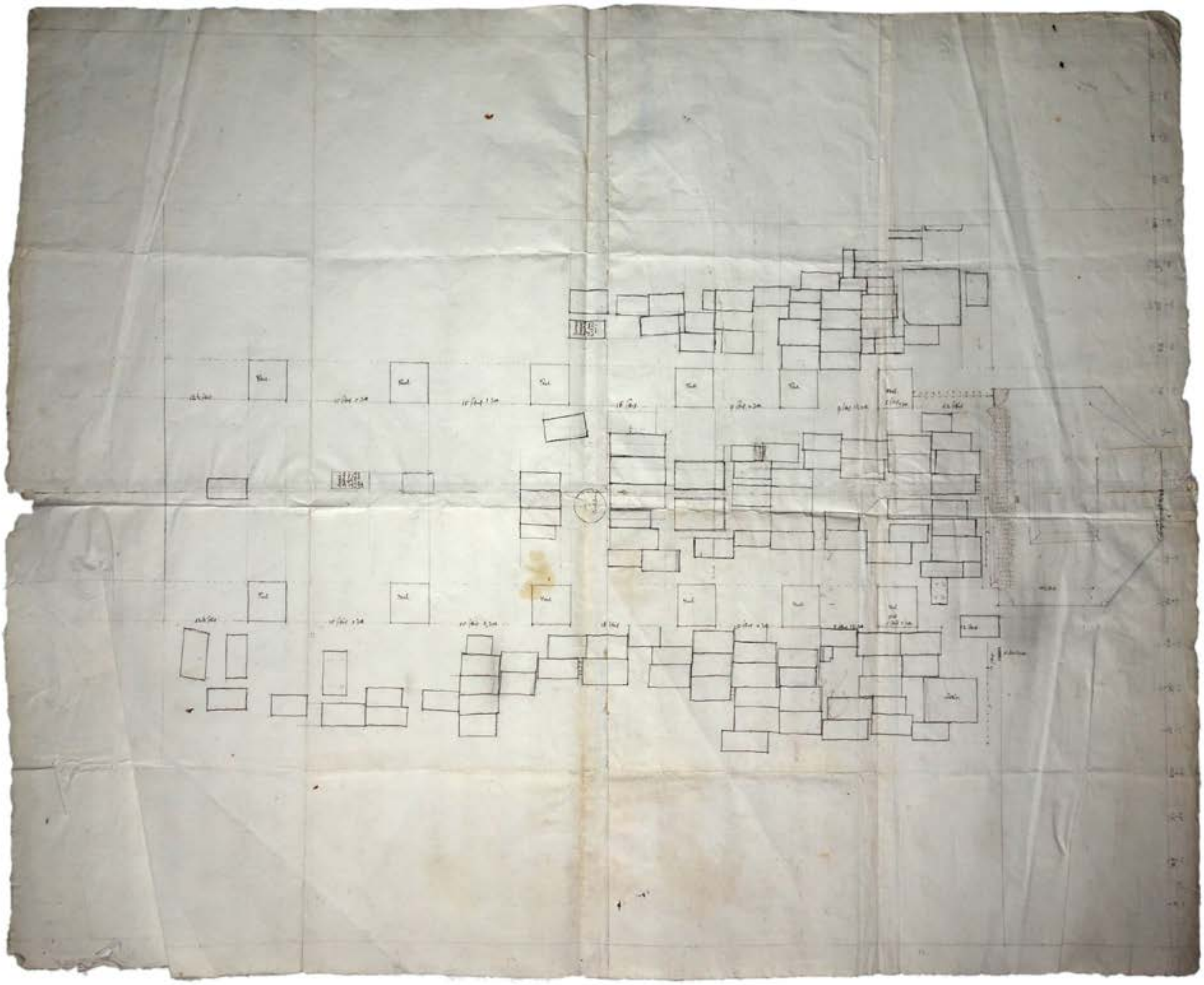

Fig. 4. Groundplan of the church from ca. 1660-70 (ink on paper, ca. 77 x 62 cm). Photo: FAECL, V.D/2 (Karten, Pläne, Bilder III), folder I, 1.3.3.

piers in feet (*Schuh*) and inches (*Zoll*). Many interior features are included, such as the three main altars in the east of the church, the font at its centre, and, most notably, the tombstones in its floor. In the case of three tombstones, the occupant is noted in the same hand and, in two cases, the date of death is known from other sources: Caspar Cramer (d. 1644; Fig. 5/C) and Jeremias Amman (d. 1659; Fig. 5/A).[6] This helps date the groundplan to the period after 1659.

What were the origins and purpose of the plan? Its survival in the Evangelical Archive implies that it was made when the church was under the control of the Lutheran congregation – either before the return

[6] Chronicle of Caspar Hain (d. 1687): formerly FAECL, now lost. I will refer to the most comprehensive edition: HAIN, C.: *Zipserische oder Leütschaverische Chronica.* In: *Hain Gáspár Lőcsei krónikája.* Eds.: BAL, J. – FÖRSTER, J. – KAUFF-MANN, A. Levoča 1910–13, here pp. 202, 281. On Caspar Cramer/Kramer, see KATONA, T.: *Caritas und Memoria: Eine Leutschauer Stiftung im Dienste der Bildungsförderung in der Zips des 16. Jahrhunderts.* Munich 2011, pp. 46–47; on Amman and his surviving epitaph, see LUDIKOVÁ, Z. – MIKÓ, Á. – PÁLFFY, G.: A lőcsei Szent Jakab-templom reneszánsz és barokk síremlékei, epitáfiumai és halotti címerei (1530–1700). In: *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, vol. 55, 2006, pp. 388–389.

