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The Jesuit Mission in Moldova

(17th Century)

– Summary –

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## **Contents**

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter I.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Society of Jesus and Moldova at the Turn of the 16th Century .....</b>	<b>19</b>
I.1 Organization of Loyola's Order .....	28
I.2 Jesuit Missionary Work.....	36
I.3 Jesuits in Poland.....	41
I.4 The First Jesuits in Moldova.....	56
I.4.1 Antonio Possevino.....	60
I.4.2 Julio Mancinelli.....	65
I.4.3 Alexandro Comuleo.....	69
<b>Chapter II .....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>The First Polish Jesuit Mission in Moldova .....</b>	<b>72</b>
II.1 Political Context .....	72
II.2. The Course of the Mission.....	78
II.3. Jesuits Expelled from Transylvania in 1588.....	94
II.4. Catholicism in Moldova after Petru Șchiopul .....	101
<b>Chapter III.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>The Hungarian Jesuit Mission in Moldova .....</b>	<b>108</b>
III.1. Paul Beke and the 1644 Visit to Moldova.....	118
III.2. The Hungarian Mission until 1650.....	124
III.3. Beke between the Archbishop of Marcianopolis and the Conventual Franciscans...	141
<b>Chapter IV.....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>The Second Polish Jesuit Mission.....</b>	<b>162</b>
IV.1. Polish Jesuits' Route to the East.....	162
IV.2. A New Mission in Moldova .....	175

IV. 3. Organization of the Mission until 1668 .....	190
IV.4 Return of the Polish Jesuits and Mission Activities until 1699 .....	200
Chapter V .....	208
<b>Missionary Controversies</b> .....	208
V.1. The Jesuits and the Bishop of Bacău, Rudzinski .....	208
V.2. Polish Jesuits between the New Archbishop of Marcianopolis and the Conventual Franciscans .....	223
V.3. Return of the Polish Jesuits to Moldova and Recurrence of Old Conflicts .....	240
Chapter VI.....	247
<b>The School and the Jesuits</b> .....	247
VI.1. The Jesuit Educational System and the <i>Ratio Studiorum</i> .....	247
VI.2. The College in Cotnari.....	262
VI.3. The School in Iași .....	270
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	277
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	285
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	286
<b>Appendices::</b> .....	303
<b>Appendix 1</b> – <i>Catalogus primus missionis Moldavica et Turcica. Anno 1651</i> .....	303
<b>Appendix 2</b> - <i>Catalogus secundi missionis Moldavica et Turcica. Anno 1651, 20 September</i> (same Jesuits) .....	305
<b>Appendix 3</b> – <i>Catalogus tertius missionis Moldavica Anni 1655</i> .....	306
<b>Appendix 4</b> – Detailed report on the missions coordinated by the College of Kamienica. .....	307
<b>Appendix 5</b> – <i>Catalogus primus, Missionem Moldavica – 1655</i> .....	385
<b>Appendix 6</b> – Jesuits from the Polish Province in Moldova during the first Polish mission .....	310
<b>Appendix 7</b> – Jesuits from the Austrian Province in Moldova.....	312

<b>Appendix 8 – Jesuit missionaries from the Polish Province in Moldova during the second Polish mission_</b>	313
<b>Illustrations</b>	314

Of all the religious orders founded before the 16th century, none is more familiar to historians or has a more extensive bibliography than the Society of Jesus. Therefore, it may seem difficult to add something new to the vast tableau that constitutes the history of Ignatius of Loyola's order. Yet, the Company of Jesus, as it has also been known since its inception, never ceases to surprise us. Without a doubt, the abundance of studies has been favored primarily by the documentary wealth of the archives collected by the Jesuits throughout their years of activity. The top-down structure of the order and the centralization around the concept of "government" within the Society produced an immense documentary heritage that allows us to reconstruct not only the relationships between the various provinces of the Society and the Roman center, but also offers insight into the functioning of all its colleges, residences, and congregations, both past and present—in short, the entire archive, built up since the year 1540<sup>1</sup>. From the very beginning of the Jesuit archives, the historiographical use of manuscripts was a major objective of the Society. The first emblematic figure in the development of both administration and historiography was Juan de Polanco. He was, therefore, also the first organizer of the central Roman archive of the order. During the generalate of Claudio Acquaviva, the project for a history of the Society of Jesus was initiated. The role of official Jesuit "historian" was institutionalized, and on occasion, there were even two people responsible for this task within the Roman curia. By 1773, five volumes of the *Historia Societatis Iesu* had been published—all based on the information preserved in the order's archives and its official records<sup>2</sup>.

As the Society began to expand across the globe, maintaining relationships with those in Rome became a major and highly important issue. Thus, the constant sending of letters was seen as the only effective way to counteract tendencies toward decentralization and, as a result, was highly regulated and controlled. A significant portion of the Society's archival holdings includes this correspondence directed to and from the Jesuit headquarters in Rome. Most of the documents issued by the Society of Jesus throughout its history are in the form of correspondence exchanged between the various structures of the order, carried out according to clearly established rules. These rules took the form of a small guide entitled *Formula*

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Lamelle, S.I., *L'archivio generale di un grande ordine religioso: quello della Compagnia di Gesù*, extras din: „Archiva Ecclesiae. Bolletino dell'associazione archivistica ecclesiastica”, Anni XXIV-XXV - 1, Vatican, 1981-1982, p. 89-91.

