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Painters Jovan Četirević Grabovan and Grigorije Popović. *Addenda* to the Biographies of the Master and the Apprentice**

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¹ Jovanović 1965: 199–222; Mutafov 2002: 217–229; Todić 2010: 355–389; Todić 2013/1: 281–291. For the latest findings about Jovan Četirević's sojourns and ethnicity see Kučeković 2018: 349–367. Četirević variant of the painter's surname was the Serbianised one which he used himself, while Grabovan was an addition to his family name denoting his origin (from Grabova), and later adopted also as a surname, especially by his descendants in the Serbian environment. Cf. Todić 2010: 358; Kučeković 2018: 351.

² Mutafov 2002: 218–221; Todić 2010: 357–377.

Abstract: The paper brings new data for the biographies of painters Jovan Četirević Grabovan and his apprentice, Grigorije Popović, acquired after the publication and the initial analysis of the biographical notes of the former written in his own hand, in a manuscript copy of the painting manual (*hermeneia*) that he owned. The conclusions primarily rely on full investigation of the previously unpublished biographical notes in the manuscript, written mainly in Church-Slavonic, probably by Jovan Četirević Grabovan's son Nikola Grabovan. The second part of the paper deals with the biographical inscriptions in the notebook of Romanian painter Grigorije Popović, written during his ten-year training period with Jovan Četirević Grabovan 1766–1776, which reveal important new details about their joint travels and works and the early career of the latter.

Key words: Jovan Četirević Grabovan, Grigorije Popović, biographies of 18th century painters, post-byzantine painting manuals (*hermeneia*), Serbian 18th century painting, Romanian 18th century painting

Айџиракџи: Рад доноси нове биографске податке о сликарима Јовану Четиревићу Грабовану и његовом ученику Григорију Поповићу открити након њиховог истраживања и њиховог анализе биографских записа на грчком језику које је сликар Јован Четиревић Грабован оставио у рукописном примерку сликарског приручника (ерминије) који је поседовао. Закључци у овом раду примарно се ослањају на његову анализу неопјављених биографских записа у истом рукопису, писаних доминантно црквенословенским језиком, а које је вероватно добио син Јована Четиревића Грабована, Никола Грабован. Други део рада бави се биографским записима из бележнице румунског сликара Григорија Поповића насталим током његовог десетогодишњег школовања код Јована Четиревића Грабована 1766–1776, који откривају важне нове информације о њиховим заједничким путовањима и радовима, као и о ранијем периоду делатности обојице.

Кључне речи: Јован Четиревић Грабован, Григорије Поповић, биографије сликара XVIII столећа, православно-српски сликарски приручници (ерминије), српско сликарство XVIII столећа, румунско сликарство XVIII столећа

The intensive scholarly interest in the life and work of painter Jovan Četirević (Alb. Çetiri – Tzetiri; Serb. Četiri) from Grabova in eastern Albania produced significant findings in the last several decades, important for understanding the international character of this Balkan artist's oeuvre and his overall contribution to the East meets West phenomenon in the Serbian religious art in the 18th century.¹ The crucial breakthrough in tracking his travels from his native land was made when his biographical notes, written by his own hand in Greek, in the manuscript copy of the painting manual (*hermeneia*) that he owned, were published and put into context with the results of previous research.² However, the scholarly analysis of these personal notes left many important questions about the painter unanswered, including some lingering misconceptions

³ Examining only the biographical notes written in Greek, previous scholars were losing track of Jovan Četirević's activity in the Metropolitanate of Karlovci in 1787, speculating on his later fate with quite differing suppositions. Moutafov 2002: 225; Todić 2010: 376. Todić's study clarified the majority of misconceptions about Četirević's life and work in prior research, bringing the correct names of all toponyms in Croatia and Slavonia which the painter wrote in Greek and, most insightful of all, concluding that Četirević must have died soon after his last recorded work in Kula in Bačka, in 1787. Cf. Kučeković 2018: 363; Kučeković 2018a: 144.

⁴ The identity of Nikola Grabovan has been known since the first texts published about his father. It was presumed that he had learned the art of painting from his father and had actively helped him on his commissions after 1780. As a practicing painter and gilder he is recorded only once, as known so far, in Osijek in 1807. Bogdanović 1900: 553; Todić 2013/2: 60. The names of the members of the Četiri Grabovan family, including Jovan and his brother Anastas, can still be found in the preserved registers of the Holy Virgin Church in Osijek Lower Town, from 1767 onwards. Family Search, "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994", Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva). The church itself was completely destroyed in the Second World War. Cf. Todić 2010: 363–365.

⁵ Todić 2010: 356, with comprehensive bibliography.

⁶ The manuscript bears the signatures LVI P.2.VIII.393, it is written on paper and leather bound, 21 x 15 cm in size. Cf. Moutafov 2002: 218; Todorov 2000: 170–171, n. 909. I am greatly indebted to father Kirill Tatárka, the pastor of the Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Miskolc, who created an opportunity for me to examine the manuscript from the Nyiregyhaza library, in July 2019, which was at that time closed to the public.

⁷ Cf. Moutafov 2002: 218.

⁸ Those parts of the manuscript display many similarities with the Church-Slavonic biographical inscriptions written by Nikola Grabovan on further pages. Some of these pages, though, might be by the hand of Jovan Četirević Grabovan himself. Texts in Greek continue to appear here and there throughout the manuscript, for example on pp. 281–282, where a list of selected saints (John of Damascene, Roman Melodus, etc.) with dates of their feast days and verses of church hymns is written. It is interesting that scattered Greek texts are usually accompanied by comments or addenda on a certain subject in Church-Slavonic. The manuscript is currently being analyzed by a group of scholars and is the subject of a forthcoming study.

