

**Mózes Csoma, *Koreai csaták és harcosok az ókortól a modern időkig*, Budapest, Oriental History Project, 2011, 176 p.**

As far as we know, this work of the young Hungarian historian and political scientist is unprecedented in the Hungarian contemporary historiography. Its value is raised also by the personal contribution of the author: he studied at the University of Sonsee from Seoul and also participated in a research grant which meant to exam the roots of the present separation of the Korean peninsula into two different states.

The book is the result of an exhaustive work of research, and by its large and various topics, and also by its pleasant (easy to be read) narrative style, and is meant to introduce the European reader into key issues of Korean history and the roots of Korean realities of our days. The bibliography is built up by a list of selective, but various titles, mostly of books available in Hungarian or English, but also a few titles in Korean, various articles published in specific journals (like “Korea Journal”, “The Review of Korean Studies”, “Seoul Journal of Korean Studies”, “Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies”, etc.), from general works like Kissinger’s *Diplomacy* to books having as subject very specific issues and from very old books – like the one of Bozóky Dezső, published in 1911 at Oradea, to recent works, issued in 2008-2009. An important part of the bibliography is represented by those works that deals first with the history of China. It is easy to understand why, since the Korean civilization and politics during the centuries was in interaction and often influences by the actions of its powerful neighbor.

The book itself is structured into four chapters, each one having on its turn several subchapters, dedicated to important and singular events of Korean history. The events are grouped by chronologic criteria and their narration is usually illustrated by pictures, photos, maps, and other useful visual illustrative material.

The first chapter is entitled “*A koreai félsziget harcai az ókori királyságok idején* [The struggle on Korean Peninsula in time of its Ancient Kingdoms]” presents the history of the peninsula starting from the appearance of the first documented kingdom – the Ko-Csoszon (or generally known by Western historical slang as Kozon or Choson) until 926, the fall of the kingdom of Palhe, caused especially by its own internal disputes, worsened by natural catastrophes (like the eruption of the Pachtu-san volcano) and continuous attacks of the Chinese armies. This chapter’s best feature is probably the description and clarification of complex social and diplomatic relations of Korean kingdoms of various ages with the Chinese Empire.

The second chapter is focusing on evolution of the Korean statehood during the Middle Ages and is entitled “*A koreai félsziget harcai a középkori dinasztiák korában* [The struggle of the Korean Peninsula during Medieval Dynasties]”. The description of the military aspects is probably even better made than in the case of the first chapter since the author has various tables and statistics related to the Royal Korean armies at his disposal. A very well written episode is the description of the Mongol-Chinese invasions against Japan and their failure (it is since they were launched partly from certain locations in the Korean peninsula); another one is the description of Imdzsin War events that took place between feudal Japan (the first invasion being led by the famous general Tojotomi Hideyoshi) on one side and the

Csoszon kingdom and its powerful senior, the Ming dynasty on the other. The chapter comes to an end by presenting the border treaty between the Chinese Ching Dynasty and Csozon on 1712, which foreseen the creation of a neutral zone too, around the Pektuszan mountain. This treaty's imperfections cause even nowadays occasional Chinese-Korean disputes.

Seen from European/Western perspective, the third chapter, entitled "*A Koreai Fél-sziget harcai az újkorban* [Wars of the Korean Peninsula in the Modern Age]", brings the Korean issue in the environment of Western great powers' policy. By 'jumping' across more than a century period, it begins the presentation with the French-American invasion against the Kanyhva island in 1866, as a result of US economic ambitions and the persecution of Christians in Korea, event that caused – following to several Korean victories in the first phase, among them the sinking of the USS Sherman in 1866 – the intervention of Japan on the Western side, and its victory, which forced the Korean Kingdom to open its ports to Western merchants and the end of the country's isolationist politics. The author also examines the military-diplomatic aspects of Japanese-Chinese war (1893-1895) and Japanese-Russian war (1904-1905) and their consequences on the Korean peninsula. In this chapter the military-diplomatic events of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are also included.

