ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

SUMMARY OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

TITLE: **Law, Family, and Church: Matrimonial Strategies and Inheritance Practices among Romanians in Transylvania (1848-1918)**

Field of habilitation: **HISTORY**

Author: **Daniela Deteșan**

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The habilitation thesis, *Law, Family, and Church: Matrimonial Strategies and Inheritance Practices among Romanians in Transylvania (1848-1918)*, summarizes my main professional achievements since obtaining my PhD in History. My research into the modern history of Romanians in Transylvania, based on the critical editing of unpublished documents, has shaped my scientific traiectory and all my publications: 2 single-author books, 15 (co)edited volumes of documents, 5 edited volumes of studies, 1 book chapter, 66 specialized studies and articles, 14 articles published in foreign languages, 46 presentations at international conferences, and 24 presentations at national conferences.

Over the past two decades, I have been involved in 11 research grants, as project director, team member, or collaborator. The postdoctoral grant carried out between 2011 and 2013, provided me, in addition to research stays at internationally renowned institutions, with the opportunity to deliver seminars at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, as a visiting researcher. These seminars were organized within the research group ”Pouvoirs et dépendances au sein de la famille: perspectives comparatives (16e-20e siècles)”, coordinated by Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux. The topics addressed (family formation, inheritance legislation and practices, concubinage, and children born outside marriage) focused on the historical context of modern Transylvania. I have also been involved in the organization of several academic events and, since 2021, in the annual organization of sessions and panels as part of the Cluj Academic Days. I co-organize the IFSGen online conference series, which reached its fourth edition in 2026. The international relevance and visibility of these initiatives are also reflected in the publication in Aspasia of a presentation of the network (vol. 18, issue 1, 2024) and of the report on the second IFSGen conference (vol. 19, issue 1, 2025).

My scholarly trajectory has developed around four main research strands: 1) the programmatic and tactical history of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania between 1849 and 1918; 2) demographic phenomena between normative frameworks and actual practices; 3) rural property, inheritance, and wills; and 4) the status of women and marital behaviors outside the law. My aim has been to understand the history of society through the lived experiences of ordinary people. I have investigated marriage strategies and inheritance practices among Romanians in modern Transylvania, examining them from the perspectives of civil and canon law, the Habsburg state and, after 1867, the Austro-Hungarian state, as well as

the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches. Such an approach brings to light individual and family trajectories, legal spaces and contexts, local and regional legal traditions, as well as the arguments and rationale underlying people's actions and the decisions they made at two crucial moments in life: marriage and death. Religion and social class influenced individual and family behaviours. Factors related to the particular characteristics and traditions of specific regions shaped distinct marital alliances, circumstances, and practices within families. I have been particularly interested in family, marriage, divorce, remarriage, concubinage, children born out of wedlock, legislation, inheritance practices, and the status of women, because these topics reveal how society functioned in practice, beyond the major political events of the period. My research has demonstrated that legal and religious norms directly influenced individual life trajectories, family relationships, gender relations, and the mechanisms of social integration and marginalization. By bringing together the findings of my research, the thesis proposes an interpretative framework aimed at capturing the essence of the phenomena and behaviors of the region's inhabitants, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the causes, mechanisms, and contexts in which these developments took place.

Through my involvement in two different research projects focusing on family history and historical demography, I undertook research stays in France (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and Institut national d'études démographiques, Paris), the Netherlands (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam; Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague; and Radboud University, Nijmegen), England (Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Cambridge), and Hungary (Demographic Research Institute, Budapest). I also participated in postdoctoral training programmes, acquiring specialized methodological skills, including through the *Introductory Course on Techniques and Methods in Historical Demography*, organized by the European Science Foundation within the European Historical Population Sample Network, at Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, in 2013. I have participated in a number of prestigious international conferences. I attended the European Social Science History Conference on two consecutive occasions, in Ghent (2010) and Glasgow (2012). At the 21st International Congress of Historical Sciences, held in Amsterdam in 2010, I presented a paper in the *Family, Demography and Well-being* session. At the first conference organized within the MOSAIC

project, initiated and conducted through the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany (2011), I presented a paper on population censuses conducted in Transylvania during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 2013, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Spanish Association of Historical Demography, I participated in the 10th International Congress, held in Albacete. In 2019, I was awarded, through the national competition organized by UEFISCDI, a researcher mobility grant under the PNCDIII-MC2019 programme, which enabled me to participate in the biennial anniversary colloquium of the French Society of Demography, *Divorcer autrefois? La séparation matrimoniale de l'Antiquité au XXe siècle. Mondes européens et extra-européens*, held in Lyon. In 2021, I participated in the international conference *Separated Beds-Interwoven Property: Divorce in Context, 1600-1900*, organized by the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies and the Department of History of the University of Vienna. Since 2013, I have been developing a historical database on Sălișteː the HDS (Historical Database of Sălișteː), which has been continuously updated. Based on the information entered into the HDS, I have published 19 scholarly studies and delivered 24 academic presentations. My articles have been published in prestigious Romanian journals (Transylvanian Review, Yearbook of the „George Barițiu" Insitute of History. Series Historica, Revue Roumaine d'Histoire, Romanian Journal of Population Studies), as well as in international journals (Annales de Démographie Historique).

The thesis is divided into two sections of unequal length. The first and more extensive section brings together the results of my research conducted between 2007 and 2026. The second section outlines my career development plan and sets out my future research projects.

In terms of content, the thesis is structured into five chapters, each divided into several subchapters. Chapter I synthesizes the research directions I have pursued to date. It serves as an introduction, placing the objectives, motivations, sources, methods, and general historical context within a broader framework. It also explores and theorizes three key concepts relevant to historical demography, family history, and rural history: two complementary notions, marriage strategies and inheritance strategies, and one multidimensional concept, the rural elite. Chapter II brings together my research on marriage and inheritance legislation. It includes an analysis of three complex and multifaceted demographic phenomena traditionally regarded as marginal: concubinage, illegitimacy, and divorce. Chapters III and IV complement each

other. They bring together the findings of my investigations devoted to matrimonial strategies and inheritance practices. Chapter IV presents a new avenue opened in historiography through notarial sources, which remain insufficiently explored. Among the significant highlighted in the volume on marriage and inheritance that I edited in 2013 are property inventories, indispensable sources for the study of inheritance systems and mechanisms of property mechanisms. Chapter V includes two case studies. The first focuses on Mărginimea Sibiului region and the ecclesiastical archive preserved in Săliște. The second concerns a project initiated in 2022 through IFSGen, the Romanian Network Women's and Gender History. I am a co-founding member of this network, which aims to reinvigorate and bring together research on women's history and gender studies conducted in Romania.

The thesis concludes with a career development plan building on the research directions pursued to date, with particular emphasis on the processing and critical editing of unpublished documents, the development of existing databases and the creation of new ones, and the production of scholarly research tools, including chrestomathies, repertories, catalogues, monographs, and individual and collective volumes.