



PAGES FROM THE ROMANIAN MILITARY THINKING. THE POLITICAL-STRATEGIC VISION ON (NORTHERN) DOBROGEA: 1878-1913

George UNGUREANU, PhD

Romanian National Military Archives – Military Archive Centre, Pitești

Starting from the complexity of the defence and national security field, this article, based on Romanian, Western, Bulgarian and Turkish historiographical contributions, supplemented with military documents from the archives, deals with the problem of defence of the right bank Danube territory obtained after the Berlin Congress (1878), until the incorporation of Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) in 1913. This article briefly shows the initial Romanian views on the inclusion of Dobrogea, then the measures enforced by the authorities at two levels, namely the political-diplomatic and military one, and the ethnopolitical one respectively, including economic, social and cultural aspects. The conclusion is that the military measures taken led to limited achievements, mainly due to some objective reasons, but this situation was counterbalanced by suitable political-diplomatic combinations and options and especially by the remarkable result of the work aiming to enhance, modernise and colonise the territory. A decisive stage in this respect was that of 1890-1895.

Keywords: borders, internal vulnerabilities, external threats, projects, actions, evolutions.

For specialists in the field today, it is almost a truism to say that the problem of the national security and defence sciences involves only political, diplomatic, military and intelligence (or counterintelligence) aspects. It has a much wider and more complex scope. The various realities and the economic, social, cultural, collective-mental and axiological developments represent potential vulnerabilities or strengths of the national defence and security system¹.

Regarding the historical Dobrogea, its generally accepted geographical limits are represented by the branched course of the Lower Danube (with Balta Ialomița and the Big Island of Brăila) to the west, the Black Sea to the east, the Lom-Provadija river line to the south and, respectively, the Danube Delta to the north². Some authors, however, exclude the southern forest area (Deliorman) from the whole of the Dobrogea lands³ while a local toponymic tradition identifies the province, exclusively with the central steppe area, excluding both the Southern Deliorman and the so-called “Northern Deliorman” (the hills of Tulcea)⁴.

After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the territory of historical Dobrogea inhabited by a very diverse ethnolinguistic and religious population was divided between independent Romania (the northern, including the Danube Delta, and central areas) and autonomous Bulgaria (the southern part). After this date, in the Romanian media, the word “Dobrogea” began to designate, in particular, that trans-Danube territory that became part of Romania in 1878. The situation has been perpetuating so far, except for the period 1913-1940, when Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) was part

After the Russian-Romanian-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the territory of historical Dobrogea inhabited by a very diverse ethnolinguistic and religious population was divided between independent Romania (the northern, including the Danube Delta, and central areas) and autonomous Bulgaria (the southern part). After this date, in the Romanian media, the word “Dobrogea” began to designate, in particular, that trans-Danube territory that became part of Romania in 1878.

¹ See, for instance, the study of George Ene, *Eminescu, securitatea și siguranța națională a României*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, *passim*.

² Joseph V. Poppov, *La Dobroudja et les relations bulgare-roumaines*, Liège, 1935, p. 13; Constantin Brătescu, *Morfologia Cadrilaterului*, Cernăuți, 1938, pp. 1-2.

³ A. Ichirkoff, *Géographié physique de la Dobroudja*, in *La Dobroudjja* edité par l'Union de savants, artists et ecrivains bulgares, Sofia, 1918, pp. 2-3.

⁴ Lt.col. Ioan Munteanu, *Cadrilaterul, istoria unei controverse (1878-1919)*, in “Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice de Apărare și Istorie Militară”, București, 1997, p. 181.



In principle, an increase in the surface area and population of a state represents a potential progress factor, but for a complete evaluation other factors (geographical position, natural resources, communication means, level of development, possibilities and system of integration of the obtained territory) must be taken into account.

of the Romanian state. In contrast, in the Bulgarian media, the term “Dobruđza” is used with its maximum historical meaning, sometimes specifying the distinction between Northern Dobrogea (belonging to Romania) and Southern Dobrogea (belonging to Bulgaria).

We intend, in this study, to draw/shape the main coordinates of the Romanian political-strategic conception of defence and integration of the territory on the right side of the Danube added after the Berlin Congress (1878) until 1913, when, through the Bucharest Treaty, Romania got the Southern Dobrogea (Quadrilateral) from Bulgaria. More specifically, we will show the initial Romanian opinions (1878) on the possibility of, then on the actual inclusion of Dobrogea, as well as, in particular, the measures taken by the Romanian state and its institutions regarding this province, both at the political-military and the ethnopolitical level.

In principle, an increase in the surface area and population of a state represents a potential progress factor, but for a complete evaluation other factors (geographical position, natural resources, communication means, level of development, possibilities and system of integration of the obtained territory) must be taken into account⁵.

In the light of such a conception, but also for other reasons of principle and political opportunity, at the beginning of 1878, the Romanian decision-makers (King Carol I, Ion C. Brătianu Government, the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate) categorically rejected the idea of the territorial exchange proposed by Russia (South Basarabia for Dobrogea and Ludogorje, up to the Ruscink-Varna line), without completely excluding the possibility of obtaining territories beyond the Danube⁶.

On the general background of rejecting the Russian claims, there were also voices of some Romanian politicians and publicists, who saw Dobrogea as “a poisoned fruit” offered by the Russian Empire to small Romania, or even as a Bulgarian territory⁷. In the memo addressed

⁵ Constantin Iordan, *România și relațiile internaționale în sud-estul european (1919-1924). Probleme ale păcii, securității și cooperării*, Editura ALL, București, 1999, p. 12.

⁶ Nichita Adăniloiaie, *România independentă în Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), vol. VII, T1; *Constituirea României moderne (1821-1878)* 2nd edition revised and added, coord.: acad. Dan Berindei, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2015, pp. 749-750.

⁷ See Antonina Kuzmanova, *Le caractère bulgare de la Dobrodja vu par les Roumains. Propagande et mise en comideration des réalités (1878-1944)*, in “*Etudes balkaniques*”, 29, nr. 31, 1993, pp. 3-5.

by the Romanian government to the European cabinets, in February 1878, it was requested that South Basarabia remained part of Romania and that the Danube Delta was given to Romania, in order to provide more economic development possibilities for the Romanian state and to ensure freedom of navigation on the Danube for European states. The idea of adding Dobrogea to Romania was rejected with geostrategic and geoeconomic arguments (isolation of this province from the Romanian territories on the left of the Danube and the consequences of this fact for the future development of the country)⁸.

Facing the categoric Romanian refusal, considered offensive, Czarist Russia decided to cut the territory of the compensatory offer for southern Basarabia. Thus, through the Treaty of San Stefano (19 February/3 March 1878), the northern border of Bulgaria was settled in the vicinity of the strategic line Cernavodă-Constanța, passing through Rasova⁹, and Russia reserved the right to maintain the connection with its troops from Bulgaria (also) through the Romanian territory¹⁰. However, in an attempt to protect the susceptibility of Western powers, Russian Chancellor A.M. Gorceakov said: *“The Romanian Dobrogea will separate the Russian Empire from the Bulgarian state”*¹¹. However, the partition invoked by Gorceakov was a thin and rather permeable one. In addition, the offer from San Stefano gave Romania a narrow part of the coastline, necessary for the development of a large port.

