

"Research topics, teaching and administrative activities in the field of history. A review"

(Habilitation thesis)

(Abstract)

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The present habilitation thesis discusses the activity I have carried out at the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, starting in 1998, when I was employed in the Department of Medieval History and Historiography. The thesis is structured in two parts, preceded by an introduction and ending with conclusions. The first part focuses on my past and present scientific and professional achievements and the second on the future ones.

For greater clarity of exposition, I have divided the first part into three sections: teaching activity, scientific research, and administrative aspects. First of all, I explained my beginnings as a student, an M.A. student, and as an employee of the faculty. I introduced the people who marked my life and activity, my professors, people who influenced and taught me. I also presented my first research activities in the field of history, as well as my research topics, some abandoned after a few years, while others continued to interest me for a longer time, even to this day. In addition, I presented some methodological aspects that guided me over time, and the two doctoral theses that I defended at the universities of Cluj and Bratislava (Slovakia), with very important consequences on my career.

The teaching activity presents, chronologically, the main courses and seminars that I have held over time, explaining their importance in relation not only to my teaching path, but also to my historical research.

Another section of this part focuses on historical research, trying to provide the evolution of my topics of interest and historical themes. An important role was played by my doctoral research dedicated to the history of Romanian Slavic studies until the First World War, completed with a thesis defended at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj in 2005 (and published in English in 2008: *The History of Romanian Slavic Studies. From the Beginnings until the First World War*. Cluj-Napoca, Ed. Academiei Române, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2008). Numerous other research topics opened up for me from the subject of my doctoral research, some of which I continue to work on to this day.

Another big research topic is the cultural history of travelling, born out of my doctoral research and one of the courses I started teaching. It is a theme that I pursued from a cultural perspective, with an emphasis on social aspects, mentalities, geography, landscape, and technology. Two important books, published in 2020 and 2022, can be mentioned here: *Romanian travelers looking out of the train window. An attempt at cultural history (1830-1930)*. Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2020 and *Romanian travelers and patients at Karlsbad. A cultural history of the spas around 1900*. Iași, Ed. Polirom, 2022.

Starting from my collection of old postcards, I began to see them as sources of historical information. From here, another research theme dedicated to postcards was born, also materialised through several studies published in volumes and historical periodicals, as well as through several books. The most recent one is *Danube Views and Landscapes. Album of postcards (1898-1930)*. Cluj-Napoca, Casa Cărții de Știință, 2024. To these are added numerous other topics of interest, all having a common denominator in the relationship between the Central European area - Slavic studies - cultural history of travelling - railway history - the exploitation of visual historical sources (postcards, banknotes, historical photography) - the exploitation of memorialistic sources.

Another section of the first part of the habilitation thesis deals with administrative aspects. As an employee at the Department of Medieval History and

Historiography, then at the Department of Medieval, Early Modern History and Art History, I got involved in the operation of the institution, as department secretary, with numerous duties in relation to the university specialisations. In addition to these, the activities within the Faculty Council, the coordination of the CEEPUS program, the coordination of Alumni Relations and others can also be mentioned.

The second part of the habilitation thesis deals with directions of evolution and development of the teaching, scientific, and academic career. I organised this part of the thesis like the first part, in three sections: teaching activity, scientific research, and administrative aspects. In each of the three sections I have shown what my future intentions are, in direct continuity with what I have achieved so far. This is true in terms of teaching activities and especially scientific research, where I have many future projects, some of which are already being documented. My future administrative concerns are related to departmental and faculty activities too.