

THE CONTEXT OF THE FIRST ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS REVISITED

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As a preamble to this investigation, I thought it would be useful to present two conclusions expressed relatively recently which I consider to be turning points in the discussion concerning the antiquity of the first translations into Romanian. The first one belongs to Alexandru Mareş, who concludes his series *Considerații pe marginea datării Psaltirii Hurmuzaki*, initially published in 2002¹ and republished in 2005,² stating that:

There are, in our opinion, undeniable philigranological clues which make it probable that the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* was dated before *Neacșu's Letter*. Such an early dating as the one we assume³ requires a new approach to the antiquity of translations into Romanian and the cultural-religious initiatives that led to their appearance.⁴

This statement, which comes after several decades of insistence on the idea that it is a risk to date the first translations into Romanian to the fifteenth century, finally confirms the intuition of the same author, expressed in 1982, concerning the inclination of translators towards a certain type of foreign version of the Psalter, of which he said that

is not accidental, but corresponds to the moment and cultural environment in which the translation or the processing in question was initiated. In this sense, the version from Sibiu of the Tetraevangelium is instructive for the Reformed milieu in which it was constituted, just as *the translation of the Psalter according to a Slavonic version that went out of use in the sixteenth century could belong to an earlier period*.⁵ [e. a. A. D.]

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¹ Alexandru Mareş, "Considerații pe marginea datării Psaltirii Hurmuzaki" [Considerations on the Dating of the Hurmuzaki Psalter], *LR XLIX*, no. 4-6 (2000): 675-683.

² Alexandru Mareş, *Sciere și cultură românească veche* [Old Romanian Writing and Culture] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 308-315.

³ The author advances three hypotheses, depending on the date of the earliest and latest versions of the watermark with the simple anchor mark, i.e., 1501-1506, assuming that the stock was exhausted in 15 years: 1) 1491-1516; 2) before 1501 or even before 1491; 3) after 1506 or even later than 1516 (Mareş, *Sciere și cultură*, 314-315). The author seems to favour the second variant, by appealing to the second type of watermark, the corbel, recorded in watermark catalogues between 1460-1468 (Mareş, *Sciere și cultură*, 315).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁵ Alexandru Mareş, "Originalele primelor traduceri românești ale Tetraevangelului și Psaltirii" [The Originals of the First Romanian Translations of the Tetraevangelium and Psalter], in Ion Gheție, ed., *Cele mai vechi texte românești. Contribuții filologice și lingvistice* [The Oldest

The second conclusion was issued in 2011 by Pârvu Boerescu when clarifying the etymology of the word *abur* (steam), whose perfect synonymy with *duh* (spirit), “attested only in the Hurmuzaki Psalter, the oldest Romanian literary text preserved to us, will have to be explained not only in diatopic terms, but also, to a certain extent, in diachronic terms”.⁶ This necessity is reinforced by an argument that I reproduce *in extenso*, so as not to detract from the verdict previously expressed by Ion Gheție and Alexandru Mareș, according to which the identification in the earliest Romanian translations of the Scripture texts of a linguistic layer from Banat-Hunedoara would *necessarily* indicate where the translation was made and the sixteenth century as the time of translation:⁷

At the beginning of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* we encounter a first layer of language, which consistently uses the forms *duh* (f. 8r, 26v, 40v, 43v, 65v), *duh de vihor* (f. 8r, 40v), *den sămânță în sămânță*, “din neam în neam” [from generation to generation] (f. 6v, 68r, 72r, 82v, 106r). From about the middle of the manuscript (roughly from *Psalms* 79) a partly different layer of language begins to appear, with more archaisms, characterized for example by the use of the terms *abur* “breath, spirit” (f. 87v, 115r, 119v), *abur de vicol* “storm wind” (f. 124v), *i-voru*

Romanian Texts. Philological and Linguistic Contributions] (Bucharest: Bucharest University, Institute of Linguistics, 1982), 204, republished in Mareș, *Scriere și cultură*, 280.

⁶ Pârvu Boerescu, “Dificultăți ale etimologiei limbii române: abur” [Difficulties of the Romanian Language Etymology: Abur], *LR LX*, no. 2 (2011): 207.

⁷ In order to further underline the value of Pârvu Boerescu’s argument, I reproduce, also *in extenso*, one of Ion Gheție’s remarks, expressed in several of his publications, most recently in the philological study that prefaces the edition of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*, edited by Mirela Teodorescu and published posthumously in 2005. In responding to the question of “in what way the presence of the elements from Hunedoara in the text of the *Psalter* can be explained”, Ion Gheție offers two answers: “Banat-Hunedoara is the place where the translation of the text was carried out, and in the case of a negative answer, the elaboration of an intermediate copy is placed in this area. In the latter case, the translation of the text would have been done in Moldavia, which is debatable, from where it would have wandered through Banat-Hunedoara, being copied in the local dialect, to then return to Moldavia and be ‘Moldavianised’ a second time, in terms of language. Of these two interpretations, the second, although theoretically possible, is more complicated and needs further philological-linguistic and cultural-historical evidence to be accepted”. Ion Gheție’s conclusion is firm: “We will say, therefore, that the original *Hurmuzaki Psalter* comes from the southwestern corner of the country (Banat-Hunedoara), and was subsequently copied in Moldavia. The existence of a Northern Transylvanian intermediary remains uncertain at the present stage of our knowledge of the historical dialectology of the Romanian language. The translation of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* (as well as the other texts with rhotacism in Banat-Hunedoara) will not be a surprise to those who know that a remarkable activity of translation of religious books into Romanian took place in this region during the sixteenth century. As has been pointed out recently, the *Slavo-Romanian Gospel Book* of Sibiu (1551-1553); the originals of Coresi’s *Cazania I*, *Molitvenic* and the *Book of Songs* published in Cluj around 1570; and also the *Palia of Orăștie* all show signs of having originated in Banat-Hunedoara. It should be noted that while Banat-Hunedoara was a flourishing cultural centre during the sixteenth century, we lack any historical information concerning the development of any scholarly activity in Maramureș and neighbouring Transylvania before 1600. See, *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki* [The Hurmuzaki Psalter], vol. I, Philological study, linguistic study and edition by Ion Gheție and Mirela Teodorescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 20-21.

“they will go” (f. 69v, 71v) and *voiu i* “I will go” (f. 73r, 117v, 120v), *pre gintul gintului/ginturelor* “from generation to generation” (f. 76v, 84r, 84v, 91v, 115r, 122r, 123r) etc.

Taking into account the variant: *pre sămânța sămânțelor vestim hvala* [praise!] *ta* (68r/13), we can safely assume that the first layer of language belongs to the Banat-Hunedoara dialect. With the same certainty, we can also affirm that the phrase *pre gintul ginturelor* could not have circulated simultaneously with the synonymous variant *den sămânță în sămânță* in the same area, e.g. Banat-Hunedoara.

The second layer of language, which overlaps at a certain point the first, without replacing it entirely, cannot be precisely located, but it is obvious that it belongs to the northern area. All we can say, given the chronologically and geographically discontinuous synonymy between *sămânță*, *gintu* and *neam*, is that the northern layer of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* can be easily recognized throughout the manuscript of the *Scheian Psalter* as well, as evidenced by the contexts in which, instead of the initial variant in PH: *den sămânță în sămânță* (see f. 6v, 68r, 72r, 82v), in PS the phrase *din gintu în gintu* appears from the beginning (p. 14/12 – f. 13v, p. 175/7 – f. 138r, p. 205/10 – f. 162r), and only towards the end (cf. PH, 106r): *în neamu și neamu* (PS, p. 258/17 – f. 203v).

These certain facts reinforce Ion Gheție’s second hypothesis (PH, 2005, p. 21⁸), according to which the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* derives from the translation inserted in the probably worn-out source from the Banat region, which at some point underwent some modifications through the use of the version containing an unquestionable layer of northern language [probably of Maramureș – completion of Pârvu Boerescu], from which the *Scheian Psalter* is primarily descended. It is unlikely that the examples of *i-vor*, *gintu* and even *abur* “duh” are due exclusively to the copyist’s permanent intervention in the translation, since we see no reason why he should have suddenly become aware, only halfway through the manuscript, that the translation from the source no longer matched his own language.

The existence of the second Romanian version, which we can only call northern, can be proved by the consistency with which the word *gint* appears in the *Scheian Psalter*, in the same contexts as *sămânță* and *gint* in the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*, while in other 16th-century *Psalter*s we find in the same places only *neam* or *rudă*, and later, in Dosoftei, also *rod* (all synonyms for the slavonic **рѡдѣ**). It is very likely that this version with archaic language, possibly also inserted between the lines of an old Slavonic manuscript, was later used (directly or through an intermediary source) in copying the *Scheian Psalter*, after which

⁸ According to Gheție, “there are two hypotheses that can be advanced regarding the relationship between this text [the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*] and the other sixteenth-century Romanian *Psalter*s: 1) the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* is a reworking of the translation from which the other contemporary *Psalter*s are derived, and 2) the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* is derived **from another translation** [e. a. A. D.] which at some point underwent some modifications by using the version from which the *Scheian Psalter*, the *Psalter from Voroneț* and the two *Psalter*s printed by Coresi [1570 and 1577] are derived.” (Gheție and Teodorescu, *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki*, 21). To make the reference easier to understand, it should be read as a continuation of the quote reproduced in the previous note.

it was lost.⁹

Rephrasing the two ideas in terms not used by their authors, most likely for subjective reasons (Alexandru Mareş could not overcome his reservation to go past the 1500s,¹⁰ while Pârvu Boerescu would have contradicted the general belief that the Romanian translation of the Psalter was realised in Banat-Hunedoara), the message of these statements is as follows: the earliest attempts to translate the Psalter into Romanian may date back to the middle of the fifteenth century, which implies – inevitably – a different cultural-spiritual climate than the one generated in the following century by the Protestant Reformation in Banat-Hunedoara.

Although extremely tempting, these gaps in the discourse on early Romanian translations, standardised by the authority of Ion Gheţie who, for several decades, was the spokesman of Romanian linguistics, must be treated with the circumspection due to any hypothesis not yet validated. However, they provide the necessary breathing space to find the courage to reopen the discussion. Vladimir Agrigoroaei has recently attempted to break down the interpretative monolith, with a study that deals with another sensitive point of research, namely the motivation that drove the translators,¹¹ reduced in Romanian historiography to the dichotomy between *external* and *internal impulse*. The former is almost invariably perceived as a thorn of heresy stuck in the orthodox shell of Romanian society, tempting through the fruits of acculturation to abandon the “ancestral faith” and, implicitly, the “being of the nation”. The second is a kind of vein of wisdom whose periodic reactivation allows Romanians to catch up within a generation the cultural delays caused by the vicissitudes of several centuries.

The ideological colouring of this dichotomy became evident in 1965, when the reputed historian and former sympathiser of the Legionary movement Petre P. Panaitescu published his monumental work *Începuturile și biruința scrisului în limba română*. Its conclusions, initially regarded with caution,¹² were soon assimilated, nuanced and continually broadened, eventually encompassing

⁹ Boerescu, “Dificultăți ale etimologiei”, 206-207. For the same reason I reproduce footnote 35 on p. 207: “The use of the second Romanian version seems to begin approximately on f. 68r, taking into account where the northern, archaic words and phrases exemplified above appear in the manuscript”.

¹⁰ Note the conservative spirit of his later reference to the same detail of the dating of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*: “the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* alone seems, according to the latest philigranological investigations, to date from the first decade of the same century [sixteenth], if not from the end of the previous century [fifteenth]” (Alexandru Mareş, *Cărți populare din secolele al XVI-lea - al XVIII-lea. Contribuții filologice* [Folk Books from the Sixteenth - Eighteenth Centuries. Philological Contributions] (Bucharest: Fundația Națională pentru Știință și Artă, 2006), 17).

¹¹ Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “Preamble à une étude sur l’hérésie et la traduction biblique au Moyen Âge et à l’aube de la Modernité”, *Biblicum Jassiense* VIII (2021): 15-91.

¹² Ion Gheţie, “Maramureșul anilor 1500 – patrie a textelor rotacizante?” [Maramures in the 1500s – Home of the Texts with Rhotacism?], *LR* XVII, no. 3 (1968): 255.

the entire spectrum of old writings in Romanian and becoming a milestone of subsequent philological research.¹³

A similar pitfall also challenged Western historiography, which in turn debated at length the relationship between translation and heresy, considering the use of vernacular languages as a factor in the transmission of heretical ideas, even though these were also conveyed just as effectively through Latin. As a way out of the impasse caused by the loss of the original translations and the vast majority of their copies, Vladimir Agrigoroaei proposed treating all literature, both biblical and para-biblical (especially writings of moral instruction), together.¹⁴

As it is also due to the laborious activities of Alexandru Mareș and his collaborators, with whom he collaborated on an extensive project to publish folk books, that a rich baggage of knowledge has already emerged, we note the conclusions expressed in two publications from 2006:¹⁵

- Only two translations are known to have been made in the sixteenth century: an apocryphal religious song preserved in a copy in Wallachia, dated by study of the watermark to between 1535 and 1555,¹⁶ and *Floarea darurilor*, according to the information provided by the title of an early eighteenth-century Russian copy preserved in a library in Moscow, which announces that the text was translated “from Italian into Wallachian language or Bogdănească by Gherman the Wallachian, and then from Wallachian into Slavonic by the Russian Hieromonk Veniamin in 1592”.¹⁷ The earliest Romanian copy was dated its watermarks to between 1592 and 1604 and was “made for himself” by the hieromonk Ioan from Putna (it is not possible to deduce whether he was speaking only as a beneficiary or also as a copyist).¹⁸ The remainder of the translations belong to the seventeenth century.
- Textual criticism has shown that most of the writings (about 18) were translated in Moldavia, where most of the Slavonic copies of the translated texts are attested. In Wallachia about eight writings were translated, but the number of Slavonic copies of texts belonging to the category of folk books is very small.
- Most of the copies circulated in Transylvania, including in Crișana and Maramureș.

Comparing these results with the syntheses on the translations of religious texts

¹³ Ion Gheție and Alexandru Mareș, *Originile scrisului în limba română* [The Origins of Writing in Romanian] (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985), *passim*.

¹⁴ Agrigoroaei, “Preambulă”, *passim*, especially 65-59.

¹⁵ Mareș, *Cărți populare*, 277-307.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 304.