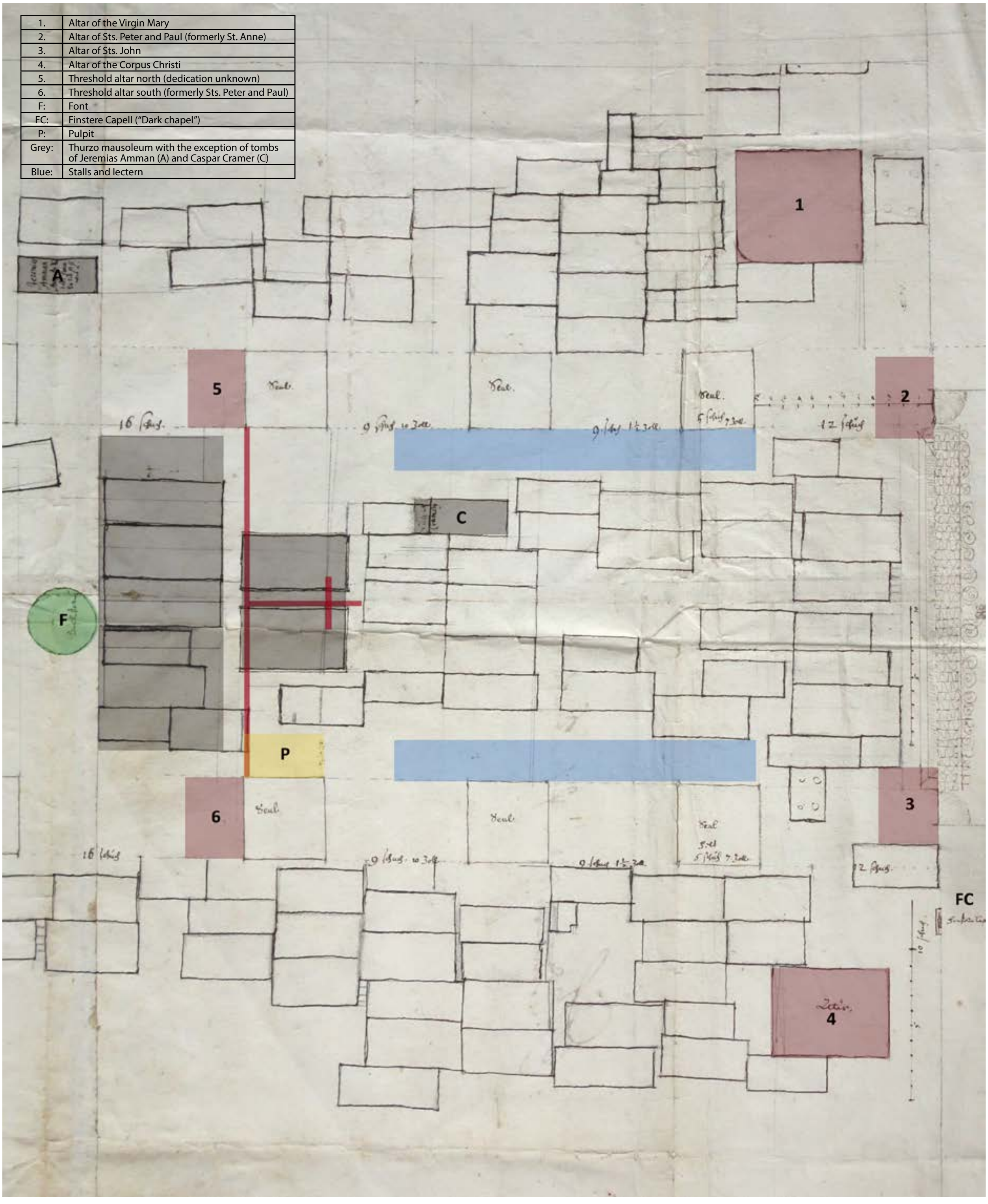

Fig. 5. Groundplan of the church from ca. 1660-70 (excerpt of Fig. 4) with furnishings. Photo: FAECL, V.D/2 (Karten, Pläne, Bilder III), folder I, 1.3.3.

of the church to Catholic hands in 1674 or during the years when it was back under exclusive Protestant control for the last time in 1682–87.[7] The plan has no title or key, but it focuses on tombs – a rarity among surviving church plans from this period. It is an ambitious project, aspiring to a comprehensive survey of the site's tombscape, including around 130 tombstones and attempting to record their dimensions, positions, and relations to each other. The inclusion of other topographical features appears secondary to this purpose: these features – the rail before the sanctuary, the altars of the side-aisles, the font – were fixed points around which the tombscape unfolded (Figs. 4-5). The reason for commissioning such a plan was surely to regulate the church's network of commemoration. This was a sensitive matter for both the authorities and private individuals: for the church, the granting of internal burials was a source of income; for individuals, it was an expensive privilege that needed a legal basis. These mechanisms are evident in the church's receipt books from the same period, which record burials in the church and the payments or legacies involved.[8]

The project corresponds to simultaneous attempts to regulate the church's seating, which is documented by a second source from the Evangelical Archive – the so-called "seating order" (*Sitzordnung*), a series of registers that recorded which families had acquired the rights to sit where.[9] By the 1660s it included well over 1000 seats within blocks of stalls that are localized with short topographical descriptions. While the first two registers in the book (1621 and 1654) predate the plan, the next revision was completed in 1666, seven years after the latest of the burials mentioned above (Jeremias Amman, 1659). This strengthens the argument for dating the groundplan to the 1660s, although a later dating in the short period of the Protestants' return to the church (1682–87) remains possible.[10] In any case, these two sources appear to have been part of a broader regulatory campaign that sought to document the rights of both the living and the dead members of the congregation.

There are signs that the plan was not completed: the side-walls (particularly on the south side) and the west end are only schematically defined by dashed pencil lines; some of the tombs and other details are also left in pencil; ancillary spaces are omitted. In this and in other ways, the plan has a provisional character: it shows the use of auxiliary lines to provide a pencil grid into which the tombstones were added. Errors and corrections – most notably, the inconsistencies in the scales – all point in same direction. The plan therefore was probably intended as a basis for a definitive version that was either never executed or has since been lost.[11]

What does the plan tell us? Primarily, it is a source of information on the politics of burial. It shows that, in the eastern parts of the church, the floor in many places was covered completely by tombstones. The central aisle shows a concentration of tombs on the threshold to the sanctuary, but also towards the middle of the church close to the font. The side-aisles show dense clusters around and immediately west of the main altars at the end of the aisles. Further west in the side-aisles, the numbers decline:

7 The note on the rear side of the sheet – stating that this was simply a "groundplan of the parish church" (*Gründriß der Pfarrkirchen*) – also implies that the plan was executed before there were separate parish churches for the two confessions, since it fails to distinguish between the old parish church and the new wooden church for the Protestants (built 1687–88). Other sources make this distinction: plans for the new church referred to the *Ewangelische Leütschawerische Vorstadts=Kirchen* or similar; receipt books from the same time referred to St. James as the "big church" (*in der großen Kirchen*). For the plans, see FAECL, V.D/2 (Karten, Pläne, Bilder III), folder I, 1.3.1; for the receipt book, see for example the entries for January 1687 (FAECL, X.A/1).

8 FAECL, X.A/1: the acquisition of an internal burial plot was relatively rare – for examples, see the accounts of funeral costs in the receipt books of 1655, 1675, and 1684–86, which mention 1-3 burials yearly.

9 FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621–1769). The book includes four seventeenth-century registers (1621, 1654, 1666, 1683).

10 These years saw changes to the church's interior and the commission of another seating register, the congregation's last in St James' (1683). On the changes to the seating, see also the receipt books of 1682-83 (FAECL, X.A/1).

11 Such a definitive plan of burials is preserved for the Lutherans' new wooden church, constructed outside the town walls in 1687–88 and rebuilt in 1713 (demolished 1838); see FAECL, V.D/2 (Karten, Pläne, Bilder III), folder I, 1.3.4.

Fig. 6/a-d: Tombstones of the Thurzo family: Johann II (d. 1508, tombstone c. 1558), Johann V (d. 1558), Christoph III (d. 1614), Stanislaus III (d. 1625). Photo: Collection of the author.

in the south aisle, there are scattered examples up to the west end; in the north aisle, there are none marked in the three western bays.

No less relevant than the areas *with* tombs are the areas *without*, since these can be related to the presence of other objects. The seating registers offer complementary evidence, showing that the voids in the groundplan were often venues for stalls. The western parts of the church, where there were few burials, contained most of the fixed seating – particularly in the central and north aisle. There are also correlations in the eastern side-aisles: both aisles, for instance, show gaps in the tombscape along their outer walls, where blocks of stalls are listed in the registers as being "on the wall".[12] In these parts of the church, the tombs appear to have been the fixtures around which the stalls had to find a place. In the western parts of the church, at least in the Reformation period, the relationship may have been reversed and the burials limited by the presence of stalls: the three centrally placed tombstones in the western nave, for instance, seem to have been laid between the two large blocks of female stalls described in the registers.

These complementary sources suggest that patterns from the medieval tombscape were retained and extended in the Reformation period. The burial of leading clerics before the high altar is documented both before and after the Reformation (1513, 1660, 1664) – a practice that can be connected to the cluster of tombs immediately before the sanctuary.[13] High-status lay burials are documented in central positions to the west of the clerics, contributing to the next rows of tombstones on the groundplan.[14]

[12] FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621–1769); see the register of 1654, which includes female stalls *An der Wand beim klain Thürle* (nos. 70-73), and male stalls *Hinter der grossen Thür… an der Wand* (unnumbered).

[13] These involved the following priests: Jakobi (1513), Christoph Boehm (1660), Hiob/Job Zabler (1664); HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), pp. 15, 282, 305.

[14] This included the royal governor based at the nearby castle of Spišský hrad, Christoph Perner (d. 1530; see below, note 31) and patricians such as Barbara Halbschuch (d. 1532) and the town mayor Caspar Cramer (d. 1644; see note 6). Two burials documented close to the Thurzo mausoleum (*juxta Thurzonum monumentum*) may also have been in this area: Erasmus Vindeck (d. 1556) and Gregor Pantscher (d. before 1556); see FAECL, V/A/2, fol. 199r (Spervogel chronicle); HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 104; LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), p. 347.

