

data (*record linkage / entity resolution*) and merges entities that appear in multiple sources. Last but not least, the database also includes a publicly accessible interface.

The issues addressed in the chapter concerned with method-oriented databases are partly discussed in a previously published study.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to source-oriented databases, method-oriented databases start from a precise research question and are built accordingly. The model analyzed in this chapter is the *Entity-Attribute-Value model*, and its implementation is detailed using as a case study Historical Data Grinder, a tool from the prosopographical research field.

To conclude, the book by Angela Lumezeanu represents a landmark for Romanian historians dealing with the use of databases. It stands out due to the detailed information on historical databases, but especially due to the contextualization of two aforementioned tools developed in the Romanian research environment.

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**Ágoston Berecz**, *Empty Signs, Historical Imaginaries: The Entangled Nationalization of Names and Naming in a Late Habsburg Borderland*, New York, Berghahn Books, 2020, 350 p., 14 illus.

The last few years have marked a steady increase in the interest manifested by younger generations of historians in approaching some seemingly exhausted research topics in terms of sources and methods. One of these topics refers to the history of nationalism and nationalities from the multinational empires, for which there is a rich secondary bibliography, as well as multiple primary sources. However, contemporary historians are innovating and enriching the knowledge using some original sources, new methods or perspectives, far more detached from the nationalist fever that characterizes a significant part of the existing researches. Apparently, the names of people, towns and places, as well as the naming processes, do not have a close connection with the history of nationalism, which is why their study was not given much attention. However, Ágoston Berecz, in his most recent book, *Empty Signs, Historical Imaginaries: The Entangled Nationalization of Names and Naming in a Late Habsburg Borderland*, addresses the issue of

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<sup>1</sup> Angela Lumezeanu, "A Database Model for Social History. Historical Data Grinder and the Transylvanian Society of the 19th and 20th Centuries", in *Transylvanian Review*, vol. XXVIII, no. 2, 2019, p. 100-111.

the processes through which the names and denominations had become part of the evolution of national policy and of nationalism in a multiethnic area of Europe: the provinces of Transylvania and Banat, during the nineteenth century. The result of his research is not only a source of useful information for researchers interested in this subject, but also the outcome of the new trend of historiography, characterized by approaching innovative sources and methods which are quite difficult to relate to the history of nationalities, in order to finally bring a fresh perspective upon some much researched topics.

The structure of the paper aims to achieve the research objectives that the author presents in the introduction. The first part, entitled *Peasants*, seeks to determine the extent to which the naming processes within the social category of peasantry have reflected the acquisition of a national identity. Therefore, Berecz establishes a relationship of equality between the naming processes and the censuses or other indicators that could provide information on the extent to which the peasantry was national, in the absence of direct sources on this issue. The second part of the paper, *Nationalisms*, focuses on the methods through which the nineteenth-century nationalists turned the names of people and places into symbols of memory, on the effects of popularizing these new meanings, and the way they reflected national ideals. The third part, entitled *The State*, presents how the governmental authorities have managed these naming processes, integrating them into the larger category of national policies. Finally, the whole work achieves another goal mentioned by the author, who wants to draw the attention to the significance of proper names, which are seen as carriers of ideological messages.

Each one of the three parts of the book contains three chapters dedicated to first names, family names or names of places. The first part is dedicated to peasantry's situation. Berecz reiterates and re-argues an idea increasingly more often mentioned by the recent years' historiography, according to which the nation was, in fact, built by the elites. As for the peasantry, ethnicity differences became significant during the nineteenth century, as a result of two processes: through the national activists' propaganda, the nationality overlapped the ethnicity, initially as a factor of social mobilization. Eventually, the ethnically diverse local communities were replaced by imagined, national communities. The Romanian national elites, for example, encouraged the adoption of Latin names among the peasantry, in order to argue the idea of Roman descent and the continuity of Romanians. One of the institutions by which this idea was promoted was the church, through its priests, who militated for the choice of Latin names, although this would have meant agreeing with the replacement of the traditional names, inspired by the Christian calendar. However,

especially at the beginning of the nation-building process, the peasants opted for the preservation of Christian names, as evidence of the persistence of medieval thought patterns; radically influenced by faith and religion, they were uncomfortable with the thought that their newborns would not be under the patronage of a saint.

