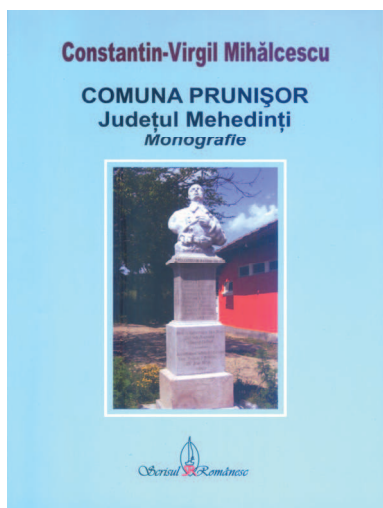


**Constantin-Virgil Mihălcescu, Comuna Prunișor,
Județul Mehedinți, Monografie,
Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 2009, 233 p. (Maria Dobre)**



Names of places, in general, and names of human settlements, in particular, have been the focus of research for more than a century, culminating in the emergence of vast lexicographical works such as the series of toponymic dictionaries of historical provinces: Oltenia, Muntenia, Banat, Transylvania, Moldavia. In a toponymic dictionary, names of localities are small monographs which do not allow a wider context regarding their presence in archival documents, in geographical or administrative sources. It is the duty of intellectuals in towns and villages, be they teachers or other professionals, to present in detail the geographical and spiritual space, the existence throughout the centuries, the homeland. Such an approach was made by a teacher of mathematics, C.V. Mihălcescu, in memory of his

parents and grandparents, descendants of the village of *Prunișor* in the county of Mehedinți. The work is a complex investigation, going beyond the purely linguistic scope, as it deals not only with names of places, but mostly with the people whose lives it follows at all levels: economic, cultural, religious, political. The book is divided into 11 chapters: I. Administrative organization. Natural environment (p. 7-20), II. History. Documents (p. 20-76) III. Population. Houses (p. 83-105), IV. Land ownership and agrarian relationship(s) (p. 105-119), V. Church (p. 119-131) VI. Education (p. 140-171) VII. Culture (p. 171-178), VIII. Health (p. 178-183) IX. Justice (p. 183-189), X. Economic life (p. 189-195), with subchapters: Agriculture; Crafts, Rural industry; Transport, Communication routes; Trade, Finance; XI. Rural police (p. 205-206). The volume concludes with a general Bibliography, Glossary. Abbreviations, Appendices: 1. Documents, Maps, Photos and Administrative-territorial division of the county of Mehedinți. By using geographical and administrative sources, the author synthesizes data on: the neighbours of the village, its place within the county, surface, landscape, climate, waters that cross it, soils, flora, fauna, the structure of the village and its relationships over time to the higher administrative unit: plasa (territorial division ranking below county); local authorities: mayor, notary public, counsellors, etc.

In Chapter II, History. Documents, the author follows the successive presence in the documents of the localities belonging to the village of Prunișor, in broad contexts, from the first attestation to the present.

In Chapter III, Population, we discover, from inventories and censuses, information on: the kind of property of different villages within the larger village, the commune of Prunișor: megișească (of free peasants), moșnenească (inherited by free holders); the number of families, number of houses, churches and schools in the locality, the number of literate people, data on the occupations of the inhabitants, data on the intellectuals of the village.

With the care of a detail-oriented scientist, complementing the overall picture, C.V. Mihălcescu offers us, in the next sections, information on the social hierarchy: old boyar families, free peasants, dependent peasants, data on parishes, churches, schools, libraries, cultural houses, hospitals, etc.

The book is enriched with numerous statistical tables, photographs of cultural objectives or local personalities, maps. Each chapter contains an adequate bibliography.

Looking with reverence to the past, responsible for the present and with the hope that the descendants will continue this work, the author of the book is guided by the thought that (quoting Tudor Vianu) “only a man who really knows where he comes from and where he goes, is a man of culture”.