

SIMINA TERIAN

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania

THE DISCOURSE OF POWER IN MEDIEVAL TRANSYLVANIA (11TH - 14TH CENTURIES): A LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Abstract:

This paper examines, from a linguistic perspective, the discourse of power in medieval Transylvania (11th - 14th Centuries), as evinced in the most important corpus of documents of the era (Codex diplomaticus Transsylvaniae, Documenta Romaniae Historica. C. Transilvania, Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, etc.). The premises of my research are: (a) that the discourse of power should not be confined to its formal meanings, instead it carries a number of secondary meanings, no less authoritarian, which can only be inferred by means of a detailed semantic analysis; and (b) that the relationship between the semantic “centers” and “peripheries” reflects the relationship between the cultural and institutional “centers” and “peripheries”. To probe these hypotheses, my paper resorts to, in terms of methodology, the combination of cognitive linguistics (mainly George Lakoff and Dirk Geeraerts’s theories), which emphasizes the metaphorical dimension of the “ordinary” language, and Eugeniu Coșeriu’s integral linguistics, with particular reference to the triad designation - signification - meaning. Subsequently, this approach is supplemented by a socio-historical research, designed to test the correlations between the institutional centers/peripheries and the semantic centers/peripheries. My study aims to show how this linguistic analysis can help confirm and, especially, revision certain theses currently defended by professional historians.

Keywords:

Power, Middle Ages, Transylvania, Linguistics

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