Tombs around side-altars, finally, are characteristic of medieval tombscapes, but continued in St James into the seventeenth century – particularly in proximity to the two main altars at the end of the side-aisles, where burials are documented and wealthy families installed epitaphs and crypts.[15]

The plan also documents change. The most notable post-medieval development was the installation of a group of tomb monuments for the Thurzos – a patrician family whose entrepreneurial successes made them into one of the most powerful dynasties in Central Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[16] The existence of a family mausoleum in St. James is documented by 1519[17], but the most ambitious monuments – a series of large figural epitaphs, tombstones, and elevated tomb chests – date from the mid-century onwards, when the foundation of Alexis Thurzo (1542) secured the family's right to perpetual burial in the church (Fig. 6).[18]

The plan helps to locate the position of the tomb monuments, which were dismantled in 1752–54.[19] It has often been assumed that they stood before the high altar, even though early modern sources described their position as "in the middle of the parish church", which suggests a position further west.[20] The plan confirms this suspicion. It shows a cluster of large tombs immediately east of the font (Figs. 4-5). In the case of the pair that are marked with double-lines and are free-standing (rather than placed directly against the neighbouring stones), an identification is possible. They can be connected to the last and most elaborate of the Thurzo monuments, those of Christoph III (d. 1614) and Stanislaus (d. 1625), both of which were raised chest tombs that were decorated on all sides and, at least in the latter case, surrounded by railings (Fig. 6/c-d).[21] The seating orders point in the same direction. As well as locating the mausoleum between the font and the choir, they show that Christoph and Stanislaus had the easternmost tombs.[22] Arranging the congregation around them was a challenge: several stalls were placed alongside and even between the monu-

[15] Two burials next to the altar of the Virgin are documented in the late sixteenth century: Joachim Leibitzer (d. 1588) and the Duke of Hollstein (d. 1596). See Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Budapest (Hungarian National Archive, further MNLB), Ms P1890/7, p. 89 (Leibitzer chronicle, 1566–1623); HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), pp. 128–29, 284; LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), 356–357; on the position of Virgin's altar, see below, section 3. The crypt in the south aisle pertained to the mausoleum of the Lang family and was probably founded by Christoph Lang (d. 1618); see HAIN 1910–13, p. 406; LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006, pp. 369–371. The crypt in the north aisle is sited below two epitaphs from the same period (Gregor Triebel, d. 1593; Anthon Roll, d. 1612; see LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006, pp. 355–56, 364–65); this was probably the Roll crypt referred to in the visitation of 1752 (Prímási Levéltár Esztergom (Primatial Archive, further PLE), visitations, lib. 31, p. 6). For the location of the crypts, see the geo-radar survey of the church: Pamiatkový úrad Levoča (Monuments Office, further PUL), unpublished report by Miroslav Terray, 13. 12. 2009.

[16] On the Thurzo family with further literature: KATONA 2011 (see in note 6); LACKO, M. – MAYEROVÁ, E.: *Der Thurzo-Kodex – eine einzigartige Quelle zum europäischen Bergrecht und Münzwesen um 1500*. Innsbruck 2022.

[17] FAECL, V/A/2, fol. 30r (Spervogel chronicle); cf. HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), pp. 18–19.

[18] The most important surviving monuments pertain to Johann II Thurzo (d. 1508, tombstone c. 1558), Alexius I Thurzo (d. 1543), Johann V Thurzo (d. 1558), Alexius II Thurzo (d. 1594), Christoph III Thurzo (d. 1614), Stanislaus III Thurzo (d. 1625). On the mausoleum and its objects: LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6); RUSINA (ed.) 2009 (see in note 1), pp. 773, 776–77 (Zuzana Ludiková). On the foundation of Alexius I Thurzo: KATONA 2011 (see in note 6). The connection between the foundation and the burial right is mentioned in the chronicle of Caspar Hain (HAIN 1910–13, see in note 6, pp. 192–93).

[19] PLE, visitations, lib. 31, p. 12; HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 176; DEMKÓ, K.: *Lőcse története I. Jog-, mű-, és művelődéstörténeti rész*. Levoča 1897, p. 223; LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), p. 333.

[20] See, for instance, HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 176: *in der mitten der Pfarr Kirche in Gattern eingefaszt*. Cf. CHALUPECKÝ 1991 (see in note 1), p. 14; LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), p. 347; RUSINA (ed.) 2009 (see in note 1), pp. 773, 776–77 (Zuzana Ludiková).

[21] LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), pp. 365–69, 373–79. Railings are mentioned in the receipts for Stanislaus' tomb. The Hain chronicle implies that there were other railings; see Hain 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 176.

[22] FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621–1769). The registers of 1654, 1666, and 1683 list a group of male stalls moving from west to east, with the Thurzo monuments located between the font and the choir. The register of 1683 implies that the tombs of Christoph and Stanislaus were the last and lay immediately before the choir.

ments.[23] All this fits with a geo-radar survey of the church's floor, which identified several subterranean crypts in the same part of the central aisle.[24]

The Thurzo mausoleum became a defining feature of the interior. The use of the chest format and surrounding rails increased its spatial agency, while the ensemble's eye-catching character was enhanced by rich materials and the hanging of further commemorative devices – flags, memorial shields, ceremonial armour and weapons.[25] The presence of the medieval bronze font, moreover, ensured that the zone was also a focal point of the church's ritual life. For the local chronicler Caspar Hain (d. 1687) or the visiting writer Georg Bohus (d. 1722), the mausoleum was one of the artistic highlights of the church and town – "a true adornment" (*eine wahre zierde*).[26] For the clerics of the Counter-Reformation, the arrangement was an impediment: some of the hanging elements were taken down in 1678 soon after the church was returned to the Catholics, while early visitations (1712, 1731, 1752) requested the removal of the tombs.[27] In 1752-54, they were moved into a separate baptistery chapel (formerly the Chapel of the Virgin; Fig. 3) together with the font, their former companion in the middle of the church.[28]

2. The choir and its threshold

The Thurzo mausoleum in its definitive form was a phenomenon of the Reformation period, as probably was the central placement of the font. The same zone, however, had assumed a pivotal role well before this – in its capacity as the threshold between the nave and the choir. Here I am referring not to the architectural components as they are known in modern terminology, which would tend to define the church's polygonal termination as the choir and the three-aisle hall as the nave, but rather to the spaces that were used in practice by the clergy and choristers on the one hand, and by the laity on the other. Particularly after the high altar had been furnished with its enormous winged altarpiece in the early sixteenth century, the polygonal space was too small to serve as a choir in the liturgical sense: it was an altar space, a sanctuary. The liturgical choir must therefore have extended into the central aisle of the hall and – if it was of similar dimensions to the choirs of other comparable churches – would have reached the third set of piers, where the large pair of Thurzo tombs stood.[29]

The groundplan provides supporting evidence. In the second and third bays of the central aisle, it shows a gap in the tombscape that runs along the arcade piers symmetrically on both sides (Fig. 5, marked blue). This can be explained as the footprint left by a pair of transverse stalls, which was a standard furnishing of choirs in the period. That these stalls were used by the clergy is confirmed by the location of Caspar Cramer's tomb on the plan, which is documented in another source as lying "next to the clergy's stall" (*neben Herrn Geistlichen gestühle*; Fig. 5/C).[30] Typically the clergy and choristers were directed from a lectern between the stalls, a furnishing that is documented *in choro medio* in St. James' as

[23] FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621–1769), register of 1683, male stalls (nos. 14-22).

[24] PUL, unpublished report by Miroslav Terray, 13. 12. 2009.

[25] Commemorative shields or funerary hatchments *(Totenschilder)* for Christoph and Stanislaus are still preserved; see LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), pp. 368–69, 377–79. The Hain chronicle refers to the family's flags, as well as to spurs and maces from the tombs of Christoph and Stanislaus; see Hain 1910–13 (see in note 6), pp. 196, 200, 458.