Beyond the first name, the surname or the toponyms were not of much interest to the peasants, as they were to the national elites; the second part of the book focuses on this subject. Since the nineteenth century, for the national activists, every aspect of the naming process was an opportunity for promoting nationalism and for building the national identity. Beginning with the 1848 revolution, many of the Romanian national activists opted for the Latinization of their own names, either by adding the suffixes *u/iu* at the end (*Alduianu, Casianu*) or by adopting the system of three names, which characterized the Romans (*Ioan Axente Sever, Alexandru Papiu Ilarianu, August Treboniu Laurianu*). However, as proof of the fact that the codes of nationally appropriate behavior were nowhere clear-cut, lay the numerous references of the Romanian elites to the names of places, cities, still using the traditional, Hungarian terms.

The same process of nationalizing the names included the travel diaries, published by various members of the national movements, who gave national names to the various natural destinations, thus nationalizing the territories through which they traveled. The traditional, Romanian names of these places, mostly mountainous, also reflect the demographic distribution in the region. Hungarian nationalists have tried to Magyarize some of these place names. The Common Army was one of the institutions that kept its distance from these attempts, although some of the regiments were asked to use Hungarian toponyms over some places with Romanian majorities, otherwise known as Romanian. This is another argument that supports the idea that the army was “beyond nationalism”.

The third part of the work focuses on the measures taken by the state and the official authorities regarding the processes of naming, first names, family names or place names. The interests of the Hungarian state were often the same with those of the Hungarian national elites; this fact created various tensions between them, on the one side, and the national activists of Romanians and Saxons, on the other. By changing the toponyms, the Magyar nationalists wanted to draw the attention of the national minorities to the elements that differentiated them from the Hungarians. However, they overlooked the fact that, up to that point, the national identity was rather an extension of the local one, and the names of the places could serve as symbols of identity. One argument in favor of this hypothesis and the one regarding the existence of peasants’ attachment regarding the traditional symbols of the places is the resistance of some

Romanian citizens to the initiative of the Hungarian authorities over the disambiguation of the Magyar name of the village they were living in. Finally, changing the toponymy also reflects the struggle for authority or legitimation of power: the German versions were the result of Vienna's efforts to impose itself, the Hungarian version reflected the efforts of Budapest, and the Romanian versions, those of the Romanian national activists. In this matter, the Hungarians had the most important stakes: on the one hand, they wanted to show the Hungarian ethnic structure of the regions, and on the other hand, they wanted to prove that these regions were under Budapest's administration.

Berecz's book ends with a series of conclusions in which the author reiterates some of the issues already mentioned in the introduction. The results of Agoston Berecz's research are satisfying not only for the curiosities it identifies in the history of nationalities in Southeast Europe; they also draw the attention of researchers of local history, the Hungarian language system, etymology and of the history of names and naming processes. On the one hand, it can be a subject of macro-history, but on the other hand, it could also be a subject of micro-history by referring to many localities and communities of Transylvania and due to the use of various primary sources. The most important aspect, however, is that none of the subjects of historical research can ever be completely exhausted and explained, especially the history of the nationalities in areas as heterogeneous as Transylvania and Banat. The results of Berecz's work demonstrate that nationalism has penetrated all manifestations and actions of communities and its documentation is possible by addressing various types of historical sources.

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**Petronel Zahariuc, Adrian-Bogdan Ceobanu (eds.),** *160 de ani de la Unirea Principatelor: oameni, fapte și idei din domnia lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza*, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 2020), 666 p.

The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought forth a new dimension with regards to the further development of the Danubian Principalities. Even though foreign historiography tends to gravitate in its analyses towards the reign of King Charles the 1<sup>st</sup>, the beginning of the "modern Romanian state" is placed at an earlier date. With the year 1859 comes the unification of the two separate states into one nuclear entity under the rule of prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866). An iconic moment, with a