

'Babes-Bolyai' University in Cluj-Napoca

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Department of Modern History, Archivistcs and Ethnology

## **Habilitation Dissertation**

**Physicians and Peasants in Romania (1860-1910)**

**Researches in Social Imagology**

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Ph.D. in History

Cluj, 2014

## Abstract

The main directions of research in my scientific activity start from the Ph.D. thesis and follow closely the directions sketched on this occasion. Since the thesis – *The Imaginary of the Human Body. Between the peasant Culture and the Scholar Culture(19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005 – is a work of historical anthropology, my scientific activity developed inside this frame. If I were to characterize my scientific activity, the most complete formulae would be to assert that what I have been working so far is framing into what the French Historiography calls *Historical anthropology*. This means implicitly that my historical researches have an ethnological dimension, so to speak. Or, that I have continuously worked at the margin between history and ethnology. In my Ph. D. paper I intended to catch the peasant bodily imaginary through contemporary field researches in two rural townships and one town. As the peasant bodily imaginary proved to be a structure still alive and so different from the bodily representations promoted by modern medical culture, it came naturally the question: How was it possible after more than two centuries of modernization, implicitly hygienic and sanitary, that the peasants in Romania of the 20<sup>th</sup> century be the keepers of pre-modern bodily representations? And hence started the in hand dedicated to hygienic and sanitary modernization of the rural world. Or the main actors of this sanitary and hygienic modernization are the state and the physicians who in their writings describe the hygienic status of rural population, the causes of the disaster found and propose the ‘improvement ways’. This is the in hand frameble to the social imagology, where we follow the image of the Romanian peasant and of the rural world in medical literature. My familiarity with the medical literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century meant also a better and better knowledge of the environment and people of this profession, with such an important role in the process of modernization. And this is the in hand of the social history of Romanian medicine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As I was saying, these directions of research are present *in nuce* in the Ph.D. work and my scientific activity after this moment developed them continuously and I think that they will constitute other directions of research that I will never leave totally in the following years.

The structure of the habilitation thesis is classic: after the abstract follows the section one where I exposed in the first part the main directions of scientific research that I have developed along my academic career. The most consistent part of this section is about the exemplification of the research direction most relevant through two case studies that are original researches, unpublished yet in exposed form, but that were present in my past scientific activity, after the Ph. D. dissertation. Both are frameable to the great topic of social imagology that I mentioned above. The first is dedicated to the topic of rural food hygiene trying to catch what physicians say upon peasant food and its specific, the causes of a state of facts and the consequences of the rural food system. The second direction is dedicated still to a topic of the medical discourse in society and that manifests along the time in many forms, all dressed up in a demographic coat. In the eighth decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the race degeneration is perceived as a consequence of demographic competition the Jews are making to the autochthonous population. Everything in the context of the fulminant debates regarding the modification of article 7 in the Constitution of 1866. After 1880, under the situation of 'solving' the Jewish problem through non-emancipation, the fear of race degeneration is headed towards the rural population whose hygienic conditions are the star of the medical writings till 1900. The new century brings a new metamorphosis of the topic of degeneration, the physicians attention being turned towards a particular form of mortality – the infant mortality.

Finally, the second part of section one is dedicated to the projects of development of scientific and academic career. Here is not much to tell. Certainly, a part of the directions of research developed till now will be continued and deepened, and another part will constitute new projects, but still in connection with the old subjects. Thus, I intend to see how the political discourse at the level of political press and the parliamentary debates uses and obviously manipulates the medical discourse upon the peasant and the rural world.

Part three of section one presents the used bibliography.