[26] The quote is from a later addition to the Hain chronicle (1761); see HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), pp. 5, 176; BOHUS, G.: *Historisch-Geographische Beschreibung des in Oberungarn berühmtesten Zipser Landes*, (ed. and transl. by Johann Lipták). Kežmarok 1919, p. 73.

[27] On 1678, see HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 458. For the visitations: Archív Biskupského úradu Spišská Kapitula (Episcopal Archive, further ABÚSK), SpB, visitations, Sigray visitation (1712), p. 10; SAL, SpB, visitations, Peltz visitation (1731), p. 14; PLE, visitations, lib. 31 (1752), p. 12.

[28] See above, note 19.

[29] The sanctuary and first three bays of the central aisle together form a space of ca. 23 x 10 m. This is comparable to other churches where the spatial organization remains legible: for instance, in the town church of Kežmarok (one of Levoča's local rivals), the fifteenth-century sanctuary and choir formed a single-aisle extension of ca. 24 x 11 m.

[30] HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 202; the chronicler Caspar Hain was Cramer's grandson, so would have known the location of the tomb.

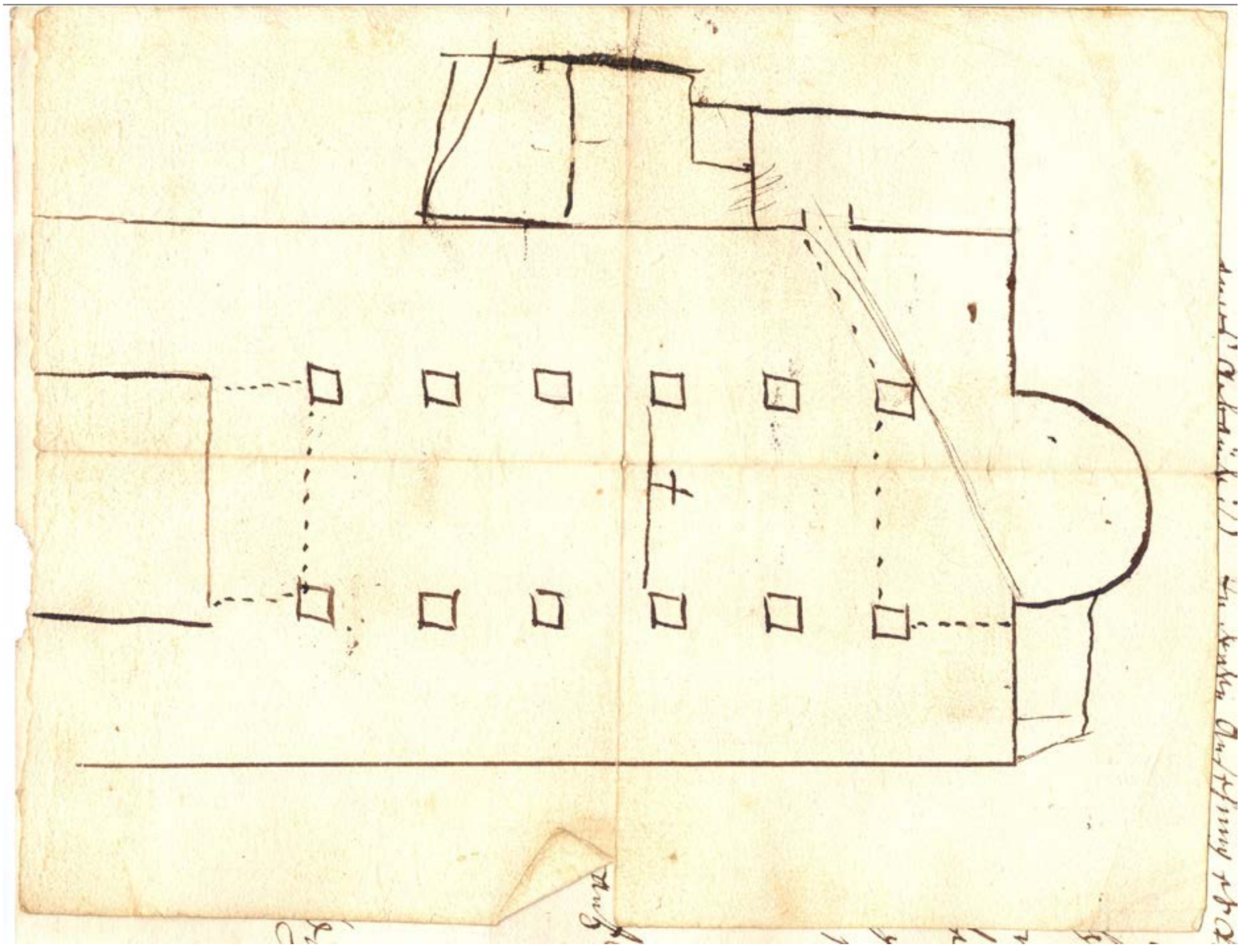

Fig. 7: Groundplan of the church from 1705 (ink on paper). Photo: FAECL, IV/E/2, fasc. III, 231/6.

early as 1530 and is referred to again in 1637.[31] This, too, seems to have left a footprint: there is an island among the tombs in the middle of the second bay (Fig. 5, marked blue). In referring to a burial before the lectern (*ante pulpitum scolarium*), the source of 1530 makes the matter explicit: the lectern was an object around which burials took place. In the first bay, by contrast, there were no such gaps – presumably because the arcade was left open to the side-aisles to provide access to the church's two sacristies (Fig. 3). It formed a transitional zone between the two bays of the liturgical choir to the west and the sanctuary to the east, which at St. James' was separated from the body of the church by a rail. Similar arrangements are documented or preserved across Central Europe – as, for instance, at the two main parish churches of Nuremberg, both of which had medieval stalls *in situ* well into the twentieth century.[32]

[31] For the 1530 reference: FAECL, V/A/2, fol. 151v (Spervogel chronicle); see also LUDIKOVÁ – MIKÓ – PÁLFFY 2006 (see in note 6), pp. 340–41. For the 1637 reference: FAECL, V/C/23a, no. 9, inventory of 1637, list of books: *Von Büchern sindt… Mehr auf dem pulpet in der kirchen auf dem cohr 3 bücher so von cantor und shulern täglich gebraucht.* On the use of similar lecterns in St. Sebald's in Nuremberg, see WEILANDT 2007 (see in note 32), pp. 164, 517, 605 (n. 3).

[32] WEILANDT, G.: *Die Sebalduskirche in Nürnberg. Bild und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter der Gotik und Renaissance,* Petersberg 2007, p. 146.

Fig. 8: Crucifixion group from the triumphal arch (now south gallery), ca. 1500. Photo: Citation from Jankovics, M. – Méry, G.: A lőcsei Szent Jakab templom szárnyasoltárai, Budapest 2007, 109.

Further evidence comes from a sketched groundplan of 1705 that shows a scheme for dividing the church for simultaneous use by Protestants and Catholics (as happened in 1706-10), with the dashed line marking out a portion of the central and north aisle for use by the Catholic congregation (Fig. 7).[33] The line follows the boundaries between the components identified in the earlier groundplan: the Catholics were to receive the sanctuary and the first bay of the hall space, which opened into the northern aisle towards the sacristy; the Protestants were to receive the two bays of the liturgical choir together with the remaining parts of the church. An important detail is added: a line with a central cross between the third piers of the arcade, which designates the great cross of the triumphal arch – an almost universal presence on the threshold to the choir in late medieval churches in Spiš and other regions.[34] The cross was referred to in a slightly later letter (1707), in which the Protestant authorities complained that the Catholics had occupied the central aisle up to the great cross (*ad majorem Crucifixi effigiem*), further than had been agreed in 1705.[35] This furnishing was still in place in 1761, when a visitation mentioned the raised, fixed cross in the middle of the church (*Crucem fixam in medio ecclesiae elevatam*).[36] It can be identified as the monumental four-figure crucifixion (ca. 1500) that is now on the south gallery and was probably removed from the triumphal arch during the campaigns to clear the central aisle (Fig. 8).

