

SOVEREIGNS OF ROMANIA (CUZA, CAROL I, FERDINAND I AND MARIA, CAROL II, AND MIHAI I), THE BRĂȚIANUS (ION, IONEL, AND GEORGE) AND DOBRUDJA

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Abstract

The sovereigns of Romania – and members of the Royal Family – had a predilection for visiting Dobrogea – including its southern part, the Quadrilateral, with the so-called Silver Coast (Balchik was the summer residence of Queen Maria) or the Danube Delta. King Carol I participated, together with Queen Elizabeth, in the inaugurations of buildings and civil constructions in Constanța, and Mamaia was, especially in the interwar period, often visited by the sovereigns (including the young Michael I). Also, the Brătianu politicians had a predilection for Dobrogea, visiting it repeatedly, participating in public meetings or inaugurations of various buildings.

Key words: *Cuza Vodă, Carol I, Ferdinand I, Carol II, Brătianu, Dobrudja, Constanța, Tulcea.*

Introduction

Even before Dobrogea, which was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1877-1878, was reintegrated into the Romanian State – from which it had been dislocated at the beginning of the 15th century, when it belonged to Wallachia led by voivode Mircea the Elder (1386-1418) –, through the provisions of the Berlin Peace Treaty (June 13-July 13, 1878), the Ruler of the United Romanian Principalities Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866) would set foot in this ancient province of Romanian ethnogenesis twice – in 1860 and, respectively, in 1864 (on his way to Constantinople).

The first of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's journeys through Dobrogea was in 1860 (Cioroiu, 1984: 51-52). The prince was going to Constantinople, on the Galați-Sulina-Varna route, to obtain recognition of the union of Moldavia with Wallachia. The description of the journey was made by one of his companions, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Minister of Public Instruction.

"From Galați to Sulina, the journey was made with the French ship 'Taurus'. At Sulina, the corvette 'Beirut' – a ship in the service of the Turkish Navy in Constanța – awaited him, specially sent by the Porte to bring the Romanian prince to Constantinople. Cuza was greeted by Salih Pasha and Nusred Pasha, whom the prince greeted kindly, but with the dignity due to independent Romanian sovereigns. All civil and military authorities were ordered to give honor to Prince

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Cuza, who was greeted, under the Romanian flag, by a salvo of 21 guns. The commander of the corvette was a famous sailor, originally from Abyssinia.

(...) The return journey was made with the battleship 'Balkan' of the French Company. Dimitrie Bolintineanu recounts, in detail, the ordeals they went through. Arriving in Galați, the Prince and his delegation were received with great pomp and a lot of people. The prince is said to have exclaimed: 'I know how these things are done. I don't like comedies'. At Medgidia, the Circassians from the Ottoman army presented him with honor, and at Cernavodă, the Prince and his suite passed between two rows of mounted Circassians, who welcomed him with cheers. Here, Romanian ministers had come to welcome him, with whom he crossed into the country".

Cuza's second journey through Dobrogea, on the Cernavodă-Constanța route, took place in June 1864.

The 'Curier d'Orient' of June 18, 1864, describes this journey in detail. The Lord's retinue was much larger than the one in 1860, five civilians and five military.

"The Lord and his retinue embarked in Giurgiu, on the Austrian ship 'Archduchess Sofia' of the Austrian Danube Company. On the ship, Cuza received the homage of Brigadier General Sahib Pasha, attached to the Lord, who informed him that, in Constanța, the corvette 'Beirut' was waiting for him, made available by the sultan for the journey to Istanbul. At Cernavodă, the gentleman is welcomed by the Dobrudjans, and the Muslims give him a batal wrapped in the tricolor. From Cernavodă to Constanța, at 10 o'clock, he leaves on an express train, personally driven by the railway director, Trevor Barkley. The gentleman had put on his low-dress uniform. There is a fifteen-minute stop at Medgidia. The train arrives in Constanța at 11.30. As a thank you, the gentleman gives Barkley a watch decorated with his initials in diamonds".

And 'Courier d'Orient' comments: "In Constanța, all the civil and military authorities were gathered on the jetty to do His Highness the honors. The prince went aboard, in the large ship 'Beyrut', in front of which the Romanian tricolor fluttered; the crew was mounted on the spars and the moment His Highness set foot on the deck of the 'Beyrut', a salvo of 21 cannon shots greeted the Sultan's illustrious guest". On the return, the Romanian delegation followed the same itinerary. From Cernavoda to Giurgiu with the Ottoman warship Kilidji-Ali, 'magnificently decorated' (Cioroiu, 1984: 52-53).

It is worth emphasizing that aspects of Cuza's passage through Dobrogea are retained in Dobrogea folklore.

A series of stories and legends about Alexandru Ioan Cuza still circulate in Dobrodjan folklore today. Most of them highlight a character characterized by a sense of justice, dignity, and closeness to the common people, a brave, kind, and quick-witted gentleman. In this sense, Cuza to the Sultan, *Cuza's Ocaua*. There is no shortage of memories of some Dobrodjans about the unifying lord.

"Thus, the memories entitled *Copiii de școală și Cuza* talk about a visit by Prince Cuza to a school in Târgu Neamț; about the order he introduced in the

country (*Pe vremea lui Cuza*); about the lord's habit of walking around fairs dressed in the clothes of a common man, in order to dispense justice (Medgidia)".

