

Sorin Geacu, *Cerbul lopătar în România* (The Fallow Deer in Romania), Editura Academiei Române, București, 2012, 387 pages, 261 tables, 117 figs., 32 colour plates.

This study, the outcome of Sorin Geacu's unrelenting research-work, represents an accurate and valuable contribution to the knowledge of a species that is of great biogeographical and hunting interest. Based on an impressive volume of concrete data, the author makes a detailed analysis regarding the situation of the Fallow Deer (an extreme case of almost fully human-controlled species), which proves man's intervention over time into the structure and dynamics of Romania's fauna. A biogeographer, specialised both in Geography and Biology, Sorin Geacu had the capacity to make quite an exhaustive approach to the issues broached.

Library and archive materials, many original information obtained from forestry and hunting experts, as well as field investigations across the country underlie the rich information provided by this work.

The First Part of the book contains general data on the distribution of the species in Europe, beginning with the earliest colonisations dating to the Antiquity, colonisation of new areas simultaneously with the numerical diminution of effectives in their places of origin, the spread of the Fallow Deer having become a wholly artificial matter. Biological and ecological particularities, the natural background of colonisation sites in Romania (with highlight on favourable or adverse conditions for the existence of the herd), general landmarks of colonisation actions in Romania, in Europa and elsewhere in the world, and finally general elements of population dynamics in Romania between 1918 and 2010 (when the study was concluded) are all aspects dealt with herein.

The Second Part, more substantial, makes an in-depth analysis of the characteristic features of the Fallow Deer populations in the wild found in Romania's major provinces (Crișana, Muntenia, Banat, Oltenia, Dobrogea, Transylvania, Moldavia and Bucovina), with emphasis on the natural living conditions of each population, the first colonisations, population dynamics (natural increase, or decrease of effectives through adverse natural conditions, as well as attacks by predators, poaching and legal overhunting), sex-ratio, number of hunted specimens, natural habitat expansion or individual captures for other sites.

Noteworthy, the huge number of digital data (tables) the analysis is based on, the maps of colonisation points, current or past colonisation sites, migration directions, places of mating, etc. are also discussed in great detail.

The Third Part expounds on the populations held in enclosures or zoos. A special mention for Charlota Park (Timiș County), which provides specimens to be introduced in Romania or abroad.

The Fourth Part refers to extinct populations, causes of decline and disappearance from their ecosystems are illustrated by 38 cases identified and described by the author. Among them, five populations had lived more than 50 years before being doomed to extinction; eight populations had resisted for 30-50 years, sixteen for 15-29 years and nine for less than 15 years.

As a conclusion, the author appreciates that, by and large, the introduction of the Fallow Deer in Romania has been a success, this species having become a stable element of the leafy forests zoocenosis despite spatial isolation, which makes the territory of the species in the wild very much fragmented. There are significant numerical fluctuations of effectives, some showing natural increases, others regressing. All in all, one might say that human influence on biodiversity proved to be positive in this case.

This volume, which also benefits from an excellent graphical presentation, unveils Sorin Geacu's passion for deep-going approaches, minutest details, as well as a mature capacity to depict the mutual relationships among natural population dynamics, certain natural phenomena and various human actions.

The present study, of great theoretical relevance for the capacity of a colonised and carefully controlled species to harmoniously integrate into the natural landscape, is also a documentary source for anyone interested in the general or local ecology and dynamics of the Fallow Deer in Romania.

Cristina Muică

Mihaela Rodica Persu, *Depresiunile subcarpatice oltene dintre Jiu și Bistrița Vâlclii. Geografie umană* (The Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia between the Jiu and the Bistrița Vâlclii rivers. Human geography), Editura Universitară, București, 2012, 242 pages, 82 figs (of which 1 colour), 50 photos, 5 tables.

Developing and managing the rural areas is one of the complex issues nowadays, it involving, on the one hand, a balanced solution between the conservation of the country's economic, ecologic and socio-cultural rural space, and on the other hand, the need to update rural life. The present paper falls in line with research into the rural reality of Romania and offers a comprehensive picture of the Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia in a comparative approach to the evolution of their natural, human and economic potential.

