

ic community, both home and abroad. This created a need and desire for knowledge of the geographic realities of the geographic-historical provinces that had just been reunited with the Kingdom of Romania. There are countless requests and appreciation letters of the work done by the Institute of Geography of the University of Cluj, from high schools and high school teachers, the Royal Ministry of External Affairs, as well as museums, libraries, bookstores, etc., and private individuals from the entire country. The same sentiment transpires from the multitude of exchange requests with entities abroad (foreign geographic societies, private and public libraries, prestigious publications), proving once again the value of the authors and of their work.

The penultimate chapter—“Varia” (pp. 289–342)—presents other administrative issues: efforts to purchase more books for the institute’s library; cashing and delivering monthly member contributions to banks; publication exchanges between the institute and Romanian and foreign institutions; regulations regarding postal expedition costs (conveying the enormous volume of correspondence); and a case study for awarding a scholarship from the Romanian Royal Geographical Society to student Ana Toşa, Geography Department (2 December 1940).

The book ends with an evocative title—“Clarifications and Biographical References” (pp. 343–454), which, through extrapolation and extraction, presents the teaching and administrative staff fluctuations in the Institute of Geography of Cluj University, between 1919 and 1947, at the same time forcing the author to continue the arduous but beautiful activity of “memory recovery” of the 45 members of the institute, for future publication.

The articles contained by the *Papers*, alongside other publications of Cluj University, such as the *Yearbook of the National History Institute*, the *Yearbook of the Classic Studies Institute*, the *Eugenic and Biopolitical Bulletin*, *Dacoromania*, *Revue de Transylvanie*, have time and time again proven the uninterrupted Romanian habitation in the geographic space of Transylvania, thus demonstrating the justness of the borders set during the Paris Peace Conference.

Professor Alexandru A. Păcurar’s excellent book impresses not only with the richness and novelty of the information conveyed to future generations, but also with the book’s artistic qualities, starting with its cover and ending with its paper and the quality of the documents, coming to consolidate the author’s reputation. We must therefore recognize the author’s merit, as he has truly and successfully completed a monumental task, fully deserving of praise and admiration.



GEORGE-BOGDAN TOFAN

MIHAELA-CORINA ILISAN

Icoanele pe sticlă și xilogravurile populare din Transilvania în viziunea lui Ion Muşlea

(Transylvanian glass icons and popular woodcuts in the vision of Ion Muşlea)
Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2019

THE THIRTEENTH volume in the series entitled “Monographs in the Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy,” coordinated by Professor Ion Cuceu, focuses on the art of Transylvanian icons and woodcuts as described in the work of Ion Muşlea, from an ethnographic and socio-

graphic perspective. The book, authored by Mihaela-Corina Ilisan, saw the light of print in an elegant format and in good graphic conditions.

The author studies the Transylvanian peasant art of icons and woodcuts from the perspective of the author-work-viewer aesthetic trinity, starting from Nicula, a “center” where this artistic-religious phenomenon started. Mihaela-Corina Ilisan demonstrates that “the spread [of the phenomenon] was surprisingly vast, as this is an art intended for a peasant audience and achieved by peasant artists.” She also states that “painting on glass used an aesthetic language and codes that could be understood throughout Transylvania, which became the macro-center of these artistic manifestations” (p. 17). Of course, these insights are filtered through the lens of the studies authored by Ion Muşlea. Through his studies “devoted to the centers of glass painting at Nicula and Şcheii Braşovului, and to the woodcut practiced in Hăşdate, [Muşlea] solves the problem regarding the origin of the two artistic manifestations, their evolution and dissemination in Transylvania, their technique and the themes they depict” (p. 19).

