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The Chronology of the Murals in the Râmeț Monastic Church (Alba County, Romania) Based on a Reevaluation of the Dating of the Narthex Inscription

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RÉSUMÉ : La découverte d'une inscription slavonne dans le narthex de l'église du monastère de Râmeț (comté d'Alba) en 1966, sa relecture avec des moyens techniques spéciaux en 1978 et sa publication officielle en 1985 ont porté à l'attention des historiens le nom du peintre (Mihul du Criș-Blanc), le nom de l'évêque fondateur (archevêque Gélase), le roi régnant lorsque la nef de l'église était peinte (Louis d'Anjou) et l'année 1377. Les Orthodoxes de Transylvanie auraient eu une hiérarchie ecclésiastique organisée autour d'un archevêché et une école roumaine de peinture en pleine affirmation. Toutefois, ces informations résultent incohérentes par rapport au contexte politique ou ecclésiastique – les Roumains étant fréquemment invités à rejoindre le rite latin – et au contexte artistique. À ce jour, Mihul demeure une figure singulière et ses créations n'ont pas encore trouvé de termes de comparaison. La nouvelle lecture de l'inscription proposée dans cette étude part de la constatation que la dernière partie du texte, où se trouvent le nom, la mention du roi et la datation, demeure illisible (même après l'examen aux rayons ultraviolets, comme en témoignent les clichés pris en 1978, conservés dans le dossier de restauration et partiellement publiés en 1985). D'autres images ont été publiées pour soutenir la lecture proposée, en mettant en évidence les détails qui ont conduit à la lecture du nom *Lodovic* et de l'année 6885 (= 1377). Cependant, le type d'écriture et les traits linguistiques du texte de l'inscription suggèrent que les aspects paléographiques sont spécifiques à l'école d'orthographe fondée à Tarnovo par le patriarche bulgare Euthyme (1375-1393), plus tard diffusés par ses disciples en Serbie, en Moldavie et en Russie. La réforme d'Euthyme ne pouvait pas atteindre la Transylvanie en 1377. La prédisposition du peintre à écrire les mots tels qu'il les connaissait dans sa propre langue témoigne du fait qu'il a appris le slavon quelque part en Transylvanie, très probablement auprès d'un moine serbe. L'inscription et, implicitement, les peintures de Mihul dateraient ainsi de la fin du xv^e siècle ou des premières décennies du siècle suivant. La comparaison avec l'inscription sculptée sur le socle de l'église de Feleac, datée de 1516, dont le texte contient des parties similaires à l'inscription de Râmeț, suggère que le roi mentionné par Mihul était en réalité Vladislav II. Il est appelé *ЛАСЛОВЪ КРАЛЬ* dans l'inscription de Feleac et le nombre de signes graphiques utilisés pour rendre ce nom s'inscrit parfaitement dans l'espace aujourd'hui illisible où le nom du roi a été transcrit dans l'inscription de Râmeț. En utilisant la même méthode de distribution des signes dans l'espace afférent de l'inscription de Râmeț, la période dans laquelle elle pourrait être peinte peut être réduite à l'intervalle 7011-7024 (= 1503-1516). Compte tenu du conflit entre Jean, évêque de Munkács, et Hilarion et Gélase, hégoumènes du monastère de Peri, il est fort possible que l'hégoumène Gélase ait été élevé au rang d'archevêque de Transylvanie. Un acte royal de 1494 semble d'ailleurs le suggérer. La résidence était censée se trouver à Feleac, mais il s'avère qu'elle aurait pu fonctionner en parallèle avec le diocèse de Feleac, sans nécessairement être unie à Rome. La possibilité d'installer Gélase à Râmeț offre un point d'appui pour l'antiquité de l'évêché de Geoagiu de Sus, évoqué dans l'acte de nomination de l'évêque Christophore en 1557, le monastère de Râmeț étant en fait la véritable (ou du moins la première) résidence de l'évêché ayant juridiction dans les parties méridionales de la Transylvanie. Un document de 1622 le désigne, en effet, comme « monastère de Geoagiu (situé) à la limite du domaine Geoagiu (de Sus) » (*Giogi klastrom s ez Giogi hatarban vagion*). Un archevêque arrivé du nord, d'un espace familier avec l'art des Ruthènes, peut également expliquer le type de *Deisis avec archanges et saints militaires* représenté sur le mur oriental du narthex de Râmeț. Le fait de peindre cette scène au début du xvi^e siècle pose à nouveau le problème de la datation de la première couche de peinture, conservée dans la niche de la Procomidie et à la jonction de l'iconostase avec le mur nord de la nef, pour laquelle la présente étude propose l'année création du monde 6895 (= 1386-1387). L'inscription en roumain, sculptée dans la pierre et placée au xviii^e siècle à l'extérieur, sur le côté nord, au-dessus de l'entrée propose d'ailleurs cette date. La mention du nom du roi Matthias (*Matiaș crai*) dans la même inscription peut fournir la limite inférieure d'une troisième étape de décoration de l'église, sa limite supérieure étant le milieu du xvi^e siècle, étape où la nef, l'iconostase, et peut-être une peinture murale extérieure, furent repeintes. La dernière étape importante est liée au nom l'évêque Inocențiu Micu-Klein, à l'initiative duquel l'autel a été repeint en 1741.

MOTS-CLÉS : épigraphie slavonne, linguistique et paléographie, histoire ecclésiastique de la Transylvanie, peinture murale, influence ruthène.

REZUMAT: Descoperirea în 1966 a inscripției slavone din pronaosul bisericii Mănăstirii Râmeț (jud. Alba), recitarea ei cu mijloace tehnice speciale în 1978 și punerea oficială în circuitul științific în 1985 aduceau în atenția istoricilor numele autorului picturii (Mihul de la Crișul Alb), numele arhiepiscopului ctitor (arhiepiscopul Ghelasie), pe cel regelui în timpul căruia a fost pictat naosul bisericii (Ludovic de Anjou) și anul 1377. Ortodocșii din Transilvania ar fi avut o ierarhie bisericească organizată la nivel arhiepiscopal, iar o școală românească de pictură s-ar fi aflat în plină afirmare. Aceste informații nu au putut fi însă armonizate nici cu contextul politic sau ecleziastic, românii fiind insistent invitați să se afilieze ritului latin, și nici cu cel artistic. Mihul a rămas o figură singulară, pentru a cărei creație nu s-au găsit încă termeni de comparație. Noua lectură a inscripției propusă în acest studiu a pornit de la realitatea că partea finală a textului, acolo unde se află numele regelui și datarea, a rămas ilizibilă chiar și în urma examinării cu ajutorul radiației ultraviolete, dovadă fiind chiar imaginile rezultate în urma fotografierii din 1978 păstrate în dosarul de restaurare a picturii și publicate parțial în 1985. În circuitul public au fost puse însă și ilustrații menite să susțină lectura propusă, prin evidențierea acelor detalii care au condus la citirea numelui *Lodovic* și a anului 6885 (=1377). Tipul de scriere și materialul lingvistic oferit de textul inscripției sugerează însă că aspectele paleografice sunt specifice școlii de ortografie întemeiate la Trnovo de patriarhul bulgar Eftimie (1375-1393), răspândite ulterior de ucenicii săi în Serbia, Moldova și Rusia. Reforma lui Eftimie nu putea să ajungă în 1377 până în inima Transilvaniei. Se mai adăuga și predispoziția autorului de a scrie cuvintele așa cum le știa din limba proprie, semn că a învățat slavona undeva în Transilvania, cel mai probabil de la un călugăr sârb. Inscripția și, implicit, pictura ar data astfel de la sfârșitul secolului al xv-lea sau din primele decenii ale secolului următor. Comparația cu inscripția de pe soclul bisericii din Feleac, datată în 1516, al cărei text conține porțiuni similare cu inscripția de la Râmeț, sugerează și ea că regele menționat de Mihul ar fi în realitate Vladislav al II-lea. El este numit *ЛАСЛОВЪ КРАЛЬ* în inscripția de la Feleac, iar numărul de semne grafice folosite pentru redarea acestui apelativ se potrivește exact în spațiul astăzi ilizibil în care a fost redat numele regelui în inscripția de la Râmeț. Folosind aceeași metodă a distribuirii semnelor în spațiul aferent din inscripția de la Râmeț, perioada în care a putut fi ea redactată poate fi redusă la intervalul 7011-7024 (=1503-1516). Ținând cont de conflictul dintre Ioan, episcopul de la Munkács, și Ilarion și Ghelasie, stareții mănăstirii din Peri, este foarte posibil ca starețul Ghelasie să fi fost ridicat la rangul de arhiepiscop al Transilvaniei, acea ierarhie menționată într-un act regal din 1494. Reședința ei a fost presupusă a fi fost la Feleac, dar acum se dovedește că ar fi funcționat paralel cu Episcopia din Feleac, fără a fi fost neapărat unită cu Roma. Posibilitatea instalării lui Ghelasie la Râmeț oferă un punct de sprijin pentru vechimea Episcopatului de la Geoagiu de Sus, invocată în actul de numire a episcopului Hristofor din 1557, mănăstirea de la Râmeț fiind de fapt adevărata sau măcar prima reședință a Episcopatului cu jurisdicție în părțile sudice ale Transilvaniei. Ea este denumită efectiv într-un document din 1622 drept „mănăstirea Geoagiului (situată) în hotarul domeniului Geoagiu (de Sus)” (*Giogi klastrom s ez Giogi hatarban vagion*). Un arhiepiscop venit din nord, dintr-un spațiu familiarizat cu arta rutenilor, poate de asemenea explica tipul de *Deisis cu arhangheli și sfinți militari* ales să fie reprezentat pe peretele estic al pronaosului de la Râmeț. Redatarea acestei picturi la începutul secolului al xvi-lea pune din nou problema datării primului strat de pictură, păstrat în nișa proscomidarului și la îmbinarea iconostasului cu peretele nordic al navei, pentru care studiul de față propune anul de la facerea lumii 6895 (=1386-1387), așa cum încearcă să indice inscripția în limba română, cioplită în piatră, așezată în secolul al xviii-lea în exterior, pe latura nordică, deasupra intrării. Amintirea numelui lui „Matiaș crai” în aceeași inscripție poate oferi limita inferioară a unei a treia etape de înfrumusețare a bisericii, limita sa superioară fiind mijlocul secolului al xvi-lea, etapă în care a fost repictată nava, inclusiv iconostasul, ba poate și o pictură murală exterioară. Ultima etapă importantă este legată de numele episcopului Inochentie Micu, din a cărui inițiativă a fost repictat altarul, în 1741.

CUVINTECHEIE: epigrafie slavonă, lingvistică și paleografie, istoria ecclésiastică a Transilvaniei, picturi murale, influență rutenă.



VISUAL CULTURE, PIETY
AND PROPAGANDA:
TRANSFER AND RECEPTION OF
RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS ART IN THE BALKANS
AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN
(16TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

The original purpose of the research at the root of this article was to clarify whether Râmeț Monastery was an episcopal residence. The only documentary information – the Old Church Slavonic inscription painted in the narthex, discovered and published more than half a century ago by Vasile Drăguț – seems to attest to this fact. Obviously, there have been similar attempts, but none of the efforts to harmonize its content with other contemporary sources

started from the critical analysis of the inscription itself. Its content was always taken at face value, with only the historical details around it needing clarification and reconstruction. At first, this was also my point of view. My only serious perplexity was related to the name of the person who wrote it, more precisely to the wording that seemed to indicate its place of origin, a very precious detail, since it suggested the existence of a ‘Romanian’ school of painting

in the 14th century. With this perplexity, however, I entered the field of philology, which was completely foreign to me. During my preliminary discussions with philologists, it became clear that the reading of the final part of the inscription, the one concerning the dating, had been artificially projected into the 14th century. The study of this reading soon demolished the entire scaffolding built by previous generations of researchers, gradually leading from a dating at the turn of the 16th century to a more accurate one in 1503-1516. This conclusion was reached with the help of an international team of experts.

In the order in which they offered assistance, my collaborators include: Vladimir Agrigoroaei (Center for Advanced Studies in Medieval Civilisation, Poitiers), the first with whom I shared doubts about the accuracy of the reading of the inscription and the generous provider of ideas, bibliography, and illustrations; Mirosław Piotr Kruk (National Museum of Art, Krakow), whose work guided me in the search for the most credible analogies for the painting to which the inscription refers; Zamfira Mihail (Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest), who helped me deepen the meaning of certain terms and mediated contact with Aleksandr Dmitrievich Paskal (Russian State Library, Moscow), a master of the secrets of Old Church Slavonic writing, thanks to whom the inscription was brought back in the field of a critical debate, freed from any kind of sentimentality; Ivana Bezrukova (Institute for the Serbian Language of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade); Wanda Stępniaik Minczewska (Institute of Slavonic Studies of the Jagiellonian University, Krakow); and Zhanna Levshina (Russian National Library, St. Petersburg), to whom I owe thanks for the clarification of the details regarding the paleography and spelling of the inscription. The article will advance through two different research fields in parallel (textual

and artistic), gradually refining its inferences towards the final conclusion where the 1503-1516 dating will appear to be perfectly justified.

A providential inscription.

In 1966, Vasile Drăguț published one of the most interesting discoveries of his career:¹ an Old Church Slavonic inscription that, on the one hand, revealed the identity of the artist who painted the murals of the narthex of the church in Râmeț, Mihul of White-Criș (*Crișul Alb*), and on the other hand, it referred to an archbishop whose name, not being legible enough, was reconstructed as George (*Gheorghe*). The date, 1486, was completely illegible, but it was apparently borrowed from another inscription, in Romanian, carved in stone and placed on the outside of the church. The discovery proved to be of major importance both for the history of art and for the history of ecclesiastical institutions in medieval Transylvania.² That is why it was subjected to a special photography in 1978,³ which enabled a new reading, thanks to Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu. The new name of the archbishop was Gelasius (*Ghelasie*), and the date was 1376,⁴ later corrected to 1377.⁵ It seems that the difficult reading of the date was not the only one encountered during the years that elapsed until the publication of the final version of the text (and translation). This should be the explanation for the fact that two versions circulated, but neither then nor later did anyone pay attention to the small differences between them:

писа(х) многогрѣшни рабѣ вѣжїи миѣла(ѣ) и зѣграфѣ
вѣлокрїшнѣцѣ повеленїем(ѣ) архїєпископо(м)ѣ геласїиѣ вѣ
дни лодовика кралѣ сѣпте м(с)ца іюла вѣ

▼ Fig. 1. The church in Râmeț today, after the 1988 works. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.



I wrote this, most sinful servant of God, Mihul, that is, the painter from White-Criș, with the approval of archbishop Gelasius in the days of king Lodovic in the year 6885 (1377) month of July 2.⁶

respectively:

писа(х) многогрѣшни рабѣ в(о)жїи миѡла(ѣ)и⁷ зѡграфѣ
вѣлокришѣцѣ повеленїем(ѣ) архїєпископо(м) геласїѡниѣ вѣ
дни лѡд[ѡв]ика⁸ краля⁹ свѣтѣ м(с)ца ѿюла в

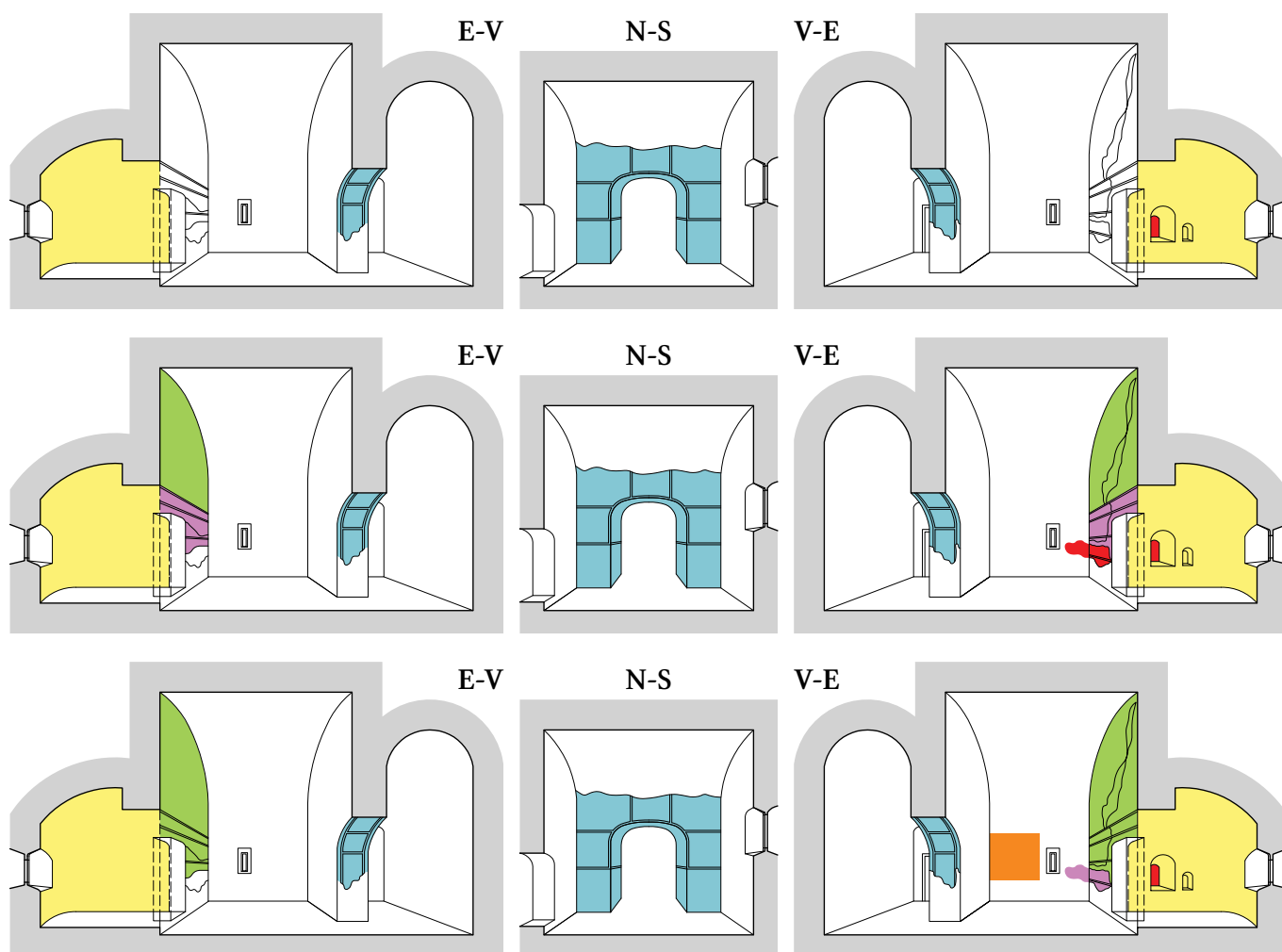
I wrote this, most sinful servant of God, Mihul, that is, the painter from White-Criș, with the approval of archbishop Gelasius, in the days of Lodovic king 6885 (1377) July 2.⁹

The discovery of this information “of exceptional significance”¹⁰ and the artistic quality of the first painting which could certainly be attributed to a Romanian¹¹ produced such great emotion that it was completely forgotten that the same painting was originally dated to the 15th century. The completion of the inscription then provided proof of the amazing synchronization of the ecclesiastical organisation in the three territories inhabited by Romanians, despite very different historical circumstances.¹² Wallachia and Moldavia were just going through the difficult process of asserting their political independence, while Transylvania had already been an integral part of the Hungarian Kingdom for over two centuries. Unable to evade this reality, historians developed multiple hypotheses in an attempt to

explain why the name of the Angevin king of Hungary, Louis I (1342-1382), allegedly intolerant, who restricted the attainment of a noble status to those who had embraced the Latin rite,¹³ was recorded in the inscription from Râmeț next to that of an archbishop who cannot be dissociated from the Eastern Church. In turn, Gelasius was considered in union with Rome and consecrated under non-canonical auspices by a false patriarch of Jerusalem, Paul Tagaris,¹⁴ subject to a Catholic hierarchy, following the functional model in Crete and Cyprus.¹⁵ It would be an expression of the hybridity of Orthodoxy under Latin / Catholic political leadership,¹⁶ or the emanation of the effort made between 1365 and 1369 by emperor John v Palaeologus, who in vain asked for help against the Turks, in exchange for his Catholic profession of faith.¹⁷ Such a large number of interpretations can be generated only by limited knowledge, in this case by the fact that the inscription from Râmeț does not confirm details extant in any other contemporary documentary sources. Practically, the information provided by painter Mihul did not shed more light on the study of art, nor on the political and religious realities of Transylvania, despite the undeniable importance of the church. Let us start then with its history, as much as it has been revealed so far.

Major problems in chronology.

Following the excavations made in 1988, in order to raise the church above groundwater, tombs were discovered



both inside the church and outside, around its perimeter. Osteological analyzes established dates between the 11th-16th centuries.¹⁸ These have remained unpublished and were not the result of archaeological research anyway, so they cannot conclusively contribute to the dating of the building. However, the actual burial in that completely isolated place, ideal for a hermitage, can be considered a sufficient argument for the function of the site as a monastic settlement at least since the 11th century, for which a more durable construction was later erected. Unfortunately, the chance to find out when this happened has been lost forever due to the rupture of the historical link between the monument and its original location (Fig. 1).

