

Ioan Murariu, *Istoria Ținutului Herța până în anul 1940*

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Dr. Ioan Murariu subjected to printing in 1995 a necessary monograph of Herța Land – component part of Moldavia. It was the first analysis of the kind in the contemporary Romanian historiography as that territory had never been the object of the specialists' preoccupation, starting with 1940 when it became part of USSR.

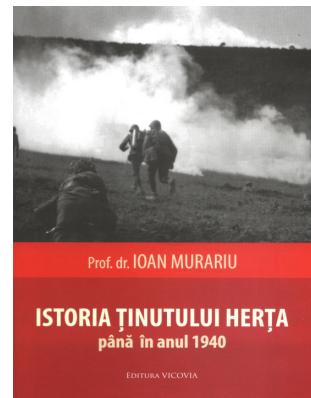
In the Introduction to the first edition, the author underlines the fact that “Never has it been written in the text books a line about the loss of Herța Land, that happened simultaneously with the loss of Basarabia and the north of Bucovina. Moreover, Herța Land has never been mentioned on any didactic map representing the ‘stolen’ Romanian territories during 1940.”

The second edition of this work was issued by the Vicovia Publishing House in Bacău, in 2010, Ioan Murariu wishing to present a detailed version of his study. It is a useful publication not only for the historical specialists but also for the wide public willing to find out reliable information about the specificity of this Romanian land. Ioan Murariu has done a solid research of the issue and has systematically presented it by including political aspects and demographic, economical, administrative, cultural, ethnographic, geographic references. The tables and censuses concur to prove, in the end, the Romanian character of Herța Land. The author prefers to use the cold language of numbers, in which he probably sees a main ally for his study. The main merit of the book is represented by the multitude of statistic information that it gathers. Traditionalistic in his approach, Murariu is the partisan of facts. The style is a combination of bare narration and “rhetoric pieces”. But we do not believe that the historian has even tried to write a fascinating book from a stylistic point of view, but to offer a redoubtable work instrument from the point of view of documentation. If this fine specialist would not have let himself literally suffocated by the multitude of documentary material and if he would have tried also other methods of analysis than the positivist one, the result could have been an exceptional book. The psychological angle of approach, the analysis of the mentalities of the “small ones” (the so-called “micro history” – greatly illustrated by Carlo Ginzburg in Italy) and generally the paradigm of structural history would have offered his research unexpected openings. But, even like this, the merits of the author are not at all little. The conclusions Ioan Murariu reaches for the period 1940 – 1944:

“(…) Herța Land was included in the Ukrainian SSR. In the following decades, the soviet authorities have imposed a policy of forced denationalization and Russification on the Romanian population, which was native and constituted the majority in this land. Innocent Romanians were deported to the work camps in Siberia, many of them dying there of hunger, cold and diseases. Churches were closed – they were used for different purposes – and the priests were persecuted. The Latin graphs, the clothing of Romanian language, were replaced in the schools and in the administration with the Cyrillic graphs. The names of some old Romanian settlements, such as Pilipăuți and others, were changed. (...) A falsified history was studied in schools.

But, in spite of these hard and long persecutions, the proud Romanians of Herța, like those in Basarabia and north Bucovina, did not forget their language, their ancestors' belief, their customs and traditions or their Daco-Roman origins.” (page 111)

When the author gets out of the shield of the abundant documentation and steps into the territory of personal reflections, the results are not always the expected ones for Ioan Murariu. His writing is clumsy, tributary to some representation clichés characteristic to the XIXth century. But let's not be unfair! The work will persist in the bibliography dedicated to Herța Land, if not



through a great style or a historical methodology, at least through honesty, passion and an excellent knowledge of the documentary sources.