⁹ Nikola Grabovan wrote that he had sent the books to his brother in Pest via Dimitrije Konstantinović, probably their mutual acquaintance or a friend. There is just one instance when Nikola Grabovan's trip to Pest in person can be ascertained – in November 1800 he was witnessing a marriage at the Saint George Orthodox Church in Pest and his name was entered in the parish marriage register as Nikolaj Grabovan, a resident of Osijek. AOEB, the Marriage Register of the Orthodox Church of Saint George in Pest, 1779–1860. I am thankful to Branislav Todić and Kosta Vuković for

about his identity, mainly outside the Serbian scholarly sphere.³ Četirević's notes from the *hermeneia* manuscript were published and commented on without taking into consideration the entirety of the manuscript, i.e., only the data provided by what he wrote about himself and his family in Greek was examined. Relying on the more extensive investigation of other biographical notes in the manuscript, written mainly in Church-Slavonic after the main text of the manuscript, some very important new insights have been achieved. Firstly, they paint a vivid picture of another important personality and the Četiri family member – Jovan Četirević Grabovan's son Nikola, who was also a painter, a resident of Osijek (Croatia), same as his father, and probably the author of the larger part of the texts and notes in the miscellaneous part of the manuscript.⁴

The existence of the *hermeneia* which belonged to painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan has long been known.⁵ It was originally kept in the Orthodox municipality of Pest library, but later found its way to the Orthodox community in Miskolc, while nowadays it is a part of the Orthodox parish house library in Nyiregyhaza in Hungary, where it was identified and described.⁶ It contains 352 pages, of which pages 2–256 bear the text of the *hermeneia* proper, written entirely in Greek.⁷ The rest of the manuscript contains a wide range of miscellaneous texts – excerpts from other *hermeneia*, also in Greek, up to p. 274, added probably later by Nikola Grabovan.⁸ Texts in German appear on pages 302–308 and represent apothecary and chemical recipes, while transcriptions from alchemical manuals in Latin, together with specific alchemical symbol charts and their meaning occupy pages 324–335. The Church-Slavonic entries begin on page 275, with the gilding varnish recipe. The handwriting of this particular passage is the same as the one appearing in the lower part of the same page, listing the books sent by the author, i.e. Nikola Grabovan, to his brother Naum in Pest (*братъу Науму у Пешти*), on April 15, 1812.⁹ This page represents an important point of reference in deciphering the authorship of the Church-Slavonic entries in the manuscript, since it contains a date long time after Jovan Četirević Grabovan's death, as explained below. The name Naum refers to Naum Četiri, the other son of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan, born, according to his father's original note in the same manuscript, in 1769 in Novi Sad.¹⁰ The preserved archives register many members of the Grabovan and/or Četiri family in Pest, but also in Miskolc and Eger in the second half of the 18th and in the 19th century.¹¹ It seems that they all maintained close ties among themselves, since many were recorded traveling for weddings and christenings from Miskolc to Pest or Eger, or vice versa. One Naum Četiri was quite a prominent member of the Orthodox community in Eger – he was registered as the father of five children, christened from 1784 to 1794.¹² The preserved registers of the Holy Virgin Church in Osijek, however, show that Naum (*Наумъ*),

drawing my attention to this invaluable corpus of archival material.

¹⁰ Naum Četiri was the third son of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan and the first born after he moved to the Habsburg dominion with his family, Moutafov 2002: 219; Todić 2010: 364.

¹¹ For example, in the preserved file considering the disputes between the “Greeks” and Serbs of Eger when the new Orthodox Church in this Hungarian town was built, the parish priest Petar Vitković in 1793 compiled a list of his parishioners belonging to the “Greek and Wallachian people”. Among them, the names of three Četiri (Четири) family members appear: Georgije, Lazar and Naum Četiri, all living residents of Eger, with Lazar being a generous financial contributor to the church building project. This Naum could be the son of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan, as explained below. ASANUK\A Fund, 320\1794. An insight into this archival material was provided to me by colleague Nenad Ninković.

¹² This man christened his children in 1784, then again in 1789, 1791, 1794 and 1798, but unfortunately buried two of his sons as infants, Atanasij and Lazar, in 1794. It appears that he had another son named Lazar, who is registered as the son of Naum Četiri, witnessing a marriage in Eger in 1805.

¹³ Family Search, “Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994”, Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva). Osijek, the Registry of Baptisms 1778–1786.

¹⁴ AOEBS, the Registry of Deaths of the Orthodox Church of Saint George in Pest, 1779–1860.

¹⁵ The custom of repetition of the same name or a limited set of names in one family through multiple generations complicates greatly the distinction between persons who bear identical name and surname and always allows the possibility that two different persons could seamlessly merge into one. It is not likely, but also not impossible, that Naum Grabovan, the son of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan, could have been living in Eger on his own and becoming a father for the first time in 1784, at the age of 15! But, Naum Grabovan does not appear in preserved archival sources in Osijek after 1781. Could he have indeed left his father’s home in Osijek and moved to Eger after that, maybe as an apprentice to some trade with another of the Četiris in Eger, and later, after 1793, relocated to Pest? What can be said with greater certainty, though, is that neither Naum Grabovan from Osijek and Pest, nor the namesake from Eger, is identical with the painter Naum Četiri (Tzetiri) from Grabova, active in Albania in the regions of Lusnja, Berat, Vlora etc. in the first half of the 19th century, and painting the iconostasis in the Holy Trinity Church in Budva in Montenegro in 1833. Cf. Muka 1999: 90; Giakoumis 2015: 86–90; Llukani 2019: 64–66. Cf. Voulgaropoulou 2020: 56–57, fig. 19.

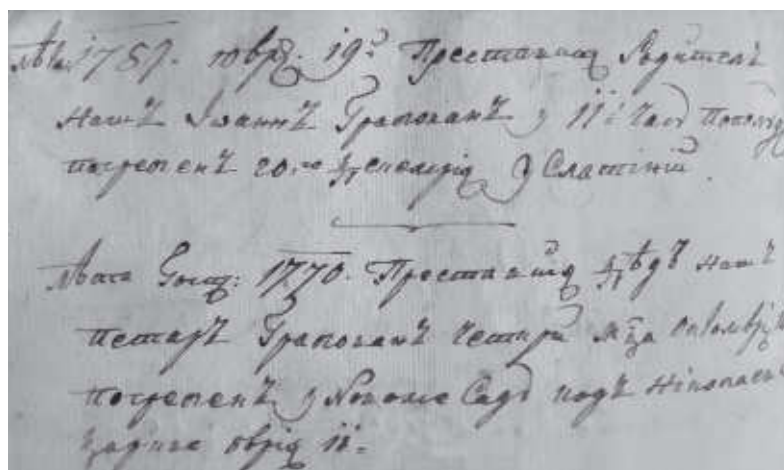
¹⁶ His recorded age of 80 at the time of death is probably an approximation, stating his advanced age. However, it quite corresponds to the date of birth of Naum Četiri Grabovan in Novi Sad in 1769.

¹⁷ Bösendorfer 1848: 107.