The planimetry and architecture are also not conclusive. Its hemicycle apse, separated from the barrel-vaulted nave by a templon wall, accessible through two doorways, as well as its massive tower resting on the walls of the narthex, present us with an aggregation of Romanesque and Gothic features that could have been adapted to the specific subdivision of an Eastern Christian church at any given time between the 13th and 15th centuries.¹⁹ The dating of the church thus remained dependent on the analysis of the fragments of painting preserved inside, the oldest of which was appreciated – stylistically, but also on the basis of the research undertaken during restoration – as being from the first part of the 14th century.²⁰ The image in question is the *Imago Pietatis* / *Man of Sorrows* (often referred to as *Vir dolorum* in Romanian studies) rendered in the tiny space of

the proskomedion niche (in place of the prothesis) (Fig. 2). This is probably the only fragment of masonry from which the old plaster was not removed in order to be replaced by the current layer of murals from 1741, under which no other traces of previous paintings have been found.

The dating of the paintings at Râmeț benefited from an ample and complex restoration process, hence the meticulousness of placing them in time and dividing them into more stages than they may have existed in reality. Because the aging of old murals was a long process, they became accessible one by one, modifying or nuancing the opinions expressed by art historians at various moments. In a concise formula and without taking into account the repaintings from the 19th-20th centuries, the differences of opinion regarding the chronology of the layers of painting are represented in Graphic 1.

According to the interpretation of Vasile Drăguț (1970), the mural strata were:

THE FIRST LAYER OF MURALS - the mural fragment from the proskomedion niche (*Man of Sorrows*) - c. 1400;²¹

THE SECOND LAYER OF MURALS - the narthex painting, by Mihul - 1486;²²

THE THIRD LAYER OF MURALS - the sanctuary murals - 1741.²³

According to Vasile Drăguț and Liana Tugearu (1985):

THE FIRST LAYER OF MURALS, DIFFERENT ARTISTS, EXECUTED CLOSELY TOGETHER - the mural fragment from the proskomedion niche, the martyrdom scenes of the templon, and the paintings on the north wall of the nave - first part of 14th century;²⁴

THE SECOND LAYER OF MURALS - the narthex painting, by Mihul - 1377;²⁵

THE THIRD LAYER OF MURALS - the register of the templon with the three hierarchs - possibly the first half of the 15th century, but likely later;²⁶

THE FOURTH LAYER OF MURALS - the upper register of the templon (*Ascension*) - completed after the register of the hierarchs;²⁷

THE FIFTH LAYER OF MURALS - the sanctuary painting - 1741.²⁷

According to Cornel Boambeș (1990):

THE FIRST LAYER OF MURALS - the mural fragment of the proskomedion niche (*Man of Sorrows*) - first half of 14th century;²⁸

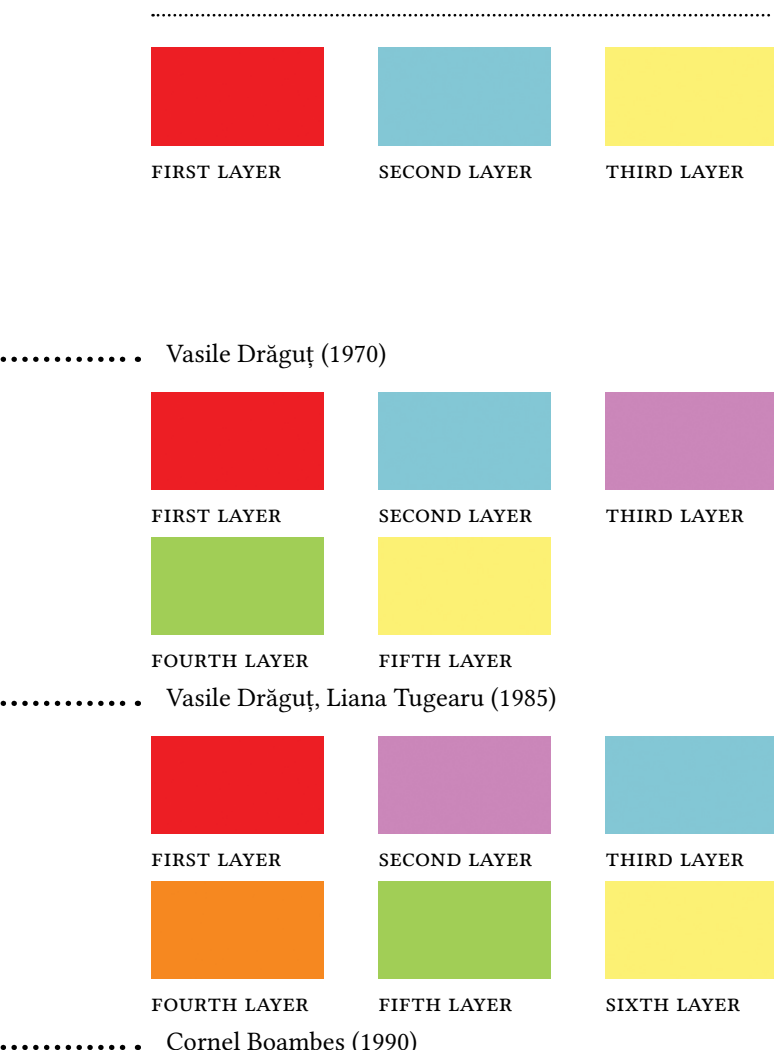
THE SECOND LAYER OF MURALS - the martyrdom scenes of the templon and the paintings on the north wall of the nave - 14th century;²⁹

THE THIRD LAYER OF MURALS - the narthex painting, by Mihul - 1377;³⁰

THE FOURTH LAYER OF MURALS - the northern wall of the nave (*Birth of saint John the Baptist*) - 15th century;²⁶

THE FIFTH LAYER OF MURALS - the templon (the register of the three hierarchs and the *Ascension*) - 15th-16th centuries?³² or 16th-17th centuries?³³

THE SIXTH LAYER OF MURALS - the sanctuary painting - 1741.²⁷



◀ Graphic 1. Three different interpretations of the succession of mural strata in the monastic church in Râmeț. The hypotheses of Vasile Drăguț (1970, before the discovery of the templon fragments), Vasile Drăguț and Liana Tugearu (1985, before the discovery of the 'Birth of saint John the Baptist'), and Cornel Boambeș (1990, after the discovery of that scene).

Credits: Anca Crișan, Vladimir Agrigoroaei, Ana Dumitran.

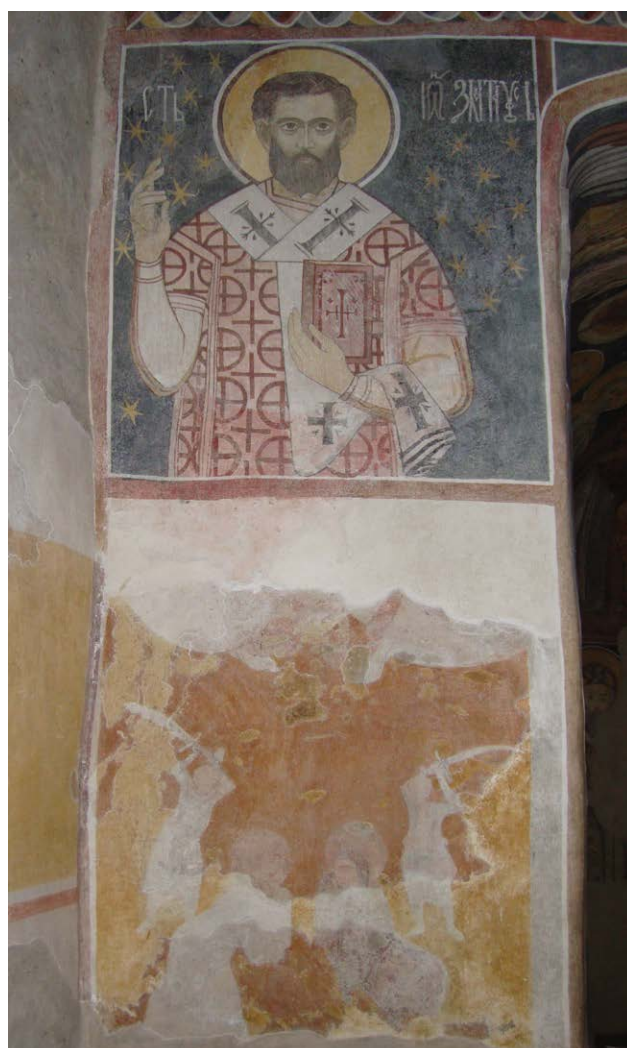




- ◀ Fig. 2. The sanctuary of Râmeț. Overlapping of mural strata in the proskomedion niche. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.
- ▲ Fig. 3. The nave of Râmeț, iconostasis and northern wall. Martyrdom scene and unidentified fragment of mural from the northern wall. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.
- ▶ Fig. 4. Overlapping of mural strata on the iconostasis of Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

Given this overview, we can imagine that if the first painting program began, as expected, in the sanctuary apse, this could not have been limited to that space alone, but should have included the templon as well. Fragments of martyrdom scenes discovered in the middle register of the masonry screen separating the sanctuary and the nave continue on the north wall of the nave (Fig. 3, 4), a sign that this space was at least partially painted and probably at the same time as the sanctuary murals. The differences in style and technique could be explained by the participation of several craftsmen,³⁵ not only by the division into stages,³⁶ but they were very close in time.

If we disregard the difficult dating of the Old Church Slavonic inscription (1377) and return to the original interpretation, the painting of the narthex in the last years of the reign of king Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490)³⁷ would be the second phase in the effort to decorate the place.³⁸ At that time, the composition of an iconographic program by the painter Mihul and his patron, archbishop Gelasius, would have taken into account the messages of the previously painted spaces. Because this painting survived only on the eastern wall of the narthex, the observation can only consider the surprising composition of the *Deisis* scene, with military archangels and saints,³⁹ and its less common location above the entrance to the nave (Fig. 5). This could be a possible sign that the image was missing from the templon – its common place of representation.⁴⁰ Thus, it is possible that the templon was painted from the beginning with the images we see today. For this alleged *Deisis* scene,



no conclusive date may be inferred. Based on the dating of other paintings in the church, one may propose only a vague dating oscillating between the 15th and 17th centuries.⁴¹ If we include in the equation the scene of martyrdom from the first painted layer, which also cannot be said to be in the right place (strictly from the perspective of an Eastern Christian iconographic program) and given that the 16th and 17th centuries reveal a standardisation of the representations of the templon, the unusualness of the templon at Râmeț could be explained only by the reworking of pre-existing compositions, such as a representation of the *Ascension* in the upper part. In fact, this would be just another form of reunion of almost all the characters portrayed in the extended version of the apostles' frieze (with the *Deisis* scene at the center) and the busts of saints John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nazianzen – who, due to their height, practically double the royal icons (Fig. 6-9). Based on stratigraphic and chemical analyses (and despite

stylistic differences), the simultaneous realisation of these two registers of the templon would be possible through the participation of several craftsmen in the project.⁴²

There is another possible interpretation. If we appreciate, even with a question mark,⁴³ that the large scene of the *Birth of saint John the Baptist*, displayed on half of the entire surface of the northern wall of the nave, dates to the 15th century (Fig. 10), such a hypothesis would not be difficult to sustain, as the painting was applied directly on the masonry, by means of a layer of intonaco. This fact raises the problem of its chronological relation to the task entrusted to Mihul to paint only the space of the narthex. Thus, if the restorer's opinion is correct and the scene of the *Birth of saint John the Baptist* represents the first painting intervention in that portion of the nave, it would be unreasonable to postdate the narthex, leaving the nave unfinished for such a long time. Not to mention that the first stage of painting would be restricted to the proskomedion niche, the rest of the sanctuary not being painted either,⁴⁴ which would have not been the case. Moreover, the overlapping of mural layers seems to be evident only in the interventions of the 19th century, from which samples were left on the Southern

▼ Fig. 5. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Deisis with archangels and military saints' on the eastern wall of the narthex of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.



wall of the nave. All the old stages are said to have coexisted.⁴⁵ We leave it to the reader to imagine what the church would have looked like from one stage to another if each craftsman had limited himself to the execution of only what has been preserved to this day. The ridiculousness of such a proposition saves me from further commenting on the issue, but also from the obligation to give credence to such a scenario. However, I cannot contradict the dating, so the only solution to harmonise the chronologies would be to imagine a complete repainting of the nave in the second half of the 15th century, an intervention from which only the fragment of the fresco depicting the *Birth of saint John the Baptist* would have survived. If such a scenario had been possible, the work would not necessarily have targeted the templon, which could have been repainted later. Likewise, it certainly could not have extended into the narthex, where an inscription from December 28, 1632 shows that Mihul's painting was still visible.⁴⁶

The supreme argument of this scenario is the inscription in Romanian carved in stone and placed outside the church, above the entrance. Put there most probably in the context of the restoration of 1741, the text, assumed by a certain lo-

gothete Dy(?)⁴⁷ tells us that "first this church was painted in the days of king Matthias (*Matiaș crai*), in the year 6895", i. e. September 1386-August 1387 (Fig. 11). A dating mistake?⁴⁸ A simple oversight of the carver or an uncritical interpretation of confusing information orally preserved by local memory, but in association with the details that could still be deciphered from Mihul's inscription or from another one, lost today?⁴⁹ Nobody can know for sure.

Some art and a lot more epigraphy.

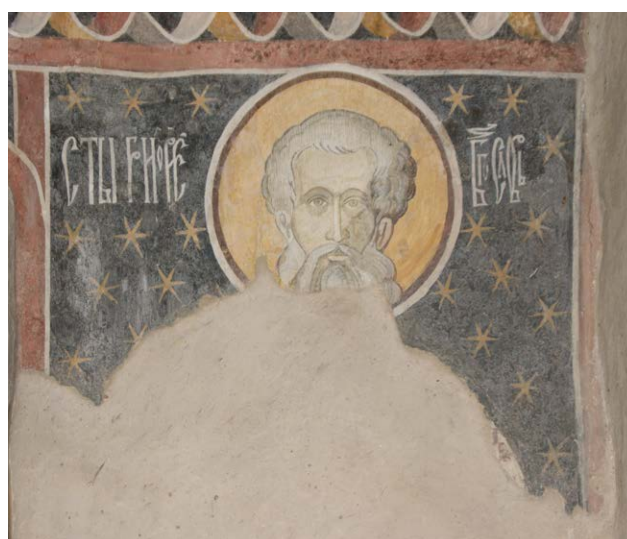
What we can know has roots in modernity. In the history of Transylvanian Romanian art, the 18th century stands out as one of the most fruitful periods. It managed to leave its mark in one way or another on all existing ecclesiastical constructions, many of them being then completely renewed. Such transformations are easy to understand if they took place after 1760, when the destruction caused by the religious confrontations between the Orthodox and the Uniate forced re-ktetorship or restoration interventions. Yet if the decoration took place in the first half of the 18th century, then it can only be seen as an attention directed toward the most important monuments, particularly since individuals





▲ Fig. 6. View of the iconostasis of the church in Râmeț.
Credits: Dragoș Gh. Năstăsioiu.

► Fig. 7-9. Saints John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nazianzen on the iconostasis of the church in Râmeț.
Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.





from the leadership of the Uniate Church, the only Romanian ecclesiastical institution whose legality was accepted at that time, were involved in these projects. Such an attitude can be more easily observed at the level of the monastic constructions, which had remained without the support of the founders, than at the parish churches, whose care was gradually transferred from the ktetor families to the whole community of believers.

The closest example is the monastic church in Geoagiu de Sus ('Upper Geoagiu'), located in the immediate vicinity of the one at Râmeț. It received a new ktetor in the person of the archpriest of Alba Iulia, Demetrius, represented in 1724 in the dedicatory depictions of the narthex. It is interesting to notice that two figures similarly greet us in the monastic church at Râmeț, on the soffit of the arch of one of the two openings of the templon. The presence of the

kivotos and the lack of halos reveal that this would be a votive picture, despite the separate rendering face to face of the figures, a solution imposed by the particularity of the space. The inscriptions that once accompanied the representations have been erased, so we can no longer know who they are and what role the 18th-century painter reserved for them. The painter instead transcribed a long list (*po-melnic*) in the proskomedion niche. The list is divided into four open scrolls distributed in pairs on either side of the new representation of *Christ in the tomb* (Fig. 12-13). The first contains only names of the faithful, the one on the opposite side refers to painters, and the other two list a long line of hieromonks, priests, and their relatives, living and dead (as the insertion of the sign of the cross suggests at the beginning of one of the lines), all grouped together under the invocation:

◀ Fig. 10. 'Birth of saint John the Baptist' on the northern wall of the nave in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

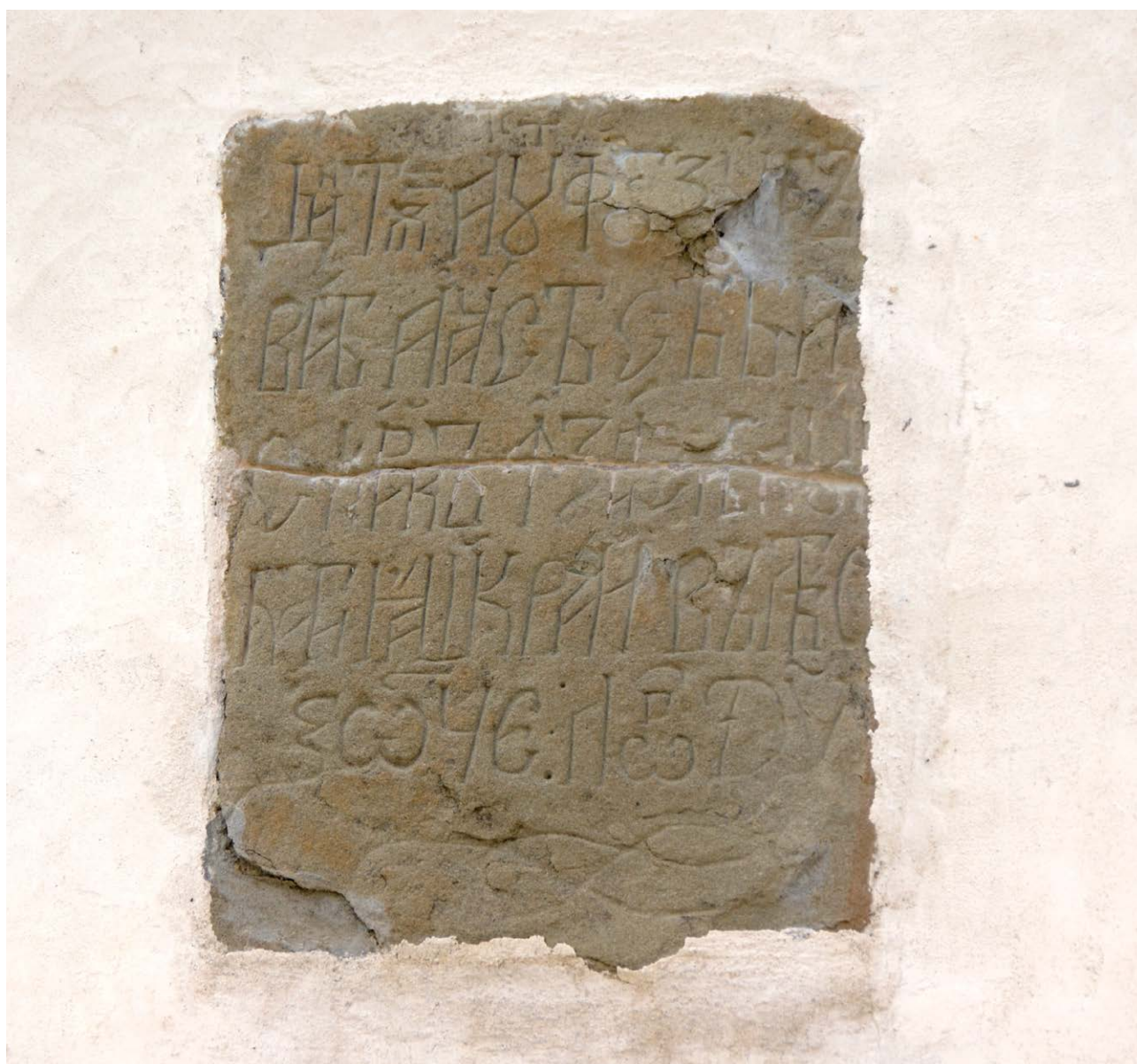
▼ Fig. 11. Inscription on the northern façade of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

Пом(ени) Г(оспод)и ктитори:/

Ermonah Gelasim, Ermonah Petronie, 2,⁵⁰ /

Ermonah Mihail, Iancul, Avram, Savul, Anisia, Iacov, /

Maria, Chirilă, Nicola, Crăciun, /



ПО: Я ІСОН: ПЕЛІА
 МЕНК: ПЕТРУ: ФІЛІОН:
 ОЛА: І: КОМАН: ІОАН ІАКОБ: К
 СЛОМІС: МХІМЛ: СЕ НЕДЕ: В
 НІСТОРЬ: ВЕ: ВД: МВІМЛ

ЕРМОНА: ГЕЛАСН: ЕРМОНА: ПЕТРОНІЕ Е
 ЕР: МХІА: МІХ: ФРА: СЕВУ: АНСІА: МКОБ:
 МІА: КИРИЛ: НИКОЛА: МІХІН
 ПЕТРУ: ШЕФН: АДМІА: МІХІЕ
 МІА: МО: МСОН: АНУЦЬ:
 ЕРЕН: ІАКУ: МІРІЕ: ЕРЕН НИКОЛА
 Е: ІСОН: ШЕФА: КІРІНА: ЕРЕН НИКО
 ЛАС: МІМІА: ЕР: МІМІА: МІМІА: І
 ІАНКУ



Pătru, Ștefan, Dămian, Mărie,/

Ana, Mos (?), Io(a)nă, Anuță,/

*† Erei Iancul, Mărie, Erei Nicola, Erei Ion, Ștefan,
Chireana, Erei Nico/*

lae, Măria, Erei Vasilie, Meletie u/

Iancul

Remember, Lord, the ktetors: hieromonk *Gelasim*, hieromonk *Petronius*, 2, hieromonk *Michael*, *Iancul*, Abraham, Sava, *Anisia*, Jacob, Mary, Cyril, Nicholas, *Crăciun*, Peter, Stephen, Damian, Mary, Anna, *Mos* (?), *Johanna*, *Anuța*, † Priest *Iancul*, Mary, Priest Nicholas, Priest John, Stephen, *Chireana*, Priest Nicholas, Mary, Priest Basil, Meletius, and *Iancul*.

