

Thede Kahl, Cay Lienau (eds.), *Christen und Muslime. Interethnische Koexistenz in südosteuropäischen Peripheriegebieten* (Christians and Muslims. Interethnic coexistence in the peripheral territories of South-Eastern Europe), in the series: „Religions- und Kulturgeschichte in Ostmitte- und Südosteuropa”, vol. 11, LIT, Münster, Germany, 2009, 361 p., ISBN 978-3-643-50058-8

The volume “*Christians and Muslims. Interethnic coexistence in the peripheral territories of South-Eastern Europe*” debates a problem of present interest regarding relations between Christians and Muslims, by investigating the neighborhood of two important religions in South-Eastern Europe. The volume presents the results of a research project led by the editors Thede Kahl (University of Vienna) and Cay Lienau (University of Münster), project entitled “Interethnic relationships between Orthodox Christians and Muslims of South-Eastern Europe. Examples from mixt settlements in Greece and Romania, in terms of confession”.

In South-East Europe the two major religious communities, represented by the Orthodox Christians and Muslims, are characterised by a historical coexistence of over half a millennium. This coexistence presents peaceful or conflictual characters, as in the case of former Yugoslavia or Cyprus. The mechanisms and principles which control a peaceful coexistence, on the one hand, and the causes which lead to conflicts, on the other hand, are investigated. Finding the answers to these questions would offer some solutions to other mixt communities in terms of religion and culture.

The work includes a number of 22 contributions elaborated in German or English, both those presented in the framework of the two workshops of the project, held in Münster in 2006 and 2007, and those of some other authors interested in this field. The evolution of interreligious and interethnic relationships in the Balkans in historical times are discussed, as well as the present problems related to the identity and life of the minorities present in the multinational and multireligious states of the same space. The authors of the papers cover a large and diverse range of socio-human professions, acting in institutions from Germany, Austria, Greece, Italy, Romania and Switzerland and interested in studying the South-Eastern European space. Therefore, the approach to this theme is made from a very diverse perspective (ethnological, political, geographical, historical, cultural, linguistic, administrative, journalistic, etc.)

The project, which forms the hardcore of the book and which drew also other contributions on this theme, chose to investigate the relationships between the two major religions in regions of peaceful cohabitation from South-Eastern Europe, where these religions are embraced by different ethnical groups. Study-cases were two regions: West Trakia in Greece and Dobrogea in Romania, both characterised by a long tradition of peaceful coexistence of the two confessions. Various hypotheses of cohabitation are tested in terms of their relevance in explaining some features of the Christian-Muslims relationships in the studied situations. These hypotheses refer to daily life aspects, potential conflict introduced by the political, church or media elite, as well as the influence that sharing a culture based on common memory could have.

Since the relationships among the representatives of the various cults bear on the future development of the regions and of the states they belong to, possible measures for strengthening peaceful cohabitation and for preventing conflicts are evaluated. Moreover, the importance of these local studies for larger scale approaches and for the future of Europe is emphasized, especially for situations at its border with the non-European space and for possible enlargement.

Due to the multitude, diversity and in-depth study of these aspects, this exhaustive work on the Christian-Muslims relationships in South-Eastern Europe, proves to be extremely useful, offering people interested in promoting and strengthening peaceful cohabitation in mixt communities of everywhere, a treasure-lore of principles for their understanding and management.

Marta-Cristina Jurchescu

David Turnock, Nicolae Muică, *Settlement of the Pătârlagele Depression (Romanian Subcarpathians). The historical geography of a settlement system in its ecological and socio-economic contexts 1500–2000*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2010, 347 p., 20 figs., 16 tabs.

The book is structured in six chapters and is completed with a useful preface about the rural studies in Romania and with a very significant appendix representing the evidence for placename study. The work represents the result of a very detailed research activity realised by the two authors during three decades.

The first chapter (*Historical review of landscape and settlement history*) offers a concise survey of the terrain, in fact a hilly area in Romania's Curvature Subcarpathians. The authors underline the detailed aspects concerning the relief (the Buzău terraces and tributary fans, the lower hill slopes and landslide surfaces, etc.), the soil, vegetation and land use,

focusing their study on landslides (their nature and significance) and on the settlement history (village names, village sites, the origin of settlements).

The chapter *Modern times: a century of continuity and change* outlines the contrast between the core area of the district with its emerging capitalist economy (evident in the centres of Pătârlagele and Mărunțișu with their services and handicrafts) and the outlying areas where poorer people depended on subsistence agriculture based on the landslides and the remnants of the mature landscape higher up. The analysis is structured in four periods (before the First World War, the inter-war period, the communist era, revolution and transition), each of them being detailed in terms of the specific features of economic activities, historic aspects and life quality: rural life in the hills with the significance of plums for preserves and brandy distillation for the first period, the creation of the collective farms, the territorial and functional reorganisation of the Pătârlagele area – “sistematizare” for the communist period and the restoration of private farming, pluriactivity based on the land for the last period.