Particularly interesting are the portraits that the owners of these memories made of Mr. Cuza. One of these refers to one of the two passages through Dobrudja of the Romanian prince: "I saw Rîșic-Pașa at Sulina. He came with Cuza Vodă. I saw Cuza, don't lie, just a stone throws away. Cuza was a tall, fair-skinned man, with a corœtian nose. I see him in portraits too, but he doesn't look like it, he looks too reserved; and no, he was fair-skinned. I can see him thanking everyone who greeted him. He went to the commission. There he had a palace and a table. He invited many people to the table. His chair was higher, and ours, lower and lower, until the end... He put food and Cuza's wine cup for each person. I can hear him telling us: 'drink to Cuza's health'. And whatever food he ate, he gave us too, so much so that he sat in the palace, but we sat in the ceadir. And Rîșic-Pașa's chair was lower than Cuza's. If you had seen it, the pasha's clothes shone so brightly, it was only gold, but Cuza's were not so shiny. He laughed at every word he said. And everyone praised him for being a good master. He stayed in Sulina for three days and then he left. Since, then I have not seen either Rîșic-Pașa or Cuza-Vodă".

Speaking about when the railway was built, a contemporary of the event recounts memories of Cuza's passage through Dobrudja in 1860: "In 1861 (*Sic!*), it seems to me, when Mr. Cuza came and crossed the Danube on a Romanian ship to go here to Țarigrad, they could barely find a passenger car for the gentleman and his entourage. I can almost see Cuza now: tall, strong, broad-shouldered, with a goatee, like at that time, and an officer's cap on his head. When the ship left the Romanian shore, the Romanian border guards all shouted in unison: 'Hurray! Long live Mr. Cuza'. When he arrived on the right bank at Cernavodă, the Turkish border guards greeted him with the same cheers in Turkish" (Dumitrașcu, 2018).

Visits of King Carol I in Dobrudja

Until recently, the idea that Prince Carol I set foot in Dobrogea on November 14, 1878 – given the official takeover of Dobrogea, by the civil administration and military units, respectively, was accredited. And when, Carol I read, in Brăila, the two documents that formalized the recovery of Dobrogea and its inclusion in the Romanian State.

In the pages of the 'Monitorul Oficial' of Romania, however – reproduced in several volumes (Ciorbea, 2022) – there is the account according to which on June 6-8, 1867, the ruler was in the Danube Delta, visiting Tulcea and Sulina.

At the beginning of June 1867, more precisely on the 5th and 6th, Carol visited Brăila and Galați. Here he boarded the ship 'La Magicienne' under the French flag for a visit to the Danube Delta and ports in southern Bessarabia.

From Galați the ship set off for Tulcea. It docked in the port for an hour. The event was announced and prepared by the authorities. Civil and military officials from the Ottoman Empire troops greeted Carol. A musical band boarded the ship,

which, together with another one on the quay where a military band was also present, created a festive atmosphere.

Departing for a visit to the Danube Delta, Prince Carol wanted to see the canals of the Delta, mainly the works carried out by the European Commission of the Danube in Sulina.

From Tulcea 'La Magicienne' first sailed on the Sfântul Gheorghe arm, turned around and entered the Sulina canal. It did not stop in the port of Sulina, it sailed further 'a little out to sea' (sic), Prince wanted to see the mouth of the Black Sea. The ship made a turnback maneuver and docked in the port of Sulina, where Carol was awaited by the 'Pasha of Tulcea', the mutasherif or governor of the Tulcea sanjak, the highest figure in the Ottoman administration in Dobrudja who had come especially to welcome the prince. Civil servants, officers and many residents greeted the prince. Carol disembarked, went to the headquarters of the European Danube Commission in Sulina, where he had a meeting with the officials and consuls attached to the city. Then came the moment when Carol was invited in a boat to visit the dikes, the lighthouse and other works to modernize navigation on the canal and in the port.

In the evening the port was dressed in festive clothes. The population came out onto the quay. The ships in the port and the ship under the Austrian flag that had accompanied the ship 'La Magicienne' had their illuminated flags raised with lanterns. Historical sources tell us that the show was splendid.

Carol had invited the families of the notables of Sulina aboard 'La Magicienne' because they had expressed their desire to greet him, and the prince invited them to the ball organized on board, an event that lasted until 11:30 p.m.

A few hours later, the ship left very early in the morning for Tulcea. Here he disembarked accompanied by the head of the Ottoman administration. To the applause of the people of Tulcea, the two headed for the administration headquarters, the so-called 'mansion', where they stopped for a short time. He returned aboard the French ship and set off for the Chilia Canal to visit the northern part of the Delta and several ports on the left arm of the canal. In front of the port, Ismail was greeted by the inhabitants, the military and warships specially sent by the European Commission of the Danube to honor the prince. Romania.

Having arrived at the port of Chilia, Carol disembarked and was invited to participate in a *Te Deum*. He then stopped at the house of the notable Bariore where he received the delegation of officials and soldiers. Here the archpriest of Ismail extended his welcome to Carol I. He then visited the old church 'Saint Nicholas', founded by Prince Vasile Lupu (1634-1653) and the remains of the fortress built by Genoese merchants many centuries earlier.

