

Constantin Brâncoveanu's Painters in Transylvania

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Generally, it was considered that the elite group of painters from Wallachia, in the times of Constantin Brâncoveanu, had an important influence on the development of Romanian painting in southern Transylvania in the 18th century.

THE WALLACHIAN painters active in Transylvania who can be considered, in terms of style, to be closely related to the group of painters of Brâncoveanu's churches are only a few: a painter Preda, author of the large iconostasis icons of St. Nicholas church in Făgăraș (1698–1699), Teodosie and Preda, sons of painter Preda from Câmpulung and authors of the mural painting in the same church of Făgăraș (1719–1720), Ștefan from Ocnele Mari, author of the iconostasis icons for the Greek-Catholic cathedral in Blaj (1737) and a painter Andrei from Săraca, in Banat (1730). Also known are the lost iconostasis icons, described by Nicolae Iorga, of the Greek-Catholic church in Maieri (Alba Iulia), painted by hieromonk Iosif. Constantin Brâncoveanu's foundations in southern Tran-

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sylvania, the monasteries Sâmbata de Sus, Poiana Mărului and the parish churches of the Holy Archangels in Ocna Sibiului and of St. Nicholas in Făgăraș were not painted during his reign. The only church which subsequently acquired a decoration painted by Brâncoveanu's painters was St. Nicholas church of Făgăraș, in 1719–1720.

The first work of a Brâncoveanu painter attested in Transylvania is, chronologically, the iconostasis of St. Nicholas church in Făgăraș. One of the large icons of the iconostasis, of St. Nicholas, bears the artist's signature, "Preda," and the year "7207" (1698–1699).¹ However, a stylistic analysis of the iconostasis of Făgăraș reveals the presence of at least two painters, since the style of the feast icons and the royal icons signed by Preda (all of them bearing Slavonic inscriptions) differ from those of the apostles and prophets, which bear Greek inscriptions. It is known that the mural painters of Brâncoveanu's churches were also icon painters; all the five churches of the monastery of Hurezi and many other churches of C. Brâncoveanu's have iconostases made by their mural painters.² Stylistically, the icons with Greek inscriptions from Făgăraș bear many design and physiognomic similarities with the mural painting from the catholicon of Hurezi. Preda's collaborators are probably some of the painters of Hurezi, maybe a team led by the Greek painter Andrei, as Constantinos and part of his team from Hurezi (Ioan, Ioachim and Stan³) were painting, during this period, the Princely Church in Târgoviște (1698–1699). The iconostasis in Făgăraș is the largest of all the preserved iconostases of Brâncoveanu's time, exceeding in size those in Hurezi and at the Princely Church in Târgoviște;⁴ therefore it could not have been done simultaneously with other works, but required its own team of painters.

Preda was previously identified with one of the homonymous painters who made the mural paintings of the chapel (*parecclesion*) and the infirmary chapel (*bolnitsa*) of Hurezi.⁵ But, stylistically, many differences can be distinguished between the three works and there are also some chronological mismatches. The painting of the bolnitsa of Hurezi was completed, according to the dedicatory inscription, on 31 May 1699, almost simultaneously with the iconostasis of Făgăraș, which proves that Preda, the icon painter from Făgăraș, could not be the same Preda who, together with his son, Ianache, painted the bolnitsa of Hurezi and the altar and nave of the monastery church of Cozia (1704–1705). Moreover, the second Preda is one of the best painters of Brâncoveanu's time; his figures evoking the Hellenistic aesthetics of the post-Palaiologan painting school are built solidly and the portraits show serenity. He also used harmonized colours, combining saturated hues with coloured greys. Or, the something more naive and conventional figures in the icons of Făgăraș (*Fig. 1*) associate this artist with another Preda, the author of the parecclesion paintings at Hurezi (com-

pleted by 1697), a more conformist muralist and icon painter (*Fig. 2*). An icon painter named Preda was also in a team of painters led by Constantinos, which in 1713 made the mural paintings and the iconostasis of the monastery church of Dealu (Târgoviște), paintings lost today.⁶