Пом(ени) Г(оспод)и: *Ermonah Sofronie, Erei Ion, Anuța*
чад его,/

Mihail, Anghelina, Io(a)nă, Stan/

Floare, ч(а)д ѿи(Е)реi Dumitru, Anuța,/

Erei Mihail, Nasta(...), Io(a)na, 5, Sanda,/

Toma, Savu, 2, Măriuța(a), (I)on, Rusanda, Io(a)nă/

и весь родъ его

Remember, Lord: hieromonk *Sophronius*, priest John, his wife *Anuța*, Michael, Angelina, *Johanna*, *Stan*, *Floare*, wife of father *Demetrius*, *Anuța*, priest Michael, *Nasta*(...), *Johanna*, 5, *Sanda*, *Thomas*, Sava, 2, *Măriuța*, John, *Rusanda*, *Johanna*, and all their kin.

There is also a fifth scroll, the inscription of which has been transcribed and published in paraphrase by Ștefan Meteș.⁵¹ This has been reproduced in later historical literature as if it were the original inscription.⁵² Given that the loss of the plaster caused the disappearance of two thirds of the inscription, and the rest was distorted during the restoration by changing the remaining words. Its message can be reconstructed only with a photo, also published by Ștefan Meteș,⁵³ but difficult to read. Its content is as follows:

(În) an 1741, m(e)șta iul(i)e, în 12 zile/

(Z)ugrăvit-u-s-au acest sf(ânt) olta(r) fl(ii)nd vlădică (?)

Făgărașului/

Ioan Inochienti K(lein) L(iber) B(aron) de Sadu, cu toa(tă) chieltuiala/

d(e) la(?) Ioan, Palaghiia ot Ponor, Io(...ul ot Remeț/

și fiind egumen ermonah Sofronie/

și ocărămtuitoriu acestui lucru, i Bologa Ioan./

Iară zugrav Gheorghe d(...)/

Ion protopop locului/

Ano 17(41)

In the year 1741, month of July, on day 12, this holy sanctuary was painted when the bishop of Făgăraș was John Innocent Klein, Free Baron of Sadu, entirely at the expense of John, *Palaghiia* of Ponor, *Io*(...)ul of Remeț, and hieromonk *Sophronius* being hegumen, and the ruler of this, and Bologa John. And painter George o(...) John archpriest of the place. Year 17(41).

Ștefan Meteș relied on other sources when he completed the name of the archpriesthood in whose jurisdiction the monastery (*Geomal*) was located, marking it in parentheses in his interpretive text. The name of the residence appears in today's image of the inscription in the form *Giomal* – the usual one at the time – although the photograph does not attest to it.⁵⁴ Once recovered in a form



◀ Fig. 12. Lists (pomelnice) mentioning the ktetors on the left intrados of the proskomedial niche from the sanctuary of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

▶ Fig. 13. List of painters and continuation of the list of ktetors on the right intrados of the same proskomedial niche. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.



as close as possible to the original message, this information does not bring any actual clarification on the identity of the mysterious characters forming the unusual votive depiction, or on the decision to place them behind the diaconal door. Additional information can be corroborated from the inscriptions that accompany other paintings.

As George of Făgăraș also repainted the church from Streisângeorgiu,⁵⁵ where he showed special care for the preservation of the votive depiction from 1408, we can ask ourselves whether or not a similar situation unfolded in Râmneț. The previous compositional frames, such as the one in the proskomedion niche (*Man of Sorrows*) can be arguments in support of this interpretation, maybe also the rest of the sanctuary apse, the only room entrusted to him for renewal. A possible intention to take over an earlier iconographic program can also be detected by the original representation of the Holy Trinity, rendered by the vertical succession of God-Savaoth (occupying the center of the apse vault), the dove of the Holy Spirit (rendered along the axis), and Christ enthroned, the latter being transformed into an extended *Deisis* by the inclusion to the left and right of His Mother and John the Baptist accompanied by groups of six apostles (Fig. 14-17). The ingenious combination could have had the role of replacing the register of the apostles, lacking on the templon. However, it depends on who was the conceiver of the iconographic program. If parts of the same composition had existed before, then the team of George of Făgăraș only reconstructed the original message on new plaster, including the votive depiction. Yet if the iconographic design we see today is due to the painter from 1741, then the character rendered in a brown cloak and with a crosier (Fig. 18) can only be bishop Innocent Micu-Klein (*Inochentie Micu*).⁵⁶

As for the figure in white robes that holds the kivotos (Fig. 19), its identification with archbishop Gelasius,

mentioned in the inscription of the narthex, on the grounds that his name appears also in the list of the ktetors in the proskomedion niche,⁵⁷ where it is rendered in the bizarre form ΓΕΛΑΣΙΜ (with *μ* in superscript), could also be valid. The name is the same as the one in the old inscription, no less bizarre and unique in its kind, ΓΕΛΑΣΙ[ΩΝ], with the superscript *-ων*, not *-μ*, as it seems at first glance. However, it would be difficult to explain why the old ecclesiastical prelate was demoted to the rank of hieromonk (*ermonah*), and the presence of the sign of the cross next to the names listed on the last three lines even suggests that *Gelasim* was still alive. It would be easier to believe that he could have been hieromonk Sophronius, a contemporary hegumen with Innocent Micu-Klein, whose name is mentioned twice in the proskomedion niche, including as coordinator (*ocârmuitor*) of the painting project.

The only aspects of the images that would have clarified the specifics could have been the accompanying inscriptions next to the two figures, but they are completely erased. However, above this identity is their representation, whether it is of figures from the beginnings of the monastic settlement or from its renewal in the middle of the 18th century. In the first case, the special status of the monastery would be confirmed, maybe even as an archiepiscopal residence, and in the second it would show the importance the monastery still had in the middle of the 18th century in a hierarchy of monastic places under the administration of the Uniate Church. This importance is also illustrated by its nominal enumeration among the monasteries demolished at the order of general von Buccow, as a result of the rally of the monks from Râmneț to the movement of monk Sophronius from Cioara:

În anul 1761, în Ardeal, 48 de biserici au ars și au surpat vladica Pavel Aaron, fiind unit cu latinii, pentru că nu [s-au?] plecat lui (...) Într-acest an (1762) au mai surpat încă 4 mă-



◆ Fig. 14-17. Painter George from Făgăraș, 1741, 'The Holy Trinity and the Great Deisis' followed by friezes with apostles and hierarch saints in the sanctuary apse of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

▼ Fig. 18. George from Făgăraș, 1741, depiction of a bishop ktetor in the church of Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

▶ Fig. 19. George from Făgăraș, 1741, depiction of a hegumen ktetor in the church of Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.



*năstiri: una a Prislopului, scaun de episcop, făcută de doamna Samfira, fata lui Moisi-Vodă Băsărab, alta Râmețu, făcută de Mihai Vodă Viteazul, una Plosca, alta Geoagiu...*⁵⁸

In the year 1761, in Transylvania, 48 churches were burned and destroyed by bishop Paul Aaron, while in union with the Latins, because they did not bow to him (...) In that year (1762) he destroyed 4 more monasteries: one of them in Prislop, a bishop's see, erected by lady Zamfira, the daughter of prince Moses Basarab, another one in Râmeț, erected by prince Michael the Brave, one in Plosca, another in Geoagiu...

About beginnings that are still not unraveled...

The importance of the monastery is beyond any doubt, but the roots of its significance remain to be determined. The 18th century had attributed it to an alleged ktetorship of

Michael the Brave, but this fact is not confirmed by other sources and ignores a possible contribution by Matthias Corvinus, which could have been documented in the text of the exterior inscription carved in stone and placed above the entrance to the church. First, I turn into a working hypothesis the previous statement that Râmeț monastery was an archiepiscopal residence, based on the mention of archbishop Gelasius in the Old Church Slavonic text in the narthex of the church.

The only certainty is that the monastic settlement at Râmeț was not a noble ktetorship, hence the deduction that the means of support of the community and those resources necessary for the construction and maintenance of buildings were provided at a much higher level than the patronage of a single family. The triple compartmentalisation of the church is unusual when compared to other contemporary masonry religious buildings, and attracts attention by the fact that it adapts a Romanesque layout to an Eastern Christian spatial program,⁵⁹ required for a monastic place of worship. The name of the place also indicates a hermitage, perhaps a little less obvious after the subsequent founding of the neighboring monastery, the one in Geoagiu de Sus. The latter could have been a metochion of Râmeț. Its oldest attestation, from 1557, reveals that it served as an episcopal residence for a long time.⁶⁰ The date of this episcopate was set in conjunction with the last months of the reign of the Wallachian prince Radu the Great (1494-1508), considering that this lord of Wallachia would have received from the king of Hungary, Vladislaus II (1471-1516), the castle in Stremț with its extensive estates, among which were Râmeț and Geoagiu de Sus.⁶¹ In reality, however, the bequest targeted the domain of Geoagiu de Jos ('Lower Geoagiu') in Hunedoara County,⁶² a different settlement. The founding of the diocese must have had completely different reasons. Probably those reasons were not entirely foreign to the policy of the Wallachian lords, just like the appointment of the bishop in 1557, easy to interpret as a consequence of the participation of prince Pătrașcu the Good in bringing back to Transylvania queen Isabella Jagiellon (1539-1540) and her son John Sigismund Zápolya (1540-1551, 1556-1570).⁶³ It is possible, however, that the monastery from Geoagiu de Sus was only a new residence of an older hierarchal structure, attested in the inscription of the narthex of the church in Râmeț.

There is no certainty that the dating of the murals of the church during the reign of Matthias Corvinus is correct, but the inscription carved on the outer wall contains this confusing piece of information. Some historians mistook it for the inscription painted in the narthex and suggested that Râmeț could be the archbishop's residence, its last resident being identified as archbishop Daniel, ktetor of the church in Feleac.⁶⁴ It was through his patronage that a *Tetraevangelion* was written in 1488, covered in 1498 by the Moldavian treasurer Isaac "for the metropolitanate of Feleac".⁶⁵ Given that this church was called "archbishopric of Transylvania" in a royal document of 1494, thus recognising for it a jurisdiction over the entire province, it was appreciated that its legitimacy could be conferred only by the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439), being therefore a hierarchy in union with Rome.⁶⁶

If Romanian historians agreed on this legitimacy of the metropolitanate of Feleac, things are not the same with the identity and affiliation of its first hierarchs. Two hypotheses arose from the need to put order to the little-known and contradictory information. The first of them has nothing to do with the monastery at Râmeț, but the second one does. In the first, a certain Macarius (*Macarie*) was

identified with a certain Mark (*Marcu*). We know about Macarius that he was a Uniate bishop of Halych, consecrated by the pope and documented in 1458-1469. He sought recognition of jurisdiction over Greek rite believers in the kingdom of Hungary, who had complied with the Uniatism of the Council of Florence, including those in Transylvania.⁶⁷ All that is known about Mark is that he settled in Feleac sometime in the second half of the 15th century, where he bought the house of the local priest Basil (*Vasile*), whose adopted son Danciu he had left as bishop in his place, on which occasion he received the name Daniel (*Daniil*).⁶⁸ Danciu-Daniel built the church in Feleac and endowed it with the above-mentioned *Tetraevangelion* in 1488, in which his name appears completed with the attribute "of Severin". Fortunately, Danciu-Daniel refers to himself as "metropolitan of Severin and Transylvania" in an undated document, though one that can be placed between 1488 and 1500.⁶⁹

However, this title was exploited by the second hypothesis. Its supporters do not accept the idea that the metropolitanate of Severin (the second metropolitanate of Wallachia), would have ceased with the entry of its jurisdiction under the authority of the king of Hungary. This hypothesis was based on a now missing (and perhaps even dubious) inscription from the church at Ribița, according to which the construction of this building took place under the authority of pope Gregory and Anastasius, in 1404, the latter being identified with metropolitan Athanasius of Severin.⁷⁰ There is also a letter addressed to Sibiu in 1453 by two bishops with unspecified jurisdiction, considered to be the metropolitan of Ungrovlahia and his colleague from Severin, the latter being in union with Rome and looking for a new residence.⁷¹ The second hypothesis is based on these shaky associations,⁷² and places Macarius of Halych in Hunedoara,⁷³ where the funerary inventory of a tomb would suggest there the burial of a high ecclesiastical individual.⁷⁴ The buried man is supposed to be archbishop Daniel, the ktetor of Feleac, with Râmeț monastery established as his possible previous residence.⁷⁵ The Greek bishop Mark would follow after a possible vacancy of the seat between 1498 and 1516.⁷⁶ As proof, a new reading is brought forth of the name mentioned in the fragmentary inscription on the pedestal of the church in Feleac: the Cyrillic letter originally read *III(efan)* (Stephen),⁷⁷ being corrected to *M(arcu)* (Mark).⁷⁸ After Mark's death, Feleac would thus become a family business by transferring the episcopate between the relatives of the local priest Basil.⁷⁹

Even though Gelasius of Râmeț does not appear in this complicated equation, the monastery is mentioned, and, ultimately, we will have to decide. Thus, if the first hypothesis could be based on the attestation in 1446 of a Basil, son of priest Barbos of Feleac,⁸⁰ from whom bishop Macarius / Mark bought the house in the 1460s, then the order of the residents would continue with Danciu-Daniel, Stephen, the one attested in the inscription from 1516 on the pedestal of the church from Feleac, and Peter, a possible nephew of Danciu active in 1538, probably the last resident at Feleac (from where he would be expelled in 1536, when the ambitious neighboring bishop, Anastasius of Vad, was recommended as head of both dioceses).⁸¹ This equation, however, fails to clarify how the transition from the episcopate of Halych to the archdiocese / metropolitanate of Severin and Transylvania was made. Moreover, when the documents refer to bishop Danciu in 1534,⁸² 1538,⁸³ 1550,⁸⁴ and 1595,⁸⁵ they mention a person who died before 1516. Furthermore, the descendants of priest Basil should have enjoyed a remarkable longevity, completely unusual for those times.

The second hypothesis is also undermined by the fact that we do not know how the title of Severin was updated, and by the misinterpretation of the initial name of the metropolitan of 1516 from Feleac, whose first initials ST(e-phen) remain, in my opinion, correct. The fact that the monastery of Râmeț is included in a list of hierarchies that continue with the Uniate ones in Feleac – as an episcopal see or only as a place of worship that has preserved the memory of a Uniate hierarchy – would have little chance of success unless archbishop Gelasius from the inscription in the narthex of Râmeț would have also been a Greek, like Mark and Macarius. Although their ethnicity is not certain either – at that time, Greek marked only the belonging to the Eastern rite – and, even if it were certain, it could not guarantee their option for the Florentine Union. Nevertheless, one could propose that it could have been the case. The clue in this case would be the form in which Mihul rendered the name of the archbishop, ΓΕΛΑΪΩΝ, undoubtedly closer to the Greek form Γελάσιος than to the Old Church Slavonic *Геласиѡ*. Yet we are in the realm of conjectures, in which any permutation is possible, only that it simultaneously leads to a logical error. The discussion must stop here, because it has turned into pure speculation. All attempts to harmonize the few documents that refer to the jurisdiction of some hierarchies over the Romanians in the Transylvanian principality have ended. We have to accept that things are unclear maybe for other reasons. The only exception is the episcopate of Vad, founded in the early 16th century as an annex of the metropolitanate of Moldavia, whose authority encompassed the entire Northern half of the Transylvanian province a few decades later. In this case, what is the message of the inscription from Râmeț, whose text contains a clear reference to a religious authority approved by the king?

...and about an end without glory.

The case of the Râmeț archbishop may illustrate the Latin expression *una hirundo non facit ver*. Having nothing on which to reconstruct the ascending evolution of a hypothetical archbishopric of Râmeț, let us try a retrospective look, starting from the moment of Christopher's appointment as bishop of Geoagiu, in 1557. The neighborhood of Geoagiu in relation to Râmeț asks us to address this issue. However, his appointment took place in the context of the return of Transylvania under the authority of queen Isabella and the elected king John Sigismund Zápolya (1540-1551, 1556-1570). At the same time, the two instituted a new bishop in Vad,⁸⁶ with jurisdiction over the northern part of the principality of Transylvania. Therefore, it is worth asking why the monastery of Geoagiu de Sus was chosen as the seat of the episcopate with jurisdiction in the Southern part of the new state. Why not another location in the nearby area? The simplest explanation is that both hierarchies settled in the previous residences: the monastery of Vad, founded with the support of the rulers of Moldavia, and the "monastery of Geoagiu de Sus", *Clastrum Fel-Diod*. However, this name does not indicate that the monastery was actually located in Geoagiu de Sus, but that it was the monastery within the domain of Geoagiu de Sus, a formula also used for the monastery at Râmeț in a hearing of witnesses from 1622.⁸⁷ The phrase used in the document of 1557 would therefore be a kind of official name of the monastery at Râmeț and of the headquarters of the 'old' episcopate – *ab antiquo* is mentioned in the same document –⁸⁸ the episcopate led by Christopher. This is also the place in which John of Peșteana could have resided before him.⁸⁹ John was the so-called 'bishop of the Romanians in this country of Transylvania'. He was sent for conse-

cration in Wallachia in 1551,⁹⁰ at a time when the other alleged episcopal residences seem to have ceased activity. There is thus a continuity, for which no other benchmarks can be offered, but which, in the general shortage of information regarding the existence and function of the ecclesiastical hierarchies of the Romanians in Transylvania, does not even need much else.

The idea that the real headquarters of the diocese of Geoagiu was at Râmeț monastery is not new. It was formulated more than a century ago by Nicolae Iorga and it is surprising that it remained unnoticed for so long, especially after the discovery of the inscription in the narthex of the church in Râmeț. Iorga quotes Benkő József with information about the ruins of the monastery from Geoagiu de Sus, seen by the learned scholar *ad radices alpium, ultra Marusium sitarum, in superna pagi parte*.⁹¹ The description is very appropriate for its location, but Iorga disputes it, considering that it must refer to the monastery of Râmeț, then confusing the domain Geoagiu de Sus in Alba county with the domain Geoagiu de Jos in Hunedoara county. Last but not least, he uses a mocking expression, roughly approximated to "monastic bishopric" or "a bishopful of monks" (*vlădicie de mănăstire*).⁹² Iorga then connects the founding of this episcopate to the Wallachian prince Radu de la Afumați (1522-1523, 1524, 1524-1525, 1525-1529).⁹³ The erection of the monastery from Geoagiu de Sus is also attributed to him, but hypothetically. What remains of Iorga's opinions is that the Southern part of Transylvania was under the influence of the metropolitanate of Wallachia, by virtue of the status of exarch of the *Plaiuri* (territories across the Carpathians) that the metropolitan of Ungrovlahia had under his jurisdiction, a state of affairs that could have been consolidated by the domination of some Transylvanian fiefs by the Wallachian lords from the first decades of the 16th century. Research treated the situation of the Southern diocese in a similar manner to that created by the lords of Moldavia in the Northern part of Transylvania by founding the diocese of Vad, although this was not the case at all. The difference is that the lords of Wallachia never ruled the territory where Râmeț and Geoagiu de Sus are located. Moreover, no documentary evidence has been preserved that explicitly attests to their involvement in supporting the two monasteries. That there was a certain gravity toward the two external poles, this is another issue. The pull in question was often revealed during the second half of the 16th century and into the middle of the next century. Finally, the metropolitanate of Wallachia prevailed as a result of the decision of the political authorities to reduce the Church of Transylvania to a single diocese, that of the episcopate in the Southern part, now with residence in Alba Iulia, whose jurisdiction was extended to the northern part of the principality.⁹⁴

The lack of documents prevents us from finding out how exactly this double claim to the patronage of the Romanian clergy in Transylvania was reached. Instead, one can deduce how the transition was made from the old episcopal structure attested in 1557 to the new one, mentioned at the end of the previous paragraph. If Christopher's successors had (or would have had) their residence in Râmeț, then their pastorate would have been short-lived. Bishop Sava was expelled by the master of the domain, Melchior Balassa, in 1560 or 1561, and the episcopate was entrusted to priest George from Ocna Sibiului, the first Romanian bishop who is believed to have professed the Protestant faith.⁹⁵ Whether or not he moved to Râmeț in the short time he exercised his authority has remained an open question. When Sava returned to head the episcopate in 1562,⁹⁶ he may not have left his new residence in Lancrăm. There



he could have enjoyed the company of a group of refugee boyars from Wallachia, having felt more sheltered after the Diet of Transylvania established a Reformed episcopate for Romanians in 1566, headed by George Szentgyörgyi, who was charged with preaching “the true Christian faith”.⁹⁷ The only certain thing is that the house in Lancrăm was ceded to the reformed Romanian bishop in 1570, as a

▲ Fig. 20. *Mihul of White-Criș, ‘Holy monk and martyr Andronicus’, in the narthex of the church in Râmeș.*
Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

► Fig. 21. *Mihul of White-Criș, ‘Saint Nicholas the wonderworker’, in the narthex of the church in Râmeș, detail.*
Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

result of Sava's spontaneous departure to Wallachia,⁹⁸ either tired of harassment or eager to fill a vacant seat there. At the same time, the monastery in Râmeț had become the property of the Kovacsóczy family and monk Raczi Simadi, probably a Serb, taught the children of the Romanians from nearby villages. Talking about this episode in his life, one of those former students does not mention anything else about the other functions of the monastery. However, Râmeț

suffered more and more from the masters of the land in the following years. Some even committed crimes, so that the monastery could be kept by the monks.⁹⁹ At that time, it is certain that there could be no question of any diocese in Râmeț. This hypothesis will be kept as potentially valid until we return to the historical discussion, starting from clearer premises drawn from other viewpoints.