Returning aboard 'La Magicienne', the prince sailed towards the port of Vâlcov. He spent the night on board. In the morning, he noticed another French ship nearby, 'Le Mortiere', which had sailed before 'La Magicienne' to sound the depth of the arm and avoid a naval incident. He also entered the Oceacov arm, admiring the mouth of the estuary from the ship in the Black Sea. Returning to the port of

Vâlcov, in an area where the water was deep enough, 'La Magicienne' dropped anchor and the prince got out in a boat to go see the port, the town and the surroundings. The residents gave him an equally beautiful welcome, and he met there with representatives of the community, civilians and military. On the seashore, he went, obviously accompanied, to Valul lui Traian near Jibrieni, where he stopped and was served breakfast on the grass. The representatives of the authorities promised to erect a monument in memory of the stop made by Carol I. On the return to Vâlcov, he was accompanied by local people on horseback. He boarded 'La Magicienne', being greeted by the residents who approached the ship with their boats. The next morning was Chilia. In the evening, the port was illuminated with lanterns. Notables with their families, they attended the ball offered by Carol which lasted until 11 p.m.

The next day, Carol and the French ship sailed to Ismail, where the ship anchored. The prince disembarked, passed under the triumphal arch erected by the locals, and toured the city accompanied by the ship commanders under the flags of France, England, and Russia.

The next day, on June 10, 1867, accompanied by Ismailis on horseback, the prince set off for Bolgrad. Thus, ended Prince Carol's first visit to the Danube Delta, the northern area of Dobrudja, and the ports of southern Bessarabia" (Ciorbea, 2022; xxx 2022 *Casa Regală a României*).

After 1878, the first visit to Dobrogea – now (it is divided into two counties: Constanța and Tulcea) – takes place in October 1879 (October 15-17, when he visits Tulcea; October 30, when he makes his first visit to Constanța).

Every year, on May 9, the historical calendar of the Romanian people marks the date of the proclamation of the Independence of Romania, under international conditions which, in 1877, facilitated the affirmation as such of the sovereignty of the modern Romanian State. In the consciousness of the era, it is noteworthy that this date – May 9 – was perceived as the symbolic moment of the proclamation of Independence, as, for example, the Romanian magazine published in Transylvania, in Gherla, "Cărțile săteanului român" records: "The day of May 9/21, 1877 will be written in golden letters in the history of Romanianism forever great and victorious, for on this day (Monday) the Diet [Assembly of Deputies] and the Senate of Romania – with one soul and one will, with one mind and one heart – proclaimed ROMANIA as an INDEPENDENT STATE (the unattached kingdom). And through this, breaking the covenants signed with tears of blood by the Romanian lords Mircea and Bogdan – with the pagans Bayezid and Selim I – THE ROMANIAN PEOPLE became LORDS over their lives and fate!"

Indeed, on this day, Foreign Minister M. Kogălniceanu is questioned about Romania's conduct in the Russo-Turkish War, the response of the great Romanian politician constituting, in fact, the Declaration of Independence of Romania: "Gentlemen Deputies, I have not the slightest doubt or fear of declaring before the National Representation that we are a free and independent nation"; on the same day,

the Assembly of Deputies votes a resolution by which "it takes note that the war between Romania and Turkey, that the severance of our ties with the Porte and the absolute Independence of Romania have received their official consecration" (also on the same day, the Senate also adopts a similar act). (By coincidence, the next day, May 10, was the day on which King Carol I celebrated his entry into the Capital in 1866. Independence would be celebrated, until 1947, on this day in May, in his Memoirs, the Sovereign recording for May 10/22, 1877: "Today's national holiday is celebrated this time with distinction, as the day of the proclamation of independence".)

Romania's participation in the war against the Ottoman Empire, alongside Russia, would materialize not only in the consecration of obtaining Independence – recorded as such by the decision of the Berlin Peace Congress (1878) – but also in the reintegration of the Romanian territory between the Danube and the Sea (*Dobrogea/Dobrudja*) to the Romanian State, in November 1878, a historical reparation also validated by the Great Powers.

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Thus, the very content of the first official documents addressed to the Dobrudjans on November 14, 1878 – *High Order of the Day to the Army on the Occupation of Dobrudja*, respectively the *Proclamation to the Dobrudjans* – is exemplary for the concern that the Romanian state authorities would show, in the following decades, for the modernization of Dobrudja: "Christians and Muslims, welcome the Romanian authorities with confidence; they come with the specific task of putting an end to the painful trials you have gone through, of healing the wounds of the war, of defending your person, property and legitimate interests, finally of developing your moral and material well-being" ([Carol I] (1939), 297).

King Carol I (1839-1914; Prince: 1866-1881; King: 1881-1914), "*Beiul Carolu*" – as he was called by the Dobrudjans until 1878 – would make his first official visit to Dobrudja in October 1879, when he arrived in Constanța and Tulcea, being greeted with joy and trust by the Dobrudjans who came out to meet him. "These populations, composed of all nationalities, all regions, Romanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Germans, Turks, Tatars, were all united by a single feeling: the desire to see, to greet, to love their good ruler, the representative of freedom, justice, tolerance and European civilization". Residents of the villages lined up along the Cernavoda-Constanța railway came, "to listen, at least in the run of the railway, to the Romanian sovereign, and the women and children, seeing the train, threw themselves to the ground as a sign of respect" (Lascu, 1999).

In Tulcea, the sovereign laid the foundation stone of the Dobrudja Monument, visited the churches in the city, the schools there (Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, German, Protestant, Armenian, Israelite), and other institutions. The ruler's presence in Dobrudja provided the occasion for the inhabitants of several settlements to submit petitions demanding economic and social improvements, expressing their confidence in the sovereign's sense of justice, "and be assured, Your Majesty, that we and our children, basing ourselves on the principles of freedoms enjoyed by our brothers – *as was said, for example, in the petition of the inhabitants of Hârșova* –, will defend the estate from any external invasions or interference by enemies" (Ciocoiu, 2022: 14-15).

