

**THE METROPOLITAN BISHOP SIMION ȘTEFAN - A FIGURE OF
MULTICULTURAL AND INTER CONFSSIONAL DIALOGUE IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TRANSYLVANIA**

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Abstract: One of the most prominent Romanian personalities of the eighteenth century Transylvania is the Metropolitan bishop Simion Ștefan. This bishop, canonized in 2011 by the Orthodox Church, lived in a multicultural and pluri-confessional environment, namely in the capital of the Principality of Transylvania, Bălgrad (Alba Iulia). Although he was an Orthodox believer, through a fruitful dialogue and a wonderful collaboration with the Hungarian prince of Transylvania and the Calvinist Superintendent, he managed to print a monumental work of the Romanian literature and culture: The New Testament of Bălgrad.

Keywords: multiculturalism, Holy Scriptures, ancient literature, sermon

After a few good decades, the Western Protestant Reformation echoes pervaded in Transylvania by the Hungarian minority population, which represented the majority of the political class at that time. Thus, the Romanian majority in Transylvania was subjected to the Calvinising pressure from the authorities. In this tense climate, The Orthodox Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan represented an important element in preserving the balance and promoting an effectively interconfessional dialogue, in a multicultural space.

The personality of the Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan

After the disposal of the Metropolitan Bishop Ilie Iorest by the political power attempting to impose its own confession or suite of religious movements, was elected, as Metropolitan Bishop, Simion Ștefan. The information about his personality before being elected Metropolitan Bishop is rather precarious and confusing. In this regard the historiography was based more on logical historical assumptions that cannot exclude the historical error or prove the historical truth through the methods recognised by the historical research.

Lately, more precisely, the past two years, was felt a strong desire to reveal the life of the great hierarch who, by his cultural acts marked a stage in the evolution of the Romanian culture, theology and linguistics. At the end of this effort, as perhaps we would expect, does not lie the ardour of the historians to elucidate a yet unclear biography, but the theologians efforts to rehabilitate a personality, who apparently could be canonized, from the blemish of the erroneous assumptions of the historians that have not avoided this piece of history because of their desire of exhaustivity.

Concretely, about the Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan, we know that he was appointed bishop for the Transylvanians¹. On October 10, 1643 Prince George I Rákóczi

¹ Fr. Prof. Dr. Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, Iași, Trinitas, 2006, p. 56.

issued a confirmation certificate², renewed on the 7th of July, 1651 by George II Rákóczi³. In the first mentioned document, were exposed 15 points, which the Orthodox hierarch had to fulfil. We will follow up the text of the 15 points (non-literally) to see if the Metropolitan Bishop was really committed, de jure and de facto, to the provisions of the diploma:

To preach, everywhere, the word of God, according to the Holy Scripture, in Romanian, and so will do his priests. 2) To accept the Calvin catechism. 3) To remove all Romanian customs of baptism. 4) Instead of the Eucharist to introduce the communion bread and wine without the transubstantiation, they will give the communion only to the elderly people and to those living a good life; 5) To distinguish the reverence for Jesus Christ of that for the saints; 6) The crucifixes and the icons to be considered adornments in the church and they should not worship them; 7) The customs and funeral ceremonies to be “erased”, never to be done with the “crones” superstition 8) The wedding can be done only after three announcements in the church. The separations (divorces) are permissible only when one spouse “goes to a foreign and far away country and for about four or five years not taking any notice of; then, the spouse could marry. 9) The sinners will be cast out of the Church. 10) The Orthodox priests and peasants will not be prevented to convert to Calvinism and obey the Calvin Bishop. 11) If the annual Council will face any religious problem, then they must consult the Hungarian Calvinist superintendent. 12) The Archpriests are chosen by the Consistory and not by paying any money; without the knowledge of the Calvinist Bishop none of the archpriests can be disposed; 13) The Bishop, along with the Archpriests will judge the causes; the appeal shall be held in Bălgrad, when the Bishop and the Archpriests will obey to the Calvin Bishop’s command. 14) The Bishop has no right to interfere in the marriages and the baptism of the Hungarian people except for the case a Romanian would marry a Hungarian woman or girl that wishes to be wedded by a Romanian priest. The Romanian priests disobeying this will pay, six guldens, the second time twelve guldens and for the third time he will be deprived of the priesthood, will be defrocked. 15) The Bishop, showing his submission to the prince, will pay him the annual tax consisting of 32 bull hides and four lynx’s hides⁴.