Again about the art and the need to revise the chronology.

At the end of this long historical and historiographical journey, overly entangled, we should return to painter Mihul and his art, as he would have been the only one able to meet the demands imposed by both the archbishop and his colleague (or colleagues) that preceded him at Râmpeț, in the painting of the apse and nave. Although very small, the remaining murals of the painting layer preceding that of Mihul were dated to the first half of the 14th century, being associated technically, stylistically, and iconographically with Western Gothic art,¹⁰⁰ while the compositional schemes were related with Byzantine art.¹⁰¹ If we trust the last reading of the inscription, Mihul, a Romanian from somewhere along the White Criș River (*Crișul Alb*), would be called a few decades later to continue the work of his predecessors, offering a much clearer confessional orientation to his artistic message. The selection of holy figures in the paintings, as well as the inclusion of military saints in the *Deisis* scene, without any correspondent in the Romanian

cultural context, have so far been explained only by the preference for asceticism of the monks at Râmpeț, the need to defend 'true orthodoxy' against Catholic propaganda,¹⁰² and the function of prayer for the forgiveness of the sins of the Romanian warriors, defenders of the borders of Transylvania. The latter would have been forced, as vassals of the king of Hungary, to take part in battles against the Romanians outside of the Carpathians.¹⁰³ As for Mihul, he was appreciated as representative of a Romanian school of painting in full affirmation, which would reveal its full potential in the works undertaken at the end of the 14th century and in the first decades of the 15th century, especially in the painting of the churches in Crișcior, Leșnic,

► Fig. 22. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Saint John Chrysostom', in the narthex of the church in Râmpeț, detail. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

► Fig. 23. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Saints Anthony the Great and Basil the Great', in the narthex of the church in Râmpeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.



Hălmagiu, Ribița, and Zlatna.¹⁰⁴ Mihul thus became a product of the intersections between the Byzantine and Western cultural spheres. In its decorative repertoire, elements transmitted through the international Gothic style were recognized (Fig. 23).¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the elongated contours of his painted physiognomies would be drawn with an obvious concern for variety (Fig. 20-23), being appreciated as a reflection of the heterogeneous artistic environment of Transylvania.¹⁰⁶

The satisfactory knowledge of Old Church Slavonic in which he composed the inscription is commensurate with a superior artistic training, but it still does not allow him to exceed the scope of a provincial master. This is especially evident in certain anatomical inaccuracies: the hands are too small (Fig. 20), there is a thinness of the legs, and an unnatural way in which clothes surround the knees of the figures, which are not completely covered by drapes (Fig. 24). For a local painting school, dependent on sponsors with limited material resources, these inaccuracies would not have been a problem. On the contrary, the overall artistic quality suggests a relatively intense activity, which constantly provided opportunities and motivations for improving technical knowledge, for collaboration among workshops, and even for possible study trips. Without such contacts, Mihul would not have been able to master the norms of Byzantine art – even if only to a large extent – nor to develop such a personal way of expression. In other words, Mihul had to have traveled, either to seek instruction or as a disciple, with the master under whose guidance he learned the craft, or to find work when he remained on his own. On a larger scale, that of a local school of painting, one must again accept the arrival of some craftsmen from elsewhere, through whom the source of inspiration and the framing in the Byzantine manner was more or less directly ensured. From this point of view, Mihul is not sufficient in and of himself.

The search around Transylvania for similarities with the paintings at Râmeț has so far resulted only in vague terms of comparison from an artistic point of view. The representations of saint Athanasius the Great in the narthex of Cozia monastery,¹⁰⁷ and of saints Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Gregory Nazianzen in the narthex of Tismana monastery have been adduced,¹⁰⁸ but the firm conclusion has been that there are no relations between the princely art of Wallachia and the provincial one of Transylvania during the second half of the 14th century.¹⁰⁹ Even the broader searches, starting from the whole set of paintings from Transylvania up to the middle of the 15th century, found only tenuous correspondences in Serbia that had nothing to do with painting, but with the use of formulas in the text of the church inscription.¹¹⁰ Minor relations with representations from the Catholic and Orthodox churches in modern Slovakia and Ukraine have also been highlighted.¹¹¹ Nothing, however, has been signaled stylistically as there are no references even to the color palette, and the canon of rendering the proportions of the figures – which Mihul particularises through a delicately elongated contour for the older saints (Fig. 21-23) and through adolescent hairstyles for younger saints (Fig. 25-26) – has not even been taken into account due to the accentuated provincial character of the paintings from all over Transylvania.

A first thought is to review what Mihul may have revealed about himself in the inscription he left in the narthex of the monastic church at Râmeț, considering that his origin and knowledge of Old Church Slavonic could offer insight into his training as an artist. The slightly strange





▲ Fig. 24. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Military saint and archangel', detail from the Deisis scene, in the narthex of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

▶ Fig. 25. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Martyr saint Procopius', in the narthex of the church in Râmeț, detail. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

situation had already been noted in which the painter – despite displaying humility through the consecrated formula “the sinful servant of God” – puts himself in the forefront more so than the two authorities, ecclesiastical and political, that he invokes as causal and temporal landmarks of his creation.¹¹² If the temporal landmark (“in the days of king *Lodovic*”) can be considered part of the *stilonarium* of these kinds of texts,¹¹³ the mention “by order of”, “at the request of” (*повеленіємъ*)¹¹⁴ of archbishop Gelasius nevertheless puts us in front of an almost direct relationship between the two. This change of interpretive key, a look at the text from the inside, cannot, however, eliminate the fact that Mihul expressly and personally received the order to make the painting. At that time, I hoped that this command was due to a merit enciphered in the word *вѣлокришць*. Although it could just as well be just a simple statement of facts, the apparent emphasis with which Mihul presents himself as *зѣграфъ вѣлокришць* indicates a distinction, a reason for pride underlined by the presence of the copulative conjunction in the sequence that connects the two attributes:¹¹⁵ that of a servant of God

and that of a painter – *многогрѣшни рабъ божиі... и зѣграфъ вѣлокришць*. The use of this appellation would suggest the recognition of an authority, of an identity-generating sign capable of justifying the selection of Mihul by a bishop whose jurisdiction is also not specified – another reason to look with suspicion at the reduction of the surname *вѣлокришць* to a basic geographical reference, “from White-Criș”, the only translation proposed so far.

Unfortunately, the efforts to find another meaning for this word have yielded no results. As a sign of consolation, we should at least note that the phrase in question is not exactly appropriate, as it does not refer to a settlement – as would have been normal – but to a river or at most a district that functioned temporarily in Zarand county and was later merged into the domain of Șiria fortress.¹¹⁶ A “land of White-Criș” (*Țara Crișului Alb*) as the equivalent name for the land of Hălmagiu (*Țara Hălmagiului*), circulated for some time in historiography, but is not a reality attested as such in medieval documents.¹¹⁷ It is just a misinterpretation of an expression created by the historian Radu Popa out of the need to delineate another common name, that of land of Zarand (*Țara Zarandului*). Yet it was completely inappropriate, because it reflects realities of the 18th and 19th centuries.¹¹⁸ It should be noted that during the 15th century, the district of Hălmagiu was also not equivalent to that of White-Criș, being attested simultaneously in documents, together with the other Romanian districts from Zarand county. Even if we assume that painter Mihul referred to



ТѢХЕННІИ СТОР.



◀ Fig. 26. Mihul of White-Criș, 'Martyr saint Nestor', in the narthex of the church in Râmeț, detail. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

that territory and not another, the lack of documentary evidence makes it impossible to separate from the entire White Criș River basin those communities that formed the homonymous district. Identifying the region where he was originally from or where he set up his residence is consequently even more difficult to establish. However, there is a certain habit of those in the land of the Criș Rivers (*Țara Crișurilor*) to refer to themselves in this way in modern times. With a similar formula, one of the most diligent copyists from the area signed his work in the 17th century:

*Eu, Popa Pătru, diîn Crișulu Reapede, diîn sat din Chinăud, am scris această sfântă carte până aicea când am lăcuit în Criștealic. Ani(i) de la nașterea D(o)mnului (...) 1686, sfârșiu în priiriu în 22 de zile, joi...*¹¹⁹

I, Popa Peter, from Fast-Criș, of the village Chinăud, I wrote this holy book up to this place when I lived in Criștealic. The years since the birth of the Lord (...) 1686, I completed it [the work] in April, day 22, Thursday...

*Cu mila lui Dumnezeu, eu, Popa Pătru diîn Crișul Reapede, diîn sat diîn Chinăud, am scris această carte când au fost ani(i) de la zidirea lumii 7196, de la Nașterea lui H(risto)s 1688, crugul Soarelui au fost în 28, crugul Lunei în 14 letera psi, și am gătat până aicea cu scrierea în luna lui mart(ie) în 28 de zile, miercuri.*¹²⁰

By the pity of the Lord, I, Popa Peter from Fast-Criș, of the village of Chinăud, I wrote this book when the years from the Creation of the World were 7196, from the Birth of Christ, 1688, the cycle of the Sun in 28, the cycle of the Moon in 14 letter psi, and I finished writing up to this place in the month of March, day 28, Wednesday.

Of course, we are talking about a reality much later than the moment when the inscription from Râmeț was composed. In addition, there is a suspicion that this Peter from Tinăud was not a local, but was part of the suite of one of the princes or boyars from Wallachia and Moldavia who found refuge for a while in Bihor in the context of military confrontations in the mid-17th century.¹²¹ Moreover, all his other signatures were limited to the formula "Popa Peter from Chinăud", with the two reproduced here being therefore the exceptions. This attestation is later, a probable consequence of the fact that the one who recommended himself in this way was not a local. It would therefore be risky to generalize and believe that Mihul would have been in a similar situation a few centuries earlier. For the sake of the hypothesis, if we accepted that Mihul would have acted in the same way as Popa Peter, let us then accept the possibility that Mihul would have said in Romanian that he is "from White-Criș" (*din Crișul Alb*). Yet this interpretation has little chance of success for other reasons.

The term *вѣлокришъ* has the value of an adjective. Its derivation with the suffix -*ъ*, an "unusual suffix for the formation of adjectives from toponyms",¹²² was interpreted as a small oddity, although it could just as well have been a difficulty of Mihul to relate to local toponymy if he had left those lands a while back or had come from other places. Long-distance travel was a constant in the lives of medieval artists. In reality, however, the use of the Old Church Slavonic suffix -*ъ* seems to have the meaning of the Romanian ending -(e)*anu* in the logic of the painter from Râmeț.

Of course, among the Romanians, Mihul could not have called himself "White-Crișan", but the confusion caused by the fact that there were several Criș rivers could make the banal surname "Crișan" be translated with maximum fidelity relative to the river on which the place of origin or residence of the painter was located. Although it is also imperfect, this interpretation seems to me much more plausible.

Unable to evade the sphere of the anecdotal, and having no other biographical reference with which to assign a new meaning to the appellation *вѣлокришъ*, I followed an earlier suggestion of Vladimir Agrigoroaei to intensify the search by starting from the name of the archbishop in charge of the painting at Râmeț, in the hope that I may be able to bring Mihul in the way of archbishop Gelasius. The only attestations of hierarchs bearing this name were found in the Ruthenian milieu: a Gelasij, bishop of Vladimir-Volhynia sometime in the 11th century,¹²³ and a Gelazy, bishop of Przemyśl, mentioned in 1412-1416 documents.¹²⁴ Although none of them could be the one alluded to in the church inscription from Râmeț (if the chronology of the inscription was really correct), I deepened the searches in this direction, being tempted by the accidental discovery of an important Vlach community that arrived in Poland following the incorporation of the principality of Halych-Volhynia in 1349.¹²⁵ Some of them were originally from the North and East of the kingdom of Hungary, more precisely from Transylvania, Maramureș, and the Slovak counties.¹²⁶ The Romanian colonisations had intensified during the period when Poland was ruled by Louis I of Hungary, a fact interpreted as a deliberate political action, in order to preserve and strengthen the ties of the Ruthenian lands with the Angevin dynasty.¹²⁷ Most Romanians established rural settlements and specialised in pastoral economy. Some of them, however, were small nobles from the entourage of the Maramureș family of Drágffy, who received estates in the lands of Sanok, Przemyśl, Lvov, and Halych.¹²⁸ It would not have been excluded that Mihul originated from such an environment, given the so-called Western influences that previous research attributed to his work.

The appreciation enjoyed by the *maniera Graeca* among the Catholic Poles and the existence in Southern Poland of these communities of Romanians who shared the Orthodox confession with the Ruthenian population, could be a fairly fertile environment for painters of his kind. Was Mihul among those who worked there? If so, such an experience should be reflected in his painting, and also in his knowledge of Old Church Slavonic, as it is known that the vernacular Slavic languages had a profound impact on the Old Church Slavonic writing in their area. In other words, where Mihul learned Slavonic, he could have also learned the craft of painting. Unfortunately, it was impossible for me to complete a linguistic research. I lacked the necessary skills, so I enlisted the help of many colleagues already mentioned in the introduction of this study. Until the philologists clarified the type of writing in Mihul's Old Church Slavonic, my research was limited to a series of searches in the artistic environment, apparently relieved by the fact that very few samples of painting of a Byzantine tradition remained, and all preserved in Catholic churches.¹²⁹ Among them, the only one that offered analogies with Mihul's painting was the one in the collegiate basilica from Wiślica. It offered parallels both in terms of the color palette, very close to the one used in Râmeț, and especially through two physiognomic similarities. These are usually the most relevant details in the comparative study of paintings.





◄ Fig. 27. Detail from the murals of the apse in the collegiate church in Wiślica, end of the 14th century-c. 1420. Credits: Piotr Krawiec, courtesy of Agnieszka Gronek.

▲ Fig. 28. Wiślica, 'Unidentified saint', detail, end of the 14th century-c. 1420. Credits: Igor Zamoyski, courtesy of Mirosław Piotr Kruk.

▼ Fig. 29. Wiślica, 'Unidentified saint', detail, end of the 14th century-c. 1420. Credits: Igor Zamoyski, courtesy of Mirosław Piotr Kruk.



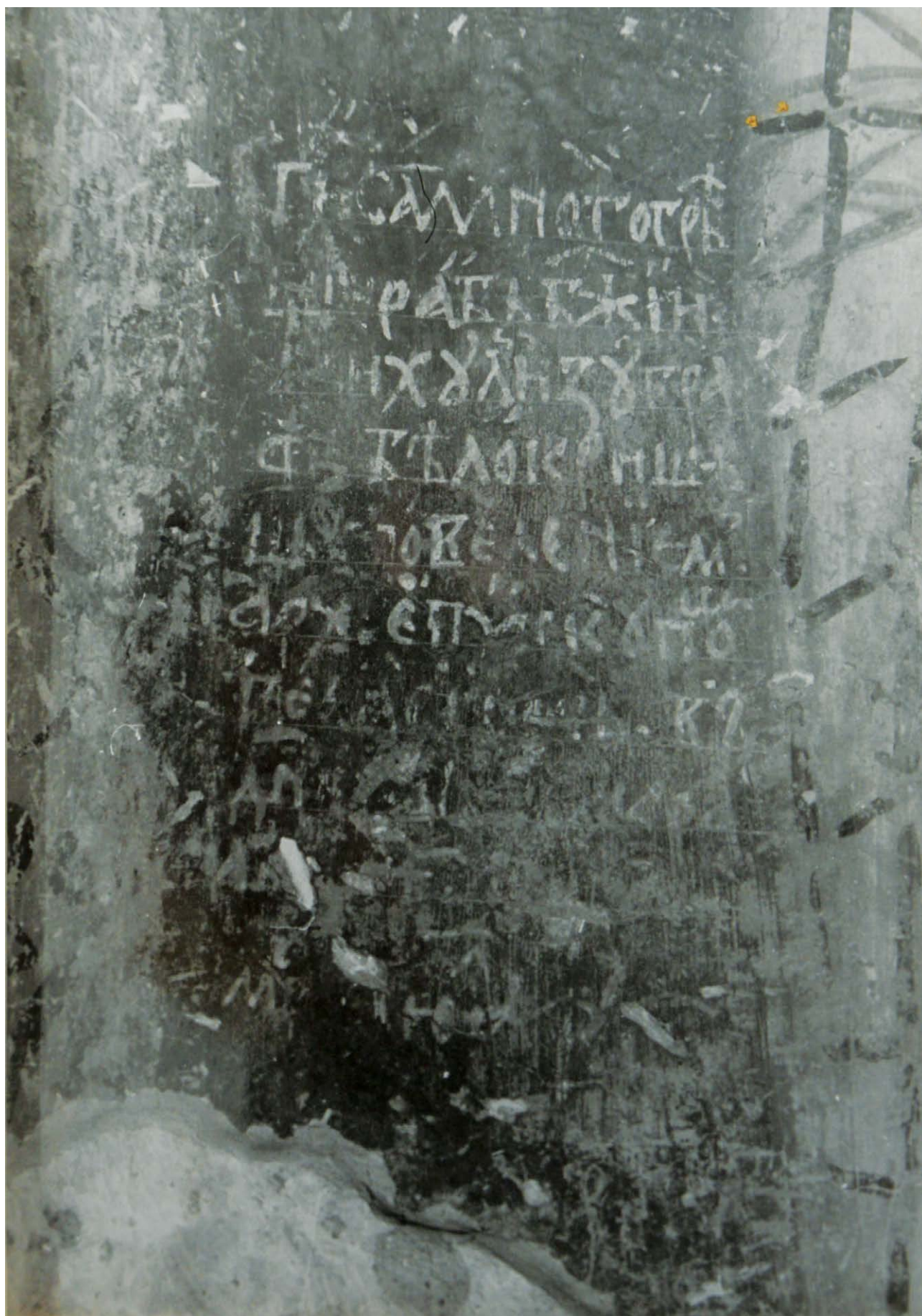
More precisely, there are two to four decades separating the paintings at Râmeț and those in the church in Wiślica.¹³⁰ Given the completely different proportions of the two monuments, literally and figuratively, it cannot be admitted that the painter of a small church secluded in the mountains of Transylvania could have influenced the workshop that yielded the craftsmen working at Wiślica. Mihul's belonging to the same artistic environment in Southern Poland, from which he had detached himself and left for Transylvania a few decades earlier than the beginning of the Wiślica construction site, would again be inadmissible. Barely strained, this connection seemed to lead nowhere. Suddenly, the inscription itself became a great obstacle and returning to it a vital necessity (Fig. 30).

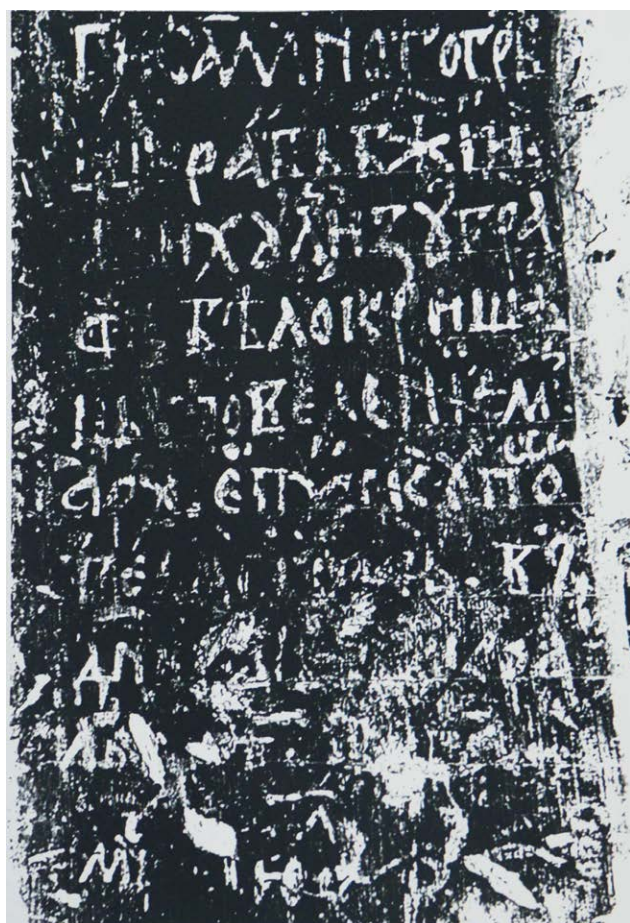
When your research becomes the research of others.

