

BOOK REVIEWS

Miossec, Jean-Marie: *Rivages d'Europe. Personnalité et avenir d'un continent ouvert*. L'Harmattan, Paris 2013, 856 p., ill. "Territoire de la Géographie".

If the shores of a continent can be of a double scope: on sea and land, then a study of European geopolitics of the dimensions now proposed by Jean-Marie Miossec, professor of geography at the University of Montpellier (and its earlier rector), had to take into account all intricacies of the relations between Europe and the Muslim World over the ages, on sea and on land. A long fan of Muslim nations spreads wide from the Atlantic Ocean, borders on the South of Europe and ends up the map, on the East, in Tatarstan, after passing over the Turkish Straits and Northern Caucasus. A study of European geopolitics cannot be complete without regard to the influence of surrounding Muslim nations and states. These two worlds did enter into intensive and changeable interrelationship, in a more or less peaceful or warlike way, and occasionally overlapping each other in space and time.

The author himself is a man of two worlds – born and brought up in Northern Africa, resettled and scientifically promoted in continental France. He devotes a lot of his attention to the Muslim World from European perspective and as it could be observed from inside. Beside, of course, his main preoccupation, the territorial management and regionalisation of the European space.

This new book which aims at becoming a general geopolitical study of the continent called "Europe", follows the process of constructing the European identity over the ages. It is peculiar to see how this, in reality, comparatively small cape attached to the great continent of Asia, has developed its own personality. The personality which is not exclusive (at least not always and not in all dimensions) and which actively takes part in building other intercultural structures: the Mediterranean and the Eurasian. The construction of Europe – so much in geographical, historical, economic and cultural detail described by J.-M. Miossec – never finishes. Likewise never comes to the end its interdependence with the immediate neighbours, Africa and Asia, represented in these regions almost uniquely by Islamic polities.



The book is composed of four main parts. First part titled *The image of Europe* [*La face de l'Europe*] discusses how the core components, like the Carolingian state, still define the undeniable centre of the continent, around which concentrate other regions – Southern (Mediterranean) Europe, Baltic and Northern (Nordic) Europe, Central and Eastern Europe (ending where Russia begins), Russia, Orient-flavoured South-Eastern Europe and then immediately come Turkey and the Arab World. Second part, *Europe takes shape within its shores* [*L'Europe se moule sur ses rivages*], tells how the idea of Europe took shape after fervent activities in various parts of the continent, climatic change, successful and failed state formation processes, regional rivalries and internal transformations, development of economic exchange, cultural transmission chains, civilisation retreats and reversals and, finally, bipartition and globalisation. Part three, *Europe on the horizon* [*L'Europe en horizon*] is a narration of a difficult process of creating one united Europe in a turbulent world: political treaties and integrative dynamics, financial crowbar, asymmetry between supranationality and intergouvernementality, demographic factor, tensions between centres and peripheries in the communitary space. The fourth part, *Europe without limits* [*L'Europe sans rivages*], examines how Europe functions in the European Union and in new global conditions. In his *Conclusion* the author stresses the necessity of cohesion and reviews the factors that could constitute a threat to it.

Miossec does not concentrate on Muslims when elaborating on the functional development of various European states, political cells facing the sea and facing the steppe – these two perspectives resemble a lot. He explains their own dynamics and the development of the common idea of Europe, delineated by physical shores and redefined by the difference from the surrounding “others”. But it is fascinating to observe how those “other” elements enter into the construct of the European geographical and mental identity in the form of pluripolarity. Furthermore, we can observe how the subsequent political entities replace each other in changed political and cultural conditions. For example, the Byzantine Empire whose core territories were in Anatolia and Thracia, and later on the same areas became kernel components of the Ottoman Empire under new Turkish names: Rumeli and Anadolu.

