

Sabina Ispas, Nicoleta Coatu (Eds.), *Etnologie românească: tradiție, cultură, civilizație (Romanian Ethnology: Tradition, Culture, Civilisation)*, The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, 2018, Bucharest, 344 pages.

One of the most important events in Romania's history is the Great Union in 1918, which represented the unification of all provinces into one national state. In 2018, the year of the Great Union Centenary (1918–2018), the Romanian Academy organized a series of academic activities and scientific events dedicated to the Centenary, including an extensive collection entitled "*Romanian Civilisation*", focused on concise descriptions of all scientific fields.

The volume entitled *Romanian Ethnology: Tradition, Culture, Civilisation*, published under the patronage of the Romanian Academy, is part of this collection and represents a synthesis of the development of Ethnology in Romania, in close view with the national and international development directions in the field. The volume was elaborated by a group of researchers from the "*Constantin Brăiloiu*" Institute of Ethnography and Folklore of the Romanian Academy and "*Petroleum-Gas*" University of Ploiești, Faculty of Letters and Sciences, and is based on the revised chapters of the first 3 volumes of the *Romanian Ethnology: Folkloristics and ethnomusicology* series (2006, 2007 and 2010).

The volume is structured into 4 chapters covering several topics (e.g. conceptual and theoretical aspects about culture, civilization, tradition, folklore and popular culture; ethnological disciplines; methodological and technical issues of investigation), considering the ethnological particularities of Romania. Emphasis was given on the history of Ethnology in Romania and also on the transformations during the last 100 years, including theoretical and methodological issues.

The first part, *Fundamental concepts*, presents theoretical aspects on insights of a wide array of topics ranging from theory and history to many aspects of folklore and culture, identifying the central concepts of Ethnology and describing how each of these concepts contributed to the development of the discipline. The four major concepts, i.e. culture; civilization; tradition and popular culture; folklore, are explained along with the evolution of the Romanian Ethnology. Moreover, after discussing the theoretical development for the last 100 years, the book continues with an overview of the different meanings of the terms in order to avoid misunderstanding and underpin the key meanings in various contexts.

The second part, which is also the most consistent one, is devoted to *Ethnological disciplines*. The authors focused on the following issues: folkloristics, ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology and ethnography. Based on a comparative-historical perspective, this part discusses the development of the ethnological disciplines in Romania and on the appropriate usage of the terminology. The book gives information about the need to answer questions concerning the definitions and the goals of the disciplines, concerning the strands of continuity that existed between the new developments and the old ethnological traditions. This chapter presents an overview of the beginning and the development of ethnography in the various parts of the world, focusing on Romanian ethnography over the last 100 years.

The historical perspective of this discipline includes information related to the scientific activity of Romanian scholars (e.g. George Vâlsan, Simion Mehedinți, Romulus Vuia, Romulus Vulcănescu) who significantly contributed to the evolution and diversification of the ethnographical science. It refers to the identity of ethnological disciplines reflected in the scientific works of preeminent scientists and in the biographical presentations of personalities of the Romanian Ethnology. Examining the historical evolution of ethnography as a discipline, the book provides viewpoints on its relationship with other disciplines, particularly with Geography. In this context, Romanian geographer George Vâlsan is remembered for both theoretical and practical contributions to ethnography, while Simion Mehedinți played an important role in the history of Ethnography, becoming one of the founders of the Romanian ethnography, developing new theoretical approaches in asserting the role of ethnography in education.

The third chapter, *The methodology of concrete research*, describes the main past and current methodological and technical aspects used in interdisciplinary research along with illustrated and worked out examples. This chapter presents a holistic view of the various methods, tools and techniques employed by researchers for the collection of data. During the last 100 years, the methods of inquiring the historical development of civilization have been highly advancing. The described methods and techniques related to interviews, questionnaires, observations, case studies, ethnographies and oral history. Attention is paid to key personalities

in the history of the Romanian Ethnology and how they influenced the changes from the theoretical, methodological and thematic point of views in the evolution of the discipline.

The last chapter, *Folklore archives*, contains numerous aspects related to the conservation of folklore. It focusses on the documentation techniques regarding folk traditions which are relevant for understanding the process through which tradition evolves and changes. The chapter describes the main markers adopted over the 100 years for the conservation of the folklore. They cover issues such as the national archives, where collected folklore can be properly stored and made available, museums or folklore sections in existing museum, harmonization of methods for collecting and archiving, trainings for collectors, archivists, documentarists and other specialists with interests in the conservation of folklore, promotion on scientific research relevant to the conservation of folklore. Of primary importance in this respect is the conservation of the vast narrative and musical folklore which has been collected during the past centuries, and which constitute an impressive national archive.

The volume represents an important synthesis on the development of Ethnology in Romania, in the last 100 years. Its publication on the occasion of the Centenary of the Great Union of 1918 acknowledges it as a reference work for the history of sciences in Romania. The interesting approach to theoretical and methodological issues turns this volume into a valuable scientific contribution relevant across the disciplines of sciences and a source of documentation for both specialists and young scientist of this field.

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