The choir threshold was accentuated by at least two further features (Figs. 3, 5). Firstly, its piers seem to have been equipped with altars from an early stage and are the only nave piers that show signs of this function: the northern pier has the remains of a large mural painting (around 1400; c. 300 x 180 cm) that must have served as a retable or coulisse for a devotional object;[37] the southern pier was constructed with a moulded extension to its western wall surface, which anticipates another form of retable – perhaps similar to the pair of stone retables preserved in the town's Franciscan church.[38]

33 FAECL IV/E/2, fasc. III, 231/6; the plan is attached to a letter of 18. 10. 1705, which refers to the division of the church as shown in the plan.

34 The detailed visitation of the Spiš region in 1693 refers to numerous triumphal-arch Crucifixions: ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Matyašovský 1693. On the broader phenomenon, see WEILANDT 2007 (see in note 32), pp. 179–83; JUNG, J.: *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany, ca. 1200-1400*, Cambridge 2012, pp. 46–53.

35 FAECL IV/E/2, fasc. III, 256 (12. 5. 1707); see *Levočská biela pani*, exh. cat. Ed.: NOVOTNÁ, M. Levoča 2010, pp. 81–82 (with a Slovak translation of the 1707 source by Vladimír Olejník).

36 PLE, visitations, lib. 52e, p. 245.

37 On the painting, which shows a selection of instruments and objects associated with Christ's Passion, see BURAN 2002 (see in note 1), pp. 35–43.

38 KOSOVÁ 2016 (see in note 1), pp. 63–64. At St. James', the western wall surface of the pier is now concealed by the eighteenth-century retable on the altar of St. Michael.

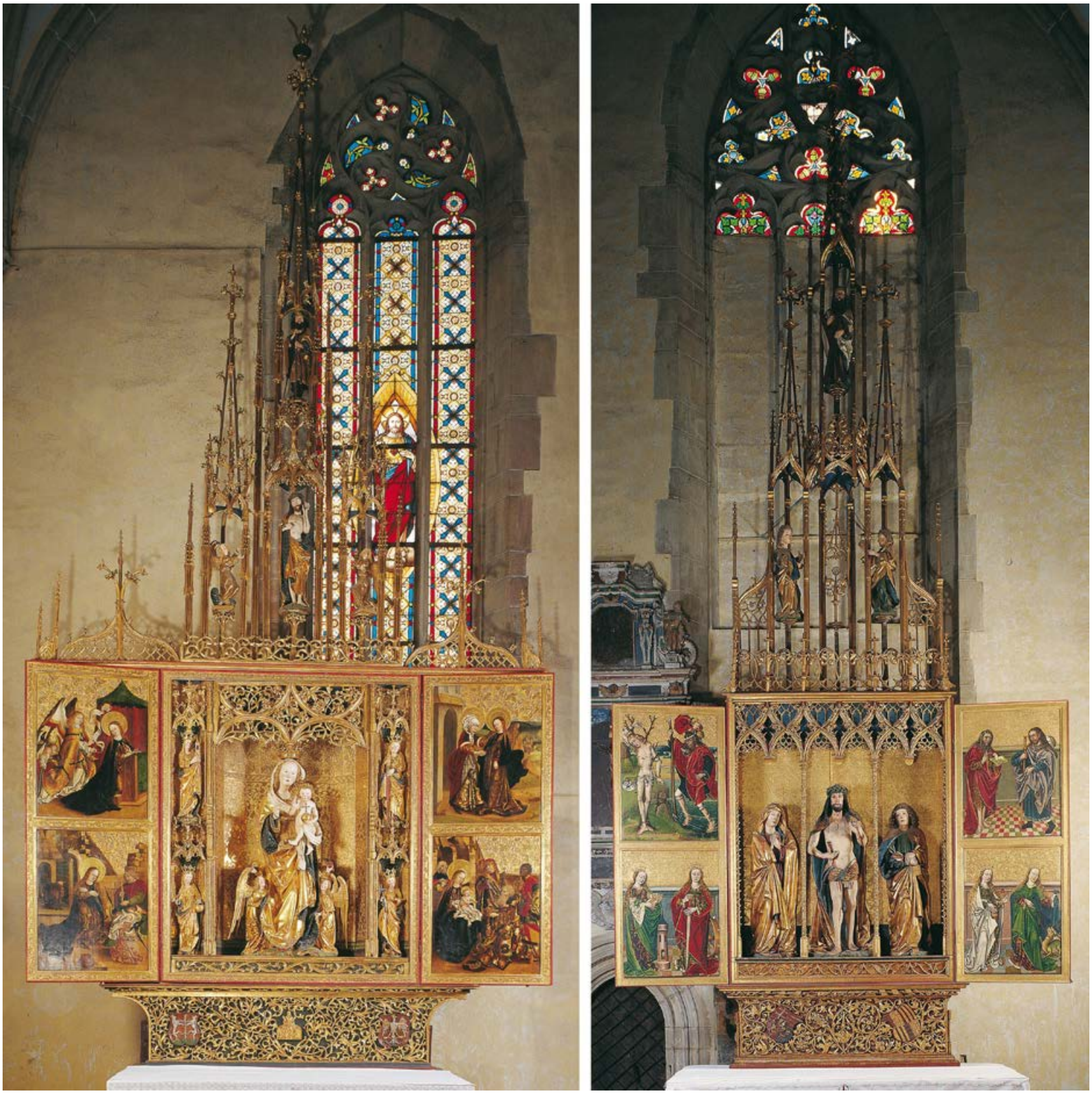

Fig. 9/a-b: Altarpieces of the Virgin (ca. 1496) and the Corpus Christi (ca. 1480). Photo: Slovenská národná galéria (Archive of the Slovak National Gallery).

Secondly, the medieval pulpit was located close to the threshold. Known in the 1630s as the old pulpit (*die Cantzel die alte*[39]) in distinction from its ornate Baroque successor (1625–26) in the western part of the church, it seems to have remained in use and was replaced in 1662 by a new "lower" pulpit that was located "on the Thurzo mausoleum" (*die vntere Neüe Cantzel, so auff den Thursonischen Begräbnusz stehet*[40]).

[39] FAECL, V/C/23a, no. 9, inventory of 1637, list of chasubles.

[40] HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 296 (30 October 1662).

The seating register of 1683 refers to it as the black pulpit and implies that it stood on the south side of the threshold.[41] The threshold between the lay church and the liturgical choir was thus a prominent zone thoughout the period under consideration: its importance predated the Thurzos' choice of location, which responded to and entrenched established spatial hierarchies.

3. Altarscape

The changes of the Counter-Reformation destroyed the bifocal character of the interior and enhanced the visibility of the church's easternmost altars, which today are furnished by a spectacular series of winged altarpieces – a pair on the sanctuary arch and another larger pair at the end of the side-aisles (Figs. 9-10). Unfolding around the high altar like a giant polyptych, this zone would already have been the primary focus of the church's medieval altarscape. The authenticity of the present layout, however, is difficult to verify on the basis of medieval sources alone – only the altarpieces of the high altar and the Sts. John altar are clearly in the positions intended by their makers.[42] Once again, the early modern material offers new perspectives.

The position of the Virgin's altar at the end of the north aisle is secured by various sources (Fig. 3/2, 9a). A burial of 1588 is said to have taken place "before the altar of the Virgin, before the sacristy" (*Ist mein lieber vater… in der kirch vor Marien altar begraben worden vor der Sacristi*), which only makes sense if the altar stood in its present-day position.[43] Early modern visitations state or imply that it stood there.[44] More generally, the detailed visitation of 1693 shows that in urban churches in the Spiš region the main altar on the north side of the sanctuary was almost always dedicated to the Virgin – a pattern that can hardly have been an invention of the Reformation or the nascent Counter-Reformation.[45] An important model was probably the ecclesiastical centre of the region, the nearby collegiate church of Spišská Kapitula, where an altar of the Virgin is documented on the north side of the choir from the fourteenth century onwards.[46]

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[41] FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621-1769), register of 1683 (female stalls, row 4, no. 79f.). The register refers to a row of stalls that stood, on the one hand, to the east of the main south portal (*Hinter der großen Thür an der wandt den schwartzen Predigt Stuhl über)* and, on the other hand, to the west of the smaller south-east portal. Similar descriptive terms were used to locate other furnishings: see below, p. 90.