Several chapters and long passages are devoted to interaction with the Arab World in the West – interpenetration of cultures in the Iberian Peninsula under the Arab domination and early Spanish reconquest; likewise the symbiotic Euro-Arab culture in Southern Italy; then the Balkans which, during many centuries, were rather perceived in core Europe as part of the Middle East rather than that of the same continent – now with such states like Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina that await their turn to apply for the EU membership; the Tatar World – once dominating Russian tiny principalities and eventually dominated by the reunited Russian state; Northern Caucasus (Chechnya and Daghestan). This is about Europe in geographical limits, however conventional and/or fictitious they are, plus the Christian nations often considered as a sort of European extension to the Middle East, Armenia and Georgia. Also Turkey and its weight in the geopolitics of South-Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean (once the Orient Question or how to dismember the Ottoman state, at present the Cyprus question plus the Turkish immigrants in Western Europe), relations with the Arab states, the Palestinian question, North-West Africa and the whole Western Mediterranean with the two shores, Northern and Southern. Exact retelling of Miossec's book and its contents would require another smaller book; the intention of this short review is to put stress on how organically the West and East are welded together and inseparable in every respect: geographically,

historically, culturally, economically and politically. The comprehensive volume by Miossec is accompanied by an extensive bibliography of ca 500 titles, by 134 figures: maps, diagrams and drawings, and an ample index which largely facilitates the use of the book. It constitutes a meaningful contribution to our understanding of our own land and that of our immediate neighbours, a work which will remain for many years unsurpassed.

Bogusław R. Zagórski

Wolnicz-Pawłowska, Ewa: *O nazwach wodnych w Polsce*. [On hydronyms in Poland]. Wydawnictwo DiG, Warszawa 2013. 236 p., bibl., index. ISBN 978-83-7181-769-4 (hard back) / 978-83-7181-802-8 (paper back)

The author of the book, Prof. Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska, is a renowned expert in Polish and Slavic dialectology and onomastics, and particularly water names (hydronyms). At present she presides over the Commission on Standardization of Geographical Names Outside the Republic of Poland which closely cooperates with UNGEGN (United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names).

Polish hydronymy is covered by an enormous amount of detailed publications, the bibliography is very rich. Many of those works are due to Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska (more than a dozen books and over one hundred articles). Paradoxically, however, the existing literature does not contain a complete overview monograph thus far and that white spot on the research map our author decided to cover, at least in a provisional way. The state of the art in local and regional research on Polish hydronyms has indeed led to a point that we need to pass on to the next stage, a blanket elaboration of the subject matter. The present book is such a first attempt in which the author has gathered several ones of her own earlier publications, reedited them when necessary and completed in order to obtain a fuller picture of the whole field.

The book is composed of nine (not numbered) chapters, preceded by an extensive and clearly formulated introduction. Even unprepared readers can learn from it about general problems and methods of hydronymic sciences, history of names formation, etymological subtleties, general rules of extending and shrinking the existing corpus of the names, basic classification of the names in the categories labeled as “native” and “foreign”. The first chapter characterizes the hydrographic resources in Poland and their regional and systematic divisions. In this context it is interesting to observe that basins of two major Polish rivers, Odra and Wisła (Vistula), cover altogether 88% of the country, while only 1.1 % of the territory are fragments of foreign basins of rivers flowing outside the Polish borders. It testifies of the exceptional cohesion of the national territory when observed from the hydrographic point of view. Furthermore, the whole of the Wisła basin lies in Poland and only very small proportion of the Odra basin is located outside Polish borders.

The second chapter contains characteristics of the Polish hydronyms: their chronological stratification connected with various origins. The earliest forms that cannot be easily explained with the use of Polish linguistic elements could be pre-Slavic or even pre-Indo-European. That question is much debatable, but careful analysis of existing name elements and a comparative study of hydronyms appearing in various European countries allow to build up an ever growing repository – or a glossary – of constituents (roots with

their derivative mechanisms and relevant semantic fields) that were used in the remote past for constructing names that are not quite clear to us today. There is a stratum of old names explicable on the ground of all-Slavic and proto-Slavic linguistic elements, then a very big number of names created in historical times and using typical Polish words and structures. There are also names of German and Baltic origin resulting from waves of population movements and transformation of a dominant language on certain areas where earlier names remained but were linguistically (sometimes only superficially) adopted to the needs of a new cultural environment. This coincides with geographical division of the country into areas of specific naming traditions, resulting from either language differences or dialectal diversification within one and the same language. Then the author reviews various semantic groups and various types of formal (structural) and semantic classifications (taxonomies). The most basic of them is dividing names into two groups: those referring to specific natural characteristics of the named features and those referring to another feature in relation to which "our" feature was named.