¹⁸ The transcript of Jovan Četirević Grabovan’s biographical notes in Greek was

the son of Jovan Grabovan, was still in his father’s household in Osijek in March 1781, when he, as a young boy of 12, witnessed a christening.¹³ In the registers of Saint George Orthodox Church in Pest there is a record of death of Naum Četiri Grabovan, on March 6, 1845, at the age of 80.¹⁴ Whether the records from Eger and Pest refer to the same Naum Četiri, at least on some later occasions, is very unclear, since the name Naum was common among Balkan immigrants of Aromanian ethnicity in Hungary, and also in the Četiri family.¹⁵ However, the one who died in Pest in 1845 is almost certainly the son of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan and the recipient of books sent to him by his brother from Osijek, in 1812.¹⁶ It seems that Naum Grabovan remained closely tied to Osijek Orthodox community because he was recorded as a benefactor of the Holy Virgin Church in 1807.¹⁷

The biographical notes of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan written in Greek in the manuscript in hand were thoroughly analyzed by previous renowned scholars and do not present the primary interest of this paper, since they were competently incorporated into the artist’s biography.¹⁸ As his father before him, Nikola Grabovan felt compelled to continue recording his family history in the same manuscript, leaving Church-Slavonic entries with information that confirm those written down by Jovan Četirević Grabovan, but also bringing new information about the later fate of the family members. On pages 321–322 he created a list of deaths and births of his closest kin, beginning with the entry most important for this particular research – he stated that his “parent” (родителъ) Jovan Grabovan died on December 19, 1789, at the eleventh hour in the afternoon, and that he was buried the next day in the town of Slatina (Ill. 1). On the second page of the list he



1. The note of Nikola Grabovan about his father Jovan Četirević Grabovan’s death in 1789, painters manual manuscript, Nyiregyhaza Orthodox parish library (Hungary). Photo credit: A. Kučeković

1. Белешка Николе Грабована о смрти његовог оца Јована Четиријевића Грабована 1789, рукопис сликарског ириручника, Библиотека православне парохије у Њиређхазу (Мађарска). Фото: А. Кучековић

published in its entirety by Moutafov 2002: 218–221 and carefully studied by Todić in 2010, as mentioned above.

¹⁹ The painter John Tzetiri from Grabova (Alb. Joan Çetiri nga Grabova), active in Albania in the last decade of the 18th and the first two decades of the 19th century has been deemed to be the same as Jovan Četirević Grabovan. Cf. Moutafov 2002: 217–221; Tourta, Drakopoulou 2006: 190; Giakoumis 2015: 59–60. The record of the death of the latter, however, seems to put an end to this notion in favor of clear separation of the two namesakes, proposed by Serbian scholars. Todić 2010: 376; Kučeković 2018: 363; Kučeković 2018a: 144.

²⁰ Jovanović 1965: 209; Todić 2010: 375; Todić 2013/1: 288.

²¹ Moutafov 2002: 221; Todić 2010: 375–376.

²² Unfortunately, the 18th century church, its archives and surroundings (with almost certainly existing gravestones in the churchyard) were completely destroyed in the Second World War. Cf. Kučeković 2015: 292–294.

²³ The year of Jovan Četirević Grabovan's birth is an approximation derived and corroborated by Todić 2010: 359.

²⁴ Moutafov 2002: 221. One page in the manuscript is deliberately cut out and some, including a few of those with biographical notes of Jovan Četirević Grabovan, are detached and probably not in their original place, so there is a possibility that the particular inscription is now missing. However, there is a much stronger evidence that the previously published form of the note mentioning Jovan Grabovan and Petar Grabonan (Grabovan), and the year 1789 in Church-Slavonic, is actually a short and incomplete reference to Nikola Grabovan's notes discussed in this paper, which begin with the mention of Jovan and Petar Grabovan.

²⁵ Moutafov 2002: 221; Todić 2010: 359–360.

²⁶ Todić 2010: 359–360.

²⁷ Todić 2010: 364–365.

²⁸ Todić 2010: 363–364.

recorded the death of Elena, “the daughter of me Nikola Grabovan” (*ищерь Елена мнѣ Николе Грабована*), on April 19, 1818, confirming in this way his authorship of these notes. The entry about his father's death is crucial because it finally refutes the claims of some scholars that Jovan Četirević Grabovan, at some point late in his life, after 1787, left the Metropolitanate of Karlovci and returned to his native land and Grabovo village in Albania, and continued to work as a painter up to the second decade of the 19th century.¹⁹ It is a well-known fact that Jovan Četirević Grabovan painted the iconostasis in the SS Peter and Paul Church in the town of Slatina in Slavonia (Croatia) in 1785.²⁰ It is also known that he executed another two commissions after that – the iconostasis in Paklenica near Slavonski Brod in Slavonia (Croatia) in 1786 and he had another engagement of unclear nature in Kula in Vojvodina (Serbia) in 1787.²¹ Why he returned to Slatina in 1789, where death found him, remains unknown for now; it is highly likely that the Orthodox community of this small but important trading town, with their newly built church and the new painted and gilded iconostasis, could afford to call him back on accounts of some smaller commissions or additional works in the church.²² If the presumed year of his birth in Grabovo in Albania, 1716, is correct, he was around or exactly 73 years old when he died in Slatina.²³

After the note of his father's death, Nikola Grabovan continued his list of important family births and deaths. The first subsequent entry is the most puzzling one, leaving the biggest unknown in the family history yet. He stated that on October 10, 1770 the “grandfather of ours” (*дѣд нашъ*) Petar Grabovan Četiri (*Петѣаръ Грабованъ Четѣири*) died in Novi Sad and was buried the next day in the churchyard of Saint Nicholas Church. Unfortunately, the note mentioning Petar Grabovan as published in earlier research does not exist in the manuscript as it stands today.²⁴ Nikola Grabovan mentions him as the grandfather, which contradicts the known fact that his grandfather on his father's side was named Vartolomej (Vartolomeos), as testified by Jovan Četirević Grabovan himself.²⁵ However, Vartolomej Grabovan was already deceased in 1775 when his son Jovan wrote down that his mother Kalija, the wife of late Vartolomej, had died in Osijek.²⁶ Could Petar Grabovan be an even older member of the Četiri family, a great grandfather, who died soon after they all moved to the Habsburg lands? The location of his burial – Saint Nicholas churchyard in Novi Sad is also significant since it was determined that Jovan Četirević Grabovan's family came from Grabovo initially to Novi Sad, where Naum Grabovan was born in 1769, only to move permanently to Osijek some time after 1771.²⁷ It seems they were still in Novi Sad in late 1771, because Nikola Grabovan writes further that on December 13, 1771 the son of Jovan Grabovan, also named Nikola, died in Novi Sad and was also buried in Saint Nicholas churchyard. Nikola Grabovan recorded that this Nikola was the first Nikola, son of Jovan Četirević Grabovan, i.e., his late elder brother and namesake. It can be assumed that this refers to Nikola, born to painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan and his wife Angelija while the family still lived in Grabovo in Albania, in 1762.²⁸ He was the one who died in

²⁹ Todić 2010: 367.

