

Sorin Geacu, *Dropia în România. Studiu Biogeografic* (The Great Bustard in Romania. A Biogeographical Study), Editura Academiei Române, București, 2016, 217 p., 55 figs., 32 colour plates, 39 tables, 485 references, summary in English.

As we have already been accustomed by Mr. Geacu's valuable publications, this time the author has intended, and succeeded, to offer us, with competence and perseverance, a complex and extremely well-documented analysis of the subject tackled. The results emphasise the importance of a biogeographical approach to the spatial distribution and dynamics of this species, closely correlated with its ecological requirements, environmental factors and the effects of human activity. Although this bird, of impressive size and original way of life, has exerted a particular attraction on both nature-lovers and hunters, no comprehensive work in the Romanian literature has so far been produced. Information on the presence of the Great Bustard in various regions of the country and the dynamics of its population are but fragmented and dispersed in various publications (some of them little accessible), forestry and cynegetic archives, or in works on Romania's avifauna in general.

The present work, which fills a gap in knowledge about this species, represents a comprehensive monograph based on assiduous research into library and archive holdings, data obtained from specialists in county museums, forestry and cynegetic institutions, higher-education establishments and information gathered from villagers and townsfolk from the south and east of Romania. Noteworthy, many information obtained from people acquainted with, or directly participating in actions and censuses connected with Great Bustard effectives, would have been for ever lost had not the author persevered in finding them.

The first part of the monograph presents morphological and biometric data and gives information on the species' reproduction and ecology. Climatic influences, especially the negative effects of glazed frost that immobilises the wings, making the birds highly vulnerable in frosty winters, are discussed at large.

A vast chapter, based on statistical data, deals with the dynamics of the species' population in Romania. The fluctuation of effectives is followed until 1997, when the Great Bustard started being a stable species in the fauna of this country. However, sporadic occurrences (isolated specimens or small, unstable flocks coming temporarily from neighbouring countries for longer or shorter periods of time) are still recorded. The complex causes that generated this situation are analysed and the efforts made to protect the species (some little known and unfortunately failed) by setting up nature reserves, are recorded.

The second part of the work makes a very detailed time-and-space analysis at regional, county and local levels, of the presence of the species in each landform unit and county, beginning with the first available information on numerical fluctuations and exact places in which flocks, or isolated specimens, were observed. For example, in certain sectors of the West Plain, but also in the Boian Plain and the Bărăgan Plain, Great Bustard effectives would locally increase for short periods of time due to poaching control and measures to ensure the necessary food. But, what followed in the last two decades of the 20th century was a steep numerical fall of effectives down to complete disappearance. Extremely valuable information are offered on recent Great Bustard occurrences on Romanian territory (very accurately noted on detail maps), which contribute to elucidating the species' state-of-the-art, fairly uncertain in the geographical literature until the publication of the present volume. Beside sporadic occurrences in the Romanian Plain and in Dobruja (birds flowing in from Ukraine) and the Vinga Plain, the author reports on a very narrow temporary area in Crișana region, between Salonta Town and the Hungarian border. Here, Great Bustards, coming from the neighbour country, would be signalled almost every year, setting temporarily and occasionally even nesting in this territory.

The work is illustrated with numerous maps and graphs, highly suggestive being those on the dynamics of various territorial units. The 67 colour photos (grouped by 32 plates) complete successfully this volume, enabling the reader to appreciate the aesthetic value of this species, which is almost totally lost from Romania's faunistic heritage. One can see impressive Great Bustard specimens (males, females and offsprings) held in museal collections or learning institutions, eggs, habitat and even a few photos with flying birds. In addition, some pictures of people locally engaged in Great Bustard protection, are also included.

However, we may hope that this work, so very well-documented, might be another argument in favour of an initiative to reintroduce this species (such as has been done rather successfully, we might say, with the beaver, the marmot and the European bison) in a proper landscape and secure corresponding protection and upkeep

measures. Such an initiative would fall in line with current trends in recapturing the values of the European natural heritage.

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Mirela Paraschiv, *Persoanele fără adăpost în București. Studiu de Geografie Umană* (Homelessness in Bucharest. A Study of Human Geography), Bucharest University Press, Bucharest, 2016, 274 p., 102 figs.