In the next chapter the author describes the history of hydronymic research in Poland. She enumerates various centers (geographically) and schools (methodologically) dealing with water names, as well as big international undertakings like *Hydronymia Germaniae* and *Hydronymia Europaea*, in which Polish hydronymists used to participate, and succeeding works of syntheses based on regional lists and monographs. It is followed by a chapter describing terminological problems as appearing in different publications. Even though the number of researchers dealing with water names is not very high, the professional terms they use have never been standardized and their proper meaning can often be gleaned only from the context (or confuse the reader). Several sets of such terms are discussed in detail before the author passes on to an alphabetical annotated list of hydrographic terms gathered from various sources.

Further chapters are devoted to more specific subjects, like prepositional names of water features which did not attract much attention among earlier researchers as belonging to a new naming stratum. Just for that reason they were often treated as the descriptions rather than the strictly understood *nomina propria*. A structural approach to the complete ononymic corpus which included these naming formations made it possible to find out that in reality they did belong to the system and should be dealt with in the full context of hydronyms. Nowadays we can observe how those prepositional names, derived mostly from the common speech and usually referring to small features of very local importance, are pouring into the official toponymic lists and undergo formal standardization procedures. Then a discussion of a term *baba* follows, which may be found quite widely, beside Polish, also in various toponymic layers in many Slavic languages. First semantic field of the word *baba* is associated with old women in diverse social and family contexts, by extension also to some objects that may be somehow related to them either through free association to the shape or to some other characteristics. However, the meaning of the word as a constituent part of hydronyms (and other toponyms amply cited here for comparative purposes) remains quite unclear and any explanation may only be of a hypothetical value.

Next short chapter includes etymological explanations of the names of several big rivers of Poland, like Wisła, Bug and Narew, as well as Dniestr, basing on the fact that a part of its basin is located in Poland and the river used to have strong historical ties with Poland. Then comes systematic enumeration of right-hand tributaries of Wisła between the rivers Wieprz and Bug, followed by two alphabetical dictionaries: of flowing waters and of stagnant waters, complete with historical references and etymological explanations. The

same scheme is used for the analysis of that part of Dniestr basin which is in Poland. The book is accompanied by a very helpful extensive bibliography (pp. 186-204) which, by its nature itself, is selective but includes all most important works on Polish hydronymy, as well as such works on Ukrainian hydronymy that contain information on contiguous areas and transborder river basins.¹

After the list of abbreviations we also find several examples of river basins represented in schematic graphic forms and a detailed alphabetical index of hydronyms (with all variants) and other toponyms cited in the book. However, for unknown reasons river names appearing in the graphic schemes are not included. The book by Ewa Wolnicz-Pawłowska is a good and instructive reading from which both a specialist and a layman will profit enormously. We wish it could be translated and published in English so as to make the questions of the Polish hydronymy better understood by foreign readers in a wider context.

Bogusław R. Zagórski

Szwarcz, Andreas; Soustal, Peter; Tscholakova, Antoaneta (eds.): *Das mittelalterliche Bulgarien, Byzanz und Europa. Festschrift für Vasil Gjuzelev zum 75. Geburtstag. Freunde des Hauses Wittgenstein / LIT Verlag, Wien / Münster 2014. "Miscellanea Bulgarica", Band 21. 122, [6] p., ill. ISBN 978-3-643-50591-0.*

The laudatory book celebrating the 75th birthday of the Bulgarian medievalist Vasil Gjuzelev (born on the 19th of October, 1936), consists, first of all, of an introduction by the editors, a laudatory notice by Johannes Koder and a series of reminiscences and reflections by V. Gjuzelev himself. It should be noted that V. Gjuzelev is reputed for his fundamental publications and insightful analyses of medieval sources for the history of his homeland from the 7th to the 15th century, and furthermore, for regional and historical studies on Bulgarian cities (Haskovo, Pomorie, Nikopol) and lands (Dobruja). These are followed by an outcome of a special laudatory session held in 2011 in Vienna, comprising 10 articles on diversified themes (and in various languages), bringing interesting information relevant to the history and historical geography of South-East Europe.

Peter Schreiner (Munich): *Südosteuropa in der Politik der Mittelmeermächte* [South-East Europe in the politics of the Mediterranean powers], pp. 23-30. The author presents an overall account of geopolitics or territorial-political changes, including main transportation routes and commercial hubs (including such an important emporium as Thessaloniki) of the vast area in the Middle Ages before the coming of the Ottoman Turks.