Quite rightly, arises, now, the question whether these commitments were fulfilled by the Metropolitan Bishop or he has found a diplomatic attitude in order to remove their implementation. As regards their content we cannot say (like some specialists did) that are humiliating, but contrary to some Romanian Orthodox Church’s ordinance, however none of the priests were obliged to act contrary to the Orthodox Church’s dogmatic teachings. It seemed, however, that Simion Ștefan managed to find a middle way for the remaining devoted to both the principality and the orthodox community he was entrusted, “The Calvinising conditions were applied only partially, namely those beneficial for the Romanian people: the

²Ana Dumitran, *Aspecte ale politicii confesionale a Principatului calvin față de români: confirmările în funcțiile ecleziastice și programul de reformare a Bisericii Ortodoxe din Transilvania*, in „Mediaevalia Transilvanica”, tome V-VI, no. 1-2, 2001-2002, pp. 151-155. (Latin language)

³*Ibidem*, p. 167.

⁴Nagy Geza, *A reformatus egyház története 1608-1715*, Attraktor Mariaesnyo Godollo, 2008, vol. I, p. 314-315; 318-319, vol. II, p. 167-167; *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia*, vol. III, p. 231-249, *apud*. Nicolae Bolea, *Mitropolia Bălgradului și Principatul Transilvaniei la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan. Teolog, cărturar și patriot*, (coord. Pr. Lect. Dr. Jan Nicolae), published with the blessing of Father Andrei, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea, 2010, pp. 166-167

increasingly usage of the Romanian language in the church or the printing of Romanian books..... none of the religious ceremonies of baptism and burial, no crucifix, no saints nor icons have been removed, but was kept without any modify of the Eastern Rite in the Orthodox Church in Transylvania”⁵.

Continuing the hierarchal-sacramental research, the historiography could not certainly state that SimionȘtefan was ordained, according to the Romanian Orthodox tradition, in Târgoviște or was simply elected and confirmed by the Calvinist authorities. Documentary, this fact cannot be confirmed because The Holy Registry of the Hungro-Wallachian Episcopate was barely published in 1668, while the first Transylvanian Bishop was ordained only in 1680.⁶The historian NicolaeIorga denies the presence of SimionȘtefan, at Târgoviște to be canonically ordained Metropolitan Bishop⁷, while the church historians, MirceaPăcurariu⁸ and ȘtefanMeteș⁹ affirm the contrary: he was ordained Metropolitan Bishop, in The Romanian Land, as the Romanian Orthodoxy’s tradition requires.

Being a great chapter of history, it cannot be treated without mentioning the great historian NicolaeIorga and his opinion, and we will also present his attitudes towards SimionȘtefan. “In the vision that Iorgapromoted, through the work he published before 1918, the Romanians in Transylvania are regarded with the willing attitude of the eldest brother, who believes that he contributed more than any other else and that to him must be attributed a wide part of the common heritage. Being led by the political and religious authorities of another nation and another confession, the Transylvanians, willynilly, they had to obey to the ruling power, because such times were not favourable for printing and writing, as only subsidiary. The work and the prints edited by SimionȘtefan, depicts him in a greater light, that of good writer, publisher and scholar¹⁰. After 1918, when the Romanian geopolitical dimensions allowed the historian to have no boundaries in expressing bluntly his opinion towards the Hungarians, so it disappeared, the condescension created around the Transylvanians contribution to the national history. The portrayal of SimionȘtefan it is that of a “Calvin priest” who called himself Archbishop...”¹¹.

This attitude assigned to the great historian has influenced other voices of the domain¹², though most scholars, clerics and theologians see in the person of the Transylvanian Bishop a personality of the Romanian culture and spirituality¹³.

⁵ Nicolae Bolea, *Mitropolia Bălgradului și Principatul Transilvaniei la mijlocul secolului al XVII-lea*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 167.

