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ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ
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**PALAEOGRAPHY AND CRITICAL EDITING OF
DOCUMENTS.
THE INSTITUTE OF HISTORY IN CLUJ, 1920-2023**

Habilitation Thesis

Main field: **HISTORY**

Author: **COSMA ELA (ANA-MIHAELA)**

2024

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Abstract

The present habilitation thesis titled *Palaeography and Critical Editing of Documents. The Institute of History in Cluj, 1920-2023* is structured, as usual, in two (quantitatively uneven) parts. The first of them includes my "Scientific and professional achievements" since earning my first doctorate until present (2000-2023), while the second comprises my future "Professional development plan".

Except for this heading, the thesis was elaborated in a monographic approach for the express purpose of its publishing in form of a guide or a handbook of compared palaeography (in general) and German palaeography (in particular), to be used in the Romanian linguistic area. Moreover, the extensive case study presented in the second half of the thesis illustrates the applied palaeography and the critical editing of documents at the Institute of History "George Barițiu" of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca throughout a century of its existence (1920-2023).

The thesis is actually formed of seven proper chapters, followed by two special "chapters" (VIII-IX), including the analytical bibliography of the Institute of History in Cluj, as well as the table of contents and the abstract in English.

The first chapter (I) is, as a matter of fact, an introduction to the "Research topics and methods" that I've approached since 2000 (the year of my first doctoral thesis and of its publishing, *The Idea of Foundation in the Romanian Folk Culture*) and after the publication of my second doctoral thesis in 2012-2013 (*Austrian Consular Representative Offices in Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia, 1782-1848; Habsburg Consular Agencies and the 1848 Revolutions in Moldavia, Wallachia and Serbia*), whereas the last proper chapter (VII) presents, instead of conclusions, the "Prospective research and studies", which I aim to conduct in the frame of my future individual and team projects. Both chapters I and VII have each three subchapters.

The five median chapters form the substance and core of the present paper, exposed in the very title of my habilitation thesis. Thus, the palaeography is approached in two chapters and a half (II-IV), and the editing of historical documents in the rest of the two and a half of the chapters IV-VI. Chapters II-VI include, each of them, eight subchapters.

More specifically, chapter II titled "Compared palaeography" offers a survey of the Romanian research dedicated to this auxiliary science, both on a theoretical level (discussing terminology and coverage area regarding the palaeography specific to various historical ages, from ancient to contemporary history), and on a practical level (summarizing the best scientific results obtained by the Romanian historians in the fields of the Turkish-Ottoman, Latin, Slavic, Romanian Cyrillic, Greek palaeographies). On the one hand, I emphasize some of the theoretical concepts useful in defining, circumscribing and establishing a chronology of the analysed auxiliary discipline of history (applied palaeography, compared palaeography, palaeography of the early modern and modern history), and on the other hand, I present a range of great Romanian historians, in their seldom appreciated quality as palaeographers and authors of handbooks of palaeography: Ioan Bogdan (posthumously edited by Nicolae Iorga, 1926), Henri Stahl and Damian P. Bogdan (1936), Mihail Guboglu (1958), Emil Vîrtosu (1968), Jakó Zsigmond and Radu

Manolescu (1971), Damian P. Bogdan (1978), Nicolae Edroiu (1972-2001, 2013), Natalia Trandafirescu (1993). I stress the importance of the fact that, when getting used to palaeography (as a "receptacle" of graphical signs and symbols), a good start would be to learn first of all and to master the respective language of the documents, as each language (either spoken or written) represents a *sui generis* universe of culture, civilization and history.

Chapter III aims to offer to the reader the first Romanian guide, as well as a brief history of the "German palaeography", given the fact that until now there is no handbook especially elaborated for the Romanians available for the study of this specific discipline. That is why, its evolution is explained in connection with the foreign research, above all with the one unfolded in the German linguistic area (Austria, Switzerland, Germany). Analogies are also made with related disciplines, like the German archival science or *Aktenkunde*, an expression of applied palaeography of the early modern and modern history, or with the establishment of similar institutional initiatives, for instance that of the French *diplomatie* taught at the famous *École des Chartes* in Paris. The last subchapter trains the reader in deciphering several texts written with German palaeography coming from the whole Romanian area. It should be mentioned that the examples of old German writing cover a wide timeline horizon, from the 14th-15th centuries up to the 18th-20th centuries.

