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O I P O S D R U



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ



Doina Paula DOROFTEI

Inscripțiile în limba latină
din bisericile României,
din perioada 1290-1850,
*cu privire specială
asupra bisericilor maghiare
din Transilvania*



Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române



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CU PRIVIRE SPECIALĂ
ASUPRA BISERICILOR MAGHIARE DIN TRANSILVANIA**



**INSCRIȚII ÎN LIMBA LATINĂ DIN BISERICILE ROMÂNIEI, DIN PERIOADA 1290–
1850, CU PRIVIRE SPECIALĂ ASUPRA BISERICILOR MAGHIARE DIN
TRANSILVANIA**

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membru corespondent al Academiei Române**

Lucrare realizată în cadrul proiectului „Valorificarea identităților culturale în procesele globale”, cofinanțat din Fondul Social European prin Programul Operațional Sectorial Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane 2007 – 2013, contractul de finanțare nr. POSDRU/89/1.5/S/59758.

Titlurile și drepturile de proprietate intelectuală și industrială asupra rezultatelor obținute în cadrul stagiului de cercetare postdoctorală aparțin Academiei Române.

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Reproducerea, fie și parțială și pe orice suport, este posibilă numai cu acordul prealabil
al Academiei Române.

ISBN 978-973-167-141-3

Depozit legal: Trim. II 2013

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Colecția *AULA MAGNA*



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Titlul proiectului: „Valorificarea identităților culturale în procesele globale”

Contract: POSDRU/89/1.5/S/59758

Beneficiar: ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

Parteneri în proiect: (I) UNIVERSITATEA POLITEHNICA București, Facultatea de Mecanică și Mecatronică; (II) UNIVERSITATEA din Craiova



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ADDENDA

Abstract

Latin Inscriptions in the Churches of Romania (with special emphasis on the Hungarian Churches of Transylvania), 1290–1850

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The main purpose of our paper is a complex interdisciplinary study of the Latin inscriptions in the churches of Romania, ranging from the 13th c. to the 19th c., with a special emphasis on the Hungarian churches of Transylvania.

Unlike previous approaches, which have been interested only in the historical and artistic point of view, our research focuses on the language and the epigraphy of the inscriptions.

The present study takes as its premise the hypothesis of the unity of ecclesiastical Latin under the circumstances of confessional and ethnical diversity and attempts to examine of several peculiar features of *media et infima latinitas* used as sacred language and as language of cultural tradition.

Given its ethnical and confessional blending, Transylvania is an area of greatest interest. Our research aims to be an interdisciplinary investigation of these relationships as reflected in the Latin inscriptions, approached from a pluri-confessional (i.e. Catholic, Lutheran, Unitarian, Protestant, Greek-Catholic, Orthodox Churches) and multi-ethnic (Saxon, Hungarian, Romanian) point of view.

In the context of the increasing European interest for *media et infima latinitas*, and for Medieval and Humanist Latin Epigraphy, our theme tries to update and synchronize Romanian research with the main inventories of Western and Central Europe: *Corpus des inscriptions de la France médiévale*, 1974..., *Die Deutschen Inschriften*, 1953..., *Corpus Inscriptionum Helvetiae*, 1977..., *Corpus Inscriptionum Poloniae*, 1975... etc. During our research stages

at the Central European University – the Department of Medieval Studies in Budapest (tutor Professor Dr. Katalin Szende) and at the Freie Universität Berlin – Institut für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie / Mittellatein (tutor Professor Dr. Bernd Roling) we have thoroughly examined the structure of articles in each one of these inventories. The comparative study of Medieval Latin glossaries and repertories of inscriptions have proved extremely useful in enriching our research methodology and in drafting our file pattern.

Research on Latin epigraphy of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the beginnings of the modern period in Romania

Old 19th c. sources (travel journals, church *visitaciones*, museum catalogues, etc.) are extremely valuable for our topic since many of the noted inscriptions are lost or deteriorated at present. Of the monographic studies, the monumental works written by Orbán Balász, especially *A Székelyföld leírása*, Pest, 1868–1873, are sources of information of first importance. The documentation on the Latin inscriptions of Transylvania in the library and archive of the "Siebenbürgen Institute" in Gundelsheim am Neckar greatly contributed to extend of the data base and to complete many older versions of the inscriptions with materials from studies and articles dating from the end of the 19th c. and the beginning of the 20th c.

There are also many modern specialized studies of art history (Entz Geza, Kelemen Lajos, Balogh Jolán, Virgil Vătăşianu, Vasile Drăguţ, Corina Popa, Nicolae Sabău), history, ecclesiastical architecture, zonal monographs (Dávid László), inscription repertories (Ioan Albu – Sibiu), studies about a certain type of pieces, such as bells (Benkő Elek), coffered ceilings, tombstones etc.

THE WORKING CORPUS

The corpus comprises about 250 Latin inscriptions from the Hungarian churches in Transylvania, out of which only a part has been included in the present study: inscriptions collected from bibliographical sources and lost inscriptions, inscriptions *in situ* and several inscriptions on objects belonging to museum collections of Budapest (Georg Apafi's sarcophagus, the Lelicieni altar, bells from Bulci and Sânpaul).