⁶ Timotei Cipariu, *Acte și fragmente latine romanesci. Pentru istorii a beserecei lai alesu unite*, Blasiu, MDCCCLV, *apud.* Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 175.

⁷NicolaeIorga, *IstoriaBisericiiromâneștiși a viețireligioase a românilor*,vol. I, IIndedition, București, 1928, p. 336.

⁸ Pr. Prof. Dr.MirceaPăcurariu, *IstoriaBisericiiOrtodoxeRomâne*, vol. II, Iași, Trinitas, 2006, p. 67.

⁹ȘtefanMeteș, *IstoriaBisericiiromânești din Transilvania*, vol. I, IInd, Sibiu, 1935, p.201.

¹⁰NicolaeIorga, *Sate șipreoși din Ardeal*, București, 1902.

¹¹Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 176.

¹² Nicolae Cartoian, *Istoria literaturiiromânevechi*, București, 1980; ȘtefanCiobanu, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, Notes and foreword by Dan Horia Mazilu, București, 1989, *apud.* Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *ibidem*, p. 177.

¹³PetruBogdan, *Considerații generaleasupraNoului Testament de la Bălgrad (1648) al MitropolituluiSimionȘtefan*, in „MitropoliaBanatului”, 1973, nr. 10-12; IoanZăgorean, *MitropolitulSimionȘtefan*,

Except for the two diplomas we mentioned before, issued by the two Calvin Princes who recognized Simion Ștefan as Metropolitan, nowadays, there are three more sources of information about his personality: a bookmark and two official documents. The bookmark appears on the pages of the book *Evanghelia Învățătoare*, from 1 to 15, printed at the Dealu monastery in 1644. The note mentions that the book was purchased by Ștefan, a lord from Bălgrad and donated to the Bălgrad Episcopate in the days of the Metropolitan Bishop Ștefan and the Archpriest Neacsă of Bălgrad". At the end of the book is recorded the following signature: "Ștefan, Archbishop, amen" This copy of the book, *Evanghelia Învățătoare*, is kept at the Library of the Romanian Academy, the branch of Cluj-Napoca, CRV 277¹⁴.

In a letter dated December 2, 1648, addressed to the Fathers Măierean and Pavel, Simion Ștefan called himself, "I, Bishop Ștefan of Bălgrad and the whole Ardeal county. In the letter he asked the priests to go home to Adam / Avram Raț to do the Vespers and the morning service, for they were old and could not go to church¹⁵. In another letter of 22nd of May, 1656 The Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan, confirms as Archpriest, Nicolae Pop of Hunedoara¹⁶.

We mention other documents issued by the ecclesiastical figures of the time, concerning the personality of the Bishop. In a letter addressed to the Calvin superintendent, Geleji Istvan Katona, Prince George I Rákóczi mentioned the election of Simion Ștefan, as Bishop he also mentioned the tax that was supposed to be collected from each of the priests in the Episcopate, consisting of one gulden, for the publishing of the New Testament¹⁷. He was also mentioned in the correspondence of Archbishop of Esztergom, Georgius Lippay¹⁸ and also in the Princely Chancery documents¹⁹. We may also use, as documentary sources the accompanying texts of the New Testament and the Psalter²⁰.

There are some assumptions that should not be necessarily excluded, even if are not documentary proved. Simion Ștefan had studied at a monastic school of Alba Iulia or at the

in „Îndrumător pastoral” II, 1978; Virgil Cîndea, *Noul Testament în limba română ca act de spiritualitate și cultură*, in *Noul Testament* first published in Romanian in 1648 by Simion Ștefan, the Metropolitan Bishop of Transylvania, republished after 350 years with the blessing of Andrei, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, 1998; Grigorie T. Marcu, *Valoarea saagogică și biblică-teologică a celor 24 de predoslovii*, in *Noul Testament* first published in Romanian in 1648 by Simion Ștefan, the Metropolitan Bishop of Transylvania, republished after 340 years with the initiative and care of Emilian, Bishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, 1988; Mihai Plătică, *Noul Testament de la Bălgrad și personalitatea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan*, în „Glasul Bisericii”, 1973, nr.11-12; Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, IInd edition, București, 1994, apud. Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 177.