<sup>2</sup> Markus Friedrich, *Archives as networks: the geography of record-keeping in the Society of Jesus (1540–1773)*, în „Springer Science Business Media B.V.”, publicație online, 2010, p. 388.

*Scribendi*, which laid out how Jesuits in different provinces were to communicate with one another. Accordingly, each member of the order, regardless of their location or mission, was required to write a report to their provincial every week. For provincials, the rule was the same regarding correspondence with the Superior General of the order, except in cases where the provincial did not reside in the same country as the General, in which case correspondence was required at least once a month. Over time, in order to maintain order within this correspondence, certain categories of documents were established, such as: *Litterae Annuae*, *Historia domus*, *Summaria vitae*, *Catalogus primus*, *Historia Societatis*, *Generalium*, *Congregationes*, etc., to facilitate easier reference. These documents consist largely of letters, requests, permissions, and instructions. They also detail much of the social and political contexts of Jesuit missions across all territories in which they were present, making them one of the main sources for reconstructing urban life. However, of particular interest for this study are two collections found in the order's archive under the names *Polonia* and *Austria*. This is because, in the 17th century, the Jesuits who came to Moldova were from these two neighboring countries. As a result, a part of the documentation concerning the development of the mission in the land east of the Carpathians is preserved in the two collections mentioned above.

The archival collections concerning the individual identities of Jesuits—such as final vow formulas, biographies, or necrologies—constitute a substantial part of the Society's archives. The Jesuit catalogues, which document the movement of individuals and the nature of their activities, not only reflect what the Jesuit order represented in ecclesiastical history but also serve as the starting point for any research into Loyola's organization. These records are essential for evaluating the quality of the mission in certain territories, as the training of each individual Jesuit proves to be one of the defining factors in the development of a mission. Moreover, the information preserved about each member is also important for understanding their place within the Society. Undoubtedly, within the order, each individual had to fulfill specific duties—some more complex than others—but all were important for the development of the Company. Therefore, having access to this information allows us to determine the reasons why certain members were sent to particular territories, the intentions of the Superior General or the provincial regarding a specific community, as well as their expectations. The more important a territory was considered—either for the Latin Church or for the leadership of the Society—the better trained the Jesuit who was sent there. In this context, we will examine the mission established by Loyola's monks in Poland, one of the most representative countries

for the Catholic space in Eastern Europe, as well as for the evolution of Catholicism in Moldova.

All these fonds and collections, clearly organized and carefully preserved, serve the purpose of conserving and passing on the legacy handed down from generation to generation, while also making the Society's documents readily accessible to researchers. Thus, by consulting the Jesuit archive—*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*—and especially the aforementioned fonds, which also contain information about the *missio moldavica*, the present work brings a valuable informational contribution that helps complete the broader picture of the Jesuit mission in Moldova, as well as the Latin Church in this region.

On the other hand, the information gathered from the order's archive also helps to fill certain gaps in the history of the Society of Jesus in Moldova. Tracing other missions in neighboring countries, such as Poland or Hungary, can offer not only new interpretations of the development of the Jesuit mission in the lands east of the Carpathians, but also new sources of information.

Approached over the centuries by a multitude of scholars, the history of the order founded by Loyola has been interpreted in so many ways that, all too often, the essence of what the Society of Jesus truly represented—both for the Roman Catholic Church and for society as a whole—is overlooked. Unsurprisingly, the history of the “black-robed” monks holds a significant place within the broader scope of Church history, representing—at least in the period immediately following the Council of Trent—the most distinctive expression of the Catholic Reformation<sup>3</sup>. This movement has since been recognized by modern scholars as a powerful force in reclaiming the “lost territories”<sup>4</sup>.

The religious order founded by Loyola emerged as a missionary movement during a critical period in the history of the Latin Church, employing creative strategies that would later come to symbolize the strength of what would become the traditional Roman Catholic Church for a long time. These strategies included, but were not limited to, reviving and nurturing the faith among Catholics, reclaiming those who had become Protestants, converting the unbaptized, training members for social services, engaging in missionary work, and

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<sup>3</sup> John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits, St. Ignatius, and the Counter Reformation. Some Recent Studies and Their Implication for Today*, in “Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, “*How Humanistic is the Jesuit Tradition?: From the 1599 Ratio Studiorum to Now*”, in „Jesuit Education 21: Conference Proceedings on the Future of Jesuit Higher Education”, vol. ed. de Martin R. Tripole, Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2000, p. 10-11.

establishing educational institutions. The expansion of the Society's mission into other parts of the world was an attempt to compensate for the territories lost in Europe. Ultimately, they quickly found a way to adapt to the various traditions and customs of the mission territories, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of Jesuit missionary work—primarily to the Roman Curia, but also to the leaders of the regions where they established themselves.

Over the past two decades in Romania, there has been a growing number of studies on Catholic communities—especially those in Moldova. Researchers have frequently focused on topics concerning the Catholic faithful in Moldova. This trend suggests that the history of these inhabitants remains a current and relevant subject for Romanian researchers. However, we must also note the notable absence of such works when it comes to the history of the Society of Jesus. We cannot ignore the importance of this order, particularly given its impact on cultural and educational developments in Moldova since the 17th century. From this standpoint, I believe it is essential to approach the history of the Jesuits in this region from a comprehensive perspective; a monograph on the order is truly necessary for Romanian historiography.

