

Assessment of *Bakalárska práce* by Mgr. Peter Bučko
Analýza stredovekých valónskych toponým v Rumunsku a Srbsku

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The *Analysis of Medieval Walloon Toponyms in Romania and Serbia* is an understated title for an important research of far reaching consequences.

In the Middle Ages, more precisely in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, Europe enjoys a time of peace and development. New cities are created, forests are cut down, and population increases. The colonization phenomenon belongs to this general spread of the population.

As many other kings, the Hungarian kings wished to increase the population of their realms. They invited colons from many regions and countries to Hungary and Transylvania. The scope of the study by Mgr. Peter Bučko are these Walloon colonists from Flanders and Brabant.

Thus, the study is not just about toponyms, but about the social, economical and political phenomenon of the colonization.

Jean Delumeau, in his influential book, *La peur en Occident*, suggests that people in the Middle Ages traveled little, did not travel far, were suspicious of foreigners, and married within a narrow circle – twenty, thirty kilometers around their village. In fact, the Middle Ages is an era of settlements – for instance, the Piemontese, Franco-provensal and Occitan settlements in the south of Italy and in Sicily, colonies that are still alive after seven centuries ; the Catalan and Ligurian colonies in Sardinia, and so on.

The structure of the study

The first chapter is about the multi-ethnicity of the Hungarian kingdom. As most European countries, the Kingdom of Hungary was multi-ethnic, but not only *de facto*. Hungarian kings kept good relations with their Pecheneg and Cuman subjects, sometimes risking the wrath of the Church for their religious tolerance for paganism, and, ultimately, for their ethnic tolerance. Multi-ethnicity was never easy to manage.

The second chapter is about voyages, missionaries and pilgrimages in the High Middle Age – in the eleventh and tenth centuries in Hungary, in our case. People traveled during the Middle Ages – only the richest, and only seldom. Pilgrims and missionaries traveled to Jerusalem after the conquest of the Holy Land, and passed through Hungary. Therefore, Hungary was well known for the Western pilgrims. A missionary from Venice, Gerard, becomes bishop of Cenad and is active in the conversion of the Hungarians. The next chapters are about toponyms, their different forms and changing names. The third

chapter is about the role of the Romance settlers in the Hungarian kingdom – either church personalities or anonymous people.

Difficulties

The texts are very often lacunary. Being mostly in Latin, with Latin names, they create another difficulty : is this Johannes, or that Simon, or Karolus, Hungarian or not ? The author had to solve these ambiguities. Is this Ken, or Kes, Hungarian or Walloon ? Also, the name of the Walloons, Olaszi, enters very often in homonymy or paronymy with the Olachi, Romanians from Transylvania. This was another difficulty the researcher had to solve, and solved it well. It will be important for Romanian researcher of medieval Transylvania as well, as it carefully distinguishes between Walloon Olaszi and Romanian Olachi.

The author identifies clearly Walloon names and churches consecrated to Liege saints, and thus is able to confirm the presence of Walloon settlers.

What is the study of toponymy ?

In the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, the climate was warmer than today. Vine grew in Wallonia. The Walloon colonists chose, in Serbia and Transylvania, places where they could grow vine. In fact, the areas they chose are still cultivated and are still vineyards eight centuries later. The study of toponymy helps us to identify patterns of habitation.

The author even attempts to estimate the number of Walloon settlers after the papal *decimae*, which followed approximately the size of the population. Mgr. Peter Bučko proves abundantly that historic research is a detective endeavour. He also created three maps – a map of the Walloon settlements in Hungary, another in Transylvania, and another in the Srem area in Serbia.

Bibliography

The bibliography is very dense, in German, Hungarian, Slovakian, English, French, Flemish and Latin. It proves that Mr. Peter Bučko has reached maturity in research. He uses mostly primary literature, Medieval sources, and uses secondary literature, works by recent historians, only when their interpretations prove useful to settle doubts or debates.

Conclusions

Mgr. Peter Bučko overcame many difficulties with his erudition to give an overview of the Walloon settlements in Transylvania and Serbia under the Hungarian kings. The understated title of the research should not mislead us. We congratulate him for his research and propose that the title of *Bachelor* be accorded to him.

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