

Habilitation Thesis Abstract History and Cultural Studies

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The analyses of death, from the historical point of view, is no longer a novel topic in Romanian and worldwide historiography. Numerous books, articles were published, several conferences on the topic were held, therefore we can affirm that the domain has an extensive development. According to Michel Vovelle, death represents an essential test to assess the attitudes, behaviors and collective representations of society, throughout the epochs, since this event is immutable. But history is just only one of the branches of human knowledge that provides explanations on death, and thus, it must be correlated with the other sciences, to provide a comprehensive interpretation.

This habilitation thesis is a reflection of the scientific work that I have done in the Historical Anthropology field. After completing my PhD thesis in 2005 (about death in Transylvania in the nineteenth century) my scientific work had focused on two such major themes :

- 1 . The historical analysis of modern cremation in the 19th-21st century Romania;
2. The historical analysis of production, distribution and consumption of alcohol in the 19th-20th century Romania .

Both analyses brought innovation in Romanian historiography. Also, both themes are of public interest in nowadays Romania (see, on the one hand, the public debate related to Sergiu Nicolaescu’s cremation in January 2013 and, on the other hand, the statistics of alcohol consumption in Romania today). By approaching these two original topics I have done a courageous pioneering work in Romanian historiography.

The results of my scientific activity since 2005 consists in publication of two books, as sole author ((*Eternitate prin Cenușă: O istorie a crematoriilor și incinerărilor umane în România secolelor XIX-XX*, Iași, Institutul European, 2011, 636 p.; *History of Modern Cremation in Romania*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013, 486 p.).

I also edited the pro-incineration writings of Archimandrite Calinic I. Popp Serboianu, which had been published between 1909 and 1939. Popp Serboianu was the only Orthodox priest who publicly claimed the idea of cremation in our country (actually

defrocked for his option) (Calinic I. Popp Serboianu, *Crematiunea si religia crestina*, edited by Marius Rotar, Iași, Institutul European, 2012, 236 p.)

I have also published over 30 articles in various national and international journals (Mortality – United Kingdom, *Tanatologici Studi* - Italy, *Procedia* -U.S.A, *Interstitio* - Moldova), two of these being indexed by ISI Thompson authority. I am the author of several chapters in various books published in Romania and abroad (eg, *Death and Bereavement in Romania* , in *Death Around The World*, Laungani Pittu , John D. Morgan, Stephan Palmer (eds.) , vol V , New York , Amityville , 2009, p 163-180).

I have initiated two international conferences (" Dying and Death in 18th- 21st Century Europe " and " Alcoholism : Historical and Social Issues "), both enjoying a great academic prestige. For instance, " Dying and Death in 18th- 21st Century Europe " International Conference (ABDD) is the only conference dedicated to death studies which is held in Romania and in Central and Southeastern Europe, having a strong an interdisciplinary character. Throughout the six editions of this conference (2008-2013) 250 researchers from over 35 countries attended.

Together with Adriana Teodorescu in 2011 I edited a selection of the best papers presented at the conference at an abroad publishing house - Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Great Britain.

Between 2007 and 2013 I lead, as the manager, two CNCS grants (first grant: 2007-2008, *Attitudes towards death, perspectives on life in 19th – 20th century Romania*, TD, 56540 RON contract value; second grant: 2011-2014: *Historical Dimensions and Contemporary Perspectives upon Cremation in Romania*, TE, CNCS - UEFISDCI, ongoing grant, contract value 605.000 RON). In addition, I have also obtained funding in three grant competitions managed by ANCS Romania in order to organize the international conference *Dying and Death in 18th- 21st Century Europe* in the years 2009 (4000 RON), 2010 (21000 RON), and 2011 (7500 RON). These ANCS grants have provided material and logistical conference support. The total amount of all the grants rose to approx. 700.000 RON.

In recognition of my scientific activity and its international visibility, Cambridge Scholars Publishing UK Publishing offered me the position of editor of a new book series focused exclusively on the dying and death topic. I accepted this proposal being aware of its necessity. This series will start in February 2014 and will contribute, in a clear manner, to the development of death studies in Romania and in Central and South Eastern Europe: http://www.csp.org/Flyers/series_46.htm .

I intend to continue the research in historical anthropology, specifically aiming at the promotion of the death studies in Romania. Despite the obtained results and although a core of Romanian researchers in the mentioned topic was already formed, the field should

be stronger and strengthened by activating the Romanian Association for Death Studies, an NGO whose bases were laid in 2011.

Another priority regarding my future activity consists in designing a new master degree curriculum, dedicated to the death and dying theme. This master program will be par excellence, an interdisciplinary one, the first of this kind in our country. Its strength will require an authentic and advantageous collaboration between specialists from the history, sociology, psychology, social work, medicine and theology. It will follow the popular pattern that had been successfully implemented in United Kingdom and United States of America.