

HABILITATION THESIS

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Abstract

A brief **introduction** is meant to explain the structure of the thesis, with the implied need to present also the accomplishments of the candidate until the doctorate. All these are described at length in **the first chapter (Evolution towards the doctorate)**. The circumstances that led to the doctorate enrolment are put forward, taking into account the educational system at stake and the difficulties that impeded the completion of the thesis. The author focuses as well on the embedded duties specific to his position (archaeologist and keeper of coins at Museum of Cluj-Napoca), which required scientific preoccupations on three levels: Latin epigraphy in Dacia, ancient numismatics, and field archaeology. After 1990, the didactic duty was added to the aforementioned, namely substitute lecturer with „Babeş-Bolyai” University, in the speciality of ancient history.

Only in 1992 the author would have access to a scholarship and an internship abroad, which allowed him to complete his doctoral thesis at a scientific satisfactory level. The same year he became senior research fellow at the Institute of Archaeology of Cluj-Napoca. Within the new position he dedicated himself to the elaboration of the doctoral thesis, defended in 1994 and published in 1998.

The second chapter follows the academic itinerary of the candidate after 1994, at first as an established researcher with the Institute (1994-2002), afterwards as a specialised teaching staff member with „Babeş-Bolyai” University (2002-2013 associate professor, and from 2013 professor). During the first sub-period the author has already managed to conceive wide academic projects, but only after 2000 he began to take part in research grants (two of them are ongoing). In addition, his vision of ancient history has consequently enriched and continues to evolve towards current European requirements.

Overall the research activity was complemented by the work within the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology. The scientific interests stayed focus on the same three domains, but in different proportions.

On archaeological level the candidate studied certain materials from his personal previous diggings, but most importantly he succeeded to publish a monograph of the Roman fort at Gherla. In the same context one has to mention several synthetic studies, with reference to the archaeological sources. Herein the novelty consisted in detailed valuation of some isolated discoveries, placed in a broader context, as well as some forays into the historiography of the domain, including a short synthesis of the research of Roman Dacia. The undisputable proofs brought in support of the presence of Christianity in the province are to be reckoned to.

In the field of ancient numismatics, the preoccupations of the candidate expanded from Latène epoch towards the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Along with publications and restudies of the materials (items or hoards), the major project successfully carried out was the publication of the monetary hoard “Apulum VII”. Candidate’s vision and employed methods have recently evolved, getting to a better understanding of certain economic phenomena from Antiquity, a fact that entails some re-evaluations of older assumptions. Personal contribution to the field is visible in certain relevant innovations: the wide appeal to archived documents in the reconstruction of some monetary collections, a better classification of some damaged items, the treatment of the coins in a broader social and juridical context, or the reconstruction of economic life from one archaeological site on account of numismatic sources.

Above all, the focus remained stable on epigraphic researches and ancient social history, carried through in a modern and competitive way. To this category belong numerous publications of new inscriptions, or the re-reading and re-interpretation of some others, but most of all the deep study of epigraphic materials in a juridical, social and cultural framework of the province in the Roman epoch. The acknowledged results in the configuration of the juridical status of some persons or communities, in the reconstruction of some aristocratic families, in the decoding of some social mechanisms (ones less evident), express to the fullest the innovative contribution brought to the field. In respect of this, the understanding of the existing relation between institutional and social aspects was paramount and it opened up new directions of interpretations. Among the published papers, after the monograph on municipal life in Dacia (based on the doctoral thesis), the most important studies are the ones about

Latin citizenship, the restitution of some mutilated texts and several clarifications concerning culture and religion.

Two books written in collaboration and published in Italy are syntheses with didactic purpose (about Roman Dacia, respectively ancient Rome) together with personal scientific contributions. Moreover, other collateral academic performances need to be included: symposiums and scientific sessions, editorships, conferences, developmental internships abroad, membership in scientific associations etc.).

The didactic activity, highly expanded after the engagement with the University, resulted in some innovative courses at the time (Ancient numismatics, Christian Latin epigraphy, Security in the ancient world, Social ancient structures etc.), not to be forgotten the conferences abroad, participations in doctoral committees, summer courses and other related activities.

Last but not least, the scientific and didactic endeavours led to significant changes within the personal vision of ancient history and its methods of investigation. The candidate has enormously evolved as a specialist of the field, towards a far more critical attitude, which imply the evolution of historiography, the broad understanding of the ancient world on the whole, as well as the sustained dialogue on an international basis. The improvement of the research and publication methods has to be aimed at, especially when some of the contemporary circulating ideas about great historical phenomena seem to be erroneous or far-fetched (as the denial of Romanisation, for instance).

The Third Chapter (Future Prospects) sums up the main tasks and work intentions of the candidate for the following years, in the light of the evolutions and conditions from the present days. There are primarily considered the most pressing needs of the didactic process and the possible means to meet them. Then there are gradually announced the candidate's research prospects, structured around the three domains. The archaeology would mean in itself only small interventions, while in the domain of ancient numismatics there are some underway papers and several future projects. Beyond any doubt, the main preoccupation would remain the epigraphy of Roman Dacia (domain in which the two ongoing grants are included), along with the social history of the province.

A final chapter, dedicated to **Bibliography**, gathers papers that are cited in the Habilitation Thesis, which are signed by the candidate and other specialists, organised in a modern alphabetical Oxford system.