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BOOK REVIEW

AȘEZĂRILE DIN MUNȚII APUSENI (THE SETTLEMENTS FROM THE APUSENI MOUNTAINS)

Vasile SURD, Veronica CONSTANTIN, Alexandru-Sabin NICULA, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj Napoca, 2017, 468 pages

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The literature on human settlements in Romania has been recently enriched with a new book focused on urban and rural habitats in one of the most emblematic mountain area of Romania, the Apuseni Mountains. This work represents a valuable research summing the latest issues on Romanian human settlements. It bases on an extensive analysis and makes use of the recent methods applied in contemporary urban and rural geographies. Quantitative and qualitative research, statistic investigation, mapping the spatial features in-field and ethnographic observation, data analysis and settlements cartographies are just a few of the methods applied throughout the study, providing the reader with a complex and global perspective on the regional dynamics of human habitats from the region of Romania's Apuseni Mountains. Divided in 20 chapters, the book started with the functional and morphological demarcation of the investigated mountain region to unveil the local and regional identities of the human settlements from this area, since the local and regional identity markers continuously influenced these habitats, thus generating an important cultural heritage.

To understand this issue, documentary attestation and in-depth investigated aims have to portray a complete illustration of the past layers of time that have shaped the local structures and functionalities of the Apuseni settlements. Since people remain the most important component of a settlement, the second part of the book brings to the fore the most relevant demographic backgrounds closely related to the altitude distribution of the people and to the significant relations established between the natural features and the settlement distribution in the analyzed mountain region. Furthermore, the authors depict this question with a separate case study on the human habitats placed in the upper area of the Apuseni Mountains. A special attention is paid to the settlements



morphology, on their dispersion and on the temporary human habitats. Considering the local economy, from traditional activities to the modern production, the third part of the book addresses specific issues on the economic and functional profile of administrative-territorial units. Against such a background, the authors make use of a specific case-study on the mining settlements. This is developed through the lens of spatial planning, providing an objective proposal on a sustainable development model for the mining area of Zlatna-Almasu Mare-Sotanga. Moreover, the authors express a scientific vision for a sustainable and integrated strategic development of the mining settlements located in the Apuseni Mountains region. The mining function is then completed with tertiary activities, since services tend to be more present in the urban and rural areas regardless of their location, size and initial economic functionalities.

The fourth part of the book is oriented on the land use. This topic is investigated through the development levels of territorial-administrative units related to the rural settlements. Moreover, the polarization potential of these territories is unveiled to frame the settlements system as a specific network with urban and rural habitats that continuously interact maintaining the local cultural traditions mirrored in particular urban and rural landscape. This extensive study is based on a vast literature, illustrating a complex process of documentation on the investigated region. The narrative is frequently filled in with maps, diagrams and figures, showing geographically the unaltered reality of this region. In addition, appropriate and significant photographs taken directly from the field argue for the most important issues critically examined in the book. Certainly, by reading this valuable contribution the readers could reflect on this mountain area of Romania in an open up version - both new themes and particular ways appear in exploring the geographical specificity of the mountain settlements. Consequently, the lecture of this book provides the reader with new understandings on the small urban and rural mountain communities and encourages new perspectives for further research.