The mentioned icons of Făgăraș are the only paintings from Constantin Brâncoveanu's time preserved in Transylvania. The other Transylvanian works attributed to the elite Brâncoveanu painters are actually ulterior, and were conceived in a significantly changed cultural and doctrinal context, following the union with Rome of part of the Romanian Church in Transylvania, and the disappearance, with the creation of the Greek-Catholic bishopric, of the Orthodox Metropolitan see of Alba Iulia. The activity of the elite painters from Hurezi, relatively well documented for the times of Brâncoveanu, becomes more difficult to follow after the disappearance of the Wallachian princely orders in Oltenia during the Austrian administration (1716–1739). However, the active presence of younger painters from the Hurezi group is often attested in this period, the orders coming from the clergy of the bishopric of Râmnic, as with the mural paintings in Sărăcinești (1717–1718, commissioned by the Bishop Damaschin



Fig. 1. St. Nicholas, detail from the royal icon, Făgăraș (painter Preda)



Fig. 2. St. Nicholas, the parecclesion of Hurezi, nave (painter Preda)

of Râmnic) in Iezer (1720, by a hieromonk painter, Nicolae from Teiuș), St. Nicholas in Olănești (1725–1726, by the parish and the priest Teodosie) or from some Greek boyars (St. George in Ocnele Mari, 1717–1718, by Duca of Sinope and Stătie of Cernavodă) and from boyars from Oltenia (St. Dmitry of Craiova, 1724, by the *Stolnik* Constantin Obedeanu).⁷

From this period dates the iconostasis of the Greek-Catholic church in Maieri (Alba Iulia), a temporary and modest Greek-Catholic cathedral, built with material taken from the old Orthodox Metropolitan church of Alba Iulia which was demolished in 1713. The iconostasis is now lost, but the four large royal icons were seen by Nicolae Iorga before 1906 and described as works by a Wallachian painter from the times of Brâncoveanu, however altered by later repainting. One of the icons featured the painter's signature, "Iosif ieromonah zograv" (Iosif hieromonk, painter), accompanied by a prayer in Slavonic and the year 7225 (1716–1717).⁸ This painter was previously hypothetically identified with a painter of Brâncoveanu's churches, a hieromonk with the same name.⁹ The painting of the hermitage church of the Holy Apostles of Hurezi was done in 1700 by two hierodeacons, Iosif and Ioan, disciples of Father Ioan, archimand-

rite and abbot of the monastery of Hurezi.¹⁰ Iosif soon became hieromonk and continued to take painting commissions. Stylistically, he seems to be the one who painted, in various teams, the monastery church of Surpatele (1706–1707), the porch of the bolnitsa in the monastery of Bistrița-Vâlcea (1710), the monastery church of Govora (by 1711), the Păpușa hermitage (1711–1712), the iconostases of the churches of Fedeleșoiu (signed “Iosif iconopiseț,” around 1708) and Govora (by 1712),¹¹ but afterwards is not mentioned anymore. As a disciple of Archimandrite Ioan, the hieromonk Iosif was certainly initiated in the issues that constituted serious threats against Orthodoxy, such as Greek-Catholicism, which insistently preoccupied Archimandrite Ioan,¹² as revealed in the iconographic programs designed by the abbot of Hurezi. The painting in the porch of the bolnitsa at Hurezi¹³ and Govora,¹⁴ but also in the hermitage church of the Holy Apostles, displays iconographic themes which illustrate the contemporary confessional disputes. The situation in which hieromonk Iosif from Hurezi would paint icons for the Greek-Catholic bishopric appears, thus, as unusual and unlikely. Therefore, the hypothetical identification of the painter from Alba Iulia must be done with caution. The icon may have been purchased from Wallachia, but, in the piece’s absence, any hypothesis on its origin cannot be supported.