The initial offer, the one from January 1878, was viewed by Romania with circumspection because of the difficulty of integrating a large territory (over 25,000 km²), with a majority Muslim-Turkish-Tartar population and a significant share of Bulgarian ethnicities. On 27 March/8 April 1878, about 200 representatives of Muslims, Greeks, Armenians and Jews from Dobrogea, led by the Turkish mufti and the Greek archimandrite, signed a document requesting

⁸ Sorin Liviu Damean, *România și Congresul de Pace de la Berlin (1878)*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2011, pp. 55-56.

⁹ Stajko Trifonov, *Dobrudžanskijat vāpros (1878-1944)*, in *Novi očerci po bāllgarskata istorija (1878-1948)*, coord.: Marija Radeva n.p., Sofia, n.y., p. 191.

¹⁰ *Istoria politicii externe românești în date* (will be quoted as *I.P.E.R.D.*), coord.: Ion Calafeteanu, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 180.

¹¹ Constantin Iordan, *Dobrogea (1878-1940) în istoriografia bulgară post-comunistă*, Editura Academiei Române, București, 2013, p. 24.



An advantageous solution for the Romanian state, in 1878, could have been the establishment of the border on the Rusciuk-Varna line, but only under the conditions of a population exchange involving the Romanian ethnic groups from the Vidin area and the Dobrogea Bulgarians.

that Romania should receive the entire Dobrogea and the Varna port city, with its hinterland¹².

An advantageous solution for the Romanian state, in 1878, could have been the establishment of the border on the Rusciuk-Varna line, but only under the conditions of a population exchange involving the Romanian ethnic groups from the Vidin area and the Dobrogea Bulgarians¹³.

Russian diplomacy failed to temper the apprehensions of the Great Western Powers, so the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano were substantially revised, following the Berlin Congress. By the Treaty concluded in the German capital, the re-annexation of Southern Basarabia to Russia (Art. 45) was approved, and Romania obtained the Serpent Island, the Danube Delta and the northern and central parts of Dobrogea, up to a line between Silistra and Mangalia, whose delimitation "on the ground" was the task of an international commission (Art. 46)¹⁴.

British Balkanologist William Miller estimated half a century after the events that the land border established in Berlin had been "unsatisfactory for both sides", because "it gave strong fortresses to Bulgaria, with which it dominated Dobrogea, and to Romania it gave its actual possession"¹⁵.

The head of the Romanian government, Ion C. Brătianu, showed that his country was an outpost of Western civilisation in the proximity of Russian despotism and post-Ottoman barbarism: "When we were given Dobrogea, Europe gave it to us out of a European interest, because they believed we were not only a brave nation, but also one of the most civilising nations in the East"¹⁶. Discovering the geopolitical and geostrategic reasons for the decision of the European Areopagus, Captain Marin Ionescu Dobrogeanu (1866-1938), wrote, a quarter of a century after the events: "If Russia occupies Dobrogea, the European

¹² Alexandru P. Arbore, *Noi informații asupra Dobrogei*, in „*Analele Dobrogei*”, XI, Cernăuți, 1930, pp. 88-89.

¹³ George Ungureanu, *Problema Cadrilaterului în contextul relațiilor româno-bulgare (1919-1940)*, Editura Istros Publishing House, Brăila, 2009, p. 39.

¹⁴ *I.P.E.R.D...*, p. 181.

¹⁵ William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Successors (1801-1927)*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 400.

¹⁶ Apud Valentin Ciorbea (coord.), *Dobrogea (1878-2008). Orizonturi deschise prin mandat european*, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța. 2008, p. 17.

*Danube Commission becomes a cosmopolitan island, in the middle of a Russian sea*¹⁷.

The first Romanian military detachments entered the Trans-Danube province on 14 November 1878, when a proclamation of Carol I was issued to the locals, and the Romanian administration was installed starting 23 November, the last Russian troops leaving the area in April 1879¹⁸. The Serpent Island actually came under Romanian military control on 12 April 1879¹⁹. The “on the ground” delimitation of the Romanian-Bulgarian border was made with difficulty and tension, the incident from Arab Tabia (today Ostrov, Constanța county), from January 1879, between the Romanian and Russian military, being very famous; finally, the Romanians were very affected by the fact that Silistra and the fortified points Medgidie-Tabia and Ordo-Tabia, in its proximity, remained in Bulgaria²⁰.

The territory of Dobrogea obtained by Romania in 1878, amounting to about 15,600 km², was strategically dominated by the Cernavodă-Constanța and Valea Carasu lines, having, according to the 1880 census, a population of 147,247 inhabitants, of which 44,354 (16,448 + 27,906) were Turks-Tartars (11.2% + 19.0% = 30.2%), 40,449 Romanians (27.5%), 29,440 Bulgarians (19.9%), 9,683 Lipovans and 8,348 Russians (6.5% + 5.6% = 12.1%), 6,481 Greeks (4.5%), 3,147 Jews (2.1%), 3,030 Germans (2.0%) etc.²¹. Except for Bulgarian historians, foreign (western) historiography considers that the territory obtained by Romania in 1878 was an exceptional ethnic mosaic, with a relative majority of Turks-Tartars, followed by Romanians and Bulgarians²².

However, the various ethnicities were spread far and wide: Bulgarians were more numerous in Tulcea county (N), where the majority of Russians and Lipovans lived and Turks-Tartars were predominant in Constanța county (57%), and the Romanian ethnics



ROMANIAN
MILITARY
THINKING

The first Romanian military detachments entered the Trans-Danube province on 14 November 1878, when a proclamation of Carol I was issued to the locals.

Except for Bulgarian historians, foreign (western) historiography considers that the territory obtained by Romania in 1878 was an exceptional ethnic mosaic, with a relative majority of Turks-Tartars, followed by Romanians and Bulgarians.

¹⁷ Marin Ionescu Dobrogianu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea. Geografia matematică, fizică, politică, economică și militară*, Atelierele grafice Socec, București, 1904, p. 916.

¹⁸ Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, second edition, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța, 1998, pp. 349-351.

¹⁹ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

²⁰ Daniela Busă, *Modificări politice și teritoriale în sud estul Europei (1878-1914)*, Editura Paideia, București, 2003, pp. 48-57.

²¹ Robert Stănciugel, Liliانا Monica Bălașa, *Dobrogea între secolele VII-XIX. Evoluția istorică*, Editura D.C. Promotions, București, 2005, p. 203.

²² G. Ungureanu, *op. cit.*, p. 38.



lived mainly in the proximity of the Danube and its ponds, arms and mouths²³.

It is not irrelevant that the population density in the area was low, under 10 inhabitants per km², while on the rest of the Romanian territory it had reached the level of 34 inhabitants per km² two decades before²⁴, which was a favourable premise for the future work of colonisation.

From November 1878 until March 1880, Dobrogea was under the regulatory regime. On 9 March 1880, the *Law on the organisation of Dobrogea* was promulgated, drafted by Mihail Kogălniceanu and magistrate Remus Opreanu, the Prefect of Constanța²⁵. According to this act, Dobrogea did not yet have representation in the Parliament of București (it was to acquire it in 1909), the communal councils elected the county councils of Constanța and Tulcea, and they submitted to the ruler (since 1881, the king), an annual report also including their desires²⁶.