³⁰ There are records of other settlers from Grabovo in Albania in Novi Sad in the same period, though. One Anastas Grabovalija, a merchant from Miskolc in Hungary, also brought his entire family to Novi Sad in 1771, where they acquired the Habsburg citizenship. This implied taking a formal oath and pleading subjugation to the empress Maria Theresa – one Georgije Janković, a goldsmith born in Grabova in Turkey, deemed by the authorities as *natione Garaeco-Valachus vulgo Czincar*, took the oath in Novi Sad in 1774. Cf. Jovičin 2020: 214–217.

³¹ Jovičin 2020: 257–260.

³² Todić 2010: 363; Todić 2013/1: 299.

³³ Unfortunately, the church in Kobaš, with the iconostasis, was destroyed in the Second World War, see Todić 2013a: 276–302. Konstantin Grabovan is recorded as a witness to christenings in Osijek on two temporally rather distant occasions: in November 1770, as a 10-year old boy, and full 30 years later, in October 1800. Family Search, “Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994”, Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva), Osijek, the Registry of Baptisms 1762–1771, 1797–1813. From this it can be inferred that he, as his brother Nikola, took permanent residence in Osijek, traveling and painting alongside their father.

³⁴ Kučeković 2019: 116–117.

³⁵ Todić 2010: 370. Cf. Kučeković 2018: 359–360.

Novi Sad as a young boy of 9. The first son to be born after his untimely death, on November 12, 1772,²⁹ already in Osijek, got the same name Nikola and lived to become the heir of his father’s *hermeneia* manuscript and the author of biographical notes discussed here. Unfortunately, none of these two deaths and burials of the Četiri Grabovan family members in Novi Sad can be verified at present, because the registers of that time from Saint Nicholas Church in Novi Sad are not known to be preserved.³⁰ The church itself was favored by Orthodox Greek and Aromanian inhabitants of Novi Sad in the second half of the 18th and in the 19th century, and many of them were its generous benefactors.³¹

Another entry on Nikola Grabovan’s list represents an important date for art historians. He recorded that his brother Konstantin (Констѣ(а)нѣи́нъ) Grabovan died on May 11, 1804 in the village of Jasenaš and that he was buried “near the church, on the right side.” Konstantin Grabovan was the first son of Jovan Četirević Grabovan, born in Grabovo in June 1760. He would also become a painter, working on his own after his father’s death.³² The place of his death is also significant and gives further credit to Nikola Grabovan’s notes when compared to other known facts about Konstantin Grabovan’s life. He is known to have painted the iconostasis in the Orthodox Church in the village of Kobaš, near Slavonski Brod in 1803, a year before he died. He is also known to be active as a painter in Osijek, where he probably started his career under his father’s wing.³³ The reason why no other later works by Konstantin Grabovan were preserved or known to have existed becomes clear with the aforementioned note of his brother. It seems that death found Konstantin Grabovan rather suddenly, “on the road”, presumably going along the business paths set by his father. The iconostasis in Saint Elijah Orthodox Church in Jasenaš, a village now in the city perimeter of the town of Virovitica in Slavonia (Croatia), was finished in 1805, but the painting style of the icons was associated with the workshop of quite a different painting quality than the one practiced by Jovan Četirević Grabovan and his known circle.³⁴ Konstantin Grabovan was in Jasenaš probably as one of the contenders for the job of painting this particular iconostasis, which was finished a year after he died. It will probably never be known if he started to paint some icons on Jasenaš iconostasis proper; but his connection to the area of Virovitica could be corroborated, rather circumstantially though, yet from another point. The Orthodox Church in Virovitica, destroyed in the Second World War, possessed a vita icon of Saint Jovan Vladimir with inscriptions in Greek, painted by Jovan Četirević Grabovan in 1777.³⁵ This commission could have been the best recommendation for Konstantin Grabovan to procure work years later in the Orthodox community in the immediate vicinity. Unfortunately, no works that could be reliably attributed to Konstantin Grabovan are known to be preserved. Two icons of Christ and the Virgin, now housed at the Museum of Brodsko Posavlje in Slavonski Brod (Ill. 2,3) have been attributed to Jovan Četirević Grabovan, but just might be partly or fully painted by Konstantin Grabovan, skillfully emulating his father’s successful and very sought-after style when working in the nearby



2. Jovan or Konstantin Grabovan (attributed), *Virgin with Christ on the Throne*, late 18th or early 19th century, Museum of Brodsko Posavlje, Slavonski Brod (Croatia)

2. Јован или Констџанџин Грабован, Богородица са Христџом на џресџољу (џриџисано), касни XVIII или рани XIX век, Музеј Бродског Посавља, Славонски Брод (Хрваџска)



3. Jovan or Konstantin Grabovan (attributed), *Christ on the Throne with Saints*, late 18th or early 19th century, Museum of Brodsko Posavlje, Slavonski Brod (Croatia)

3. Јован или Констџанџин Грабован, Христџос на џресџољу са свейџџељима (џриџисано), касни XVIII или рани XIX век, Музеј Бродског Посавља, Славонски Брод (Хрваџска)

³⁶ Borčić 1971: 60, ill. 74. The photographs published here were procured thanks to Mrs Danijela Ljubičić Mitrović, the curator at the Museum of Brodsko Posavlje in Slavonski Brod.

³⁷ Cf. Todić 2010: 373.

³⁸ Cf. Todić 2010: 359–360.

village of Kobaš in 1803, or even earlier, in 1786, during his father's engagement in Paklenica.³⁶

Nikola Grabovan added another four records of deaths in his family to the list. He repeated the dates his father had noted in the same manuscript about the deaths of his two brothers, Josif Grabovan and Pavle Grabovan, who both died as infants in Osijek, in 1781 and 1782.³⁷ On the first page of the list Nikola, as his father before him, also remembered the death of his grandmother Kalija (Калина, in Nikola's version) in Osijek in 1775.³⁸ The fourth record

³⁹ Cf. Todić 2010: 377. Nikola Grabovan stated that his mother was buried very close to the church, outside the altar wall.

⁴⁰ Above Nikola's note about his sister's death stands a longer inscription in Greek which he also wrote, with more information, including the precise date of Ana's passing – February 5, 1795. This corresponds to the record of death of Ana, the daughter of Janko Grabovan, in the preserved registry of deaths from 1787 to 1801 of the Church of the Holy Virgin in Osijek. Family Search, "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994", Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva). Osijek. The name Janko Grabovan is actually Jovan Četirević Grabovan, since Janko was commonly used as a nickname for Jovan; Jovan Četirević Grabovan also referred to himself as Janko. Moutafov 2002: 219; Todić 2010: 360.

⁴¹ Family Search, "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994", Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva), Osijek, the Registry of Deaths 1835–1842. Cf. Bogdanović 1900: 553.

