

\*\*\* (2015–2016), *Strategia de dezvoltare a României în următorii 20 de ani* (Romania's Development Strategy over the next 20 years), Ionel-Valentin Vlad (ed.), Edit. Academiei Române, vol. I (480 pages), vol. II (462 pages), București.

This Development Strategy was elaborated under a Project of the Romanian Academy coordinated by Acad. Ionel-Valentin Vlad.

Interdisciplinary teams of specialists from the Romanian Academy, from other research institutions, and higher education establishments have been assigned to each of the eleven areas of this Strategy.

The eleven chapter-based research themes (projects) found in this two-volume study focus on the most important, but also very vulnerable areas of this strategy: *School and Education; Natural strategic reserves, what we use and what we leave to future generations; Security and energy efficiency; Information security – cybernetic protection; Protection of intellectual property englobed in projects and electronic publications; Security and food security; Economy and quality of life; Health state – from Molecular Biology to Personalised Medicine in Romania; The National Danube Strategy; Romanian culture between the national, that is in the proximity zone and the universal; Multi-language Europe, electronic culture; Romania – Society of knowledge and of added value to what it has; Romania in the globalization era – Space and tradition, a meeting-place of civilisations, of equilibrium and moderation.*

The first volume provides a SWOT analysis of each tackled area, a general development outlook for time-intervals of 3–5, 10 and 20 years, as well as several scenarios of Romania's European integration. The second volume, proceeding from existing weaknesses presents a general view on the subject and sets a short-, intermediate, and long-term task-plan.

Geographical researches were integrated into two main domains: assessment of natural resources (air, soil and protected areas) and the National Danube Strategy, in the latter being proposed an Global Environmental Change Atlas of the Romanian Danube Valley.

The two volumes overviewed herein are devoted to the anniversary of 150 years from the foundation of the Romanian Academy.

Elena Teodorescu

\*\*\* (2015–2016), *Resursele strategice ale României* (The Strategic Resources of Romania), Bogdan C. Simionescu (ed.), *Volumul 1. Problemele prezentului și provocările viitorului* (Volume 1. Current problems and future challenges), 197 p., *Volumul 2. O abordare pentru următoarele două decenii* (Volume 2. An approach to the next two generations), 213 p., Edit. StudIS, Iași.

Under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, a two-volume book on *The Strategic Resources of Romania*, co-ordinated by Academician Bogdan C. Simionescu was published in 2015 and 2016. The first volume, *Current problems and future challenges*, deals with a highly topical issue, namely, the responsible, sustainable use of the main environmental components (air, water, soil, forests, and subsoil resources). An analysis of protected areas points out that, over the years, man's impact on nature has created major imbalances among the environmental elements. The management of all type of wastes is also a very topical problem, tackled by the authors in relationship with their impact on health and on the environment. Last but not least, the demographic question is also broached, demographic forecasts providing for a numerical outline of future generations. A SWOT analysis targets each component, with highlight on the situation Romania is expected to attain in 2035.

The second volume, *An approach to the next two generations*, proceeds to setting some main goals, that is, to identify priority sectors and task plans for each component discussed in this book, in conformity with current and future requirements. The final goal is for Romania to reach a high development level, and have this country occupy the place it deserves having in view its available resources.

These two volumes are part of the Project, *Natural Resources. Strategic reserves, what we use and what we leave to future generations* integrated into *The Strategy of Romania's development in the next 20 year, 2016–2035*. The eleven projects of this Strategy make an interdisciplinary approach to the fundamental sectors of the

Romanian society, from education and economy to culture and international positioning, starting from the more careful conservation and valuation of this country's heritage.

The work of specialists from several research fields of the Romanian Academy and the University staff alike, the volume is addressed to a wide readership, both specialists and decision-makers, to eventually raise awareness of the importance and rational use of natural resources.

*Nicoleta Damian*

(2015), *Atlas of Land Use/Cover Change in Selected Regions in the World, Volume XI* (Atlasul Schimbărilor în utilizarea și acoperirea terenurilor. Studii de caz în diferite areale de pe glob, Volumul XI), Ivan Bicik, Yukio Himiyama, Ján Feranec, Lucie Kupkova (eds.), Charles University in Prague, 70 p., in English.