Laura Balletto (Genoa): *Brevi note su Pera genovese a metà del XIV secolo* [Short notes on Pera of the Genoans in the middle of the 14th century], pp. 31-38. The author focuses on the Genoan center of trade and political influences in the Middle East that was Pera (at present Beyoğlu, a part of İstanbul), situated "in front of Constantinople, on the

¹ One more important publication of particular relevance should however be added to the bibliography. It is *Slovník mikrotoponimiv i mikrohidronimiv pівнічно-західної України та суміжних земель* [Dictionary of microtoponyms and microhydronyms of South-Western Ukraine and contiguous lands]. T. 1-2. Redakcijnovydavnyčyj viddil "Veža" Volyn's'koho deržavnogo universytetu imeni Lesi Ukraïny, Luc'k 2006.

opposite shore of the Golden Horn, which during two centuries constituted the most wonderful flagship of Genoan overseas". Pera was located in a place that assured for its possessors control of trade routes between Western Europe, the Sea of Levant and the Black Sea (and there, in cooperation with another strategic possession of Genoa, Caffa on the Crimean Peninsula). The author presents a review of archival sources concerning the Genoan activities in the mentioned areas in the 14th century, which seem less abundant than those referring to the 13th century; their study is therefore of even greater importance as each document should be more thoroughly investigated and exploited so as to yield data comparable with those available for the previous age of Pera's development.

Sergej P. Karpov (Moscow): *Il valore della documentazione archivistica Genovese per la storia del Mar Nero e dell'Europa orientale* [The value of the Genoan archival documentation for the history of the Black Sea and the Eastern Europe], pp. 39-43. The author follows, in a sense, in steps of L. Balletto in the previous article, concentrating mainly on the more specific areas directly bordering on the Black Sea. Besides the archival documents he evokes the European sea charts of the 13th-17th centuries as an outstandingly worthwhile source of historical information.

Michel Balard (Paris): *La défense de la Gazarie Génoise* [The defence of the Genoan Gasaria], pp. 45-54. The author turns his attention to the last, declining stage of the Genoese overseas colonies: Caffa, Cembalo and Soldaia in the Crimean Peninsula, and the adjoining region known under the name of Gasaria (and its derivatives). The growing threat of the Ottoman Turks, permanent conflicts with competing Venetian and Byzantine possessions, coincided with a diminishing interest in the colonies shown by the City of Genoa. It was mainly due to worsening of terms of trade between East and West, combined with more and more frequent confrontations within an ethnically and religiously diversified population of the colonies. The fortresses needed overhaul and renovation, the fleet required repair works, the armed forces on land and sea had more and more difficulty to attract new native staff from Italy (who did not wish to expatriate and remain underpaid) and had to take recourse to foreign sellswords, not always considered reliable. The metropolis could not support and defend its colonies effectively, the crisis was too deep.

Ivan Jordanov (Shumen): *Titles and dignitaries in the Preslav court (893-971). The contribution of sigillography*, pp. 55-68. Organization and nature of the Bulgarian administrative system in the 9th-10th centuries are still to be reconstructed. Written sources are scarce and mostly available from Byzantium (external sources), while the local sources are even less abundant. A hierarchical list of dignities (*taktikon*) for Bulgaria is yet to be established. Therefore sigillography constitutes an important source of information to be gathered from the inscriptions on official stamps, meticulously analyzed and put in comparative light. The purpose of this article is to offer some new sigillographic data for the period when the capital of Bulgaria was moved from Pliska to Preslav (893). Through the study of newly used rank titles it is revealed how the Byzantine model of administration was gradually adopted by the developing Bulgarian state.

Ivan Božilov (Sofia): *Franjo Rački et son "Histoire de la Bulgarie"* [Franjo Rački and his "History of Bulgaria"], pp. 69-76. The Croatian priest, historian and man of letters, Franjo Rački (1828-1894), wrote a history of Bulgaria at some time between 1863 and 1866, that until recently has remained in a manuscript form, buried among documents of the Croatian National Archives and unknown to the outside world. The author of the paper, together with his wife, have discovered that rare work, made a research about the circumstances of its creation, translated into Bulgarian and published. The paper describes

mainly the old Byzantine and less numerous Slavic sources, and some other contemporary works used by Rački, and the way his book was constructed. The whole history is divided into three parts, the first of which is devoted to a general outline of Bulgarian lands and of the Bulgarians themselves from 1019, after 50 years of fierce battles against the Byzantine army which occupied the country, and subsequent uprisings for independence. I. Božilov highlights the geopolitical fact of one undivided Bulgaria being presented in the book, including the Macedonian territories.