The problems discussed are based on a serious documentation from the profile literature, as well as on the collection, processing and geographical interpretation of a vast amount of statistical data and field-work. There are over 200 bibliographical references, suggestive photographic images, GIS-related cartographic representations and numerous charts.

The ten chapters of this volume contain detailed analyses of the evolution, structural-functional and typological aspects of the study-area; the introductory chapter acquaints the reader with the rationale of the author's choice of the subject-matter and the arguments sustaining it.

*Chapter one* has a theoretical methodological section, a chronology of the profile works studied, and an outline of this Subcarpathian area's geographical personality.

*Chapter two* presents the geographical position of the Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia within Romania and the Getic Subcarpathians, delimiting and structuring sub-units in terms of communication routes and administrative make-up.

*Chapter Three*, suggestively titled *Favourable and restrictive natural factors in the enlargement of the human habitat*, makes an analytical overview of the main environmental components directly connected with the humanisation of the Subcarpathian region studied.

*Chapter Four*, structured alike to monographic works, deals with the history of people's settlement in the area, the formation and evolution of the settlement network intimately correlated with natural conditions.

*Chapters Five and Six* are the most extended ones numerically and important in content, diagnosing human potential (numerical evolution of the population, demographic movements, human pressure on the territory, demographic structures and behaviour, migration), analysing the main features of the settlement network – dissemination and altitudinal distribution of settlements; demographic, morphostructural and functional typology; territorial distribution of towns and their demographic size, functional zonality, urban development level and the rural-urban ratio. The author takes a comparative view of the evolution of population and habitat with highlight on the post-communist period. The recent evolution of the settlement network is shown to be increasingly influenced by economic and socio-political factors, local interests focusing on making best use of natural and human resources, an aspect that will obviously count in the region's new territorial organisation.

*Chapter Seven* is devoted to economic activities, particularly agriculture, industry and tourism, and their role in the organisation of the territory; also, a typology of settlements is being presented based on the interpretation of statistical indicators obtained by processing statistical data.

*Chapter Eight* expounds on the socio-cultural infrastructure with focus on education and health care, the area's cultural geography, basically customs, traditions and crafts.

*Chapter Nine and Ten* represent a synthesis of the previous topics of this work, together with a SWOT analysis of opportunities and hazards, favourable and restrictive elements in setting the strategies of territorial regionalisation and development of the local communities with a view to their hierarchisation.

The geographical specific of this study has imposed using various-scale mapping techniques in order to outline the characteristic phenomena discussed herein, offering a visual picture of details and general elements.

Persu's own conclusions underline the need for the region's future development by relaunching traditional economic activities, mainly shepherding and ecological agro-tourism which may turn out to be a representative economic occupation in this area.

*The Subcarpathian depressions of Oltenia between the Jiu and the Bistrița Vâlcii rivers. Human geography* constitutes a complex and valuable work with a wealth of data and scientific information that add new, practical attributes to the regional sustainable development strategy, to geographical knowledge and interpretation generally.

Daniela Nancu

Nicoleta Damian, *Mediul geografic și factorii de risc social din Delta Dunării* (The Danube Delta – Geographical Environment and Social Risk Factors), Editura Universitară, București, 2013, 264 pages, 116 figs., 30 tables.

The deep-going mutations registered after 1989 have opened up new vistas for research into the man-environment relations and the human impact on the components of the natural environment, in particular.

The present study falls in line with this general framework and makes a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the delta system and the complex phenomena facing it after the fall of ideological barriers and the generalisation of globalising connections. In the seven chapters of this volume the author discusses the case of the Danube Delta in Romania.

Noteworthy is the effort made by the author to gather, select, and synthesise information on an area marked by profound 20<sup>th</sup>-century mutations. Although the study-area is not a very large one, yet the work adds real and recent theoretical-methodological knowledge to the profile geographical literature in a modern and all-inclusive presentation.

Since this analysis is not simply geographical, but tackles also sociological and economic aspects, the study obviously acquires a multidisciplinary character, a remarkable endeavour in the Romanian geographical literature devoted to the complex interactions within fragile natural ecosystems, with highlight on the structure and particularities of the deltaic ecosystem and its spatial and temporal links with the limitrophe spaces. In this work one also finds a coherent data-base on the origin, particular aspects and consequences of spatial disparities in the Danube Delta, as well as the role of endogenous and exogenous factors underlying them. The reader will also become acquainted with modern concepts on spatial development in the light of the complex functional relationships established among the various components of the geographical environment, the historical and quantitative geo-demographic and geo-economic impact on the Danube Delta natural components and its neighbouring areas.