The Atlas published by International Geographical Union Commission on Land Use and Land Cover Changes is a work that puts together the research results of universities and research centers in Romania, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic focused on the dynamic of land use/cover. Often vulnerable to economic and political conditions, land use/cover undergoes significant changes that do propagate to the other components of the ecosystem. Knowing that the most intense land use/cover dynamics occurs in the urban, agricultural and forestry landscape, this work brings together studies of areas belonging to such landscapes: the Romanian Danube Valley, Bucharest Metropolitan Area, Bratislava, and the Prague metropolis, agricultural land in Czechia, the Gorce Mts. in the Polish Carpathians.

Environmental damage is assessed by using a specific methodology, depending on the ecosystem it is applied to, stressing upon the following issues: the amplitude and spatial distribution of changes in land use/cover (in the landscape of the Romanian Danube Valley or Gorce Mts.); dynamics of the built-up area in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area over the last century; the size and spatial distribution of areas affected by transitional dynamics or changes in land use/cover (in post-communist Romania); changes of artificial surfaces in urban areas (Bratislava), land cover (Prague metropolis) and agricultural lands (Czech Republic) are subject to.

The indicators were selected from the Eurostat database and satellite images available for researchers, so that these types of research can be applied to other European Union areas as well, thus attempting to achieve a harmonized methodology.

Overall, these researches succeed to create an image of changes in the dynamics of land use/cover, addressing, tangentially or directly, ecological concepts such as succession disturbance, and variability in the context of a human civilization where economic and political conditions are rapidly altering and entailing changes in the environmental components, thereby limiting further development options of the Planet's inhabitants. In some cases, such as the Romanian Danube Valley, the question arises as to damming the River-affected floodplain lakes, soil quality, topoclimate, and hydrological regime of the Danube. Even if the Atlas studies draw attention to environmental change by altering land use/cover, do we know Nature well enough to put the "pieces" back?

*Paul Șerban*

Lucian David (2015), *Peisajele etnografice din România* (Ethnographic landscapes in Romania), Edit. Etnologică, București, 191 pages, 57 figs, 57 photos, refers.

This editorial production, the result of lasting scientific investigations conducted into the Romanian geographical space by young researcher Lucian David, is based on a sound documentation of the ethnographic landscape types. The author's activity began in 2000 as doctoral candidate and continued also after 2010, when he was awarded the Ph.D. of Geography title. The 191 pages of this work include: Contents, Foreword, five chapters, bibliographical references, tables, 57 figures (maps, graphs, schemes) and as many photographs.

The author outlines the topicality of the subject (*Introduction*), considering that an analysis of the highly fragmented and fastly degrading ethnographic landscape in Romania is both of theoretical and practical value.

A noteworthy work on the list of David's publications is *Atlasul Etnografic Român*, elaborated in collaboration with specialists from the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore. This monumental achievement stands out by its original cartographic material. Each landscape, engendered by soil agricultural and non-agricultural uses, is shown on the thematic maps contained in the five Atlas volumes: I. The Habitat, II. Occupations, III. Popular Techniques, IV. Folk Art and Costume, V. Feasts, Customs, Mythology).

Having in view the above-mentioned scientific achievement and the author's contribution to it, the reader is expected to receive the five-chapter *Ethnographic landscapes in Romania* with special interest.

The analysis of numerous field information, questionnaires and statistical data highlights the multitude of ethnographic landscape aspects and typology illustrated by a rich cartographic and photographic material.

**Chapter One** provides some theoretical considerations on the Landscape concept, furthermore enlarging upon the Geographical Landscape. Proceeding from the recent definition of the term *landscape* given in the Explicative Dictionary of the Romanian Language (1998), the author makes a general presentation of the historical evolution of its use in painting and photography, as well as in ecology, architecture, geography and culture at large, also recalling Romania's membership of the European Landscape Convention.

