

Summary of habilitation thesis

History of the Orthodox Church of Hunedoara

The land of Hunedoara, an ancient hearth of Romanian-Christian survival and cradle of our formation as a people, constitutes, through its valuable cultural and artistic heritage – the Paleo-Christian (Densuș), princely (Gurasada, Streisângeorgiu, Peșteana, Strei, Nucșoara, Ostrov, Râu de Mori, Sânpetru, Leșnic, Crișcior, Ribița, Roșcani, Bârsău, etc.) and contemporary places of worship (Orăștie, Alun, Ghelari etc.) or the monastic settlements from Prislop, Suseni-Colț, Vaca/Crișan etc. – as well as its theological-spiritual heritage (Saints Ioan of Prislop and Sofronie of Cioara, metropolitans Ioan of Peșteana, Ioan of Prislop, Ghenadie II and Iosif Budai of Transylvania, bishops Ioan from Cerna, Spiridon and Teofil from Prislop of Vad, historians Silviu Dragomir and Mircea Păcurariu, journalists Ioan Moța and Sebastian Stanca, dogmatist Ilarion Felea, canonist Liviu Stan and the great confessor Arsenie Boca from Prislop all come from here), a point of reference on the "map" of Romanian spirituality.

Therefore, this space deserves a detailed presentation, which I have attempted – in a synthetic presentation – within a doctoral thesis, later edited in a volume entitled: *The History of the Church Life of the Romanians from Hunedoara County* (Reșița, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, 2010, 734 p.). Opening with a broad presentation of the general historical framework, a factor of church evolution, the work details the dynamics of the ecclesiastical life of the Romanians from Hunedoara County during the time when Christianity was spreading on these lands (with the inventory of all archaeological discoveries of this kind) and up to the formation of medieval administrative-canonical structures, namely the archpriestships, parishes and filial churches of Hunedoara County. Particular attention was paid to the relations - most often tense - of Orthodoxy with Catholicism (ending in the division of the Romanian Transylvanian Church at the beginning of the eighteenth century) and Protestantism, respectively pastoral-missionary, national-political and cultural activities of the priests of Hunedoara County, of all those who, with the pen or gun in their hands, from pulpits or desks of modest schools, bearing the Calvary of Austrian, Hungarian and Communist dungeons, put themselves, body and soul, at the service of the Romanian national ideals, at the service of enlightenment through culture and comforting the parishioners through faith. Finally, the monastic settlements could not be missed; the presentation, in the form of medallions, of monasteries, hermitages and cloisters of Hunedoara County from the past and present 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 (in terms of age, identity of its founders and original destination) Densuș worship place and the ancient princely foundations from the Land of Hațeg and the parts of Zarand, to the worship places built after 1989 – received special attention in three other volumes: *Orthodox Churches of Hunedoara* (Reșița, Eftimie Murgu Publishing House, 2011, 664 p.), *Repertoire of 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, Episcopia Devei și Hunedoarei Publishing House, 2014, 244 p.). the following were taken into account for each church: presentation of the patronage, building material, period of edification and founders, architecture, craftsmen and typology of the painting and sculptural ensembles, preservation stage and renovation works undertaken,

respectively the more important pieces in their mobile heritage; the indication of the confessional status of each worship place over time, along with mentioning the predecessors of the present foundations completed the outline of an overall picture of these monuments.

Considering the above mentioned, multiple research sub-directions were outlined over time: monographing the parishes of Hunedoara (writing monographs of parishes Bobâlna, Trestia and Nevoies/Lunca parishes and numerous parish micro-monographs in the diocesan magazine "Christian Dacia" and volumes of local historical and theological symposia, respectively putting in circulation parish chronicles like those of Gurasada, Valea Bradului and Crișcior parishes, and original notes of priests) and disappeared monastic settlements (Vaca, Plosca, Cerna etc.), elaborating biographical medallions of personalities of Romanian Orthodox spirituality (metropolitans Ioan from Caffa, Ioan from Prislop, Ghenadie II, Iosif Budai and Iov Țirca of Transylvania, Pious Saints Visarion Sarai and Sofronie from Cioara, archpriest Nicolae Pop from Balomir, priest-journalist Sebastian Stanca, etc.), presentation of the evolution of the confessional education of Hunedoara (especially the Orthodox elementary schools from the Archpriestship of Deva), the ties of the Orthodox Romanians from Hunedoara with their brothers from Banat and over the mountains, etc. To these are added a number of studies on the secular history of the lands of Hunedoara, as well as the presentation of the age of the great migrations and their impact on the development of local communities, the period of the Principality of Transylvania, the administrative-territorial organization of Hunedoara county in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, the communities of Italian immigrants in Hunedoara County, etc.

The following works will be mentioned on the same monographic line, some of them in the project phase, others in the finishing phase: *Diocese of Deva and Hunedoara (2009-2016). History – achievements – perspectives, Monasticism of Hunedoara – history and topicality. Orthodox Monasteries, Hermitages and Cloisters, Dobra Parish – church chronicle pages and Iliia Orthodox Parish – church chronicle pages* (putting into circulation precious information contained in two extended and unprecedented parochial chronicles). Also, it is envisaged to draw up a "monographic series", comprising the history of the five *Current Orthodox Archpriestships of Hunedoara*: Deva, Brad, Hateg, Orastie 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 result of gathering, systematizing, researching, "interpreting" and synthesizing all the sources (archaeological, archival, artistic, etc.) that I had at my disposal in the attempt to create a comprehensive picture of what could be called the *History of the Orthodox Church of Hunedoara*.

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