

”SĂLAJ AT THE CENTENARY”. *BOOK REVIEW*

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Abstract. Published at Caiete Silvane and Eikon publishing houses, the book ”Sălaj at the Centenary” (second edition, coordinated and edited by Traian Vedinaş) represents a valuable monographic study. With more than 570 pages and containing numerous photographs or maps, the volume is structured in seven chapters, each of which records a varied number of articles signed by various prestigious specialists who contributed to the study. Also, the work is produced according to authorial preferences in various discursive styles, presenting theoretical studies, essays, case studies, evocations, etc.

Keywords: Sălaj county, monography, rural and urban development.

The first chapter, entitled "*Communications and communications*", belongs to the coordinator T. Vedinaş and contains an analysis of "*monographic communications*", respectively of "*communication and communion*". Thus, the first work with a monographic profile dedicated to these lands is due to the ethnographer P. Mór, who published in 1902 in Hungarian the "*Sălaj County Monograph*", an interesting study that contained six volumes and which represented an important source of information.

The second chapter of the work, under the coordination of V. Surd, is entitled "*Population and settlements*". Within it are addressed the demographic issues specific to Sălaj county, the general characteristics of the population, the specifics of human settlements, the demographic size of the territorial administrative units, the localities and the number of inhabitants, the documentary evidence, the morphology of the settlements, respectively the economic functions.

Thus, 224,384 people live in the county, most of them (60.6%) in the rural area. Demographic decline, one of the most worrying realities of contemporary Romanian society, is also specific to Sălaj county, which lost over 40,000 inhabitants from the moment it recorded the largest number of inhabitants (271,989, in 1956).

The ethnic structure of the Salaj population reveals the majority share of Romanians (66.1%), followed by the Hungarian (22.4%), Roma (6.7%) or Slovak (4.9%) minorities. The confessional structure attests to the inhabitants' belonging to Orthodoxy (61.5%), Greek Catholicism (2.5%), as well as to various Protestant (Reformed 18.8%) or Neo-Protestant (Pentecostal 4.6% or Baptist 3.7) cults (%). By sectors of activity, most of the inhabitants belong to the tertiary sector (37,500 people), followed by the secondary (industrial) sector – 29,000 people, while 33,700 villagers work in the primary sector.

Thus, from an economic point of view, the county presents a significant agricultural character due to the predominantly agricultural function of the 284 rural settlements. There are 61 territorial administrative units recorded in the county, of which four are urban (Zalău, Şimleu Silvaniei, Jibou and Cehu Silvaniei) and 57 are rural. The most inhabitants are registered in the municipality of Zalău (56202),

followed by Șimleu Silvaniei (14436) and Jibou (10407). Regarding rural communities, the most important demographic potential is in Crasna (6485 inhabitants), Sărmășag (6092), Pericei (3768) or Bobota (3766). Next, this chapter presents a study of the maps of Sălaj in the period 1918-1968 made by O. Costinaș. Thus, the transformations that took place as a result of various administrative reforms during the mentioned period are analyzed. Under F. Lozinsky's signature, is the analysis of demographic, ethnic and religious dimensions. For a better understanding of the specific realities of these issues and their evolution, the author presents and analyzes a series of statistical data collected from the multiple censuses carried out over time (1850, 1910, 1930, 1956, 1966, 1992, 2011) stating at the same time that the demographic structure of Sălaj county was marked by important historical events such as the Great Union of 1918, the Revolution of December 1989, which determined significant transformations of a social order, with socio-demographic implications.

The third chapter of the monograph is entitled "*History and politics*" and includes a series of articles that analyze the main historical and political moments in the past of Sălaj, as well as a series of personalities who made important contributions at the local, regional level or national. The oldest landmarks in the history of Sălaj are described by D. Gheorghe-Tamba in the article "Archaeological evidence", which presents, among other things, the ancient vestiges of the Dacian-Roman civilization, the territory of this county representing part of the Dacia Porolissensis province.

Thus, the traces of the Roman presence from Buciumi, Românași, Brusturi, Porolissum-Pomet (a settlement mentioned since antiquity by Ptolemy) are of particular value, both from a scientific and tourist point of view. Next, Porolissum, the most important locality in the north of Traian Dacia, enjoys a new analysis by Tr. Vedinaș, who evokes certain significant moments from the past of this settlement that "represents both Romanian and European heritage".

The following articles, published under the signature of E. Musca, address topics such as the situation of the nobility and the peasantry in the historic Sălaj county, as well as the presentation of the fortresses and castles in these lands, among others being mentioned the Wesselényi and Bélydy castles in Jibou, the Báthory castle in Șimleu Silvaniei, the Bethlen castle from Dragu, Bánffy castle from Nușfalău, Józska castle from Surduc, Haller castle from Gârbou or Báy castle from Treznea etc.