The first section of the book provides a many-sided analysis of the Danube Delta's geographical position, a historical overview of research, the main features of the area's relief, climate, waters, vegetation, fauna and soils. Next, the analysis is enlarged at macro-territorial level: the particularities and importance of the deltaic system at the mouths of the Danube in the light of wetlands and their international importance (Ramsar Convention and UNESCO natural sites the Danube Delta is part of). Furthermore the discussion focuses on the environmental factors impacted by human activity, the quality of the environmental components (water, air, soil and biodiversity), the intensity and spatial distribution of human pressure, the quality of the technical-urbanism and transport infrastructure, the economic and environmental policies. A distinct chapter expounds on the quantitative and qualitative aspects of social risk factors in the Danube Delta (demographic: infrastructural development; economic and political; land management and fishing – the main resource in the Delta and the economic policy related to it), the dynamics and geographical distribution of social risks: poverty, unemployment and social conflicts.

In view of the above, tourism is being suggested as development alternative, a chance for the local communities to prosper, but also a risk for the natural components in case tourist fluxes are not managed in an appropriate manner. The last chapter deals with projects, programmes, international conventions and agreements on wetlands, which Romania is a signatory to, and their implementation in the Danube Delta ecosystem after it had been listed among the biosphere reserves under the "Man & Biosphere" Programme and declared a wetland of international value, mainly as water-fowl habitat (Ramsar Convention, September 1991), as well as World Natural Heritage (UNESCO list); the Danube Delta together with the Razim-Sinoe Lagoon Complex having become a Biosphere Reserve are sites of worldwide importance.

As a conclusion, we would say that the structure, field surveys and bibliography, the pertinent and critical analyses, suggestive graphical material and illustrations, the specific data-base elaborated, the synthetic comprehensive approach, and not least the logical presentation of the complex problems and relationships among various elements makes Mrs. Damian's works a relevant scientific achievement for the Romanian and foreign geographical literature alike.

*Radu Săgeată*

Gheorghe Kucsicsa, *Parcul Național Munții Rodnei. Relații om–mediu* (Rodna Mountains National Park. Man-environment relations), Editura Universitară, București, 2013, 168 pages, 108 figs and graphs.

This original approach to a very complex and topical problem is quite remarkable for logical structuring and the remarkable complementarity between text and maps.

A researcher at the Romanian Academy's Institute of Geography, the author interprets quantitative analysis in the light of geography, which makes of this work a model in profile research.

The seven chapters of the volume provide a synthetic image of the Rodna Mts National Park and of human impact on the geographical space.

Chapter One analyses the *Man-environment relation within mountain areas*, and a set of introductory notions, e.g. natural park, biosphere reserve, as well as programmes for mountain environmental research; fundamental concepts: theoretical and methodological relations between physical and human geography and the role of these concepts in making prospective analyses reliable.

Chapter Two, *Rodna Mountains National Park. General considerations*, is an overview of the Park's history, location and place among protected areas in Romania, zonality, current use of land and infrastructure.

Chapter Three, titled *Natural potential, a support of man-environment relations*, expounds on problems of geology, landscape, climate, waters, soils and the biotic cover.

Chapter Four, *Population and settlements in the Rodna Mountains*, discusses aspects of human geography, perhaps a bit too sketchy.

Chapter Five dwells on matters of *Human pressure on the environment* with highlight on local toponymy, types of human pressure and assessment indexes.

Chapter Six, *Environmental dynamics*, presents major problems of land erosion, trees knocked to the ground, with focus on environmental dynamics within the context of global climate change.

The last chapter, *Natural tourism potential and ecotourism development prospects*, analyses the landscape's tourism potential, ecotourism and sustainable development changes.

In view of the work's theoretical-methodological attributes, the information provided, the original analyses, and the impressive quantity and quality of graphical material, the study is expected to arouse the interest of a wide range of specialists and students of geography and economics.

The well-documented approach and wealth of ideas make this volume a valuable reference material in problems of man-environment relations and of environmental geography.

*Dragoș Baroiu*

