

## The mural with St. Christopher in Haczów

The representation of St. Christopher is on the northern wall of the church, to the right of the entrance to the Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel. It was created in 1494 by an unknown master, who drew inspiration from Kraków's artistic centre. He possibly could have come from Krosno. It is a fantastic piece of Gothic church decoration. Thanks to reconstructions, the mural is clearly visible. However, many details are difficult to make out. The polychrome is penetrated by cracks and rings of the logs on which the artwork was painted. The whole thing creates the unique atmosphere of contact with archaic art. Red and green colours prevail.

St. Christopher's body takes nearly the whole height of the wall, some 5 metres. This scale provides a sense of contact with a representation of a giant. On Christopher's right arm sits Jesus Christ depicted as a child. St. Christopher has bushy brown hair that freely flows down to his neck and is tucked beneath his left ear. Christopher's head is turned towards his right arm. His dark eyes look there, at Christ sitting on him. They are highlighted with a brown outline, just as the arches of his eyebrows and his long nose. The lower part of his face is covered with a thick brown beard.

The upper body of St. Christopher is shown *en face*. His broad shoulders are covered with a red coat. It flows down to his thighs in loose folds. Underneath the coat is a green tunic wrapped with a belt. It ends right above the knees, or a knee, in fact. What has remained shows only St. Christopher's leg. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the section of the wall on which the right hand was painted was demolished to provide an entrance to the chapel.

St. Christopher holds a long cane. It starts above his left arm and goes askew up to his right foot, which cannot be seen. With his left hand bent at the elbow, Christopher holds the cane above his left arm. With his right hand, he supports it at chest height. He keeps his left foot sideways, with his toes pointing to the right. Its slim shape has a red outline. Red lines also outline knees and calf muscles. Christopher walks through the river, as evidenced by the remains of wavy lines and fantastic water creatures at the level of Christopher's calf. To the right of it is a little human-faced monster with a big unshapely nose and piggy ears. He raises up a short, hooked dagger. The monster is

about to attack the fish with it. Nearby, you can also see the representation of a mermaid holding her own tail.

Christ wears a blue coat. His head is surrounded by a halo – a circle that denotes his sanctity. He raises his right hand up in a blessing gesture. Underneath his robe, you can see a bare foot. Christ is disproportionately small compared to Christopher. His body is roughly one tenth of St. Christopher's. This scale and the representation of Christopher as a person of a supernatural size is profoundly justified by legend. Legend says that he was a 7 m giant with supernatural strength who was capable of transporting giants across the river.