[42] The retable of the high altar is clearly *in situ*. In the case of the Sts. John altarpiece, as János Végh observed, the painting of the rear side shows it was tailored to its current position: the rear decoration is restricted to its north wing, which is the only part of the furnishing that is visible from behind (the mensa stands on the sanctuary arch, but projects slightly into the central aisle; see Figs. 3/4, 11). Another argument comes from the altarpiece's imagery, which shows coordination with the programme of the high altar – implying that the former belongs within the orbit of the latter. See VÉGH, J.: Der Johannesaltar des Stadtpfarrers von Leutschau Johannes Henckel. Eine ikonographische Studie. In: *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 46/47, 1993/94, pp. 767, 772-73; see also BURAN (ed.) 2003 (see in note 1), pp. 755–56 (Jiří Fajt / Stefan Roller).

[43] MNLB, Ms P1890/7, p. 89 (Leibitzer chronicle, 1566–1623). There has been uncertainty about which of the church's two eastern annexes served as the sacristy – the space attached to the north aisle or the smaller space between the sanctuary and south aisle. There can, however, be no doubt that the northern annex served as the main sacristy for most of the period under consideration: it has a huge late-fourteenth century lavabo (on its north side; ca. 3.40 m high) and an ornate, late fifteenth-century niche for the secure storage of a monstrance or other precious vessel (on the south side, ca. 1.80 m high). While its wooden gallery and some sources suggest that it was occasionally used as a chapel, this was often the case with sacristies, which were frequently equipped with altars. In any case, the reference in the Leibitzer chronicle and other sources discussed in this essay locate the sacristy on the north side.

[44] In the first detailed visitation from 1693 (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Matyašovský 1693, p. 75), the altar is referred to as "on the left next to the sacristy": *Ad synistram p(ro)pe sacristiam altare B(eatae) M(ariae) V(irginis) cum statua ejusd(em)*. The lists of altars in the visitations of 1712 (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Sigray 1712, p. 7) and 1731 (SAL, SpB, visitations, Peltz 1731, p. 12) are consistent with this position. Only the 1700 visitation (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Sigray 1700, p. 39–40) suggests a different sequence, but it is short and unreliable.

[45] ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Matyašovský 1693.

[46] *Katedrála sv. Martina v Spišskej Kapitule*. Eds.: JANOVSKÁ, M. – OLEJNÍK, V. Spišské Podhradie, 2017, p. 71. Spišská Kapitula may also have been the model for the choice of altar on the south side of the sanctuary in Levoča (Corpus Christi).

Fig. 10/a-c: Altarpieces of Sts. Peter and Paul (1490s), St. Anne (ca. 1520), Sts. John (ca. 1520). Archív Pamiatkového úradu SR, ORA Levoča (Archive of the Slovak Monuments Office).

The altarpiece of the Corpus Christi in the south aisle appears a natural counterpart to the altarpiece of the Virgin (Figs. 3/5, 9b). It is a high-status furnishing that was linked to a prestigious confraternity of the Corpus Christi and, as the arms of Matthias Corvinus and Beatrix of Aragon on its predella imply, a product of royal patronage. Particularly by the standards of the 1470s–80s, it was an ambitious design and thus clearly intended for a prominent position.[47] Many of its specifications, moreover, were taken on by the slightly later altarpiece of the Virgin (ca. 1496), suggesting that the latter was conceived as a pendant.[48] Nevertheless, the Corpus Christi altarpiece's later peregrinations – it spent much of its post-medieval history elsewhere in St. James' (c. 1731–1956) – have created uncertainty about its original setting.[49]

The seventeenth-century groundplan suggests that the current position is authentic (Fig. 5). It shows two large altars at the end of the side-aisles, but makes a distinction: it shows that the preserved mensa of the Virgin's altar was broader than the mensa of the south aisle, which was demolished in the eighteenth century, when the Corpus Christi altarpiece was transferred to make way for a new, larger altarpiece (Fig. 5/1,4). The distinction on the groundplan corresponds to the different breadths of

[47] On the altarpiece with further literature: BURAN (ed.) 2003 (see in note 1), pp. 720–21 (János Végh).

[48] On the altarpiece with further literature: ibidem, pp. 724–25 (János Végh).

[49] It was moved before the visitation of 1731 (SAL, SpB, visitations, Peltz 1731, p. 12) and was returned to its current position after the restoration of 1955-56.

the altarpieces' predellas: that of the Virgin's altar is 247 cm wide, which fits perfectly to its mensa; that of the Corpus Christi altar is only 210 cm wide, which would fit to the mensa on the groundplan, but not to the larger eighteenth-century mensa (ca. 300 cm wide). The Corpus Christi altarpiece was not only narrower but also lacked fixed wings, which meant that in closed condition it occupied less space than the Virgin's altar. There was a reason for both of these design features: the more slender format allowed access to the eastern door on the left of the altar, which originally led into a sacristy or chapel – on the plan it is called the "dark chapel" (*finstere Capell*; demolished in 1857; Figs 3, 5/FC).[50] It thus seems that the Corpus Christi altarpiece was conceived to stand in the middle of the south aisle *and* to leave space for the portal, whereas the Virgin's altarpiece faced no such restrictions. While the groundplan only documents the layout in the seventeenth century, it is inconceivable that an altar dedicated to the Corpus Christi was asigned this position to cater for reformed liturgy in a period when its eponymous confraternity lost influence and was ultimately dissolved (ca. 1584).[51]

The final altar in the eastern zone, dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul, is documented here in the early visitations, but the retable (1490s) differs from its companion on the south side of the sanctuary in both its stylistic language and specifications (Figs. 3/3, 10).[52] While this alone does not prove that it was conceived for another position, the chronicle of Gabriel Golnich, a long-serving church official, shows that it stood further west in the early seventeenth century. He states that in 1621 he acquired a stall next to the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul (*ich Gabriel Glokner hab bey Petri u Paul altar ein Stell kriegt*).[53] In the seating register from the same year, his stall is mentioned among those in the southern aisle just east of the main portal (*so hinter d grossen thür*).[54] Another reference in the same register refers to an unidentified altar in the same position (*Beim altar hinter der grossen thür*).[55] The most likely position for the altar is on the south pier of the first bay to the east of the portal – on the choir threshold, where, as mentioned, the remains of a fourteenth-century stone retable can be seen behind the current, eighteenth-century furnishing (Figs. 3/7, 5/6). The prominent position at the head of the lay church fits with the standing of the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul, which was one of the oldest and most prestigious side-altars in St. James'.[56] Its proximity to the medieval pulpit fits with the altar's endowment, which was used to pay the wage of the church's preach-

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[50] The same chapel was mentioned in 1657, when its roof was repaired; see CHALUPECKÝ 1988 (see in note 1), p. 36.

[51] On the confraternity: IVÁNYI, B.: A lőcsei „Krisztus Teste" testvérület jegyzőkönyve 1431–1584. In: *Közlemények Szepes vármegye múltjából*, 3/3–4, 1911, pp. 129–45, 193–201; JANKOVIČOVÁ, E.: Fraternitas Corporis Christi v Levoči. In: *Majster Pavol z Levoče: život, dielo, doba*. Ed. NOVOTNÁ, M. Košice 1991, pp. 72-80; MAJOROSSY, J.: The Fate and Uses of Medieval Confraternities in the Kingdom of Hungary during the Age of the Reformation. In: *Bruderschaften als multifunktionale Dienstleister der Frühen Neuzeit in Zentraleuropa*. Eds.: LOBENWEIN, E. – SCHEUTZ, M. – WEIß, A. Vienna 2018, pp. 441–75, 462–64.