For the young Romanian unitary state, immediately after the War of Independence, Russia had imposed itself as the greatest danger to its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which resulted in the secret accession to the Triple Alliance (18/30 October 1883), and subsequently, the creation of the fortified line Focșani-Nămoloasa-Galați, with the direct participation of German Major M. Schumann (1888-1893). As for Dobrogea, more direct Romanian fears were related to small Bulgaria, dissatisfied with the territorial clauses of the Berlin Treaty. When voting the Turnovo Constitution (1879), delegates of the Bulgarians from Northern Dobrogea also took part, and “*the statement that Dobrogea is a Bulgarian territory inhabited first of all by the Bulgarians, taken away from Bulgaria and given to Romania, in exchange of Basarabia, is invariably included in the school textbooks and Bulgarian reference papers after 1878*”²⁷.

²³ R. Stănciugel, L.M. Bălașa, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

²⁴ Keith Hitchins, *România (1866-1947)*, third edition, translation by George G. Potra and Delia Răzdolescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2004, p. 163.

²⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 354.

²⁷ Blagovest Njagulov, *Les images de l'autre chez les Bulgares et les Romaines (1878-1944)*, in “*Etudes balkaniques*”, 31, nr. 2/1995, p. 5.



The Romanian-Bulgarian territorial rivalry evolved within the wider framework of the political-diplomatic and military relations at the European level. While Romania roughly gravitated on the orbit of the Central Powers, Bulgaria alternated between Russophile and Russophobe cabinets. As a result, the Romanian-Bulgarian relations reached their cordiality peak under the rule of Russophobe liberal leader Stefan Stambulov (1887-1894), known for these words: *“If Romanian Dobrogea had not existed, it should have been invented, to separate Bulgaria from Russia”*²⁸. At the opposite pole, we can mention the aggressive Bulgarian actions at the border, in August 1885, encouraged by Russia²⁹, as well as the Russian-Bulgarian secret conventions of 1902 and 1909, which confirmed Russia’s promise to support the Bulgarian territorial ambitions in Northern Dobrogea, if Romania were to fight against the Great Power from the East, in a general conflict, a known commitment in București³⁰. Moreover, according to military historians Momčil Ionov and Stančo Stančev, Bulgarian military experts considered at the beginning of the 20th century that Dobrogea would be the main battle theatre, in case of a Romanian-Bulgarian war³¹.

We will further address the political-diplomatic and military actions taken by Romania to defend the threats coming from Dobrogea, including the idea of annexing the Southern Dobrogea to the Romanian state.

The main politico-diplomatic instrument for the defence of pre-war Romania, including Dobrogea, was the secret alliance with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy, signed on 18/30 October 1883 and renewed successively in 1888, 1892, 1902 and 1913³². However, the act concerned only Russia and the eventuality of an unprovoked aggression on its part. Romania’s attempts to include a clause regarding Bulgarian

The Romanian-Bulgarian territorial rivalry evolved within the wider framework of the political-diplomatic and military relations at the European level. While Romania roughly gravitated on the orbit of the Central Powers, Bulgaria alternated between Russophile and Russophobe cabinets.

²⁸ Apud Hristofor Hespaciev, *Aminirile unui fost diplomat bulgar în România (1905-1910)*, translated by Daniel Cain, Editura Fundația PRO, București, 2003, p. 42.

²⁹ Daniela Bușă, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-60.

³⁰ Gheorghe Zbucnea, *România și războaiele balcanice (1912-1913). Pagini de istorie sud-est europeană*, Editura Albatros, 1999, p. 70.

³¹ Apud Gavriil Preda, *Relații militare româno-bulgare la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea și începutul secolului al XX-lea*, în *Români și bulgari. Provocările unei vecinătăți*, coord.: Fl. Anghel, Mariana Cojoc, Magdalena Tiță, Editura Cartea Universitară, București, 2007, p. 122.

³² *I.P.E.R.D.*, pp. 191, 208.



were not successful³³. However, the possibility of a Russian-Bulgarian conjugated act was at least theoretically counteracted. Mentioning such an eventuality, M. Ionescu Dobrogeanu wrote, in 1904: *“We would be overwhelmed by forces and circumstances. But in this case, the problem is complicated: we have allied armies on our side...”*³⁴.

In October 1884, the meeting in Rusciuk, between King Carol I and Prince Alexander of Battenberg, determined the military situation at the Romanian-Bulgarian border for the next several months³⁵. We cannot say the same about the high-level official visits of 1897, 1902 and 1909, which were less fruitful and could not remove the general atmosphere of mutual suspicion³⁶.

It is also worth mentioning that the interests of 13 states were represented in the Romanian Dobrogea, at consular, vice-consular or commercial agency level: Great Britain, Austro-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden and the Ottoman Empire³⁷.

Due to the varied ethnic composition of the Dobrogea population, a potential danger for the Romanian administration was represented by the local irredentist organisations and actions, in this case, the Bulgarian ones. Some irredentist leaders, once discovered by the authorities, left (voluntarily or forced) the province, among them the father of the poet Panait Cerna (1881-1913); the remaining ones turned mainly to the political left (the Socialists, the Peasant Party), anticipating a trend that would manifest itself fully in the inter-war Quadrilateral. The local Romanian-language press repeatedly drew attention to the prosperous material situation of the Bulgarian communities, which allowed them to finance subversive activities, camouflaged in cultural activities³⁸. In principle, the minority schools were free, only the teaching of the Romanian language being compulsory³⁹.

³³ Petre Otu, *Bulgaria în planurile de campanie ale armatei române în anii 1912-1916*, in *Români și bulgari...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

³⁴ M. Ionescu Dobrogeanu, *op. cit.*, p. 924.

³⁵ D. Bușă, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³⁶ G. Ungureanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-206.

³⁷ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

³⁸ Mădălina Lasca, *Imaginea comunităților bulgare din Dobrogea în presa de limbă română de la sfârșitul secolului XIX*, in *Români și bulgari...*, pp. 89-104.

³⁹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 355.



The suspicions that were hovering over the ethnic Bulgarians from Tulcea county caused prefect Ioan Nenițescu, known especially as a Romanian nationalist poet, to resort to a series of punitive and restrictive measures, in 1898: the abolition of Bulgarian “communities”, schools and cultural houses, expulsion of teachers from Bulgaria and limited study of the mother tongue to one hour per week⁴⁰.

Much more loyal to the Romanian state, even if it was a more passive loyalty, were the Dobrogea Muslims, a fact understood and appreciated by the rulers; In 1880, the great vizier Said Pasa expressed to the plenipotentiary minister in Constantinople, Dimitrie Brătianu, the gratitude for the attitude of the authorities and the Romanian population towards the Muslims in Dobrogea⁴¹.

At the military level, we note, first of all, the placement of the 5th Army Corps in the area, namely the establishment of the Romanian military navy (1883), with 1898 as a reference year, when the Danube Division and the Sea Division were created. Around the First World War, the Danube Division included three groups, namely: the Danube Squadron (4 monitors and 8 stars), the Galați-Tulcea-Sulina area Defence Group with 4 checkpoints, 3 torpedoes – “Năluca” type, 3 boats – “Rândunica”, “Ștefan cel Mare”, “Alexandru cel Bun” type, as well as artillery battery and, respectively, the Cernavodă-Fetești defence group, 4 canons and 4 “Vedea” type boats. The Sea Division included the cruiser “Elisabeta”, the “Mircea” brig and the navy schools. The total crew number was 2,562, of which 147 were officers and assimilated, 98 masters and civil craftsmen. However, a whole host of shortcomings overshadowed these achievements. The cruiser “Elisabeta”, considered, at the time of its launch (1888), the most powerful warship in the Black Sea, was used up before the outbreak of “the Great War”, the light torpedoes were not very stable during bad weather, and the “Mircea” brig had a reduced combat ability⁴².