In the Romanian context, it is quite evident that in specialized literature the focus does not fall on the elements mentioned above. Rather, the Jesuit mission east of the Carpathians has been directed toward more worldly activities, similar to those of their Franciscan counterparts. By analyzing these differences, we aim to give this study a comprehensive structure—to highlight the uniqueness of the Society of Jesus in this region. Alternatively, we question whether this unity truly existed, or was merely a rule written by Loyola that was not always applied in mission territories. But if the general's rule guided each Jesuit individually, how were exceptions possible in certain regions? Numerous factors distinguish the Society of Jesus from all other religious orders ever founded, yet one thing remains constant among them all: their work in the service of the Church of Rome.

Thus, the present work also attempts to fill in a page of Moldova's history, as well as to answer the questions posed above—especially since the Society of Jesus has proven to be an almost continuous presence in the development of the Latin Church in this region and beyond. Moreover, the Jesuit monks who were active in Moldova not only had a significant impact on the Catholic faithful of the region, but also a major influence on the Orthodox population, with the schools founded by the Jesuits often being taken as models. Furthermore, the work of the “black-robed monks,” as in all territories where they operated, was not limited to the elements explicitly highlighted in the Society's rule, such as evangelization and education, but extended even to more worldly matters like commerce. However, the Society of Jesus had another rule: financial self-sufficiency. Each mission had to find the means to support



itself autonomously. This, once again, distinguished them from other missionaries who came to Moldova at the request of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and who received a “salary” for their pastoral work.

Given all of the above, I wanted to approach this topic for several reasons. First of all, due to the specific nature of this order—one that is very distinct and different from anything that had previously existed in the Eastern Church. Their militant character was what set them apart so clearly at the time from other religious orders. Through their method of organization, they proved to be highly efficient, both in terms of their missionary efforts and the educational system they implemented, which, as we will see in the following pages, became a model for major universities in modern Europe. This is evident first and foremost in the large number of adherents even in the early years of their existence—the order counted around 1,000 members by 1556, the year of Ignatius of Loyola’s death, and had reached 8,272<sup>5</sup> by the year 1600. Their effectiveness was also due to the way they worked with the societies in which they carried out their missions, and the way they related to them. They understood that in order to convert an entire community, one had to start from the top—by earning the trust and loyalty of its leaders<sup>6</sup>. Historians are very cautious and do not easily use the word “revolution,” especially when speaking of a religious order. However, without sounding overly dramatic, this is the right word to describe what happened in the historical study of the Society of Jesus. The “scene” we witness today is so different from what it was just a few decades ago that it is almost unrecognizable<sup>7</sup>. Suddenly, the Jesuits have become a controversial subject—almost as controversial as the Templars once were—generating all kinds of theories, more or less favorable or factual, but all ending in the same conclusion: the revolutionary impact the Society had on the entire Latin Church, and beyond. Therefore, their place on the world stage cannot be contested. These monks accomplished so much in such a short time—compared to other religious orders already in existence in 1540—that, by drawing a parallel, we can quite easily understand why they became so recognized and influential in the development of the Catholic Church to this day.

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<sup>5</sup> Herve Yannou, *Iezuiții și Campania*, traducere din limba franceză de Ion Doru Brana, Editura Nemira, București, 2008, p.35.

<sup>6</sup> Stewart Rose, *Ignatius Loyola and the Early Jesuits*, Longmas, Green and Co., London, 1870, p.170.

<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Maryks, Jonathan Wright, *Current Trends in Jesuit Historiography*, în *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, vol. 1, Brill, 2024.

Another reason why I consider the study of this order necessary concerns the Jesuits' involvement in one of the most important branches of European cultural development—and, by extension, Romanian culture as well. I'm referring here to education and the system they developed. The first Jesuits made their mark as preachers, missionaries, and also reformers of monasteries. However, in 1548, when they opened their first college for lay students in Messina, Sicily, they effectively opened the door to a new beginning. This first Jesuit college, open to all students, was an instant success, and petitions for more Jesuit colleges began pouring into Rome from most cities in Catholic Europe<sup>8</sup>. As Teresa Ferro also attests, thanks to the cultural work of the Society of Jesus, for the first time Romanian intellectuals relied on a type of knowledge that could be described as contemporary and European in scope, since Jesuit schools were uniformly structured from France to Poland. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Moldavian historiography—the starting point of modern Romanian historiography—was inspired by humanist methodological principles and is associated with the names of Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin, who were educated in Jesuit schools in Poland<sup>9</sup>.

A final reason would be to highlight the role the Jesuits played in the specific development of the Latin Church in Moldova. As we will see throughout the pages of this work, I refer here to the ways in which the followers of Loyola fundamentally transformed the course of the Catholic Church. Although at the risk of being considered too subjective, it must be emphasized that the Society of Jesus introduced, in 17th-century Moldova, a new way of “shepherding” Latin communities—one that ultimately influenced their fellow Franciscans as well. Not infrequently, Jesuits working in Moldova were accused of resembling the monks of Saint Francis more than following their own pastoral model. However, we believe—and will demonstrate throughout this study—that the Jesuits were in fact trying to adapt to the community they encountered. Consequently, they adopted certain behaviors similar to those of the Franciscans, who had already been present in Moldova for several centuries. Yet, they never abandoned the strict rules implemented by the leadership of the order.