Chapter IV deals with the "Applied palaeography and processing of documents at the Institute of History in Cluj". The chronological and synthetical data examined in the first four subchapters mirror the detailed activity and contributions brought by the researchers from our Institute, since its foundation in 1920 until today, particularly in developing the Latin, Hungarian, German and Romanian palaeographies specific to the medieval, early modern and modern history of Transylvania. The applied palaeography of the above mentioned languages was and is used in processing the historical documents, which involves the medieval historians and palaeographers (Jakó Zsigmond, Francisc Pall, Ștefan Bezdechi, Theodor Naum, Gheorghe Duzinchievici, Konrad Gündisch, Mihail P. Dan, Aurel Răduțiu, Susana Andea, Lidia Gross, Vasile Rus, Adinel-Ciprian Dincă, Victor V. Vizauer, Andreea Mârza, Maria Frînc), the researchers of the early modern history who edit the documents of Horea's uprising of 1784 (Alexandru Neamțu, Volker Wollmann, Nicolae Edroiu, Ladislau Gyémánt, Anton Eilhard Dörner, Remus Câmpeanu, Mircea-Gheorghe Abrudan, Mihai Olaru), the historians and palaeographers specialized in the modern history of the revolutionary years 1848-1849 (Silviu Dragomir, Ioan Lupaș, Victor Cheresteșiu, Benkő Samu, Liviu Botezan, Camil Mureșanu, Hilde Mureșan, Egyed Ákos, Ioan Chindriș, Gelu Neamțu, Ioan Bolovan, Stelian Mândruț, Bodor Marghioala, Varga Attila, Balog Iosif Marin, Ela Cosma), as well as the experts in the modern history and palaeography of the period 1849-1918 (Simion Retegan, Dumitru Suciu, Daniela Deteșan, Mirela Popa-Andrei, Loránd Mádly, Nicoleta Hegedüs). I then present the theoretical approaches made by the historians from the Institute of History "George Barițiu" of the Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca, in order to establish the necessary rules regarding palaeography and document processing (1961-2012). The last three subchapters illustrate the palaeography applied by the author of this thesis, with regard to the 18th-19th centuries in Central and Eastern Europe, the military history of the years 1848-1849, and the 18th-19th centuries in Mărginimea Sibiului.

Chapter V explains the "Critical editing of the documents" specific to medieval, modern and even contemporary history. It is the main activity unfolded at the Institute of History in Cluj, by means of the operations executed in the following sequence: the discovery and identification of documents, their selection, the specification of the documents' headers and sources, the transcription of documents, their translation (mostly into Romanian, sometimes into German or English), the elaboration of the documents' *regesta* (abstracts), the editing and, finally, the critical editing of the historical documents. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the seldom debated status of the editors, who either publish editions of certain authors' works or critically edit volumes and collections of historical documents.

Chapter VI approaches the "Documentary heritage collections edited by the Institute of History in Cluj". This is the major objective pursued with obstination by our Institute, during its century-long existence (1920-2023), since its foundation until today. The institutional strategies developed in order to acquire and capitalize the archival and documentary funds include the programs for the heritage management, which were established in 1919 by the first directors of the Institute, Ioan Lupaș and Alexandru Lapedatu. They were continued without interruption, both during the interwar and postwar periods, in spite of the political regimes and ideological dictatorships ruling our country, by Constantin Daicoviciu and Ștefan Pascu, directors of the Institute of History in Cluj (1949-1989), and all the more after 1989 by its directors Aurel Răduțiu, Camil Mureșanu, Nicolae Edroiu and Ioan Bolovan. As the first institute of national history founded in Romania, our Institute includes as "main tasks" (*sarcini de căpătâi*), but also as indicators of its scientific assessment, "researching the archives and libraries inside and outside the country, and publishing the historical sources" (Nicolae Edroiu). Such tasks and goals determined the Institute of History in Cluj to collect the archive funds which now represent a strong documentary basis for the numerous edited document collections.

The results of the collective enterprise unfolded by the History Institute in Cluj for a century counts more than 100 critical editions of documents and over 80 monographs and volumes of studies with document annexes, published in not less than 24 collections. Among them, I present, however not in chronological order of their publishing, but according to the chronology of their contents, the following: 11 corpuses of critically edited historical documents, 3 historical glossaries of medieval Latin and 2 volume cycles of pre- and post-1848 church documents (1. *Documente privind Istoria României. C. Transilvania/DIR*, 6 vol., 1951-1955; 2. *Documenta Romaniae Historica. Seria C. Transilvania/DRH*, 7 vol., 1977-2014; 3. *Documenta Romaniae Historica. Seria D. Relații între Țările Române*, 1 vol., 1977; 4. Glossaries of medieval Latin, 3 vol., 1965-2010; 5. *Conscripția fiscală a Transilvaniei din anul 1750*, 5 vol., 2009-2016; 6. *Izvoarele Răscoalei lui Horea*, series A. *Diplomataria*, 12 vol., 1982-2012; 7. *Izvoarele Răscoalei lui Horea*, series B. *Izvoare narative*, 5 vol., 1983-2007; 8. Volumes of legal and church documents from the first half of the 19th century pertaining to *Lemeni's File*, 3 vol., 2007-2012; 9. Silviu Dragomir's collection of *Studii și documente privitoare la Revoluția românilor din Transilvania în anii 1848-1849*, 4 vol., 1944-1946; 10. *Documente privind revoluția de la 1848 în Țările Române. C. Transilvania*, 12+1 vol., 1977-2020; 11. Volumes of church documents from the years 1848-1860, 5 vol., 2011-2014; 12. The collection "Avram Iancu – 200 Years from His Birth", 2 vol., 2023; 13.