The next two chapters (*Settlement profiles: (a) the official list of large groupings* and *Settlement profiles (b) the smaller villages and hamlets*) offer individual studies of all the settlements in the area. The total number of settlements is 119 and they are grouping into six classes of which classes Three to Six cover today's 25 official settlements; class Four includes four settlements which were commune centres before the administrative reforms of 1968, while the other 20 are the remaining villages which have official recognition as dependencies of Pătârlagele or Pănătău. Each individual study is detailed in the followings aspects: placename references, situation and historical outline, church history, village facilities, toponymy and statistics.

The fifth chapter, *Toponymy: Placename study with documentary and oral evidence* provides a rich field of research in view of landscape diversity and the long history of settlements accompanied by cropping, haymaking, pastoralism and forest work. This chapter includes a comprehensive review of the content: references to topography (the landslides, water supply, forest clearance), to human geography (to farming, to crops, to stockrearing and fruit-growing, to associated activities, to the local circulation and religious manifestations, to the other historical events).

In the sixth chapter, *Communes and other larger administrative areas*, the authors profile the old administrative divisions from Pătârlagele “Plasa” (used in the 1930s for a county district), on a chronological basis with reference to the key sources.

The book has 347 pages, 20 figures, 18 tables, representing the result of the research activity, making particular use of the map collection in the Romanian Academy Library, supplemented by fieldwork in Pătârlagele Depression.

Irena Mocanu

Nicolae Florea, *Pedodiversitate și pedociclicitate: solul în spațiu și timp* (Soil diversity and Soil cyclicity: the soil in space and time), Ed. ICPA, București, 2009.

The amazing complexity and diversity of the soil cover has always been a challenging subject not only for soil scientists, but also for geographers and geologists, agronomists and environmentalists and for all people interested in the knowledge, preservation and protection of natural resources on Earth.

Prof. N. Florea's book “*Pedodiversitate și pedociclicitate: solul în spațiu și timp*”, ca. 280 pages, richly illustrated with tables, graphs and maps, represents an exhaustive approach to the above-mentioned problems.

By its topics – soil diversity and soil cyclicity, or more exactly the soil viewed in space and time – this book ranks among the breakthroughs world-wide in the soil science of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

According to the author, the soil entities, spatial soil diversity and their geographical aggregate represent concrete forms of the pedological space, and the cyclicity of soil genesis processes that lead to soil formation and evolution, respectively pedorhythms and pedofluctuations, being the expression of the pedological time. Space and time make up the background of soil existence.

The first seven chapters of the book offer the reader the opportunity of a very instructive journey in the field of soil diversity and soil cyclicity, starting from a general characterization of the pedosphere and its relationships with the other geospheres and ending up with the cyclic evolution of soils, pedorhythmicity and pedoperiodicity, (pedorhythms and pedofluctuations). Both aspects represent in fact one and the same facet of soil cover or the pedosphere.

Of particular interest for both pedogeographers and environmentalists is the characterization and systematization of pedogeographical aggregate, a topic less developed in the international Soil Science.

Quite new and original is the concept and the scheme of soil and soil cover formation, a problem taking various balances of cyclic soil genesis and geological-geomorphic processes depending on different environmental conditions. This

idea is also illustrated by the concept of the co-evolution of soils and loess deposit formation according to an original scenario.

Chapter eight is devoted to soil diversity in the world. Chapter nine presents the main life-support factors and the essential role of the soil.

The impact of this book on the future development of the Soil Science is difficult to assess. The in-depth study of soil diversity and soil cyclicity opens up the way to new fields of research and knowledge: a branch of soilscape study and chronopedology, with focus on the organization, functionality and dynamics of soil cover and its geographical subunits at different space and time scales. This would prove of great utility for the managing element of soils and of other natural resources and for predicting environmental risks under the effect of both global climate change and the ever higher pressure of modern society.

*“Pedodiversitate și pedociclicitate: solul în spațiu și timp”* is by far a common work. It goes beyond the ordinary vision of soil and the soil cover. Beside the great diversity of soils world-wide, it reveals the profound and dynamic links between soil and other components from the surface of the Earth’s crust. The final soil cover image is not only one of a complex and diverse entity, but also of a dynamic and ever-changing entity that has been accompanying the evolution of the surface crust at least since the emergence of terrestrial plants.

Despite its elevated theoretical level, the text is easily readable, the ideas and concepts being clearly expressed. As Boileau said – “Le Style c’est l’homme même” – Prof. Nicolae Florea is and has always been an exceptional teacher.

I warmly recommend this exceptional and unique book to all those (students, teachers, practitioners, a.o.) interested in knowing some of the profound and marvelous secrets of the pedosphere, or simply of the ground we every-day walk on (even if it is sometimes hidden under the asphaltic blanket).

*Ioan Munteanu*