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*Anexa nr.6*

## **ABSTRACT OF THE HABILITATION THESIS\***

***CUM EUROPA CONEXI – CONNECT TO EUROPE.***  
**The Greek-Catholic Church and Modernity in Northwestern Romania:  
Institutions, Elites, Education And Cultural Heritage  
(Nineteenth-Twentieth Centuries).**

**Field of Habilitation: HISTORY**

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This habilitation paper, entitled "*Cum Europa conexi - Connect to Europe. The Greek-Catholic Church and Modernity in the North-West of Romania: Institutions, Elites, Education and Cultural Heritage (XIX-XX Centuries)*" represents the research work that I undertook after the public defense, in 2011, of the doctoral thesis entitled "Ecclesiastical and school structures in the Greek-Catholic Diocese of Oradea. Parishes and Village Schools (1850-1900)". This paper describes the multidisciplinary research that I have done, and continue to do, in defining more clearly some segments of the history of the current territory of north-western Romania, in which the Greek-Catholic confession was the promoter, among Romanians, of some fundamental values of European civilization (education, awareness of Latinity, civic spirit and national rights, dignity and cultural identity). The whole approach is also a critical evaluation of the relationship between ecclesiastical, cultural, and educational institutions, on the one hand, and the social, political, and confessional transformations of the region, on the other.

The paper is structured into two large chapters, "Representative Scientific Achievements" and "Academic and Scientific Career Development Plan", each having main sub-themes that reflect both the continuity in the research of the topics and especially the interest in bringing to light new data and interpretations, which would enrich the bibliography of the subject in the northwestern area of Romania. Within the two main chapters, we aimed to capitalize on the representative contributions already made and to outline future research programs based on the systematic exploitation of archival sources, interdisciplinary approaches, and the integration of local themes into a broader historiographical framework for European and Central-Eastern Europe.

Within the representative scientific achievements, the first major research direction is that of the history of the Greek-Catholic ecclesial institution in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a focus on the Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Oradea and its role in the religious, social, educational, and cultural life of northwestern Romania. Thus, after completing the doctoral thesis, the research continued and was developed by capitalizing on the archives in the country and abroad, the library funds, and the old press, outlining a clearer picture of the functioning of church institutions, the relationship between Church and state, parish and school organization, as well as the role of the clergy in the modernization of Romanian society. The researched documents reveal the factor of connection to



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the values of Europe, of Western Christianity, which gave impetus to the modernization of Romanian society. This framework includes the volumes dedicated to ecclesiastical personalities, such as the Blessed Martyr Bishop, Valeriu Traian Frențiu (1875-1952), but also thematic syntheses on the past of the Greek-Catholic Eparchy of Oradea in the context of the Great Union (1918-1919). The exhibition catalogue dedicated to the history of the Diocese of Oradea completes these researches, transforming the documentary and iconographic material into an accessible and useful tool for both the educational environment and the general public. The relevance of these works lies both in the capitalization of unpublished documents and in the clarification of insufficiently researched episodes. The dissemination activity was carried out through scientific conferences, documentary exhibitions, and other publications (Romanian-English bilingual exhibition catalogue), which allowed the transfer of research results from the academic environment to the general public.

The second fundamental direction is dedicated to the persecution and resistance of the Greek Catholic Church during the communist regime. The opening of the archives of the former Securitate made it possible to deepen a sensitive and complex theme, which requires not only access to new sources, but also to a careful critical methodology, which is capable of distinguishing between true and false information, produced by the wickedness of the repressive totalitarian system. The research focused on the biographies of bishops and priests, underground church structures, mechanisms of surveillance and repression, as well as the continuity of religious life in conditions of illegality. The volumes dedicated to Bishop Iuliu Hirțea (1914-1978) and the synthesis in English about the Greek-Catholics in northwestern Romania illustrate the deepening of the research direction and its openness to the international academic circuit. The importance of these contributions is doubled in the dissemination activities, materialized in conferences, exhibitions, public interventions (radio and television) and specialized studies, oriented towards the recovery of historical memory, essential for understanding the relations between the church and political power in the twentieth century.

The third component of the scientific activity that I have undertaken is related to the history of culture and education in the north-west of Romania, especially by channeling the research approach to a few representative institutions in Oradea. This direction complements the study of ecclesiastical history, showing that the evolution of the Greek-Catholic Church is fundamentally linked to the history of education that it supported in the formation of the Romanian elites. Thus, a central place is occupied



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by the research project dedicated to the Greek-Catholic Seminary of Oradea, completed with the publication of an extensive trilogy that reconstructs the history of the institution of the Seminary (volume I), the biographies of students (volume II), and the documentary corpus (volume III) in the period 1792-1948. This project, carried out within a research team, with a systematic work in capitalizing on archives, combines institutional history, education history, and prosopography. In the same framework are the studies related to the *Preparandia* (Normal School) and other educational institutions, as well as the investigations dedicated to musical and cultural formation in Oradea. This analyzed segment also confirms the connection to Europe, the educational process carried out within the above-mentioned institutions being defining in the modernization of the Romanian society in the geographical space of north-western Romania.