The question of what type of Old Church Slavonic writing belongs to Mihul did not prove to be productive either. Philologists have much finer criteria for appreciating a text. Because they could not offer me a clear answer and were not content simply to give any answer, the colleagues who guided me in this part of the research shared their doubts with me, unable to give categorical statements about the inscription of painter Mihul. The first of the questions, the one that shook the entire meticulous scaffolding built so far, was voiced by Aleksandr Dmitrievich Paskal. Based on the spelling of the signs 8, ѿ in superscript, ѿ, and the smooth breathing, he questioned the very possibility of the inscription dating to the 14th century. The features in question would most likely suggest a dating to the 16th century. Suddenly, the small differences in the reading bet-

The figures from Wiślica have no names, and their identities do not seem to have been revealed even in the inscriptions on the scrolls they hold in their hands. Represented standing, these figures belong to a larger group of saints, paired at the intersection of the walls of the apse, in the upper portions (Fig. 27). The younger figure (Fig. 28) can be compared with saints Procopius and Nestor from Râmeț (Fig. 25-26). Despite the inevitable differences, they have in common the same type of hairstyle and the same way of rendering the strands of hair, through touches in alternating color tones. The older figure (Fig. 29), with a high and domed forehead, with the extremities completely removed from under the strands of hair, resembles saints Gregory the Great, Andronicus, Nicholas, and John Chrysostom from Râmeț (Fig. 20-23).

I must admit that these analogies are tenuous, but they cannot be neglected in the absence of other comparisons. They could indicate at least a common training among the painters involved. Nevertheless, the obstacles between Râmeț and Wiślica are not easy to overcome. The most important of these is the time interval that separates them.

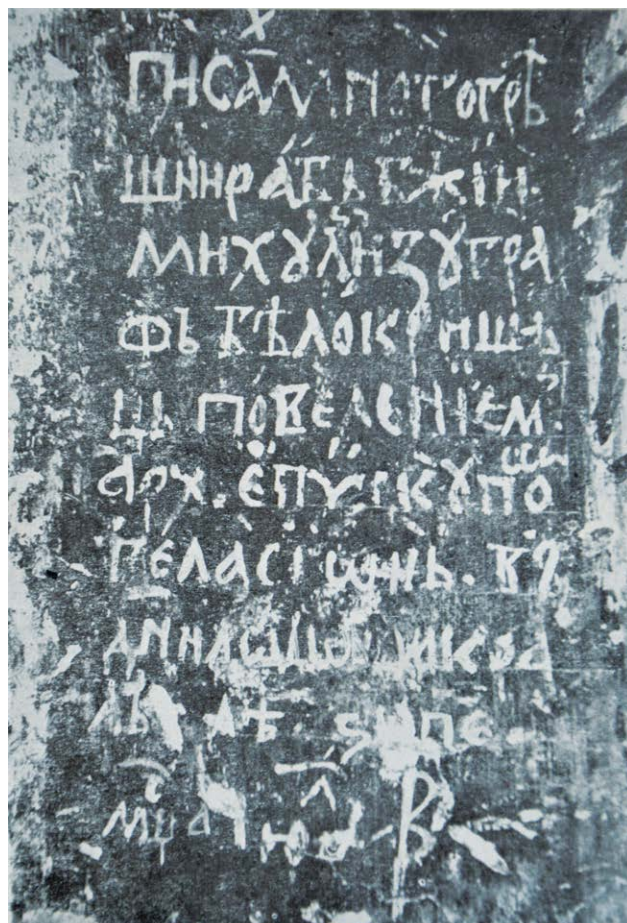




◀ Fig. 30. Old Church Slavonic inscription painted in the narthex of the church in Râmeț, photograph of 1980 from the monastery archive. Re-photographed by Dumitrița Filip.

▲ Fig. 31. uv photograph of the inscription from Râmeț. Source: Breazu 1985, p. 50.

▼ Fig. 32. Photograph of the inscription from Râmeț, with a reconstruction of the illegible text. Source: Tugearu, Breazu 1981, p. 33.



the hotel. The inscription appeared in all its splendor! I didn't sleep all night, waiting in the morning to call Prof. Drăguț in Bucharest. He was extremely excited, but he told us that he did not believe it until he saw it; what's more, a kind of Thomas the Unbeliever of the scientist version.¹³¹

In fact, the first version of the translation made by Monica Breazu and published by Liana Tugearu, the one in which the dating of 1376 was advanced, did not really mention anything about the name of the king:

I wrote this, most sinful servant of God, Mihul painter from White Criș during the office of archbishop Ghelasion. In the days ... the king (year 6884) month July 2.¹³²

Later, when the academic translation was published, there were still some doubts about the reading of the king's name. The large number of letters was too difficult to cram into the remaining space, so Liana Tugearu preferred to narrow them down (ΛΩΔ[ΩΒ]ΙΚΑ),¹³³ considering that two of them had probably been marked in superscript. She also opted for a different spelling than that of Monica Breazu (ΛΟΔОВΙΚΑ).¹³⁴ However, the use of ω instead of ο, in addition to the fact that it is not justified (everywhere in the readable text ο is used), also presupposed a greater need for space (Fig. 31-32). However, she had agreed on the dating in 6885 (= 1377). A detail of the group of the Slavonic numbers, with the accentuation of the contours, for more clarity, was published together with the photograph obtained through the special technique.¹³⁵ The same detail can also be observed in the material written by the author of the photograph (Fig. 33),¹³⁶ only that its reading is ex-

ween the variants proposed by Liana Tugearu and Monica Breazu became very important. Returning to their publications and checking the illustration with which they completed their arguments (Fig. 31-32) made clear the difficulties they faced. Things were described with nostalgia later by one of the authors of the photos:

After the torturous operation of unrolling and connecting the electrical cables to the remote headquarters of the monastery, we proceeded to examine the inscription on the second layer of plaster in the narthex, using a source of ultraviolet radiation. Monica Breazu, an excellent Slavacist now in Paris, took care of the actual reading. At one point, she became elated and simply shouted, 'Fantastic, incredible, what will Prof. Drăguț say?' We all squirmed, not understanding a hint of the Old Church Slavonic inscriptions that shone like a diamond due to the fluorescence effect. *The year of the painting was '6885', meaning '1377'!* [emphasis in text]. I took pictures with a magnifying glass, with the camera in my hand or on a thin tripod that vibrated continuously. Will something come out? Overwhelmed with emotion, we returned after midnight to Alba Iulia and we developed the film in a 'rest room' in



▲ Fig. 33. Detail of the uv photograph of the inscription from Râmeț. Source: Ionescu 2008, p. 258.

▲ Fig. 34. uv detailed photograph of the inscription from Râmeț, now in the monastery archive. Re-photographed by Dumitrița Filip.

► Fig. 35. Present state of the Old Church Slavonic inscription in the narthex of the church in Râmeț. Credits: Vladimir Agrigoroaei.

tremely difficult and any interpretation is based on a conjecture. As for the group of Cyrillic letters that made up the name of the ruler, they are in an even more deteriorated state (Fig. 34). Once I understood these things, the harmonisation of the 16th-century spelling with these illegible dating landmarks could no longer pose major problems. The only issue was that the reading of the inscription had been forced and sent the interpreters – certainly not in bad faith – to an inappropriate time period.

Aleksandr Paskal's comment was supplemented by suggestions from Ivana Bezrukova. She pointed out that the

position of the accents and the forms of the letters м, ѿ, ѡ, ѣ, ѡ were specific to the school founded in Tarnovo by the Bulgarian patriarch saint Euthymius (1375-1393), later spread by his disciples in Serbia, Moldavia, and Russia. Looking from the perspective of Serbian Cyrillic paleography, the inscription from Râmeț could be dated between the second half of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. I follow here the suggestion of Zhanna Levshina, who noticed that it was too early for Euthymius' reform to reach Transylvania. In 1377, it was just initiated in Bulgaria. Wanda Stępnia Minczewska also noticed that Mihul had a predisposition to write words as he knew them in his own language: михѡл, зѡграф, епископ, although correctly in Old Church Slavonic they would have been михѡл, зѡграф, епископ. Indirectly, this observation confirmed that бѣлокришѣць must indeed be seen as a circumstantial adaptation of a Romanian name, consisting of a translatable part (White) and an untranslatable part (Cris). The only word left in question remained the derivative геласіѡн. Correctly, in the Slavonic, it should have been transcribed as геласіѡм. Yet as such, at least we removed from the discussion the possibility that the bearer of this name was Greek.

Of course, such a short text contains too little linguistic material to answer the question of where Mihul learned Old Church Slavonic. However, the form in which the word поведеіѡм is rendered can be seen as an indication. The transformation of поведеіѡм into поведеіѡм is one of the most characteristic phonetic features of Serbian Old Church Slavonic, being in use from as early as the end of the 13th century. As the phonetic adaptation of the Greek terms зѡграф, епископ and the name михѡл is not characteristic of either the southern (Serbian and Bulgarian) or the eastern (Russian-Ukrainian) redactions, one may conclude that Mihul learned the Old Church Slavonic language somewhere in a Romanian monastery, most likely from a Serbian monk. We already saw this happen in Râmeț, where in the second half of the 16th century "a priest named Raczi Simadi who lived in it" was a teacher.¹³⁷ Unfortunately, this is the only way to reconstruct his linguistic profile. Yet, if we bring into the discussion the fact that bishop Christopher, the one named in 1557, was praised for his knowledge of Greek (*graecarum Litterarum scientiae*),¹³⁸ possibly a confusion with knowledge of Slavonic required of a Greek-rite cleric, as well as the fact that Euthymius, the bishop named in 1571, was consecrated by the Serbian patriarch from Peć, we could have two additional weak arguments that in Râmeț there were others who knew Old Church Slavonic and who shared their knowledge with young disciples. In the early years of the 16th century, their arrival could have been a consequence of the long diplomatic travels of despot George Branković, by then a monk under the new name of Maxim. He was consecrated bishop in 1503 or 1504 by the ecumenical patriarch Niphon, who was then in Wallachia. Or perhaps by the hierarchs of Moldavia in 1507-1508, as the latter consecrated him as archbishop of Belgrade. Maxim (George Branković) was an envoy of king Vladislas II of Hungary, being charged with diplomatic missions to assure the collaboration of the Romanian principalities in the fight against the Ottomans.¹³⁹

A new reading of the inscription.

After noticing that the dating of the inscription in the narthex at Râmeț to 1377 was only the result of a personal choice, suggested perhaps by the dating error – 1387 – of the inscription carved in stone and inserted on the outer wall of the church, it remained to be seen whether the new information could be useful for a new reading. For easier tracking of the text, let us start by saying that the inscrip-

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΑΛΛΗΛΟΤΕΡΑΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΡΑΒΒΕΚΗΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΧΑΛΗΖΟΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΟΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΟΝ

ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΟΝ

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tion was divided into ten lines. For nine of them, ruling lines were incised with a consistent spacing, which gives the inscription an orderly appearance, serving also as a sign of the importance of the message it had to convey. The first six lines can be read effortlessly, and their text remains the same as in the first reading, that of Vasile Drăguț:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) писахъ многогрѣ | I wrote this, most sin- |
| 2) шні рабѣ вѣи | ful servant of God |
| 3) миѣдѣ и ѣ зѣгра | Mihul and painte- |
| 4) фѣ вѣлокришѣ | r White-Crișa- |
| 5) цѣ повелѣніемъ | nu, by the order |
| 6) архієпископомъ | of the archbishop |

The next group of letters was read by Vasile Drăguț as *георгіномъ*.¹⁴⁰ The letters *ге*, *ї* and the *ѣ* sign at the end, which the historian did not indicate in his transcript, are clearly legible in the photograph he published.¹⁴¹ The letters *лѣс* can be easily read in the ultraviolet photography and, thanks to the cleaning performed during the restoration, they have also become legible to the naked eye (Fig. 35). The name of the hierarch thus remains the one proposed by the Breazu-Tugearu reading. However, in the absence of a clear legibility of the last three signs, we still can complete it in the correct form:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 7) геласіомъ. вѣ | Gelasiom, in |
|------------------|--------------|

From lines 8 and 9, only the following letters remain visible today:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 8) дни ***** кра | the days ki- |
| 9) лѣ (л)ѣ [т] ****. | ng, year |

With the exception of line 2 and without counting the superscript characters, the preceding lines contain eleven and twelve characters each, which means that the illegible text on line 8 must have consisted of a maximum of seven letters (rather 6 + 1 in ligature) (Fig. 36). Liana Tugearu also accepted the same, probably on the grounds that two words were superscripted, because the variant of the name proposed (*лѣд[ѣв]ика*) does not offer the possibility of a transcription with a ligature. Given the name of such an important character and given that the inscription could continue far down the wall, if it proved necessary, the two ways of abstracting the text (superscript and ligature) cannot be accepted and no heaping of the letters can be sustained. We should note that the author of the inscription in Romanian inserted on the outer wall of the church used the same number of letters (6 + 1 in ligature) when he identified *матинаш* as the king during whose time the church was first painted.

When we combine the color image of the inscription, as much as can be read of it (Fig. 35), and the black-and-white one achieved with ultraviolet photography (Fig. 31), it becomes quite obvious how many tricks the eyes can play in their inability to distinguish between extant traces of white paint and the scratches or losses of plaster that the black-and-white photograph also rendered as white marks, without capturing the depth of the layers. The most obvious mistake due to these confusions can be seen in line 10. Due to the lack of the mark incised below, it was easily detached from the rest of the lines and written in disarray. In the reading proposed by Vasile Drăguț and supported by Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu (*м(с)ца іюла вѣ*), this line acquires a chaotic aspect, due to the excessive oversizing of number 2. However, the vertical arm of this sup-

posed number is only the consequence of a scratch and the upper loop is the result of scraping. What remains can only be interpreted as a final ornament, as it was necessary to have with a text of such importance. The content of the last row is thus restricted to:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 10) м(с)ца іюла | month of July + ornament |
|-----------------|--------------------------|

Even if we utilize all the technical means available today and take into account the names of all the kings of Hungary since the middle of the 14th century and the princes of Transylvania in the 16th century, the attempt to give content to such important parts that remain unknown in the text of the inscription at Râmeț lead nowhere. No letter can be reconstructed or at least proposed in order to have a landmark around which to form at least one hypothesis. Dragoș Năstăsoiu found himself in a similar situation. In publishing the church inscription at Râmeț in a corpus of inscriptions from Transylvanian medieval churches, he left blank the illegible spaces on lines 7, 8 and 9, corresponding to the end of the archbishop's name, the king's name, and the year.¹⁴² Again, the painting was left to reveal its age.

The possibility that Mihul was only the author of the inscription and not of the painting is to be excluded, as the differences between the spelling of the inscription and that of the names of the represented figures (much more elegant and neat) could suggest. The framing of the text between the decorative margin and the edge of the robe of saint Gregory the Great, as well as the drawing of the ruling lines with a minimal discrepancy (a few millimeters outside the background color) denotes care for the freshly painted surface and respect for the work. Let us not forget that at the time of the discovery, when the name of the hierarch was still presumed to be George and the inscription had not been intensively studied, Vasile Drăguț placed it in the second half of the 15th century, more precisely in 1486. The decision seemed justified. It was based on the correction applied to the date in the Romanian inscription on the outside of the church and on a debatable analogy with the fragments of painting discovered in the sanctuary of the

▼ Fig. 36. Interpretation of the uv detailed photograph of the inscription from Râmeț published by Breazu 1985, p. 50, marking the letter-spaces where the name of the king and the dating used to be painted.



church of Zlatna, of which 'at least part' were attributed to Mihul.¹⁴³ Because he did not know an archbishop George in the second half of the 15th century, Marius Porumb challenged the dating proposed by Vasile Drăguț, but it is not clear whether he was referring only to Mihul's text, which he considered to be dated to the 16th century, or also to the painting of the narthex of the church in Râmeț.¹⁴⁴ When the inscription was dated to 1376-1377, its mural stratum was automatically sent back to the second half of the 14th century, without any comment on the previously expressed opinions.¹⁴⁵ The restorers in turn took over this dating, not checking whether or not the technical aspects coincided with the manner in which a 14th-century painter had worked.¹⁴⁶ Thus, instead of contributing to the progress of research, reading at all costs the missing parts of the inscription from Râmeț proved to be totally counterproductive, both for art historians and for those interested in political and ecclesiastical history. The confirmation of the existence of an Orthodox archdiocese was expected in vain. The only working hypotheses that could be offered were in relation to the Latin Church and its efforts to reunify Christianity.

A new chronology for the layers of painting.

At this point, we must ask ourselves: what effects could the new reading of the inscription have on the history of Râmeț monastery? What needs to change if the dating of the information provided by Mihul does not lead to 1377, but to the end of the 15th century, maybe even to the beginning of the 16th century? The age of the church, uncertain, has been pushed back to the beginning of the 14th century on the grounds that the first layer of murals, the one to which the fragment in the proskomedion niche belongs, has been dated to the first half of that century. The closest analogies were found in the painting from Sântămăria-Orlea, dated to 1311, with the one at Râmeț being considered later, without exceeding the middle of the 14th century.¹⁴⁷ This first layer, for which Vasile Drăguț had previously proposed a date about half a century later,¹⁴⁸ as well as the martyrdom scenes in the nave, the images on the templon, and those of the northern wall, were to a large extent pushed back in time under the pressure of the dating of Mihul's murals to 1377 and the discovery of the two layers of whitewashing underneath it.¹⁴⁹ Now that this burden has been removed, a reassessment of the dating differences reported in the table at the beginning of this article is in order. As the text published by the restorative painter Corneliu Boambeș does not allow me to distinguish between hesitations and possible typographical errors, I will resume the discussion based on the restoration documentation of the painting, handed over for preservation to Râmeț monastery on December 13, 1989.¹⁵⁰

The *Birth of saint John the Baptist*, the only mural fragment that could have been used in an proper dating because it was discovered during the last restoration projects that took place between 1987 and 1989, was presented in the publication as dating to the 15th century, which is questionable.¹⁵¹ In the documentation that accompanied the restoration, however, reference is never made only to the 15th century. The approximations are formulated as follows: "(from) the beginning of the 16th century (?)", "between the 15th-16th centuries (?)", "16th century (?)", or "between the 16th-17th centuries (?)". The reason for these hesitations is evident in the restoration file related to this painting fragment, where, instead of conclusions based on laboratory analyses, we find the following confession:

Noting, as a general fact, that the monastery received do-

nations from Romanian princes like Matthew (*sic!*) Corvinus, Radu the Great (1506), Michael the Brave – it would not be excluded that this painting is related to the period and activity to some of them. As an option, I would include this stage of fresco painting between the 15th and 16th centuries, before the fresco painting on the templon, which I link to the foundation of the monastery by Michael the Brave.

Stylistically, the image of the 'Birth of Saint John the Baptist' (?) reminds me somewhat of the painting from the time of Peter Rareș.¹⁵²

The problem is that none of the cited sources are justified. The painting of the church during the time of Matthias Corvinus does not result in his financial involvement. Radu the Great's is a conjecture after the deed of donation of the domain of Geoagiu de Jos, based on a confusion with the one from Geoagiu de Sus. And the support received from Michael the Brave is based on modern fantastical interpretations. The trouble is that this entire succession of rulers overlaps over a century and a half of art history, during one of the most dynamic periods in which a renewal occurred even in artistic environments indebted to Byzantine traditions. More technical and adequate explanations, yet still not entirely conclusive, can be found in the restoration file related to the painting on the templon:

It seems that this stage of fresco painting, in its execution, would correspond (judging stylistically) to the period in which Michael the Brave helped Râmeț monastery with donations. It was thought that his own painters, Peter the Armenian, Menas, and Nicholas of Crete painted it. However, this hypothesis is not supported by any concrete dating. No inscription has been found.

Personally, it seems to me more stylistically related to the period of the 16th century, beginning of the 17th. What led me to this option: the ornamental motif of the braided ribbon, the draping of the figures, the composition, the very restrained color range, the way the drawing is elaborated.¹⁵³

We notice again the same confusion and helplessness, even if formulated in other terms. In addition, in the case of Michael the Brave, we cannot even speak of the beginning of the 17th century. His authority over Transylvania ceased in fact (and in law) after the battle of Mirăslău (September 28, 1600). If we take into account the decline of the monastery as a result of discretionary treatment directed by the owners of the domain Geoagiu de Sus, starting with the 1560s and until late in the 17th century, accompanied by trials and even attempts to expel the monks,¹⁵⁴ we have to exclude this period from the list of moments conducive to enhancing the monastery with new paintings. Moreover, I believe that we can extend this unfortunate stage to 1741. Even then, we must acknowledge the financial difficulties faced by the new ktetors as they managed to restore only the sanctuary apse, thus the smallest room of the church.

With arguments like the ones mentioned above, it is difficult to accept the succession of the layers of painting, their breadth, and especially their chronology. Even if several hands were involved, the two fresco fragments can be brought together and discussed even if only for their peculiar iconographic choices. Regarding the scene of the *Birth of saint John the Baptist*, the place where it was located, and the dimensions occupied by a single representation, although organized in two registers, are bizarre and impossible to associate with any other scenes. Moreover,



we do not know whether the church was dedicated to saint John the Baptist, with the intention of reconstructing a program carried out on the entire surface of the nave. And the painting is of too good of a quality to believe that its author was called to Râmăţ only to cover that half of the wall. As for the templon, the representation of the *Ascension* instead of the *Crucifixion* and the three holy hierarchs as a duplicate of the royal icons – since that part of the masonry on which the martyrdom scene is located must have been whitewashed and intended for movable icons – escapes any logic. The only explanation would be that one of the two registers was intended to illustrate the dedicatory feast of the church (*hram*). As it is not known what dedication the church had in the Middle Ages, this assumption remains only hypothetical until further clarifications emerge on the issue.