A final reason for considering a study of the Jesuit order necessary concerns the Jesuits' role in the development of the Latin Church specifically within Moldova. As we will see in the pages of this work, this refers to those ways in which Loyola's followers practically transformed the course of the Catholic Church from its foundations. Although there is a risk of

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<sup>8</sup> William V. Gangert, S.J., *Istoria iezuiților*, trad. de Marius Talos, S.J., Editura Ars Longa, Cluj, 2001, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup> Teresa Ferro, *I missionari cattolici in Moldavia. Studi storici e linguistici*, Editura Clusium, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 31.

being labeled too subjective, it must be emphasized that the Society of Jesus introduced, in 17th-century Moldova, a different way of “shepherding” Latin communities—one that ultimately also influenced their Franciscan confreres. It was not uncommon for Jesuits working in Moldova to be accused of resembling the monks of Saint Francis more than following their own pastoral approach. Yet, we believe—and will demonstrate throughout the study—that the Jesuits actually sought to adapt to the communities they encountered. Consequently, they adopted certain behaviors similar to those of the Franciscans, who had been present in Moldova for several centuries. However, they never abandoned the strict rules implemented by the order’s leadership.

### **Research Status:**

Within the overall picture of Latin ecclesiastical historiography in Moldova, the list of works addressing the local Catholic community can be quite extensive. However, at the same time, we observe that those who have specifically studied the Jesuit order are very few, and each has focused only on a particular aspect of the mission’s development. This is also evident in the fact that over the years, only a few works have been published about this Society, none of which fully address the history of the order in the territory east of the Carpathians. It should not be overlooked that Romanian researchers have treated this subject rather succinctly, focusing only on certain aspects of the Jesuit mission. Overall, too few works discuss this Society and its activities in Moldova. Undoubtedly, the most important work belongs to Francisc Pall, who in 1939 published, within the Romanian School in Rome, the work *Le controversie tra i minori conventuali e i gesuiti nelle missione di Moldavia*. Pall’s study on this topic presents in detail all the problematic issues, namely all the conflicts between members of the two orders present in the Moldavian capital from the mid-17th century until the suppression of the order on July 21, 1773, by the papal bull *Dominus ac Redemptor*, issued by Clement XVI. Thus, Pall’s research exposes only a part of the Society’s activity in Moldova but, relying on an immense documentary resource, it outlines—through the rivalry between the two orders—the way missionary orders, Jesuit and Franciscan alike, evolved internally, in our view<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Francisc Pall, *Le controversie tra i minori conventuali e i gesuiti nelle missione di Moldavia*, în „Diplomatarium Italicum”, vol. IV, Roma, 1939.

Lucian Periș's book *Le Missioni Gesuite in Transilvania e Moldavia nel Seicento* offers<sup>11</sup> a significant contribution to understanding the Jesuit presence in Moldova during the 17th century. The work delves into pivotal moments such as the arrival of Paul Beke, the controversies surrounding relationships with the Franciscans, and interactions with Polish monks. This study stands out as one of the most comprehensive attempts to address the subject, aiming to cover key events related to the Catholic Church in 17th-century Moldova.

Another work, but which addresses this subject too briefly, belongs to the priest Alois Moraru, "*The Jesuits of Moldova (1588-2010)*"<sup>12</sup>. This research is intended to be a brief foray into the history of the Jesuit order on the territory of Moldova, covering four centuries of history in a few pages, addressing only some of the more important aspects, as well as highlighting the main moments in the history of the order in other areas of Romania in which the Jesuits had a more significant contribution. However, considering the fact that, for the moment in which this work saw the light of day, the importance of this study for Romanian historiography must be emphasized.

Details related to the activity of the Society of Jesus in Moldova have also been presented by Romanian researchers, but without providing an exhaustive contextual framework. For example, Violeta Barbu's work, *Purgatory of the Missionaries. The Counter-Reformation in the Romanian Countries in the 17th Century*, addresses the Jesuit mission in Moldova in places, but without providing a complete or concrete picture of their activity or that of any other order present in this territory. Also, the works of priest Emil Dumea, *Catholicism in Moldova in the 18th Century*<sup>13</sup> and *History of the Catholic Church in Moldova (16th – 20th centuries)*<sup>14</sup> recall the activity of the Jesuit mission in this area, with ample references to the schools in Cotnari and Iași.

Therefore, what will differentiate this work from those existing so far is, first of all, the subject, *Missio Moldavica* – and everything that the presence of the monks of the Society of Jesus in Moldova represented from the beginning of their activity in this space until the end of the 17th century. The emphasis will fall without any interruption only on what the order

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<sup>11</sup> In 2024, the Galaxia Gutenberg publishing house published a second edition of the doctoral thesis of the late Lucian Periș, *Catholic Presences in Transylvania, Moldova and Wallachia (1601-1698)*, with a translation from Italian by William Bleiziffer, preface and argument by Ovidiu Ghitta, vol. edited by Livia-Maria Bodea.

