Angela Lumezeanu, *Infrastructuri digitale pentru istoria socială. Construirea bazelor de date istorice*, Cluj-Napoca, Mega, 2021,, 196 p.

The monograph by Angela Lumezeanu represents a recent addition to the Digital Humanities (DH) research trend developed at Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca during the 2010s by the scholars in the field of Humanities who are mostly but not exclusively historians. The author is a Junior Researcher at Babeş-Bolyai University, Centre for Population Studies and software engineer at "George Barițiu" History Institute of The Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca. She has a formal education in both History and Computer Science and has a solid experience working on DH projects, the best-known of which is the *Historical Population Database of Transylvania*.

The book under scrutiny in the present paper represents the translated published version of her doctoral dissertation (completed and defended in English) and an absolute novelty within the Romanian scientific environment. Its main aim is to provide a coherent overview to how historians approach and employ information technology, and in particular relational databases, to correct some of the most frequently encountered errors in their work, and to provide best practice models in this regard. Thus, Angela Lumezeanu's work represents a milestone, as well as a guide for a research area still under development in Romania.

In addition to the introductory and the conclusive sections, the book is structured on four chapters, dealing with the topic from general to particular. The first chapter [*Bazele de date şi cercetarea istorică: un instrument inovator* (p. 19-44)] provides an overview of how databases have been implemented in historical research since the second half of the last century. The author notes that the first use of quantitative means for storing data in historical research dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century, but it was not until the turn of the millennium that the digital approach triumphed. Historical databases are further divided into two categories: *source-oriented databases* and *method-oriented databases*. However, as the author underlines, there is no pure form of these two types and the two above-mentioned categories represent rather two theoretical poles, with the bulk of the databases filling the space between them.

The chapter also includes a presentation of the databases associated with the European Historical Population Samples Network (EHPS-Net), which was created in 2011 as an information and dissemination space for historians dealing with quantitative history. The historical databases briefly presented are the following: Swedish demographic databases (POPLINK, POPUM and FOLKNET), Norwegian Historical Population Register

(NHD), Integrated Microdata Series (IPUMS and NAPP), MOSAIC database, Karelia database (KATIHA), Scanian Economic Demographic (SEDD), Antwerp database - *COR, Hungarian Historical Demographic Database, Historical Sample of Netherlands, Historical Population Database of Transylvania (HPDT) and the aggregator tool Intermediate Data Structure (IDS). Angela Lumezeanu concludes the chapter by highlighting the common features of the above-mentioned databases: source orientation, relational nature, institutionalization and a long implementation time.

The second chapter [*Ce este o bază de date? Principii de bază ale funcționării bazelor de date* (p. 45-63)] focuses on the defining features of a database and on the latter's operating principles. In order to be considered a database, one or more datasets must, on the one hand, include data and the relationships between them, and on the other hand provide an easy way to access the stored data. Various types of databases are presented and their operating principles are also discussed.

The next two chapters follow two types of databases: source-oriented and method-oriented, starting from two research projects in which the author was involved: the Historical Population Database of Transylvania [*Bazele de date orientate către sursă. Historical Population Database of Transylvania* (p. 65-136)] and the Historical Data Grinder [*Bazele de date orientate către metodă. Modelul entitate-atribut-valoare şi Historical Data Grinder* (p. 137-164)]. We must note a discernable disproportion between the two chapters, the one devoted to source-oriented databases being significantly ampler than the one devoted to method-oriented databases. However, the disproportion is partly due to the fact that the architecture of the source-oriented databases is more complex and they are more widespread than method-oriented databases.

In the analysis of source-oriented databases, the author mainly focuses on their sources – in particular, for the Historical Population Database of Transylvania, the parish registers. From 1895 onwards, parish registers, which have been preserved since 1638 in Transylvania, lose their official character in favor of civil registration. General information about each type of register is given, followed by an explanation of how different typologies of sources have been accommodated into the database.

Beyond the sources of the database, the three components of the database are considered in separate subchapters: the database of the sources, the standardized database and the relational database. While the database of the sources closely reproduces parish registers in four major tables, the standardized database contains logically inferred and standardized information. The relational database is the result of linking

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.[1] 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

[1] 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.