The ruler's impressions of this trip to Dobrudja are given in a letter sent to his father, which said, among other things, highlighting the Romanian historical traditions in this part of the country: "From far away, very close to each other, on mounds and hills, the ruins of Roman fortresses can be seen, both on the shores of the Sea and on the banks of the Danube. Similarly, in the middle of the country, from horizon to horizon, apart from the ruins of fortresses, so many natural and artificial mounds can be seen, that if we were to look at them as army graves, of which there are many, *we could truly say that the Romanian in Dobrudja is everywhere treading on the ruins of the greatness of his ancestors!* (our emphasis)".

The next visit of the Sovereign – proclaimed King in 1881, Romania being transformed into a kingdom at 14/26 March – will take place in Constanța, on September 10, 1889, accompanied by the crown prince Ferdinand; the city is visited (the Cathedral, the Greek Church, the Armenian Church, the Mosque, the City Hall, the schools, other institutions). "A long time has passed since I came to Dobrudja. My joy is all the greater, however, to find myself together with the heir presumptive of the Crown in your midst and to note the great progress made in the course of 10 years", the sovereign would confess at the respective gala lunch. After welcoming the presence of "our young navy" (represented by the ship 'Elisabeta'), Carol I concludes: "I raise this glass in honor of Dobrudja, so that this beautiful province, in which the Romanian sentiment took root in such a short time, may prosper and develop in peace and quiet, in the health of the townspeople of Constanta, who, by giving us such a brilliant and warm welcome, have shown us their love and devotion, for which I thank you with all my heart.

Long live Dobrudja and its port of Constanța"! (Lascu, 1999: 168).

The following year, on October 9/21, 1890, King Carol I will participate in the solemn laying of the foundation stone of the 'King Carol I' Bridge over the Danube, delivering a short speech in which he states that "I am happy that I was able to crown the first pillar of the bridge in front of such an imposing gathering and the population of Dobrudja, who ran from all sides to witness this work, which will forever link these two banks of the Danube, twinning interests and cementing the union between these two trunks of the Romanian State in a lasting and imperishable way" (Lămureanu, 2004: 121).

Five years later, the sovereign will witness the inauguration, on September 14, 1895, of the majestic lace arch over the Danube, the 'King Carol I' Bridge designed by Eng. Anghel Saligny). The festivities are impressive and truly popular (over 20,000 'souls' participate); during them, "the culmination of the celebration was the crossing of the bridge by the 15 locomotives, whose whistles, together with the sounds of the ships stationed in the port of Cernavoda, the booming of the cannons on the hill and the gunboats, the sound of trumpets, drums, military music and the acclamations of the crowd produced – the press of the time recorded – a concert impossible to say and describe" (Lascu, 1999: 201).

The King's response to the speeches revealed, among other things, the importance that the head of state attached to the economic prosperity of modern Romania: "Gathered here, on the shores of Dobrudja, the country united by the blood of our braves and forged again, through an iron chain with Romania, we celebrate an event eagerly awaited by the entire country, which will find a great resonance far beyond its borders. The completion of the bridge over the Danube, desired by Me for a quarter of a century, is today an accomplished fact and this towering work rises before us as a clear testimony of the strength of the Kingdom.

Human genius, in which the progress and strong momentum of Romania are reflected, has overcome all difficulties, has removed all obstacles, in order to execute this lasting and imperishable work, *which must show the world that the people are worthy of their beautiful calling at the mouths of the Danube and on the threshold of the East* (our emphasis).

Monuments are the living history of peoples; to this day, the traces of Trajan have not been erased. Who does not speak of his bridge at Severin? May God grant that the second bridge, established after thousands of years on the Lower Danube, may live for centuries to tell future generations, from generation to generation, *that only through sacrifices, struggles and steadfast work could the Romanian State be founded* (our emphasis).

I can be proud, however, that under My Reign this great bridge was conceived and completed by our engineers, which will attract a significant part of European trade to our railways, because today we control the shortest line between the northern seas and the countries of the East.

Let us now cast a glance further out to sea, onto this boundless waterway, where the countless paths of movement of the entire world intersect, which spread wealth among nations. Through the port of Constanța, the bridge over the Danube opens up this broad path for us, which will unexpectedly increase our commercial relations and ensure our maritime development" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 162-163).

The modernization work of Dobrudja will continue at this end of the 19th Century, the Romanian Kingdom experiencing, in its entirety, a significant development, especially in economic terms; a component that will become increasingly important for Romania over time will be the Port of Constanta, a work of considerable dimensions – for that era – towards which King Carol I constantly

showed his special concern. "Today's celebration has double importance – *he will say at the celebration of the beginning of the Port's works, on October 16, 1896* – because by laying the first stone of the new port of Constanța, we have also laid the foundation for our maritime development" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 176; Lascu, 1999: 213).

Until the official inauguration of the Port in 1909, the King would often be on the construction site, would be shown the plans, and would supervise the progress of the works. "The huge work of the Port, the works of the City Hall and especially the strengthening of the banks, were examined in detail by the great king and often his authorized word, placed where it was needed, smoothed out many of the difficulties that the accomplishment of these works encountered", reports a contemporary in 1914 (Lascu, 2018: 135).

The Romanian Navy also benefited from the support of the Head of State, he participated, on several occasions, in Constanța, in the consecration of ships, an occasion with which he reiterated the importance of the navy for the country's trade: "I raise my glass to a happy future of our merchant navy, as well as the military one, being certain that both, in fulfilling their duty, far from the country, will be animated by a single feeling, will be guided by only one thought: the Fatherland and national honor, and that on their ships, wherever they may be, the cry so dear to all will resound: «Long live Romania!»", said Carol I in 1898, at a banquet given on the ship «King Carol I» ([Carol I], 1939, II: 210).