It would be superfluous to describe the sequence of the chapters. The author does it eloquently in the “Introduction,” where she lists, describes and explains the logic of their succession. But we should dwell a little upon the miraculous happening from Nicula, where the icon of the Mother of God with the baby Jesus, painted on wood by the priest Luca of Iclod, wept for days in 1694 (or, according to others, in 1699). The phenomenon triggered strong emotion among the locals, arousing their interest in icons and painting on glass, a relatively affordable material, obtained by melting quartz sand in the glass-making workshops. Because it “lachrymated,” the

icon of Nicula became the subject of the glass icons made by numerous peasants, at first in the surrounding area of Nicula, which soon became a center of icon painting on glass. The craft spread throughout Transylvania, and in 1696 a man called “Ion of Nicula” was already working in Braşov. This led to the emergence of other centers with famous icon-makers, who passed on the craft to their descendants as a “gift of grace.” The period of maximum development was the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. Icon-makers had innate, but also acquired, artistic and technical skills, imparted to them by master icon-makers and by some books on painting. They prepared themselves spiritually, through prayer and fasting, for the process of icon painting.

The main subjects represented on Transylvanian glass icons are Jesus, the Virgin and Saints, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Mystical Winepress, and Doomsday. The recourse to a regional criterion allowed the author to describe the Transylvanian centers, as well as to highlight their specificity: Nicula and Northern Transylvania; Iernuţeni, in the Mureş Valley, active between 1796 and 1808; the Braşov area, with Şcheii Braşovului, where the foundations were laid by icon-painters from Nicula; the Făgăraş area—the Land of Olt, where the peak of icon-making creations was reached through the works of Savu Moga (1816–1899), Matei Ţâmforea (1836–1906), Ana Tâmaş, married Deji (1860–194?); the area of Mărginimea Sibiului, where a peculiar style developed, influenced by Ion Morar (1815–1890), followed by his daughters, Emilia (1861–1931), and Elisabeta (1866–1939), and Nicolae Oancea (1806–1890) from Vale; the Sebeş Valley area—

Alba Iulia (Maierii), with more sober colors and more dynamic compositions, the figures with a hieratic physiognomy that are typical of the centers in Laz-Lan-crăm, where the icon-makers Ioan Kostea, Nicolae and Petru Zugrav, Savu Poienaru and his family worked. The presentation of the areas of popular iconographic creation is an incursion into the geography of Transylvanian cultural identity undertaken by the passionate researcher Mihaela-Corina Ilisan with great accuracy and sensitivity.

The work is rich in new information on the life and activity of Ion Mușlea, who can be included in the gallery of personalities that Mihai Eminescu described as “our eternal guardians of the eternal soil.” It also presents the intellectual effervescence of interwar Cluj, so beautifully integrated into the chorus of the intellectual elite of Romania, firmly determined “to enter universality through the national gate.”

In addition to the high quality of the analyses, syntheses and conclusions contained in this work, I confess that I have reviewed it under the emotional impact of having been closely acquainted with the late visual artist and restorer Dorina Idiceanu, who carried out the restoration of the Icon of the Mother of God in Nicula with utmost professionalism.

This passionate, in-depth study on glass icons and popular woodcuts in Transylvania in the vision of Ion Mușlea, written by the young professor Mihaela-Corina Ilisan, its rich and evocative iconography and the data and information it provides, as well as the refined terminology used by the author, recommend it to a broad range of readers, both to scholars and to the general public, and should be present on the shelves of every good library.



ALEXANDRU PĂCURAR

LUCIAN ROPA

Organizarea administrativ-teritorială a României în perioada regimului comunist

(The administrative and territorial organization of Romania during the communist regime)

Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2020

THE LIBERATION of Romanian historiography from ideological control more than three decades ago provided extremely diverse and complex possibilities of expression. The evolution of historical writing during this time span indeed shows an exponential diversification of the issues broached, the Romanian historical research gradually becoming connected to the main international historiographical trends, from which it had been brutally separated when the communist regime was established in Romania.

There still are little-exploited niche territories. One of them is the history of administration, a topic that has been little approached in Romanian historiography. The work of historian Lucian Ropa precisely aims at a reconstruction meant to reveal the way in which the territorial-administrative organization of Romania evolved during the communist regime.

The book, an absolute novelty, is the first one in Romanian historiography to debate in depth and professionally the problem in question. Based on a solid archival and bibliographic documentation, published and especially unpublished information merge in the pages of this volume, information that outlines a clear image of the way the Romanian communist regime planned and organized the country from an administrative-territorial point of