The next Brâncoveanu paintings in Transylvania are, in chronological order, the mural paintings in the altar and nave of St. Nicholas church in Făgăraș. Made 20 years after the construction of the church, they are due to the material contributions of the Orthodox merchants and residents of Făgăraș.¹⁵ The church remained Orthodox until 1723, when it became the cathedral of the Greek-Catholic bishopric, which was moved here temporarily from Alba Iulia.

An inscription in the nave, on the south-eastern pendentive of the dome, mentions the year “7228” (1719–1720) and the name “Preda zugrav” (Preda, painter). Two inscriptions on the western wall of the nave again mention “Preda zugrav sin Predii” (painter Preda, son of Preda) and “Teodosie sin Predii” (Teodosie son of Preda) and an inscription in the altar, on the edge of the garment of St. Spyridon’s *saccos*, again gives the name “Preda sin Predii zugrav ot Dolgopole” (Preda, son of painter Preda from Câmpulung). The wall paintings were made by two brothers, Preda and Teodosie, sons of Preda, an artist from Câmpulung. It was presumed that Preda from Câmpulung was the author of Brâncoveanu’s iconostasis of the church in Făgăraș,¹⁶ but there is no documentary proof in this respect. Instead, the identification of the two brothers, Teodosie and Preda, seems easier; a “Teodosie fiul Predii zugrav” (Teodosie, son of painter Preda) signed his name on the porch of the bolnitsa of Bistrița monastery (Vâlcea) in 1710. Signing alongside two other painters, hieromonk Iosif and Hranite, Teodosie describes himself as “apprentice,” probably of Hranite, mentioned immediately above in the inscription.

TEODOSIE BELONGS to the generation of painters of the second and third decades of the 18th century; he painted the churches in Govora (by 1711, with hieromonk Iosif and Hranite), Păpușa (by 1712, with Iosif), Sărăcinești (1717-1718, with his brother, Preda, and George), St. Dmitry of Craiova (1723–1724,¹⁷ in a larger team where Preda is again mentioned). A hieromonk painter named Teodosie was mentioned as part of the community of Bistrița monastery in 1712.¹⁸

The painters Teodosie and Preda from Făgăraș can be easily identified with the painters of Brâncoveanu's churches by some iconographic particularities that the two brothers used in their paintings: the iconography of the nave's dome in Făgăraș represents a glorious Christ sitting on the throne (*Fig. 3*) and not the consecrated iconographic formula of the Pantokrator bust. The two painters used the same iconography at Sărăcinești (*Fig. 4*), one year before the paintings in Făgăraș. The altar at Făgăraș also presents an iconographic particularity: the portraits of hierarchs in frieze are represented half-length, under trilobite arches (*Fig. 5*), in liturgical vestments and carrying Gospels books in their hands, just like in the painting of the Holy Apostles hermitage at Hurezi (*Fig. 6*), the foundation of Archimandrite Ioan in Brâncoveanu's times. Teodosie had worked several times together with hieromonk Iosif (at Bistrița, Păpușa, Govora), one of the authors of the painting of the Holy Apostles hermitage.

It is not known if Teodosie was a direct disciple of Iosif (the inscription on the

porch of the bolnitsa at Bistrița is ambiguous), but the iconographic program of the frieze of the bishops attending the seven Ecumenical Councils, representing a *unicum* in the painting of Wallachia is presumably inspired by the mosaics of the nave of St. Sophia church in Constantinople¹⁹ was brought by Teodosie to southern Transylvania where it became a real iconographic "fashion": this frieze was frequently painted in altars and naves by the early 19th century (the church in Beclean, near Făgăraș, 1808, where an inscription indicates them as: "the Patriarchs of the holy seven Ecumenic Councils,"²⁰ the Orthodox



Fig. 3. Christ on throne, Făgăraș, the nave dome (painters Preda and Teodosie)



Fig. 4. Christ on throne, Sărăcinești, the nave dome (painters Preda and Teodosie)

churches in Sărata, 1806, Colun, 1811, Arpașu de Sus, 1815, Voevodenii Mici, 1820).²¹

Therefore, it may be correct to identify brothers Teodosie and Preda from Făgăraș as the authors of the paintings at Sărăcinești and, probably, as those of St. Dmitry of Craiova (now lost).