¹⁷ *Apud* Mareș, *Cărți populare*, 141, 292.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139-140.

to determine to what extent they are in agreement, we obtain the following answers:

- Moldavia stands out clearly from the other Romanian provinces in terms of interest concerning the translation process, thus the hypothesis that the translation of the Psalter could have been carried out in this region gains credibility.
- Translations have been made in all known instances from Slavonic sources,¹⁹ other language versions being taken into account only for verification and comparison purposes.
- There is a chronological lapse of at least several decades between the manifestation of the desire/need for religious books in Romanian and the interest in para-biblical literature, which – ultimately – suggests that there was an external impetus for the beginning of the translation of religious texts.
- The previous conclusion allows us not to absolutise the dating of the starting point of the translation process to the sixteenth century, even if

¹⁹ The statement requires a brief comment. I have quoted above the information about the translation of the work *Floarea darurilor* from Italian into “Bogdănească”, a most explicit reference to the Moldavian origin of the translator, Gherman Valahul. Whether or not it is true, Pandele Olteanu claimed on several occasions between 1968 and 1992 that the earliest Romanian version, preserved in ms. BAR rom. 4620, descends from the original language of the reputed work. According to Alexandru Mareş, traces of this Italian translation cannot be detected in the preserved manuscript versions (Alexandru Mareş, “Moldova și cărțile populare în secolele al XVI-lea - al XVII-lea” [Moldavia and Folk Books in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries], in Violeta Barbu and Alexandru Mareş, eds., *Floarea darurilor. In memoriam Ion Gheție* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2006), 148). As their source, Alexandra Roman Moraru proposed, in 1982, a translation made in Banat-Hunedoara after a (Slavonic?) translation of the Greek version printed in Venice in 1546 (Alexandra Roman Moraru, “Cea mai veche versiune românească a *Florii darurilor*. Filiație și localizare” [The Oldest Romanian Version of the *Floarea darurilor*. Filiation and Localization of Translation], in Gheție, ed., *Cele mai vechi texte românești*, 263-316). The proof was republished in 1996 in a scientifically approved volume in 1992, which did not undergo any further interventions. For this reason, the monograph dedicated by Pandele Olteanu to *Floarea darurilor*, of whose preparation Alexandra Moraru was aware and which was printed in 1992, is annotated in 1996 as “unpublished to date” (*Cele mai vechi cărți populare în literatura română* [The Oldest Folk Books in Romanian Literature], vol. I, *Floarea darurilor*. Established text, philological and linguistic study, glossary by Alexandra Moraru (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1996), 19, footnote 13). In his synthetic survey on the translation of folk books in 2006, Alexandru Mareş points out – albeit without comment – the conclusion of the translation in Banat-Hunedoara, but without making any reference to the broad refutation of his argument made in 1992 by Pandele Olteanu on the basis of the study published by Alexandra Moraru in 1982 (Pandele Olteanu, *Floarea darurilor sau Fiore di virtù* [*Floarea darurilor* or *Fiore di virtù*]. Study, critical edition, translation and glossary in comparative context (Timișoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1992), 188-192). That this is a deliberate omission is demonstrated by the references Alexandru Mareş makes in the footnotes to the annexes of the monograph signed by Pandele Olteanu. For a historian sincerely interested in the problem and unable to handle philological arguments on his own, this deliberate concealment of a contrary and apparently well-founded point of view raises serious questions about the validity of the asserted opinion.

the information that has been preserved belongs – again ultimately – only to this century.

- Transylvania proves to be the main recipient of translations, a conclusion which, even if it can be proved quantitatively only by manuscripts containing para-biblical literature compiled in the seventeenth century, is also certified for the sixteenth century by the activity of the Coresian printing press. The capitalization through printing of the translators' efforts meant that the number of copies put into circulation, and therefore the number of recipients, was significantly higher than that produced by monastery scriptoria and occasional copyists.
- The considerable reception of Moldavian translations by the Romanians in Transylvania presupposes the existence of a zone of intense contact where the exchange of ideas and the circulation of information was direct and where, at the same time, there were important external cultural influences capable of providing the necessary motivation for producing translations. This area, consisting of historical Maramures, the north of medieval Hungary, the south of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom and the north of Moldavia, generically called "Ruthenia" by Nagy Levente,²⁰ became a potential melting pot in which all the "ingredients" met. Their combination (whether through cultural transfer or as a result of an internal need has yet to be established) resulted in the first Romanian translations of religious texts.

In compiling this preliminary overview, only the bibliography accumulated through the research of philologists has been used so far. I will now try to outline the historian's point of view, starting by noting that their voices have hardly been heard since Petre P. Panaitescu published his daring and, at the same time, questionable book dedicated to the beginnings of the Romanian writing. During this period of more than half a century, the obstruction of the communist censorship on the one hand and the quasi-absence of documentary material on the other provided philologists with a favourable framework in which they could substitute themselves for historians. This was not usurpation as long as the historians themselves did not get involved in the debates, probably also on the grounds – quite rightly! – that only philologists could solve the language problems posed by the old Romanian texts. A historian's reading, however careful, is not likely to pick up phonetic and lexical subtleties in such a way as to be able to choose between the various points of view expressed, apparently with equal competence and erudition, by the philologists. However, it is more than obvious that the limitations to which philologists are exposed as a

²⁰ Nagy Levente, *Reforma la români. Un fenomen de transfer cultural în secolele XVI-XVII* [Reform Among Romanians. A Phenomenon of Cultural Transfer in the Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries] (Oradea: Editura Ratio et Revelatio, 2021), 47-52, 86-91.

result of the lack of information needed to establish with certainty the specifics and extent of the languages that make up the northern dialect of *Dacoromania* could be at least partially overcome by including in the equation a truthful reconstruction of the geo-political, cultural and confessional context, which is the exclusive competence of historians. As their interest has become fragmented into detailed explanations, and syntheses of the kind written by Nicolae Iorga have no longer been produced, the assimilation of a literature that has become too specialised and too vast has become as difficult for linguists as it was for historians to understand philological discourse. I will continue to try to extract from this literature the elements able to break the deadlock in this discourse and to ensure a polyphony of voices involved in the debate, which in the future should take place in an interdisciplinary framework, with the participation of historians, philologists and theologians alike.

In order to gain coherence, we will start this approach of bringing to a common point the views of philologists and historians from the aforementioned conclusion of Ion Gheție that the first translations of religious texts into Romanian must have been made around the middle of the sixteenth century in Banat-Hunedoara, where the Protestant Reformation's penetration into the relatively compact Romanian communities of Lugoj, Caransebeș, Orăștie, Deva and Hunedoara led to a cultural effervescence which was to culminate in the publication of several books of worship whose printing was entrusted to the team of Deacon Coresi. Although this theory is well founded and consistently supported by linguistic arguments (phonetic, morphological and lexical), it is questionable for the reasons we will discuss below.

1. First of all, it is based on the continued existence of a Catholic cultural elite in the region, hence the early and great willingness to accept Protestant ideas, unlike the rest of the Romanians in Transylvania and beyond. The familiarity of the Catholics in Banat-Hunedoara with Western Latin-speaking culture is also useful in explaining the bizarre aspect of some translation solutions, previously interpreted as the translator's foreign ethnicity or as derived from the foreign sources used in the translation. However, the fact that this cultural tradition was at the origin of literary writing in Romanian is undermined by the fact – of major significance – that its form of graphic expression was also of Western origin. The use of the Latin alphabet, in which Catholic books of worship were written, was already at least centuries old at the time of the earliest evidence of the Reformation in the Romanian environment.²¹ The direct consequence of this fact

²¹ One of the first Romanian Reformed centres was active in Caransebeș, and a special dietal decree was issued for the church here in 1564, to be used in common by the followers of *Romanæ religionis* and *evangelij professores* (Sándor Szilágyi, ed., *Monumenta Comititalia regni Transylvaniae*, vol. II (Budapest: Akadémiai Könyvkiadó Hivatala, 1876), 224). The dietal act does not mention to which Protestant orientation the so-called *evangelij professores* (a term usually used to indicate adherents of Lutheranism, but which, in 1564 – the year of the official recognition of

was the inclination of the Romanian Catholic scholars – and to a large extent of the Calvinists – towards the Western culture, which they would absorb and even enrich, rather than towards the Byzantine-Slav tradition from which the oldest surviving Romanian texts derive their origin.

Recently, the re-examination of a document dating from 1360-1380, containing the requests of the *knezes* of the Remete domain addressed to the Ban Benedict Himfi, thought to have been written by a person with little knowledge of the Latin language, has shown that it is possible to explain the inadequacies by taking them as such from a text originally formulated in Romanian²² and rendered – it is implied – in the Latin alphabet. Beyond the fact that this possibility lowers the age of writing in the Romanian language below the most optimistic admissible limits, what must be retained from this argument is the fact that the adoption of Catholicism from the fourteenth century onwards²³ and, implicitly, of the Western culture with which it formed a whole, meant a shift from Slavic culture and the Cyrillic alphabet. Proposed so far only as a hypothesis, due to the lack of any explicit mention in the available documents, the composition of the first translations into Romanian in the environment of the Franciscan monasteries in Banat (whose reports from the second half of the fourteenth century refer to hundreds of thousands of converts and some missionaries' familiarity with the Romanian language,²⁴) seems to be supported by the recognition of some Franciscan correspondences in the painting of the churches of Hațeg-Land.²⁵ Both cultural transformations, however, represent

the Helvetic confession – could also designate Calvinists) belonged. The firm Calvinist orientation was imposed in 1585, when the new Calvinist bishop of Transylvania was explicitly given the task “to appoint trustworthy preachers [...] in Caransebeș and Lugoj and in other Romanian localities belonging to them” (Paul Binder, “Contribuții la studierea factorilor interni în problema dezvoltării scrisului în limba română (secolele XVI-XVII). Momente din istoria culturală a satului Bărabanț” [Contributions to the Study of Internal Factors in the Development of Writing in Romanian (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries). Moments in the Cultural History of the Village of Bărabanț], *Apulum* XX (1982): 175).

²² Claudia Tărnașeanu, Ana Maria Gînsac and Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu, “Colloquial Calque Translations, Rookie Errors, and Grammaticalization Clusters in a Latin Complaint of the Romanian Knezes from the Remete Estate, c. 1360-1380”, in Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ileana Sasu, eds., *Translation Automatism in the Vernacular Texts of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 31-39. Thanks are due to the editors for the opportunity to consult this text before printing.

²³ Adrian Magina, “Opțiuni confesionale în rândul nobilimii din Banat (secolele XV-XVII)” [Confessional Choices Among the Banat Nobility (Fifteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)], *AȘD* vol. I (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005): 122.

²⁴ Julian-Mihai Damian, “Fratii minori italiani e Banato trecentesco”, in Alvisse Andreose et al., eds., *Tradizioni e istituzioni religiose nello spazio culturale italo-romeno tra medioevo e prima età moderna. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi (Milano, 24-25 ottobre 2019)* (Roma: Nella Sede dell'Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 2022), 51-88.

²⁵ Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “*Pauper Paulus* și mănăstirea tainică de la Sântămărie Orlea” [*Pauper Paulus* and the Mysterious Monastery of Sântămărie Orlea], *AT* 24 (2014): 183-228; Idem, “Les

extensions of Latin Europe, at a time when the Byzantine “schismatic” tradition was to be replaced, not interpreted and at least partially accepted.

When converts to Protestantism wanted to translate their books of worship into Romanian, it would have been natural to turn to the Latin, Greek or Hebrew versions, as did all Protestants involved in the process of translating the Scriptures into the vernacular. On the contrary, philologists assure us that the sources of the Romanian translations of the *Psalter*, the *Tetraevangelium* and the *Apostle* are Slavonic. The choice of these languages could not have been determined solely by the return to the Cyrillic alphabet, which was imperatively necessary after the establishment of the Reformed Romanian Diocese by the decision of the Diet of 1566,²⁶ in order to include the Romanians who converted from Orthodoxy. This means either that the converts did not make the translations, and therefore there was a cultural elite of the Eastern confession in the area, or that they imported them from other Romanian lands. In either case, invoking the Reformation as the impetus for translation becomes problematic. There remains the possibility that their adherence to Catholicism was expressed to a considerable extent by virtue of the privilege granted on 22 March 1443 by the King of Hungary on the basis of the Florentine Union, which made it possible for some Catholics to return to the Eastern rite in Slavonic,²⁷ knowledge of which made them extremely useful to the faction that accepted the Reformation.

In such a position we might suspect Lațcu of Mățești, the secretary of King John Zápolya, on whose behalf in 1533-1534 he corresponded in Slavonic with Gavril, the protos of Mount Athos. He asked for clarification about the fate of souls between death and the Final Judgment and about fasting, confession, the intercession of saints and the Virgin Mary, the marriage of priests – that is, all “heresies (...) preached by a prophet named Lufther”, which, through “false prophets”, spread “here, in the Hungarian and German Lands, and everywhere among the Christians who belong to the Roman Pope”.²⁸

The existence of such individuals complicates, undoubtedly, the confessional landscape, as did the appearance of the Romanian Reformed Episcopate, which, in fewer than five years’ existence turned significantly towards its own understanding of the Reformation by sponsoring the Brașov edition of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. However, for the translation of the Bible, it turned again to the West, but not as it is confessed in the preface of the

peintures de Strei et l’Union des deux Églises”, *Museikon* 2 (2018): 37-78.

²⁶ Szilágyi, *Monumenta*, vol. II, 326, art. 17.

²⁷ Iulian-Mihai Damian, “Inspirația, contextul și aplicarea decretului regal *Privilegium Ruthenorum* (1443) în Transilvania și Banat” [The Inspiration, Context and Application of the Royal Decree *Privilegium Ruthenorum* (1443) in Transylvania and Banat], *AȘD* I (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005): 96.

²⁸ Violeta Barbu, “Românii și Reforma la 1534” [The Romanians and the Protestant Reformation in 1534], in Barbu and Mareș, *Floarea darurilor*, 361.

Palia, printed in 1581-1582 in Orăștie, to translate from “the Jewish and Greek language”. (As true Protestants they must have been “Tordaș Mihaiu, elected bishop of the Romanians in Transylvania and with Herce Ștefan, preacher of the gospel of Christ in the town of Căvăran Sebeș, Zacan Efrem, the teacher of Sebeș, and Peștișel Moisi, the preacher of the gospel in the town of Lugoj”, tempered, however, by the Orthodox convert “Achirie, the protopope of the Hunedoara County”²⁹, for whose sake the language list was completed by “Serbian”, which is understood to be the Slavonic language. However, the path was shortened by the use of the Hungarian translation of the *Pentateuch*, printed in Cluj in 1551,³⁰ and of an edition of the Vulgate.³¹

The two examples, Lațcu of Mățești and the group of translators of the *Palia*, although supporting – without certifying – the theory that the first Romanian translations of religious texts were located in Banat-Hunedoara, also prove the permissiveness of the Romanian world towards change, and even a certain dexterity in shifting between value systems, gained from centuries of living at the border between the two Christian worlds. If we add the observations from the first part of this section, the alternative of locating in another area does not seem so unlikely.