The main **researched area** is represented by nearly 50 villages from the Eastern and North-Eastern Transylvania, i.e., the counties of Covasna, Harghita, Bistrița-Năsăud. The investigation covers the Hungarian churches belonging to the Catholic, Unitarian and Reformed Confessions. The file of each church contains not only the inscriptions *in situ*, but also data collected from bibliographical sources in order to offer a complete image of the use of the Latin language in these areas during the centuries.

Chronological limits: Given the characteristic temporal delay in this region as compared to the Western or the Central European zone, the period discussed ranges from the end of the 13th c. (the first dated inscriptions: 1290, 1299 Luncani/Gerend, stone inscriptions; 1300, Câmpulung, tombstone of Laurentius de Longocampo) to 1850, which is the chronological limit of the "Medieval Inscriptions of Romania" series edited by the Romanian Academy. This extension of the period to be studied beyond the chronological higher limit of 1550–1550 established by Western and Central European repertories may be useful for any future research of *infima latinitas* as a concluding part of the history of the Latin language.

STAGES OF THE RESEARCH

– During the first stage we made a signal list of inscriptions from all areas of Romania, collected from bibliographical and archival sources (the Catholic Archbishopric of Alba-Iulia, the Reformed and Unitarian Church archives in Cluj-Napoca, the Consistorial archive of the Lutheran Church in Sibiu). Each file included the identification of the object, its present location (e.g. *in situ* / in a museum collection / lost etc.), some technical data regarding the inscription (a short description of the object, its present condition - deteriorated, restored, destroyed etc.), bibliographical sources.

– The next and most difficult stage was represented by the research in the Hungarian churches for the documentation *in situ* involving an accurate transcription of the text, photos and drawings of the inscriptions, measurements of the pieces and of the letters.

– The repertory files and the epigraphic, linguistic and stylistic commentary

REPERTORY FILES

Each file comprises the following data:

- place name in Romanian (present and old name) and Hungarian, the confession of the local church, the first mention of the village in documents
- description of the object: place of the inscription on the object, material (stone, metal, wood, plaster), dimensions of the object and of the inscription, letter measures and type of inscribing
- the text of the inscription
- its transcription, using unitary and modern epigraphic norms and reconstructing the units of the text (syntagms and verses)
- a comparison of different versions as mentioned in bibliographical sources with the original inscription on the object
- a Romanian translation
- epigraphic observations: type of letters; peculiar shape of letters and numbers; date formulae; combinations of letters; abbreviations; punctuation marks
- the quoted bibliography, in chronological order

The files are ordered in alphabetical order of the place names, in chronological, and in typological order.

Since our present approach is confined to the description, the epigraphic and linguistic aspects of the inscriptions, it is extremely important to extend the research to related aspects including history, art history, Church history, paleography, epigraphy, theology, etc. in order to draw a complete file from an interdisciplinary point of view.

THE EPIGRAPHIC AND LINGUISTIC COMMENTARY

The last section of the paper provides ample epigraphic, linguistic and stylistic commentary on the working corpus. This commentary and the comparisons with the formulae of related texts are based on information from other areas of Transylvania, from Wallachia, and Moldavia.

A) The epigraphic commentary

The epigraphic notes of each inscription file are included in a commentary about the following aspects:

- **Dating expressions:** The most widespread formula is *anno Domini*, first the year being indicated according to the Roman system, then in the transition from Roman to Arabian figures, until these last ones became generally used. Some other formulae are rarely attested: *anno Christi*, *anno Salutis*, *a partu virginis*. Later are used indirect attestations with reference to priesthood in such formulae as *sub plebano...*, *sub pastoratu...*, *sub officio...* or *tempore parochi...tempore aedilium...*, followed by proper names.
- The **types of writing** used during the mentioned period are: Gothic majuscules, Gothic minuscules, humanistic writing, modern writings.
- A special chapter is devoted to the analysis of **combinations of letters**, to their inventory and frequency in different periods: ligatures of 2 or 3 letters, enclaves and interwoven letters. It is also noticed the frequently-used association of these combinations (e.g. ligatures and enclaves, ligatures and interwoven letters etc.), especially in the first half of the 16th c.
- The chronology and frequency of **abbreviations** are examined in relationship with lexical categories, the main types of abbreviations being:
 - by contraction – used for *nomina sacra* (*Dominus*, *Christus*, *Sanctus Spiritus*), *ecclesia*, *anno*, some titles and their correspondent qualifications;
 - by suspension – for some titles and their correspondent qualifications, partially latinized place names, name of time divisions (year, month), indication of age (*aetatis suae*)
 - by initials, especially titles and functions, time units (*A.D.*), some funerary formulae imitating the antique epigraphy (*D.O.M.*, *D.O.M.S.*);
 - by special signs of abbreviation (–, ~, ° etc.) – their inventory and significance

B) The linguistic commentary

The language of the Church inscriptions is deeply formalized, using fixed formulae, Biblical and liturgical quotation and a limited vocabulary. This conventionality is to be considered as a methodological advantage: such a small corpus of dated Latin inscriptions may become a model to be used and improved in the following studies concerning *media et infima latinitas* in other types of texts, such as documents or literary works.