Returning to the chronology and the amendments applied to the restorer's opinions, we established that the

painting of the templon has as its upper limit the middle of the 16th century, while the larger section to which it belongs (and upon which the scene of the *Birth of saint John the Baptist* was painted) may be dated either earlier or at the same time. In order to establish the lower limit, I believe that the information provided by the inscription carved in stone and mounted above the entrance, on the north façade of the church, must be given credence. Its content and location are added to the list of oddities characterising the monument in Râmăţ. I am not referring to the discrepancy between the name of king Matthias Corvinus and the year 6895 (= September 1386-August 1387), but to the fact that the text commemorates an event concerning the interior of the church, while the commemorative plate was placed on the outside. To whose eyes did that information matter so much as to demand its presentation in such a solemn way? Because it was written in Romanian, the search horizon cannot dip below the

middle of the 17th century, when such texts were not yet written in Romanian, but it also cannot go beyond 1741, when the monastery and the church faced difficulties and destruction once again. A suggestive detail could be considered the fact that the church also had exterior murals – a fact almost unknown today: two scenes also completed in 1741 were located right near the niche where the commemorative plate was placed.¹⁵⁵ Is it possible that the inscription referred to such a painting? The list of painters, today only partially legible, suggests an affirmative answer in this regard (Fig. 12). The text was declared unpublished in 1929, and left as such by Ștefan Meteș who was content only to comment that “the old monastery of Rîmeț was renewed in its painting, even on the outside, by a painter mentioned in the proskomedion: George of Făgăraș (1741).”¹⁵⁶ An almost complete transcription of the text was provided only by Vasile Drăguț,¹⁵⁷ but it is possible that his reading was interpretative in some places. Otherwise, there is no explanation why the legibility of the text remained so precarious after the restoration. Combining the text with the transcription, I obtained the following content:

Пом(ени) Г(оспод)и Gheorghe Zugrav, Pătru Zugrav), Ma-
thei, Stanca, Șandru, Maria, Anița, Ranite, Toma, Maria.
(Aceste) nume (se pomenesc cu cinste ori) pre c(are) v(a în)vr-
rednici [sic!] D(umne)z(eu), că au zugrăvit și hramul de (po-
menire de peste an).¹⁵⁸

Remember, Lord: George Painter, Peter Painter, Matthew, Stanca, Șandru, Mary, Anița, Ranite, Thomas, Mary. These names are to be remembered honorably by whomever God will favour, for they painted also the feast of the church.

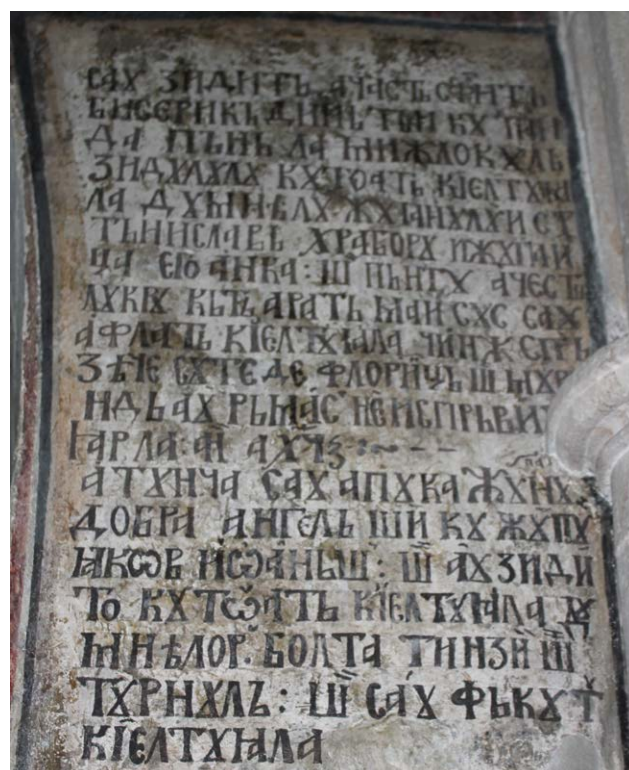
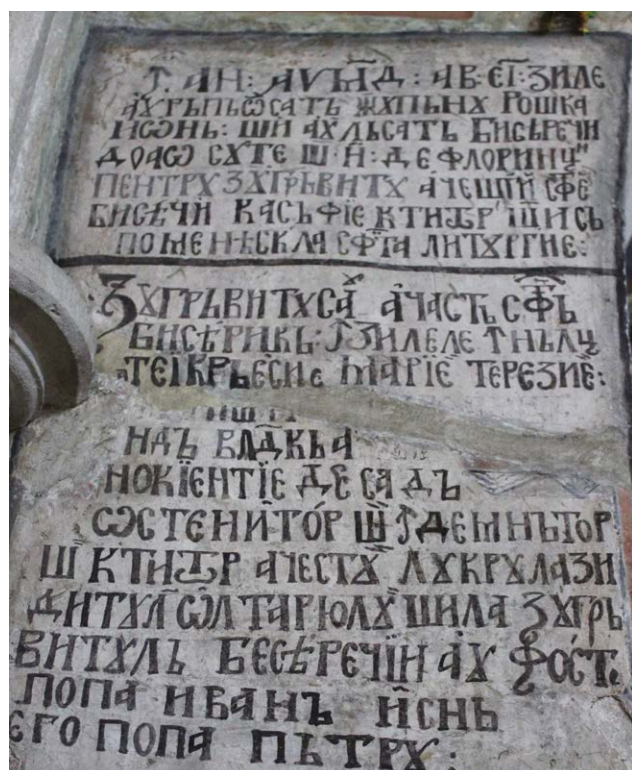
This confirms thus the words of Ștefan Meteș about the author of the exterior painting. But we ought to note also the importance given to the team of craftsmen entrusted to painting the two scenes on the outside of the edifice.

Historians have considered only the possibility that the inscription carved in stone refers to the interior painting, especially after reading the inscription of Mihul, which illuminates the name of archbishop Gelasius, reaching to his canonization in 1992. The supreme argument that the reference was in relation to the interior painting was offered by the name of hieromonk Геласим from the list in the proskomedion niche. This was an invented name whose ending -м in superscript may be a sign that even the one who wrote it was unclear. If it had been taken from the inscription of Mihul, which at that time must have been much more legible, it would at least provide proof that there it had been derived correctly according to the rules of Old Church Slavonic and rendered in the form ГЕЛАСІОМ, not ГЕЛАСІОН, as it was established in the reading by Monica Breazu and Liana Tugearu.

Supposedly bishop Innocent Micu-Klein commissioned the painter from 1741 to study the old inscriptions in order to give a historical dimension to his involvement in the restoration of the church. This would not be surprising, because the same happened in the case of other churches repainted during his pastorate, such as the one in Streisângeorgiu in 1743, where the same painter renewed the votive painting and the inscription from 1408-1409 (Fig. 37),¹⁵⁹ but also in Zlatna, where the new inscription included the mention of the building of the church in 1424 by master Stanislav Hraboru, also taken from a similar source, now lost (Fig. 38).¹⁶⁰ Either out of carelessness or because readability was already causing great problems, this information was assumed uncritically at Râmeț, as evidenced by the lack of interest in the term archbishop, which did not raise reading problems and which the proud bishop Innocent Micu-Klein would not have missed the opportunity to exploit. However, Gelasius / Ghelasim is listed only

◀ Fig. 37. Repainting of the votive scene in the church of Streisângeorgiu in 1743. Credits: Mihai Bilici.

▶ Fig. 38. The new ktetorial inscriptions of Zlatna, painted in the 18th century. Credits: Anca Crișan.



as hieromonk, that is, a monk with the function of a priest. The reading of this name became the subject of discussion for the first time in 1890, when the scholar priest Vasile Bologa published in *Telegraful român* the story of a local old woman:

'I heard people that saint Gelasius came from Hopaciu (a hayfield still owned by the monastery today) and entered the church on a horse and nobody saw him since then', concluding that he must be the one whose name is also mentioned in the list of hieromonks. This father must have led a very honest and unsullied life, for the locals named him 'saint' and placed his depiction among those of the saints during the last painting of the church.¹⁶¹

Beyond the image of an apocalyptic knight – the result of fantasy probably combined with a hyperbolisation of the horror scene narrated by Popa Stan from Gârbova de Jos in 1622 – what is surprising is the reference to the Hopaț hayfield, for which the monastery had received the reconfirmation of the right to property in 1614, at the request of monks Savu Popa and Toma Moisin.¹⁶² The first was the one involved in the hearing of witnesses from 1622, the one who had been accused of having killed the servant of the master of the field. In that region, a fountain called the 'Monks' Fountain' had been built according to tradition by monk Gelasius (*zice tradițiunea, – de călugărul Gelasie*). The information was published in 1925 by archpriest-colonel Ioan Dăncilă,¹⁶³ who had collected it around 1910-1914,

the period when he was a priest in Râmeț.¹⁶⁴ However, he also read the name from the proskomedion inscription as Gerasimos (*Gherasim*), referring to Nicolae Iorga's reading of 1906.¹⁶⁵ The biography of saint Gelasius continued to develop, becoming a true patericon in the 1940s, not coincidentally after hegumen Evloghie Oța 'discovered' his holy relics: a skull brought to the surface by the floods of 1925. It was placed by the then priest in a coffin that he buried near the church. From there, it was 'miraculously' unearthed on the occasion of the 1943 clearings.¹⁶⁶

The zeal of these priests who served in the church of Râmeț monastery and made great efforts for its restoration and that of the monastic complex may explain the resurgence of the memory of the locals, who soon began to relate various miracles. Saint Gelasius will prove to be an important reference in the history of the monastery in a few more decades, when the inscription of Mihul will be read. In addition, the piety of the villagers seems to have roots in a distant time in order to justify its inclusion in the iconographic program of what in 1890 was considered as "the last painting of the church", that is, one of the most appreciated *a secco* layers dated to the second half of the 19th century.¹⁶⁷ However, the date of 1809 is also offered for this intervention.¹⁶⁸ Its poor artistic quality led to its entire removal, except for some fragment left on the south wall of the nave.

With so many dating inconsistencies, one can also think that Vasile Bologa actually referred to the painting from 1741 and that he had in mind the figure holding in his hand



the kivotos of the church. Would it be possible that master George of Făgăraș used the memory of the local community, thus meeting the historicizing claims of bishop Innocent Micu-Klein? It may well be that even a hieromonk from the middle of the 18th century, who happened to bear the same name as the archbishop in Mihul's inscription simply by chance, may have advanced and be further confused. Given the distribution of names in the funerary list, with the insertion of the sign of the cross before the sixth row of names and the seemingly unjustified oversizing of the name on the last row, as if to draw attention to the fact that it was the most important, perhaps Gelasius / *Ghelasim* was only one of the ktetors of the time, who lived onward. He may have been a truly a special person, whose memory, blurred by the passage of time, survived until the end of the 19th century when he was reactivated by the need to draw attention to the church in order to find the support necessary for its restoration and continuation.

If the latter was the reality, then it should be accepted that the two inscriptions, that of Mihul and that of 1741, have nothing to do with one another. In this case, there must have been at least one other inscription, because it would have been natural for each layer of murals to have its own commemorative text. The fact that the name of king Matthias and the year 6895 do not interfere in the in-

scription carved above the entrance could be explained by the uncritical assembly of two distinct texts, both preserved in fragmentary form and each aiming at a different period of adornment of the church. As the painting of George of Făgăraș and his team was completed in the apse and the exterior of the church, it is very possible that the two pieces of information refer to one of the previous decorations of the church (year 6895 = 1386/1387), while the other refers to an exterior painting about which no other information remains (made during the reign of king Matthias Corvinus).

Therefore, this establishes a dating for the *Man of Sorrows* scene from the proskomedion niche and practically for everything that the first layer of painting of the church in Râmeț could mean. Recent interpretations have stated that the closest parallels of this painting are the frescoes in the Reformed church in Unirea (Felvinc) (Fig. 39-41), recently uncovered, and those in the now-also-Reformed church in Cricău (Boroskrákkó), appreciated to have at least one common author,¹⁶⁹ active in 1310-1330?¹⁷⁰ The chronology of these paintings is also not certain. In addition, craftsmen of the stature of those belonging to the Italo-Byzantine stylistic horizon or the Bavarian *Zackenstil*,¹⁷¹ could have stopped in Transylvania for quite a long time in order to be accessible to Romanian sponsors. One argument that certainly proposes a later date at the end of the 14th century is the presence of swords in the scene of the martyrdom – plain sabers instead of Byzantine *parameria*. Given the relatively late representations of swords in Serbian art (first

◀ Fig. 39-41. 14th-century mural paintings from the church in Unirea (Felvinc). Credits: Anca Crișan.





▲ Fig. 42 a-d. Six details from the inscription of Feleac before it was covered with a plexiglass shield for protection. Credits: Adrian Andrei Rusu.

▼ Fig. 43. Contemporary state of the inscription of Feleac. Credits: Ciprian Firea.

▲ Fig. 44. Drawing of the inscription of Feleac, published by Marius Porumb. Source: Porumb 1978, p. 311.



in Lesnovo in 1341 and then much later in Manasija in the early 15th century, likely effects of the Ottoman campaigns in the Balkans), the two swords with curved blades at Râmeș would be a far too surprising innovation for a provincial painting that should have followed more established models.¹⁷² As for the rest of the paintings at Râmeș, they could have been made in several stages or by an extended team, consisting of Mihul (who worked in the narthex), the anonymous author of the scene of the *Birth of St. John the Baptist*, and the anonymous authors of the paintings on the templon, in a time interval between the end of the 15th century and the middle of the 16th century.

A possible identity for Gelasius.

Let us return now to the other avenue of research. We have already seen that the function of the Râmeș monastery as an episcopal residence in the medieval period and its jurisdiction over the Orthodox in the southern half of Transylvania is a credible hypothesis. But how does the existence of this episcopate, hitherto known as that of Geoagiu, reconcile with the mention in the inscription of archbishop Gelasius, who remains a historical reality, regardless of the date of the inscription?

First, I can say that this Gelasius must be sought in a period of time that does not exceed the middle of the 16th century, since we nominally know almost all those who served ecclesiastical leadership functions with reference to the Romanians from Transylvania. Moreover, the interval cannot dip below the second decade of the 15th century, the latest

date for the painting of the collegiate basilica from Wiślica. For the time being, I keep this example as a landmark in the effort to search for the sources of Mihul's painting, even if the research will have to be extended by finding closer chronological analogies. Moreover, Gelasius cannot be identified with Gelazy from Przemyśl, the one attested between 1412 and 1416, in part because he was only a bishop. In addition, we must take into account the recommendation of philologists to look to the end of the 15th century and even the early 16th century, to a period for which Slavo-Romanian paleography offers two extremely important milestones: the Old Church Slavonic *Missal* of the church in Feleac, copied in 1481, which contains all the spelling elements on the basis of which Mihul's inscription received the new dating,¹⁷³ and the inscription carved in 1516 by priest Filip from Hațeg on the pedestal of the same church in Feleac, to which I also referred in the opening pages of the article (Fig. 42-44). Its content is somewhat similar to the inscription at Râmeț:

ВЛАДЪТЪ ЗКА ПИСАМ МНѢГѢ ГРАШНИ ПѢПЪ ФИЛИПЪ ХАЦАГ
ВЪСІЕ ЛѢТѢ [...] АСТА ЛАСЛѢОУ КРАЛЪ ВЪ ДНИ ПРѢВЪСЦЕННА
МИТРОПОЛИ КЪР ЦѢ [...].¹⁷⁴

Year 7024. The most sinful priest Philip of Hațeg wrote this. In that year, king Laszlo (died), in the days of the most holy metropolitan kyr St(...).

It was during this time that king Vladislaus II of Hungary (ЛАСЛѢОУ КРАЛЪ in the inscription in Feleac) settled the dispute between Hilarion, hegumen of Peri Monastery, and John, bishop of Munkács. On the occasion of that dispute, the king established on May 14, 1494 the subordination of both to the *archiepiscopo vero de Transsylvania*, unfortunately in general, referring to the one then and in future times (*modernis et futuris*), without any nominal mention.¹⁷⁵ Older and newer historiography has long debated the identity of the archbishop revealed by documents relating to these misunderstandings. In recent decades, the opinion that the king had in mind the Uniate hierarchy of Feleac has prevailed.¹⁷⁶ Should we have the confirmation of the hypothesis that, before residing in Feleac, the archdiocese in question had its headquarters in Râmeț?¹⁷⁷ The only basis for those who issued it was the inscription considered to date from 1377. In the time of Vladislaus II (1490-1516), the archbishop's residence in Feleac was functional. The inclusion of Gelasius on the list of bishops there would only unnecessarily complicate matters.

However, another loophole opens if we look at the continuation of the dispute settled in 1494. It was resumed in 1498 by the next hegumen of Peri, as bishop John continued to disrupt the monastery's stavropegial rights by collecting taxes from priests on the basis of a fraudulently obtained royal diploma.¹⁷⁸ The name of this hegumen was in all probability Gelasius, although the reference is also made to Hilarion in the text of the royal letter to the authorities of Máramaros county, from which we know about the continuation of the trial.¹⁷⁹ The above assumption is based

on the fact that the document must have contained somewhere a statement that it was another person, a detail that the editor Hodinka Antal did not reproduce, considering sufficient only the correction inserted in the text:

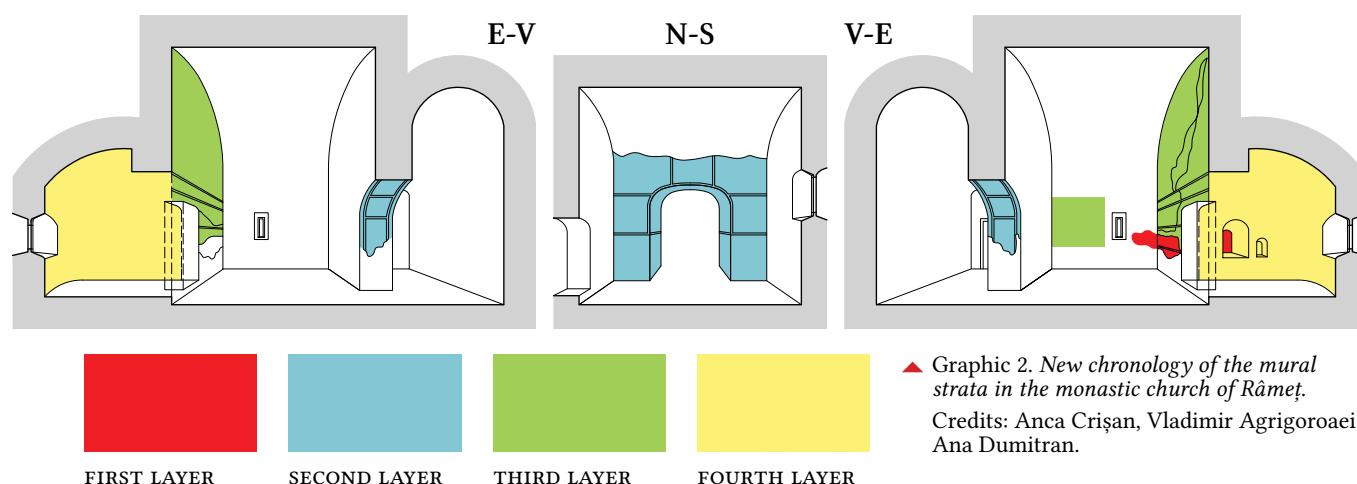
1498, November 29. Diploma wherein Vladislaus II requires that the authorities of the county of Máramaros defend hegumen Gelasius (Hilarion) of Peri against bishop John.¹⁸⁰

That such proof existed and that it is not a matter of carelessness is proven by the perseverance with which Hodinka Antal calls *Gelasius* / *Gelasios* / *Gelaziosz* the hegumen of Peri in every instance in which he refers to the events of 1498. This choice is respected both in the edition of documents¹⁸¹ and in the history of the Diocese of Munkács that he wrote on its basis.¹⁸² Moreover, two decades before the publication of these works, which remain reference works to this day, Tit Budu used the same documentary sources, even if he did not explicitly mention them, and thus reconstructed the list of the hegumens of Peri: "Among the hegumens of the monastery of Saint-Michael in Maramureș are mentioned *Pachomiu*,¹⁸³ *Ilariu*, and *Gelasiu*" (my emphasis).¹⁸⁴

We do not know how the trial ended, as the archive of the diocese of Munkács no longer preserves any record from the period between 1498 and 1551,¹⁸⁵ but the episcopate was endowed with the entire fortune of the monastery when it appeared again in documents.¹⁸⁶ Its decline continued until its total ruin, so bishop John must have been the winner of the dispute, as his 'honorary' jurisdiction on the basis of the 1494 diploma became effective in 1498.¹⁸⁷ However, this story allows us to imagine a happy ending for Gelasius. Assuming that he soon became one of the future archbishops of Transylvania – according to the 1494 diploma – then even John of Munkács would have to recognize his authority. Since he could no longer reside in Peri, where his former superior had already established himself¹⁸⁸ of whose harassment we can easily guess that he had had enough, but also because the archdiocese must have had its headquarters in Transylvania, it is very likely to imagine that Gelasius moved. Among the usual pastoral obligations, he would have taken care of the painting of the church of his new residence.