If the Bulgarian fleet was weak, the Russian fleet represented a very dangerous potential opponent, an attack of which could, in the opinion of Marin Ionescu Dobrogianu, most likely target

The suspicions that were hovering over the ethnic Bulgarians from Tulcea county caused prefect Ioan Nenițescu, known especially as a Romanian nationalist poet, to resort to a series of punitive and restrictive measures, in 1898: the abolition of Bulgarian “communities”, schools and cultural houses, expulsion of teachers from Bulgaria and limited study of the mother tongue to one hour per week.

⁴⁰ Ioan N. Roman, *Iredenta bulgară în Dobrogea*, in “Analele Dobrogei”, XVI, Cernăuți, 1935, pp. 5-6.

⁴¹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 403-404.



In the "Report on the concentration of the army in hypothesis A" (war against Russia), elaborated in December 1909 by Colonel Ioan Popovici, the 5th Army Corps had the mission to supervise the Cernavodă Bridge; the optimal concentration zone of the Romanian troops was located in the northeast of Walachia and the south of Moldavia on the right side of the Prut, so that, among others, to be close to Basarabia, Transilvania and Dobrogea.

the Constanța-Cernavodă line, and not Mangalia, defended by the homonymous and eccentric lake (positioned collaterally) towards the enemy's objectives. In order to diminish the vulnerability of Constanța in the face of a Russian maritime attack, M. Ionescu Dobrogianu proposed, in 1904, following the Danish model of the fortified island in front of Copenhagen, the installation of a coastal battery and the establishment of a defence pier, the fortification on land being considered useless⁴³. In fact, Constanța's vulnerability to the Russian fleet would be revealed in the following year, in the context of the famous episode of the cruiser Potemkin⁴⁴.

In the event of a Russian attack from the north, the same M. Ionescu Dobrogianu recommended the fortification of the Eski-Kalé part, considered more exposed, the surveillance of the Russian-speaking Lipovan population from the Delta, the installation of a torpedo battery on the Tulcea promontory and a torpedo dam at Ceatal, then the successive resistance to Babadag (on a short term), later to Hârșova, where it was recommended to build a bridge over the Danube (it would only be accomplished in 1966-1970). Once Hârșova and Isaccea were lost, resistance in the Cernavodă area became useless⁴⁵.

In the "Report on the concentration of the army in hypothesis A" (war against Russia), elaborated in December 1909 by Colonel Ioan Popovici, the 5th Army Corps had the mission to supervise the Cernavodă Bridge; the optimal concentration zone of the Romanian troops was located in the northeast of Walachia and the south of Moldavia on the right side of the Prut, so that, among others, to be close to Basarabia, Transilvania and Dobrogea⁴⁶.

In case of a Bulgarian ground attack on the Romanian Dobrogea, Captain M. Ionescu Dobrogianu wrote, in 1904, about the difficulty to find an optimal line of defence. As the most likely target of the Bulgarian attack was the Cernavodă bridge, the mentioned officer recommended organising two successive lines of defence, both located south of the Carasu Valley, namely the line delimited by the Urluia and Borungea valleys, with the centre at Enigea, respectively the line

⁴³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 922.

⁴⁴ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

⁴⁵ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 919-921.

⁴⁶ Romanian National Military Archives – Military Archive Centre Pitești (RMNA – CADP), Great General Staff (GGS) Collection – Section 3 Operations, file 29/1909, rows 1-9.



of the Peștera and Ikingi-Deré, with the centre at Medgidia⁴⁷. Moreover, in the autumn 1916 campaign, the Romanian troops were withdrawn from Dobrogea, after losing the Constanța-Cernavodă strategic line⁴⁸. In a nationalistic brochure, published in 1919, Colonel Ion Antonescu observed that the disembarkation of enemy troops at Zimnicea, in November 1916, was carried out only after the Cernavodă-Constanța line had been reached in Dobrogea⁴⁹.

Even today, the possibilities of fortification of the Dobrogea area are significantly influenced by the climate of the province. Thus, the torrential character of the rainfall, generally reduced in frequency, may trigger floods and landslides, with direct effects on the land, logistic transports or troops manoeuvre⁵⁰.

Going back to the Romanian-Bulgarian rivalries from more than a century ago in Dobrogea, we mention that during the period of great tension of 1900-1902 (after Professor Ștefan Mihăileanu's assassination)⁵¹, the Romanian Great General Staff permanently received information about the movements of Bulgarian and Russian warships at the Black Sea⁵². In fact, in 1900, the construction of the bridgehead from Cernavodă was initiated, an operation that lasted until 1912, with the purpose of facilitating the operations of the Romanian army in Dobrogea and in the eastern sector of the Romanian Plain. The Russian government strongly protested against these actions, considered contrary to the provisions of Article 52 of the Berlin Treaty, but maintained a silent attitude towards similar actions by Bulgaria⁵³. In 1903, General Constantin Christescu (1866-1923) drafted hypothesis C, in the eventuality of a Bulgarian attack on Romanian territory⁵⁴.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Directorate General of State Security identified many Bulgarian officers crossing the border

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Directorate General of State Security identified many Bulgarian officers crossing the border on the pretext of buying necessary materials for the Bulgarian army (hay, firewood etc.) and trying to establish ties with Bulgarian ethnic groups in Romania and spy on military objects.

⁴⁷ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 924.

⁴⁸ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

⁴⁹ Ion Antonescu, *Românii – originea, trecutul, sacrificiile și drepturile lor*, edited by Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Editura Moldova, Iași, 1991, p. 75.

⁵⁰ Valentin Dragomirescu, *Dobrogea: o analiză geografico-militară*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare "Carol I", București, 2015, pp. 29-31.

⁵¹ *I.P.E.R.D.*, pp. 200-201.

⁵² G. Preda, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 113-115.

⁵⁴ P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 152 (Details in RMNA – CADP, GGS Collection – Section III Operations, file 10, passim).



According to Colonel Ioan Popovici, for the Romanian state and its army, the war could only be offensive, in order not to allow Bulgaria to gain the upper hand. After mentioning “the too big difficulties that are foreseen in reaching an effective result, adopting the offensive through Dobrogea”, he formulated the solution of an attack (march) towards Sofia, starting from the Danube Plain.

on the pretext of buying necessary materials for the Bulgarian army (hay, firewood etc.) and trying to establish ties with Bulgarian ethnic groups in Romania and spy on military objects⁵⁵. Also, the Romanian secret services had information on the training of Bulgarian gangs by the officers from the neighbouring country, in order to carry out espionage missions, including for the benefit of the Russian army⁵⁶.

