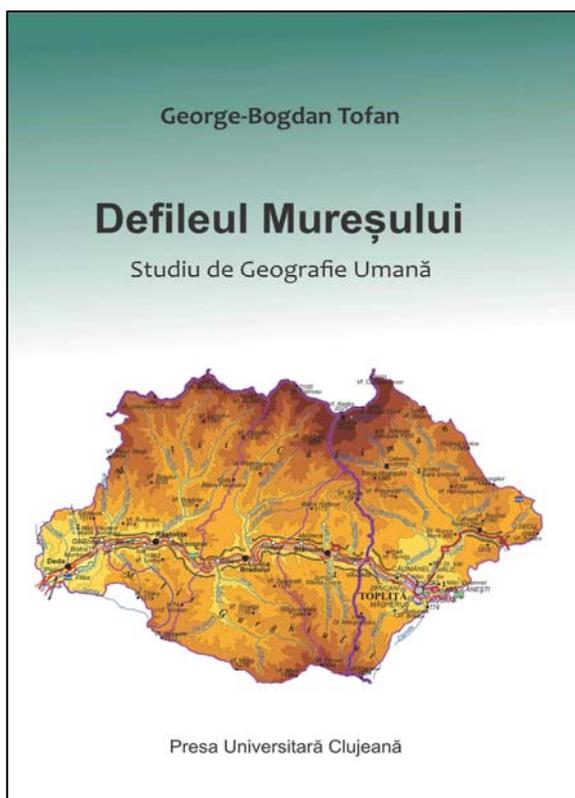


GEORGE-BOGDAN TOFAN (2014)

MUREȘULUI DEFILE. A HUMAN GEOGRAPHY STUDY

Cluj University Press, ISBN 978-973-595-631-8, 158 pages, 46 figures, 20 labels, preface, summary in English language



The review of a scientific paper naturally starts with a quantitative component. In the case at hand, the author compiled a number of 158 pages, which include 153 pages of text, 46 figures, out of which 33 are maps or different types of charts, and also 13 photographs.

The book's ending encompasses the **Summary** (p. 136-153) and the **References** (p. 154-158), while the book's **Contents**, in Romanian as well as English, can be found in the opening (p. 5-7).

The book begins with a **Preface** (p. 9-10), by *Prof. Nicolae CIANGĂ, PhD*, from the Geography Faculty of Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. The book's structure accurately follows geographical logic, presenting the *physical-geographic characteristics of Mureșului Defile (Toplița-Deda Defile)*, opening with views on the concept of *defile* and then moving on to issues referring to *Geographic location* (1.2., p. 12-15), where several aspects regarding a more precise demarcation of the area are emphasized (mainly the eastern and western limits). Thus, the author states

that „...the defile actually extends between Vâgani (a component of the Town of Toplița) and Bistra Mureșului. That is why, as long as there will be available information, I will also include these two settlements situated at both ends of the defile (that is Vâgani and Bistra Mureșului), which are part of other major relief forms (to the east, Toplița - Giurgeului Depression, and its northern compartment, the Toplița-Subcetate Plateau, while to the west, Deda, part of Reghinului Hills, and Vălenii de Mureș Depression (Deda-Porcești Depression), which in turn are parts of the Transylvanian Depression” (p. 12).

Knowing these aspects, the books moves on to the integrated analysis of the *geological genesis and structure* of the area, which is dominated by the *volcanic-sedimentary formation*. Here, several small scale caves have been identified that are unique in Romania, with different

origins, either due to alteration processes, or due to external factors (water and wind erosion), also known as „*mould caves*”. This chapter also comprises the *relief's distinctive features*, which played a major role in the area's population, characteristics presented with the help of a series of parameters such as *relief energy and density*, *slope and exposition*, with lasting effects on the social-economic component, as well as on land usage and capitalisation. Moreover, the *climatic, hydrographic and biopedogeographic components* are presented in the same detailed manner.

Chapter 2 of the book – **Geodemographic specificities** (p. 48-77), like any classic study, follows the same logic in emphasizing the main geodemographic components: *the evolution of the number of inhabitants* for more than a century and a half (161 years), *territorial distribution of population*, *agricultural density*, *population dynamics* (natural movement, migration patterns), *population structures* (gender, age groups, habitat, marital status, profession, ethnicity, religion, education level and political views), plus **habitat characteristics** (administrative-territorial evolution, typology of rural settlements, geographic toponymy, etc.), based on a rich table and cartographic material (17 tables, two charts, 13 graphs and four graphical representations of different settlement hearths from Mureşului Defile).

The next chapter, entitled **The Specific Activities from Mureşului Defile** (p. 93-132), is the longest, and in terms of presenting the above mentioned specificity, it follows the same scientific logic, opening with the primary sector, *Land and agricultural activities* (arable land and plant cultivation, pastures and hayfields, animal husbandry and animal products), *Forests, Waters and other types of surfaces*, *Other primary activities*, all excellently portrayed by the cartographic representation from page 99, (Fig. 42. *Land usage in Mureşului Defile*), followed by *Industrial activities* (Mining, Power industry, Wood processing, Mineral water bottling), continuing with the third component of chapter 4, which comprises tertiary activities (*Transportation, Trade and commerce, Education, Culture and arts*, closing with *Medical services*).

A more special attention was given to *tourism*, which, even though is in the primary offer stage, contains a multitude of natural touristic resources and sights (orographic, climatic, hydrographic, biogeographic, environmental) and man made (archeological, cultural-historical, economic, ethnographic, etc.), which can be included in a list of national and international areas of great attractivity.

The last chapter (5) tackles, from a practical standpoint, **Views on Future Settlement Development**, using a SWOT analysis, taking into account three major development directions (Infrastructure, Increasing economic competitiveness, and Quality of life improvement).

The scientific content, the thoroughness and accuracy of the language are the things that recommend this book to researchers, local authorities and to everyone willing to know in detail the realities of this area.

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