[52] The altarpiece is around twenty years older and more ambitious than the Sts. John altarpiece – for instance, in the size of its shrine sculptures and microarchitectural complexity of its crown. In the first detailed visitation from 1693 (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Matyašovský 1693, p. 75), the altar is referred to as "on the right-hand side [of the sanctuary or Sts. John altar]", i. e. from the perspective of the altar, looking west; the description of the altars involves a change of perspective, but this is the only reading that makes sense. The lists of altars in the visitations of 1712 (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Sigray 1712, p. 7) and 1731 (SAL, SpB, visitations, Peltz 1731, p. 12) are consistent with this position. The 1700 visitation (ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Sigray 1700, p. 39-40) does not mention the altar, but it is short and unreliable. On the altarpiece, see NOVOTNÁ, M.: Reštaurovanie oltára sv. Petra a sv. Pavla v Levoči. In: *Pamiatky a múzeá*, 1995, pp. 40–45.

[53] SAL, kr. 6, inv. c. 50; PIIRAINEN – POLLÁKOVÁ 2013 (see in note 3), p. 122. Golnich served as *campanator* (or *Glöckner*, an official responsible for the bells and furnishings, among other things) c. 1614–37; see PIIRAINEN – POLLÁKOVÁ 2013, p. 121; FAECL, V/C/23a, no. 9, register of 1637.

[54] FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621–1769), register of 1621, female stall no. 81.

[55] Ibidem, male stall, unnumbered.

[56] HRDINA, J.: Spišská města a pápežská kurie v době Velkého západního schizmatu. Komunikace a transfer informací na příkladu graciálních listin. In: *Stredoveké mesto ako miesto stretnutí a komunikácie*. Eds.: LUKAČKA, J. – ŠTEFÁNIK, M. et al. Bratislava 2010, pp. 208-11; *Majster Pavol z Levoče: Ruky a zlato*

er.[57] The altarpiece's imagery, finally, also fits to this function, since it shows a preaching scene from the lives of the titular saints in both opened and closed condition – a rare and striking choice.

The westward position of the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul leaves a vacancy on the sanctuary arch. Among the church's surviving altarpieces is a strong candidate for this position: the altarpiece of St. Anne (ca. 1520), which in formal terms is the near-identical twin of the Sts. John altarpiece (ca. 1520; Fig. 10).[58] The kinship of the two altars is apparent in their histories: both were early side-altars that received a pair of papal indulgences on the same day (10 February 1392);[59] both later had their dedications re-pointed in response to contemporary circumstances – the requirements of the patron (Sts. John altar) and the growing popularity of a cult (St. Anne altar).[60] Both altarpieces share the unusual characteristic of having partially decorated rears that correspond to the projecting mensas on the sanctuary arch, which leave the inner sides of altarpieces visible from behind (Fig. 11).[61] The placement of the Anne altar on the sanctuary arch, finally, makes sense in terms of devotional zoning, since it establishes a centre of veneration for the Virgin's mother and relatives in close proximity to the main Marian altar.[62] In this way, the two new altarpieces seem to have been part of a coordinated remodelling and extension of the church's altarscape around 1520.

Further sources offer an explanation for the transfer of the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul from the lay church to the sanctuary arch. In 1682, the town's Protestant congregation regained control of St. James' after eight years of Catholic control. There followed a series of interventions that included the removal of some altars. The chronicle of Caspar Hain states that in July 1683 several "papist" altars were dismantled to increase seating capacity.[63] A

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v službe ducha, exh. cat. Eds.: NOVOTNÁ, M. – PIATROVÁ, A. Bratislava 2017, pp. 142–44 (Mária Novotná).

[57] The altar (first mentioned in 1390) was part of the foundation of Georg and Christine Eulenbach, which centred around their burial chapel of St. George on the north side of the church. Their legacy included an annual income of 12 fl. for the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul. While this is only documented later (1476) as the preacher's salary, the existence of a separate benefice for a preacher and its connection to the Eulenbach foundation is documented in the late fourteenth century; see SOPKO, J.: *Stredoveké latinské kodexy slovenskej proveniencie v Maďarsku a v Rumunsku.* Bratislava 1982, cat. nos. 312, 391, 393; HRDINA 2010 (see in note 56), pp. 208–211. The same pier of the south arcade also seems to have carried the pulpit, presumably on its north side – a situation that would be cramped but is possible: see, for instance, the position of the early modern pulpit next to the altar of St Nicholas at St George's in Spišská Sobota; on the position of the pulpit, see above.

[58] RUSINA (ed.) 2009 (see in note 1), pp. 832–33 (Dušan Buran).

[59] HRDINA 2010 (see in note 56), p. 202.

[60] The Sts. John altar was the successor of an older altar (documented in 1392) of Sts. John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, Barbara, and Helena: the new dedication was expanded to embrace three other St. Johns (Sts. John the Evangelist, Almsgiver, and Chrysostom – the name-saints of the patron, Johannes Henckel), but the memory of the older dedication was preserved by the crowning representation of St. Mary Magdalene, an older sculpture that was probably taken on from the predecessor altarpiece; the two other dedicatees of the late fourteenth-century altar, Sts. Barbara and Helena, were left out because they now had a separate altar at the church (in the Chapel of St. George). The St. Anne altar was the successor of another altar mentioned in 1392, which was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, St. Anthony, and St. Anne. The sixteenth-century altarpiece articulates a shift in focus towards the fashionable cult of St. Anne Trinity, but – once again with a choice that otherwise would be hard to explain – retains the memory of St. Anthony as co-dedicatee through a prominent relief of the saint on the inner wings, where he is paired up with his fellow hermit, St. Paul.

[61] The partial decoration corresponds to the altars' proposed positions on either side of the sanctuary: the St. Anne altarpiece shows lateral and rear decoration only on the right-hand side (viewed from the front); the Sts. John altar shows decoration only on the left-hand side (see above, note 42). The rear decoration of the St. Anne altar is restricted to the predella – the loss of its right wing makes it impossible to know whether it had a rear panel like that of the Sts. John altar (Fig. 11).

[62] The altarpiece cannot have been made for its current position, where it arrived only in the eighteenth century and had to be adapted to accommodate the expansive epitaph of Johannes Lang (1639).

[63] HAIN 1910–13 (see in note 6), p. 500: *Hatt mann etliche Päbstische Altar ausz der Kirchen wegkgeschaffet, vnd an derer statt Neüe Gestühl zu beqvemligkeit der zuhörer Machen laszen.*

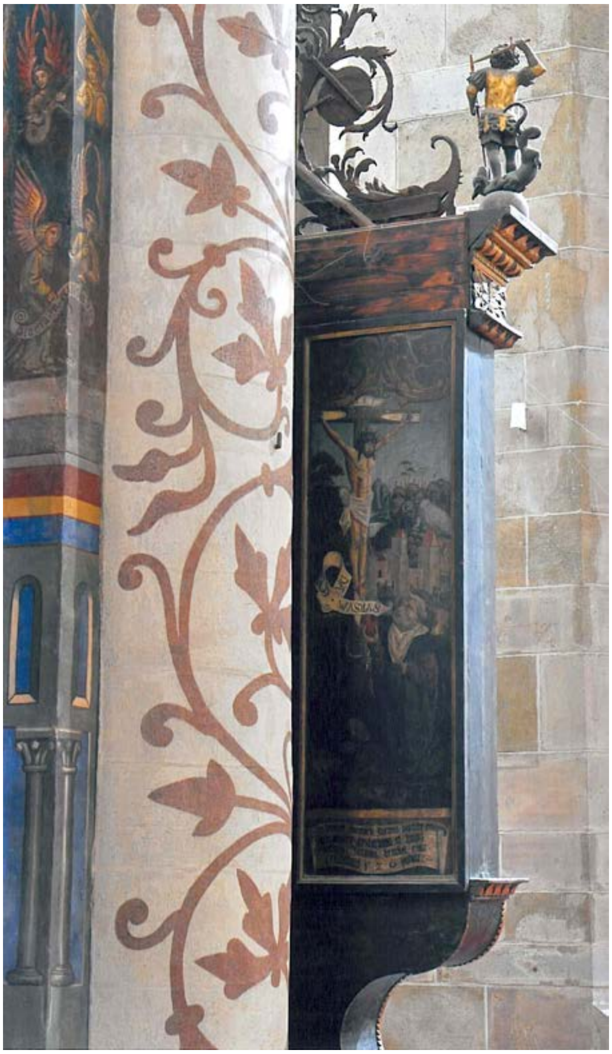

Fig. 11: Altarpiece of Sts. John (ca. 1520), view of rear side from east. Archív Pamiatkového úradu SR, ORA Levoča (Archive of the Slovak Monuments Office).