**Chapter Two.** Its two sub-chapters are devoted to the cultural landscape values, underscoring the theoretical aspects of this landscape type (sub-chapter one) and research into the ethnological landscape (sub-chapter two).

**Chapter Three, The Ethnographic Landscape,** proceeds from analysing the definition and features of this landscape type, further presenting all its components and concluding with its hierarchisation.

**Chapter Four** makes a detailed presentation of the ethnographic typology, with focus on land use and, based on it, discusses each type of landscape: forest, pastoral, pomological (fruit-growing), viticultural (wine-growing), piscicultural (fish-breeding) and mixt. Maps, descriptions, quotations and thematic photographs complete the analyses made. Ethnographic landscapes are grouped by two large categories: primary and derived. The former (forest, pastoral and piscicultural) are described in detail in sub-chapter four; the latter, correlated with land-fond dynamics, are enlarged upon in three regional case-studies: the Rucăr-Bran Corridor in the mountain zone, the Cotmeana Piedmont in hillock and tableland zones, and the Oltenia Plain in the lowlands. The cultural ethnographic structures are discussed in terms of origin, evolution and religion. The state of conservation of ethnographic landscapes (regressive, unstable, stable and progressive), as well as their aesthetic value (spectacular, special and ordinary) are two interesting study-subjects of the last two sub-chapters.

**Chapter Five** assesses the Romanian ethnographic landscape and, together with Chapter Four, represents the core of the whole volume (over 60% pages and 80% of the graphic and photographic illustration). Here, one finds also an analysis of the geographical landscape and methods to appraise this landscape-type sustainable development. According to the author, a first step in landscape research is to outline the study-area (region, province, or village, and the cultural environment), get a knowledge of the geographical setting, diagnose the respective life environment (relief, waters, soils, climate, vegetation and fauna), as well as the favourable and restrictive conditions of ethnographic landscape development. A second step should take into account the calendar time and the historical time. Other two analyses and assessment steps are the heritage value and the artistic perception. The author's geographical, but also ethnographic approach to appraising the ethnographic landscape includes two methods: of synthetic indicators and of the questionnaire, with focus on the former which geographers are more familiar with, namely, the calculation of indicators and indexes, which should be scientifically reliable and suggestive of a dynamic picture of population density, human pressure on the landscape, birth index, and landscape transformation index. The findings helped to the elaboration of a set of assessment maps at national level, each being interpreted and analysed.

The last sub-chapter: *Sustainable development of the ethnographic landscape*, which concludes this study, highlights the protection, conservation, valuation and monitoring of ethnographic landscapes. This sub-chapter follows closely the Ethnographic Landscape Sustainable Development Scheme which involves both management (protection, conservation, valuation and monitoring) and the identification of degradation-induced factors, especially anthropic ones (demographic, economic, political, technological and cultural).

Sustainable development and rural management are one of the most complex topics nowadays, *essentially supposing to strike a balance between conservation of the ecological and social-cultural space and modernisation trends.*

The author himself considers that the analyses he made in this work are not simply a scientific approach, but also a useful research tool. The maps of ethnographic landscape, and their appraisal (Chapter Five) represent

efficient means of furthering research into delimiting cultural zones along other ethnographic co-ordinates, as well.

The strong points of this work are: reliable scientific substantiation; discussing issues in the light of the contemporary research problematique by goal-setting and having a methodology directly connected with the subject. A correctly used terminology and a clear, easily understandable scientific language are among the other assets. The graphic illustration, figures, thematic maps and tables match the content perfectly.

In our opinion, it would have been desirable to have the author's own conclusions at the end of this study.

Otherwise, the interesting approach to ethnographic landscape issues, the scientific probity of information, the value and volume of data yielded by field surveys (questionnaires), alongside statistical data, make this volume a valuable scientific contribution, a source of documentation for specialists in the elaboration of efficient protection, conservation, valuation and monitoring measures to preserve the cultural heritage. At the same time, people interested in the positive evolution of the countryside will also find a number of reference points on the subject.

*Daniela Nancu*