2. *A second reason which may strengthen this alternative is the absolutisation of the translation prohibition by the Eastern Church.* In fact, the prohibition, where it was not supported by convenience, only concerned books of worship, not books for reading, which include the texts of Scripture. The following factors would have provided models and the motivation for initiating translations into Romanian long before the spread of the Protestant Reformation:

- Close proximity to Catholicism in Poland, with which both the Kingdom of Hungary and Moldavia had close political and dynastic ties, and where the earliest translations of the Psalter most probably date from the thirteenth century.³² Poland is also where the first complete translation of the Bible was made in the mid-fifteenth century for the use of Zofia

²⁹ *Palia de la Orăștie. 1581-1582. Text – Facsimile – Indice* [*Palia* from Orăștie. 1581-1582. Text – Facsimiles – Index], ed. by Viorica Pamfil (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1968), 10-11.

³⁰ Nagy, *Reforma la români*, 96.

³¹ Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească* [Romanian Biblical Lexicology] (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2008), 511.

³² Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “The First Psalters in Old French and Their 12th Century Context”, in *Vernacular Psalters and the Early Rise of Linguistic Identities. The Romanian Case* (Bucharest: Dark Publishing, 2019), 31-32. Bernard Wodecki (“Polish Translation of the Bible”, in Jože Krašovec, ed., *The Interpretation of the Bible. The International Symposium in Slovenia, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 289* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 1202) suggests the 12th century, a view contradicted by the fact that the earliest known Polish versions are influenced by the Czech translation, thought to date from the thirteenth century.

Holszanska, the fourth wife of King Vladislav Jagiełło, an Orthodox convert to Catholicism on the occasion of their marriage.³³

- Proximity to Bohemia, which was also at times in a dynastic union with Hungary, where intense scholarly activity under the patronage of the university founded by Emperor Charles IV of Luxembourg in 1347 turned Prague into a cultural hub, partly explaining the relations between the Hussites, the Lollards and the Waldensians,³⁴ with echoes as far as Moldavia.
- The presence of Benedictine monasteries in Transylvania and Franciscan monasteries in Banat, Transylvania and Moldavia, in whose *scriptoria* – rightly called “incubators of knowledge” and “cultural mediators”³⁵ – books of Scripture were multiplied and often translated into vernacular languages.

Such a possibility must be considered after the philigranological analysis of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* proved with certainty that it dates from 1516 at the latest, therefore prior to Luther’s publication of his theses which shook Western Christianity to its foundations. Does this mean a return to the theory of Hussite influence? The question should no longer be a rhetorical one after Iulian Mihai Damian’s introduction into Romanian historical literature of a mysterious Johannes Valachus de Multania, who led the Hussite refugees in Wallachia in the middle of the fifteenth century,³⁶ and especially after Ioan-Florin Florescu’s discovery of a possible Czech influence on the text of the *Tetraevangelium* printed by Philip Mahler in Sibiu in 1551-1553,³⁷ even if it is a case of pre-Hussite translations, which could have been brought to Moldavia not only by the Hussite refugees, but also by Franciscans.³⁸ Since the probability that at least the Psalter

³³ Wodecki, “Polish Translation of the Bible”, 1204; Julia Verkholantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica. Ruthenian Translations from Czech in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland* (LIT Verlag, 2008), 51; Agrigoroaei, “The First Psalters in Old French”, 32.

³⁴ Agrigoroaei, “The First Psalters in Old French”, 33.

³⁵ Renáta Modráková, “Benedictine St George’s Monastery at the Prague Castle as a Crossroad of Medieval Cultural Trends and Ideas”, in Monika Benišínova, *(Trans)missions: Monasteries as Sites of Cultural Transfer* (Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2022), 41.

³⁶ Iulian Mihai Damian, “*Vetus et nova haeresis*. Inchiziția franciscană la hotarul sud-estic al regatului ungar la mijlocul secolului XV” [*Vetus et nova haeresis*. The Franciscan Inquisition on the Southeastern Border of the Hungarian Kingdom in the Mid-Fifteenth Century], *AȘDII* (2006): 100; Idem, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie* [John of Capestrano and the Late Crusade] (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2011), 148.

³⁷ Ioan-Florin Florescu, *În multe chipuri de Scripturi. Studii de traductologie biblică românească* [In Various Ways of Scriptures. Studies in Romanian Biblical Traductology] (Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2015), 168, 171, 175-176, 200-201.

³⁸ Vladimir Agrigoroaei, “Le faux problème hussite dans la littérature vieil-roumaine”, in Eugen Munteanu, ed., *Receptarea Sfintei Scripturi între filologie, hermeneutică și traductologie. Lucrările Simpozionului Național „Explorări în tradiția biblică românească și europeană”, VII, Iași, 18-20 mai 2017* [The Reception of the Holy Scriptures Between Philology, Hermeneutics and Traductology. Proceedings of the National Symposium “Explorations in the Romanian and European Biblical

was translated into Romanian as early as the fifteenth century is very high, it is obvious that an explanation must be sought in this century, one being the Hussite movement, responsible for the earliest Hungarian translation of the Bible. We know from the *Chronica fratrum minorum de observantia provinciae Boznae et Hungariae* that it was composed by two clergymen from Kamanetze (Sremska Kamenica, Serbia) who, in the context of the Hussite rebellion in Sirmium in 1438-1439, went to Moldavia, where they translated the two Testaments.³⁹

3. However, the event that can be credited for the first Romanian initiatives to translate the holy books could also be the Florentine Union – admittedly, not directly, but rather as a consequence of the disputes generated by both the effort to impose it and the effort to challenge it. Since both directions would have benefited from studying and deepening Christian teaching in order to broaden and strengthen their social base in their convictions, we will pursue their dialogue as broadly as possible, trying to include in the equation all the known elements to which, in one way or another, the emergence of the protographs might be due.

In July 1439, in order to obtain the necessary military support for Constantinople's defence against the Ottoman advance, the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, Patriarch Joseph II and a large number of subordinate archbishops, including the metropolitans Damian of Moldavia and Isidore of Kyiv and of all Russia, signed the ecclesiastical union with the Latin Church at the Council convened in Florence. Anti-unionist voices also immediately rallied around Metropolitan Mark Eugenikos of Ephesus.⁴⁰

As one of the architects of the union from the time when the Council was held in Ferrara, Metropolitan Isidore, a native Greek and a close friend of Patriarch Joseph II (1416-1439), remained a fervent supporter of the union, which he proclaimed in several cities of what in 1440 was the Hungarian-Polish *condominium*, inviting "all who bear the Christian name, both Latins and Greeks, and all other believers of the Ecumenical Constantinopolitan Church, Ruthenians, Serbs, Romanians and other Christian nations", to respect each other's sacraments.⁴¹ His advice was at least partly followed, and in 1442 the Peri

Tradition", VII, Iași, 18-20 May 2017] [Iași: Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2018), 81, 87.

³⁹ Damian, "Vetus et nova haeresis", 98-99; Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 146-147; Nagy, *Reforma la români*, 29-30.

⁴⁰ Borys A. Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform. The Kyivan Metropolitanate, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Genesis of the Union of Brest* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998), 43-44; Dan Ioan Mureșan, "Isihasmul și prima etapă a rezistenței la deciziile Conciliului florentin în Moldova (1442-1447)" [Hesychasm and the First Stage of Resistance to the Decisions of the Florentine Council in Moldavia (1442-1447)], *Studia hi.* 44, no. 1-2, 1999: 26-28.

⁴¹ Damian, "Inspirația, contextul și aplicarea", 92-94; Marius Diaconescu, "On the Isidore's Encyclical Letter Addressed from Buda on March 5th, 1440, to the Romanians, Ruthenians and Serbs in the Kingdom of Hungary", *AUB ist.* II (2011): 56-63.

monastery was able to regain its properties usurped by its neighbouring nobles, the Chapter of Oradea, calling the beneficiaries *fratres seu calugeri (...) nunc Deo propitio nobiscum fide uniti*.⁴²

Continuing his mission of recommending the union, Isidore arrived in 1441 at his residence in Moscow, where he was arrested and accused of heresy, but managed to escape and return among the Ruthenians. On March 22, 1443 he obtained from King Władysław III Jagiełło an important *Privilegium* that guaranteed the Slavic churches in Poland-Lithuania and Hungary the freedom to exercise jurisdiction over those of the Orthodox confession (which had already been abused by Catholic prelates eager to collect more tithes) as well as the right to own and have their usurped possessions returned.⁴³ This privileged diploma is particularly important because its provisions were also applied in Transylvania and Banat.⁴⁴ Metropolitan Isidore deserved the name “champion of the union”, ascribed to him by Borys Gudziak,⁴⁵ because he defended the unification even by participating in the final battle for Constantinople, later becoming its united patriarch in the last years of his life (1459-1463).⁴⁶

Metropolitan Damian, on the other hand, a native of the Bulgarian colony of Constantinople, joined the anti-unionist faction, most probably following the failure of the Warna Crusade (November 10, 1444).⁴⁷ In 1445, together with the other archbishops participating in the debates in the Xylalas palace, he signed a letter to Emperor John VIII asking him to repudiate the union.⁴⁸ In 1447 the emperor sent the much more stable Metropolitan Joachim to Moldova to replace him. Joachim served until 1454, suffering many insults from the anti-unionists, whose voices joined those of the Hussite heretics in banishing him to Poland “as a deplorable enemy of their rite”.⁴⁹

The union not only affected the individual destinies of those who made it, whether they remained faithful to it or not, but dramatically marked the existence and subsequent evolution of all ethno-political communities affiliated to Eastern Christianity.

⁴² Marius Diaconescu, “Les implications confessionnelles du Concile du Florence en Hongrie”, *MT* I, no. 1-2 (1997): 34.

⁴³ Diaconescu, “Les implications confessionnelles”, 37; Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 44-45; Mureșan, “Isihasmul”, 30-32; Damian, “Inspirația, contextul și aplicarea”, 94-95.

⁴⁴ Damian, “Inspirația, contextul și aplicarea”, 95-98.

⁴⁵ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 45.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-45; Dan Ioan Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando, titulaire du Patriarcat de Constantinople (1474-1497), et son rôle dans la politique orientale du Saint-Siège”, *Annuario VIII* (2006): 160, 208.

⁴⁷ Dan Ioan Mureșan, “Teoctist I și ungerea domnească a lui Ștefan cel Mare” [Theoctist I and the Royal Anointing of Stephen the Great], in Dumitru Țeicu and Ionel Căndea, eds., *Românii în Europa medievală (între Orientul bizantin și Occidentul latin). Studii în onoarea profesorului Victor Spinei* [Romanians in Medieval Europe (Between the Byzantine East and the Latin West). Studies in Honour of Professor Victor Spinei] (Brăila: Muzeul Brăilei, Editura Istros, 2008), 381.

⁴⁸ Mureșan, “Isihasmul”, 46-47; Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 382-383.

⁴⁹ Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando”, 184; Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 384-386, 394-398.

The chain of cataclysms began in 1448 in Moscow, when, with the election of Jonah, Bishop of Ryazan, in place of the banished Isidore, the autocephaly of Moscow was established *de facto*,⁵⁰ its *de jure* affirmation taking place at a synod held in 1459.⁵¹ Because of the kinship between Grand Duke Basil II of Moscow, Grand Duke Alexander of Kyiv (married to Basil II's sister) and King Kazimir IV (who was Alexander's cousin), Metropolitan Jonah's authority soon extended to the Ruthenians of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom and was officially recognised in 1451.⁵² The mediator was Simeon Olelkovich, Alexander's son and successor as Grand Duke of Kyiv, who, in the period 1455-1470, was received as the most influential political player among the anti-unionists.⁵³ His sister Evdokia, the wife of the Moldavian voivode Stephen the Great between 1463 and 1467, must also have played a role in mediating the return of the Kyiv Metropolitanate under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch.⁵⁴

In 1453, following the conquest of Constantinople, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was revived out of the Ottoman conquerors' need for internal stability combined with the anti-unionist aversion of the Greeks. Due to this, the United Patriarch Gregory III Mammas, elected in 1443, was forced to flee to Italy in 1451. In his place, a synod convened with the approval of Mohammed II elected Gennadios Scholarios, the successor of Mark Eugenikos at the leadership of the anti-unionist faction, whose staunch opposition to the Florentine union gave the sultan a guarantee that he would not seek military aid from the West in the future.⁵⁵ The culmination of this attitude came at the pan-Orthodox synod convened by Patriarch Maxim III in 1484, where the decision was taken to impose rebaptism for Catholics, who had thus been treated as heretics.⁵⁶

The recognition in 1451 of Jonah as Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Russia by King Kazimir IV was a heavy blow to the Florentine Union, this time from within the Catholic world, through the vehement rejection of the refugee Isidore, who was at that time serving as papal legate in Constantinople. Rome reacted decisively only in 1457, when Pope Calixtus III (1455-1458) devised a plan to divide the old Metropolitanate of Kyiv, which was completed by his successor Pius II (1458-1464) in collaboration with the United Patriarch of Constantinople, Gregory III Mammas. In Isidore's place, a close relative of his, Gregory the Bulgarian (1458-1472), was to exercise his pastorate under the auspices of the

⁵⁰ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 45.

⁵¹ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 177-178.

⁵² Dan Ioan Mureșan, "De l'intronisation du métropolitain Théoctiste I^{er} au sacre d'Étienne le Grand", in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine* [Stephen the Great and Holy. Athlete of the Christian Faith] (Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2004), 352.

⁵³ Mureșan, "De l'intronisation", 365-366.

⁵⁴ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 184; Mureșan, "Teoctist I", 326-327.

⁵⁵ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 14.

⁵⁶ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 238-239.

Florentine Union over the Greek believers of the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom, thus consecrating the division of the old archdiocese between Gregory, the united Metropolitan of Kyiv, Lithuania and “all of Lower Russia”, and the “schismatic” Jonah, who, as Metropolitan of Moscow, had “Upper Russia” under his jurisdiction.⁵⁷ This confessional reality was short-lived, however, because after Jonah’s death in 1461, Gregory the Bulgarian addressed the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, asking him to extend his jurisdiction over Moscow as well. In 1467 Patriarch Dionysius I recognised Gregory as Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Russia and wrote a letter to the Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow asking him to recognise Gregory’s authority as a condition for the reunification of the two Metropolitanates. When refused, Dionysius declared the Moscow Metropolitan Philip a schismatic (1469), and Ivan III called the patriarch a heretic and a prisoner of the pagans, his blessing being considered unnecessary for the autocephalous Metropolitanate of Moscow (1470). The division of the old Metropolitanate of Kyiv was thus consecrated for the second time, this time by the return under the authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Metropolitanate with jurisdiction in the Polish-Lithuanian Kingdom, the Moscow Metropolitanate remaining under the authority of the Grand Duke.⁵⁸

Among the nine dioceses listed in the bull of appointment of Metropolitan Gregory the Bulgarian issued by Pope Pius II on September 3, 1458,⁵⁹ that of Halych and Lviv was already at that time under the jurisdiction of the Greek monk Macarius de Servia, of the Monastery of St Cyprian of Constantinople, *electus Galliciensis*, appointed by Pope Calixtus III on January 16, 1458⁶⁰ as bishop of the Ruthenians of Poland and of those living according to the Greek rite in the dioceses of Oradea, Transylvania and Eger, i.e., the Romanians, Ruthenians and Serbs of Hungary. His presence in Transylvania is documented for the years 1466-1469,⁶¹ a sign of a disagreement with his superior in Kyiv, who was in dialogue with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in those years. As a result of his refusal to abandon the union, or perhaps because of the scorn of the Catholic

⁵⁷ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 45-46; Mureşan, “De l’intronisation”, 359-360.