⁴² Cf. Bogdanović 1900: 553.

⁴³ Family Search, "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994", Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva). Osijek, the Registry of Baptisms 1797–1813, 1813–1838, the Registry of Deaths 1835–1842.

⁴⁴ Family Search, "Croatia, Church Books, 1516–1994", Orthodox (Pravoslavna crkva). Osijek, the Registry of Deaths 1817–1834. Cf. Todić 2010: 377.

⁴⁵ Bogdanović 1900: 553; Todić 2010: 377.

⁴⁶ Todić 2013/1: 164, with comprehensive bibliography.

⁴⁷ Dobjanschi 1977: 61–63; Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 116–136; Dobjanschi 1998: 185–192.

⁴⁸ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 119–126; The drawings published in Săndulescu-Verna 1979: 417, 418, 444, 451, 455, 457, 460, 464, 478, 485 originate from Grigorije Popović's notebook. They were attributed to the painter by Romanian colleague Cristina Cojocaru.

concerns the death of his mother Angelija (Анђелија), the wife of painter Jovan Četirević Grabovan, in Osijek on April 16, 1818.³⁹ Nikola Grabovan added just one more record of death in the Četiri family to his father's manuscript. On p. 341 he briefly noted that in 1795 Ančica (Анчица) died; the reference concerned his sister, born to Jovan and Angelija Četirević Grabovan in Osijek in 1781, as the painter himself noted in Greek.⁴⁰ It is very interesting that the data in Nikola Grabovan's notes fully matches the records in the protocols of the Holy Virgin Church in Osijek. On the other hand, this particular archival source provides additional information about later members of the Četiri Grabovan family in Osijek, namely the descendants of Nikola Grabovan, who were, in larger part, not previously known. Nikola Grabovan was married to a woman named Ekaterina, who died in Osijek on April 14, 1835.⁴¹ They had at least five children: two sons named Aleksandar, born in 1814 and 1823; the first, like his father before him, probably named after his deceased elder brother. There was another son, Konstantin, born on June 1, 1812 and two daughters – Elena, mentioned above, and Ana, who was, as it seems, a benefactress of a Roma (Gypsy) family from the village of Elčin near Valpovo in Slavonia (Croatia).⁴² She christened two of their children, in 1820 and in 1823; this was important to her father, so much so that he decided to make two notes about these christenings in the *hermeneia* manuscript (p. 317).⁴³ Nikola Grabovan himself died on April 19, 1824 and was buried in the communal cemetery in Osijek Lower Town.⁴⁴

It seems that the surname Grabovan disappears from Osijek Lower Town Orthodox community by the middle of the 19th century.⁴⁵ The important information left by Nikola Grabovan in the *hermeneia* manuscript from Nyiregyhaza greatly contributes to the completion of Jovan Četirević Grabovan's biography. It is interesting that the new information to be incorporated into the knowledge about his early career comes also mainly from another painter's notebook – that of his apprentice Grigorije Popović, the only one who was not a member of his family. Serbian scholars knew very little about Grigorije Popović so far.⁴⁶ But, Romanian colleagues have been tracking the painter named Grigorie (Grigore) Popovici from Fruzinești village near Bucharest for decades, denoting him as one of the painters who introduced realistic traits to Romanian painting at the end of the 18th century.⁴⁷ The connection between Serbian and Romanian researchers investigating the same artist has never been really made, notwithstanding the fact that the sketchbook of Grigorije Popović, also containing biographical notes describing his apprenticeship with Jovan Četirević Grabovan and their joint sojourn to Slavonia and northern Croatia, has been partially published and studied by Romanian scholars.⁴⁸ Recent field trip to Romania also yielded new knowledge about the relationship of the two painters and helped to clarify some uncertainties about the early career of Jovan Četirević Grabovan in Wallachia and Moldavia, before his final transit to the Habsburg Monarchy.

The notebook of painter Grigorije Popović is unfortunately lost or out of reach now, but biographical notes that he left on its pages have been published, as noted above. According to those, he

⁴⁹ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 120–121.

⁵⁰ Moutafov 2002: 219; Todić 2010: 360–362.

⁵¹ Of the few reliable clues that shed some light on his activities in Bucharest during this first period, the icon of Saint John the Forerunner from the National Museum in Belgrade, which he signed in 1754, stands out. This icon still represents the earliest known work by Jovan Četirević Grabovan. Cf. Todić 2010: 362–363, 380, ill. 1.

⁵² Todić 2010: 363.

⁵³ Todorov 2000: 23 No. 1, 40 No. 93.

⁵⁴ Todić 2010: 363–364.

⁵⁵ Grigorije Popović wrote in Latin about Anastas Grabovan, calling him *Perdocto ac generoso, domino domini Anastaseo mercatori, domino mihi, Essekiensi*. Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 120. It is known that Anastas Grabovan, the elder brother of Jovan Četirević Grabovan, also lived in Osijek. He was considered a kind of *pater familias* to the Grabovans in Osijek, who bought a house and practiced trading profession. Todić 2010: 364–365.

⁵⁶ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 120.

was born in Fruzinești village in 1750 as a son of Tudor the priest, who was also a painter. He first learned to paint from his father, but as he himself states, he began his apprenticeship with Jovan Četirević Grabovan in 1766 in Bucharest, at the age of 16.⁴⁹ This note is important in several aspects. It is known that Jovan Četirević Grabovan, after completing his artistic training “in Muscovy” from 1746–1750, arrived in Bucharest, in August 1750.⁵⁰ This was actually his first stay in Bucharest, which he, after a few months of work in the city of Roman in Moldova, completed in 1755 by going back to his native Grabova, where he got married and started a family.⁵¹ His next reliably known sojourn in Bucharest came in 1761.⁵² However, there is additional proof that he traveled to and stayed in Bucharest in the period between 1755 and 1761 – in 1755 in a *Synaxarion*, now in Nyiregyhaza, he wrote on p. 5 margin that he had bought it in Bucharest in Wallachia. Two years later, in 1757, he bought another book in Bucharest, according to the inscription on the margin of p. 4 – the *Hexabiblos* of Constantine Hermenopoulos, printed in Nikolaos Glykis Venetian printing house in 1744.⁵³ It seems that during all of this time he was traveling back and forth from Grabova to Bucharest, establishing his business connections and tending to his family at the same time, because his first two sons, Konstantin and Nikola, were born in Grabova in 1760 and 1762, as detailed above. Previous researches could not resolve with certainty his movements from 1761 up to 1769 when he was already in Novi Sad with his family.⁵⁴ The notebook of Grigorije Popović puts Jovan Četirević Grabovan firmly in Bucharest in 1766 and presents him as a master of some reputation, being able to take apprentices outside his own family. The apprenticeship of Grigorije Popović lasted, in his own words, for six years, so he must have joined his master on his travels very early on, even being with him when he moved his family from Grabova to Novi Sad and later to Osijek. There is actually proof that Grigorije Popović met Jovan Četirević Grabovan’s brother Anastas in Osijek, because he wrote his name, occupation and place of residence in his notebook.⁵⁵ After the apprenticeship period, Grigorije Popović became a journeyman in June 1772 and stayed with his master as a full-time associate with a salary of 40 florins per year.⁵⁶ He was not mentioned in an inscription on the iconostasis of the church in Tovariševo in Bačka (Serbia) in 1771–1772 (Ill. 4), only because Jovan Četirević Grabovan had another associate on this particular commission, one Georgije Grabovan. This iconostasis was the first big job Jovan Četirević Grabovan took after his permanent relocation to the Habsburg dominions. It now stands in the Orthodox