In close connection with the professional experience carried out within the "Gheorghe Șincai" Bihor County Library, the third fundamental research direction that we have carried out is dedicated to the history of old books, printing, and libraries in northwestern Romania. The research we have developed in this field has capitalized both funds from the "Special Collections" of the library, as well as archival sources and bibliographies following themes such as the circulation of the old book, church schematismus, the funds of ecclesiastical libraries, the history of the local printing press, incunabula and post-incunabula, as well as the representations of the old press on some events, personalities and confessional communities. The volume dedicated to books, censorship, and libraries in northwestern Romania synthesizes some of these concerns and proposes an interdisciplinary approach that connects cultural history, theology, and sociology. Documentary exhibitions and published catalogues contribute to the preservation and transmission of research results, transforming the heritage dedicated to the subject of the history of old books and libraries into a tool of cultural and historical education. This research direction demonstrates that the study of old book collections and the history of libraries can become a way to reconstruct the intellectual and confessional environments in the northwestern territory of Romania.

In the plan for the development of the academic and scientific career, I aimed to develop a research vision focused on consolidating and expanding studies on two main directions: the history of the Greek-Catholic ecclesiastical institution and the history of culture and education, both also in the north-western area of Romania in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



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For the first direction, the starting point is the observation that, although the research on the history of the Greek-Catholic Church has advanced considerably after 1990, there are still areas that have not been sufficiently investigated, both at the level of general history and of parish micro-history. In this perspective, we propose a systematic exploitation of the rich archival funds existing in the county and central archives, as well as a conceptual revision of the writing of church history, where the emphasis must fall on the writing of a history that goes beyond apologetic frameworks and integrates the religious, social, educational, political, and cultural dimensions of the institution. The need for in-depth research on the micro-history of parishes, interconfessional relations, religious interference, the local implementation of the Union with Rome, the activity of Catholic missionary orders, and the dynamics of ecumenical dialogue is highlighted. At the same time, the communist period and the transition from communism to democracy can be segments of maximum interest, which require critical investigations on the repression, clandestinity, institutional reconstruction, and identity redefinition of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania.

For the second direction, that of the history of culture and education, the academic development program that I propose in this paper starts from the idea that this field has a much more solid historiographical base than ecclesiastical history, but which still suffers from the absence of updated monographs dedicated to school and educational institutions in northwestern Romania. The conceptual framework of this direction situates history as a factor of convergence between fields such as philosophy, theology, pedagogy, linguistics, and sociology, thus supporting the multidisciplinary character of the research. It is thus proposed to deepen some themes regarding both the history of education (the Diocesan Greek-Catholic Normal School in Oradea, the Roman-Catholic Theological Seminaries in Oradea and Satu Mare, the network of confessional schools) and those of the history of education, namely the youth movements in north-western Romania (the scout movement). Both research directions can bring clarifications in defining the important role that school and educational institutions have played in the formation of local and regional elites. The mentioned research directions are based on the use of primary sources from Romanian and foreign archives, correlated with secondary sources and specialized bibliography from libraries and online databases. Similarly, research into the history of the old book and libraries continues, being an area with high potential for development. The approached conceptual framework takes into account the function of the book and



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the printing press in the processes of literacy, of cultural formation of the clerical and secular elites, thus connecting the Romanian population to Western European civilization. Based on the information from the county archives and the funds from the "Special Collections" of the libraries, it is possible to develop both "classical" themes related to parish and school libraries, the diocesan Greek-Catholic library in Oradea, the libraries of the Greek-Catholic educational and educational institutions in Oradea (Diocesan Seminary and the Preparandia), as well as complex and interdisciplinary themes, which capture the impact of specialized literature in the formation of the elites (bishops, canons, archpriests, professors).

In conclusion, this habilitation work shows the construction of a unitary vision regarding the religious and cultural history of north-western Romania, in the period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an approach that demonstrates the integration of local research into the broader framework of national history and the history of Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time, it shows the continuity of research after defending the PhD in 2011, showing concern for the critical recovery of the history of the Greek-Catholic institution, of cultural and educational institutions, based on research with primary documents, having both interdisciplinary openness and concern for the communication of research in the academic environment and for the general public. It is the proof of a thorough consolidation regarding the Greek-Catholic ecclesiastical history, the communist persecution, the history of education, and the history of the old book, on the basis of which future research projects can be proposed, capable of contributing both to the development of knowledge and to the consolidation of the cultural memory of the Romanian people. From balance sheet to project, enabling paper "*Cum Europa conexi - Connect to Europe. The Greek-Catholic Church and Modernity in Northwestern Romania: Institutions, Elites, Education and Cultural Heritage (XIX-XX Centuries)*" aims not only to recover the past in a documentary way, but also to reinterpret it in a way that is as relevant as possible for current historiography.