

Diana Dogaru (2013), *Analiza spațială a presiunii antropice în geosistemele din Dobrogea* (Spatial analysis of anthropic pressure in the geosystems of Dobrogea), Edit. Academiei Române, București, 174 pages, 13 tables, 48 figs., 7 colour plates, refers., summary in English.

This study of regional geography is concentrated on human-environment relationships in Dobrogea, a region which is characterized by a vast diversity in terms of environment, economy, ethnic and social aspects. Human pressure on the environment is analyzed using a spatial, interdisciplinary perspective, based on a series of biophysical and socioeconomic indicators.

In order to evaluate the typology of the geosystems in Dobrogea and their state factors, the author applied a complex set of techniques, methods and models (e.g. GIS techniques, spatially exploratory methods, statistics, etc). Some approaches, such as the integration of regional geosystems in large territorial ensembles, based on a global perspective, are new for the specialized literature in our country. Likewise, part of the analyses were realized in view of the methodologies elaborated within the framework of the EU FP6 CLAVIER project (*Climate Change and Variability: Impact on Central and Eastern Europe*), which highlights the connections between environmental changes and society in the context of climate change, at regional, national and local scale. The author participated directly in this project by working on the impact of climate change on tourism sector.

In the present work, there were established three geosystems (coastal, plateau and Danubian geosystems) which were differentiated in sub-geosystems and further down in geofacies and geotops, each providing specific services to the society.

The assessment of the human activities in the geosystems of Dobrogea was based on anthropic pressure indicators, which were classified, according to international existing frameworks, in three large groups: population, economic development in relation to resources use and consumption, and urbanization. The description of the human activities was done within three identified intervals of gradual anthropic pressure intensification: the period of extensive agriculture, which lasted up to the end of the collectivization; the period of planned industrial development and the period of transition towards a market economy.

The processes by which anthropic activities generate changes at the level of territorial systems were evaluated using anthropic pressure indicators, thus highlighting the main intraregional disparities in Dobrogea. In this sense, the functional types of the settlements were distinguished, as well as the inequalities in the distribution of population income and in the social development of the region. These aspects were tightly connected with the particularities of the three geosystems in Dobrogea and with the anthropic pressure exerted on them. In order to differentiate the functional types of the settlements, a set of statistical methods were applied which were based on cluster and factor analysis, methods which can be applied in other regions as well.

The interconnections between social and ecological systems were evaluated according to the extensively applied methodologies of the studies of human-environment interactions (i.e. spatial analysis between social indicators (poverty in this case) and environmental contextual factors, evaluation of human influence on land resources, based on GIS integration techniques, and estimation of the proportion of vegetation and physical endowments in the coastal urban area, based on remote-sensing derived parameters). The results were viewed in terms of their implications for the regional and territorial development plans and strategies, although the link between the conceptual settings and the development patterns of the region was somehow less emphasized. Nevertheless, the relevance of such preoccupations resides in their integrative character regarding the assessment of anthropic pressure on the environment, aspect that is highly increasing in Geography, and which complies with the new research directions of the Future Earth global program.

Apart from the methodological interest for a broad audience (e.g. students, professors, researchers in the field of geography and environment) regarding the evaluation of human-environment relationships, the book offers pertinent information for fundamenting regional development policies in Romania.

*Dan Bălțeanu*

Cristian D. Stoiculescu (2013), *Făgetele virgine din România în context european sub influența schimbărilor climatice* (Virgin beech forests in Romania within European context under the influence of climate change), Edit. Academiei Române, București, 416 pages, 57 tables, 265 figs., 6 annexes, 7 colour plates, refers., summary in English.

This book, published with Greenpeace support, represents a valuable contribution to raising awareness of the scientific and ecological importance of Romania's natural heritage, the dangers facing it, conservation efforts and the pressures it is subject to. This achievement highlights the author's wide-ranging field experience, his study of a rich specialist literature beside silviculture that is botany, zoology, geography and history.

It is a comprehensive analysis of beech forests. All the aspects tackled in this work emphasize a basic idea, namely, the extraordinary phytocoenological value and complexity of the country's beechlands – ecosystems of distinctive biogeographical specificity. Therefore, conserving them in conditions as close as possible to their natural state of virgin forests with a complex structure and wide faunal and floral diversity is an imperative necessity. Some of the problems dealt with at large refer to the variability and spread of beech across the country, as well as to the biogeographical individuality of the Romanian Carpathians and their beech forests, biostatistical elements characteristic of the latter, and beech wood biodiversity. A great part of the work dwells on the role of protected natural areas (especially of National Parks and NATURE 2000 sites) in the conservation of forest ecosystems.

The beech forest is shown to be “the most stable and robust forest ecosystem of Europe's temperate zone”, and a complex biological regulator of environmental conditions capable to contribute even to attenuating climate change. The author draws an alarm signal of the major risk for environmental degradation through irrational forest exploitation, a risk enhanced also by prospective climate change which may disturb the ecological stability of beech forests, particularly of those affected by human activity.

Relying on numerous concrete information, the author looks into man's illegal activities, extremely detrimental to Romania's forest stock, beech and mixed forests included. Greenpeace investigations into illegal logging over the 2009-2011 period (official information supplied by profile institutions charged with forest administration and control) and into the evolution of forest areas in Romania over the 2000-2011 interval (based on geospatial data-sets) revealed that nearly half of the affected forest surfaces lie in currently protected areas.

The international importance of the virgin and half-virgin beech forests in Romania, which are “the last and most stable of Europe's mesophyllic resistance nuclei in the way of aridisation” is underscored. This view is supported also by the opinion of some foreign specialists, Dutch and Germans in particular, who collaborated with Romanian silvicultorists. On the base of appropriate documentation, a proposal is made to declare some beech stands in Romania, of exceptional global value, “a world heritage asset” alongside of Ukrainian-Slovakian virgin beech forests in the West Carpathians and of some secular forests in Germany, already assigned this status. The work ends up with a substantial chapter of conclusions in which concrete proposal are made for beech forest protection, in general and for virgin and half-virgin stands, in particular.

This work is the outcome of the efforts of a passionate unrelenting defender of Romania's forest land, namely Eng. Cristian Stoiculescu, a man thoroughly involved in establishing the current network of protected areas in this country. It is an important work of reference for anyone engaged in protecting Romania's natural heritage and a guide to those willing to get a better knowledge of this invaluable heritage.

*Cristina Muică*

Teodor Marușca (2012), *Recurs la tradiția satului* (In Village Tradition. Agrosylvopastoral), Edit. Universității Transilvania din Brașov, 10 chapters, 464 pages, 105 tables, 2 annexes.

Teodor Marușca, a PhD of Agronomy, eminent researcher and teacher, has conducted a 40-year long investigation in the field of botanic, meadow typology and environmental protection (resorting to biotechnical tools), genetic resources and the economic efficiency of animal breeding. This and other of the author's interests have materialised in 450 titles of books and articles published in specialist journals.

The present volume, actually a “lifetime profession of creed” (foreworded by Acad. P.I. Otiman) represents a ten-chapter collection of articles on a wide-range of topics: general aspects of agriculture, cultivation of plants, fodder basis, animal breeding, pastoral heritage, mountain region economy, rural development, environmental protection and socio-economic aspects. The discussion focuses on current problems of Romania’s agriculture, the largest chapter being devoted to the pastoral economy, the author being a several decades member of the Braşov-based Meadows Research and Development Institute.

Each chapter and sub-chapter could be a starting point and new perspectives for in-depth studies by young researchers in agriculture and related fields.

*Irena Mocanu*