<sup>12</sup> Alois Moraru, *Iezuiții din Moldova (1588-2010)*, Editua Presa Bună, Iași, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Emil Dumea, *Catolicismul în Moldova în secolul al XVII-lea*, Editura Sapientia, Iași, 2005

<sup>14</sup> Idem, *Istoria Bisericii Catolice din Moldova (secolele XVI – XX)*, Editura Sapientia, Iași, 2008.

founded by Loyola represents, and everything that these monks achieved in the space east of the Carpathians, in the chronological period indicated in the title.

### **Structure:**

As highlighted in the table of contents, this dissertation is organized into six chapters, each attempting to present in detail all aspects of the Jesuit mission in Moldova during the specified chronological period. The choice of title was not unusual: the seventeenth century truly marked the establishment of a mission of the Society of Jesus. Although there were some attempts at the end of the sixteenth century, only from 1645 did a continuous Jesuit mission operate in Moldova.

With this in mind and considering the mentioned timeframe, the first part, *The Society of Jesus and Moldova at the End of the Sixteenth Century*, will initially focus on the founding of this order—both contested and admired.

Therefore, we will discuss the beginnings of this structure formed around Loyola's ideas, the organizational system, and examine in depth the three foundational works of the Society: *Spiritual Exercises*, *Constitutions*, and *Ratio Studiorum*. More importantly, we will highlight the characteristics of Jesuit missionary work to establish from the outset the directions through which the Society intended to advance the Catholic cause in the “way of the Lord,” and which of those directions were applied in the context of Moldova. Next, our attention will turn to Loyola's order in Poland. The presence of the Society of Jesus in the culture of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was undoubtedly one of the most significant elements in the formation of the religious, cultural, and political identity of this multi-national and multi-confessional state. Due to Poland's historical influence over Catholics in Moldova—exerted through the appointment of bishops—it was more than evident that Petru Șchiopul, the ruler of the land east of the Carpathians at that time, also looked north when he aimed to eradicate Protestantism in his country.

In the second chapter, the work turns its focus to the first mission of the Society of Jesus in Moldova. Although we noted that a Jesuit mission would only become firmly established in Moldova during the second half of the seventeenth century, the initial attempt occurred at the end of the previous century. Known as the first mission of the Society of Jesus in the land east of the Carpathians—or the first mission of the Polish Jesuits in Moldova—it had a distinct character compared to those that would follow.

While Jesuits typically sought close ties with local rulers to secure an immediate impact, in Moldova they pursued a different approach. The mission of the Society was founded at the prince's request to combat Protestantism in his realm. Thus, the *missio Moldovica* at the end of the sixteenth century emerged from political considerations: the prince wanted closer ties to Rome, which he could achieve only with Poland's assistance. Therefore, the Jesuits were entrusted with meeting these expectations, and their role in the neighboring country was seen by Moldovan representatives as a bridge to the Catholic world. Beyond the political motivations behind establishing a mission in Moldova, this chapter also explores other contemporary realities encountered by the Jesuits in Petru Șchiopul's land. Here, we examine what Loyola's followers found in 1588 in Moldova, including: the condition of worship sites, the state of Catholic communities, parishioners' relationships with the church, their customs and traditions, and the impact Protestantism had had on their development. Consequently, this chapter addresses the pastoral dimension of the mission as well as the political one.

The arrival of the Hungarian Jesuit Paul Beke in the summer of 1644 would change the course of events in the Latin Church of Moldova. For Beke, and for many other members of the Society, the establishment of a Jesuit mission east of the Carpathians represented a gateway to the Orient. Aspiring to be compared with the great missionaries of the Society, the Hungarian Jesuit had set his sights on reaching Crimea. Undoubtedly, the most significant influence on his decision to apply for missions in the Far East came from the reports of Jesuits already working in that region. In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus published books and pamphlets almost every year describing foreign peoples and their customs. These works emphasized the important, difficult, challenging, and even martyr-like nature of missionary activity in Asia and the New World. From its inception, the Jesuit order was a pioneer in this field, using a wide range of materials—missionary correspondence, reports, and annual letters—to recruit followers and successors. Most of these materials were translated from their original languages and published to maximize accessibility and help Jesuits in the region understand the messages being sent. Therefore, in this section all aspects of Paul Beke's mission in Moldova will be examined: his plans to achieve his great goal, as well as the controversial conflict between the Jesuits in Moldova—represented by the Hungarian—and their Franciscan confrères. As mentioned earlier, this subject was thoroughly researched by Francis Pall in 1940. However, retelling the events—especially those surrounding the church in Iași—within this work does not mean merely summarizing Pall's analysis. Instead, we will aim to present the topic in full: describing events not only from the perspectives of the Jesuits or the Franciscans, but rather examining how the conflict developed within the order itself. We

will closely follow how these disagreements influenced the evolution of the Society of Jesus's mission in Moldova, and how the successors of Saint Ignatius of Loyola acted to extinguish the difficulties arising between the missionaries. To a large extent, Beke's presence in the capital of Moldova was always associated with these controversies, and ultimately this became the cause of his removal from the mission.