No opportunity was missed to refer to Dobrudja and its inhabitants: "Thanking you warmly for the brilliant welcome with which we were greeted – *the King toasted in Constanța, on September 23, 1907, at the end of some military maneuvers*h – I wish the county and the city all happiness and that our great port may become a source of wealth for the country, ensuring its economic development.

To the health of the inhabitants of Dobrudja!

Hurray!" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 383).

In the first decade of the 20th Century, the Royal Family undertook several trips on the Danube, stopping at Tulcea, the Danube Delta, and Sulina.

One of these trips took place on May 6-7, 1908.

„Today, the Sovereigns are due to arrive, and from 7 a.m. onwards, there is great excitement on all the streets. All the mayors and municipal councilors have arrived from the county.

At 8 a.m., the passage of the schools begins, which are arranged in the places indicated in the program.

The officials gather at the reception pavilion erected at the pier.

In the morning, the monitors arrived in the port: *Ion Brătianu, Lascăr Catargiu, Mih. Cogălniceanu, Alex. Lahovari*, who anchor in front of the Romanian pontoon.

On the left bank of the Danube, the corvettes also arrived: *Maior Giurescu, Maior Const. Ene, Maior Șonțu Gheorghe, Maior Nicolae Ion, captains Lascar Bogdan, Valter Mărăcineanu and Romano Mihail*, as well as 4 gunboats. All of them dock on the

banks of the Danube. The entire city floats in greenery and tricolor, especially the streets where the royal procession will pass.

Almost all the houses are decorated with flags, garlands and carpets.

Everywhere you can see paintings representing the royal family. In the pavilion are the consular corps, the inspector of the European Commission, the communal council, members of the Chamber of Commerce, the agricultural inspector with the regional commission, the archpriest with the clergy, the Israeli cantor with his son and the hodja, members of the Israeli community and many other people. Also in the pavilion are the invited ladies as well as the committee of the regional Society 'Vatra Luminoasă' [The Luminous Hearth] .

It is 8:45 a.m. when the royal yacht appears, coming from Isaccea and having as its vanguard the ship 'Dunărea' and preceded by several commercial vessels and the Italian warship 'Galileo'. When the yacht enters the harbor range, the cannons of the monitors salute the royal ship with 21 shots. Music plays, endless urals start from the chests of thousands of citizens on the quay.

After the yacht makes its rounds, it docks amid delirious cheers at the splendidly decorated Romanian pier. On the pontoon, the King and Prince Carol are received by Mr. General Averescu, the Minister of War, who arrives in the morning with the monitors, as well as by General Culcer, the commander of the Dobrudja division. Also arriving with the royal yacht were Prime Minister Sturdza and Morțun, the Minister of Public Works, then the sovereign and Prince Carol review the company of honor, the societies, and the students at the high school, whose choir sang the royal anthem, and converse with the high school principal.

H.M. The King then comes to the reception pavilion where he is greeted by Mr. Sebastian Teodorescu, the mayor of the city, who presents him with the traditional chicken and salt, welcoming him to the land of Dobrudja. Mr. Prefect Bălțeanu who accompanied the Sovereign from Isaccea introduced the people in the pavilion with whom His Majesty spoke to each one separately.

H.M. The Queen being indisposed, remained on the yacht where the Ladies offered her bouquets of flowers, as did Mrs. Dr. Călinescu vice, the president of the regional society 'Vatra Luminoasă' who offered the Sovereign a splendid bouquet from the society. H.M. thanking her, he inquired about the progress of this society.

Upon leaving the pavilion, a former official named Sandovici presented the Sovereign with a petition. After this, H.M. The King, accompanied by Prince Carol and followed by a large cordon of carriages in which there were official persons, traveling along Carol, Elisabeta, and St. Nicolae streets to the cheers of the crowd, went to the city Cathedral where Father Niculescu, the county archpriest, officiated a Te-Deum. After this, with the same procession, the sovereign went to the Commemorative Monument of Re-annexation which he visited. There were over 100 veterans who had arrived from the county, and Major Emanoilescu, also a veteran, gave the Sovereign an enthusiastic speech. His Majesty spoke in part with several veterans.

Some of them gave the Sovereign a petition. The committee for the erection of the monument was also presented here. His Majesty the King took pictures with the officials and ministers and greatly admired the park that was built on the embankment of this monument. Then going down to the city, he went directly to the pier, from where, boarding the Royal boat, he visited the monitors off the Danube while cannons were fired from the ships' sides. After the review of the ships, the Royal boat also passed by the Italian ship «Galileo», which greeted the Sovereign's passage with several cannon shots. While the Sovereign was visiting the ships, Her Majesty the Queen received various delegations of citizens on board. The undersigned, as secretary of the 'Vatra Luminoasă' association, was also received by Her Majesty, thanking me warmly for the work we do to achieve the purpose of this society, promising that he will receive more blind people from our county in the colony in Bucharest.

After Her Majesty the King returns to the yacht, all the ministers take their seats on the ship, except for General Averescu together with the county prefect, after which the royal yacht, amidst the roar of cannons and the cheers of the crowd, makes the rounds and departs for Sulina (...) (xxx, 1908: 1).

