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As evidenced by his field research and publications, the interests of the author are primarily directed towards the Migration Era and Early Medieval Period[1]. The investigated area (Bukovina), located on the superior course of the rivers Siret, Prut and Dniester, respectively the north-eastern curvature of the Carpathian Mountains, is frequently referenced in the archaeological literature in relation to the evolutions taking place during the first millennium AD. Along time, the political-administrative status of the region fluctuated[2], and as a consequence, so did the influence of ideology infused interpretations coming from archaeology – a point brought up by the author repeatedly.

At any rate, as indicated by the previous body of knowledge, we should expect similar evolutions that took place in a relatively small, geographically homogenous territory, which only later was fragmented by political borders. The language barrier, namely only the superficial knowledge of the foreign language bibliography, together with the nationalistic stance adopted in the not-so-distant past, could explain the diverging solutions offered by the Romanian research community, on the one side, and the Ukrainian and Russian researchers, on the other. Perhaps the most compelling example of this is found in the archaeological environment from the second half of the 5th century – the first half of the 7th century. One side attributed it to a Romanic civilization (foreshadowing the early Romanian civilization), which, without important consequences, assimilated a paltry Slavic presence, while the other side argued for an exemplar early Slavic horizon.[3]

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[1] For example ANDRONIC 2005.

[2] A territory with a surface of over 10000 km^2; today the most well-known cities being Suceava in Romania and Cernăuți (Chernivtsi, Czernowitz) in Ukraine. During the Middle Ages it evolved as part of the 'Upper Country' ('Ţara de Sus') of the Principate of Moldova. The name of 'Bukovina' was made official once it was annexed by the Habsburg Empire în the year 1774, becoming the Ducate of Bukovina în 1849. The year 1918 marked the union with Romania, and then in 1940 the northern part of Bukovina (north of the river Siret) was annexed by the U.S.S.R. Since 1991 it is a part of Ukraine.

[3] În the issue of the Early Slavs, aș it was debated by Romanian researchers, I think it would be useful to reference a fairly recent study (CURTA 1994). Regarding the 'oscillating presence' of the Slavs in the Romanian linguistic and historiographical research, a very succinct, yet very poignant examination can be found in BOIA 2002, 169–176. Also, short mentions of CURTA 2006 would have been useful in connection with an entire series of controversial aspects, and then the theoretical and methodological issues, among which the complicated issue of ethnicity in relation even to the Early Slavs (especially as the work is listed in the bibliography – 2001 English-language edition).

Although the discussion around the method employed is limited, the author assures the readers of the assumed stance of scientific objectivity (page 7, 60). Yet, mostly when it comes to archaeology, this is a formula likely to lead to trouble. If it were possible to respect this principle, often times the archaeologist would be forced to refrain from stating that some ceramic fragments are 'early Slavic' or 'Romanic' when appraising them in relation to other fragments, but rather merely state that they are fragments of clay vessels. However, the author repeatedly assumes a skeptical stance on the ethnic attributions of archaeological material, and various archaeological situations are critically examined. In fact, some of the expressions used in the text are not entirely in line with the formalism of scientific objectivism[4].

The global, unitary approach in regards to the territory examined can be identified as the correct premise of the method, and even more so, the exploitation of the Ukrainian or Russian literature, less accessible and known in the Romanian research community (the reverse lack of accessibility of Romanian literature in the Ukrainian/Russian community being also true[5]). The structure of the entire paper is supported by five chapters, the first two with direct reference to important archaeological cultures, namely the so-called 'Carpathian Barrows Culture' (referred to as CBC from now on), then the Sântana de Mureş–Chernyakhov culture (SMCC). The third chapter deals with the migration of the Huns, and the following chapter examines the presence of the Slavs in Bukovina during the 6th–9th centuries. The most detailed chapter, which includes case studies, analyses the premises and the process of formation of the feudal state of Moldova. One of the subchapters ('Bogdana Church' – the archaeological key to the establishment of the country) comments on the results of a very interesting archeological investigation undertaken, however, by other researchers.

Unfortunately, a succinct examination taking a broader perspective (starting with the concept itself) on what the Migration era meant in the case of Bukovina is missing. Only in relation to the Huns, without significant or conclusive argumentation, is a case being made for the fact that the migration of this eastern population favored the intervention of the early Slavs. In fact, in contrast with the lower chronological limit assumed by the paper, CBC and SMCC largely exceed chronologically the beginning stage of the Migration Era, which has the conventional landmark in the late 4th century or even in the immediately following stage. Through the known content they primarily illustrate the primary segment of the Late Roman Imperial Age, at least according to Central-European chronology[6].

