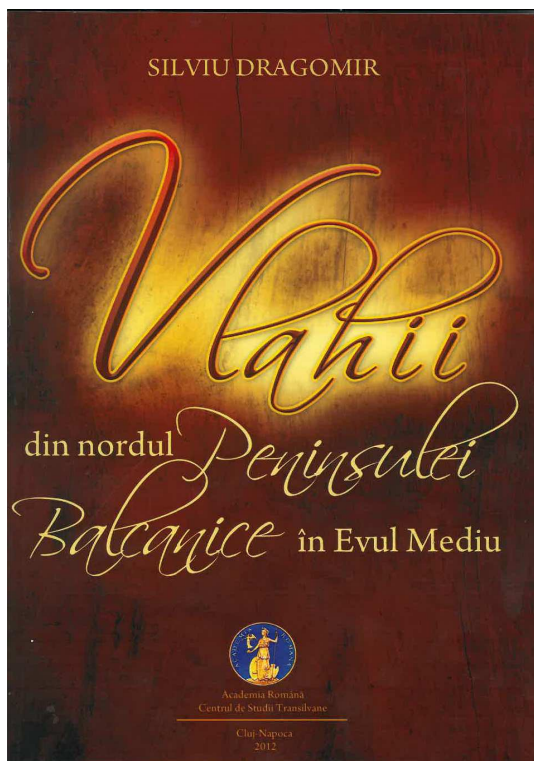


Silviu DRAGOMIR (2012)

VLAHII DIN NORDUL PENINSULEI BALCANICE ÎN EVUL MEDIU

Editura Academiei Române, Central de Studii Transilvane, Cluj Napoca, 2012, ISBN 978-973-7784-74-2, 224 pages, foreword and introductory study in English language, content, references, name index, place index



Silviu Dragomir is one of the most important Romanian historian of the XXth century and the reprint of this book is a tribute to his lifetime work dedicated to his people.

The book was cared by Ph.D. Professor Ioan Aurel Pop (member of Romanian Academy, „Babes Bolyai” University Cluj Napoca) who also wrote the foreword of the book and by Ph.D. Professor Sorin Sipos (from University of Oradea), the author of the introductory study.

The book was ordered by the Commission for the Study of Romanian Language and People and, according to the author was to clarify a whole series of problems, namely: the territory occupied by the romanians in Balkan Peninsula, the oldness and the specific features of different groups, the results of the symbiosis among slav populations and the phases the went through until complete disappearance, the contacts with the Albanians and the differences from macedo-romanians and, finally, the three dialect zones which takes shape south of Danube (p. XII).

The book is structured in six chapters, each chapter treating the „vlahs” according to different main geographical areas (Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro) and, within each main geographical area, different locations (from the Black Sea coast through Rodopi Mountains to Dalmatia, Istria a.s.o.) covering the whole Balkan geographical space. This vast geographical area, with a great variety of forms and elements, is the background and the support of very complex historical processes, involving different ethnic groups.

The investigation of the author is very careful, going up to the intimacy of the „vlah” communities and revealed the existence of major differences „according to geographical configuration of the living space...” (p. XXV). These intimate knowledge of the „vlahs” of their geographical space has materialized in grazing routes which, later on, became migration routes, from east to west (p. XXVI). Although it is a historical book, the geographical information is very solid, covering the many geographical elements from both physical and human geography (relief, hydrology, vegetation, types of settlements, elements of geo-demography a.s.o.). The importance

of the geographical element is proved both by the „density” of geographical elements and by the title of one chapter - „*Geographic extend of „vlahs” in Middle Age Serbia*” (p. 31). These geographic elements are the primary location clue for different ethnic groups of slavs, „vlahs”, hungarians, byzantines. Comparative analysis of some geographic elements could lead to important conclusions concerning the geographic extend of some elements. The information linked to forest vegetation, for example, are numerous because of the multiple use in the Middle Age as a construction material, energy source, strategic element (p. 34). The analysis of forest areas and reporting the historical information to present-day situation could give information related to the dynamic of these forest areas.

The book is an excellent source for toponymy, hydronymy and onomastics analysis, the relationship being a bivalent one: on the one hand the existence of the „vlahs” is proved by the hydronyms, toponyms which can be found as a testimony of their presence in different geographic area across the Balkans and, on the other hand, they borrow the name of different natural elements of hydrography relief from their native, latin language.

The page of this book is a very happy meeting with one of the most important Serbian and European geographer, Jovan Cvijic. The geographical researches made by Cvijic and his collaborators in the early decades of the XXth century amounted to fundamental information source for Silviu Dragomir. The proof of this statement is given by the numerous citations of Cvijic researches which are fundamental milestones in the historical analysis (p. 12, 13, 16, 33, 52, 53, 67, 84, 175, 178). Although it seems to be a historical book, the analysed work to prove be a book with a very solid geographic structure which could be an important scientific source for both human and physical geographers.

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