

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

view. The general and the specific come together in a unique manner, giving us a highly instructive overview of the research objectives, following an integrative chronology of events.

For a better understanding of the matter, Lucian Ropa also approaches the administrative-territorial realities of interwar Romania, realities that had to be known because the communist regime was built on them.

The author approaches in an integrated manner the analyzed problems, skillfully and wisely tackling the political and administrative issues. Lucian Ropa understood very well that in order to successfully address the administrative-territorial developments during the period under analysis, it is imperative to know the substance of the new political authority established in Bucharest starting with 1945. The policy of the new administrative regime was strongly influenced and suggested by Moscow and this fact is emphasized in the author's clarifications. This is also the explanation for the way in which Lucian Ropa chose to devise an integrative, interdisciplinary work, in which history merges with geography, sociology, political science, administrative law, and the science of public administration.

Worthy of notice are both the modernity of the approach and especially the author's discourse. He offers us a very well-articulated work, in which the research area is excellently delimited. We also wit-

ness an impeccable mastery of the working tools, allowing for solid descriptive and interpretive analyses, which leads us to the conclusion that the historian is mature and has a well-established intellectual background, being obviously familiar with all the intricacies of the chosen topic.

Lucian Ropa's research is a lucid, unbiased work that goes beyond the subjectivism of many of the researches devoted to the communist regime. His detached approach, characterized by a well-defined analytical spirit, reveals at the same time a critical spirit well anchored in the realities of the time. At the same time, it is impossible not to notice the complex descriptive skills of the author, and also the superior interpretive level of his entire analysis. The qualities of the work are numerous and, besides those already invoked, we will add the clarity of the discourse, the adequate and balanced language, qualities hard to find in many of the works focused on the communist regime in Romania.

The volume of Lucian Ropa is an absolute novelty. Romanian historiography has not seen such complex approaches during the last three decades. The originality of the study is doubled by a thorough documentation and by a very special passion for historical reconstruction. All these make it possible for the reader to enjoy a work of outstanding quality, original, and written at a high academic level.



GABRIEL MOISA