The painter Andrei, who painted together with his son, Andrei, the monastery church in Săraca (Banat) in 1730, was thought to be the same Andrei who painted, as part of a large team, the catholicon of Hurezi monastery (1694),²² although at Săraca he signed in Romanian and at Hurezi he put his own signature in Greek (St. Stephen's hermitage of Hurezi, 1702).²³ The identification between Andrei the painter from Săraca and Andrei, the painter of Brâncoveanu's churches in Hurezi is also accepted by the Serbian researcher Ljiljana Stosić,²⁴ who further identifies his son, Andrei (Andreović) as one of the authors of the mural paintings of the church of Vračevšnica (Serbia), completed in 1737.

The identification of Andrei the painter from Săraca with Andrei, the painter from Hurezi shows, however, a number of inconsistencies. The first is related to the Greek origin of the painter Andrei from Hurezi, which is quite clearly revealed in the inscriptions from the churches he painted, but which disappears completely at Săraca. There is also the argument of the paintings' style: the paintings at Săraca are more modest than the mural assemblies made by Andrei



Fig. 5. St. Patriarchs, St. Nicholas church, Făgăraș, altar (painters Preda and Teodosie)



Fig. 6. St. Patriarchs, Holy Apostles hermitage, Hurezi, nave
(painter hieromonk Iosif)

the Greek, one of the best painters of his time (the catholicon of Hurezi, 1694, St. Stephen, 1702, Polovragi, 1703, Surpatele, by 1707, the porch of Cozia, 1707). Finally, there is also the question of time, because a painter could not disappear without a trace for 17 years, between the painting of the porch of Cozia, 1707 (the last work commissioned to the Greek Andrei) and the paintings of St. Dmitry church in Craiova (1724), where a painter Andrei appears,²⁵ and at Săraca (1730). The late date and the second position in the hierarchy of the painter Andrei from St. Dmitry in Craiova, mentioned in the painters' inscription after Teodosie, who was but a disciple of the Brâncoveanu painters, urge us to consider that this is not the Greek painter Andrei, but a younger one, probably a disciple of Brâncoveanu's painters. The same could be the author of the paintings at Săraca.

The last mention of a Brâncoveanu painter in Transylvania concerns the author of the 14 icons of the iconostasis of the Greek-Catholic cathedral in Blaj, in 1737 (preserved today in the town's museum). The painter, Ștefan from "Târgu-Ocna" (Ocnele Mari, Vâlcea), was contracted by the Greek-Catholic Bishop Inochentie Micu Clain to paint the iconostasis of the new Greek-Catholic episcopal church, relocated from Făgăraș to Blaj in 1737²⁶ (*Fig. 7*). The painter was identified by historians as Ștefan, a Brâncoveanu painter who did the mural paintings of the monastery church of Surpatele (by 1707),²⁷ Fedeleșoiu (1708)²⁸ and the church porch of Govora monastery (1711–1712, where he signed as "Ștefan the priest"²⁹) (*Fig. 8*). The iconographic program of all the churches Ștefan painted, mostly together with the hieromonk Iosif, was devised by the Archimandrite Ioan of Hurezi.³⁰ Ștefan's painting quality is remarkable especially in the porch of Govora, with an iconographic program that emphasises a prayer to

the Mother of God for the protection of the Orthodox Church against the threats coming from the Greek-Catholic Church (*Fig. 8*).³¹

The historians also attributed to Ștefan, the Brâncoveanu painter, the paintings from St. Dmitry of Craiova, but this was a painter who signed as “monk.”³² An inscription at St. Nicholas church in Olănești mentioned two painters named Ștefan and the date 1725–1726, but the church is now repainted and cannot be analyzed stylistically anymore. Also attributed to him was the painting of the church in Glogova (1734),³³ made by a large team of seven painters, but the late date, the poor quality of the paintings and the modest position of this Ștefan in the painters’ inscription, mentioned only the fourth, challenges this hypothesis.

