

**E**LENA DRAGOMIR, SILVIU MILOIU,  
**I**STORIA FINLANDEI [THE HISTORY OF  
**F**INLAND] (TÂRGOVIȘTE: EDITURA  
CETATEA DE SCAUN, 2011), 468 pp.

***Costel Coroban***

„Ovidius” University of Constanta; Head of Department Humanities & Society at the Cambridge School of Constanta, coroban\_costel@yahoo.com

At the end of last year the Romanian historical academic community has had the pleasure of witnessing the publication of a first ever monograph of the history of Finland in the Romanian language. The volume is authored by Associate Professor PhD Silviu MiloIU from the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, and researcher and PhD (ABD) Elena Dragomir from the University of Helsinki, appropriately under the aegis of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies (RABNS).

Considering how rarely have the Finnish people made the subject of an approach of a Romanian historian, it is not surprising how well has the book been received by the Finnish representatives in Romania. One might not expect that countries such as Romania and Finland to have much in common, but under the present necessities the attention of whole Europe is focused on Finland as a successful economic, scientific and educational model. In this regard, Romania does not stand outside Europe, and should not. That is why this book can and should be read not only to satisfy a historical curiosity but also in the more pragmatic purpose of offering guiding and answers to problems that individuals, companies and states alike face nowadays.

The authors, Dr. Silviu MiloIU being the president of RABNS and Elena Dragomir its secretary, are unquestionably ones of the most pertinent Romanian researchers in the history of Nordic Europe and the history of Romania’s relations to Northern Europe. Dr. Silviu MiloIU, now deputy dean of the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște’s Faculty of Humanities, is the author and co-author of over 5 volumes in these fields, also having edited more than 7 volumes of historical studies. He has published extensively (over 50 articles) in journals abroad as well as in Romania, has participated in over 60 international scientific conferences, and has also taught at universities abroad. Furthermore, together with Elena Dragomir and other members of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies and students from the “Valahia” University of Târgoviște, Dr. Silviu MiloIU has already organized two conferences dealing mostly with relations between Romania on one side and Baltic and Nordic Europe on the other, and plans to organize a third one in 2012. Elena Dragomir is co-author of more than three volumes and author of many articles in international peer reviewed journals in the fields of international relations during the Cold War period.

Taking the high international recognition of the authors in consideration, it is no wonder that the volume presented here has enjoyed a very warm welcome across the Romanian academic and diplomatic world. Moving on to the contents of it, the opus is divided into XXXII parts plus an Introduction and also features a Preface and, very usefully, a general and toponymic Index plus a very broad Bibliography.

The first part of the book begins with the ancient history of Finland and covers the birth of the Finnish people at the beginning of the middle ages. The role of the Vikings is assessed in the second part, while the third one brings in discussion the Swedish and Russian expansions. Part IV discusses the Swedish rule over Finland during the later middle ages, while the next one ends the whole age with a final portrayal of the Finnish medieval culture. Naturally, the Renaissance and Reform of Finland follow. Then the authors approach the expansion of Russia, the Diet of Porvoo, the organization of the Grand Duchy of Finland and birth of the modern Finnish nation including its loyalty as a part of the Russian Empire.

Part XI significantly portrays World War I followed afterwards by the founding of the state of Finland amid the Civil War between the Pro-communist and Anti-communist factions of Russia and until the peace treaty of Tartu of 1920. After this, all the important aspects of the interwar years are approached: politics, the economy, culture and external policy.

Starting with parts XIX and XX, the Winter War (Talvisota) and Continuation War (Jatkosota) are approached. Then the next part is reserved to the evolution of Finland until the peace treaties ending World War 2, and the following ones to the reconstruction after the war, Finland under Kekkonen and the period of the return to parliamentary democracy until 2008. As with the interwar years, the Finnish culture, economy and external policy are treated in broad parts each. Interestingly, the role of Nokia is not left aside, as this company is inevitably tied to Finland's image across the globe.

Starting with the XXVIIIth part, accent falls on Finland and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, and NATO, while the penultimate part deals with Finland's foreign policy in general after the fall of the Soviet Union. For the Romanian reader the most copious chapter is the last one, where Finland-Romanian relations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century are detailed.

Considering this complete, clear and explicit structure of the volume and the international prestige of the two authors, I am overwhelmingly compelled to recommend this book not only to history prodigies but to the larger public as well. I could hardly imagine a reader that would not benefit from finding out more about Finnish culture, politics and the Finnish economic model, in the current state of worldwide financial turbulences. With this occasion I am also expressing my confidence that in the following years this book will become a "classic" of the Romanian historiography, and cannot help but notice that the society owes much recognition to the authors for this undoubtedly difficult and time-consuming project. In times when people and countries alike face economic hardships and seem to seek only pragmatism and profit, and when the very morals of whole generations come into question, the public must realize how great a privilege is to receive the blessing of knowledge from talented and gifted researchers.