⁵⁸ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, p. 47; Mureşan, “Girolamo Lando”, 177-178.

⁵⁹ *Documenta Pontificum Romanorum historiam Ucrainae illustratia (1075-1953)*, collegit introductione et adnotationibus auxit P. Athanasius G. Welykyj OSBM, vol. I (1075-1700) (Romae: Sumptibus Ucrainorum apud exteros degentium, 1953), 146.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 138-139. On the same day Calixtus III also issued Macarius’s recommendation to the King of Poland (*Ibid.*, 140). On September 11, 1458, Pius II asked the Catholic bishops of Lviv and Przemysł to return to Bishop *Macarius Galicensis* the corresponding revenues collected from the united Ruthenians (*Ibid.*, 153-154). The issuance of these documents contradicts the hypothesis that the appointment of Macarius was in fact intended as a transfer of the see somewhere in the territory of Hungary (Adrian Andrei Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara și românii din vremea sa. Studii* [John of Hunedoara and the Romanians of his Time. Studies] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1999), 99-100).

⁶¹ Menyhért Érdújhelyi, “Magyarországai gör. katolikusok a mohácsi vész előtt” [The Greek Catholics in Hungary Before the Mohács Disaster], *Katholikus Szemle* 11, no. 1 (1897): 44-53.

prelates who used to collect tithes from the united Ruthenians, Macarius seems to have had to leave his residence in Poland and move among his faithful in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁶²

But even in this region the Florentine Union was on the verge of collapse. We do not know where Bishop Macarius settled, but the most tempting hypothesis revolves around the fortress of Munkács in the county of Bereg, given in 1396 by King Sigismund of Luxembourg to the Lithuanian Prince Theodor Koriatovits, a leading political personality of the time, who turned it into the strongest fortress in the north of medieval Hungary, as well as an important centre of Ruthenian colonization (about 7-8,000 families). In 1402 he became the son-in-law of Count Dragoș of Maramureș, and his legendary figure is linked to the foundation of the diocese of Munkács, but only the founding of a monastery is certain.⁶³ In 1422-1423 the fortress was given again, this time to the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević, whose relations with the King of Hungary became increasingly close as the Ottoman threat grew.⁶⁴ In 1433 it was in the possession of his successor, the despot Đurađ Vuković/ Gheorghe Branković, together with numerous other feudal estates spread over several counties of the kingdom,⁶⁵ which brought him considerable income,⁶⁶ achieved in part thanks to the demographic increase provided by the establishment of Serbian colonies.⁶⁷ This privileged status of the despot, apart from his personal prestige and the strong kinship relations he had formed, was due to a considerable extent to his duplicitous attitude towards the Florentine Union, which he simulated convincingly enough to receive as many benefits as possible, including from the Holy See, from which he obtained permission to found nine monasteries in Hungary under the pretext of strengthening the union, whose monks, however,

⁶² Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 49-51; Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 99-101; Mureșan, "De l'intronisation", 359-360, 370; Dan Ioan Mureșan, "Bessarion et l'Église de rite Byzantin du royaume de Hongrie (1463-1472)", in Christian Gastgeber et al., eds., *Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit. Europa am Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit zwischen Wien und Konstantinopel* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011), 83-84, 91-92.

⁶³ Микола Вегеш, Степан Віднянський, "Цікаве дослідження про подільського князя Федора Корятовича – володаря Мукачівського замку. Рец. на: Федака С. Д. «Ми, Федір Корятович, з ласки Божої князь із Мункача ...»: історичний нарис. Ужгород: Карпати, 2017. 136 с., іл." [An Interesting Study About the Prince of Podil Fedor Koryatovych – The Owner of the Mukachevo Castle. Review at: Fedaka S. D. "We, Fedor Koryatovych, by the grace of God, the prince from Munkach ...": Historical Essay. Uzhgorod: Karpaty, 2017. 136 pp., illustrations], *Краєзнавство* 3 (2019): 284-287.

⁶⁴ Aleksandar Krstić, "Familiales of the Serbian despots in and from the territory of Banat (1411-1458)", in Zoltan Iusztin, ed., *Politics and Society in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (13th – 16th centuries)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2019), 94-95.

⁶⁵ Krstić, "Familiales", 103, 106.

⁶⁶ Александар Крстић, "Деспот Ђурађ Вуковић и закуп коморе у Нађбањи" [Despot Đurić Vuković and the Lease of the Chamber in Baia Mare], *Историјски Часопис* LXIV (2015): 252.

⁶⁷ Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 38.

under the protection of the despot, carried out an intense anti-unionist mission. This information could be suspected of exaggeration on the part of the Catholic party which passed it on to us,⁶⁸ but it is fully confirmed if we look at the conditions under which Đurađ Vuković-Branković negotiated in 1451 the marriage of his niece, Elisabeta Cilly-Branković, to Matthias Hunyadi, as a sign of the end of the conflict with his father, which began in 1444 in the context of the Warna Crusade. A condition in the marriage contract thus stipulated that *puella Elisabet [...] in ritu fidei Graecorum permaneat et semper cum ea, et in eius obsequiis stent presbiteri ex Graecorum ritu, ac nobiles et etiam dominae et puellae, quos nos et filii nostri ad hoc eligere maluerimus et voluerint.*⁶⁹

This condition must be seen in relation to the desire expressed earlier, in 1448, in the context of similar attempts to intermarry the two magnates, when the same potential bride was offered to Matthias' elder brother Ladislaus Hunyadi; the marriage was to be *factam, contractam et dispositam sub fide nostra christiana, fama et honore nostris temporalibus et sacro baptismatis sacramento nostra parte irrevocabiliter et semper promissimus, ymmo et harum serie promittimus servare gratam, ratam et firmam.*⁷⁰ Since the statement belongs to Count Ulrich Cilly, Elizabeth's Catholic father, and *fide christiana* can only be understood as Latin confession, it can be deduced that the celebration of the

⁶⁸ The information comes from a letter addressed by the Franciscan monk John of Capestrano to Pope Calixtus III on July 4, 1455, in which he describes in detail the duplicitous policy of the despot Đurađ Vuković-Branković towards the Florentine Union, noting among numerous accusations that: *Gloriatur proinde habuisse a praefato praedecessore vestrae sanctitatis bullam aedificandi novem loca in regno Hungariae, ubi manutenere vult calogeros graecos, qui omnino dicunt Spiritum sanctum non procedere scilicet a filio; qui negant purgatorium esse, qui inficiantur animas quorumcunque sanctorum nullam gloriam usque ad diem iudicii habere; nec animas quorumcunque damnatorum aliquam poenam pati usque ad iudicium, et multa alia, quae longum esset enarrare (Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica cum insertis editorum documentorum registis ab anno 925 usque ad annum 1752. Collegit et digessit P. Eusebius Fermendžin, Zagrabie, 1892, 225). For the context in which John of Capestrano's accusations were made, see Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 38-40. The existence of the monasteries is confirmed by the correspondence between the despot and Pope Nicholas V in 1453; for the context in which this correspondence took place, see Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 105-106, 114. As a result of the conflict with the Hunyadi family, the descendants of the despot Đurađ Vuković-Branković lost all their possessions in Hungary in 1459 (Krstić, "Familiares", 109), and the Serbian communities of the first wave of colonization were dissolved after the disappearance of the Hungarian Kingdom and the emergence of the Pashalik of Buda in 1541. No evidence survives of the monasteries he founded under the protection of the privileges granted by Pope Nicholas V in 1453.*

⁶⁹ Georgius Fejér, *Genus, incunabula et virtus Joannis Corvini de Hunyad, regni Hungariae gubernatoris, argumentis criticis illustrata* (Budae: Typis Typogr. Regiae Universitatis Ungaricae, 1844), 152.

⁷⁰ Lajos Thallóczy and Antal Áldásy, eds., *Codex diplomaticus partium Regno Hungariae Adnexarum*, vol. II. *A Magyarország és Szerbia Közti Összeköttetések Oklevéltára, 1198-1526* [Documentary Archive of Hungarian-Serbian Ties, 1198-1526] (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1907), 150.

marriage in the Western rite and even the rebaptism of the bride had been requested by the groom's family.⁷¹

On July 4, 1555, as the wife of Matthias, the 13-year-old girl was restored to the bosom of the Catholic Church by the inquisitor John of Capestrano.⁷² Her residence in Hunedoara is linked to the establishment of the first clear evidence of the activity of an Orthodox hierarch in Transylvania, Bishop John, who came from Caffa and whose actions threatened to destabilise the religious union within the province and the surrounding territory of Banat.⁷³ Suspected of having been part of the bride's suite,⁷⁴ arrested by order of John of Capestrano and sent to Rome, he became an effective instrument of conversion and on July 2, 1456, as Archbishop of *Gothia* (Mangop/Theodoro), he was commissioned to take over the destiny of the religious union and crusade in the Crimean Peninsula, his birthplace.⁷⁵ In this dignity, John of Caffa took the place of Metropolitan Macarius, who was transferred to the see of Serres (now in Greece).⁷⁶

He is believed to be the same individual who, on January 16, 1458, was given the task of taking over the pastoral care of the Uniates of Poland and Hungary, namely, Bishop Macarius of Halych,⁷⁷ whose potential parishioners we continue to search for, this time turning our attention to the Romanian nobles of Banat, also suspected of a formal adherence to Catholicism. Their conversion was quite widespread at the end of the fifteenth century, perhaps precisely because the half measures with which the Florentine Union operated proved insufficient when faced with social opportunism.⁷⁸ In the context of the assiduous sabotage of the union by the Catholic clergy of southern Hungary, against whom the pope's interventions were superfluous,⁷⁹ the seating of a united bishop among the nobles of Banat could not have brought them any real advantage, so Macarius' residence must have been elsewhere.

⁷¹ Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 104.

⁷² *Acta Bosnae*, 225.

⁷³ Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 122-128.

⁷⁴ Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 41; Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 106.

⁷⁵ Iulian Mihai Damian, "Iancu de Hunedoara, Ioan de Capestrano și Biserica transilvană de rit răsăritean: noi mărturii despre mitropolitul Ioan «de Caffa»" [John of Hunedoara, John of Capestrano and the Transylvanian Church of the Eastern Rite: New Testimonies about Metropolitan John "of Caffa"], *AIXXLIII-XLIV* (2006-2007): 1-14; Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 129-136.

⁷⁶ Damian, "Iancu de Hunedoara", 5, 11-12.

⁷⁷ Damian, *Ioan de Capestrano și Cruciada Târzie*, 130, n. 125. Attention is drawn to a namesake, Macarius, former Metropolitan of Serres, who retired to a monastery in Athos after 1445 and was also among the intimates of Isidore of Kyiv, who wrote him a letter, the date of which is apparently unknown.

⁷⁸ Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 57.

⁷⁹ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 216.

After a similar approach, Adrian Andrei Rusu proposed Feleac, a Romanian village under the jurisdiction of Cluj where, in the 1480s, a Gothic church was built and where several sources indicate the existence of a functioning archbishop's seat extending into the first decades of the following century. Attempting to unravel the complicated order of archbishops known in documents, A. A. Rusu considered Macarius to be one and the same person as the Greek bishop Mark,⁸⁰ who, according to sources, settled in Feleac sometime during the second half of the fifteenth century. Here he bought the house of the local priest, Vasile, whose son, Danciu, he raised up and made bishop in his place, on which occasion he would have adopted the name Daniil. To Daniil we owe the construction of the stone church and its endowment with a *Tetraevangelium*, copied in 1488 and adorned with silver covers in 1498 by the Moldavian treasurer Isac "for the Feleac Metropolitanate".⁸¹ The attestation in 1446 of Vasile, son of the priest Barbos of Feleac,⁸² from whom Bishop Macarius-Mark bought the house in the 1460s, seems to support A. A. Rusu's hypothesis. Based on it, the historian further proposed to identify the Feleac Metropolitanate with the "Archdiocese of Transylvania", mentioned in an act issued by Hungarian King Vladislav II Jagello in 1494, and labelled it as united with Rome, on the grounds that the only source of legitimacy of a Greek Rite Church in Hungary at that time was the Florentine Council.⁸³ However, the second part of A. A. Rusu's hypothesis becomes less plausible given that in Poland, Cazimir IV Jagello, the father of the issuer of the document of 1494, appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1481 and again in 1488-1489 for the consecration of the Metropolitans of Kyiv, and in 1495 so did John I Albert Jagello.⁸⁴ The sabotage of the religious union of the Ruthenians was thus generally affected, since the jurisdiction of Kyiv also extended into Hungary.

The interpretation of the emergence of the Diocese of Munkács / Mukachevo as an extension of the anti-unionist attitudes of Metropolitan Jonah Hlezna of Kyiv (1489-1494), who sent Bishop John there to take over the jurisdiction of the deceased Macarius of Halych,⁸⁵ the conflict that arose between this Bishop John and the abbot of the Peri monastery, as a result of which – by the already mentioned act of 1494 – the King placed both under the authority of the "Archbishop of Transylvania",⁸⁶ as well as the occupation of this position by

⁸⁰ Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 100-105.

⁸¹ Marius Porumb, *Biserica arhiepiscopală din Feleac, ctitoria lui Ștefan cel Mare* [The Archiepiscopal Church of Feleac, the Foundation of Stephen the Great] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Renașterea, 2003), 12-13.

⁸² Jakó Zsigmond, *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei (1289-1556)* [The Registers of the Convent from Cluj-Mănăștur], vol. I (1289-1484) (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1990), 329, no. 569.

⁸³ Rusu, *Ioan de Hunedoara*, 101-106.

⁸⁴ Gudziak, *Crisis and Reform*, 52; Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 230.

⁸⁵ Diaconescu, "Les implications confessionnelles", 56.

⁸⁶ August Treboniu Laurianu, ed., *Magazinu istoriku pentru Dacia* [Historical Magazine for Dacia],

the abbot Ghelasie of Peri in the years immediately following and the identification of the Râmeț monastery as his residence, functioning in parallel with that of Feleac,⁸⁷ although they do not have sufficient information to validate them, may nevertheless also call into question the second part of A. A. Rusu's hypothesis.