There is no identification, on the stylistic criterion, between Brâncoveanu’s painter Ștefan the priest and painter Ștefan contracted at Blaj, as the elevated refinement of the first, his good knowledge of the anatomical design combined with a great expressiveness of his very elongated figures and the use of a colour range based on soft hues and subdued contrasts are not present in a satisfactory manner in the icons of the second, more rigid and conformist. The painter from Blaj is rather an epigone of Brâncoveanu’s artists. The fine but flat figures and a rather schematic anatomical design in the icons from Blaj represent general characters of the “post-Brâncoveanu” painting as it evolved with younger generations of painters, still of good quality but lacking the solid preparation of their predecessors in the “school” of the Greek painting masters, who still cultivated the virtuosity of post-Palaiologan academism.

Ștefan from Ocnele Mari is a painter of the next generation after Brâncoveanu’s reign, whose work, even if it is not known from other certain examples, can be presumed as prolific. This was a time when, with Oltenia under Austrian rule, the circulation in Transylvania and Banat was frequent in both ways, since



Fig. 7. Deisis, royal icon, Blaj
(painter Ștefan from Ocnele Mari)



Fig. 8. The Mother of God, the Church' Protectress; Govora, the porch
(painter Ștefan the priest)

Inochentie Micu Clain knew and appreciated the recent paintings at Hurezi and Cozia, as specified in the contract made with the Wallachian painter.³⁴ The town of Ocnele Mari was a major economic centre in Vâlcea and there were numerous orders for painters; the iconostasis of the church of St. John Chrysostom's hermitage at Titireciu was painted in 1715.³⁵ The church of St. George in Ocnele Mari was decorated in 1717–1718, by artists who painted in the style of the Hurezi school. The Assumption Church in the same town, now ruined, was built in the late 17th century and perhaps painted soon afterwards. Therefore, a painter could become here a good artist even in the difficult conditions of the late 1730s.

Moreover, the unusual situation for an Orthodox painter to take a commission for another confession, strongly combated then by the Orthodox clergy in Wallachia, was possible in Oltenia in that time, together with other similar "curiosities," otherwise religiously hardly acceptable, such as the presence of the portraits of the official leaders of the province, General Steinvile at St. Nicholas in Olănești and of Emperor Charles VI in the church of Ștrețești de Jos (1733).³⁶

But there is also another aspect of these inter-confessional artistic relations: the case of a famous painter from mid 18th century Oltenia, Grigore Ranite, who painted major ensembles, such as the altar and nave of Tismana monastery church (1732), the Annunciation chapel of St. Nicholas church in Șcheii Brașovului (1738), icons for the monastery of Partoș (Banat), the bishopric parecclesion at Râmnic (1753) and ended up converting to Greek-Catholicism³⁷ and painting icons for the Greek-Catholic cathedral of Blaj.

For the Wallachian painters active in southern Transylvania during the 18th century, many of them peasants, who painted Orthodox but also Greek-Catholic churches, their poor education, a mercantile spirit, or, perhaps, personal beliefs led them to paint for both confessions, but for the Brâncoveanu painters, their elite theological training and the high spiritual “school” around Archimandrite Ioan of Hurezi are arguments that cast serious doubts on their presumed artistic activity for the Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania.