4. The inscription on the despotic icon of Christ, Holy Archangel Gabriel Church in Molovin (Serbia), 1772. Photo credit: A. Kučeković

4. Запис на пресвионој икони Христѡа, црква Свѣтѡг арханђела Гаврила у Моловину (Србија), 1772. Фото: А. Кучековић



5. Jovan and Georgije Grabovan,
*Christ, despotic icon in the Holy
Archangel Gabriel Church in
Molovin (Serbia), 1772. Photo
credit: Museum of Serbian Orthodox
Church, Belgrade*

5. Јован и Георгије Грабован,
*Христос, ђресѣјона икона у цркви
Свејѣног арханђела Гаврила у
Моловину (Србија), 1772. Фоѣо:
Музеј Српске ѣправославне цркве,
Београд*



⁵⁷ Lesek 2000: 428–431.

⁵⁸ Todić 2010: 365–366; Todić 2013/1: 284, with complete references.

⁵⁹ Todić 2010: 366.

⁶⁰ Todić 2010: 361–362.

⁶¹ Sabados 1990: 106.

⁶² Sabados 1990: 106–107, ill. 3.

Church in Molovin village in Srem (Serbia), where it was relocated in the 19th century.⁵⁷ In the inscription on the despotic icon of Christ both Jovan and Georgije are mentioned under the same surname – Četiri Grapovan (Ill. 5).⁵⁸ Georgije Grabovan is never mentioned again in Serbian painting from this moment on and it has rightfully been presumed that he must have parted ways with his cousin Jovan right after finishing the iconostasis in Tovariševo and went back to their native land.⁵⁹ There is, however, another possibility. He may have gone to Wallachia, because there is reason to believe that the cooperation of Jovan and Georgije Grabovan began much earlier, when the frescoes of the Saint Parascheva Church in Moldovan town of Roman were painted.



6. *Figures of the Church Fathers, probably 1754–1755, altar of the Saint Parascheva Cathedral in Roman (Romania). Photo credit: Arhiepiscopia Romanului și Bacăului*

6. *Црквени оци, вероватно 1754–1755, олтарски просјор катедрале Свете Пејке у Роману (Румунија). Фото: Архиепископија Роман и Бакау*

In the *hermeneia* manuscript from Nyiregyhaza Jovan Četirević Grabovan left just one note about his works before 1760, but a remarkably precise one. He stated that he had worked in “the church of Roman” from September 1754 to May 1755, when his work in the particular church was finished.⁶⁰ The frescoes in Roman Saint Parascheva Cathedral, executed in the 18th century in the altar and the nave, were dated in the second half of the century, around 1780.⁶¹ However, the style of the frescoes, especially the types of monumental full figures in the lower zone, strongly resembles the particular and recognizable style of Jovan Četirević Grabovan, particularly of his early works in the Metropolitanate of Karlovci (Ill. 6). The large workshop of painters in Roman left their names in the inscription in the niche of the prothesis (Ill. 7). The first mentioned was “Ioan Zugrav,” i.e., Jovan the Painter, and the second, deemed as his kin, was – Georgie.⁶² Other names mentioned were Iosif (Joseph), Miriuța, Ioannu and Aanasie, but only the one named Jovan was actually denoted as a painter, inferring that he was the



7. The inscription in the prothesis of the Saint Parascheva Cathedral in Roman (Romania), probably 1754–1755. Photo credit: Arhiepiscopia Romanului și Bacăului

7. Запис у проскомидији катедрале Свете Пејке у Роману (Румунија), вероватно 1754–1755. Фото: Архиепископија Роман и Бакау

⁶³ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 120.

⁶⁴ Jovanović 1965: 204; Kučeković 2004: 219–237; Todić 2013/1: 284–286; Kučeković 2018: 354–355.

⁶⁵ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 121.

⁶⁶ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 120–121. The identity of Jovan Četirević Grabovan was unknown to the Romanian scholar, so he presumed that Jovan and Georgije must have traveled directly from Bucharest to Lepavina, which is hard to believe, considering the temporal proximity of the painting of iconostases in Orahovica and Lepavina Monasteries.

⁶⁷ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 121; Kučeković 2018: 354–356.

⁶⁸ Whether this was a reference to a real brother by blood or to another type of relation is unsure. Grigorije Popović left this particular note also in Latin: *Perdocto ac generoso, domino domini Demetro Popovici mercatori, Kanijensi, mihi fratri... colendissimo*. Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 121.

⁶⁹ AOEBS, the Marriage Register of the Orthodox Church of Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in Nagykanizsa, 1790–1828; the Register of Deaths 1790–1828.

⁷⁰ Whether Grigorije Popović's personal ties with his presumed kin living in Nagykanizsa could have contributed to the

leader and the proto-master of the painters' workshop in Roman. All of the above clearly leads to the conclusion that Jovan Četirević Grabovan may have led this workshop of painters, with his cousin Georgije and the others. He was already in his late thirties then and, if the assumption is correct, this would be his only preserved work in fresco known so far. This would also lead to the re-dating of the 18th century frescoes in the Roman Cathedral to 1754–1755.