The possible existence in Transylvania in the last decades of the fifteenth century of a hierarchy subordinated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate is also supported by the 1481 correspondence of Pope Sixtus IV with the General Vicariate of the Polish Franciscan Province concerning the situation of the union in Poland and Moldavia, from which one can glimpse a true capitulation to the reality of the abandonment of the Florentine Union by the majority of the faithful of the Greek rite, with only the individual reconciliation of heretics and schismatics being recommended for the future.⁸⁸

Looking, however, at the whole of the unknowns of the history of the Greek hierarchy in medieval Hungary, implicitly also in Transylvania, the first part of A. A. Rusu's hypothesis – that of Macarius's establishment in Feleac, from where his descendants, without necessarily having any connection with the "archbishopric of Transylvania" mentioned in 1494, continued to pastor the fewer and fewer supporters of the Florentine Union, enduring in the sixteenth century the harassments coming from the neighbouring bishopric of Vad, apparently created by the Metropolitan of Moldavia to hasten its extinction – remains the most credible interpretation issued so far in the historiography of the problem.

Returning to the series of cataclysms caused by the Union of Florence, the last destination to which we will turn our attention is Moldavia, the young state that emerged east of the Carpathians in the mid-fourteenth century, which owed its survival for a long time to the rivalries between the two neighbouring kingdoms, Poland and Hungary. Dan Ioan Mureșan, a true expert on the problem of the reception of the Florentine Union in Moldavia, was the first to add the spiritual dimension to the political spectrum illustrated by the struggle of the *boyars* parties and the absence of a principle of succession to the throne capable of preventing fratricidal wars. His studies have shown that the fierce struggle for the throne by the descendants of Alexander the Good (1400-1432) for more than a quarter of a century and even in the first decades of the reign of Stephen the Great (1457-1504) was not only to gain power but also to assert the position of Moldavia towards religious union. A detailed account of the events, which D. I. Mureșan has presented in several publications, shows that the first heir to the

vol. III (București: Cu tipariul Colegiului Național, 1845), 178.

⁸⁷ Ana Dumitran, "The Chronology of the Murals in the Râmeț Monastic Church (Alba County, Romania) Based on a Reevaluation of the Dating of the Narthex Inscription", *Museikon*, 4 (2020): 148-149.

⁸⁸ Mureșan, "Ghirolamo Lando", 237-238.

throne of Alexander the Good, Prince Elias/ Iliș – married to the sister of Zofia Holszanska, the fourth wife of King Vladislav Jagiełło, for whom the Bible was translated into Polish – was a fervent supporter of the union even before it was proclaimed in Florence.⁸⁹ In 1436 he sent Metropolitan Gregory to Rome, where he confessed his Catholic faith and was commissioned to carry out missionary work *pro augmento catholice fidei et romanae ecclesiae* among *Valachos, Bulgaros et Moldovlachos, in regno seu confinibus Hungarie in praesentiarum existentes*.⁹⁰ Stephen II, with whom Elias had to share the reign, obtained in the same year from Constantinople the elevation of the Diocese of Roman to the rank of a Metropolitanate,⁹¹ perhaps not only in order to have a hierarchy on an equal footing with that of his brother, but with the intention of substituting it for the Metropolitanate of Suceava, whose archbishop had just accepted in those days the unconditional conversion. A first end of the dispute can be considered to have taken place in 1445, when Metropolitan Damian, who had signed the Act of Union in 1439, appeared in Constantinople as a supporter of Mark Eugenikos, and the blinded Elias was finally removed from the scene, Stephen II and the anti-unionist party claiming victory. In Rome, Eugenius IV took this as a rejection by Moldavia of the Florentine Union, convinced that the perpetrators of this overthrow had made an alliance with the heretics who had fled to Moldavia from Transylvanian Szeklerland.⁹² In the short period of peace that followed, as a reward for supporting his religious policy, Stephen II made generous donations to the Moldavian monasteries, especially to the Neamț monastery, for which he is considered the second founder, although it was located in the “Upper Country”, which was under his brother’s rule during the time of the *condominium*. There, precisely in those decades when war was endemic, the monk Gavriil Uric produced a considerable number of copies of important works belonging to hesychastic literature.⁹³ Hesychasm thus demonstrates its “fifth column” qualities, designed to undermine the convergent unionist efforts of the reign, the Suceava Metropolitanate, and the Catholic settlements of Baia and Siret.

The arrival in Moldavia in 1448 of the new Metropolitan with unionist views, Joachim, was not likely to change things, because the struggles for the throne continued, and his teaching on religious union was undermined even by Hussite preachers, whose sermons, as the Catholic Bishop Peter Csipser of Baia confessed on November 28, 1452, were listened by heretics and schismatics alike.⁹⁴ Joachim was banished during the second reign of Alexander II/

⁸⁹ Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 376-377.

⁹⁰ Mureșan, “Isihasmul”, 21-24.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 25; Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 378-379.

⁹² Mureșan, “Isihasmul”, 42-43; Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 382-384.

⁹³ Mureșan, “Isihasmul”, 50-52, 54-55.

⁹⁴ Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 394-398.

Alexăndrel (February 1452 - August 1454),⁹⁵ a son of Elias, whose decision to abandon the Latin alphabet for inscriptions on the coins he issued, replacing them with Slavonic inscriptions, was later interpreted as a genuine anti-unionist protest,⁹⁶ although all other known information about him would place him in the pro-union faction. Nothing is known about how this new break with Rome was prepared or how the Bulgarian Theoctist – who historical tradition notes was Markos Eugenikos's deacon⁹⁷ and was consecrated as an archbishop by the Serbian Patriarch Nicodemus of Ipek, also a reputed anti-unionist – came to be the leader of the Moldavian Church.⁹⁸ The group that supported Theoctist may also have been responsible for the overthrow of Alexander II a few months later, the return of Peter Aron to the throne in August 1454 not for a moment looking like restoring control to the pro-union forces and the anti-Ottoman crusade. The last armed conflicts for the rule of Moldavia do not even allow us to clearly distinguish the unionist mark, but it must be associated especially with the support of John Hunyadi, assisted in those years, as champion of the anti-Ottoman struggle, by the inquisitor John of Capestrano, commissioned to preach the union and the Crusade in Hungary and Poland. In connection with the latter's involvement in the overthrow of Bishop John of Caffa from Hunedoara, we also learn from Franciscan sources about Peter Aron: that in 1455 he converted (to Florentine Union or to Catholicism?) and undertook the expulsion of all schismatic Wallachians from Moldavia (meaning those who refused the union).⁹⁹ It seems that the commitment was put into practice in the summer of 1456, because after the Christian victory at Belgrade the Metropolitan is no longer mentioned in the documents, a sign that he and the "schismatics" close to him were expelled.¹⁰⁰ Ten months later, following the victory of Stephen III at Doljești, it was Peter Aron himself who was banished. Theoctist, in order to avoid a repetition of the episode of exile, resorted to the act of anointing, which was due only to the emperor, as an additional measure to strengthen the orthodoxy of the new ruler, who had just emerged from the shadow of the Catholic John Hunyadi.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 186-191.

⁹⁶ Părvu Boerescu, *Din istoria scrierii românești. Preliminarii teoretice. Alfabetul româno-chirilic. Vechea scriere româno-latină (1570-1830). Crearea alfabetului românesc modern* [From the History of Romanian Writing. Theoretical Preliminaries. The Romanian Cyrillic Alphabet. The Old Romanian-Latin Script (1570-1830). Creation of the Modern Romanian Alphabet] (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2014), 103.

⁹⁷ Mureșan, "De l'intronisation", 341-342; Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 219; Mureșan, "Teoctist I", 381.

⁹⁸ Mureșan, "Girolamo Lando", 189.

⁹⁹ Mureșan, "Teoctist I", 409-411.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 411-413.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 340-343, 416.

Although a relative internal peace was established for almost half a century, the confrontation between the pro- and anti-unionist factions did not cease. In the first decade of his reign, when he was more under the influence of Metropolitan Theoctist with whom he founded the Putna monastery, Stephen brought over from Kyiv his bride, Evdokia, the sister of Grand Duke Simeon Olelkovich, the restorer of the Pechersk Lavra. He thus became related to the most important political opponent of the Florentine Union, to whom, in the chronicle he initiated, Theoctist associated the title of Tsar, even though he was only a vassal of the King of Poland.¹⁰² After Simeon's death in 1470, Theoctist transferred this title to Stephen the Great, as the chronicle written by the monks of Bistrița suggests, assigning him this title from the year 1471.¹⁰³

After the death of his first wife, Stephen allowed himself to be drawn into the marriage plans of Cardinal Bessarion, the United Patriarch of Constantinople. These were fulfilled in 1472 – with the hope, of course, of extending the religious union and widening the anti-Ottoman front – with the marriages of Maria Asanina Palaiologina to the Lord of Moldavia and of her cousin, Zoe Asanina Palaiologina, to the Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow.¹⁰⁴ Their husbands, each in their own way, also came to be associated with the names of the two Byzantine princesses and their hopes of taking over the political and spiritual heritage of Byzantium: in Moscow the first seeds of the ideology of the Third Rome would be sown, and in Suceava “Tsar” Stephen would decide to join the crusade proclaimed in 1464 by Pius II. Thus, Bessarion's anti-Ottoman and pro-union plan failed in Moscow but partially succeeded in Moldavia, where in November 1473 Stephen the Great attacked Wallachia, which was allied to the Ottoman Empire. This provoked the Sultan's reprisal, which ended with the victory of the Moldavians at Vaslui on January 10, 1475.¹⁰⁵ The plan also succeeded in spiritual

¹⁰² Ibid., 323-326.

¹⁰³ Maria Magdalena Székely and Ștefan S. Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina. O prințesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei* [Maria Asanina Palaiologina. A Byzantine Princess on the Throne of Moldavia] (Sfânta Mănăstire Putna, 2006), 69-70. The earliest known official use of this title is in the vicinity of the votive miniature in the *Tetraevangelium* of Humor, which was completed in June 1473. The absence of the voivode's wife from the image is interpreted by D. I. Mureșan as a protest on the part of the miniaturist monk Nicodemus of Putna against the new political orientation of Stephen the Great, while the title of tsar was meant to remind him of his legal obligation to remain a defender of Orthodoxy (Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando”, 219-220, n. 295). As it was not intended for the personal use of the ruler, but for that of the Humor monastery, this kind of psychological effect can be excluded. So can Nicodemus' alleged initiative to carry out only part of the patron's order, at least until radiological analysis confirms that the white area in the lower right half was never painted. See also <https://www.putna.ro/Tetraevanghel-s3-ss2-c1-cc1.php> (accessed on 30.10.2022).

¹⁰⁴ Mureșan, “Teoctist I”, 327-329.

¹⁰⁵ Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando”, 204-205. See also Ștefan S. Gorovei, “1473: Ștefan al Moldovei și lumea catolică” [1473: Stephen of Moldavia and the Catholic World], *AIX XXIX* (1992): 77.

terms, Stephen tacitly accepting the jurisdiction of the new Latin Patriarch, Girolamo Lando, over the Moldavian Church.¹⁰⁶ But he hesitated to respond to the express request to submit the Moldavian Church to him – a request which reached Stephen after the defeat at Războieni (July 26, 1476) – being dissatisfied that the allies had been late in helping him and worried about the return to Wallachia of Vlad Țepeș, who had been considered a Catholic since his first reign in 1456-1462.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, he delayed his response until, with the fall of Lando and the break-up of the anti-Ottoman coalition, it was no longer relevant. After reaching peace with the Ottoman Empire in 1480-1481, Stephen asked the Ecumenical Patriarch to confirm Metropolitan George David,¹⁰⁸ the successor of Theoctist, who had died on November 18, 1477. Maria Asanina Palaiologina also died on December 19 of the same year. An embroidery on her tomb continued to bear the symbolic meaning of the true imperial agenda she had brought to Moldavia as a dowry: the succession of an Empire that should not die.¹⁰⁹ On August 31, 1481, in the aforementioned letter to the General Vicar of the Polish Franciscan Province, Pope Sixtus IV acknowledged the return to schism of the Ruthenians of Poland-Lithuania and the Romanians of Moldavia. The last reverberation of the unionist phenomenon was to occur in 1484, at the pan-Orthodox synod already mentioned, convened by Patriarch Maxim III to judge the legality of the Florentine Council, where, following the conclusion that a false ecumenical council had met in Florence, the participants demanded the introduction into the Euchologion of the obligation to rebaptise Catholics, who had thus been made heretics.¹¹⁰

It is time to consider how this long account of facts generally known to historians can help philologists to clarify the problem of the appearance of the first translations of religious texts into Romanian. First of all, the events highlight a profound confrontation between the two branches of Christianity. The effervescence and durability of this confrontation were fuelled, on the one hand, by the Ottoman threat, which generated intense eschatological fears that lasted well into the seventeenth century, and on the other hand, by humanist scholarship, which, massively supported by the advent of printing presses, analysed the biblical texts in depth, and in the sixteenth century came to question the very foundations of the Christian faith. Even though both types of consequence came somewhat later, they shared the same origin: the conflict

“*Stephen the Great’s action, triggered in 1473, must be seen as part of Pope Sixtus the Fourth’s projects*” (author’s emphasis, Șt. S. G.).

¹⁰⁶ Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando”, 211.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 212, 215.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 234, 236, 237.

¹⁰⁹ Székely and Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina*, 183.

¹¹⁰ Mureșan, “Girolamo Lando”, 237-239.

sparked by the attempt to restore the unity of the Christian world, sealed in 1439 at the Council of Florence, which superimposed and interlinked the supremacy of the Latin Church and the anti-Ottoman Crusade. For Romanians, geographically located closest to the territories already occupied by the Ottomans, the dichotomy between political survival (apparently guaranteed by the acceptance of the union) and spiritual salvation (for which the anti-unionist faction hastened to give assurances) must have made it necessary to involve in the equation a much broader social factor than that constituted by political decision-makers and the ecclesiastical elite. One convenient way to get the masses to support a creed was persuasive speeches, ostentatiously repeated, a tactic to which the Hussite leaders, and most probably the Catholic ones, resorted, but which Romanians must have expected primarily from their spiritual leaders, whether unionists or opponents of union. Constant contact with the Western environment – where translations of holy texts were no longer a novelty in the mid-fifteenth century and had little impact on the psychology of the faithful – must also have become familiar to those who, apparently, only provided military aid from there. It was not only people that circulated but also their ideas and the books with which they supported them. The Slavonic literature brought north of the Danube by Bulgarian and Serbian refugees after the conquest of their homelands must have done a great service in this respect. We can now understand why the number of copies made of them was greater in Moldavia, where the pressure of the union was longer and more persuasive, and the imitation of Byzantium – through the solemnity of ceremonial practices, the protectorate of the monasteries of Athos and other holy places of Orthodoxy, and the foundation programme – was much earlier. But Slavonic texts could only serve the spiritual edification of a limited number of people, whereas teaching and, especially, prayer had to be extended to the point of generalization, as the safest means of bringing the opposing side out of battle. Someone therefore had to take on the task of translating them or – to begin with – at least those that could have maximum impact, that is, the *Psalter*, the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles*, possibly along with some apocryphal and hagiographic writings. It should also be mentioned that for a long time these translations were interspersed with the Slavonic text, a sign that whoever read and passed on the message – most often in religious services – wanted to be deemed credible twice: once for the authority of the sacredness of the liturgical language and a second time for the message contained in his translation.