After Paul Beke's withdrawal from Moldova, a new Jesuit mission entered the land east of the Carpathians—and fairly quickly—composed of five members of the Society who arrived from Poland. The decision for the mission in Moldova to be taken over by members of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was by no means accidental. Therefore, in Chapters IV and V, titled *The Second Polish Jesuit Mission* and *Missionary Controversies*, we analyze the evolution of Loyola's order in Moldova during the second half of the seventeenth century, from 1650 to 1699. Here, we will investigate the methods of operation of the Polish Jesuits, determining whether there were any differences between them and their Hungarian counterparts. Thus, we again consider that particular quality which one would normally expect of all Jesuit missionaries, regardless of province, and whether this had any impact on the indigenous community. I chose to divide the subject between two capitals because, in my view, a clear distinction needed to be made between the pastoral mission carried out by the Polish Jesuits and the conflicts that arose or persisted with the other representatives of the Catholic Church in Moldova.

In the next chapter, the research will focus on analyzing the educational system implemented by the Jesuits in Moldova. To pursue their objectives, the Jesuits did something they originally decided they would not do: establish schools. The principal founder of the order, Ignatius of Loyola, had been concerned that taking responsibility for institutions would hinder their mobility and availability for missions, but he was soon convinced that education could be a powerful tool for cultural influence and religious transformation.

Their first college was founded in Messina, Sicily, in 1548. Over the following years, dozens of colleges were established throughout Italy under the patronage of the local nobility and leaders. Eventually, a few hundred Jesuit educational institutions were built across Europe, Latin America, and Asia. Yet none was more important than the Collegio Romano (Roman College), founded in 1551. These new schools became centers of learning and repositories of knowledge, governed by carefully structured guides known as the *Ratio Studiorum*. This document detailed a curriculum that included the classical trivium (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy), as well as philosophy, theology, and other subjects—including elaborate theatrical performance. Thus, a rigorous training program

was prescribed in both classical humanities and the sciences, with particular emphasis on mathematics, physics, and astronomy<sup>15</sup>.

In this sense, I recall the importance of the two schools, in Cotnari and Iași, considered the first "experiments" of higher education in the Romanian space, with the exception of the reformed school in Cotnari, which was opened in 1563, with the help of Mr. Despot Vodă. Thanks to the cultural action of the Society of Jesus, for the first time Romanian intellectuals relied on a knowledge that we could define as contemporary and at a European level, because the Jesuit schools were structured uniformly, from France to Poland.

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<sup>15</sup> It is generally recognized that Christian missionaries played a fundamental role in the propagation of the ideas of the scientific revolution, such as conceptual, methodological and institutional approaches to the natural world. The Jesuits did not shy away from this either, contributing through their research to the development of these branches. In this sense, for the contribution of the Jesuits to the development of the educational system, we mention the works: Robert Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education: Its History and Principles Viewed in the Light of Modern Educational Problems*, Wipe and Stocks Publishing House, Oregon, 2009; *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official, Plan for Jesuit Education*, vol. 22 of "Institute of Jesuit Sources", 1, editor Claude Nicholas Pavor, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005; Farrell, Allan P., *The Jesuit Code of Liberal Education: Development and Scope of the Ratio studiorum* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1938; *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum of 1599*, Washington, 1970; and Grandler, Paul F., *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548–1773*, in „Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe, 1548–1773”, Brill Publishers, 2018. etc. In the field of astronomy, we remember Christopher Clavius (1538-1612) who played an important role in the reform of the Gregorian calendar. Clavius also promoted the teaching of mathematics, including astronomy, in the Ratio Studiorum. Among his most important works we remember: *Astrolabium*, Rome, 1593; *Horologiorum nova descriptio*, 1599 and *Romani calendarii a Gregorio XIII P.M. restituti explicatio*, 1603. To the same extent, the Jesuit Christoph Grienberger (1564-1636) discovered the equatorial mount (with an axis parallel to that of the Earth). The Jesuit Odo van Melcote (1572–1615) observed the nova in 1604, and his observations placed the nova in the same location as that seen by observers elsewhere in Europe, showing that it was not simply an effect in the Earth's atmosphere, but a phenomenon that occurred far beyond the orbit of the Moon. The Jesuit Nicola Zucchi (1586–1670) invented the reflecting telescope, and Athanasius Kircher (1601–1680) made some of the first detailed telescopic drawings of Jupiter and Saturn. In terms of cartography, John Brian Harley (1932–1991) attempted to define "Jesuit cartography" comprehensively, and noted that more than any other religious order, the Jesuits produced maps. In this regard, we mention the works: "The Map as Mission: Jesuit Cartography as an Art of Persuasion," in "Jesuit Art in North American Collections", vol. edited by Jane B. Goldsmith, Museum of Art, Marquette University, 1991.



### Sources:

In pursuing the writing of this thesis, an important place is held by recourse to contemporary documents, such as those from the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*. Without consulting these sources, tackling a subject so little studied in our context would not have been possible, primarily due to the informational deficit. Chronologically limited to the end of the seventeenth century, the aim of the thesis was to bring novelty not only methodologically but also informationally. Therefore, consulting the order's archive in Rome was more than necessary. As mentioned above, the Jesuits were very organized from this perspective, and the documents—although, after the dissolution of the order in 1773, they were scattered across various Italian state archives—were gathered through a lengthy process, rearranged, and made available for research. As in the past, the Jesuits responsible for the extensive archival collection have ensured orderliness in inventorying the documents. Thus, the process of gathering unpublished information about the course of the Society of Jesus's mission in Moldova was relatively straightforward. The most difficult part was the paleography of the texts, contrary to the impression that Latin alphabet documents would be much more accessible. We are dealing with seventeenth-century documents, when Latin script no longer followed the rigorous rules of the Roman or Gothic periods<sup>16</sup>, and each scribe expressed thoughts in their own style. Normally, in such an order, it was usual for the general's chancery to have a copyist who drafted letters sent from the central office. However, the rule requiring every Jesuit to transmit regular reports on the progress of a mission means that in today's Jesuit archive a large portion of documents survive *manu propria*. This exposes the researcher to a wide variety of handwriting, the difficulty being offset by the discovery of novel information.