Notes

1. Marius Porumb, *Un veac de pictură românească din Transilvania: Secolul XVIII* (Bucharest, 2003), 10.
2. See, for specific information on the mural painting in Vâlcea in the times of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu: Corina Popa, Ioana Iancovescu, Elisabeta Negrău, and Vlad Bedros, *Repertoriul picturii murale brâncovenești: Județul istoric Vâlcea* (Bucharest, 2008), *passim*.
3. Radu Gioglovan et al., *Inscripții și însemnări din județul Dâmbovița*, vol. 1 (Târgoviște, 1975), nos. 22–25, 40.
4. Florentina Dumitrescu, “Sculptura de lemn brâncovenească,” in *Pagini de veche artă românească*, vol. 3 (Bucharest, 1974), 31 *sqq.*
5. Marius Porumb, *Dicționar de pictură veche românească din Transilvania (sec. XIV–XVIII)* (Bucharest, 1998), *s.v.*
6. Gioglovan et al., no. 614.
7. Teodora Voinescu, “Școala de pictură de la Hurezi,” in *Omagiu lui George Oprescu* (Bucharest, 1961), 567–587; Radu Crețeanu, “Zugrăvi din județul Vâlcea,” *Revista Muzeelor și Monumentelor—Monumente Istorice și de Artă* (Bucharest) 49, 2 (1980): 88–95.
8. Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori și inscripții ardeleni și maramureșene*, vol. 2, *Inscripții și însemnări* (Bucharest, 1906), 34, no. 24/1: “Lord Jesus Christ, me, your servant, hieromonk Joseph the painter, year 7225.”
9. Marius Porumb, “Zugrăvi și centre românești de pictură din Transilvania secolului al XVIII-lea,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie* (Cluj-Napoca) 19 (1976): 103.

10. Ms. 154 inv. 65/2 from the Library of the Monastery of Hurezi, fol. 10r (apud Ioana Iancovescu, "Schitul Sf. Apostoli," unpublished paper).
11. Voinescu, "Școala," 576, n. 8; Crețeanu, "Zugravi," 93.
12. Corina Popa, "Un cărturar din Câmpulung de la sfârșitul secolului al XVII-lea," *Ars Transilvaniae* (Cluj-Napoca) 1 (1992): 13–15.
13. Corina Popa, "L'Iconographie de la peinture de l'exonarthex des églises brancovanes, I," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, série Beaux Arts* (Bucharest) 45 (2008): 88 sqq.
14. Ioana Iancovescu, "Un image, ses sources et ses raisons d'être," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, série Beaux Arts* 43 (2006): 29–34.
15. The Orthodox were at that time in the majority among the population at Făgăraș. Valeriu Literat, *Biserici vechi românești din Țara Oltului*, 2nd edition (Cluj, 1996), 162; Ioana Cristache-Panait, "Cu privire la unele monumente din Țara Făgărașului în lumina relațiilor cu Țara Românească," *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice* (Bucharest) 39, 2 (1970): 30.
16. Literat, 157 sq.; Porumb, *Dicționar de pictură*, s.v.; id., *Un veac de pictură*, 10.
17. Virgil Drăghiceanu, "Inscripții de la biserica Sf. Dumitru din Craiova," *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice* (Bucharest) 8 (1915): 191: "painted by: Teodosie, Andrei, Preda, Gheorghe, Macarie, monk Ștefan..."
18. Ioana Iancovescu et al., *Colecția Stavropoleos* (Bucharest, 2006), 15.
19. Ioana Iancovescu, "Din nou despre schitul Sf. Apostoli," communication at the annual session *New Data in the Medieval Art Research from Romania*, December 2009, George Oprescu Institute of Art History, Department of Medieval Art, Romanian Academy, Bucharest.
20. Literat, 108.
21. All these mural ensembles are made by a single family of painters, Grecu from Săsăuș (ibid., 180–196).
22. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, 14.
23. Constantin Bălan, *Inscripții medievale ale României: Județul Vâlcea* (Brăila, 2005), no. 884.
24. "Les peintures murales du groupe de zographes d'Andrei Andreović au monastère de Vračevšnica," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art, série Beaux Arts* 33 (1996): 39–48.
25. Drăghiceanu, "Inscripții," 191.
26. Ioana Cristache-Panait, "Un zugrav din Țara Românească în Transilvania în prima jumătate a secolului al XVIII-lea," *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei—seria Artă plastică* (Bucharest) 16, 2 (1969): 325–327; Marius Porumb, "Ștefan zugravul, autorul tâmplii comandate de Inochentie Micu Clain," in *Sub semnul lui Clio: Omagiu Acad. Prof. Ștefan Pascu la 60 de ani* (Cluj, 1974), 486–489; id., "Zugravi și centre românești de pictură," 103–125; id., "Ștefan zugravul de la Ocnele Mari," *Acta Musei Napocensis* 14 (1977): 401–404; id., "Zugravi de școală brâncovenească din Transilvania primei jumătăți a secolului al XVIII-lea," in *Ștefan Mețș la 85 de ani* (Cluj-Napoca, 1977): 413–416; id., *Dicționar de pictură*, s.v.; id., *Un veac de pictură*, the repertory of painters.