Analysing the possibility of a war with Bulgaria, the Romanian decision-makers in this matter concluded that the Romanian state should not have the initiative for opening hostilities, but had to be prepared for offensive operations, the optimal solution of counteracting a Bulgarian attack in Dobrogea being the concentration of shock forces in Oltenia (Western Walachia), to threaten Sofia, the Dobrogea war-theatre playing a secondary role⁵⁷.

In 1908, the “Report on the concentration of the Romanian army in hypothesis C” (war against Bulgaria) was drawn up. The army of the neighbouring state was considered superior in terms of infantry and artillery, but inferior in terms of cavalry. After reviewing a series of drawbacks of the concentration of the Romanian troops in Dobrogea, the author of the memo concludes that: “the line of operation of the Romanian army through Dobrogea puts the Bulgarians in such good conditions that, after all, victory can become theirs”. Even in the event of a rejection of the Bulgarian troops and a future pursuit, they had possibilities of strengthening on their own territory⁵⁸. Starting from the reality of the Bulgarian political-territorial ambitions in the southeastern Europe, amplified after gaining full independence, in October 1908, Romanian Colonel Ioan Popovici drew up a homonymous version of hypothesis C, in 1910. According to Colonel Ioan Popovici, for the Romanian state and its army, the war could only be offensive, in order not to allow Bulgaria to gain the upper hand. After mentioning “the too big difficulties that are foreseen in reaching an effective result, adopting the offensive through Dobrogea”, he formulated the solution of an attack (march) towards Sofia, starting from the Danube Plain⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ G. Preda, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 126.

⁵⁷ P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁵⁸ RMNA – CADP, GGS Collection – Section III Operations, file 23/1908, rows 20-36.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, file no. crt. 28/1910, rows 1-8.



In the context of preparations for the coalition war against the Ottoman Empire (the first Balkan war), Serbia and Bulgaria concluded a military convention in the spring of 1912 that also stipulated a (defensive) war against Romania. In such a situation, Dobrogea was considered as the possible theatre of military operations, as was the Middle Danube or the Serbian territory⁶⁰.

On the eve of Romania's intervention in the Second Balkan War, on 17 June 1913, General Alexandru Averescu finalised a *"Memorandum regarding the guidance of the Romanian army's operations in case of intervention in the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict"*. The future Romanian Marshal appreciated that *"the line of operations that presents the most advantages for advancing the main forces is the cluster that starts from the Danube, in front of Bechet-Corabia-Turnu Măgurele points"*⁶¹. In fact, in the short summer 1913 campaign, Romania's main operations army concentrated on the left bank of the Danube, under the leadership of Crown Prince Ferdinand, later crossing the river, on the Bulgarian territory, while the Romanian Dobrogea represented the starting point for the Dobrogea Corps offensive, under the command of General Ioan Culcer⁶².

As the possibility of a substantial territorial expansion of Bulgaria on the part of the Ottoman Empire, especially in Macedonia, became increasingly clear in the Romanian political, diplomatic and military circles, the idea of a proper territorial compensation of the Romanian state appeared. The northeastern areas of the Bulgarian state, up to the Silistra-Varna or even Rusciuk-Varna lines, were considered as a strategic cover of the territory obtained in 1878; what the promoters of these ideas underestimated or ignored was the extent of the changes in Southern Dobrogea, after 1878, to the benefit of the ethnic Bulgarians (and to the disadvantage of the Muslims), both in terms of demographics and, above all, of economic-social relations. The Romanian plans to push south of the land border with Bulgaria, in case of the collapse of the Ottoman rule in the Balkans, were unsuccessfully communicated in Vienna and Berlin, in January 1901

As the possibility of a substantial territorial expansion of Bulgaria on the part of the Ottoman Empire, especially in Macedonia, became increasingly clear in the Romanian political, diplomatic and military circles, the idea of a proper territorial compensation of the Romanian state appeared.

⁶⁰ D. Bușă, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁶¹ D. Preda, E. Ardeleanu, Al. Oșca, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁶² P. Otu, *op. cit.*, p. 160.



At the time of annexing (northern and central) Dobrogea under the Romanian state jurisdiction, the agriculture of this province was burdened, on the one hand, by the Ottoman inheritance in the field of financial law, and on the other hand, by the restricted share of the cultivated land in relation to the uncultivated ones (ponds, marshes etc.).

by P.P. Carp⁶³, then by Ion I.C. Brătianu; in September 1909⁶⁴, but also in Sofia, in 1902, by King Carol I himself⁶⁵.

The territorial expansion of the Romanian state to the south of Dobrogea was to take place under the conditions of the second Balkan war, in the summer of 1913. The territory acquired then, called *Quadrilateral*, due to its almost quadrangle form, *Southern Dobrogea*, or *New Dobrogea* (in opposition to *Old Dobrogea*, which is part of Romania since 1878), did not prove to be a true strategic cover of the Cernavodă-Constanța line, neither during the years of the First World War nor during the two interwar decades⁶⁶. In addition, the administration of the Quadrilateral posed many and difficult problems to the Romanian administration, some of them also affecting the international relations level⁶⁷.

At the time of annexing (northern and central) Dobrogea under the Romanian state jurisdiction, the agriculture of this province was burdened, on the one hand, by the Ottoman inheritance in the field of financial law, and on the other hand, by the restricted share of the cultivated land in relation to the uncultivated ones (ponds, marshes etc.).

An essential feature of the Ottoman land tenure system was the placing of the most extensive arable land in the *Mirie* category, i.e. not in the full ownership of the cultivators, but only in their hereditary use, revocable in case of repeated non-cultivation of the land entrusted by the state, personified by the sultan. The Laws on Dobrogea issued by the Romanian authorities in 1880 and 1882 stipulated the transformation of the *Mirie* type properties into full private properties, in exchange for the payment of staggering amounts over 15 years. The Law of 1884 stipulated the rescheduling of the respective amounts for 20 years, in parallel with the alternative possibility of assigning a third of the *Mirie* surfaces, in exchange for the recognition of the full property right over

⁶³ I.P.E.R.D., p. 201.

⁶⁴ K. Hitchins, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

⁶⁵ Gh. A. Dabija, *Amintirile unui atașat militar român în Bulgaria (1910-1913)*, Tipografia "Universul", București, 1936, p. 163; H. Hesapciiev, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

⁶⁶ G. Ungureanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-75.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, *passim*.



the rest for the owners⁶⁸. As a result of the confiscations of “thirds” and other legal measures, the Romanian state acquired a total of 165,142 hectares (127,843 in Constanța county and 37,309 in Tulcea county), representing about 1/9 of the Romanian Dobrogea area. Of this total, 60,552 hectares remained state property, and the rest (almost 2/3) was distributed to the native population or to the colonists brought to the area⁶⁹.

Much more than from confiscations, the Romanian state increased its Dobrogea land reserve following the works of enhancement of the territory (remedies, desiccations, divisions, deserts etc.). Thus, between 1884 and 1905, the cultivated area of the Romanian Dobrogea increased from 240,000 hectares to over 800,000 hectares⁷⁰. The works in question also contributed to the improvement of the hygienic-sanitary state, the ponds and marshes representing a favourable environment for a wide range of bio-pathogens⁷¹.