According to what is known thus far, with references to the different opinions, alongside analyses and personal observations (sometimes supported by results of the author's own field research), the author examines the local series of vestiges usually attributed to the two archaeological environments, with a temporally partially overlapping evolution until sometime in the first half or even the middle of the 5th century. If the distinction between the necropolises of the two cultures is facile, sometimes the settlements, primarily the ones that are not well investigated, are difficult to distinguish (page 20). Horizontally, in agreement with the Ukrainian authors, the limit between the two cultures can be drawn on the Upper Prut (SMCC toward the north, CBC toward the south)[7]. At least from the observations of the author, the presence of the SMCC in the region of the current-day city of Czernowitz is unclear, more certain being the funerary discoveries (pages 92–93). To the contrary, towards the south in the Romanian county

[4] For instance: 'supreme interest in justifying the invasion of the Romanian territory' (page 161); 'vengeful Hungarian historiography' (page 229); 'as they shamelessly continued to militate' (page 332).

[5] Of course, the observation is valid also in regard to the first volume of *Istoria Bucovinei*. See ANDRONIC 2008.

[6] For more recent work on CBC see for instance VAKULENKO 2010.

[7] For example VAKULENKO 2010, 193–194. The author emphasizes some similarities in the contents of the two cultures, explained by mutual ties.

of Suceava there appear to be very few sites belonging to this culture, the area being occupied by CBC (pages 58, 82–83)[8].

In agreement with some of the specialists, the two archaeological environments, are explained as the outcomes of cultural syntheses between the 'free Dacians' and some eastern Germanic populations (bearers of the Przeworsk culture and the Ghots). However, the terms in which such a line of reasoning can be put forward – if at all – are much more complicated, being directly related to the nature and quality of the arguments[9]. The multi-ethnic character of SMCC was always taken into account in the literature, but M. Andronic believes that most of the settlements did not have mixed composition. Although this opinion is not supported by arguments in the text, it may be correct since the association of certain distinct cultural elements does not necessarily imply different ethnical components. In relation to this issue, although this is not clearly stated, the author makes reference to the possibility of some settlements of the Dacian population that can be thought of as SMCC (page 60).

Unlike the majority of the Romanian experts, the author counters with serious arguments the possibility of the Romanization of the area anchored by the Eastern Carpathians (perhaps with the exception of southern Moldova), an extra-provincial territory during the times of the Dacian Province. It is even less likely that this complex phenomenon took place in the immediately following period (for instance, pages 24, 60–62, 189)[10]. In the logical thread of the argumentation in the book, this is an importance stance, which supports other points of view of the author.

Special attention is granted to the analysis of the inventory from some dwellings of the settlements in Kodyn I, II (Romanian, Codeni), Gorecha II (Romanian, Horecea), Hliboca etc., sometimes explained in the Ukrainian and Russian literature as indicators of the earliest Early Slavic horizon (5th century), formed already by the final stage of CBC or SMCC. The hand-made pottery and particularly the one modeled at the wheel specific to this culture (sometimes datable through metal pieces) can be associated in these features with the hand-made pottery already characteristic of the Early Slavs. M. Andronic appears to be rather skeptical in this regard, considering the possibility of a mix of material from different horizons of the habitation in this settlement (pages 21–24, 29, 33–34, 149–152, 185)[11]. The position that the author avows is a sensible one considering that the question of a potential connection between CBC and SMCC, namely the one between the populations supported by the Early Slavs, remains open (page 35). However, other passages from the text create confusion, namely there are references to 'transition dwellings' (page 23), 'the stage of transition from CTC to the late Slavic one, Prague' (page 24), 'transition period from the CTC to the Early Slavs' (page 33), 'cultural overlap of late SMCC culture with the old, primitive Slavic layer', 'genetic link between the SMCC settlements from western Ukraine and the Prague culture' (page 154), 'Cerneahovian pottery combined with Early Slavic pottery' (page 171). Thus we ought to believe that M. Andronic adopts the opinion

[8] În general, the stage of the field research should be taken into account. At least în the Romanian part of the upper Siret, the settlements and the necropolises are rare. See PETRESCU 2010, maps II and III.

[9] To cite only the opinion of Lidia Vakulenko in regards to the bearers of the Carpathian Barrows Culture, who were Taifali, an opinion supported by some particularities of the funerary customs, see VAKULENKO 2010, 215–218.

[10] The possibility of the Romanization of Moldova or Muntenia was long repudiated even in the Romanian research community. For instance DAICOVICIU 1967, 10–11. Gh. Ştefan excluded the process of a profound Romanization in the case of northern Moldova, Crişana and Maramureş, regions in which late process of Romanization is more likely. See ŞTEFAN 1968.