Peter Soustal (Vienna): *Zur Präsenz der Slawen auf dem Heiligen Berg Athos* [On the presence of the Slavs on the Holy Mount of Athos], pp. 77-88. The author reviews the list of the monasteries on the Mount of Athos, indicating those markedly connected with the noted presence of the Slavic monks in them, their connection with Slavic foundations, and etymology of such proper names that can be drawn from Slavic languages. In fact, the Orthodox monks were mainly Greeks but included quite a number of monks of Slavic origin, be it of Bulgarian, Serb or Russian descent, and others, who left a strong imprint on the theological thought cultivated in the monasteries and largely contributed to historical and geographical research on the Balkan nations.

Elena Koytcheva (Sofia): *The Forefather of the Komnenian Dynasty. His Name and Career* (in English), pp. 89-99. The Komnenian dynasty of Byzantine rulers still raises many questions about its origin and proper genealogical affiliations of its progenitors. The author discusses the question of Manuel Komnenos and Manuel Erotikos (“Amorous”) whom certain historians consider to be one and the same person. This author argues, basing on historical evidence, including topographical origins of the respective families from Anatolia and anthroponymic analogies, that they were two different personalities which should not be mixed and taken one for another. E. Koytcheva admits, however, that the identification of persons bearing the two surnames and their progenitors is still debatable and requires more study.

Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova (Sofia): *Frontières et peuples réels et imaginaires dans les récits sur Alexandre le Grand* [Frontiers and peoples, real and imaginary ones, in the stories of Alexander the Great], pp. 101-110. Legends about Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) and his daring exploits abounded in the centuries that followed his death and became a part of living traditional memory in different cultures. The author reviews real and imaginary frontiers and peoples that appear in the legends, their distribution over the vast territories allegedly conquered by Alexander (either to the North of Caucasus or even of Kirgizstan), bordering with the lands of Biblical Gog and Magog (Yāğūğ and Māğūğ in Islamic tradition). The legends mixing the geographical real and imaginary, interweaving motives coming from various sources, written or oral, are sometimes a challenge for the researchers who encounter all difficulty in finding a grain of historical truth among fairy tales.

Oliver Jens Schmitt (Vienna): *Skanderbeg und die Slawen im makedonischen Raum* [Skanderbeg and the Slavs in the Macedonian space], pp. 111-122. Another historical personality whose life and deeds gave occasion to historical debates and appraisals in international artistic works (literature, music) was the Albanian national hero, Skanderbeg (1405-1468). The author tries to elucidate several questions that arise in connection with the Balkan Slavs and their interrelation with the local Albanians and the Skanderbeg's story. The first is the question of Skanderbeg's family origin, which may be interpreted as Slavic. Then there is a problem of identification of one of Skanderbeg's capitals, Svetigrad (Holy City in Slavic), which can be tentatively equated with Kočačik/Kodžadžik in

Macedonia. And last, the ethnically mixed character of the Debar/Dibra regions that constituted the heartland of Skanderbeg's origins and resistance against the Ottoman Turks, where Albanians lived together with Greeks and Slavs (Serbs and Bulgarians).

The volume is full of engaging and well written contents by authors highly competent in their respective fields and constitutes, as such, a valuable addition to literature on the still vague picture of South-East European geographical history in the Middle Ages. In addition, however, the readers would certainly find it of interest to see a full list of V. Gjuzelev's works with their original titles and other bibliographical details, as well as a comprehensive names and terms index attached to this eye-catching volume, leading to enhancement of its practical usefulness and scientific value. The illustration on the front cover represents a real rarity: an Anglo-Saxon cotton map of South-Eastern Europe from about 1040 (a fragment of a world map), preserved in the British Library. It is regrettable that such an interesting item was not described and analyzed in detail in the book it illustrates, leaving us with appetite for more.

Bogusław R. Zagórski