Having reached this point in the discussion, we need to consider which faction is more likely to be recognised as the promoter of this tactic of *captatio benevolentiae*, or at least to be recognised as the first to promote it in the Romanian environment. The problem cannot simply be solved by putting it down to the *scriptoria* of the Moldavian monasteries, whose diligence in the fifteenth century is profoundly admirable, even if it had every chance of being

correct and of settling the competition in favour of the anti-unionist faction. This is because we also find translations of the Psalms and several books of the Old Testament (*Ruth, Esther, Job, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, The Song of Songs, The Lamentations of Jeremiah, Daniel*) in the fifteenth-century Ruthenian environment – precisely those chapters whose high moral and empathetic character could best serve the anxieties of the time. All these texts – which are preserved in the *Vilnius Codex* of the Lithuanian Academy, datable by watermark to around 1514 (and which is supposed to have also contained translations of the 12 Minor Prophets and the *Book of Isaiah*) – are disputed in the scholarly literature. A group of researchers claim that the sources from which the translations were made are Slavonic, and only in the case of *The Song of Songs* did the translator also use an older Ruthenian translation from Hebrew, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century.¹¹¹

Another scholarly group believes that these translations and a whole series of works on philosophy, astrology-astronomy, mathematics, botany, etc. were translated from Hebrew sources by Jews from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, who dictated them to Ruthenian Christians, also with one exception, the *Book of Esther*, for which a Greek source is presumed.¹¹² This second authorship of the translation, the only one documented,¹¹³ led to the association of the entire corpus of Ruthenian translations with Judaizers active initially around Novgorod, then also in Moscow.¹¹⁴ This enigmatic sect, whose origins are still unclear,¹¹⁵ had such an impact on religious life in the great Moscow citadel that it led to the compilation in 1499 of the first complete Slavonic version of the Bible under the patronage of Bishop Gennadij Gonozov of Novgorod, one of the main persecutors of the Judaizers.¹¹⁶ As for the

¹¹¹ Francis J. Thomson, “The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament”, in Jože Krašovec, ed., *The Interpretation of the Bible. The International Symposium in Slovenia. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series 289* (Sheffield Academic Press, 1998): 873-878.

¹¹² Moshe Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations from Hebrew and the Heresy of the Judaizers: Is There a Connection?”, in Vyacheslav V. Ivanov and Julia Verkhohantsev, eds., *Speculum Slaviae Orientalis: Muscovy, Ruthenia and Lithuania in the Late Middle Ages* (Moscow: Novoe ozdatel'stvo, 2005), 189-198.

¹¹³ Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations”, 197-198.

¹¹⁴ Dmytro Čyževs'kyj, *A History of Ukrainian Literature (From the 11th to the End of the 19th Century)*, Second Edition, with *An Overview of the Twentieth Century*, Edited and with a Foreword by George S. N. Luckyj (New York and Englewood, Colorado: The Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences and Ukrainian Academic Press, 1997), 230-232; Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations”, 190-191; Mikhail Beider, “On the Frontiers of Sacred Spaces: the Relations between Jews and Orthodox Christians in the Early Modern Ruthenian Lands on the Example of Religious Proselytism and Apostasy” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Free University of Berlin and Charles University in Prague, May 10, 2016, accessed in 31.10.2022, <https://d-nb.info/1121007759/34>), 41-50.

¹¹⁵ Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations”, 187; Beider, *On the Frontiers of Sacred Spaces*, 21-31.

¹¹⁶ “The Slavonic Translation”, 650-664; Beider, *On the Frontiers of Sacred Spaces*, 50.

motivation of these translations, they were explained only by reasons deriving from the Jewish mysticism professed by the Kabbalist Rabbi Moshe ben Jacob ha-Goleh (the Exiled) and the context of eschatological fervour around the year 5525 (= 7000 after the creation of the world, 1492 after the birth of Christ), when the leader and wisemen of the Jewish community in Kyiv could think of a “mission among the Slavs” in an attempt to find the proselytes so important in the process of Redemption.¹¹⁷ There remains the purely intellectual motivation,¹¹⁸ if we look at the group of Ruthenian translations of the Judaizers as a whole, in which works of a scholarly nature far outnumber biblical texts. It should also be remembered that the removal of Dmitriy and his mother, Elena Stefanova Voloshanka, from the throne of the Grand Duchy of Moscow was based on the accusation that the daughter of Stephen the Great (who was also the daughter-in-law of the Grand Duke Ivan III) had converted to this Judaizing sect.¹¹⁹ Without minimizing the political stakes of this accusation, which brought Vasily III (son of Ivan III’s second wife, Zoe Asanina Palaiologina, who became Sophia by rebaptism) to the throne, historians have drawn attention to the complicated network of kinship and events at the end of which Elena may even have been a supporter, if not of the “heresy” (as articulated by the Russian Church synods of the late-fifteenth century, then at least of the idea of the need for vernacular translations of the holy texts.¹²⁰ We would thus have indirect evidence of her familiarity with such realities even before her marriage to Ivan the Younger in 1483, and of the existence of translations in the Moldavian cultural landscape prior to that time.

Moving from Lithuanian to Polish “Ruthenia”, we find another version of *The Song of Songs*, translated into Ruthenian after the third edition of the Czech Bible, the so-called *Bible of the Taborite hetman Philip of Padeřov*. Copied between 1432 and 1435, it was seen as a sign of the spread of Hussitism among the Ruthenians. The text serves as an introduction to a short treatise on the love of God and contains nothing Hussite.¹²¹ It has been preserved – together with a Marian Mass translated from a Croatian missal; the bull of Pope Eugenius IV issued at the Florentine Council; and the prayers *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria* and the *Apostles’ Creed* rendered in Latin with the Cyrillic alphabet – in a codex compiled for Queen Zofia Holszanska by the Glagolitic Benedictines of Kleparz, a monastery near Krakow convened in 1390 by Queen Jadwiga and Vladislav I

¹¹⁷ Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations”, 202-203.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹⁹ Mureşan, “Teoctist I”, 327-329, 351; Beider, *On the Frontiers of Sacred Spaces*, 53, 59.

¹²⁰ Beider, *On the Frontiers of Sacred Spaces*, 53: Elena was the daughter of Evdokia of Kyiv, who was the sister of Mikhailo Olekovich, whose retinue included the Jew Zachariah, a man with a vast knowledge of astrology, astronomy, necromancy and magic, who arrived in Novgorod in 1470 and is considered the founder of the Jewish sect. Fedor Kuritsyn, one of the leaders of the Judaizing movement, served long missions at the court of Stephen the Great in the 1480s as head of Ivan III’s diplomacy. See also Taube, “The Fifteenth-Century Ruthenian Translations”, 185-186, 201.

¹²¹ Thomson, “The Slavonic Translation”, 881.

Jageĥo for the purpose of converting Ruthenians through the Slavonic liturgy of the Catholic rite.¹²² The translators and copyists of these texts had an open spirit and an active interest in the Catholic rite, accompanied by an apparent adherence to the Orthodox faith.¹²³ There is also a Ruthenian translation of the *Book of Tobit*, made no later than the second half of the fifteenth century, copied from a Czech Bible, this time belonging to a Hussite redaction,¹²⁴ which continues with the *History of the Prophetess Sivilla* and a Ruthenian *Visio Tnugdali: The Instructive History of the Soldier Faudal*, both Catholic subjects with a long and diverse vernacular circulation.¹²⁵

Thus we have a long tradition of Ruthenian coexistence with Czech, Catholic and Hussite biblical and para-biblical translations, which can be explained by the prestige of the Czech language in the Polish-Lithuanian territory and by the presence in Poland of the Glagolitic Benedictines, whose missionary activity among the “schismatics” began as early as the end of the fourteenth century. This tradition was to remain active, as evidenced by the Ruthenian version of the Bible printed in 1518-1519 in Prague by Francis Skaryna in 22 separate fascicles,¹²⁶ for which he used the Venetian edition of the Czech Bible of 1506,¹²⁷ and the testimony of the Jesuit Balthasar Hostovius, who noted the familiarity of the Polish and Ruthenians with the Czech Bible at the end of the sixteenth century.¹²⁸ We also have a strong Catholic mark on Ruthenian translations, even when their sources are borrowed from the Hussites, a sign that the Florentine Union, albeit tenuous, was nevertheless a reality, which also acted to inculcate such practices of familiarity with the sacred text. We would expect, therefore, that their manifestation in the Ruthenian environment would also have a counterpart in the Romanian environment in the areas of coexistence, at least where we do not know that Romanians were openly against the union.

At this point, it would be particularly useful to have a thorough knowledge of the collection of manuscripts and printed books that circulated in the communities of Subcarpathian Ukraine. Of the printed material, we know so far only of one of the four bibliographically recorded copies of the bilingual *Slavo-Romanian Tetraevangelium*, printed by Philip Mahler in Sibiu in 1551-1553, but this too did not arrive in the region until 1630, when Luca Crăciun

¹²² Verkholantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica*, 27, 33-35, 43-50; Agrigoroaei, “Preamble”, 36-37.

¹²³ Verkholantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica*, 51.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 87-89; Agrigoroaei, “Preamble”, 37.

¹²⁵ Verkholantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica*, 52-69, 71-85; Agrigoroaei, “Preamble”, 37-38.

¹²⁶ Giuseppe Perri, “Print Culture in Early Modern Ukraine and Its Ukrainian Historiography”, in Stefan Kiedroń, Anna-Maria Rimm, in co-operation with Patrycja Poniatowska, eds., *Early Modern Print Culture in Central Europe. Proceeding of the young scholars section of the Wrocław seminars, September 2013* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2014), 131.

¹²⁷ Verkholantsev, *Ruthenica Bohemica*, 27.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

bought it from Moldavia and donated it to the church of Șindrești,¹²⁹ a village situated today on the border between Romania and Ukraine, in Maramureș county. A number of other manuscripts were also collected from the same locality, including:

- a *Minaion* for September, copied in 1500 in Pleașcena (in Ukraine);¹³⁰
- a *Mineion* for the whole year, copied by two monks from Stryi in 1556, given in 1679 to the church of Mala Kopania; in 1783 it was in the church of Sanislău (Satu Mare county);¹³¹
- a *Mineion* for the whole year, copied in the sixteenth century, which belonged to the church of Vishnii Berezna; in the seventeenth century it was in Maramureș;¹³²
- a *Minaion* for the whole year, copied in 1554 in a monastery in southern Poland; from 1661 it belonged to the church of Trip, then to the church of Boinești (Satu Mare county);¹³³
- an *Octoechos*, copied in the sixteenth century by Deacon Gherasim of Przemysł for the priest Ioan of Moisei;¹³⁴
- a *Leitourgikon* from Hrip (Satu Mare county), copied in 1557 in the village of “Sozani” (Susani?) in the time of Bishop Antonie of Hust and dedicated to the church of St Archangel Michael in Sozani, which was presumably under his patronage.¹³⁵

The collection of about 500 manuscripts in the Uzhhorod University Library, which today includes all the selected examples, does not contain any volumes dating from before 1500, but it provides an illustration of the circulation of books and copyists in the sixteenth century, even though in none of the cases do we know how the books passed from the ownership of Ruthenian churches to Romanian churches or vice versa. However, their route is emblematic, as they

¹²⁹ Viorel Ciubotă, “*Tetraevangheliarul* slavon de la 1546 tipărit la Sibiu – exemplarul din biblioteca Universității Naționale din Ujgorod” [The 1546 Slavonic *Tetraevangelium* Printed in Sibiu – The Copy in the Library of the National University of Uzhgorod], *SC - Satu Mare* XXX/II (2014): 16-19; *Evangheliarul slavo-român de la Sibiu. 1551-1553*, Studiu introductiv filologic de acad. Emil Petrovici, Studiu introductiv istoric de L. Demény [The Romanian-Slavonic Gospel Book of Sibiu. 1551-1553, Introductory philological study by Acad. Emil Petrovici, Introductory historical study by L. Demény] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1971), 84; Andrei Eșanu and Valentina Eșanu, “Filip Moldoveanul (?-1554), primul tipograf de limbă română” [Filip Moldoveanul (?-1554), the First Romanian-Language Typographer], *RIM Chișinău*, no. 1-2 (117-118) (2019): 19.

¹³⁰ Gabriel Ștrempel et al., ed., *Manuscrise slavone și românești din Biblioteca Universității Naționale din Ujgorod: catalog* [Slavonic and Romanian Manuscripts from the Library of the Ujhorod National University: Catalogue] (Satu Mare: Editura Muzeului Sătmărean, 2012), 49-51.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 52-56.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 68-71.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 79-83.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 72-75.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 136-140.

are placed on a long-trodden path of cultural and other exchanges, which Pârvu Boerescu also reconstructs when he extracts from the body of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* that layer of language belonging to the northern area, which he assumes to have been coagulated in a different version of the translation originated in Banat-Hunedoara.¹³⁶

The existence of a northern version of the translation of the Psalter, which Ion Gheție doubted,¹³⁷ is also proven by Andrei Avram's research on the rhotacism. Avram clearly separates the rhotacistic copies of the Psalter composed in Moldavia, where rhotacism reached its maximum development in the fifteenth century, from the version of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*, which attests only to an incipient phase of rhotacism, specific to the languages of Maramureș and the nearby regions of northern Transylvania until the beginning of the sixteenth century. His plea is limited to demonstrating the obligatory circulation in northern Transylvania of the translation made in Banat-Hunedoara; he does not comment on its dating to the first half of the sixteenth century, implying that he agrees with this. Consequently, the explanation for the appearance of archaism in the language of the northern Transylvanian version is not its older age, but the fact that the phenomenon of rhotacism developed here later than in Moldavia, that is, after the fifteenth century.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Boerescu, "Dificultăți ale etimologiei", 206-207.

¹³⁷ See quotes in footnote 8.

¹³⁸ Andrei Avram, *Nazalitatea și rotacismul în limba română* [Nazality and Rhotacism in Romanian] (București: Editura Academiei, 1990), 134-136: "Without wishing to discuss here the complicated problem of the localization of the texts with rhotacism, we only mention that one of the three psalters, PH, is characterised by a linguistic peculiarity which we cannot attribute (and no one has attributed) to Banat and which, in all likelihood, does not originate either from the languages spoken in Moldavia."