[11] This potential situation was brought up long ago. See GODŁOWSKI 1979, 426. For a detailed critique of the too early dating of the sites of the Prague culture (Prague–Korchak) see CURTA 2001, 228–246. For the dating of come features with a more certain dating, in some cases with the repetition of the positioning in the 5th century see GAVRITUKHIN 2005.

of some of the cited authors (especially Russian and Ukrainian), but is doubtful of it at the same time.

The name of the fourth chapter ('Slavs and the Bukovina area in the 6th – 9th centuries') sets from the start the primary conclusion which in the interpretation of the author is supported by the analysis of the vestiges from the 6th – 9th century: the intense Slavic habitation in Bukovina during this time. With reference to the north of Bukovina, a Slavic presence before the year 500 is not excluded (page 146). At least in the northern third of Moldova, the Romanic character of the population is a myth 'tenaciously formed in the Communist period' (note on page 135). On the other hand, the opinion that Bukovina was one of the initial regions where the Slavs developed is contradicted, although this possibility can not be entirely excluded (pages 149–150). The stance on the role of the Kiev culture in the formation of the Early Slavic environment – according to which this culture was created precisely by the Early Slavic population – is viewed favorably. Without references to argumentation, the hypothesis is thought more likely compared to others (page 156).

In agreement with datings proposed sometimes also in the Romanian literature[12], even some of the settlements in the southern part of Bukovina (Suceava county, Romania) would support a horizon of Slavic habitation that can be dated around the year 500 (for instance, page 169). In regards to this region, the increased density of the 6th – 7th century settlements in explained by the settlement of the Early Slavic population (pages 160–162). The text is unclear on the existence of a local population preceding these Slavs (the much beloved idiom 'autochthnous population' in the Romanian literature). At most it can be deduced from the text that we could be dealing with remains of an older Dacian population. At any rate, the Slavs would have assimilated the local population 'as much of it as existed after the Hunic invasion' (page 24). The reference to the possible 'retreat in the mountains' or rather to the 'forests' of these dwellers does not shed any light in this case, and similarly the mention of pottery produced by 'locals' (pages 184, 188). In the face of this reconstruction of the ethnic tableau, the acceptance of a 'process of Christianization… in a particularly advanced stage even in the norther parts of the East-Carpathian region' (page 188) is surprising, mostly since the norm among Romanian specialists in regards to this period is to assume that the local population is Christian. Contrary to this way of interpreting things, the explanation offered is surprising, and at any rate makes one think: in the 6th – 8th centuries Christianity could have also been adopted by the Slavs. As far as we know, the official date of the Christianization of the Kiev Russians corresponds to the final part of the 10th century, the author himself noting the spread of the reliquary cross in the region only after this date (page 306). However, until the beginning of the second millennium AD, the majority of the population that lived north of the Prut was pagan as indicated by the increased frequency of pagan places of worship (pages 305–306).

The evolutions that followed after the 6th – 7th centuries until the end of the first millennium AD seems to have taken place in totally different ways in the region situated south of the upper segment of the river Siret (Suceava county, Romania) compared to the northern region between the Siret and Prut–Dniester. There is a dramatic difference between the number of known sites, very few south of the river[13], an observation repeatedly made by M. Andronic. Regardless of a very possible difference in the field research of the two areas, it appears that this was the real situation, as proved by a microarea intensely excavated by the author of the book, namely the basin of the Soloneţ river (Suceava county).

The so-called Dridu culture, present in southern Moldova, but nonexistent towards the north, in agreement with a large part of Romanian researchers, is attributed to the early Romanian population (for instance, pages 225, 230) The lack of pottery specific to this culture

[12] For example COMŞA 1960.

[13] This picture is also confirmed by record that is not that old. See MIHAJLINA 1997, the map on page 10.

in the northern area should not necessarily be explained by the nonexistence of the Romanian population (page 263). However, the references to this are general and lack a more precise chronology, for instance 'Romanians and the extra-Carpathian Slavs' (page 229), 'the relations of the Cumans with the Romanian population' (page 233). At any rate, in the northern part of Moldova the Slavic influence was greater (page 225).

The examination of the situation in the 11th – 13th centuries, as it is currently known for the Suceava county, again diverging from the territory situated towards the north (the region of the city of Czernowitz), suggests a disarming situation. Up to this day a ceramic horizon that could have generated the pottery known from the period of the formation of the feudal state of Moldova, in general a horizon datable before the year 1300, has not been found. The north of Moldova does not stand out though the density of the hydronyms or toponyms of Romanian origin (for instance pages 257–259, 263, 268, 274, 324). This is why we ought to believe that in Bukovina, the Slavic population preceded the Romanian population (for instance page 267). Compared to this, the Răducăneni culture (the second half of the 11th century – first half of the 12th century) from the central-southern part of Moldova, as is often believed, is attributed to the Romanians (for instance page 234). Definitively, this region was inhabited by Romanians (for instance page 241).

