

BOOK REVIEWS



Suciu, H. (2009), *O istorie a Lugojului între secolele XIV-XVIII* (*A history of Lugoj between the 14th and 18th Centuries*, Nagard Publishing House, Lugoj, 222 pages, 3 figures, bibliography, I.S.B.N.:978-973-1900-53-7.

The historical scientific literature focused on the Romanian Banat Region was recently completed with another valuable work on the one of the most representative settlement from this region, having a remarkable cultural and historical heritage. It is about the municipality of Lugoj, an important town settled on the western part of Romania. For a long time it was considered the cultural hearth of Banat; it was often been directed the attention of many researchers both before and after 1990. In this context, the present book comes to complete in a new vision the history of this town between the 14th and the 18th centuries. Due to a modern approach, the author relates in a fluent and coherent mode, the most relevant historical characteristics of the town through the lenses of the representative stages of this settlement, starting with the old forms of the local habitat and ending with the late medieval period.

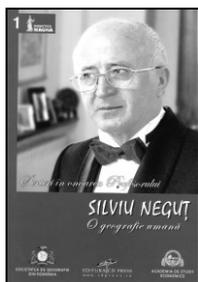
In the first pages of the study the author explains why we need a new history of the municipality of Lugoj and what are the reasons for his decision to analyze the period between the 14th and the 18th centuries. The introduction of the book is designed to reveal the main features of the town, both from the geographic and historic perspectives. In this respect, the first section of the introduction presents in short the role of the geographic components in the evolution and the development of the town; thereupon the author paid a special attention to the historic dimension of the entire Banat outlining the origins of the toponyms of Banat and Lugoj as well as important features of this historical space from the old archaeological discoveries to the specific of this site as a fortress in the Middle Ages.

The first chapter deals with the history of Lugoj during the period in which this settlement was integrated into the Hungarian Kingdom. This stage is ending in 1536 thereupon starting a new particular period related to the historical realities of Lugoj in connection with the Banat of Caransebeș and Lugoj and Transylvania. The Ottoman occupation and the main functional and structural transformations of this period are analyzed in the 3rd chapter, while the next chapter, in a coherent manner, is oriented to the Habsburg period, occasion for the author to explain the real transition to the modernity.

Based on this general historical background, the 6th chapter shows substantial considerations about the fortress of the town, as well as about the cultural life of this settlement. This last approach regards three separate case studies focused on the local life of the inhabitants in connection with the presence of the fortress, on the religious life (based on the functional dynamics of the local churches) and on the schools of Lugoj (being well-known the fact that the entire cultural function of the town is mostly tied on the educational traditions of this part of the Romanian territories).

The last chapter is designed as a concluding study for the entire society of Banat seen between modernity and retardation. It seems that the new realities opened once with the end of the 18th century and with the outset of the 19th century bring with them some negative features which are able to generate tensions and violence at the level of the entire Europe. This reason is justified by the coming of the two World Wars. For this reason, the author ends his historical insights just in time for not meeting the period in which the people start to learn the hatred for each other. The content of the book is well founded on a consistent historical literature, the work being well documented from the scientific perspective. Therefore we consider this book a relevant work both for the town of Lugoj and for the large territory of Banat. In this regard, we can appreciate that this new historical approach legitimately complete the relevant bibliography on the Romanian towns from Banat and we warmly suggest the book to all those ones interested on the past realities from this part of Romania.

**Lecturer Dr. Ioan Sebastian JUCU,
West University of Timișoara**



Societatea de Geografie din România, Neacșu, M., C., coord.
(2010), *Scrieri în onoarea Profesorului Silviu NEGUȚ: o geografie umană* (*Writings in Honour of Professor Silviu NEGUȚ: a Human Geography*), CD Press Publishing House, București, I.S.B.N.: 978-606-528-047-2, 368 pages, 83 figures, 195 photos.

The geographical literature was recently enriched with a special book dedicated to the great Romanian Professor Silviu Neaguț with the occasion of celebrating the age of 65. In this context, the book starts with a first part which comprises a special interview accorded by the great Romanian geographer to Octavian Dragomir Jora and Marius Cristian Neacșu. This dialogue reveals many important and interesting aspects about the life of Silviu Neaguț as a usual man as well as a professor and a remarkable scientist. In close connection with the large interview from the introduction part, the second one included other attractive interviews and radio broadcasts focused on different topics as ‘Geopolitica Șerpilor’ (‘The Snakes Geopolitics’), the relation of the economic crisis with the particularities of the labour market and the future of the graduates and so on. The 3rd part of

the book is dedicated to the biography of Silviu Neguț which is summary outlined through the lenses of his large curriculum vitae that reveals his most important contributions on the Romanian academic field. Moreover the content of it is legitimately completed with a list of the publications of which we can note (as single author, co-author or coordinator) *Statele lumii de la A la Z (The states of the world from A to Z)*, *Enciclopedia statelor lumii (The states of the world encyclopedia)*, *Superlative geografice (Geographic superlatives)*, *Pași pe Terra (Steps on Terra)*, *Mirajul alb. Polul Nord – Polul Sud (The white mirrage. The North and the South Poles)*, *Geografie (Geography)*, *Enciclopedia copiilor (The Encyclopedia for children)*, *Cartea recordurilor geografice (The geographic records book)*, *Enciclopedia Asiei (The Encyclopedia of Asia)*, *Tranziție și reformă (Transition and reform)*, *Europa – ghid de călătorie, (Europe – travel guide)*, *Enciclopedia Africii (The Encyclopedia of Africa)*, *Geopolitica României (The Geopolitics of Romania)*, *Geografia Turismului (Tourism geography)*, *Capitalele statelor Europei (The capital cities of the states of Europe)*, *Geografie umană (Human Geography)* and many more other encyclopedias, handbooks as well as many scientific articles in specialized reviews from Romania and abroad. Through the background of his publishing activity Silviu Neguț has become a worldwide known geographer and scientist. The success of his academic activity as well as his scientific contribution was rewarded with many occasions through awards, diplomas and high distinctions. In this regard, he became in 2003 the geographer of the year. Its academic activity was particularly appreciated by many important academic personalities from Romania being considered „man, scientist, and a perfect manager” (Prof. dr. M. Ielenicz), „a modern professor and a true friend” (Prof. dr. G. I. Roșca), „one of the most appreciated Romanian geographer” (Acad. D. Bălțeanu), „a multiple personality” (Acad. M. Malița), „an excellent student and an elite professor” (Prof. dr. V. Cucu), „the friend from the book of geography” (Dr. V. Rusu), „a great man” (Dr. D. Prunariu), „the voice from the radio, the voice from the Romanian geography” (Prof. dr. N. Popa) and many other appreciations from his colleagues, friends, collaborators and students. Beyond these selective gleanings from the book which emphasize the great personality of Silviu Neguț the last part of it illustrates some moments of his life in pictures. The images from the final part of this volume come to motivate the previous considerations pointing out some relevant moments both from the personal life and the scientific activity of this Romanian geographer. This last chapter comes to demonstrate once more the reality of the fast flow of the time, a really truth recognized by Neguț himself even at the beginning of the book, section in which the great geographer himself rhetorically ask „why the time goes so fast?”. A memorable book and a remarkable biography of one of the largest Romanian geographers... Certainly, this book is a real lesson of life.

**Lecturer Dr. Ioan Sebastian JUCU,
West University of Timișoara**