Some of them are degraded, requiring their rehabilitation and eventual inclusion in the tourist circuit. Also, the fortress and the Almaș domain (once owned by Petru Rareș), as well as the noble residence at Dragu, are presented in detail. The chapter continues with the laudatory presentation of Baron Wesselényi Miklós (1796-1850), a prominent personality of the Sălaj, supporter of legislative projects aimed at the liberation, ownership and social emancipation of the people. In the view of L. Laszló, the author of this evocation, the great Hungarian baron was "an enlightened mind in difficult times", a genuine supporter of Romanian-Hungarian reconciliation and an ardent promoter of the rights of the Romanian nation in Transylvania.

O. Costinaș evokes the personality of Simion Bărnuțiu (1808-1864) and the essential role he played in the *Revolution of 1848*. In the author's view, Bărnuțiu is the true ideologist, the political doctrinaire of the Transylvanian Romanians from 1848 and until 1918. Al. Papiu Ilarian, is presented by F. Lozinsky. Along with

Bărnutiu, this is another prominent personality who belonged to the 1848 generation from Transylvania. In continuation of this material, F. Lozinsky presents us "*Local Elites at the Constituent Assembly*" and a series of documents related to the participation of the villagers in the *Great Union* of 1918. It is known that, in important moments of its history, the Romanian people enjoyed the activity of truly providential personalities. Among them, in 1918, Iuliu Maniu, George Pop de Băsești, Vasile Goldiș, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Miron Cristea, Iuliu Hossu etc. The personality of the great statesman Iuliu Maniu was evoked in the pages of this monograph by C. Borz. Maniu was born in Simleu Silvaniei on January 8, 1873, studied in Zalău, Cluj, Budapest and Vienna, finishing with a doctorate in law in 1896. He held important positions in the Romanian state, was a democratic political leader of international stature, and a victim of the communist totalitarian system. This chapter ends with the evocation of Corneliu Coposu from Salăj, in the view of T. Vedinaș - a true "*senior of democracy*".

In continuation of the monographic work, follows the chapter dedicated to the economy and development of Sălaj county. At the beginning, T. Vedinaș and O. Costinaș present a study on societal typologies and the paradigm of asynchronous development, and later the main branches of economic activity (agriculture and pastoralism, industry, tourism and services) are analyzed. The chapter ends with a case study, carried out by F. Neaga, in relation to the realities of agritourism in Cizer.

Education and political regimes are addressed in chapter IV, where we find various studies related to, among others, the "pedagogy of the elites", the noble origin and the intellectual elite, the situation of literacy and school dropouts, the reformed school in Zalău (Balogh L.), but also interesting evocations of the professor Ion Aluaș (M. Pascaru and I. Biriș). The "incursion" into the universe of the Sălaj press is made by D. Săuca (From "*Gazeta de Duminică*" to the online press. Also, M. Matyas presents the publication *Szilágy/Szilágyság*, the oldest newspaper in Sălaj, published since 1877.

The last chapter of the volume, entitled "*Heritage and development*", analyzes a series of topics specific to this issue. Thus, C. Burghel shows the different points and "institutions" of the peasants (traditions, customs, rituals, traditional clothing, popular culture, etc.), I. Abrudan and A. Medve analyze the protected areas, the ecological dimension of sustainable development, spa tourism from Bizușa, Jibou and Boghiș. The important scientific and tourist objective of Jibou, the "*Vasile Fati*" *Botanical Garden*, is described by C. Sicora. P.S. Petroniu, the Bishop of Sălaj, presents the history and the present of the diocese.

The religious life and the church of the Hungarians in Sălaj are analyzed by L. László, and the past and present of the Greek-Catholic Church in these lands is revealed by C. Borz. O. Costinaș continues to present the minority of Slovaks on Mount Șes, and D. Stejerean the Jewish community and synagogue in Simleu Silvaniei. T. Sîrca analyzes the role that ASTRA played in the history of the Romanian people in Transylvania. Next, some representative cultural institutions or organizations are mentioned.

CONCLUSIONS

The volume "*Sălaj at the Centenary*" represents a reference monographic study, with an interdisciplinary profile, coordinated according to sociological principles by T. Vedinaș, which through the numerous topics addressed, together with the other authors offers an interesting exhaustive picture of the specific realities of this county. In the volume are presented the past of this county, its demographic, geographic, economic, cultural, touristic or heritage dimensions, the aspects related to infrastructure or education and its outstanding personalities, etc. This volume contributes to a better knowledge of Sălaj county and enhances the prospects of its sustainable development.