The cumulative result of the constructive and coercive-state measures, applied by the Romanian authorities in Dobrogea, in the land domain, constituted a solid basis for the redistribution of property, through sale-purchase. Until 1908, the Romanian state sold a total of 400,452 hectares of Dobrogea arable land, of which about 2/3 (260,163 ha.) to Romanian ethnic groups (colonists or natives), and 140,379 to Romanian citizens of other ethnicities⁷². Meanwhile, in 1903, a law of ownership for those who fought in the War of Independence (1877-1878) was issued, according to which they were granted 2000 m² of home fireplace, plus lots of 8 hectares, in exchange for amounts payable in 60 years annuities; in addition, they benefited from a five-year tax exemption and aid for building houses and purchasing cattle and agricultural tools, as well as fruit trees and nozzles from state nurseries⁷³.

Between 1884 and 1905, the cultivated area of the Romanian Dobrogea increased from 240,000 hectares to over 800,000 hectares. The works in question also contributed to the improvement of the hygienic-sanitary state, the ponds and marshes representing a favourable environment for a wide range of bio-pathogens.

⁶⁸ Ioan N. Roman, *Proprietatea imobiliară rurală în Dobrogea*, in vol. *Dobrogea – 50 de ani de viață românească (1878-1928)*, manager: C-tin Brătescu, secretary: I. Georgescu, Cultura Națională, București, 1928, pp. 285-286.

⁶⁹ Toma Ionescu, *Asupra proprietăților și colonizărilor în Dobrogea*, in *Dobrogea – 50 de ani...*, p. 278.

⁷⁰ Gheorghe Iacob, *Repere ale evoluției economice*, in *Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), tome VII, T2; *De la Independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)*, coord.: acad. Gh. Platon, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2003, p. 167.

⁷¹ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁷² Marin Vlădescu-Olt, *Constituția Dobrogei*, Tipografia “Doru P. Cucu”, București, 1908, pp. 131-132.

⁷³ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 358, 370.



An important stage for the connection of Dobrogea with the rest of the Romanian territory is represented by the years 1890-1895, when we note the establishment of the Romanian River Navigation (1890), then of the Romanian Maritime Service (1895), almost simultaneously with the inauguration of the Cernavodă bridge.

However, the yield of the plant crop was low, compared to the rest of the country, a fact that can be explained either by the smaller proportion of the plows (24 to 100 hectares, compared to 36 in Moldavia and Walachia⁷⁴), or by the dependence on the very fluctuating climatic conditions⁷⁵.

A well-represented branch of activity in the pre-war Romanian Dobrogea was animal breeding. Thus, at the beginning of the last century, the province sheltered the eighth part of Romania's sheep and goats flocks; the number of sheep per capita of Dobrogea (3) was higher than any country in Europe (Greece – 2.5, Bulgaria – 2, Serbia – 1.5 etc.). In 1904, in Constanța and Tulcea counties, a horse was registered to 2.7 respectively 3 inhabitants, a large horn to 1.38, respectively 2.44 inhabitants, a small horn to 3.7, respectively 1.2 inhabitants, a pig to 6, respectively 5.8 inhabitants⁷⁶.

Due to the specific conditions and measures taken by the central and local authorities, Dobrogea was not affected by the peasant movements that shook the Old Kingdom of Romania between 1888 and 1907.

If the industrialisation itself made little progress in Dobrogea from 1878-1913, not the same can be said about communications and commerce. An important stage for the connection of Dobrogea with the rest of the Romanian territory is represented by the years 1890-1895, when we note the establishment of the Romanian River Navigation (1890), then of the Romanian Maritime Service (1895), almost simultaneously with the inauguration of the Cernavodă bridge⁷⁷. In fact, the building of the Bucharest-Fetești railway line and a trans-Danube bridge had been stipulated in a law adopted in June 1882, and three years later, the construction of the bridge over the Danube and the reconstruction of Constanța port were declared works of public utility, following a few years of failed auctions⁷⁸.

In 1887, the Ministry of Public Works gave up the idea of a tender, setting up a special service, under the guidance of engineer Anghel Saligny (b. 1854-d. 1925), who, assisted by other Romanian engineers,

⁷⁴ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 935.

⁷⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 796.

⁷⁷ Gh. Iacob, *Repere ale evoluției economice...*, p. 120.

⁷⁸ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 676.



drew up a project, finalised and accepted in the year 1889, when the actual works began⁷⁹. After six years, Dobrogea was linked to Walachia, in the Fetești-Cernavodă area, by the longest bridge complex in Europe and the second in the world⁸⁰. Between Cernavodă and Constanța, a railway line had been built, in the Ottoman period (1857-1862), by a British company⁸¹. Tulcea County, not connected to the rest of Dobrogea (and the country) by rail, would have a slower development than Constanța⁸². Dobrogea road network was represented, in 1900, by two national roads (Constanța-Babadag-Tulcea and Tulcea-Ghecet), 41 neighbourhood roads and 9 communal roads⁸³.

After the repurchase from the British company “Danube and Black Sea Railway and Küstenge Harbor Company Ltd.” (the same one that built the Constanța-Cernavodă railway), the modernisation of the port of Constanța started on 16 October 1896, being entrusted to the French company Hallier, and after its bankruptcy (1899), to the engineer Anghel Saligny⁸⁴.

Also in 1899, the direct railway line Berlin-Constanța was inaugurated, and six years later the Constanța-Istanbul⁸⁵ submarine cable was used, the metropolis of Northern Dobrogea becoming a nodal point between Central Europe and the Near East. On 27 September 1909, in the presence of the royal family and the members of the government, the celebrations of the inauguration of the port of Constanța took place, occasion on which, symbolically, the ship “Iași” was loaded with cereals for export, from the first warehouse-silo built by A. Saligny, who was also present at the event⁸⁶.

Between 1889 and 1913, the volume of trade practised in the port of Constanța increased from 89,400 tones to 1.5 million tones, representing one-third of the total export of Romania since then, including 85% of the quantity of oil exported. Currently, through the port of Constanța pass about 15 million tons annually⁸⁷. Going back

In 1899, the direct railway line Berlin-Constanța was inaugurated, and six years later the Constanța-Istanbul submarine cable was used, the metropolis of Northern Dobrogea becoming a nodal point between Central Europe and the Near East.

⁷⁹ A Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

⁸⁰ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 168.

⁸² A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

⁸³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 684.

⁸⁴ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

⁸⁵ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-403.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 403.

⁸⁷ V. Dragomirescu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.



In 1913, Old Dobrogea had a total population of 384,420 inhabitants (over 2.5 times more than in 1880), of which 209,571 in Constanța county and 170,859 in Tulcea county.

to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we also mention that during this period, about 90% of the volume of Romanian foreign trade was carried out with the western states (including Austro-Hungary), 8% with the Balkan states (including the Ottoman Empire) and only 2% with the Russian Empire⁸⁸.

A third of a century after joining Romania, Dobrogea became the most urbanised province, among the four of the Old Romanian Kingdom, with a share of the city population of 25%, compared with less than 10% in Oltenia (Western Wallachia), 18% in Moldova and about 22 % in Muntenia (Eastern Walachia), thanks to the Capital (country average: 18.4%)⁸⁹.