Regarding the documents preserved in Romanian archives, the situation is not encouraging. I focused especially on archival fund 1078 at the National Archives of Romania, Iași branch, which contains a significant number of documents from the Roman Catholic Diocese. Since this fund is withdrawn from research, its investigation was limited to an inventory compiled in 1997 under the careful guidance of researcher Silviu Văcaru—but this inventory covers not even a quarter of the total documents. I found that this fund contains very few documents from the seventeenth century, and the first mention of Jesuits present in the city of Iași dates only from the eighteenth century. The fact that, from its transfer from the Diocese's custody in 1974 until now, not even an inventory has been created, deprives researchers of access to important information and renders any justification untrustworthy.

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<sup>16</sup> Constantin I. Andreescu, *Manual de paleografie latină*, București Iași, 1938, p. 82-88.

Furthermore, speaking of unpublished information, we must emphasize the fact that some works, although published decades ago, have been little consulted, or even completely ignored by some Romanian researchers. Here I mention the collection of documents *Monumenta Antiqua Hungariae*, volume III, in particular, edited by Lukas Ladislau S.I. and published in 1981, under the aegis of the publishing house "Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu", in Rome. This volume includes an important part of the documents that refer to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Transylvania following the Diet of 1588, from Mediaș. Therefore, the erroneous acceptance of what is written about the Jesuits of the first mission in Moldova, as if they were those expelled from the neighboring country, would have been avoided if this volume of documents had had a greater circulation. Ironically, however, the work is uploaded to the official platform of the Jesuit archives and can be consulted for free.

In the same category of works, which had a rather limited circulation, but which contain information of undeniable interest, are the works also signed by Lukas Ladislau, and more precisely *Catalogi perosarum et officiarum Provinciae Austria, S.I.* in three volumes, published by the same publishing house mentioned above. These works, although introduced in the category of working tools, represent one of the main sources for reconstructing the route of each Jesuit reported in the pages of the work. Since the importance of a mission was also given by the experience that each individual had, the catalogs compiled by Lukas Ladislau represent the shortest path to defining the significance that the order granted to certain mission territories. Therefore, by following these Jesuits I set out to discover the importance of the mission in Moldova for the general of the Society, but also for the Jesuits from the provinces of origin.

In the same sense, but for members of the Polish Province, one of the main sources is the database *Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy, 1564-1995*, organized by the Jesuit order in Krakow and coordinated by Ludwik Grzebień SJ, Wydż, Filozoficzny TJ, Kraków since 1996. Organized on the same principle as Ladislaus' catalog, this platform includes information on the entire activity of all Jesuits born in Poland, starting with 1564, the year of the province's establishment, and until 1995. In addition to biographical information on the Society's monks, this database also includes data on all aspects of the order's life, from the buildings they owned to the colleges they created, etc. Therefore, in order to reconstruct a small part of the history of the Jesuits who worked in Moldova, this database, as well as the volumes carefully coordinated by Ladislau, come to the aid of those who aim to achieve this.

We also gathered a large part of the information from the documents published in *Moldavi Csango-Magzar Okmanytar (1467-1706)*, published in two volumes and edited by

Benda Kalman, Gyozo Kenez, Gabriela Jaszay and Gyorgy Istvan Toth<sup>17</sup>. Surprisingly, these documents also preserve the secret of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Transylvania in 1588, indicating each one with their first and last names. Probably, due to the language in which the editors' mentions were noted, some observations escaped the attention of Romanian researchers. However, for our work, the volumes coordinated by Kalman Benda represented one of the main sources in order to reconstruct the past of the Catholic communities in Moldavia.

Equally useful to us have been the collections of Romanian documents, whether they include external documents, gathered from foreign archives, or internal documents, issued by the chancellery of the monarch, or by Catholic ecclesiastical institutions in the country. A good part of these documents have been published over the centuries in various document collections, of which I mention only those used in the pages of this work: *Documents Concerning the History of the Romanians collected by Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi*<sup>18</sup>, *Documents Concerning the History of Romania*<sup>19</sup>, A , or *Documents Concerning the Relations of Transylvania with Moldova and Wallachia* , published by Andrei Veress, but also the volume by N. Iorga, *Studies and Documents Concerning the History of the Romanians*<sup>20</sup>, vol. I-II, published in 1901. In addition to them, also from the category of primary sources, which are part of the group of works published in Romanian historiography, are the *volumes Foreign Travelers about the Romanian Countries*<sup>21</sup>, edited by Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Paul Cernovodeanu. Although they are mainly based on previously edited texts, the volumes contain very important clarifications and critical assessments.

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<sup>17</sup> *Moldavi Csango-Magzar Okmanyar (1467-1706)*, vol. I, II, vol. coord. de Kalman Benda, Gyozo Kenez, Gabriela Jaszay, Gyorgy Istvan Toth, Institutum pro studiis Hungarorum, Budapesta, 1989.