"Examining the spelling of the PH text, I concluded that it reflects the stage of evolution of the lat. *N* intervocalic, which I defined as the first phase of rhotacism (with the mention of nasality), a conclusion based on the observation that words with rhotacism are usually written with **nr** (the most frequent spelling) or **†r**; the rare cases when **r** is written can be classified in the general phenomenon of "zero notation" or are the result of the copyist's negligence [...]. In our opinion, if the PH reflected a language with rhotacism that had reached the phase existing in Moldavia since the fifteenth century, it would be expected that this text would contain exclusively the **r** spelling – as in the Slavonic documents of the same century (and as in the Romanian documents and letters written in the aforementioned province in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries [...]) – or at least the use of the **r** spelling would be, in words with rhotacism, much more frequent than the **nr** and **†r** spellings (as in PS and PV, where the **r** spelling appears 'almost regularly' [...]). Excluding the implausible hypothesis that the original from the province of Banat was copied in Moldavia at a time when the northern languages of this province still preserved the first phase of rhotacism, i.e. before the fifteenth century, when the earliest records of the second phase of the rhotacism with [r] date from [...] – , we are obliged to admit that PH does not represent a language characterized by the phase of rhotacism existing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in that region and, consequently, to turn our attention to areas of the Dacoromanian linguistic system where the denasalization of vowels in forms like [lūră] occurred later than in Moldavia. In the Voronetian Codex both phases of rhotacism, with and without nasalization, are recorded. Therefore, the fact

The dating of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter*, with the help of watermarks, to between 1491 and 1516,¹³⁹ together with the delimitation of the two language layers made by Pârvu Boerescu, confirms the existence at that time of two versions of the same translation, coming from regions with different stages of language development. It significantly lowers the date of the protograph, which – for a start – allows us to exclude from the equation the Reformation as an external impulse for translation. A second achievement is the clear dissociation between the languages of northern Moldavia, which during the fifteenth century were characterised by rhotacism in its fullness of expression, and those of northern Transylvania and Maramures, which in the same century did not go beyond the first phase of rhotacism. Consequently, the source of the apparently archaic version used by the author of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* in the second part of the manuscript could not have reached Maramureş from Moldavia until prior to the fifteenth century, a totally implausible chronology, as Andrei Avram correctly pronounced.

Relativised by attributing them to copyists of another ethnicity or by etymological deductions that keep them necessarily within the Daco-Romanian language, the few foreign words – in Hungarian, Ruthenian, German and even Latin – are nevertheless a reality in the lexic of old Romanian translations of religious texts. They may refer to the sources used in the process of translating, to the ethnicity of the translator, or to an area where multi-ethnic coexistence forces multilingualism, a quality often claimed by translators. Neglecting their presence on quantitative grounds would deserve a reassessment, even if it is obvious that it will not affect the conclusion that Slavic versions were the basis of the translation, or perhaps precisely for this reason.

The hope linked to this re-evaluation is to support the relocation of the translation effort into Romanian, using methods specific to philology, for a more reliable connection to the divisions of the general European phenomenon of which it is a part, and above all so that the translations do not seem so strange in

that in PH there are usually spellings of the type of ѠСНРЬ (ѠС†РЬ) and that, at the time when this text can be assumed to have been translated and copied, only spellings of the type of ѠСРЬ appear in Slavonic documents written in Moldavia supports the view that rhotacism in PH is a feature originating in a language spoken in Maramureş or a nearby region in northern Transylvania, not in a language spoken in northern Moldavia.”

Ibid., 217-218: “We assume that the transition from pre-rhotacism to the first phase of rhotacism [lûnă] > [lură] did not occur anywhere before the separation of the Istro-Romanian dialect from Dacoromanian (thus in a period beginning no later than the fourteenth century. In some languages of Ardeal and Maramureş rhotacism is later than the fifteenth century (in fact, [ŋ] still exists, together with [r], in some rhotacistic languages). The transition from the first to the second phase of rhotacism took place in Moldavia earlier than in the rhotacistic languages (or at least part of the rhotacistic languages) of the other two aforementioned provinces. [...] In Maramureş rhotacism – for which we have evidence that can give us clues as to the absolute chronology of palatalization and rhotacism – is posterior to 1500.”

¹³⁹ See n. 4.

other spaces than the one so well established in recent decades, namely that of Banat of Lugoj-Caransebeş and county of Hunedoara. For, although they may not be found today, Slavonic models similar to those identified as the basis of the Romanian translations¹⁴⁰ may have existed all over Hungary, brought even by the United Bishop Macarius of Halych, who, as we have seen, was declared “to be from Serbia” in papal acts, but above all by the settlers of the vast domains of the Serbian despots, including in the territory of Maramureş and Bereg counties, with the monasteries of Peri and Munkács, where it is most convenient to locate the translators.

Although the domains were lost, Serbian authority returned in 1479, when, to compensate for the loss of his own diocese, Archbishop Iovaniyk of Belgrade received from King Matthias Corvin jurisdiction over the priests of Maramureş.¹⁴¹ A complaint from Abbot Luke of Munkács regarding the sabotage of his jurisdiction proves the involvement of this prelate in the actual administration of the territory and anticipates the conflict a decade later between the bishop of Munkács and the abbot of Peri.¹⁴²

Is it too far a stretch to hypothesise that the appearance of the bishop of Munkács in the documents, precisely at this time of rivalry, is no coincidence but relates directly to Iovaniyk’s installation in the monastery of Peri – which, after his death, attracted reprisals from the neighbouring diocese?

Had the Peri monastery meanwhile renounced the union in order to host the only Orthodox archbishop recognised by the Kingdom’s authorities? Or was it precisely his takeover of Maramureş that brought about the reorientation (which hardly seems likely to have been only in the form of fees collected from priests)?

Should the confrontation between the two forms of authority, that of the archbishop and that of the abbot, also be reduced exclusively to these fees and to the possible reminder of the fact that Munkács belonged to the Hungarian lands of the Branković despots? Or was its source in the Munkács monastery’s affiliation to the union and its possible status as the diocesan residence of Macharius of Halych, a status which, in the period between the disappearance of Macarius and the establishment of Bishop John, allowed the abbot to exercise jurisdiction over the parishes in the county, following the model of the Peri *stavropigia*?

¹⁴⁰ For which see the studies of Iosif Camară, “Cele mai vechi Psaltiri româneşti și redacțiile Psaltirii slavone” [The Oldest Romanian Psalters and the Redactions of the Slavonic Psalter], *Caietele SEXTIL Pușcariu V* (2021): 72-81, and “New Information on the Slavonic Sources of the Oldest Romanian Psalters”, *Paleobulgarica* XLVI, no. 1 (2022): 81-94.

¹⁴¹ Ioan Mihalyi de Apșa, *Diplome maramureșene din secolul XIV și XV* [Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries Diplomas from Maramureş] (Sighet: Tipografia lui Mayer și Berger, 1900), 536-537.

¹⁴² Diaconescu, “Les implications confessionnelles”, p. 52-53.

To what extent could the answers to these questions help to shed light on the emergence of a religious literature in Romanian in the area, since we do not know whether the Ruthenians used the translations whose remains we have presented above?

Faced with so many uncertainties, philologists rightly put all hypotheses under question, and the cradle of Romanian literature is sought elsewhere. The only consolation, for the time being, is that Slavic sources of South Danubian Serbian or Middle Bulgarian composition must have circulated in abundance in Hungary, and access to them is as possible here as anywhere else in the territory of present-day Romania. Their use would seem to be much more convenient for those who wished to express their resistance to the Florentine Union – unless, that is, an attempt was made to extend the experiment of the Benedictine monks of Kleparz to the Romanian environment by appealing to Slavic sources as another expression of conformism, legalised by the *Privilegium Ruthenorum*, which proclaimed the equality of the two rites.

Such a possibility could also explain the appearance of translations in Banat-Hunedoara. And, to make the spectrum of possibilities even more complicated, let us introduce into the discussion the neutral variant, of the manifestation of a phenomenon of *stimulus diffusion*, which does not operate at the level of substance but at the level of forms, such that the translations could be totally devoid of a confessional colouring and the origin of the sources could be emptied of any meaning.

The existence of a northern Transylvanian edition of the Psalter, so difficult to extract from the corners of linguistics, remains – at the level of historical demonstration – a mere intuition and a logical consequence of an atmosphere charged with too many conflicts for the Romanians (like those in their immediate vicinity) not to have tried to strengthen and even promote the convictions they were forced to form around the most far-reaching event in the history of the fifteenth century: the union proclaimed in 1439 at the Council of Florence.

The only documentary basis for our search in Moldavia for the reasons behind the appearance of at least some of the earliest translations of religious texts into Romanian is the summary of a letter dated March 11, 1532, sent from Krakow, which speaks of a *doctor ex Walachia* who spoke Latin and Polish, but not German and perhaps not Romanian, and who wanted to take care of editing in Romanian, Polish and German the four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul.¹⁴³ Too brief to be supported by other contemporary sources, this account was excluded by Ion Gheție and Alexandru Mareș from any serious discussion of the original of the first Romanian edition of the *Tetraevangelium*, the one attributed to Filip

¹⁴³ For the last discussion concerning this mention, long debated in Romanian historiography, see Nagy, *Reforma la români*, 18-19.

Mahler the Moldavian, published in Sibiu in 1551-1553, on the grounds that the protograph was produced in Banat-Hunedoara.¹⁴⁴ Since I cannot discuss the philological aspects, I will limit myself to a few observations on some aspects that leave the historian perplexed, having reached the end of the argument of the philological school founded by Ion Gheție.

The first of these concerns the need to import from Moldavia the source from which the Coresi editions of the Psalter were made, there being no trace of the primary translation in Transylvania only a few decades after its composition. On the contrary, its supposed creators – the scholars from Banat and Hunedoara, now Protestant, among whom at least one of the translators may have been alive, – instead of restoring the lost translation followed the trail of its copies and found it even in the Orthodox Moldavia! It is true that the only copies preserved – strangely, still in Moldavia! – seem to recall a protograph from Banat, although a door has always been left open to Zarand-Crișana,¹⁴⁵ albeit not wide enough to see through it scholars of the stature of the people of Banat and Hunedoara. Thus, the possibility of localization – proved by the same phenomena of language as those supporting localization in Banat – has been completely minimised. Compared with what we have just been looking for in the preceding paragraphs, it no longer seems impossible that the translations appeared in western Transylvania, from where they spread north to Maramureș and on to the north of Moldavia where they took on the garb of a complete rhotacism, and that the Romanians of Banat-Hunedoara learned of them only in the context of the need for an edition by which they could prove their fidelity to the Reformed hierarchy instituted in 1566 by dietary decree. Although this route is very long, it is part of the routes followed in the subsequent centuries by pilgrim scholars occasionally employed to copy religious books, who continued to make the link between Crișana, Munkács and northern Moldavia.¹⁴⁶

However, and with this I turn to the next observation, the Moldavians show fidelity to the old translation of the Psalter – which passed to Transylvania

¹⁴⁴ Gheție and Mareș, *Originile scrisului în limba română*, 339-342.

¹⁴⁵ At least that is what the expressions “the Banat-Hunedoara – western Transylvanian language” and “the southwestern quarter of the country, i.e., Banat-Hunedoara and neighbouring areas” imply (Ion Gheție, “Banatul și textele rotacizante” [Banat and the Rhotacistic Texts], *LR XXXI*, no. 3 (1982): 239; Gheție and Mareș, *Originile scrisului în limba română*, 195, 198, 202, 206 (with the explicit mention of Crișana), 263, 300. For the exegesis on which these expressions are based, see Ion Gheție, *Baza dialectală a românei literare* [The Dialectal Basis of Literary Romanian] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1975), 238-242.

¹⁴⁶ Names such as Luca Muncăceanul (from Munkács), Pavel Cotuna Muncăceanul, Ioan Muncăceanul, Vasile Sturze Moldoveanul (from Moldavia), Agaton Moldoveanul, deacon Ioan from Moldavia, Ioniță Voița Suceveanul (from Suceava), Popa Ioan from Țara Leșească [from Poland], Alexandru Eustafie originally from Galicia complete the list of seventeenth- to eighteenth-century pilgrim scholars found in Crișana (Florian Dudaș, *Vechile manuscrise românești din Țara Bihorului* [Old Romanian Manuscripts from Bihor Country], vol. I (Oradea: Biblioteca revistei „Familia”, 2007), *passim*.

to be printed by Coresi, but which continued to be transmitted in manuscripts in Moldavia until 1703 almost without any contamination by the Romanian translation printed in 1651 in Alba Iulia.¹⁴⁷ This cannot be explained other than by the awareness of paternity over its beginnings, and such an attachment must be linked to heroic times, in which the translation had to have played a saving role.

Of course, I am aware of the subjectivism and pathos of this statement. Nevertheless, even when transformed into a mythical time in which old things were mixed with even older things, the time of the pastorate of Theoctist I remained in the memory of Moldavians and is recorded by Dimitrie Cantemir precisely because of its anti-Florentine role, even if it was limited to the replacement of Latin writings with those in the Cyrillic alphabet.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Mariana Combiescu, "Psaltirea de la Mehadia" [The Psalter of Mehadia], *LR XVII*, no. 3 (1968): 259-268; Alexandra Roman, "Psaltirile românești din secolele al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea. Probleme de filiație" [Romanian Psalters of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Problems of Filiation], *LR XXIII*, no. 3 (1974): 233-242; Gheorghe Chivu, "Psaltirea – de la litera la spiritul textului sacru. Considerații asupra unui manuscris moldovenesc de la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea" [The Psalter – From Letter to the Spirit of the Sacred Text. Considerations on a Moldavian Manuscript from the Mid-Seventeenth Century], *Text și discurs religios I* (2009): 37-43.