¹⁴ Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad 1567-1702*, Cluj-Napoca, Clusium, 2001, pp. 47-48. (note 165); Ana Dumitran, *op. cit.*, p. 171. (note 3)

¹⁵ Ioan Lupaș, *Documente istorice transilvane*, vol. I, Sibiu, 1940, apud. Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, în *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 171.

¹⁶ Ana Dumitran, *Aspecte ale politicii profesionale a Principatului calvin față de români: confirmările în funcțiile eclesiasitice și programul de reformare a Bisericii Ortodoxe din Transilvania*, in „Mediaevalia Transilvanica”, tome V-VI, no. 1-2, 2001-2002, pp. 169-170.

¹⁷ Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan*....., p. 171. (note 6)

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.171. (note 7)

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 171-172. (note 8)

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 172.

Academic Calvin College. Was ordained priest and got the Monastic tonsure at the monastery in the same city²¹.

Another hypothesis, in my opinion a fanciful one, is that supported by Nicolae Iorga, which identifies Simion Ștefan with the teacher named Simion, the interpolator in Grigore Ureche's Chronicle. This hypothesis is supported by the historian's demonstrations about the fact that the Metropolitan Simion Ștefan had been ordained with the help granted by Vasile Lupu. Furthermore, he makes a comparison with the Moldovan text of the New Testament text, where he would have found some similarities²².

Another bookmark on the *Tetraevangel*, a Slavonic manuscript, identifies Simion Ștefan with the priest Simion of Zagra²³.

This hypothesis that Simion Ștefan is originary from Bistrița-Năsăud is contrary to the Confirmation document of October 10, 1643: *honorabilis vir Popa Simionius Alba Julianus*²⁴.

Following the historical and philological research to the latest news regarding the subject we must remember the Slavonic manuscript from the monastery of St. Paul of Mount Athos where there is the following note: "This book, was given by Simeon, the Bishop of Bălgrad, to his priest, Mihail of Hungaro-Wallachia, in Cătălui monastery, under the administration of lord Iovan, the abbot, the lord Mateiși, lady Elena and Teodosie, the boyar... and that year it was war, and the voivode Matei defeated Vasile the voivode, in the year 7148"²⁵.

The year 1639/1640 recorded on the manuscript does not match with the period of Simion Ștefan's Episcopate for he was ordained Bishop only in 1643.

The first mentioning this manuscript, in historiography, is Leon Kavelin (the Archimandrite Leonid), in 1875. The others who followed him were satisfied only quoting Father Leonid, without consulting the manuscript²⁶. This detail is very important for finding the work before his ordination as bishop. We do not know if this priest "of him" moved to Hungaro-Wallachia or Simion Ștefan spent some time in The Romanian Land. The fact is that this manuscript could provide the information that he was a penman.

This hypothesis providing Simeon Ștefan's penman quality is supported by a text written on *Palia de la Orăștie*, designed to replace the missing print text, where appears the copyist's signature: "Pisaz Pop (a) Ștefan"²⁷.

Because we do not want to enter too deep in the middle of the problem, we will summarize the last effort of the researcher Ana Dumitran: the biographical outline is completed with the mention that the Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan with the scribe

²¹ Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad (1567-1702)*, Cluj-Napoca, Clusium, 2001, pp. 47-48.

²² N. Iorga, in „Revista istorică”, XI, 1925, no. 4-6, apr.-jun. p. 115, *apud.* Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad (1567-1702)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Clusium, 2001, pp.48.

²³ Francisc Kiss, *Informații privitoare la Simion Ștefan*, in „Steaua XXXI, nr. 3, martie, 1980, p. 52.

²⁴ Ana Dumitran, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

²⁵ Damian P. Bogdan, *Despre daniile românești la Athos*, București, 1941, p. 24, note 1, *apud.*, Ana Dumitran, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

²⁶ See the note 34 from Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan.....*, p. 178.

²⁷ Ana Dumitran, *Moștenirea Mitropolitului Simion Ștefan. Comentarii, ipoteze, reevaluări*, in „Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan. Teolog, cărturar și patriot”, (coord. Pr. Lect. Dr. Jan Nicolae), published with the blessing of Father Andrei, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea, 2010, p. 179.

quality” and “this little biographical retouch has at least the advantage to be documentary proved”²⁸.