Social Geography continues to represent, unfortunately, one of the least studied geographical fields in Romania. Even worse is that some geographers, even among young researchers, who should support broader approaches to the subject of the science they serve by tackling new topics and ensure the geographical impact, maintain an obtuse and obsolete research perspective, by limiting their scientific actions to descriptive and unidirectional studies.

In this context, the present book is a daring, pioneering, study in Romanian Geography, aiming to break the barriers imposed by prejudices and contributing to widening the geographical horizon at its interface with sociology through a complex, multidisciplinary approach to one of the contemporary urban phenomena: *poverty*.

Not coincidentally, the first chapter of the paper focuses on defining poverty and urban poverty, in particular, and on determining its typologies and territorial effects, as well as and also the directions of alleviating poverty in relation to its specificity at territorial level. Homelessness, as a social impact of urban poverty, is theoretically analysed in the second chapter.

The second part of the book centres on poverty and homelessness at macro-territorial level, highlighting their specificity inside the European Union and Romania. In Romania *austerity* imposed in the last part of the socialist period, was an attempt at rebalancing the budget (payment of foreign debts); *another austerity* episode market the transition period, when the generalized economic and social decline supposed the accumulation of new foreign debts; once more, *austerity* after 2008 was recorded against the background of the global economic crisis. Both phenomena are analysed at territorial level, in relation to housing characteristics and the local economies, more or less vulnerable to the challenges posed by the national and global political and economic context. A territorial and legislative analysis of homelessness and social exclusion is followed by the identification of implemented measures required to alleviate these marginal phenomena.

The third part of the paper is devoted to the particularities of homelessness at the level of the urban territorial system represented by Bucharest, Romania's capital-city and one of the largest metropolises in South-East Europe. Homelessness, was a well-developed phenomenon in Bucharest up to the late 1990s, when the first shelters for the homeless where opened (1998), through partnerships between the local authorities and the NGOs. However, the number of homeless in Bucharest tripled between 1996-2010, affecting some 5,000 people (Table 27, p. 115), and becoming a real problem for the local authorities. Children and the youth appear to be the most vulnerable group, mushrooming after 1990 from a few people to 1,270 persons in 2009 (Table 28, p. 117), and including some other marginal phenomena, such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, etc., or representing sources of epidemiologic risk.

The Bucharest homeless originate from disadvantaged social environments and from poor areas, especially from the Moldavia region and the South-East of the country. The pauperization of these people was determined by the post-December economic reconversion that generated unemployment. A cartographic representation of the origin of outside areas for the homeless in Bucharest is given in Figure 49 (p. 177).

The immigration of the homeless in Bucharest is demonstrated also by their incidence inside the urban built-up area, with some half of them activating in Victoria Square – Regie – Grozăvești and Eroilor perimeter, with a Gara de Nord Station core (Table 29, p. 118).

Following the general presentation of homelessness in Bucharest, the author individualises this phenomenon within the city area, with focus on the social impact it generates (see the chapter on the perception of homelessness by Bucharest's general population). The interrelation between homelessness and the characteristics of the capital's urban space is discussed in Chapter 10, homelessness being explained in the light of typology and spatialized in relation with the urban space particularities (Table 65, p. 219). The author differentiates several types of habitats for the homeless: green areas (in use or derelict), pedestrian zones, transport infrastructure, commercial and religious areas, heat distribution infrastructure, sewage infrastructure,

residential structures (in use or derelict), residential waste-disposal areas and waste storage areas, vacant structures and brownfields (Fig. 89, p. 220).

The last two chapters of the book are devoted to the territorial management of homelessness. Defining a policy for the territorial management of homelessness started with the assessment of the current process of homelessness management, continued with addressing homelessness from the institutional viewpoint and ended up with analysing territorial management problems and of the objectives of homelessness sustainable management.

As a conclusion of this study, the author says that: “at present, homelessness in Romania is included in a deficient system of management and prevention, being in its first stages of elaboration and development. Attaining the objective of alleviating homelessness and of stabilizing its management, concomitantly conducting a sustainable process of prevention, asks for strong legislative and government financial support in order to implement a long-term policy” (p. 253).

As a whole, the paper has a reliable theoretical support in the substantial bibliography. It can be rightfully considered a reference-work in the contemporary Romanian Geography, being addressed to both specialists and the local authorities, as well as to anyone interested in the issue. The accessible scientific language and the rich illustration make this book a useful tool of research and documentation.

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