

HABILITATION THESIS

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**POLITICAL AND CANONICAL POSITION OF
TRANSYLVANIA IN *CHRISTIANITAS* DURING THE
PONTIFICATE OF INNOCENT III (1198-1216)**

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ABSTRACT

The current paper represents a synthesis of the researches I undertook from completing and publicly presenting the PhD thesis (November 2000) until present time, as well as a reflection of professional evolution throughout this period. This exegesis represents an outstanding step towards an academic career corresponding to a superior level of research and expertise which we believe to have attained; consequently the current paper was designed as a superior scientific research, unequivocally historical, with specific references to the primary and secondary sources studied, together with the constant emphasis upon personal contributions and conclusions reached throughout the last three years. Therefore, we would like to make a most accurate highlight of the scientific activity in the area of Romanian medieval studies that has been performed in the dynamic framework of academic activity.

Our core researches are enrooted mainly in the area of medieval history and historical auxiliary sciences, substantially focusing on the medieval history of Transylvania (XI-XIV centuries). Though several generations of historians have conducted researches, the medieval history of this important Romanian region has yet many to unveil, particularly in connection to universal history and its most significant actors: the Holy See and the Empire. This state of facts is partially justifiable due to censorship in historical matters during the autocracy and due to stereotypes that beforehand and afterwards imprinted on the national culture and historiography.

Taking into consideration the diversity of the present ideological background, with limited supremacy tendencies on different sides, that allowed us to explore bibliography and interpretations representative to western historiographies notably German, Italian and French, we can perform a comeback to genuine Latin language sources and particularly to the controversial diplomas issued by Innocent III. Implementing this new perspective of historical criticism in the Romanian case with its Transylvanian particularities implies that the more scientific research advances, the more we acknowledge how the Holy See influenced Transylvanian institutional background in the XIII century, preserving at the same time a precise personal characteristic, while later enjoying an uncommon evolution.

In the aftermath of our PhD thesis we continued the investigation upon the emergence of the first pontifical documents concerning Transylvania which, during Innocent III, indirectly, peripherally, insinuatingly or allusively make reference to the Romanians in Transylvania, to their secular and ecclesiastic institutions, to confirming state of things and not of former or newer beginnings. We tackled the viewpoint by addressing pontifical diplomas and auxiliary documents issued by the royal Hungarian authority from Transylvania and Transylvanian Romanians by drawing interpretative-documentary arguments that would reveal how the Holy See directly interacted with this Romanian region by establishing personal properties meant to map out a Christianitas designed to answer pontifical guidelines, since royalties are mere ministries of the Church who is the one overlaying politically and dynamically over the Empire: the biographic argument, namely why is Innocent III the most influential Pope of the Middle Ages and which of the events during his pontificate contributed to him being defined by the saying *Maior Dominus de mundo*; the ecclesiologic argument, how exactly does a Roman Church profile, proclaiming itself the only Church, is framed theologically and ecclesiologic by encompassing any other ecclesiologic attempt, particularly during the events of 1204 when the schism was growing dim and the Pontiff Sovereign was turning into Christ's vicar, as the permanent recurrence of Saint Peter with the mission assigned by Lord Jesus Christ to rule the Church; the canonical argument by

heightening canonic law over civil law and applying the *ratione peccati* concept in order to fully be inserted in every aspect of civil and public life and to adjust them according to theocratic principles; the political argument, namely to transfer pontifical decisions to public administration matters and solutions or attempted solutions by means of which kingdoms' decisions are being absorbed or censured, bears as final purpose the attempt to transfer public life regulations under the jurisdiction of the Roman Church. This political argument is the one emphasizing Innocent III's endeavor to relate to Transylvania with or without Hungarian kings' agreement as means to encourage non-Hungarian power structures to the end of building entities that answer only to the Roman Church and are territorially bind to it. The missionary argument emphasizes secular public power entities (principalities) and ecclesial ones (dioceses and monasteries) belonging to oriental ecclesial background of Constantinopolitan rite – Romanians which are discussed by Innocent III under direct relations with the purpose of transforming these local or missionary (Cistercians) structures in forthright subjects of Rome at the Christianitas frontier; the crusader argument refers to military deployment of Teutonic Knights in the Bârsei Land, precisely during Innocent III's pontificate with the successful goal of creating a political-monastic-military subordinated to Rome during such a canonical background of the crusade. The chronological unfolding of these arguments, with slight mismatches, reveals how intensely and directly was Innocent III interested in Transylvania and its integration in Christianitas.

The methodology that we chose varies according to the available bibliographic sources. The number of original references mainly on diplomacy is limited. Still, we are referring to the first documents that clearly mention Romanian structures. The research methodology combined critical and hermeneutical analysis of diplomatic documentation, not solely from the historical viewpoint, yet with theological, ecclesiological, canonical and civil law analysis.

The results following this research have been made public by means of presentations at conferences held in Romania and Europe, by publishing articles in history journals or volumes printed in Romania and other countries and by publishing certain books and coordinating a volume of studies.

The paper also comprises a presentation of the professional evolution following recent years, as well as development plans for a professional, scientific and academic career, accompanied by research domains that shall be addresses in the following period. Enclosed are bibliographical references designed for the first section, including a list of the most relevant personal contributions.