Another moment with Constanța as host, with a special historical charge not only for the people of Dobrudja, was the inauguration, on September 26, 1909, of the Port of Constanța, an opportunity to highlight, on the part of the sovereign, the importance of the country's international commercial ties, the place of Dobrudja and the people of Dobrudja in the national whole. "We can rightly regard it (the Port of Constanța – our note) as a key factor in our economic prosperity and as a national pride. The Port of Constanța, with the help of our maritime service, has put us in constant and direct contact with foreign fairs and ports, especially with western Europe, which is the largest buyer of our national products.

The activity of this commercial center, which will certainly take place without damage to our Danube ports, will be *the true barometer of our economic development* (emphasis added).

Therefore, I believe that although the great works that have been carried out so far are only a beginning compared to what the future holds and that *Constanța will become in a short time, not too distant, one of the most important ports of the Black Sea* (our emphasis).

On this occasion, I cannot fail to note today – *continued King Carol I, explaining the importance of the political moment for the people of Dobrudja* – a close and close connection between this event and the entry of the people of Dobrudja into the full constitutional life of the country. Through this perfect embodiment of Dobrudja from the Romanian homeland, from whose bosom nothing can separate it, the goal of the ancient fighters for the domination of the Black Sea, the dream of the Old Mircea [cel Bătrân] Voievod and of Ștefan the Great [cel Mare], was fulfilled forever.

At the end of the Sovereign's response, he expressed his gratitude to the people of Dobrudja for the hospitality with which they greeted him each time: "With deep gratitude I thank everyone for the brilliant welcome with which I was greeted

by the city, as well as for the good wishes that were brought to me in such warm and flattering words, and I am happy that I have the pleasant opportunity to raise my glass to the ever-increasing prosperity of the port of Constanța and for the happiness of our dear people of Dobrudja" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 411-412; Lascu, 1999: 445-446).

Indeed, the inhabitants of Dobrudja had for some time benefited from even greater attention from the Romanian authorities, led by the King; he had indeed indicated to the Parliament, in the Royal Message [*Mesajul Regal*] of November 15, 1908 – when the opening of the annual session of the Legislative Bodies was marked – the need for the people of Dobrudja to be granted all political rights, namely to be able to participate in elections and have representatives in Parliament. "Yesterday marked thirty years since, at the head of the army, I set foot on the land of Dobrudja, regained through the blood of our brave soldiers and fallen in the war of independence. Since then, this part of Romania has gained a strong momentum. Through the national conscience through the great and fruitful works with which the Kingdom has continuously endowed it, it is today forever united with the motherland, through feelings of love and gratitude.

The time has come, however, to extend our constitutional regime to the counties of Constanța and Tulcea" ([Carol I], 1939, II: 395).

As a result, starting in 1912, the people of Dobrudja will send their representatives to Parliament (deputies and senators), the time up to this date being devoted to political and public debates on the constitutional translation of the King's instructions; initially, a restrictive law is adopted regarding the political rights granted to the people of Dobrudja and only through the energetic intervention of the Sovereign is this modified beneficially; the delegates of the inhabitants of Dobrudja presented themselves to the king with memoirs, and the king, "the only one who knew Dobrudja and the soul of his subjects better", intervened to amend the law "in accordance with the recommendation of the sovereign, who truly understood the superior interests of his state" – said Const. Venturatu, a resident of Hârșova, in the pages of the newspaper 'Dobrogea jună' in 1914 (Lascu, 2018: 137-138).

In 1913, the Southern part of Dobrudja was reunited with the actual body of the Romanian territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, the counties of Durostor and Caliacra being added to the other administrative components of the Old Kingdom.

In his constant concern for the destinies of the country, the sovereign visited, in May 1914, "the new territory annexed to Romania", at the end of the trip expressing his satisfaction "for the love with which we were greeted by the entire population, regardless of nationality or faith. The endless acclamations from the ancient city of Mircea the Elder, especially (Silistra – our note) have found a grateful echo in our hearts; my living wish is that this ancient city, so flourishing until a few centuries ago, will regain, together with the entire region that surrounds it, its former splendor, through a new surge of prosperity under My reign", it was stated in a Letter [*Scrisoare*] of the Sovereign addressed to Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu.

In just a few weeks, the King will be in Constanța for the last summer, when he receives the visit of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia (June 1, 1914). "We all remember how, during the preparations for receiving the Tsar, he regularly went to the Casino twice a day to personally inspect the progress of the works and to give himself a lot of instructions about what needed to be done. These visits – *a memoirist recorded in the 'Conservatorul Constanței', in the fall of 1914* –, almost unnoticed even by the visitors who walked along the embankment opposite the boulevard, he made them with the same simplicity and lack of etiquette that had made the great Captain the most beloved of the ordinary people of Constanța". Indeed, King Carol I came to Constanța several times a year, "without the boring pomp for a King, he crossed the city every day, almost alone in a carriage, to go to the port to the Queen's Pavilion and to return to the Palace, and we – *contemporaries testify* – had become so accustomed to this that the noisy manifestations from other parts were replaced by greetings full of respect and deep love, to which he responded with obvious pleasure".

The sovereign felt especially in his element when, often, he stopped – alone – in the classes and laboratories of the 'Mircea' Boys' High School: "In the last four years of his life, there was no spring in which this school did not have the honor and pride of a royal visit" (Lascu, 1999: 697).