In the following lines we will present the portrait of the Metropolitan Bishop SimionȘtefan, by Istvan Juhasz, a Hungarian historian

“SimionȘtefan is the most famous Romanian missionary of the seventeenth century. He was the first Romanian bishop who accepted the conditions of the Reformed Church. His work, as a translator of the Bible, is the best example of the Reformed influence on the Romanian Church, an effect that has not resulted in the loss of the Romanian identity but as a redundancy of culture.

The foreword at the New Testament shows, for the first time in the history of the Romanian culture, the cultural unity of the Romanians from everywhere. He talks with grief about the fact that the Romanians live in totally different countries, being separated from each other, not speaking the same language, at all, so he had to use his translation of the common terms that are understood by everyone.

SimionȘtefan was the pioneer of the Romanian linguistics.

Another merit is that he worked on translations having a solid knowledge background, bringing a large contribution to the enrichment of the lexicon of the Romanian language yet poor, with a few terms and phrases. The New Testament is translated from the Greek original, but he also considered and written text Slavonic and the Hieronymus Latin text.

In 1651, with the budget provided by prince Rakozi, he published *Psaltirea* in Romanian language, taking as a basis for the translation, the original Hebrew text. Most probably he was helped with these texts by the Hungarian and German scholars at the “Reformed faculty” of Alba Iulia.

The Romanian translation of the Holy Scriptures was done, mostly, by SimionȘtefan. But most of the Old Testament remained untranslated. To continue this work was appointed, by the Prince Mihaly Apafy, the Reformed pastor, Matho Istvan. The work remained unfinished in the seventeenth century, because of the political changes in Transylvania”²⁹.

He died, in the summer of 1656³⁰, in September 17, 1656, at Târgoviște, was ordained the new Metropolitan Bishop, Sava Brancovici.

The New Testament of Bălgrad (1648)

The advent of *The New Testament of 1648*, the first integral translation of this Holy Book, into Romanian, is unprecedented in our country, and not only, it was a premiere for the other peoples of South-Eastern Europe. It is a religious work, which exceeds the strict limits of church life. It is a work of particular interest for the history of Romanian culture, namely for our literary language and indirectly, for this artistic literature³¹.

The translation of the *New Testament of 1648* is a milestone in the Romanian literature; it is a work of reference for the subsequent translations of the Scripture, such as

²⁸*Ibidem.*, p. 183.

²⁹Juhasz Istvan, *A reformacio as Erdelyiromanokkozott*, Cluj, 1940.

³⁰Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, - pentruseminariile teologice liceale - București, Editura IBMBOR, 2006, p. 191.

³¹http://www.bibliotecamm.ro/miraj/Fisiere/noul_testament.html (retrieved in 05.10.2011).

The Bible of Bucharest of 1688, The Bible of Blajof 1795, The Bible of Buzău of 1854-1856, Andrei Şaguna's Bible of 1856, and other following works.

The *New Testament* has spread since its appearance, throughout all the provinces inhabited by Romanians, strengthening their hearts in the unity of faith and nation. *The New Testament of Bălgrad* will always remain a Romanian Orthodox work of unquestionable theological, historical and literary prestige³².

“We should put the year 1648, in front of the following humanistic Romanian translations. But the issues raised, the fact that is given in marginal glosses, the beginning of a dictionary of neologisms, - the first of its kind from our country, as well as the ideas contained, shall remain bright anticipations, up to the comparison of the words with the money, resumed by Haşdeu in his famous theory of words' circulation. As if Transylvania was meant to create the Romanian philology, the circle of anonymous scholars, sponsored by the bishop of Alba Iulia gives the first expression of this philological genius, which will be extended by Samuil Micu, Cipariu, Densuşianu and many others ...”³³. Work of the Transylvanian and Wallachian scholars, addressed by its content, by its language and by its message to our entire nation, it was, in terms of Romanian culture the political Unification echo accomplished at Alba Iulia, by Michael the Brave, in 1601, and, at the same time, the most categorical confession of feeling, deed and Romanian affiliation of seventeenth century Transylvania³⁴.