The actions of the Romanian authorities to make the most of the Dobrogea territory and to state some agricultural lands, in conjunction with the development of communication routes, created a solid basis for the colonisation process of the province between the Danube and the Sea. Not unimportant is the fact that, after the use of the Cernavodă Bridge, the colonisation experienced a significant acceleration⁹⁰. In turn, the colonisation considerably transformed the ethno-demographic structure of the province between the Danube and the Sea. Thus, in 1913, *Old Dobrogea* had a total population of 384,420 inhabitants (over 2.5 times more than in 1880), of which 209,571 in Constanța county and 170,859 in Tulcea county⁹¹. The Romanian ethnic groups made up the absolute majority of the population (216,425 inhabitants, 56.9%), their share being slightly higher in Constanța county compared to Tulcea (61.6%, compared to 51.1%). The second place was the Bulgarian ethnic group, 51,149 (13.4%), followed by the Turks-Tartars (41,442 inhabitants or 10.9%). The Russians and the Lipovans, 35,849, represented 9.4% of the population, and the 9,999 Greeks made up 2.6% of the total population⁹².

Of the more than 200,000 Romanians from *Old Dobrogea*, recorded in 1913, only a quarter (24.2%) were *dicieni* (Romanians who were there in 1878 or their descendants), while 39.5% were *cojani* (from the plains

⁸⁸ G. Preda, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

⁸⁹ Veličko Georgiev, Stajko Trifonov (editors), *Istoriya na Bălgarite (1878-1944) v dokumenti*, Tom I, 1878-1912, Prosveta, Sofia, 1996, p. 561.

⁹⁰ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 931.

⁹¹ A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

⁹² *Ibid.*



of Walachia, 21.8% were *mocani* (coming from Transylvania and Banat, under Hungarian domination), 8% were Moldovans from the right bank of the Prut, and 5.6% were Romanians from Basarabia⁹³. One should notice as well the significant increase of Romanians in Tulcea county, between 1908 and 1913, from about 40% (62,204 out of 154,147)⁹⁴ to 51⁹⁵. An area with a significant share of the non-Romanian population remains the Danube Delta, where Prefect Ioan Nenițescu had tried, at the end of the 19th century, to initiate a colonising action⁹⁶. The share of Romanian ethnicities had increased not only demographically, but also socially-economically, being relevant in this regard the fact that Dobrogea was the only province of the Old Kingdom since 1912 where they were better represented in the urban environment than in the rural one (80.45%, compared to 48.2%)⁹⁷.

As we have seen, the Bulgarians registered a decrease of one-third of the demographic share (from 19.9 to 13.4 percent), but, in absolute numbers, their number saw a significant increase, from about 30,000 to over 51,000, representing an increase of 70% over 33 years (1880-1913). According to some Romanian sources, this increase was due to the Bulgarian immigrants from Southern Basarabia, caused by the revocation by the Czarist authorities of the privileges granted at the beginning of the 19th century to the Bulgarian colonists⁹⁸.

The share of Bulgarian ethnicities in the rural economic and social life of the province remained, after all indications, higher than the demographic itself. A statistics from 1906, put into circulation by Vasile M. Kogălniceanu and used by Bulgarian propagandist Ivan St. Penakov, in the interwar years, recorded, on the territory of Tulcea county, a total of 9,742 Romanian agricultural households, totalling 97,000 hectares (on average, about 10 hectares per household), respectively 5,794 Bulgarian agricultural households,

The share of Bulgarian ethnicities in the rural economic and social life of the province remained, after all indications, higher than the demographic itself. A statistics from 1906, put into circulation by Vasile M. Kogălniceanu and used by Bulgarian propagandist Ivan St. Penakov, in the interwar years, recorded, on the territory of Tulcea county, a total of 9,742 Romanian agricultural households.

⁹³ Constantin Iordache, *Rumînskata Kalifornija: integriraneto na Severna Dobrudža v Rumînija (1878-1913)*, in "Istoričeski Pregled", 57, nr. 3-4/2001, p. 63.

⁹⁴ Romulus Seișanu, *Dobrogea, Gurile Dunării și Insula Șerpilor*, Tipografia "Universul", București, 1928, p. 193.

⁹⁵ See *supra*, notice 97.

⁹⁶ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-269.

⁹⁷ Răzvan Limona, *Populația Dobrogei în perioada interbelică, Semănătorul*, online publishing, August 2009, Tulcea, p. 26, the text is available at tulcealibrary.com, retrieved on 29.08.2019.

⁹⁸ Central National Historical Archives of Romania, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers* Collection, file no. 131/1939, rows 31-32.



When it became part of the modern Romanian national state (1878), the northern and central Dobrogea territory was considered by the Romanians as an area of maximum vulnerability, for multiple reasons (Trans-Danube position, ethno-demographic composition, precarious economic situation, etc.). The main fears were related to the affinities and connivances between Russia and Bulgaria.

totalling 85,504 hectares (on average, about 15 ha per household)⁹⁹. The deputy of Macedonian-Romanian origin, Achile Pinetta showed, in the parliamentary sitting of 8 April 1922, without being contradicted by auditors or other speakers, that the Bulgarian ethnic groups from Northern Dobrogea had succeeded in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the stipulations of the Romanian land regime, having documents of property and sufficient financial reserves not only for the payment of fees for the transformation of *Mirie* properties into full private property, but also for the acquisition of land¹⁰⁰.

Despite the good relations with the Romanian authorities on the political and cultural level, the situation of the Turkish Tartars experienced a significant economic and social degradation. Their number, in absolute numbers, remains the same, but the demographic percentage share drops almost three times, between 1880 and 1913, from 31% to 11%, while the arable area held was reduced to no more than one-sixth; several socio-cultural factors contributed to this dramatic involution: lack of an Ottoman tradition of written acts, language barrier, Islamic conservatism, but also certain attitudes and behaviours of Romanian officials¹⁰¹. The precariousness of the living conditions of the Dobrogea Muslims also made its mark on the degree of literacy (very low, although the two counties occupied, in 1912, the 2nd and the 3rd places among all the 32 counties of the Old Romanian Kingdom, in this chapter)¹⁰², “*as and hygiene-sanitary condition*”, their homes being considered “*true outbreaks of infection*”¹⁰³.

*

When it became part of the modern Romanian national state (1878), the northern and central Dobrogea territory was considered by the Romanians as an area of maximum vulnerability, for multiple reasons (Trans-Danube position, ethno-demographic composition,

⁹⁹ *Apud* Ivan St. Penakov, *L'entente bulgaro-roumaine. Premisses*, Editura T.F. Tchipeff, Sofia, 1939, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ “*Monitorul Oficial – Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților*”, no. 20 of 30 April 1922, sitting of 8 April 1922, in *Sesiunea ordinară 1921-1922*, Imprimeria națională, București, 1922, p. 347.

¹⁰¹ M. Ülküsal, *Dobruça ve Türkler*, Turkish Institute for Culture and Researches, Ankara, 1966, pp. 24-44.

¹⁰² A. Rădulescu, I. Bitoleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

¹⁰³ M. Ionescu Dobrogianu, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

precarious economic situation, etc.). The main fears were related to the affinities and connivances between Russia and Bulgaria. In order to safeguard and strengthen its sovereignty in Dobrogea, the Romanian state has taken a series of measures, both at the political and military level, and at the ethnopolitical level (i.e. economic, social, cultural ones, etc.). The actual military measures (the establishment of the Danube Division and the Great Division), the deployment in the area of the 5th Army Corps, the building of the bridgehead from Cernavodă, etc.), affected by a whole series of difficulties and objective deficiencies, offered limited results, but Romania's security options and European pre-war balance made up for this disadvantage. A remarkable success was the measures of the second category (the enhancement of the territory, the development of the communication routes and the port of Constanța, the colonisation etc.), in their essence, of constructive-integrative type and only occasionally of coercive type. These led to the full integration of Dobrogea into the Romanian national-state edifice, a process that will prove irreversible, in the context of affirming the principle of national self-determination and under the conditions of the Romanian foreign policy option since August 1916.



BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. ***, *Istoria militară a poporului român*, vol. V (1878-1919), Editura Militară, București, 1988.
2. ***, *Istoria politicii externe românești în date*, coord.: Ion Calafeteanu, Editura Enciclopedic, București, 2003.
3. ***, *Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), vol. VII, T1; *Constituirea României moderne (1821-1878)*, 2nd edition revised and added, coord.: acad. Dan Berindei, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 2015.
4. ***, *Istoria românilor* (academic treatise), vol. VII, T2; *De la Independență la Marea Unire (1878-1918)*, coord.: acad. Gh. Platon, Ed. Enciclopedică, București, 2003.
5. ***, *La Dobroudja*, edité par l'Union de savants, artists et ecrivains bulgares, Sofia, 1918.
6. ***, *Monitorul Oficial – Dezbaterile Adunării Deputaților*, no. 20 of 30 April 1922, sitting of 8 April 1922, in the volume *Sesiunea ordinară 1921-1922*, Imprimeria Națională, București, 1922.
7. ***, *Novi očerci po bălgarskata istorija (1878-1948)*, săstavitel Marija Radeva, f.ed., Sofija, f.a.



8. Arhivele Militare Naționale Române/Romanian National Military Archive – Military Archive Centre (Pitești), *Great General Staff Collection*, 3rd Operations Section, files 10, 12, 17, 23, 24, 28, 29.
9. Central Historical National Archives, *Presidency of the Council of Ministers Collection*, file no. 131-1939.
10. Ion Antonescu, *Românii, originea, trecutul, sacrificiile și drepturile lor*, edition by Valeriu Florin Dobrinescu, Editura Moldova, Iași, 1991.
11. Constantin Brătescu, *Monografia Cadrilaterului*, Cernăuți, 1938.
12. Daniela Bușă, *Modificări politice și teritoriale în sud-estul Europei (1878-1914)*, Editura Paideia, București, 2003.
13. Valentin Ciorbea (coord.), *Dobrogea (1878-2008). Orizonturi deschise prin mandat european*, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța, 2008.
14. Gheorghe A. Dabija, *Amintirile unui atașat militar român în Bulgaria (1910-1913)*, Tipografia ziarului "Universul", București, 1936.
15. Sorin Liviu Damean, *România și Congresul de Pace de la Berlin (1878)*, Editura Mica Valahie, București, 2011.
16. *Dobrogea: 50 de ani de viață românească (1878-1928)*, Director: Constantin Brătescu, Secretary: I. Georgescu, Cultura Națională, București, 1928.
17. Valentin Dragomirescu, *Dobrogea: analiza geografico-militară*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare "Carol I", București, 2015.
18. George Ene, *Eminescu, securitatea și siguranța națională a României*, Editura Eikon, Cluj-Napoca, 2014.
19. Veličko Georgiev, Stajko Trifonov (săstaviteli), *Istorijska na Bălgarite (1878-1944) v dokumenti*, Tom I, 1878-1912, Prosveta, Sofija, 1996.
20. Hristofor Hesapciev, *Amintirile unui fost diplomat bulgar în România (1905-1910)*, traducere de Daniel Cain, Editura Fundației PRO, București, 2003.
21. Keith Hitchins, *Românii (1866-1947)*, 3rd edition, translated by George G. Pora and Delia Răzdolescu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2004.
22. Dobrogianu Marin Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea. Geografia matematică, fizică, politică, economică și militară*, Atelierele Grafice Socec, București, 1904.
23. Constantin Iordache, *Rumînskata Kalifornija: integriraneto na Severna Dobrudža v Ruminija (1878-1913)*, in *Istoričeski Pregled*, 57, no. 3-4/2001.
24. Constantin Iordan, *Dobrogea (1878-1940) în istoriografia bulgară post-comunistă*, Editura Academiei Române, 2013.
25. Constantin Iordan, *România și relațiile internaționale în sud-estul european (1919- 1924). Probleme ale păcii, securității și cooperării*, Editura ALL, București, 1999.
26. Antonina Kuzmanova, *Le caractères bulgare de la Dobrodja vu par les Roumains. Propagande et mire en comideration des réalités (1878-1944)*, in "Etudes balkaniques", 29, nr. 31, 1993.

27. Limona Răzvan, *Populația Dobrogei în perioada interbelică, Semănătorul*, online publishing house, Tulcea, August 2009, available at tulcealibrary.com, retrieved on 29.08.2019.
28. William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Succesors (1801-1927)*, Cambridge, 1927.
29. Ioan Munteanu, *Cadrilaterul, istoria unei controverse (1878-1919)*, in *Anuarul Institutului pentru Studii Politice de Apărare și Istorie Militară*, București, 1997.
30. Blagovest Njagulov, *Les images de l'autre chez les Bulgares et les Roumaines (1878- 1944)*, in *Etudes balkaniques*, 31, nr. 2/1995.
31. Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Istoria Balcanilor (1804-1945)*, translated by Andreea Doica, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2002.
32. Ivan St. Penakov, *L'entente bulgaro-roumaine. Premisses*, Imprimerie T.F. Tchipeff, Sofia, 1939.
33. Žeko Popov, *La situation et les luttes des Bulgares de la Dobroudja de Nord (1878- 1913)*, in *"Bulgarian Historical Review"*, 19, nr. 1/1991.
34. Joseph V. Poppov, *La Dobroudja et les relations bulgaro-roumaines*, Liège, 1935.
35. Dumitru Preda, Alexandru Oșca, Eftimie Ardeleanu, *Proiecte și planuri de operații ale M.St.M. Român (până în anul 1916)*, edited by the Romanian Military History Commission, București, 1992.
36. Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, 2nd edition, Editura EX PONTO, Constanța, 1998.
37. Florin Anghel, Mariana Cojoc, Magdalena Tiță coord., *Români și bulgari. Provocările unei vecinătăți*, Editura Cartea Universitară, București, 2007.
38. Romulus Seișanu, *Dobrogea, Gurile Dunării și Insula Șerpilor*, Tipografia "Universul", București, 1928.
39. Robert Stănciugel, Liliana Monica Bălașa, *Dobrogea între secolele VII-XIX. Evoluție istorică*, Editura D.C. Promotions, București, 2005.
40. George Ungureanu, *Problema Cadrilaterului în contextul relațiilor româno-bulgare (1919-1940)*, Editura Istros, Brăila, 2009.
41. Müstecib Ülküsal, *Dobruça ve Türkler*, Araştırma Türk Kültürnii Enstitutu, Ankara, 1966.
42. Marin Vlădescu-Olt, *Constituția Dobrogei*, Tipografia "Doru P. Cucu", București, 1908.
43. Gheorghe Zbucnea, *România și războaiele balcanice (1912-1913). Pagini de istorie sud-est europeană*, Editura Albatros, 1999.

