

Summary of empowerment thesis

History of Hunedoara Orthodox Church

The land of Hunedoara, an ancient hearth of Christian-Romanian survival and cradle of our creation as a people, constitutes, through its valuable cultural and artistic heritage – the paleo-Christian (Densus), princely (Gurasada, Streisângeorgiu, Peșteana, Strei, Nușoara, Râu de Mori, Sânpetru, Lesnic, Criscior, Ribița, Roșcani, Bârșău etc.) and contemporary (Orăștie, Alun, Ghelari etc.) places of worship, or the monastic settlements of Prislop, Suseni-Colți, Vaca/Crișan etc. – as well as its theological-spiritual heritage (Saints John of Prislop and Sofronie of Cioara come from here, metropolitans John of Peșteana, John of Prislop, Ghenadie II and Joseph Budai of Transylvania, bishops John of Cerna, Spiridon and Teofil of Prislop of Vadul, historians Silviu Dragomir and Mircea Păcurariu, journalists Ioan Moța and Sebastian Stanca, dogmatist Ilarion Felea, canonist Liviu Stan and prodigious confessor Arsenie Boca), a reference point on the "map" of Romanian spirituality.

Therefore, this space deserved a detailed presentation, which I have tried – in a synthetic presentation – within this doctoral thesis, later edited in a volume entitled: *Istoria vieții bisericești a românilor hunedoreni / History of the Church Life of Hunedoara Romanians* (Reșița, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, 2010, 734 p.). Opening with a broad presentation of the general historical background, a factor of church evolution, the work details the dynamics of the ecclesiastical life of Hunedoara Romanians from the stage of the spread of Christianity on these lands (with the inventory of all the archaeological discoveries of this kind) to the formation of the Medieval administrative-canonical structures, namely the deaneries, parishes and Hunedoara subsidiaries. Particular attention was paid to the relations – most often tense – between Orthodoxy and Catholicism (which, the beginning of the eighteenth century, led at to the division of the Romanian Transylvanian Church), as well as Protestantism, respectively the pastoral-missionary, national-political and cultural activities of Hunedoara priests, all those who, with either a pen or gun in their hands, from the pulpit or from the desks of their modest schools, bearing the Calvary of Austrian, Hungarian and Communist dungeons, put their body and soul in the service of the Romanians' national ideals, in the service of cultural enlightenment and religious encouragement of the faithful. Finally, the monastic settlements could not be missed; the presentation, in the form of medallions, of the monasteries, sketes and hermitages of Hunedoara of the past and present day, is preceded by drawing the main landmarks of monastic evolution in the south-west of Transylvania.

The approximately 600 Orthodox ecclesiastical edifices – from the controversial place of worship (in terms of age, identity of the founders and original destination) of Densus and the ancient princely foundations in the Land of Hateg and Zarand and to the places built after 1989 – received special attention in three other volumes: *Bisericile ortodoxe hunedorene / Hunedoara Orthodox Churches* (Reșița, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, 2011, 664 p.), *Repertor al bisericilor de lemn din județul Hunedoara / Index of the Wooden Churches in Hunedoara County* (co-author, Reșița, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, 2011, 457 p.), and *The Treasure of Hunedoara – Historical Monument Orthodox Churches* (Stockholm, Felicitas Publishing House - Deva, Publishing House of Deva and Hunedoara Diocese, 2014, 244 p.). For each church, the following were considered: presentation of patronage, building material, time of edification and founders, architecture, craftsmen and typology of the pictorial and sculptural ensembles, preservation stage and renovation works, respectively the more important pieces belonging to

their mobile patrimony; the indication of the confessional status of each place of worship through time, along with the specification of the predecessors of the present foundations have completed the outline of a general picture of these monuments.

Starting from the aforementioned, several research sub-courses have been outlined over time: the monographs of Hunedoara parishes (the monographs of Bobâlna, Trestia and Nevoieș / Lunca Parishes, and numerous parochial micro-monographs in the diocesan magazine "Christian Dacia" and in the volumes of certain local historical and theological symposia, namely putting into circulation certain parish chronicles, such as those of the parishes of Gurasada, Valea Bradului and Crișcior, and the original notes of certain priests) and the missing monastic settlements (Vaca, Plosca, Cerna etc.), the elaboration of biographical portraits of certain personalities of the Romanian Orthodox spirituality (Metropolitans John of Caffa, John of Prislop, Ghenadie II, Iosif Budai and Iov Țirca of Transylvania, Holy Saints Visarion Sarai and Sofronie of Cioara, Archbishop Nicholas Pop of Balomir, Journalist Priest Sebastian Stanca, etc.), the presentation of the evolution of Hunedoara confessional education (especially the Orthodox Elementary Schools in Deva Deanery), the links of the Orthodox Romanians of Hunedoara with their brothers from Banat and from beyond the mountains, etc. To these are added a series of studies on the secular history of Hunedoara lands, such as the presentation of the age of great migrations and their impact on the development of local communities, the period of the Transylvanian Principality, the administrative-territorial organization of Hunedoara county in the 18th-19th centuries, the communities of Italian immigrants in Hunedoara County etc.

The following works are listed on the same monographic line mentioned above, some of them in the project phase, others in the finishing phase: *Episcopia Devei și Hunedoarei (2009-2016)*. *Istorie – înfăptuiri – perspective / Diocese of Deva and Hunedoara (2009-2016)*. *History – Achievements – Perspectives, Monahismul hunedorean – istorie și actualitate. Mănăstiri, schituri și sihăstria ortodoxe / Hunedoara Monasticism – History and Topicality. Orthodox Monasteries, Sketes and Hermitages* (volume accompanied – for advertising purposes – by an *Album al așezămintelor monahale hunedorene / Album of Hunedoara Monastic Settlements*), *Parohia Dobra – fișe de cronică bisericească / Dobra Parish – church chronicle pages* and *Parohia Ortodoxă Ilia – fișe de cronică bisericească / Ilia Orthodox Parish – church chronicle pages* (putting into circulation precious information contained in two extended and unprecedented parish chronicles). Drawing up a "monographic series" is also intended, including the history of the five current *Protopopiatele Ortodoxe hunedorene / Orthodox Hunedoara Deaneries*: Deva, Brad, Hațeg, Oraștie and Petrosani (in a broader and more detailed form compared to the project initiated and carried out by the Romanian Patriarchy).

Without being exhaustive, all the works listed are the work of collecting, systematizing, researching, "interpreting" and synthesizing all the (archaeological, archival, artistic, etc.) sources that we had at our disposal in an attempt to create a complete picture of what might be called the ***History of the Orthodox Church of Hunedoara***.