This work was first published, at Alba Iulia, in January 20, 1648, being the first integral translation of the *New Testament*, published into Romanian. In the foreword were approached some interesting ideas about the literary language, the need of a language understood by all Romanians, the people's need of culture.

Along with Varlaam's *Cazania*, *The New Testament of Alba Iulia* was the foundation on which, the Romanian literary language, was built for the centuries that followed.

The New Testament translation

The hieromonk Silvestru, is the first who attempted to translate *The New Testament*. Sent in Transylvania by the ruler of the Romanian Land, the Voivode Matei Basarab, he work hardly through a scholarly activity, for the support of the Romanian culture and church's life. It is supposed that he made some less successful translations and the beginning of his work was continued by Simion Ştefan, along with a group of scholars.

As regards the translation source we will go through the steps proposed by Simion Ştefan in *Predoslovie* (the foreword). The author noted that:

“You must know that we did not count only a source, but the whole sources we knew about, Greeks, Serbians and Latin, all written by the great scholars, and as we knew Greek, we have read and counted them all. The most we used the Greek source but also the Ieronim's source for it was translated from Greek and Latin, too, and also the Slovene source, because it was translated from Greek and was printed in Moscow. We counted all of them but we never left the Greek source, because we

³²*Ibidem.*, (retrieved in 05.10.2011).

³³ George Ivaşcu, *Istoria literaturii române. Vol. 1*, Bucureşti, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1969, p. 154.

³⁴ Virgil Căndea, *Noul Testament în limba română act de spiritualitate şi cultură*, in *Noul Testament 1648*, Alba Iulia, Editura Episcopiei Ortodoxe de Alba Iulia, 1988.

know that the Holy Spirit urged the Apostles to write the New Testament into Greek, so, the Greek source is the milestone of the whole work”³⁵.

As we have seen in those mentioned in the foreword, the translator / translators have used three sources: the Greek, the Latin and the Slavic.

In order to clarify the matter, furthermore we will use the laborious research undertaken by the Professor Alin-Mihai Gherman, over which we are forced to persist due to the scientific innovations he brought in the field.

As regards the Slavonic source, the researchers have reached a consensus, establishing that for the translation of the New Testament it was used the *Bible of Ostrog(1595)*³⁶. Regarding the Greek text, identifying the source is not one of our concerns, it is not imperative because even if they would have used a Greek manuscript or a western edition of the text does not change anything at all³⁷.

Regarding the Latin source, most of the researchers have chosen the *Vulgata*, Ieronim’s translation. Of course, the two Latin sources, translations made in the sixteenth century by Erasmus of Rotterdam and the French humanist Theodore of Beza³⁸, were not taken into account. Here’s the researcher’s conclusion:

“A research I did proved that in the last phase of elaboration of the New Testament printed in Alba Iulia in 1648, it was used Theodore Beza’s translation, unanimously appreciated by the scholars of the time, printed in more than 30 individual editions and over 50 editions combined with the translation of the Old Testament, elaborated by the Hebrew and Old Testament teacher, Tübingen Immanuel Tremmelius³⁹, the two translations being merged by Franciscus Iunius (known as Major “the eldest”, to be distinguished by his son, a great theologian of the German university wits of the seventeenth century)⁴⁰, who introduced to the various editions of the Sacred Bible the introductory remarks by the various texts of The Holy Scripture and summaries of each chapter, as well as the considerable critical apparatus, consisting of references to other biblical texts and explanations of unknown concepts. The Latin translation was seen by both Beza and Tremmelius and even by Iunius as an operation intended to provide a scientifically biblical, intransigent Latin equivalence”⁴¹.

On the texts accompanying each book of the New Testament (*Predoslovii*) the specialists remained uncertain, because the problem still requires research. Even if the

³⁵*Noul Testament 1648*, Alba Iulia, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe de Alba Iulia, 1998.

³⁶ This is the first Complete Bible edition, published in Slavonic language by Ivan Fyodorov of Ostrog between 1580-1581. At http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ostrog_Bible (retrieved in 06.06.2011)

³⁷ Alin-Mihai Gherman, *Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan și cultura timpului său*, in “Mitropolitul Simion Ștefan. Teolog, cărturar și patriot”, (coord. Pr. Lect. Dr. Jan Nicolae), published with the blessing of Father Andrei, Archbishop of Alba Iulia, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea, 2010, p. 54.