Jovan and Georgije Grabovan likely continued to work in Romania and travel together for the next two decades, up to April 1772 and the completion of Tovariševo iconostasis. It is also probably not a coincidence that they parted ways just two months prior to Grigorije Popović becoming a journeyman and a paid associate of Jovan Četirević Grabovan. In 1773 Grigorije Popović wrote in his notebook that his master increased his salary to 45 florins and gave him a pair of boots.⁶³ When exactly Grigorije joined his master on his work in Slavonia and Croatia is still uncertain. His collaboration was not mentioned in the inscription on the iconostasis of the Orthodox Church in Orahovica in Slavonia (Croatia), painted by Jovan Četirević Grabovan.⁶⁴ According to the inscription, the iconostasis was finished in March 1775, but the painter could hardly have executed this large commission on his own. Grigorije Popović was almost certainly working with him, but probably his workload and pictorial quality, acknowledged by his master, were still not high enough to merit recording his name. But that soon changed. Grigorije was with Jovan in Croatia the next month; he wrote in his notebook that he, Grigorije of Papa Thodor from Fruzište, had stayed in Lepavina Monastery in Hungary.⁶⁵ Romanian researchers tried to reconstruct the possible path Jovan and Grigorije took from Bucharest to Croatia, rightfully denoting Osijek and Jovan's brother Anastas's house as the stop on this road, as explained above.⁶⁶ They were almost certainly traveling along the line of recommendations given by Aromanian merchants doing business in trading towns of Slavonia and northern Croatia.⁶⁷ One place that was also probably on their travel route was Nagykanizsa in Hungary. Grigorije Popović wrote in his notebook the name of a merchant from "Kanizsa", named Dimitrije Popović, denoting him as "my brother".⁶⁸ The exact meaning of this note remains rather unclear, but two important facts further support the previous assumption. It seems that one Dimitrije Popović really lived in Nagykanizsa around the time Jovan and Grigorije might have arrived there in 1775. In the preserved registers of the Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in Nagykanizsa many parishioners with the surname Popović are mentioned on various occasions; Dimitrije Popović had his daughters married in 1792 and 1803, and he died in 1807 at the age of 78.⁶⁹ Even more convincing is the fact that the Orthodox parish of Saint Nicolas in Nagykanizsa belonged to Lepavina Monastery, the very place where Jovan and Grigorije got their first large joint commission.⁷⁰ The elaborate dedicatory inscription on the Lepavina Monastery iconostasis, almost completely lost in the destruction of the Second World War, was signed in August 1775 as the work of Jovan Četirević Grabovan and



8. Jovan Četirević Grabovan and Grigorije Popović (painters), *The Iconostasis of the Saint John the Forerunner Church in Székesfehérvár (Hungary), 1776*

8. Јован Четиревић Грабован и Григорије Поповић (сликари), *иконостас цркве Светиог њорока Илије у Сјоном Београду (Мађарска), 1776*

deal been made, using Lepavina hieromonks, officiating as priests, as mediators, is a matter of further speculation, with no firm ground for now. It seems that the steady engagement of Lepavina monks in Nykanizsa after 1790 meant that this parish was firmly under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Bishop of Pakrac and Slavonia, after some earlier disputes with the neighboring Orthodox Eparchy of Buda. At the same time, only six Orthodox homes were registered in Nagykanisza. Cf. Vasin, Ninković 2018: 90.

⁷¹ Jovanović 1965: 204–205; Todić 2010: 368–369; Todić 2013/1: 286.

⁷² Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 122.

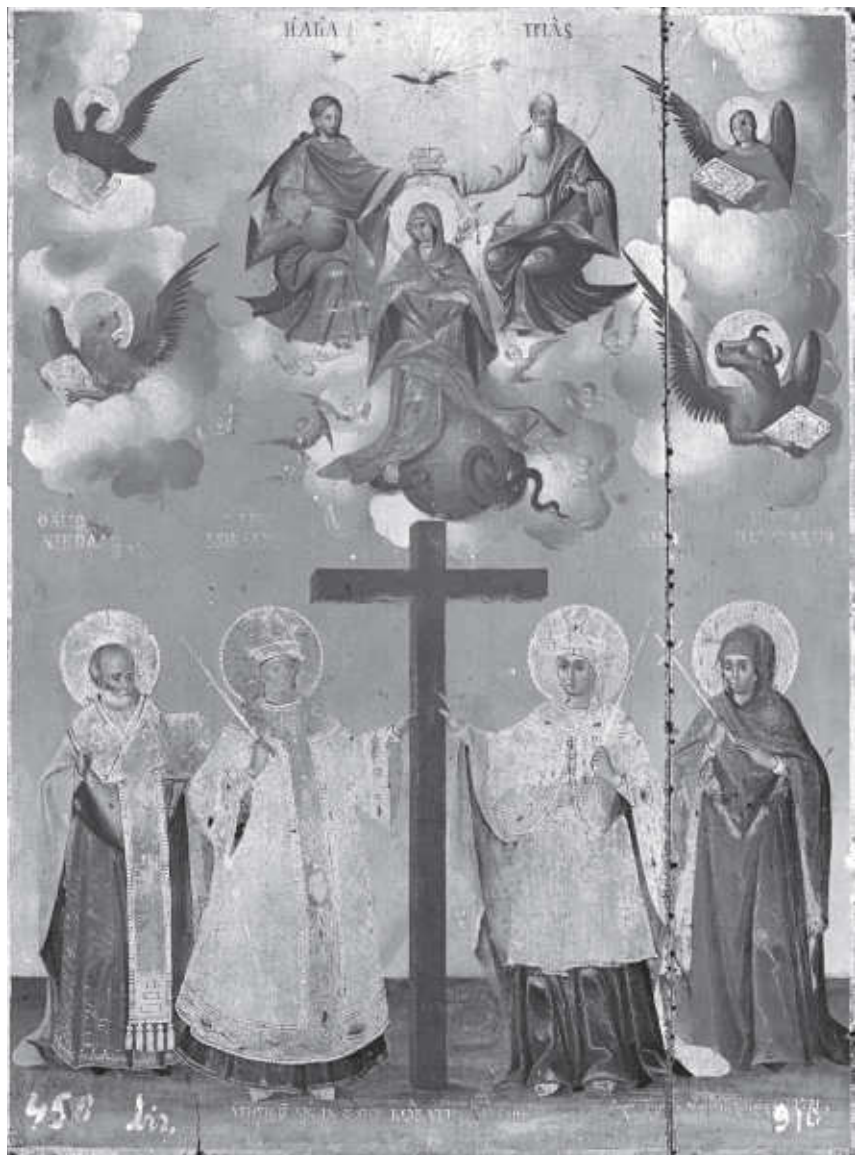
⁷³ Jovanović 1965: 205–206; Ševo 2011: 105–122; Todić 2013/1: 286.

Grigorije Popović – “his apprentice”.⁷¹ This elevated status of Grigorije Popović is corroborated by his own notebook entry, written in Lepavina in July 1775, where he stated that his master had doubled his salary, raising it to 80 florins. In August that same year, they rearranged their agreement again and Grigorije took on an even larger part of the workload.⁷² They took a commission of painting the iconostasis in the Orthodox Church in Székesfehérvár (Serb. Stoni Beograd) in Hungary (Ill. 8). The dedicatory inscription still preserved under the despotic icon of Saint George states that the iconostasis was finished in July 1776 by the “effort and handcraft” of the icon painters Jovan Grabovan and Grigorije Popović.⁷³ This formulation is a clear evidence of Grigorije Popović becoming a master in his own right after finishing the 10-year period of learning the craft and working with Jovan Četirević Grabovan.