<sup>18</sup> *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor culese de Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi*, vol. III parte I (1576-1599), București 1880; vol. XI, (1517-1612), publicate de N. Iorga, București, 1900.

<sup>19</sup> Andrei Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria : Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării-Românești*. Vol. II, Acte și scrisori (1573-1584), Editura Cartea Românească, București, 1930; Idem, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, vol. IV, „Acte și Scrisori, (1593-1595)”, ed. Cartea Românească, București, 1932.

<sup>20</sup> N. Iorga, *Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, vol. I-II, București, 1901.

<sup>21</sup> *Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. I, II, III, IV, V, îngrijit de Maria Holban, M.M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru și Paul Cernovodeanu, București,

### **Methodology:**

From a methodological point of view, in this work, the reference to archival documents remains the most important source for the study of this work. The researched documents will be constantly linked to other types of sources, such as the reports of the missionaries to the superior of the order or to the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, since even the archival document can prove its value. Therefore, in addition to an addition of novelty and a background of credibility conferred by the document itself, I considered it necessary to supplement it with other sources, such as edited documents, working tools, special or general works.

An important place will also be occupied by the critical analysis of the reports drawn up by the Catholic missionaries who served in Moldova, basically a re-evaluation of some documentary sources that were previously researched, but in this case they will be viewed from a different perspective. More precisely, the emphasis will be placed on contextualizing the moment in which that report was drawn up, the reason behind the writing but also, I think very importantly, who wrote that report. Therefore, by establishing these three elements: *why*, *when* and *who*, we can understand, perhaps more easily, the evolution of certain events, both from within the Catholic communities in Moldova and from within the Society. Traditionally, these accounts have been seen as narrative sources of “foreign travelers”, who share their impressions, subjectively, about the social and political realities of the time, but at the same time, justify and discriminate, in favor of those who drew them up. However, because these sources are not narrative sources, but reports that concern more than the state of local Catholicism, and sent on to superiors or the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, they define in themselves what the Latin Church in Moldova represented during the reference period. Equally important is the identification of the signatory, because the one who wrote a particular report did so for the benefit of his own congregation.

To the same extent, through the comparative method I want to find certain similar features between the members of the Jesuit order present in Moldova, with those from the Province of Poland or Austria, because most of the Society's missionaries came from these two directions. Through this method I do not propose to talk about certain facts for which there is no direct information in the sources, but to highlight the unity of the order but also their efficiency in different geographical spaces. Moreover, with the help of judgment by analogy I want to highlight certain elements specific to the mission in the area east of the Carpathians, because, as I have already mentioned, each mission has its own particularities. Due to such a vast extension of the order, it is almost impossible for the Rule written by Ignatius of Loyola to apply to all territories to the same extent. Therefore, Moldova will not be an exception to

this norm either. We will see how, and if, the Jesuits will cope with this small state, but which, in itself, holds so many challenges for the monks of the Society. After all, we must not forget that we are still talking about a traditionally Orthodox state, where the majority of the inhabitants, including the *vodă*, were Christians in the true sense of the word, and the work of the Jesuits had to be restricted only to Catholic communities. If for the Franciscans this was somewhat normal, the members of the Society had to adapt, limiting their activity only where they were allowed.

Throughout six centuries of existence, from 1540 to the present day, the Society of Jesus has never ceased to amaze. They quickly went from being the most admired religious order ever founded, to being the most condemned and judged, to the point of being suppressed in 1773<sup>22</sup>. However, the history of the "monks in black" did not stop. Reorganized in 1814, by the papal bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*, issued by Pius VII, the Jesuits quickly resumed their activity, once again becoming the most indisputable "weapon" of the Church in the fight against Protestantism, which, in the light of the 19th century, became increasingly fierce.

Therefore, following what has been said, it must be emphasized again that, due to the lack of an analytical study on the activity of the Society of Jesus in Moldova, the intention of this work is to capture, as authentically as possible, all aspects of the Jesuit mission in the country east of the Carpathians. Since Loyola's order was, and is, so complex, I will consider that throughout this work I will include all the elements that defined the action of the Society, such as the ethnic, social, political, economic and confessional, in order to understand, ultimately, their way of proceeding in Moldova as well.

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<sup>22</sup> The initiative against the Jesuits came from unquestionably Catholic circles. The first state to fight against the Jesuits was the Kingdom of Portugal, where King Joseph I expelled them from both European territories and South American and Asian colonies in September 1759. The next action came from Bourbon France, where the impetus came from the royal courts, which made King Louis XV dissolve the society in November 1764, instead of expelling them all as Portugal had done in 1759. The Spain of Charles III also preferred the Portuguese model, so the king expelled all Spanish Jesuits from Spain's Asian and American colonies, as well as from mainland Spain, in April 1767. The Italian territories of the Bourbon dynasty of Naples and Parma followed, where, at the instigation of the Spanish, the same actions took place. After a new pope was elected in 1769, in the person of Clement XIV, the aforementioned states, especially the Bourbons, put pressure on him until, in 1773, the papal bull *Dominus ac Redemptor* led to the dissolution of the Society and all that remained of their missions throughout the world. Dale Van Kley, *Jansenism and the international suppression of the Jesuits*, in "The Cambridge History of Christianity - The Christian Enlightenment", no. 25, Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 302.

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