The lexical commentary, based on these stereotypes of the language, follows the inscription formulary: the typology of the formulae, their chronological use and their structure (nominal and verbal centres, the modalities of variation in the limits of a formula etc.), the ethnical and confessional preferences in a certain area.

Typology of formulae:

The inscriptions collected from churches have similarly structured Christian messages, comprising two types of information: a first one refers to religious texts (Biblical, liturgical and patristic quotations, with peculiar confessional preferences for each period), the other to concrete data (e.g. names of donors, details about building and local communities, biographies of the deceased etc.)

a) Christian formulae

The preferred sources of the religious formulae are from *Ezekiel*, *Job*, the *Book of Psalms*, the *New Testament*, and the liturgy. There are also some Trinitarian formulae and epithets for *nomina sacra* (*numen*, *Tetragrammaton*, *Dominus Deus Zebaoth*) whose chronological occurrences illustrate the history of the Church movements within the Christian Church.

Some formulae are generally used for all types of objects, especially after the Reform (*Verbum Domini manet in aeternum*, *in honorem Dei*, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*), other formulae are specialized for tombstones or bells (*O rex gloriae veni cum pace*, *Deus homo factus est*). There are chronological, ethnical and confessional preferences for certain quotations or formulae (*Verbum Domini manet in aeternum* - mostly used by the Reformation, *Soli Deo gloria*, *in honorem Unius veri Dei et Filii Sui Iesu Christi* - preferred by the Unitarian Church)

b) The formulae about donors and donations, acquisitions, expenses are usually inscribed on church furniture (pulpits and their canopies, priests' stalls), walls, coffered ceilings, bells, etc.

c) Formulae of construction and restoration

The craftsman is designed first by most general terms (*magister, opifex, artifex*), later by differentiated terms (*fusor, pictor, sculptor, architector* etc.). The created object is always named *opus*. Specialized terminology has been developed only at a later time, such as terms of architecture (for 'church', 'part of the church', 'fortification', 'parsonage'), bells, altars, coffered ceilings (*lacunar, laqueare, tabula*).

The same evolution is illustrated by the verbs which designate 'to build', 'to confect', 'to restore': from general meaning of the verb *facere* to specialized terms such as: *funderere* for bells, *sculperere, pingere*.

d) Funerary formulae are very diversified:

– the vocabulary related to 'death', 'grave', 'to bury', 'to commemorate' etc., occurs in varied combinations.

– elements of ancient mythology (comparisons, metaphors, funerary formulae) are largely used in Renaissance inscriptions.

The linguistic commentary closes with a **glossary** of terms found in the studied inscriptions. From this point of view the most interesting are the synonymous series (*moles, monumentum, sarcophagus, sepulchrum, tumulus, tumba, urna* for 'grave', *saxum - lapis - marmor - petra* for 'tombstone', *consors - coniunx - conthoralis* for 'wife'), the changes of meanings, the occurrences of terms used by the first Christian authors, the option for a morphological variant, etc.

At the end the study has **bibliography** and **indices** (index of place names in Hungarian and Romanian, the chronological and typological indices).

It is important to notice that some of the aspects that are only mentioned in this study have been discussed in detail and in depth in several of our papers published during the postdoctoral research. This is the case with the diffusion of the formulae of the inscriptions on bells from Germany, France and Transylvania; the style of the funeral inscriptions

(focusing on elements of antique Latin inscriptions taken over by Renaissance epigraphy), the relationship between phonetics and writing in the inscriptions, the names of church building and their chronological use, the structure of place names in (partially) Latinized form (inventory of suffixes, their frequency and distribution, types of lexical bases).

In our view, the importance of the present study lies in its substantial contribution it brings to the historical and religious background of the Romanian culture and for further comparative studies, such as those concerning the typology of the formulae and their diffusion in Western / Central / Eastern Europe. Our present, primordially descriptive, research for the Romanian area will be considerably improved and extended when similar studies will be elaborated. This subsequent work will eventually enable researchers to draw a more substantial comparison and to derive pertinent conclusions with respect to the integration of the Eastern and Western areas that have used Latin as a major means of European communication.

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Editura Muzeului Național al Literaturii Române

CNCS PN - II - ACRED - ED - 2012 – 0374

Coperta colecției: *AULA MAGNA*

Machetare, tehnoredactare și prezentare grafică:

Victor PREDA, Nicolae LOGIN

Logistică editorială și diseminare:

Ovidiu SÎRBU, Radu AMAN

Traducerea sumarului și sintezei, corectură și bun de tipar
asigurate de autor

ISBN 978-973-167-141-3

Apărut trim. II 2013