³⁸*Ibidem*, p. 54.

³⁹Ioannes Immanuel Tremmelius (Tremelio): Italian Jew (1510-1580) converted first as a catholic, he became a Reformed. He peregrinated in France, England and Netherlands (he was teacher at Luvain), between 1561-1577 he became Hebrew and Old Testament Professor at the University of Heidelberg. He is considered one of the most important Hebraists of the seventeenth century.

⁴⁰ Known as Francis Junius Major, Franz Junius or François du Jon (1546-1602), Walloon and Huguenot descent), he was Tremmelius’ son-in-law, he finished the translation of the Old Testament, he introduced to the various editions of the Sacred Bible the introductory remarks in the seventeenth century, his work merged the two translations of Tremmelius and Beza.

⁴¹Alin-Mihai Gherman, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

translators used the Protestant biblical exegesis⁴², they were very attentive and keen observers on matters of faith did not deviated in any other direction.

As was told before, by the Professor Mihai-Alin Gherman, along with this translation we have to confront “a large-scale scientific operation which incubates good knowledge of philology and theology”⁴³.

Most specialists have seen in the person of the Metropolitan Bishop, Simion Ștefan, the main successor of the translation made by Silvestru, the monk, assuming the difficult task of refining the original version⁴⁴. On the other side, Nicolae Iorga believed that Simion Ștefan’s role in the translation of the New Testament was to “advise”⁴⁵ the translators. Along with Simion Ștefan, an important role in translating the New Testament, had some “priests and wise men”⁴⁶. Among them we mention Meletie Macedonianul, recommended by Ștefan Gelej, in 1640, for the position of Metropolitan Bishop, and the future Bishop Of the Wallachia, Daniil Andrean who will translate *Îndreptarealegii*⁴⁷. He is considered the successor of the Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan. We also admit that he was a personality known among the Bălgrădean clergy, he participated, in 1685, at the election and the consecration ceremony of the new Metropolitan Bishop of Bălgrad, Varlaam⁴⁸.

Under his name stands other works, such as *Vechiul Testament* (ms. 4389 of BAR), *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Teodosie, Viața patriarhului Nifon, Învățătură preste toate zilele* (Câmpulung, 1642), *Mysterios sau sacrament* (Târgoviște 1651), a.s.o.⁴⁹.

Here is what Simion Ștefan says in the foreword, at the first edition, about the translators: “Your Majesty, you had mercy and thou hast commanded me to search between my priests, those wise men who know how to translate The New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ”⁵⁰.

Therefore Simion Ștefan is the milestone personality in this process, because he had to search and to choose the members of the translation’s team, he had to ensure that the will remain in the same faith he preached to the Romanian Orthodox People.

In conclusion, the importance of the Metropolitan Bishop Simion Ștefan, in translating the New Testament, is undeniable. Even though he was helped by other personalities of his time, it does not exclude the translation’s patronage in terms of, both, managerial, intellectual and spiritual.

⁴²*Ibidem*, p. 55.

⁴³*Ibidem*, p. 57.

⁴⁴Mario Ruffini, *L’opera della Chiesa ortodossa romena nella creazione della lingua letteraria nazionale*, in “Orientalia Christiana Periodica”, 1966, p. 205, *apud*. Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad (1567-1702)*, Cluj-Napoca, Clusium, 2001, p. 44.

⁴⁵Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria literaturii românești I*, IInd edition, București, 1925.

⁴⁶Mircea Păcuraru, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. II, București, IBMBOR, 1994, p. 71.

⁴⁷*Ibidem*, p. 71.

⁴⁸*Mitropolia Ungro-Valachiei. Condica sfântă*, publicată de Ghenadie Carioveanu (Enăceanu), vol. I, București, 1886, p. 63, *apud*. Eugen Pavel, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁴⁹Eugen Pavel, *Carte și tipar la Bălgrad (1567-1702)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Clusium, 2001, p. 46.

⁵⁰*Noul Testament 1648*, Alba Iulia, Orthodox Arhiepiscopate Alba Iulia Publishing, 1998.

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