Mișcarea națională a românilor din Transilvania între 1849-1918, 8 vol., 1996-2019; 14. *Documenta Masonica* [1867-1918], 2 vol., 2011-2013). To these are to be added: 3 series of historical correspondence (15. correspondence of *George Bariț și contemporanii săi*, 11 vol., 1973-2003, 2022; 16. *Corespondență Vincențiu Babeș*, 2 vol., 1976-1983; 17. *Corespondență Valeriu Braniște*, 6 vol., 1985-1996), (18.) the collection *Bibliografia Istorică a României* (14 vol., 1970-2010), (19.) the volumes including the very history of the Institute of History in Cluj (3 vol., 2008-2011), as well as (20.) the *Dicționarul Membrilor Institutului de Istorie din Cluj (1920-2020)* (1 vol., 2020). Neither the collections of studies, nor the monographs joined by document annexes and critical editions, published by our Institute, could be omitted in my presentation (21. *Biblioteca Institutului de Istorie Națională*, 22 vol., 1928-1948; 22. *Biblioteca Institutului de Istorie Cluj. Serie nouă*, 10 vol., 1994-2008; 23. Collection of "Doctoral Theses", 27 vol., 2010-2020; 24. Collection of "Transylvanian Historical Biographies", 20 vol., 2006-2023). In the same chapter, I also analyse two case studies by separately detailing the collection of *Documents regarding the Revolution of 1848 in the Romanian Lands. C. Transilvania* (12+1 published volumes), elaborated by my colleagues and me in the frame of the priority research program I'm part of at my Institute, as well as the collection of "Transylvanian Historical Biographies" (20 vol. already published), edited by me.

After using an extensive critical apparatus of footnotes in the body of the thesis, in the end of it I converted the traditional bibliographical references into a useful work tool, in the form of chapter VIII dedicated to a genuine "Bibliography of the Institute of History in Cluj". Here I included the funds of documents that are kept in the archives of the Institute's research teams, the critically edited corpuses and volumes of documents, the historical glossaries, the collections of historical correspondence and those of studies and monographs with documentary annexes published under the aegis of the Institute of History in Cluj, the *Historical Bibliography of Romania*, the Institute's periodical publications, and last but not least the general and specialized literature, focused on the scientific outcomes obtained by our Institute's researchers.

I am proud and grateful for working at the Institute of History in Cluj-Napoca, which motivated me in choosing the best personal and professional topic for my habilitation thesis, that of investigating *Palaeography and critical editing of documents*, in connection with the Institute's main activity objects. My arguments *pro domo* I have shown in chapter I, and also, in chapter VIII, my decision to further devote my energy to breaking new paths in Romanian historical science, based on the proficient mastery of the primary sources' languages and writings.

In fact, the key words expressing both my past and my future career development are the very passion towards the profession of palaeographer which I learned and practice at the Institute of History in Cluj, the experience of the 32 years I have spent working here, the solid ground offered to my scientific research only by investigation of the historical documents and by their critical editing, my astonishment discovering the impressive heritage of document corpuses and collections edited and published by the Institute's forerunners and colleagues. All these led me to the conviction, a *leitmotif* or "red thread" of the present thesis, that my institution was and remains a true national center of excellence in the fields of palaeography and critical editing of historical documents.

The huge Benedictine effort unfolded by the Institute's members since 1920 in the mentioned fields is no amateur movement, but an elitist enterprise, requiring hard work and deep specialization. The most obvious results include the publications of the Institute of History in Cluj, namely the already mentioned 24 collections edited between 1920-2023, joined by the Institute's periodicals, counting 97 tomes (1921-2023) of the "Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj" (Yearbook of the Institute of History in Cluj), 8 numbers (2018-2021) of the "Buletinul informativ" (Newsletter) and the first 2 numbers of the "Revista de istorie economică/Romanian Journal of Economic History" (2022-2023).

Paddling against the current (so popular nowadays) of trivializing historical culture, of thinning both general knowledge and special references needed by the researcher, of ignoring indicators of research quality and measuring only standards of quantity and editorial policies, at the risk of not being modern at all, nor adapted to the present time and society, I propose a model of a history researcher dedicated to his profession, to the important research topics (not to the mercantile, catchy ones, pleasing only the large public and the sponsors) and, most of all, to the primary sources (to which access is allowed by the *passe-partout* of the document languages and palaeographies). Walking the narrow path, professional acknowledgement and financial success might come (or not) later, instead such a researcher, not depending on fashion and trends, but only on documents, will bring to an end solid works, which most probably (although becoming no bestsellers) will never depreciate and decrease, but maintain and increase their value.