¹⁴⁸ "Before the Council of Florence, following the example of other nations whose languages were derived from the Roman language, the Moldavians used Latin characters. However, after the Metropolitan of Moldavia had switched to the Papist faction at that council, [...] his successor, the deacon of Mark of Ephesus, a Bulgarian by birth, named Theoctist, in order to further extinguish any papist seed in the Moldavian Church and to deprive the youth of the power to read the sophisms of the papists, advised Alexander the Good not only to expel from his country those who thought otherwise about the holy things, but also the Latin letters, and to replace them with the Slavonic ones" (Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, traducere după originalul latin de Gheorghe Guțu [Description of Moldavia, translation from the Latin original by Gheorghe Guțu] (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1973), 371). For a synthesis of the interpretations given to this passage, accompanied by the placement of Cantemir's opinion alongside the statements made by previous chroniclers, see Alexandru Mareș, "Despre un pasaj controversat din *Descrierea Moldovei*" [On a Controversial Passage in the *Description of Moldavia*], *LR LXVII*, no. 1 (2018): 65-89. From the bibliography referred to and discussed, the study dedicated by Dan Ioan Mureșan to the biography of Metropolitan Teoctist I, in which all the seemingly unsubstantiated statements of Dimitrie Cantemir are analysed with the utmost accuracy, offering credible and very well-documented solutions, is missing. See Mureșan, "De l'intronisation du métropolitain Théoctiste I^{er}", 337-374. In his latest return to the subject, Dan Ioan Mureșan convincingly clarifies the replacement of the practice of the predominant use of Latin in the voivodal chancellery by Slavonic, following Alexander the Good's awareness of the secret agreement between his Polish suzerain and the King of Hungary to divide Moldavia, established by the Treaty of Lublin in 1412. Later that year, Alexander the Good brought the relics of St John the New to Moldavia; accepted the new metropolitan sent by the Ecumenical Patriarch; became the protector of the Zographou monastery, from where he transferred the monumental Slavonic literary corpus of Euthymius of Târnovo; divorced Anna Ringała, the sister of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas; granted protection to the Hussites; and entered into open military conflict with Poland (Dan Ioan Mureșan, "Sauver l'héritage d'Euthyme de Târnovo. Le patriarche Joseph II, la Moldavie et Zographou", in Марко Скарпа et al., eds., *Религиозен разцвет България XIII*

In a way less clear to the curious scholar of the late seventeenth century, that profound transformation almost two centuries earlier may in fact have been the replacement of translation attempts initiated by the proponents of the union with their own translations, which they could guarantee as coming from reliable sources uncontaminated by foreign teachings. Let us recall the otherwise inexplicable statement from April 16, 1454 made by Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Archbishop of Krakow, who sheltered the Metropolitan Joachim, who was enthroned in 1448, and who, recommending him to the Pope as a martyr of the union, claims that the Moldavians had banished him “as a deplorable enemy of their rite”.¹⁴⁹ What substantial changes could he have made, in such a short pastorate, in an territory that was practically unaffected by the four points of the Florentine Union?

The pope’s commemoration during the Liturgy was almost exclusively his obligation, and the introduction of the *Filioque* into the Creed at a time when direct contact with the lower clergy was massively obstructed by wars could at best be regarded as a future desideratum.¹⁵⁰ Of course, the implementation of a translation programme would have been equally affected, but older translations could also have been used, which could have been brought, for example, from

– XV в. / *Floraison religieuse Bulgarie XIII^e – XV^e s. Долади от Международната научна конференция София, 12-13 юли 2019 г.* (София: Кирило-Методиевски студии, книга 30, 2021), 136-137. Only the inclusion of Metropolitan Theoctist in Dimitrie Cantemir’s speech remains unexplained, after the dating of Moldavia’s relations with Zographou could be traced back to the first decades of the fifteenth century (Ibid., 110-112). Prior to the discovery of the edifying document in 1416, Dan Ioan Mureșan attributed to the metropolitans Damian and Theoctist, both of Bulgarian origin, the initiative to bring to Moldavia the cultural heritage of Euthymius of Tărnovo (Dan Ioan Mureșan, “Zographou et la transmission de l’idée impériale bulgare en Moldavie”, *Bulgaria mediaevalis* 2 (2011): 736-737).

¹⁴⁹ Mureșan, “Theoctist I”, 385-386.

¹⁵⁰ It is precisely for this reason that I consider it unnecessary to discuss here the presence in the Scheian Psalter of the Athanasian Symbol with the Filioque, whose translation and association with the Psalter text would most likely have occurred in the sixteenth century, in the context of the Pro-Reformation reigns of the first decades of the second half of the century. The Scheian Psalter itself, which philigranological analysis has dated to between 1573 and 1578, may have been composed during just such a reign, namely that of John the Terrible (Ioan Vodă cel Cumplit) (1572-1574). For the dating of the translation of the Athanasian Symbol see Alexandru Mareș, “Note despre prezența *Simbolului atanasian* în vechile texte românești” [Notes on the Presence of the Athanasian Symbol in Ancient Romanian Texts], in Mariana Manguileu, ed., *In honorem Gheorghe Mihăilă* (București: Editura Universității din București, 2010), 169-176 (with the previous bibliography). For the dating of the *Skeian Psalter* see Alexandru Mareș, “Datarea Psaltirilor Scheiană și Voronețeană” [The Dating of the Skeian and Voronetian Psalters], *LR XXXIII*, no. 3 (1984): 191-198. For Moldavia’s relations with the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, see Șerban Papacostea, “Moldova în epoca Reformei. Contribuții la istoria societății moldovenești în veacul al XVI-lea” [Moldavia in the Reformation Era. Contributions to the History of Moldavian Society in the Sixteenth Century], *Studii Rev. Ist.* XI, no. 4 (1958): 55-76, and Maria Crăciun, *Protestantism și ortodoxie în Moldova secolului al XVI-lea* [Protestantism and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Moldavia] (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1996).

neighbouring Maramureş. Might Joachim have tried to ask the *scriptoria* for copies of these translations instead of producing Slavonic books, thus attracting the criticism that he was trying to change the rite?

But how did his gesture differ from that of Theoctist, if he was indeed the promoter of Romanian translations of sacred texts? Probably with the essential fact that he ordered new translations, responding to the need of some of his contemporaries to understand the sacred texts, and sensing that by doing so he would be able to stop the attraction to union. Having risen to the top of the Moldavian Church as an opponent of union, and having been elevated to the position of deacon by Mark Eugenikos, a strong opponent of the decision of the Council of Florence, he may also have allowed some time to pass before making such a decision, which he then presented with sufficient diplomacy. Possibly inspired by a similar practice sponsored by the family of the Grand Duke Simeon Olelkovich of Kyiv, the object of his unconditional admiration, Theoctist succeeded in giving this renewal such a turn that it could later be interpreted as the decisive gesture of a rupture with the West.

Instead of conclusions, a hypothesis

The division of the territory inhabited by Romanians into at least three large regions, each subject to different influences if not fundamentally different, manifested in different periods characterised by different intensities. It represented, a reality that made it absolutely necessary to take several initiatives, independent of each other, to translate the Scriptures and other texts of moral instruction into Romanian. However intense the cultural and material exchanges in the Middle Ages may have been, under the pressure of so many decision-makers, who did not always act in a coherent manner, it was impossible for a single group of scholars to be responsible for such a complex dissemination of translations as the oldest preserved copies of the Psalter.¹⁵¹ To achieve this complexity even the interval of a century between the Florentine Union and the appearance of the Romanian Reformed communities in Banat-Hunedoara could not have been sufficient, much less the time between the appearance of these communities and the beginning of the activity of the Coresi printing press.

Based on these considerations, I believe that each Romanian province tried, in its own way, to respond to this difficult task, which arose in the Romanian landscape – in my opinion – as a result of the disputes for the restoration of Christian unity, resulting in at least four threads from the merging of which, in the sixteenth century, Romanian literature emerged.

A first thread passed through the western part of present-day Romania, meaning the Banat of Severin, Crişana and northwestern Transylvania, where the confrontations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy were much earlier, the contact with the West more intense and the need to assert identity stronger,

¹⁵¹ See the studies of Iosif Camară, mentioned in n. 141.

especially after the Ottoman occupation of southern Danube, following which the Orthodox group in medieval Hungary was increased by Serbian colonization.

A second thread existed in the historical Maramureș, where the coexistence with the Ruthenians and the reverberations of the culture emanating from the University of Prague increased the variety of models, admirably illustrated by Ioan-Florin Florescu in the exegesis he dedicated to the sources of the *Tetraevangelium* printed in Sibiu between 1551 and 1553.¹⁵²

The third thread appeared in Moldavia, where, after a period of hesitation between the Catholic offer from Poland and that brought by refugees from Hungary and Bohemia, the vision of the anti-unionist Metropolitan Theoctist I was imposed. As a result of Theoctist's close collaboration with the voivode Stephen the Great, his relations with the Orthodox circles of Athos¹⁵³ and Kyiv, and his correct understanding of Moldavian realities – which were deeply affected by the wars for the throne, but which were in large part also religious wars – he was best able to bring together high-quality Slavic sources, praiseworthy acculturation initiatives and the resources of the *scriptoria* of Moldavian monasteries.

The fourth thread developed in the interior of Transylvania, in Banat (more precisely in Lugoj-Caransebeș) and in Hunedoara, the domain of the Romanian Reformed Episcopate founded in 1566. At the Episcopate's initiative, several editions were compiled from previous translations and the literary repertory was enriched with its own contributions, whose utility went beyond the limits within which other threads operated, including books for worship as well as those for reading. Its inheritance fell to the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Alba Iulia, which resumed the effort of translation and printing in the middle of the seventeenth century, bringing it into line with the most advanced standards reached at the time in publishing holy books.

¹⁵² Florescu, *În multe chipuri de Scripturi*, 168, 171, 175-176, 200-201.

¹⁵³ In 1502, the Venetians knew that Mount Athos was under the protection of “dil Carabodan”, cf. Ștefan Andreescu, “Ștefan cel Mare ca protector al Muntelui Athos” [Stephen the Great as Protector of Mount Athos], *AIIA Iași* XIX (1982): 653. Regarding a psalter with numerous Romanian handwritings which belonged to the Zographou monastery and has proven to be a real key to decoding how the Serbian version – represented today by the Belgrade Psalter and identified as the main source of the Romanian protograph – was diffused, see Iosif Camară, “New Information on the Slavonic Sources of the Oldest Romanian Psalters”, *Paleobulgarica* XLVI, no. 1 (2022): 84-85. Regarding the long-standing relations between Zographou Monastery and Moldavia, see Mureșan, “Sauver l'héritage d'Euthyme de Târnovo”, 110-112, 123-129. Mureșan analyses a document which attests, for the year 1416, the quality of “*ktetor* and benefactor” Alexander the Good for the Athonite monastery. Patronage of the monastery was transferred in that year to the Moldavian voivode by the last descendant of the Bulgarian dynasty, Joseph II, who was at that time holder of the office of Ecumenical Patriarch. The purpose of this document is said to have been to delimit the framework in which a community of Moldavian monks, including the young Gavril Uric, was established at Zographou. The monastery's mission was to copy and send to Moldavia the entire corpus of the *Menaia* compiled by Patriarch Euthymius of Târnovo (Ibid., 127-129).

Epilogue

The translation of the Psalter is the only one with surviving manuscript text samples that predate and parallel the printed text that was in circulation from 1570. It is therefore also the only one for which it is possible to make a fairly reliable assessment of the number of attempts at diorthosis. Research in the last two decades, culminating in the recent work of Iosif Camară, has established that all the manuscript versions of the Psalter come from a single translation, the circulation of which was mostly bilingual, with an independent Slavonic version usually interspersed with the Romanian text.¹⁵⁴ Taking into account these conclusions, as well as the overall cultural activity carried out in the three Romanian regions with separate political existence, the only place in which the original translation could have been confronted with the new Slavonic redactions that appeared in Athos is Moldavia. It is also from there that the preserved copies originate, at least as their end point of use, and it is also there that the text continued to evolve even after the appearance of the printed versions.

What we have today is the result of the combination of some of the copies that circulated in historic Maramureș, northwestern and southwestern Transylvania¹⁵⁵ and Moldavia, that is, the areas most affected by the initiatives of attraction to Catholicism, Florentine Union or Hussitism. When the Romanian Reformed scholars of Banat-Hunedoara were faced with the problem of translating and printing the texts of Scripture, they brought the translation of the Psalter from Moldavia, although Andrei Avram's research into the phenomenon of rhotacism has shown that the same translation was also in circulation in Maramureș, from where the same Reformed scholars also brought other texts which they subsequently translated and printed. So, there was an intellectual emulation and a possible selection of what had already been well done previously, if we include in the equation a certain haste on the part of the Reformed Diocese to equip itself with books necessary for the mission with which it had been charged, that of converting all Transylvanian Romanians. The Reformed scholars preferred the Romanian version of the Psalter found in Moldavia, on the grounds that it was a more advanced translation, improved by a succession of at least two more diorthoses than anything they could find in Maramureș.

Combining the results of the investigations of Ion Gheție and Alexandru Mareș with those of Andrei Avram and Pârvu Boerescu, we must start from Banat-Hunedoara as the place of origin of the protograph and reach, before the end of the fifteenth century, both Maramureș and Moldavia. At that time, the composer of the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* had at his disposal two versions. One was

¹⁵⁴ Camară, "New Information on the Slavonic Sources of the Oldest Romanian Psalters", *passim*.

¹⁵⁵ On the exclusion of northeastern Transylvania, see Andrei Avram, "Cu privire la cronologia transformării în africcate a oclusivelor (pre)palatale în graiurile dacoromâne" [On the Chronology of the Transformation of (Pre)palatal Occlusives into Affricates in Dacoromanian Languages], *SCL* XXX, no. 3 (1979): 214.

from Moldavia, with a lexic affected by the final phase of rhotacism. The other was from Maramureş, and its lexic, remaining in the first phase of rhotacism, shows an independent, local evolution, its source having come from Moldavia prior to the fifteenth century, thus too early for any translation initiative in the Romanian territory. In the 1560s, the Romanian supporters of the Reformation in Banat-Hunedoara decided to print the Moldavian version, hence the assumption that the Maramureş version was considered inferior, as was the primary version, which possibly still existed in their environment. The contribution of Moldavian scholars shows a special aptitude and competence in the field of translation, while the stagnation of primary translation in an area where almost all translations of holy books are supposed to have been made remains inexplicable. All the more so since the protograph must have been produced long before the end of the fifteenth century for its original lexical mark, from Banat-Hunedoara, to have had time to shrink so drastically.

With this reasoning, the historian's contribution ends, obviously without having been able to bring the discussion to a conclusion that would justify its resumption. I can only articulate a list of questions to which philologists can first provide an answer, again corroborated with historical information, which will refer, by exclusion, to the time and place the earliest translations were composed.

The most important issue – and probably the most difficult to solve – is re-evaluation of the phonetic, morphological and lexical arguments that would delimit in Banat-Hunedoara and only there the area of spread of the first translator's language.

Then, since the existence of the protograph in the fifteenth century has been proven with certainty by dating the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* between 1491 and 1516, the approach that allows its analysis as pre-sixteenth century text must be elaborated. This is exactly what Ion Gheţie systematically refused to do, preferring to ignore the opinions of those who intuited this reality, on the grounds that “it is impossible to reach valid conclusions in this direction [...] as long as our knowledge of the Romanian language before 1500 is completely vague”.¹⁵⁶ In fact, much of our knowledge of the Romanian language in the sixteenth century comes from manuscripts of the Psalter, of which at least the *Hurmuzaki Psalter* can now be regarded as a sample of fifteenth-century language. It is, at the same time, a confirmation of the conclusion, put forward “with all reserve” by the same illustrious philologist, that the period of establishment of the Romanian literary tradition was between 1450 and 1520.¹⁵⁷

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¹⁵⁶ Gheţie, *Baza dialectală a românei literare*, 239.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

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