Let us return for one last time to the inscription itself and consider the wider context. When the inscription was brought back to light from under the layers of repainting, research could attribute part of the murals to Mihul, identified with a Romanian from White-Criș. Archbishop Gelasius was added only later, when the inscription was read more carefully. By his order and, of course, at his expense, Mihul was able to display his talent. Yet the words which would have helped us to understand when this event took place were completely erased, together with the name of the king under whose reign the painting was done. Since they could recognize the value of Mihul's artistic creation and regret the lack of information concerning the beginnings of artistic and church life in Transylvania, the authors





of the 1741 repainting tried to recover these pieces of information. Too unfamiliar with the succession of Hungarian kings, they mismatched the proposed name – that of king Matthias Corvinus – and the year 6895 (= 1386-1387). Historians tried in vain to reconcile the data, giving credibility to the king's name or following the dating, the latter being preferred in the end. When advanced tools were deployed to read the missing parts of the inscription, the attention was already focused on the dating and tried to fill in the banks of the inscription, identifying the king with Louis of Anjou. The new dating, 6885 (=1376-1377), is oddly optimistic, although it could not be contradicted by other sources of the time, neither could it be confirmed or corroborated with them. However, it does not withstand the laborious philological dissection.

We finally have all the necessary pieces to elucidate, at least to a point, the unknowns of the inscription at Râmeț. The king's name, $\mu\alpha\tau\theta\alpha\iota\alpha\varsigma$, contains exactly as many letters as seem to be missing from line 8 of the inscription text. The orthography of the late 15th or early 16th century is also explained. And the possible identity of the archbishop, who comes from an area intimately familiar with the Ruthenian artistic environment, to which he could have guided Mihul for training, or from where he could have asked him to come ($\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\rho\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\kappa\iota\tau\eta$), would also make sense. Overlapping the years of Vladislaus II with those from when Gelasius was able to begin his pastorate, the dating of the painting of the narthex of the church in Râmeț could be estimated between 1503 and 1516. These would be the years since the Creation of the World 7011 / $\alpha\lambda\phi\omega\tau\alpha\ \text{7024} / \alpha\lambda\phi\omega$. However, the space reserved for the date on line 9 of the inscription requires at least three digits (Fig. 36), in front of which the conventional sign \times announcing the transformation of the letters into numbers had to be placed.

One last detail must be explained. If the identification is correct, then the archdiocese headed by Gelasius would have had a parallel existence with that in Feleac. How it came into being and whether or not it had its headquarters in Râmeț, these are questions to which there are no answers yet. Certainly, this seat was not in Peri, where the bishop of Munkács was already in office, but there are other things that seem to link the two monasteries. In the consciousness of the monastic community at Râmeț, an old tradition claims that the monastery of Peri was founded by two monks who left Râmeț in 1215. Discreetly slipped into historical literature,¹⁸⁹ the origin of this speculation was recently discovered in a note by hegumen Evloghie

Oța, being piously rendered in the last monograph of the monastery:¹⁹⁰

(...) the following note appears in register no. 1 of the holy monastery: 'Hieromonks Romulus and Genadius were ordained in Ohrid, Macedonia, and they left from Râmeț monastery in the year 1215, laying the foundation of Peri monastery, Maramureș, which was burnt by the Tartars in 1215. We know this from an act from Budapest in 1952; this was told unto me in the office of the Ministry of Cults in the month of March 1952 by a public servant from the Historical Monuments. Written by myself, hieromonk Evloghie Oța, starets of the holy monastery Râmeț, today, February 5, 1954'.

Given that in 1215 the Tartars were still striving to conquer China (only in 1223 did the first expedition to the West take place, which reached the Donetsk region of Ukraine, but without immediate consequences),¹⁹¹ it is to be understood how much credit should be given to the rest of the glorious past of the monastery at Râmeț. However, it cannot fail to capture the past of this legend, which was born long before it had even the slightest scientific support. At that time, the whole church was covered with a painting of dubious quality, laid in 1930, as a result of equally dubious restoration work coordinated by architect Rudolf Wagner.¹⁹² So no one was aware of the controversies that the old paintings would incite.

About the paintings of Mihul.

We had left Mihul just when we thought we had identified the world in which he did his apprenticeship, hoping that the signature of his only known work could have brought it closer to that of the murals of the collegiate basilica in Wiślica. However, the new dating sent us almost a century and a half later, removing from discussion any direct relationship between Mihul and the team that painted in Poland. Nor is the acquisition of the Slavonic language related to the area inhabited by the Eastern Slavs, as far as could be observed from the little linguistic material offered by the text of his inscription. Nevertheless, the possibility that archbishop Gelasius was first hegumen at Peri, the monastery that offered a deputy metropolitan to Halych in 1391¹⁹³ and whose patrons were extensively involved in the process of Romanian colonisation of the Ruthenian territories which entered in the kingdom of Poland in 1349, forces us to reevaluate the hypothesis that Mihul's biography

may have been related to that area.

Although the painting at Râmeț seems to date to the beginning of the 16th century, the list of monuments in Poland and Ukraine with which it can be compared remains the same that offered analogies with the painting at Wiślica. Therefore, this direction of investigation is exhausted. An additional problem is that the Ruthenian environment was just undergoing an important artistic change, attributed by historians to the influx of settlers populating the more than 300 Wallachian settlements (*ius valachicum*) in Lesser Poland and Red Ruthenia.¹⁹⁴ In general, it is considered that the primary source of inspiration for the art practiced in the vast territory initially subordinated only to the metropolitanate of Kiev was Byzantine art. Yet, starting with the last decades of the 14th century, the Ruthenian space is dominated by influences from the Balkans (Serbian and Bulgarian), as well as from Russia and Moldavia.¹⁹⁵

A somewhat in-depth knowledge of the content of these influences is almost impossible due to the small number of frescoes that still survive.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, at the level of icon painting it has been appreciated that those in the submontane areas of Sanok land are related to the Balkans, even suggesting that many of the icons were painted by

settlers from the south of the Danube, Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia.¹⁹⁷ A much more circumspect opinion points out that there is no evidence to establish a direct relationship between colonisation and the creation of icons. One could therefore speak only of a transfer to the North of iconographic models, mediated by newcomers to the Polish territories.¹⁹⁸ As such, the search for comparative terms in this web of interference is doomed to fail from the start.

The only similar example that could be evoked is that of the murals of the fortified church at Posada Rybotycka, a settlement near Przemyśl (Fig. 45-47). This was located in the second half of the 14th century on the property of a noble family from the entourage of the house of Drag and Sas, therefore a community governed by *ius valachicum*.¹⁹⁹ It was also a monastic church dating back to the 15th century, with additions in the last part of the same century. Today it is the oldest Orthodox masonry church in Poland. As in Râmeț, its architecture is an adaptation of Ro-

▼ Fig. 45. Posada Rybotycka, the murals from the Southern wall of the sanctuary. Credits: Piotr Krawiec, courtesy of Agnieszka Gronek.





▲ Fig. 46. *Posada Rybotycka*, the murals from the Eastern wall of the sanctuary. Credits: Piotr Krawiec, courtesy of Agnieszka Gronek.

◆ Fig. 47. *Posada Rybotycka*. Detail of the mural from the Northern wall of the nave. Credits: Piotr Krawiec, courtesy of Agnieszka Gronek.



manesque-Gothic structural features to a Byzantine layout, which is why its analogies were sought in Northern Moldavia and Transylvania. The explanation for the building solutions used has been found in the noble ktetor's patronage of a team of craftsmen from Hungary who would have had experience on the construction sites in Northern Moldavia.²⁰⁰ The comparison with Moldavian churches was also made at the level of the iconographic program,²⁰¹

laid in two stages, according to the latest research, at the beginning and in the second half of the 16th century.²⁰² In the absence of other contemporary paintings, the identification of the painters required careful analysis of hundreds of icons, so that in the end the conclusion could be limited to the evasive indication of a local workshop in Przemyśl, for the first stage of painting, and a workshop active in the vicinity of Sambor, for the second stage.²⁰³ Certainly, if we could say at least that much about Mihul, we would exceed all expectations. But the stubbornness to look for antecedents in a space where painters seemed to turn to Moldavia for their own sources of inspiration is beginning to look suspicious. It would have been logical for Mihul to have been to Moldavia as well. Yet, there is an important reason for keeping him in this sphere, namely, the way in which the artist understood to assemble his only extant scene: that of the *Deisis* with the archangels and the military saints located above the entrance to the nave.

The *Deisis* formula with archangels and other saints was created by the artists of Kievan Rus' and evolved until the end of the 14th century, when the variant centered on *Maiestas Christi* flanked by Mary, John the Baptist, archangels Michael and Gabriel, and the twelve apostles, all full-length. This was established as the appropriate representation for the templon.²⁰⁴ This variant was also adopted in Moldavia during the reigns of Peter Rareș (1527-1538, 1541-1546), with the first templon-iconostasis from the Văleni-Piatra Neamț skete church (which also served as a model for the second iconostasis, commissioned by prince Jeremiah Movilă after the devastation of the church during the conflict with Michael the Brave), and the iconostasis of the church at Humor monastery, among the examples.²⁰⁵ In Râmeț, in the middle of the standing figures, we are greeted by an oversized figure of Christ, rendered bust-length, following a model favored by a craftsman who painted in the 14th century the cave church of Corbii de Piatră, in Wallachia.²⁰⁶ In other words, this old Balkan model interfered with the one created by the Ruthenians in the version offered by Mihul. The resulting composition even demonstrates knowledge of older variants, which did not enjoy a similar success to the one described above. Of these variants, the oldest had only seven characters, to the left and right of Christ being present Mary, John the Baptist, the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and the apostles Peter and Paul. Examples include a 12th-century diadem discovered in Kiev,²⁰⁷ the templon of the church of Saint-Cyril's monastery in Belozersk, painted in 1497,²⁰⁸ the iconostasis of Vladimir Cathedral, attributed to Rublev's studio,²⁰⁹ an iconostasis of the 15th century with unknown origin preserved in the National Museum in Przemyśl,²¹⁰ another from the 16th century preserved in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow,²¹¹ and perhaps even the iconostasis of the church in Ochona, from the 16th century,²¹² but also the individual panel, from the first half of the 16th century from the Terlo iconostasis, preserved in the National Museum of Art in Krakow.²¹³ Ktitors of the paintings were sometimes added to this group of figures, as evident in a Novgorodian icon from 1467;²¹⁴ various holy bishops, as in the case of iconostases painted in the 15th century for the churches of Drohobych (Saint-John-Chrysostom),²¹⁵ Astafievo (Saint-Nicholas),²¹⁶ and the Moscow Kremlin,²¹⁷ as well as other apostles, martyrs, and hermits. This was a diversification noticed since the middle of the 16th century. It can be seen at Kostarowce, where the panels depicting Mark the Evangelist and Mark the Ascetic remained,²¹⁸ and at Koschewniki, where the *Deisis* line of the iconostasis had seventeen figures, including saints Nicholas, John Chry-

sostom, Basil the Great, and Gregory Nazianzen, metropolitans Peter and Alexius of Moscow, saints Barlaam of Chutyn, and Sergius of Radonezh.²¹⁹

As for the inclusion of military saints, the earliest reference found in the consulted publications dates to the first half of the 14th century and appears in the church in Kyalovanga, a village in the Arkhangelsk region. It is also a succession of iconostasis panels on which were represented, full-length and to the left of Christ: the Mother of God, Michael the Archangel and saint Nicholas, and on the right: John the Baptist, Gabriel the Archangel, and saints Boris and Gleb.²²⁰ Naturally, the two princes were preferred rather as local saints, not necessarily for their military status.²²¹ Less clear is the dating of the next example, the iconostasis of the church in Paszowa, for which the 15th century or the first decades of the 16th century have been proposed.²²² The second option was determined by confronting similar representations within the Orthodox diocese of Przemyśl, whose dating extends to 1515. These are the iconostases of the churches of Daliowa, Mszana, Turze, Strzyłki, and Chrewt.²²³ All have in common the figures of saints George and Demetrius, who at Paszowa end the *Deisis* line with the apostles Peter and Paul, the archangels Michael and Gabriel, Mary and John the Baptist, who flank Jesus enthroned.²²⁴ In Daliowa, saints Theodosius and Anthony are also rendered, and in Mszana appear Theodosius, Anthony, and the anachorites Onuphrius the Great and Mark of Thrace.²²⁵ Although there are no other examples, they have certainly not been missing, and the absence of this type of representation of the *Deisis* theme in the rest of the Orthodox lands forces us to stay connected to the Ruthenian schools of painting.

I do not know who the two military saints represented in Râmeț are, but the most convenient interpretation would suggest saints George and Demetrius.²²⁶ two well-known figures, almost indispensable in the iconographic program of any Orthodox church, regardless of time and place. In fact, their inclusion in the *Deisis* cycle enjoyed a certain popularity in the Ruthenian cultural context. In addition, if one of them is indeed saint Demetrius, we would again have a link with the Romanian settlers established in the kingdom of Poland who had a special devotion to this saint, his invocation penetrating even the oath formulas.²²⁷ In the end, no matter who the two saints are, the idea of introducing them to the *Deisis* scene did not come to Mihul out of the blue. Either he saw it represented as such, and the chances of this happening in Transylvania, Wallachia, or Moldavia were zero, or he was asked to represent it like this by someone familiar with this image, in this case archbishop Gelasius who had to come from Peri, in whose stavropegial jurisdiction were also Ruthenians. If we look at the whole painting on the east wall of the narthex of the church in Râmeț, which has raised many questions also because of the presence of the Holy Fathers of the Church, usually represented in the apse, and if we now recover the composition of the *Deisis* in Ruthenian painting, considering also the narrow space in which it unfolds and the fact that it is not an iconostasis, I think that the interpretation of the whole as a *Deisis* rendered on three registers (considering the intrados of the passageway to the nave) is a plausible hypothesis.

These considerations cannot take the place of conclusions and do not at all claim to be an answer to the question of where Mihul mastered the art of painting. Moreover, his contribution to the decoration of the church at Râmeț remains a great enigma because none of the other frag-





◆ Fig. 48-50. Fragments from a Deisis scene in Torki (Poland, early 16th century). In later Deiseis, apostles and archangels are interposed between Christ and the rest of the characters. Courtesy of the archives of the National Museum 'Metropolitan Andrzej Szeptycki' in Lviv, thanks to Jarosław Giełma.

ments of the mural have been fully explained to date. It would be worth trying, in the future, to associate the painting of the narthex with the one on the upper half of the templon and with the scene of the *Birth of saint John the Baptist* on the Northern wall of the nave, with the intention of finding a common origin. So is the further exploration of that spark that ignited in the restorer's mind, leading him to think of the painting from the time of Peter Rareș. Some Ruthenian painters were certainly familiar with it. Craftsmen must have also come from there to Transylvania, as early as the first half of the 16th century, as we have evidence that it often happened from the middle of this century onward.²²⁸

Concluding remarks.

As can be deduced from the immediately preceding paragraphs, archbishop Gelasius is the missing link explaining the transfer of Ruthenian iconographic paradigms to a

painter from the White Criș River region. The collaboration of the two, no matter what it consisted of, is a point of reference both for the history of Romanian art in Transylvania and for the ecclesiastical history of the Romanians. So far, the only known reference about the archdiocese, run at one point by Gelasius, was preserved in the inscription written by painter Mihul. For these reasons, in the absence of new documentary information, an alternative approach is not possible.

That the residence of this archbishopric was in Râmeț seems to be confirmed by the fact that there existed an ecclesiastical hierarchy in the 16th century, known today as the Geoagiu diocese, and its membership in the Eastern Church is also confirmed by documents attesting to the existence of this diocese. We know nothing about the moment of the founding (arch)bishopric of the diocese, nor about the reasons that led to the choice of residence in such an isolated place, located on a noble estate whose owners had no reason whatsoever to be favorable to Romanians and their Orthodox confession, except in the period 1450-1464, when it was in the possession of the Hunyadi family.²²⁹ The cessation of its operation by moving the residence to Alba Iulia most likely took place during the episcopate of Genadius I (1579-1585), the first for whom we have certain details

that he owned a 'house' in the capital of Transylvania.²³⁰

Regarding the various moments in which the church at Râmneț was painted, I consider that the oldest fragment of painting – the *Man of Sorrows* from the proskomedion niche – could date from 1386-1387, insofar as the inclusion of this year in the carved inscription set on the outside of the church in 1741 could have been based on an inscription in the sanctuary apse that would have contained this date.

Among the other stages in which the church was (re)painted, Mihul's painting of the narthex has a relatively certain date based on the features of the inscription. It dates back to the last years of the reign of king Vladislaus II, in other words, to c. 1503-1516. For all other interventions, including a possible attempt to paint the exterior of the edifice in the time of Matthias Corvinus, the answers must await further research.

Notes:

1 Drăguț 1966, p. 43.

2 Andreescu 1966, p. 839-840.

3 Ionescu 2008, p. 256.

4 Tugearu 1979.

5 Tugearu, Breazu 1981, p. 33.

6 Breazu 1985, p. 49. The original Romanian translation is: *Am scris eu preapăcătosul rob al lui Dumnezeu, Mihul, adică zugravul de la Crișul Alb, cu încuviințarea arhiepiscopului Ghelasie în zilele regelui Lodovic în anul 6885 (1377) luna iulie 2.*

7 According to this reading, the name of the painter should be translated to Mihuli.

8 Note letter w, which differs from the symbol preferred by Monica Breazu, which is s.

9 Tugearu 1985, p. 168. The original Romanian translation is: *Am scris eu mult păcătosul rob al lui Dumnezeu, Mihul adică zugravul de la Crișul Alb, cu încuviințarea arhiepiscopului Ghelasie, în zilele lui Lodovic rege 6885 (1377) iulie 2.*

10 Porumb 1981, p. 16.

11 Breazu 1985, p. 50.

12 Tugearu 1985, p. 164; Porumb 1998, p. 231.

13 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 33-34.

14 Barbu 2001, p. 63.

15 Daniel 2014, p. 95.

16 Năstăsioiu 2016, p. 220.

17 Lăzărescu 1965, p. 264-265; Papacostea 1986, p. 572.

18 Șinca 2013, p. 266.

19 Tugearu 1985, p. 150-151.

20 Tugearu 1985, p. 159; Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

21 Drăguț 1970, p. 43.

22 Drăguț 1970, p. 61-63.

23 Drăguț 1970, p. 61.

24 Tugearu 1985, p. 158-159, 165-168.

25 Tugearu 1985, p. 159, 168-171.

26 Tugearu 1985, p. 153, note 24, p. 171-172.

27 Tugearu 1985, p. 153, note 24.

28 Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

29 Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

30 Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

31 Boambeș 1990, p. 83, 88.

32 Boambeș 1990, p. 83, in the text.

33 Boambeș 1990, p. 81-82, as explanation for the images.

34 Boambeș 1990, p. 83.

35 Tugearu 1985, p. 156-158.

36 Boambeș 1990, p. 84.

37 Drăguț 1966, p. 43.

38 Tugearu 1985, p. 159. From the restorer's point of view, this should be the third stage (Boambeș 1990, p. 82, 84).

39 Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 7-10.

40 Sabados 1993, p. 26-40.

41 Tugearu 1985, p. 153, note 24, discussed only the dating of the register with the hierarchs, unable to decide between the first half of the 15th century and a later date, but without deciding whether "later" means the second half of the same century or much later. Boambeș 1990, p. 83 has arguments for the simultaneous realisation of the two registers, median and superior, and proposes the questionable dating to the 15th-16th centuries, but all the explanations of the figures contain, also doubtful, a dating in the 16th-17th centuries.

42 Boambeș 1990, p. 83, 88.

43 Boambeș 1990, p. 83. The questionable dating accompanies the figures on p. 85 and 87.

44 Boambeș 1990, p. 84.

45 Boambeș 1990, p. 84, 88.

46 Tugearu 1985, p. 169.

47 The reading of the two letters is uncertain, and it is not possible to determine whether they belong to the Cyrillic or Latin alphabets: *log(ofăt) Dy(...?)*. The letters have also been read as *Dumitru* (Iorga 1906, p. 158), *Du* (Drăguț 1966, p. 39) și *DV* (Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 5, note 13).

48 For the years to correspond to the reign of Matthias Corvinus, correct should have been 6995.

49 For commentaries on the disjunction between the king's name and dating see: Ștefănescu 1932, p. 431; Vătășianu 1959, p. 761; Drăguț 1966, p. 39-47; Drăguț 1970, p. 61-63; Porumb 1978, p. 310-311; Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 7, nota 13; Tugearu 1985, p. 159, nota 39; Șerban 1986, p. 57-58.

50 The number indicates two people with the same name. Similar situations below.

51 Meteș 1936, p. 56.

52 Drăguț 1966, p. 40, note 9; Porumb 1997, p. 142.

53 Meteș 1936, p. 55.

54 Only a third of the text's length was preserved, particularly the end of the lines: [...] 12 zile/ [...] ică Făgărașului/ [...] toa chiełtuial/ [...] u ot Geisu (sic!)/ [...] h Sofronie/ [...] ru, i Bologa Kiva (sic!)/ [...] Giomal.

55 Porumb 1998, p. 389-390.

56 Porumb 1997, p. 143-144.

57 Porumb 1997, p. 144.

58 Mareș 1990, p. 121; Mareș, 2007, p. 190.

59 Șerban 1986, p. 57.