As a sign of respect for the memory of King Carol I, the mayor of Constanța, Professor Virgil P. Andronescu, will propose to the Municipal Council, on November 4, 1914, the erection of a Monument and a Statue to the one who "showed his endless love, raising the port and the city to the height where it is, supporting our development needs with advice and deed, giving a clear indication of what we should be; we are obliged to give a clear proof of gratitude and, to this end, I propose that in our city we erect a grand monument to him, which will show the future, through his presence here, that our dominion at Sea is forever and that we knew how to raise our soul and heart to his great deed and thought" (Lascu, 1999: 691-693; 695-606).

... Unfortunately, today, the memory of the deserving Sovereign is not honored in proportion to his worthy deeds; the 1914 project never came to life, and later the establishment of a new form of state – the Republic – cast King Carol I into a shadow that should, today, be removed.

The Dobrudja people, especially – to whom King Carol I constantly manifested his attachment – must recover their historical values, the Captain of 1877 being given due honor (in Tulcea, there is a bust of the Carol II!); one of the large and well-managed communes of Dobrudja – such as Cumpăna or Comana, for example (I already showed, at the beginning of this material) – should dispute the primacy in bearing the name of Carol I, the issue being, of course, not political sympathies, but national gratitude. And perhaps such an initiative should be taken into account as soon as possible, because, in the fall, we mark (as I said once again, in 1998) 120 years since the Reintegration of Dobrudja into the Romanian State, Carol I being – alongside Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu (and a Dobrudjan locality should bear his name!) and Mihail Kogălniceanu – one of the fathers of Romanian Dobrudja.

The Travels of King Ferdinand and Queen Maria in Northern Dobrudja (Danube Delta).

Queen Maria in Balchik (Southern Dobrudja/Oadrilater)

The successor of the first King of Romania, his nephew Ferdinand I (August 24, 1865-July 20, 1927; King: 1914-1927) also made – together with his wife, the Princess, then Queen Maria (October 29, 1875-July 18, 1938) – several visits and ‘royal journeys’ to Dobrudja.

Thus, in September 1915, the new Sovereigns were guests of the Tulcea people, they visited the new archaeological excavations at the Histria Fortress, as well as the Altân Tepe copper mine (Ciocoiu, 2022: 118-120), and in the 1920s they also made visits, one of which (from May 1926) was described at length in the queen’s diary: “Both [Monasteries] Cocos and Celic-Dere are located in a beautiful wooded valley, which you would not expect to find in Dobrudja. It is quite strange that most of them are lime trees, and it is so rare to see a lime forest. There are other beautiful varieties of trees among them, a variety of pear trees that I do not remember seeing anywhere else and about which the skilled Colonel «Flora» said that they originated in the Caucasus.

The old nuns of Celic-Dere had, of course, hoped that we would visit them, and we found everything ready and decorated. Later, we had lunch in the garden, at the guesthouse, a beautiful, large white building. We had brought cold food with us. Nicky came too, and we were in a very good mood.

After we had eaten, we went down to the little Russian-style church and were ceremoniously welcomed by all the nuns, a group of women dressed in black. Half of them is Russian. A Te Deum was sung among many icons and candles. The church is made of wood and full of icons of all kinds, but only one is worth noting, the old one, brought from Mount Athos, representing the death of the Virgin Mary. (...)

Our visits to this remote corner are of course rare. I have been here once before, before 1915, and it left me with a beautiful memory. They [the nuns] were very sad that His Majesty did not come to this distant place of theirs.

We met His Majesty in a small town called Niculițel and returned home by another road, partly through the beautiful forest with such different and beautiful trees, in which everything was of a superb green because it had rained very much everywhere. We stopped at a place where we found some delightful wild flowers although, in fact, it is not yet their season” (Ciocoiu, 2022: 134).

King Ferdinand’s last trip to Dobrudja took place in October 1926, in the Danube Delta, on a hunting trip: “And here, as in all parts, His Majesty is greeted by a large crowd of citizens, almost all Russian fishermen, who with their simple, but all the more moving manner, led the distinguished guests in all directions. Inside the hall [of the fishing town of Vâlcov, the Venice of the East, on the cold stones, were lined up about 30 pieces of cod of various sizes, recently caught and which in their huge bellies contained the eggs, which in cod and sturgeon are called black roe” (Ciocoiu, 2022: 138-139).

Queen Maria's connection with the town of Balchik [*Balcic*] is well known (Matache, *passim*) – the favorite area of Romanian artists between the wars (Păuleanu, *passim*), the small town on the Silver Coast of Romania (the Black Sea maritime facade of Southern Dobrogea, incorporated into Romania in 1913) –, starting from her first visit, in 1924; here, according to her wish and instructions, the well-known summer residence – the Lonely Nest (Tenha Juvah) [*Cuibul Singuratic*] or the Balchik Castle – is built.

Michael I, Presence on the Romanian Coast

Another member of the Royal Family, the son of King Carol II, Mihai, Grand Duke of Alba Iulie (1921-2017; king: 1927-1930, 1940-1947) will be present, as a child, almost every year in Mamaia and Constanța: “Mihai's seaside vacations were hosted, until 1927, by the royal pavilion in the Port of Constanța, a pavilion that under the influence of Queen Maria had become the ‘Queen's Nest’. In the summer and autumn of 1926, coming to closely supervise the interior design of the residence in Mamaia, the Queen stopped for a few days at the pavilion in the port, enjoying the presence of her grandson: ‘We got off our train to have breakfast in the pavilion, where little Micky is, having a cold. But he was cheerful, full of fun and in a good mood, happy that we were with him’”, records Queen Maria in her notes (Cornea, 2021¹: 229).

His presence is recorded in the pages of the press, including during the 1930s, when his father was king; he also accompanied him to the Romanian Navy Day ceremonies or other public events that took place on the Romanian coast.

