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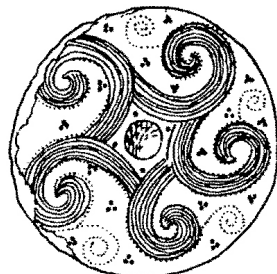
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A. Rustoiu/M. Egri (eds), *Community dynamics and identity constructs in the eastern Carpathian Basin during the Late Iron Age. The impact of human mobility* (Ethnic and Cultural Interferences in the 1st Millennium BC to the 1st Millenium AD XVII), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Mega, 2021, 224 p. ISBN 978–606-020–174–8.

The volume proposed by the editors A. Rustoiu and M. Egri, titled: **Community Dynamics and Identity Constructs in the Eastern Carpathian Basin during the Late Iron Age**, with subtitle **The impact of human mobility, represent o synthesis of the results of the interdisciplinary researches**, carried out within a project CNCS – UEFICDI (nr. PN-III-P4-ID-PCE–2016-0353, developed between 2017 and 2019) by a research team, coordinated by the editors mentioned above.

I will begin with a quote from Frank Herbert’s famous work, “Dune”¹: “Migrations stimulate new ideas ... and new ideas are a threat directed against the whole fabric of life...”. This observation is obviously the perspective of those towards whom the migrations are directed, by no means of the migrants...

This is why, not by chance, the volume’s introduction (signed by the editors) opens exactly with the image of current migrations (of the third millennium), respectively with the appeal to similar ones from the end of the Roman Empire, or during the late Iron Age, when a cultural model ended (or enters its *post-coherent* phase and *transitional* phase) and other models appeared on its “ruins”.

The debates related to the nature of interactions between local and migratory communities (we would say that the Anglo-Saxon term: “newcomers”; is more inspired), reopened by the modern processes we are witnessing, are analyzed not only from the point of view of the political and administrative authorities, but also from the perspective of the much broader field of sociology, cultural anthropology and even history.

For archaeology, this debate has been and remains influenced by the perspectives of the *autochthonist* and/or *diffusionist* approaches that have dominated the last century. Here, for example, is how the use of extremely modern methods, such as DNA analyzes based on stable isotopes in the establishment of ethnic identities, are interpreted in such a way as to lead to paradigms of the 19th and early 20th centuries who ignored the fact that **identity** is the result of **social practices**. The renewed interest in studying migration processes, the contexts and the consequences generated by them, has produced numerous recent approaches, focused on their impact on the social and economic dynamics of communities from different regions and periods.

The present volume also belongs to this current, which is centered on the various aspects associated with the impact of human mobility, in the social-political, economic and cultural processes, within the communities of the second Iron Age in the eastern area of the Carpathian Basin, more precisely the Transylvanian one.

The contributions proposed by the members of the project team (in total number of 14), which appear in the form of distinct chapters of the volume (10 in number), represent the results of the multidisciplinary investigations carried out within the mentioned project.

¹ HERBERT 2021.

The indicated geographical space (seen as a transitional area, extremely diverse in morphology and rich in resources) turns out to be a truly relevant one from the perspective of investigations related to the impact of human mobility. It is no coincidence that the investigations start precisely from the optimal knowledge of the characteristics of this space (morphology, landscape, natural resources, communication routes, environmental factors, etc.). It is impossible that an approach that wants to be **actual** and **serious** can start from coordinates other than those expressed by geographical determinism.

From temporally perspective, the processes fall under the three chronological horizons proposed, inspired by the authors: “Scythian horizon”, “Celtic horizon” and “Dacian horizon”.

The volume opens precisely with a study, proposed by A. Rustoiu, regarding the human mobility and identity constructs in the eastern Carpathian Basin during the late Iron Age. The chapter can be seen as an example of “good practices” in the analysis of such a territorial segment, by using modern means and techniques (e.g., visibility analysis from the point of the Cugir dacian fortress, etc.).

The second chapter (signed by: Aurel Rustoiu, Mariana Egri, Iosif Vasile Ferencz), focuses on the particularities of human mobility and their impact on social and cultural developments. The materiality of the three cultural-chronological horizons is presented together with other cultural-ethnic elements with which they coexisted or intersected in southwest Transylvania, the objective perspective of the archaeological argument capturing elements of continuity but also of discontinuity.

The next chapter (signed by Andrei Georgescu), punctually, based on recent archaeological discoveries, addresses the social and cultural transformations specific to the end of the Early (Old) Iron Age and the beginning of the New Iron Age in Banat, seen as a natural pendant of the Mureş Corridor, with the connections related to the south-west of Transylvania but also to the Central European world.

How the geographical landscape becomes a factor in human mobility is the theme discussed in the next chapter (signed by Sándor Berecky), from a new perspective, with emphasis on the hinterland areas of different communities in dynamic processes. The way in which the landscape is anthropomorphized, through direct interventions, is highlighted through aerial photographs and archeology of the landscape, for the different chronological levels.

In the fifth chapter, Andreea Drăgan addresses the issue of specific technologies of the Iron Age from the perspective of regional and interregional connectivity starting with painted ceramics from the Carpathian Basin.

A similar approach is carried out in the next chapter by Adrian Cătălin Căvălean, on the discoveries of glass artifacts from the Mureş Corridor, which betray strong connections, at very large distances, proving the role played by individual mobility in the spread of technologies, trends, practices and ideas.

The following four chapters deal with the general theme of the volume, from the perspective of other archaeological categories and archaeo-environmental data, through interdisciplinary approaches: Roxana Grindean and Ioan Tanţău approaches the results of the palynological investigations; Szilárd Sándor Gál, Lucian Vaida, and George Marinescu analyze the bio-archaeological markers obtained from the study of the remains from the necropolises of the Scythian and Celtic horizons; Georgeta El Susi from the perspective of paleofaunal data, and Beatrice Elena Ciută of vegetal macroresidues.

If I began the presentation by referring to Frank Herbert, I will conclude with a remark issued by the renowned American philosopher and cultural anthropologist David Kaplan², embodied in what can be accepted as “the law of cultural dominance” – and which, in my

² KAPLAN 1960.

opinion, summarizes exactly the conclusions of the studies contained in this volume: “that cultural system which more effectively exploits the energy resources of a given environment will tend to **spread** in that environment at the expense of less effective systems”. With the specification that this paradigm can be extended to all levels of the history of *Homo sapiens*.

I cannot conclude this presentation without remarking on the way the volume is presented, its design, its layout (the English language option), the quality of the illustrations and, why not, its highly inspired cover, in full tone with the content, design under the Mega Publishing brand, which tends to replace the idea of *Excelsior*. I’m probably slightly subjective, but the image of the ample double meander that Mureş River makes in front of the village of Balomiru de Câmp (Alba County), is probably the quintessence of the idea of a border, of crossing, from one area to another, from one cultural model to another, why not from one era to another.

As an archaeologist who studies the Transylvanian Neolithic, I cannot but admit the fact that following the way of association of the contributors to this volume: a team (!), without further details, I feel a certain slightly bitter taste, because the Transylvanian “Neolithic Research Guild” did not arrive (nor by far!) at such a level of professional association. The only thing to lose is the research of certain cultural-chronological stages. The results of the collaboration between researchers of the La Tène era can be seen volumes, in fact a series of volumes, the present one being the last in order of appearance, after a series of other similar collective or individual contributions.

Marius Ciută

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