27. Voinescu noted that at Surpatele the painter Ștefan signed as “hierodeacon” (576, n. 4), but the inscription preserved does not confirm it (Bălan, no. 1549).
28. Voinescu, 576; Crețeanu, “Zugravi,” 92–95.
29. “*ereu*” (Bălan, no. 692).
30. Ibid., no. 690, 1547; Corina Popa, “Schitul Fedeleşoiu,” *Studii și cercetări de istoria artei—seria Artă plastică* 38 (1991): 28.
31. Iancovescu, *passim*.
32. Drăghiceanu, “Inscripții,” 191; Voinescu, 576, nn. 4 and 6; Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, 135, the repertory.
33. Radu Crețeanu, “Biserica din Glogova,” *Mitropolia Olteniei* (Craiova) 8, 6–7 (1956): 365; id., “Mănăstirea Surpatele,” *Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice* 4 (1974): 19.
34. Cristache-Panait, “Un zugrav,” 326.
35. Bălan, nos. 1142, 1144 and 1150.
36. Virgil Drăghiceanu, “Monumente istorice din Oltenia,” *Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Istorice* 24 (1931): 117.
37. Porumb, *Un veac de pictură*, 55 sqq.

Abstract

Constantin Brâncoveanu’s Painters in Transylvania

Recent research on the mural paintings of the churches founded by Constantin Brâncoveanu in Vâlcea has made us reconsider the earlier identification of the Wallachian painters active in Transylvania by the first half of the 18th century with their homonymous painters of Hurezi monastery (UNESCO monument) and of the monuments in its area. The present paper concludes that Preda, the author of the royal icons of St. Nicholas church in Făgăraș (1698–1699), is probably the painter of the Hurezi monastery chapel (1696–1697), but not one and the same with Preda the painter of the Hurezi *bolnița* and of Cozia’s altar and nave. Teodosie and Preda, sons of painter Preda from Câmpulung and authors of the mural paintings of St. Nicholas church in Făgăraș (1719–1720), also did the mural paintings of the monastery church of Sărăcinești (1717–1718). The painter Andrei from Săraca (1730) is not the Greek painter Andrei from Hurezi. Ștefan from Ocele Mari, author of the iconostasis of the Greek-Catholic cathedral in Blaj (1737), cannot be Brâncoveanu’s painter, the priest Ștefan. Hieromonk Iosif, author of the icons in the Greek-Catholic church of Maieri in Alba Iulia (1716–1717, disappeared), is not the same with Brâncoveanu’s homonymous painter. The main arguments concern the style of the paintings, but also their religious confession. The high theological education of Brâncoveanu’s elite artists, tutored by the Archimandrite Ioan, abbot of Hurezi, casts serious doubt on the assumption that they painted for the Greek-Catholic Church in Transylvania.

Keywords

post-Byzantine painting, Greek-Catholic Church, iconography, Constantin Brâncoveanu (Constantine Brancovan), Hurezi monastery