

ABSTRACT

Habilitation theses are either a strictly cumulative research paper presenting the main results of the undertaken researches or a high level monographic paper. Both require an independent scholarship, since they are accomplished independently, without a direct supervision of a doctoral advisor. I chose to approach the habilitation thesis as a scientific text, referring directly to primary and secondary sources and underlining my own contributions.

My contributions deal almost entirely with medieval and pre-modern epigraphy and are strongly related to the medieval history of Transylvania. I have published the corpus of medieval and pre-modern inscriptions of the city of Sibiu (*Inschriften der Stadt Hermannstadt aus dem Mittelalter und der frühen Neuzeit*). It remains until now the single epigraphic corpus of a Transylvanian town which meets current European standards. Numerous papers presented at national and international conferences and epigraphic studies published in scientific journals dealt with the epigraphic themes and the interpretation of various inscriptions and epigraphic monuments. These will be referred to at the top of each chapter, illustrating and proving the different research issues. The following paper is meant to be a synthesis of my research since I defended my PhD and obtained the doctoral degree in 1998 until now. It also includes a presentation of my professional evolution in this period. In this synthesis, I attempted to achieve the main requirements of the habilitation paper, which presumes a presentation of personal scientific and professional achievements in a documented way, stressing upon the originality of my contributions. This is why I chose steadily to indicate references to the primary and secondary sources I used in order to attest the accuracy and reliability of my research since having obtained the doctoral degree.

I must clarify from the very beginning that I did not have in mind a comprehensive approach of the epigraphic evidence of Central and South-East Europe in the Middle Ages and pre-modern, respectively the early modern era. It would have been otherwise impossible: the inscriptions are mostly unpublished, repertories (*corpora*) to include the studied areas are scarce and those that exist cover just some islands of this area, a situation in fact noticeable all over Europe.

Based on my analyses, I strived to prove the origin and conception of epigraphic texts from the viewpoint of their memorial function. In order to achieve this aim, I studied the role of inscriptions as representational testimonies regarding persons from various milieus – kings, princes and voivodes, the political and social elites like nobles, boyars, official functionaries and magistrates, bans and dukes, lords and members of the patriciate, knights, merchants and guild members.

The coverage area of this synthesis research is much broader than that envisaged in previous studies, which are generally specialized in more geographic spaces that are restricted, justifiable in the context of including in comprehensive corpora regional or zonal epigraphic evidences. For this reason, most studies are mainly national, taking into consideration certain spaces of the territory of the nowadays modern national states from a historical perspective, and even present territorial administrative divisions, hence many shortcomings caused by the lack of an overall vision of the medieval world. The epigraphic space analysed in this paper includes both German-speaking regions such as Bavaria and Austria, as well as other spaces of the Holy German Empire, Bohemia, Hungary, and medieval Poland with Krakow, Slovakia, Croatia, including the Dalmatian coast and Bosnia. Serbia and Bulgaria were also taken into consideration, addressing the major issues and aspects that have influenced the epigraphic production in the Romanian Principalities. My research focuses especially on Transylvania, a true melting pot of Western and Byzantine influences since the turn of the millennia. I included Wallachia and Moldavia, related to Central Europe as well as to the area influenced by Byzantium and the South-Slavic States.

The paper consists of three major sections:

- I. Scientific and professional achievements
- II. Future research and academic perspectives
- III. Bibliographical references associated with the first two parts

Section II is organized, beyond introduction and conclusions, in four major chapters, dealing with:

1. Memory legitimation, focusing on *ius inscriptionis* in its connections, on the transmission of good fame and good memory, the glorious death and the good deeds, *mors repentina*, as well as on the normative function of funerary monuments.

2. Epigraphic scripts, also referring to the various types of letters used in medieval and pre-modern inscriptions of the studied area – Romanesque, Gothic majuscule and Lombardic script, Gothic minuscule, Early Humanistic Capitalis, Renaissance Capitalis, Fractura and Humanistic minuscule.

3. Epigraphic formulary deals with different types of formulae - introductory or exit formulae, names, titles and epithets implying the social and political role or position, as well as dating formulae.

4. The iconography of the funerary monument mainly deals with the typology of funerary monuments based on their structure, epigraphy and memorial function, including the *vanitas vanitatum* cycle.

The aim of this study is not just a new reading of the epigraphic sources of Central and South-East Europe in the Middle Ages and the pre-modern period. I attempt to assemble the epigraphic approach in a schema or interpretative paradigm able to merge in its assessment both the epigraphic constituent, the text transmitted by inscriptions, and the iconographic component, thus an iconotextual interpretative paradigm.

The paper contains a presentation of the professional evolution since having obtained the doctoral degree as well as plans for the future professional, scientific and academic career, involving the directions of research. The bibliographical references related to the first two sections also include my most relevant personal contributions.