60 Hurmuzaki, II/5, p. 445.

61 Bunea 1902, p. 29-30, 33-35.

62 Veress 1914, p. 92-93.

63 Iorga 1989, p. 133.

- 64 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 124, note 152.
- 65 Porumb 2003, p. 12-13.
- 66 Rusu 1999, p. 101-106.
- 67 Diaconescu 1997, p. 48-51.
- 68 Rusu 1999, p. 100-105.
- 69 Bogdan 1902, p. 308.
- 70 Rusu 1991, p. 7-8.
- 71 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 126, nota 166.
- 72 Leaving aside the difference in name, it is equally impossible to overlap the identity of metropolitan Athanasius with Anastasius mentioned in Ribița; see Năstăsioiu 2016, p. 217; and Năstăsioiu, Adashinskaya 2017, p. 31-33. As for the authors of the letter from 1453, the editor of the document argued that they would have been a couple of Greek bishops who took refuge after the fall of Constantinople; see Iorga 1915, p. 65-68.
- 73 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 127.
- 74 Pinter, Țiplic 1999, p. 61-62.
- 75 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 124, note 152.
- 76 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 138.
- 77 By Mihail P. Dan; Popa 1958, p. 409-411.
- 78 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 83, note 20; and p. 138, note 223.
- 79 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 138.
- 80 Jakó 1990, p. 329, nr. 569. I hereby thank Marius Diaconescu for indicating the document.
- 81 Rusu 1999, p. 103.
- 82 Veress 1929, p. 11-12, no. 13: proof about the testimonies of several residents of Feleac that the priest John is the legitimate son and heir of Bishop Danciu.
- 83 Cipariu 1870, p. 776: certificate of sale to priest John of Feleac of the goods inherited by Anna, the blood relative of bishop Peter, then in office.
- 84 Cipariu 1870, p. 777-779: document of the trial between the heirs of Anna, the sister of Bishop Danciu, and priest John from Feleac, in connection with the goods left from bishop Danciu.
- 85 Cipariu 1870, p. 779-780: document of the trial between the sons of the priest John of Feleac: priest Jeremiah and his brothers, priests Matthew and Peter, in connection with the goods inherited from their father.
- 86 Pascu 1956, p. 251-252.
- 87 The original text: *tudom azt hogi ez az klastrom a hul Popa Zaul lakik Giogi klastrom s ez Giogi hatarban vagion* (Andea, Andea 1992, p. 200). The monk Popa Savul, accused in 1622 of plotting an assassination, is said in 1614 to have lived with another monk at Râmeț Monastery in Alba County (*discretorum virorum Zavae Popa ac Thomae Moissin calugerorum Valachorum factam intercessionem, in clauastro sive monasterio Remethensi in comitatu Albensi Transylvaniae existentium et vitam eremiticam degentium*) (Andea, Andea 1992, p. 199).
- 88 Hurmuzaki, II/5, p. 445.
- 89 For the hypothesis that John of Peșteana was bishop at Geoagiu, see Dăncilă 1925, p. 75-76; and Rusu 1997, p. 76.
- 90 Hurmuzaki, xv/1, p. 495.
- 91 Benkő 1781, p. 359.
- 92 Iorga 1989, p. 117. The first edition of the book was published in 1915.
- 93 Iorga 1928, p. 141.
- 94 Dumitran, Gúdor, Dănilă 2000, p. 47-50.
- 95 Hurmuzaki, xi, p. 874; Binder 1974, p. 209-216.
- 96 Hurmuzaki, xv/1, p. 578.
- 97 MCRT, II, p. 321-322. Those who were still uncertain, bishops, priests or monks, were to be persuaded through the organization of synods and public disputes.
- 98 Veress 1929, p. 292.
- 99 Andea, Andea 1992, p. 197-199. *Vide infra*, note 154.
- 100 For the technical analysis, see Boambeș 1990, p. 82.
- 101 Tugearu 1985, p. 154-158.
- 102 Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 23-24.
- 103 Negrău 2011, p. 54.
- 104 Drăguț 1982, p. 121-125; Theodorescu, Porumb 2018, p. 269-272.
- 105 Tugearu 1985, p. 165.
- 106 Theodorescu, Porumb 2018, p. 269.
- 107 Tugearu 1985, p. 161.
- 108 Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 23, note 90.
- 109 Popa 1996, p. 5.
- 110 Popa 1996; Agrigoroaei 2012.
- 111 Agrigoroaei 2015, p. 169-172, 187-188 (the article deals with the paintings of Leșnic).
- 112 Agrigoroaei 2012, p. 115.
- 113 Cf. Agrigoroaei 2012, p. 118-119; Năstăsioiu 2016, p. 216.
- 114 Term used only in connection with a higher authority (cf. Franz Miklosich, *Lexicon linguae slovenicae veteris dialecti*, Vindobonae, 1850, p. 111: *повелѣник* = *mandatum*, *повелѣти* = *jubere*, *повелѣна* = *edictum*; Българска академия на науките, *Старобългарски речник*, vol. II, Sofia, 2009, p. 235, *sub voce* 'poveljaniju'), the translation "with approval" proving less inspired, because it excludes the nominal order. For the translation "by the order of", see Năstăsioiu 2016, p. 238.
- 115 Read initially as the end of the artist's name: *Mihuli*, then correctly separated as a result of the observation of smooth breathing mark above (Breazu 1985, p. 49-50), but forcibly translated as "that is," because in the Slavonic the word *i* has only the conjunctive value *and*.
- 116 Evidence from 1404 has been preserved (Pascu 1972, p. 210) and 1444 (Codrea 2017, p. 7).
- 117 Adăscăliței 2010, p. 185; Codrea 2017, p. 5.
- 118 Popa 1988, p. 11.
- 119 Dudaș 2007, vol. II, p. 32, no. 27: Ceaslov-Octoih.
- 120 Dudaș 2007, vol. II, p. 36, no. 29: Molitvelnic.
- 121 Dudaș 2007, vol. I, p. 48-50.
- 122 Breazu 1985, p. 42 (original text): *sufix neuzual pentru formarea adjectivelor de la toponimice*.
- 123 Булгаков 1913, p. 1397.
- 124 For a list of the Orthodox (and later Uniate) bishops of Przemyśl, see Mironowicz 2003. Trajdos 1984, p. 119; Kruk 2019, p. 671.
- 125 Jawor 2012, p. 22-23.
- 126 Jawor 2012, p. 28-29, 43, 49.
- 127 Jawor 2012, p. 78, 82-88.
- 128 Janeczeczek 2004, p. 16, 19; Janeczeczek 2006, p. 41; Krochmal 2007, p. 213-214, Jawor 2012, p. 82.
- 129 Kruk [2018] lists only seven examples.
- 130 The proposals for the dating of the painting in Wiślica range from the end of the 14th century to the second decade of the 15th century. For all the viewpoints expressed so far, see Kruk 2017a, p. 146, note 4, p. 153, 156, notes 24, 25, 26. The dating to 1420 is also supported by the investigations carried out in the context of the last restorations, for which see Stec 2014, <http://muzeum>.

weebly.com/blog (accessed on 02.05.2020).

131 Ionescu 2008, p. 257. Original text: *După chinuitoarea operație a derulării și cuplării cablurilor electrice la sediul îndepărtat al mănăstirii, am trecut la examinarea inscripției aflată pe al doilea strat de tencuială din pronaos, utilizând o sursă de radiații ultraviolete. De citirea propriu-zisă se ocupa Monica Breazu, o excelentă slavistă acum la Paris. La un moment dat s-a luat cu mâinile de cap și pur și simplu a urlat: 'Fantastic, incredibil, ce o să spună prof. Drăguț?'. Ne-am bulucit cu toții, neînțelegând o iotă din semnele slavone care străluceau ca un diamant datorită fenomenului de fluorescență. Anul pictării era 6885 adică 1377! Am executat fotografii printr-o lupă de mare grosisment, cu aparatul ținut în mână sau de pe un trepied subțire care vibra încontinuu. O să iasă oare ceva? Gătuți de emoție ne-am reîntors după miezul nopții la Alba Iulia și, într-un „rest room” în hotel, am dezvoltat filmul. Inscripția apărea în toată splendoarea ei! N-am dormit toată noaptea, așteptând dimineața să telefonăm prof. Drăguț la București. A fost extrem de entuziasmat, dar ne-a spus că nu crede până nu vede; ce mai, un fel de Toma Necredinciosul în variantă scientist. The text was probably written many years before. A manuscript variant of this text is kept in the archive of Râmneț Monastery, where the last part of the quote originates, and which is not found in the published text.*

132 Tugearu 1979. There was a second article, published by Liana Tugearu in *Tribuna României*, nr. 150 / 1 February 1979, under the title "Semnificația unei descoperiri". Original Romanian text: *Scris-am eu mult greșitul robul lui Dumnezeu Mihul Zugraf de la Crișul Alb în timpul păstoririi arhiepiscopului Ghelasion. În zilele ... Craiul (Văleat 6884) luna iulie 2.*

133 Tugearu 1985, p. 168.

134 Breazu 1985, p. 49.

135 Breazu 1985, p. 50.

136 Ionescu 2008, p. 258.

137 Andea, Andea 1992, p. 202.

138 Hurmuzaki, II/5, p. 445.

139 Pilat 2010, p. 229-238.

140 Drăguț 1966, p. 43.

141 Drăguț 1966, p. 46.

142 Năstăsoiu 2016, p. 237-238.

143 Drăguț 1966, p. 43-44.

144 Porumb 1978, p. 311, nota 12.

145 Porumb 1981, p. 16-18; Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 7-10; Drăguț 1982, p. 121.

146 Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

147 Tugearu 1985, p. 154, Boambeș 1990, p. 82.

148 Drăguț 1970, p. 43.

149 Boambeș 1990, p. 83-84.

150 Unfortunately, this dossier contains no relevant photographic documentation, only a few black-and-white illustrations documenting the cracks in the plaster, not the painting surfaces and their degree of preservation after the removal of the recent layers of paint. Such photographs, some of them published by Șinca 2013 in groupings of unnumbered illustrations, are mentioned as existing in the archives of the monastery and in those of the National Heritage Institute in Bucharest (INM). Until the finalisation of this text, they were not accessible to me.

151 Boambeș 1990, p. 83, 88; and figs. 15-16 on p. 85.

152 Râmneț monastery, *dosar nr. 252, Pictură restaurare. Anii 1981-1989: Fișa de restaurare privind pictura murală în tehnica frescă din naos – perete nord (spre vest de fereastră), scena „Nașterea Sf. Ioan Botezătorul”, sec. XVI? de la biserica veche a mănăstirii Râmneț – jud. Alba, p. 1-2. Original text: Constatând, ca fapt general, că mănăstirea a primit danii din partea unor voievozi români ca Matei Corvin,*

Radu cel Mare (1506), Mihai Viteazul – n-ar fi exclus ca această pictură să fie legată de perioada și activitatea unora dintre ei. Ca opțiune aș include această etapă de pictură în frescă între secolele XV-XVI, înaintea etapei de pictură în frescă de pe iconostas, pe care o leg de ctitoria mănăstirii de către Mihai Viteazul. // Stilistic, imaginea 'Nașterii Sfântului Ioan Botezătorul' (?) mă duce oarecum cu gândul la pictura din epoca lui Petru Rareș.

153 Loc. cit.: *Fișa de restaurare privind pictura murală în tehnica frescă din naos – iconostas, biserica veche a mănăstirii Râmneț – etapă de pictură – sec. XVI-XVII? (Mihai Viteazul?), p. 1. Original text: Se pare că această etapă de pictură în frescă ar corespunde ca execuție (judecând stilistic) perioadei în care Mihai Viteazul a ajutat Mănăstirea Râmneț cu danii. S-a emis părerea că însăși (sic!) zugravii lui, Petre Armeanul, Mina și Nicolae din Creta au pictat-o. Această ipoteză însă nu este susținută de nici o dată concretă. Nu s-a descoperit nici o inscripție. // Personal mi se pare mai degrabă legată stilistic de perioada secolelor XVI, început de XVII. M-a dus la această opțiune: motivul ornamental al panglicii împletite, drapajul personajelor, compoziția, gama cromatică foarte reținută, modul în care este elaborat desenul.*

154 ...știu că această mănăstire în care stă Popa Savu este mănăstirea Geoagiului și este în hotarul Geoagiului; eu, și când eram copil acolo am învățat la un popă pe nume Raczi Simadi, care sta atunci în ea, dar și atunci era stăpânită de domnii din Geoagiu. După aceea, că Kouasoczieștii au dat Geoagiul (nu știu); știu și că ei stăpâneau (mănăstirea) ce ținea de Geoagiu. Când domnul Kouasoczki l-a trimis pe Popa Savu din mănăstire și l-a pus pe Remeti Pal în mănăstire, el a stat un timp acolo; odată, întreb de la Popa Todor, care este și acum preot în Râmneț, că din ce pricină a trebuit să plece din mănăstire Popa Savu și acum domnul Kouasoczki l-a lăsat pe Remeti Pal în ea. Popa Todor a spus că, lasă să umberle numai, o să vezi că nu va sta Remeti Pal în mănăstire, și nu peste multă vreme am mers peste Râmneț, fiind acolo zarvă mare, neașteptată, se spunea că vin tătarii, ne-am și speriat tare, dar nu a fost nici urmă de tătari, ci hoții au bătut mănăstirea și pe săracul Remeti Pal l-au dus și l-au omorât. După aceea, întreb pe Rakato Iuon din Râmneț ce s-a întâmplat cu săracul Remeti Pal și el a spus că pe acesta l-au omorât, și eu am fost părtaș la moartea lui, pentru că Popa Savu ne-a fost tocmnit pe noi pentru 6 forinți ca să-l omorâm și noi l-am omorât. Testimony given by Popa Stan of Gârbova de Jos in 1622. He was one of the witnesses interrogated in connection with the legal status of Râmneț monastery and the events from a decade before (Andea, Andea 1992, p. 202).

155 For the images made in 1978, see Șinca 2013, the second tab in the group of illustrations between p. 232-233, the fourth and seventh tabs in the group of illustrations between p. 336-337. Only one of the scenes is legible (*Adam and Eve Eating from the Forbidden Tree*). The second scene illustrates the dedication, the *Nativity of the Mother of God* (cf. Tugearu 1985, p. 149, note 1, where it is also said that the painting was from the eighteenth century).

156 Meteș 1929, p. 118.

157 Drăguț 1966, p. 40, note 9.

158 Râmneț Monastery document, file no. 252, *Pictură restaurare. Anii 1981-1989, „Fișa de restaurare privind pictura murală în tehnica frescă etapa de pictură post-brâncovenească – Altar de la biserica „Adormirea Maicii Domnului” și „Izvorul Tămăduirii” – Mănăstirea Râmneț, jud. Alba”, p. 2.*

159 Porumb 1998, p. 389-390.

160 Porumb 1998, p. 458-460.

161 Bologa 1890, p. 451. Original text: *„Eu am auzit pomenindu-se că Sfântul Ghelasia au venit de la Hopaciu (un loc de fânate, care mănăstirea și azi îl posedă) și au intrat în biserică cu cal cu tot și de atunci nu s-a mai văzut”, conchizând că trebuie să fie vorba de cel al cărui nume vine înainte și în pomelnicul amintit între Ermonachi. Acest Părinte se vede că a dus o viață foarte cinstită, neprihănită, căci poporul din loc l-a numit „Sfânt” și la cea din*

urmă zugrăvire a bisericei i-a pus chipul între sfinți.

162 Andea, Andea 1992, p. 199.

163 Dăncilă 1925, p. 86.

164 Dăncilă 1925, p. 93.

165 Dăncilă 1925, p. 87.

166 Șinca 2013, p. 102-103.

167 Boambeș 1990, p. 84.

168 Iorga 1906, p. 158 (in the original): *În tindă, zugrăveală din 1809, după o notiță pe ușă*; Dăncilă 1925, p. 92 (in the original): *Biserica din Rimeți, zisă mănăstire, e refăcută la 1809. Pe pereți și astăzi se vede zugrăveala ciudată, care ne prezintă pe ostașii sfinți și mucenici, luptând cu greutățile prin cari au devenit nemuritori, în costumul unguresc din veacul al XVIII-lea. A făcut-o de sigur un biet pictor care nu știa ce e arta bisericească.*

169 Burnichioiu 2018, p. 57-58.

170 Jékely, Kiss 2008, p. 97; Kovács 2014, p. 39.

171 Kovács 2014, p. 38-39.

172 For the sabre attaining "considerable popularity in warrior saint depictions from the fourteenth century onwards", see Gro-towski 2010, p. 360.

173 The manuscript is preserved in the Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca, and is freely available for consultation at http://documente.bcuccluj.ro/web/bibdigit/patrimoniu/BCUCLUJ_FCS_MS4745.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2020.

174 Popa 1958, p. 409; Porumb 1978, p. 309. Initial Romanian translation: *Văleat 7024. A scris mulpăcătusul popa Filip din Hațeg. În acest an (a murit) Laslău crai, în zilele preasfințitului mitropolit kyr Șt(...).*

175 Laurianu 1845, p. 178.

176 Rusu 1999, p. 101-106.

177 Pop, Marcu Istrate, Sălăgean, Simon 2017, p. 124, note 152.

178 Hodinka 1909, p. 203-218.

179 Hodinka 1911, p. 9-10.

180 Hodinka 1911, p. XXVII, doc. nr. 7. Original text: *1498. nov. 29. II. Ulászló oklevele a máram. megyei hatóságokhoz, védjék meg Gelaziosz (Hilarion) körtvélyesi apátot az említett János püspök ellen.*

181 Hodinka 1911, p. 9.

182 Hodinka 1909, p. 29, 203, 208 (with a discussion of the contribution of hegumen Hilarion to the clarification of the disputes with bishop John), 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215.

183 The hegumen of 1391, remembered in the patriarchal tomos that accorded Peri Monastery the stavropegial status.

184 Budu 1891, p. 16. Original text: *Ca egumeni a Manastirei de la S. Michail din Maramuresiu se amentesc Pachomiu, Ilariu și Gelasiu.*

185 Hodinka 1909, p. 221.

186 Meteș 1936, p. 173.

187 Hodinka 1909, p. 218.

188 Cf. Hodinka 1909, p. 213.

189 Șerban 1986, p. 57.

190 Șinca 2013, p. 66-67, nota 24. Original text: (...) *pe registrul nr. 1 al Sf. Mănăstiri se află următoarea notiță: «Ier. Romulus și Ghena-die au fost hirotoniți în Ohrida Macedonia și în anul 1215 au plecat din Mănăstirea Râmeț punând bazele Mănăstirii Peri Maramurăș care la 1215 a fost arsă de către tătari. Aceasta o știm dintr-un act de la Budapesta din 1952, aceasta mi s-a spus în biroul Ministerului Cultelor în luna martie 1952 de către un funcționar al Monumentelor Istorice. Scris-am eu ierom. Evloghie Oța starețul Sf. Mănăstiri Râmeț, azi 5 februarie 1954».*

191 Plokhly 2018, p. 79-80.

192 Opriș 1986, p. 60-61.

193 Hurmuzaki, xiv/1, p. 16.

194 Jawor 2012, p. 148-149; for a list of towns, see p. 271-273.

195 Sulikowska-Gaska 2009, p. 31; Herea 2017, p. 115-146.

196 See an attempt in Mickūnaitė 2013, who associates the painting commissioned by Grand Duke Vytautas after 1409 for the church in Trakaj, then the residence of the Dukes of Lithuania, with the Moravian style disseminated in Serbia during the Lazarević and Branković dynasties (ca. 1370-1459), for which see Preradović 2016. The murals of the Church of the Annunciation Monastery in Supraśl, dating back to 1510/1511-1557, among whose authors was Nectarius the Serbian, offers clearer situation. (Матановић 2017, p. 213-226).

197 Grządziela 1994, p. 207-266.

198 Kruk 2001, p. 237-246; Kruk 2007, p. 287-297.

199 Jawor 2012, p. 137.

200 Kruk 2017b, p. 399.

201 Herea, Giemza 2014, p. 156-181; Gronek 2015, p. 72, 141-142, 166, 176-179, 219, 361, 363.

202 Gronek 2015, p. 181-182, 428.

203 Gronek 2015, p. 175 (for the first stratum), p. 357-358 (for the second stratum of murals).

204 Nowgorod 2004, p. 74-75.

205 Sabados 1997, Sabados 2008; Sabados, Lambru, p. 1-3, 5-6, 9, 11-12.

206 An analogy noted already in 1985 by Liana Tugearu (Tugearu 1985, p. 170, nota 46).

207 *Sainte Russie* 2010, p. 130.

208 *Sainte Russie* 2010, p. 400-404.

209 Kondakov 2009, p. 115.

210 Janocha 2010, p. 17.

211 Kondakov 2009, p. 162-165.

212 Nowgorod 2004, p. 74-75.

213 Kruk 2019, vol. I, p. 118-121 – for comments, vol. III, p. 68-77 – for illustrations. The town of Terlo was part of the territory under Wallachian law (Jawor 2012, p. 273, nr. 228).

214 *Sainte Russie* 2010, p. 292.

215 Kondakov 2009, p. 122-125.

216 Kondakov 2009, p. 160-161.

217 *Sainte Russie* 2010, p. 487.

218 *Icons* 2008, p. 37.

219 Nowgorod 2004, p. 64-65.

220 Kruk 2019, vol. I, p. 114-117.

221 For the cult of these two saints, see White 2016, p. 132-166.

222 *Icons* 2008, p. 31.

223 Biskupski 1984, p. 76-83; Япема 2005, *passim*. It should be noted that the last two were towns that were part of the colonized territory under Wallachian law (Jawor 2012, p. 272, nr. 174, p. 273, nr. 268).

224 *Icons* 2008, p. 31; Biskupski 1984, p. 77, il. 1.

225 Biskupski 1984, p. 79.

226 Cincheza-Buculei 1981, p. 30-31.

227 Jawor 2012, p. 37.

228 For the earliest examples, see Porumb 1998, p. 13-14 (Agârbiciu), 39-40 (Bica), 109 (Dezmir), 255 (Nadășu), 284 (Păniceni).

229 *Apud* Burnichioiu 2016, p. 261, 264.

230 Șerban 1981, p. 189-194.

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