The fourth chapter ("*A koreai fél-sziget harcai a 20 század második felében* [The Struggle in the Korean Peninsula during the Second Half of the Twentieth Century]" represents an incursion in the contemporary Korean political realities. Starting the narration with the Soviet declaration of war against Japan, it approaches very well the issue on which the future division of the Peninsula during the Cold War was based. The description of the Korean War's events could represent basic bibliography for any university course in the history of the Cold War. In a few pages, the author also performs a short, selective but precise analysis of the consequences of nowadays situation of the two Korean states.

The book could be regarded as belonging at the same time to the fields of history of civilizations, military history, or diplomatic history, but it remains first of all a selective introduction in Korean historical issues. By this, it could be recommended to both specialists and amateur readers. Nowadays, although our daily life is not perceived to be affected in a direct manner by the issue of the divided Korea, it is still one of the major current contemporary geopolitical issues. At one side, South Korea is one of the capitalist 'Tiger' economies of the Far East, and with all of its internal weaknesses it is a major pillar of our contemporary global economy, especially in its industrial sector and is also a key element of the Far East's possible economic primacy in the future over all the other regions of the earth. On the other hand, the Communist North Korea is not only a 'rogue state' that is a menace to its Southern cousin, but recently an uninvited member of the Atomic Club, and by its anti-US attitude – developed not only by its own fault – a concrete danger on the security of our contemporary world system. Although the popular support for the totalitarian and abusive leadership of the country is far from being as solid as it is presented to be by the Northern-Korean propaganda, the regime's implosion is not

soon to come. In this context, Korean issues are good to be known by any contemporary diplomat or other specialist in the field of international relations.

Artur Lakatos

La decomunisation à la Roumaine: la perspective nord-américaine  
**Prezentul trecutului recent. Lustratie și decomunizare în postcomunism [Le présent du passé récent. Lustration et décommunisation au postcommunisme], volume coordonné par Lavinia Stan, préface de Vladimir Tismaneanu, Bucarest, Éditions Curtea Veche, 2010, 535 pages**

Lavinia Stan est professeur de sciences politiques au Canada, à l'Université St. Francis Xavier, et cette édition de son livre représente une version roumaine de l'ouvrage *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Routledge, 2009.

Antérieurement, l'auteur a publié *Religion and Politics in Post-Communist Romania*, Oxford University Press, 2007 et *Church, State and Democracy in Expanding Europe*, Oxford University Press, 2011 (toutes les deux en collaboration avec son époux, M. Lucian Turcescu), et ultérieurement elle a édité la monumentale *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 3 volumes, 2013 (en collaboration avec Nadya Nedelsky) et *Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Romania*, Cambridge University Press, 2013. En même temps, l'ouvrage *Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from 25 Years of Experience* est à paraître à Cambridge University Press (toujours avec Nadya Nedelsky). Pour finir avec la présentation de ce palmarès scientifique impressionnant, nous allons dire que Mme Stan est aussi l'auteur d'un grand nombre d'études et d'articles sur de différents thèmes de sciences politiques.

Le livre propose une comparaison de la situation des anciens pays communistes de l'Europe de l'Est, prenant comme repère les thèmes de la lustration, de l'accès aux dossiers de la police politique et des procès intentés aux responsables de la répression. Modestement appelé "volume coordonné par", le travail représente, dans une grande mesure, le résultat des recherches de Mme Stan qui signe, en dehors de l'Introduction et des Conclusions, quatre des huit études qui le constituent, et qui regardent les cas de la Pologne, de la Hongrie, de l'ancienne Union soviétique et de la Roumanie. Concernant l'Allemagne, nous y retrouvons l'étude de Gary Bruce, sur la République Tchèque et la Slovaque celui écrit par Nadya Nedelsky, sur la Bulgarie par Momcil Metodiev et, enfin, sur la Slovénie par Tamara Kotar.

Il s'agit d'un travail du domaine appelé *transitional justice*, terme anglo-saxon des sciences politiques qui vise la totalité des mesures prises par un État en vue de réparer les violations des droits de l'homme perpétrées par le régime politique antérieur, et qui n'a pas d'équivalent dans l'espace culturel européen. Concernant les régimes communistes, il pourrait être traduit, *grosso modo*, par l'"histoire et la mémoire du communisme", expression qui vise l'ensemble des mesures de