Romanian and Serbian scholars agreed that the master and the apprentice haven’t worked together after 1775/6, but the future of

9. Grigorije Popović, *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*, 1781, Pasarea Monastery (Romania). Photo credit: Courtesy of Cristina Cojocaru, Institute of Art History Bucharest, photo by Serioja Bocsok

9. Григорије Поповић, *Крунисање Богородице са светитељима*, 1781, манастир Пасареа (Румунија). Фото: Кристијана Коџокару, Институт за историју уметности Букурешт, фотографија Серјожа Босок



⁷⁴ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 121, Todić 2013/1: 164, with further references.

⁷⁵ Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 128. The comprehensive study of Grigorije Popović's preserved oeuvre in Romania is currently being conducted by colleague Cristina Cojocaru, to whom I owe many valuable insights and suggestions.

⁷⁶ Dobjanschi 1977: 61–62, ill. 6; Dobjanschi 1998: 186. There is actually no evidence where Grigorije Popović painted this icon.

⁷⁷ Todić 2013/1: 164. Most of Grigorije Popović's preserved works in Romania were painted after 1780. According to colleague Cojocaru's preliminary findings, he also might have continued to travel for work after parting ways with Jovan Četirević Grabovan, especially in the period from 1776 to 1780.

Grigorije Popović after this date hitherto eluded the latter.⁷⁴ As mentioned above, Romanian scholars viewed Grigorije Popović as one of the most important painters of Țara Românească in the last quarter of the 18th century, with identified signed works in the period 1776–1803.⁷⁵ He probably parted ways with Jovan Četirević Grabovan right after the completion of the Székesfehérvár iconostasis, returned to Bucharest and started developing his own workshop. His earliest known signed icon of the Virgin with Christ on the throne, preserved at the Romanian National Museum in Bucharest, is dated in 1776, which could mean that he had returned to Bucharest to a commission that was already waiting for him.⁷⁶ There is no proof that he met or worked with Jovan Četirević Grabovan again. Whether he could have returned to Metropolitanate of Karlovci on one occasion in 1783, when one Grigorije Popović is recorded working as an assistant to painter Mihailo Jevtić in Sremski Karlovci (Serbia), remains unclear, especially considering his intensive activity in Romania after 1780 (Ill. 9, 10).⁷⁷ What could be said with certainty, though, is that Grigorije Popović painted under the decisive influence of Jovan Četirević Grabovan's

10. Grigorije Popović, *Virgin with Christ on the Throne with Archangels and Saints*, 1781, Țiganesti Monastery (Romania). Photo credit: Courtesy of Cristina Cojocaru, Institute of Art History Bucharest, photo by Serioja Bocso

10. Григорије Појовић, *Богородица са Христом на трону са арханђелима и светитељима*, 1781, манастир Циганешти (Румунија). Фото: Кристина Којокару, Институт за историју уметности Букурешт, фотографија Серјожа Босок



⁷⁸ The especially fine examples are the despotic icons of Saint Lazarus Church iconostasis in Cernica Monastery in Bucharest, which were painted by Grigorije Popović in 1802. Cf. Săndulescu-Verna 1992: 129.

⁷⁹ Todić 2013/1: 287–288; Kučeković 2018: 363.

style, upgrading it in terms of figurative plasticity and pictorial quality later on.⁷⁸ His former master's painting activity also intensified after 1776, resulting in him becoming the most favored painter of Orthodox communities in villages around Lepavina Monastery and the towns of Križevci and Koprivnica (Croatia).⁷⁹ As far as we know, he never again took another apprentice or engaged a painting associate outside his family. In 1776 his son Konstantin was sixteen years old, the same age as Grigorije Popović when he joined him a decade before that. Konstantin Grabovan probably replaced Grigorije as his father's assistant, only to be joined later by his then still infant brother Nikola.

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СЛИКАРИ ЈОВАН ЧЕТИРЕВИЋ ГРАБОВАН И ГРИГОРИЈЕ ПОПОВИЋ. *ADDENDA* ЗА БИОГРАФИЈЕ МАЈСТОРА И УЧЕНИКА

Биографије сликара Јована Четиревића Грабована и Григорија Поповића проучавају се од почетка XX столећа, али су у новије време поново привукле међународну научну пажњу после објављивања биографских бележака Јована Четиревића Грабована које је овај сликар записивао на грчком језику у рукописној копији сликарског приручника (ерминије) коју је поседовао. Ове белешке су објављене и коментарисане без проучавања рукописа у његовој целисти, што је довело до одређених забуна око сликаревог идентитета, живота и радова, првенствено ван српске научне сфере. Овај рад представља покушај одговора на нека од многих питања која су се отад наметнула, у првом реду са ослоном на изучавање осталих, претходно непубликованих биографских записа у истом рукопису, писаних на црквенословенском и понешто грчком језику. Ти записи откривају идентитет још једне важне личности – сина Јована Четиревића Грабована. Звао се Никола Грабован и такође је био сликар и један од очевих наследника у послу, који је овај марљиво развијао у православним заједницама Славоније и северне Хрватске у последњој четвртини XVIII столећа.

Рад такође настоји да обједини досадашња сазнања прикупљена у иностраним научним сферама, румунској на првом месту, о сликару Јовану Четиревићу Грабовану и његовом ученику Григорију Поповићу. Румунски научници већ деценијама истражују делатност сликара под именом Grigorie (Grigore) Rorovici, пореклом из села Фружинешти код Букурешта, сматрајући га важним протагонистом увођења реалистичких тенденција у румунско сликарство крајем XVIII века. Његова бележница са записима и скицама, данас изгубљена или недоступна, делимично је публикована и такође је садржавала биографске записе сликара о његовом учењу код Јована Четиревића Грабована у Букурешту, као и њиховом заједничком путу у Славонију и северну Хрватску. Скорија теренска и студијска истраживања у Мађарској и Румунији донела су нова сазнања о односу двојице сликара и помогла у расветљавању многих недоумица о раној каријери Јована Четиревића Грабована, пре његовог коначног преласка у Карловачку митрополију. Резултати истраживања требало би да српској научној средини представе Григорија Поповића као пуну уметничку личност и открију његову каснију делатност након напуштања Јована Четиревића Грабована, када се овај сликар, по свему судећи, вратио у Букурешт и тамо засновао сопствену радионицу, остајући трајно веран стилским и иконографским обрасцима које је примио од свог учитеља.