In the end, it is certain that the southern part of Bukovina (the northern part continued to be an area of Slavic habitation par excellence) was colonized by the Maramures Romanians, who came from the north-eastern part of the Carpathian basin (the Depression of Maramures), a movement that occurred around the middle of the 14th century and is well documented in the official papers of the Hungarian Chancellor (for instance page 260, 276, and mostly 324–377, with numerous details)[14]. However, compared to the entire East-Carpathian area inhabited today by Romanians, the author presumes an intense process of Romanian immigration from north and east Transylvania in successive waves and for centuries, according to an uncited opinion starting with the 11th century (for instance page 260, 276, 329)[15]. At the beginning of the Moldavian statehood, primarily in the northern part of the province, the Romanian-Slavic interaction, both ethnical and cultural, was particularly intense (page 326)[16].

Although it is understandable that the author only aimed to examine the archaeological data and the literary sources (as many as could be found), and some topo- or hydro- nymes, I believe that even in the summary of the extended subchapter "Bukovina and the 'dismounting baptism' of the new Romanian state of Moldova" (pages 324–377) there would have been room for at least a short mention of the analysis and compelling observations from an older, yet relevant paper[17].

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[14] Even the Romanian presence în Maramureş is debatable. It can be potentially explained by the immigration of some Romanian groups from the central parts of Transylvania starting with the 10th century (POPA/HARHOIU 1989, 270).

[15] The theory is not novel. The author references only an older history treaty of the Republic of Moldova (page 157). Without dwelling on this issue, Robert Roesler's opinion is worth mentioning: 'Ebenso scheint es uns erlaubt zu vermuten, dass von der Marmaros aus schon seit längerer Zeit still und unbemerkt eine Wanderung der Walachen in die Triften Bukowina und Moldau stattgefunden habe, und dass die Errichtung einer transkarpatischen Wojwodschaft erst dann erfolgte, nachdem durch die Ansiedlung eines zahlreicheren Volktums für dasselbe eine Grundlage geschaffen war, der Bogdansche Aufstand also nicht der Anfang sondern das Ende der Emigration gewesen ist' (ROESLER 1871, 343).

[16] Although in a different segment only the possibility of a Romanian-Slavic co-habitation is conceded, in other regions, premarily at the southern periphery of Bukovina (page 322). Even if it is older, it is worth noting a different opinion, polar opposite, also formulated by Romanian researchers – it is more likely that Romanians did not encounter a Slavic population in Moldova and Basarabia, but rather the late Alans, Pechenegs, and Cumans. See BRĂTIANU 1988, 96.

[17] BRĂTIANU 1980 (first edition appeared in 1945), 117–186.

Along the text certain analyses and observations are needlessly repeated, and some well-known facts are emphasized, such as in the subchapter "The Bukovina region under the impact of the last Great Migration" (pages 225–253). This leads to an inefficient use of space. Mostly since the book is also addressed to the lay reader, it could have been structured in a more efficient and clear manner, even if this would have meant splitting the text over more chapters and subchapters. Surely it would have been useful to have the lists of discoveries for the different chronological segments, overlaid on a map of entire Bukovina. Last, but not least, the book should have included a more substantial summary (perhaps even a shortened version), either in Ukrainian or in a world language. Together with other observations formulated in the current review, these additions could lead to an improvement of a potential new edition, and are in my opinion necessary.

Mugur Andronic's book is primarily an archaeology text, a monograph which examines the evolutions that occurred in the current cross-border area of Bukovina during a very wide chronological interval (3rd/4th centuries to the 14th century). His conclusions contradict a thesis supported thus far by Romanian experts, namely that of the long-term continuity of a Daco-Roman, and then Romanian, population including in regions which are found today at the periphery of the territory inhabited by Romanians. M. Andronic's book has the undeniable merit of contributing to the launch of a very important debate in relation to at least the territory of Bukovina.

Of course, the issue is complicated, but it is to be expected that attempts similar to this one will unveil other regional evolutions within the territory of modern-day Romania[18]. In relation to such a wide area, there is still the possibility of a uniform and long-lasting 'cultural continuity', an often contrived explanation with the aim of arguing for the co-habitation of the same ethnic group. Even in the case of a more restricted territory, such as the south-Carpathian region of Romania, a relative 'cultural continuity' could rather be understood by means of some vertical and horizontal discontinuities[19].

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[18] In agreement with M. Andronic's work on Bukovina, a homogenous archaeological environment (cca. the middle of the 6th century – the middle of the 7th century), attributed to the Early Slavs, was proposed for the north-western region of Romania (STANCIU 2011, 91–318).

[19] MADGEARU 1997.

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