register among the church receipts for the same year provides details: it states that seven altars were taken down and, furthermore, that one was re-erected: *Mehr haben wir 7 Altar abgebrochen… Mehr auffs neu ein Altar auffgesetzt.*[64] The seven altars seem to have been drawn primarily from the church's four chapels and nave, which indeed would have facilitated new seating in and around the lay church, as the seating register of 1683 shows.[65] But the altar of St. Anne would also have been an obvious target, since the cult of her extended family – which lacked any biblical basis and had flourished only towards the end of the Middle Ages – could hardly have been more "papist" and problematic in reformist eyes. If this left a gap on the sanctuary threshold, then there was one obvious and uncontroversial candidate to replace it – the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul, whose cult remained strong among the Lutherans in Levoča.[66] With the presence of these saints, the sanctuary became a tour-de-force of apostolic imagery – with the high altar of St. James flanked by altars dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul on the one side, and to St. John the Evangelist (together with St. John the Baptist) on the other.

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The altars add further to a body of evidence that provides detailed and overlapping insights. The groundplan maps out the tombstones *in* the floor, the seating order describes the furnishings standing *on* the floor. The former serves as a negative image of the latter: its gaps can be related to the presence of stalls, but also to other furnishings such as side-altars.[67] The geo-radar survey dissects another, subterranean level – helping to locate the Thurzo

[64] FAECL, X.A/1, receipt book of 1683 (loose sheet).

[65] The receipts include expenditure on the installation of new stalls "in the chapel, where the altar was" (*in der Capel wo das altar ist gewest*); FAECL, X.A/1, receipt book of 1683 (loose sheet). The seating register of 1683 includes stalls in the south-western Chapel of the Virgin that had not been included in the register of 1666 and were largely still vacant; FAECL, diverse manuscripts, Sitzordnung (1621-1769), register of 1683, male stalls nos. 37-40. The early visitations (1693, 1700, 1712) make no mention of the altars that previously stood in the chapels, although they do refer to further, unspecified altars that were no longer consecrated or damaged. Most of the furnishings from the chapel altars have been lost; ABÚSK, SpB, visitations, Matyašovský 1693, 1700 Sigrai, and 1712 Sigrai.

[66] In documenting the church's income from collections in the course of the year, the receipt books from 1688 onwards show that – apart from major Christological and Marian occasions – the congregation's fixed feastdays almost all pertained to the apostles and included the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (29 June); FAECL, X.A/1.

[67] The two side-altars of the sanctuary arch, for instance, are not marked on the plan, but their presence is implicit in the conspicuous gaps in the tombscape.

mausoleum, as discussed, but also revealing crypts that can be related to other details on the plan.[68] Further medieval and post-medieval sources provide corroborative evidence on these and other aspects of the interior.

The material shows that the Lutherans undertook reforms, but worked within the parameters of the system they inherited. The liturgical centre of the church, the sanctuary and liturgical choir, retained its format – occupying the polygonal termination and the three eastern bays of the hall. The flanking aisles continued to serve as side-choirs or, as they were known in a nearby town, *sanctuaria collateralia*:[69] they held the church's most important side-altars and, like the choir, were focal points of the tombscape. The lay church occupied the area to the west – a large, squarish space that incorporated the site's two main portals on its sides and the centre of the church's musical life, the organ gallery, at its rear. The threshold between this space and choir formed an important zone at the centre of the site. It had no architectural screen, but was clearly articulated by furnishings that catered to its distinctive functions: in the pre-Reformation period, these comprised a pair of side-altars and the pulpit, which were crowned by the triumphal-arch cross; subsequently, the font and the mausoleum of the Thurzo family played a defining role.

The Reformation period saw shifts of gravity, most notably the installation of a new, highly decorative pulpit in the middle of the lay church (Fig. 3/P). The period also saw a growing focus on seating, some of which was installed in the formerly separate spaces of the side-chapels. The decisive break, however, came only during the Counter-Reformation, which brought interventions from both confessions: after regaining control of the church in 1682, the Protestants carried out their most sweeping reforms to date; after the definitive return to the Catholic congregation, the church's interior was remodelled and a series of new furnishings installed. Nevertheless, much survived. While the ensemble at the centre of the site was dismantled, some its most important furnishings were transferred to other positions and are preserved: altar furnishings, the triumphal-arch cross, the font, the Thurzo monuments. Most importantly, the environment of the high altar and sanctuary – the venue of the church's most ambitious medieval furnishings – was left largely intact. As one of the best preserved examples of its type, it is this aspect of the ensemble that has particular potential as a source on spatial and visual cultures – both before and after the Reformation.

[68] The geo-radar survey shows two crypts in the eastern side-aisles, which can be connected to the families Lang and Roll; see PUL, unpublished report by Miroslav Terray, 13.12.2009; see also above, n. 15. The seventeenth-century groundplan does not mark these explicitly, but it seems to refer to the entrances to the crypts: it shows two transverse slabs that, unlike the normal tombstones, have small circles in their corners, which were presumably iron rings that allowed the slabs to be lifted and the crypts to be opened (Fig. 5).

[69] The term was used in a contemporary receipt book (1509) to refer to the similarly conceived southern side-choir at St. Nicholas' in Prešov; see DIVALD, K and IVÁNYI, B.: Az eperjesi Szent Miklós-templom. In: *Az Országos Magyar Szépművészeti Múzeum Évkönyvei*, vol. 4, 1924–1926, pp. 30–73, here p. 61.

Reformations of Medieval Art
New Research on the Church of St. James in Levoča (Slovakia)

Résumé

The church of St. James in Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau) contains one of Central Europe's largest collections of late medieval art that remains in a sacred context – including, among other things, numerous cycles of mural paintings and winged altarpieces. While the church's value as a source on artists and their workshops is well established, its potential for the study of furnishing ensembles remains uncertain: the sparsity of written sources before the mid-sixteenth century has made it difficult to ascertain how far the furnishings formed part of a medieval system – rather than being an assortment of objects that were either rearranged or brought into the church in later periods. The article addresses this problem through some previously unstudied sources from the Reformation period, which show how the Lutheran authorities retained and adapted a traditional topography. The first section looks at patterns of burial, drawing primarily on a detailed groundplan of the church that was probably made in the 1660s and records the position of around 130 tombstones. It shows how late medieval hierarchies remained intact, with prestigious burials spreading from the church's most important altars and jostling for position in and around the choir. The plan also makes it possible to locate and reconstruct the layout of the Thurzo mausoleum, whose magnificent remains are now displayed in another part of the church. The second section focuses on the threshold between the choir and lay church, a pivotal zone that was dismantled in the eighteenth century but can be reconstructed. It shows how, before the Counter-Reformation, the sanctuary and liturgical choir occupied not only the church's polygonal apse, but also a significant section of its three-aisle hall. The prominence of the zone – as the site of important facilities, such as altars, the pulpit, font, and tombs – was already established in the late medieval period, but only reached its peak under the Lutherans. The final section looks at the church's altarscape. Evidence on the role of side-altars in the Reformation period is related to earlier visual and written sources, suggesting that, while there were changes in the lay church, the spectacular series of altarpieces along the eastern walls was left largely unaltered. Having also survived later interventions, it is this aspect of the ensemble that has particular potential as a source on spatial and visual cultures – both before and after the Reformation.

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