“One of the most beautiful summers that Michael spent in Mamaia seems to have been, without a doubt, the one in 1928, when his grandmother, Queen Maria, Aunt Ileana and Sitta's Greek relatives were with him for a few days. Always present with Michael, Princess Elena dedicated all her time and energy to his education, as King Michael himself confessed: ‘My mother, Princess Elena of Greece, was the one who took care of my education during the first years. She preferred the formation of character according to the English system, which was much more flexible, to the strict German discipline’. Princess Elena seemed to enjoy this little corner of heaven equally, surrounded by her mother, sisters, cousins, and grandchildren from abroad, even if she sometimes drew the reproaches of Queen Maria, dissatisfied that ‘the Greek relatives continued to swarm around Elena's house, forming two royal camps and transforming Michael, the future King of Romania, into a little Greek’. Even so, the preserved photographs betray the happiness and tranquility that reigned in the small house by the sea...” (Cornea, 2021¹: 235).

King Carol II in Constanța. Official Speeches

During the ten years of his reign, King Carol II (1893-1953; king: 1930-1940) visited Constanța every year – preferably in the summer, on occasion of the celebrations for Romanian Navy Day. Each time, he gave speeches in which he emphasized the need to modernize the military and merchant fleet – or the city of

Constanța, including the construction of a royal residence here or participation in various inaugurations –, as can be seen from the examples below.

The Reply of His Majesty the King

Mr. Rear Admiral,

I believe it is almost unnecessary to renew to you, on this day of great celebration for the country and of special celebration and recollection for the Romanian Royal Navy, the love I bear to this element of national defense.

Out of conviction, and on the other hand out of a love that binds me to My navy by the fact that I had the good fortune to stand at its head for several years, I am urged at any moment to take special care of it. In our naval development, on the one hand there is a financial issue – which none of us can consider ourselves completely in control of – and on the other hand there is the issue of personnel training, both from a technical and tactical point of view, and especially from a point of view of the seafaring spirit.

I was prompted by this thought when I felt the duty of sending you that amount, to allow the base ship to be transformed – perhaps definitively – into a training ship, so that it can take our young generation of sailors on the waves of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

For, admitting the old French saying ‘c’est en forgeant qu’on devient forgeron’, only by sailing can you become a navigator. The results of the several voyages that have been made in recent years have been for Me the most obvious proof that in the personnel of the Romanian crew there is that spirit and that great love, without which no navy can exist.

I can assure My navy today that I take care of them and that as soon as there are possibilities, another effort will be made which will have to be decided to include two parts.

The first part is that beautiful issue, which has been dragging on for several years and which I am convinced that My government will do its utmost to resume and bring to a successful conclusion, is the issue of the naval base, a base without which our navy cannot survive. The second part, more difficult, is the increase in the number of units, so that, even if today there are difficulties, even if today the possibility of fulfilling their mission in peacetime, that is, war preparation, is reduced to the simplest expression, I hope that My beloved sailors can look to the future with perfect confidence, assuring them that I will be the one who will always watch over and defend their interests and those of our navy.

With this thought, I raise my glass asking you to shout with Me ‘Long live our navy!’ (Prolonged cheers). ([Carol II], Răspunsul Majestății Sale, 1933: 1).

Visits of His Majesty the King to Constanța

Constanța, 17 August

Yesterday, after the banquet in Mamaia, the Sovereign visited the city hall of Constanța, where Mayor Grigorescu presented him with the plans and projects for the modernization of the city.

Accompanied by Mayor H. Grigorescu, he Sovereign then visited the municipal casino, leaving on foot to the port, to the royal train. The Sovereign made some observations, including the extension of the seaside boulevard to Tataia, the paving of the casino terrace and the activation of the works to consolidate the banks. H.M. the King expressed at the same time his desire that a bust of Queen Elizabeth be erected on the seaside boulevard [it was placed in 1937, work of the Dobrudjan sculptor Ion Jalea], on an anacramente extending into the sea.

At parting, he promised Mayor Grigorescu that he would take the city under royal protection.

AT THE EXPORT SLAUGHTERHOUSE

In the morning, M.S. The King went to the export slaughterhouse whose construction works are in progress – the Sovereign, accompanied by Dr. Alex. Bâcleșanu, general veterinary zootechnical inspector, inspected in detail the works carried out so far, taking a close interest and receiving explanations from Mr. Bâcleșanu. On this occasion, the Sovereign made observations on the completion works and gave plans in this regard. He also inquired about our cattle economy, the valorization of animal products, export, etc. (xxx Vizitele, 1934: 10).

After the Visit of His Majesty the King to Constanța

The Sovereign Took an Interest in the Needs of the City.- A Royal Residence in Constanța

Constanța, August 19

The traditional celebrations of the sea and navy have always been honored with the high presence of His Majesty the King. This year, however, an unusual event occurred on occasion of the festivities. Whereas until now the Sovereign would leave the city in the evening, or at most the next day, with the exception of last year, when he was detained here by the illness of Grand Voevod Michael, this year His Majesty stayed in Constanța for three days, showing from the beginning a special interest in Constanța and the problems related to its prosperity and development, and especially our seaport,

Together with Minister Sasu, Mayor Horia Grigorescu and the assistant mayors Vulcan and Huhulescu, His Majesty the King visited, on the third day, the construction sites and works in the city, including the quarries and the export slaughterhouse, even going to the city hall, casino, etc.

On this occasion, the Sovereign made fair observations of the plans presented by Mr. Mayor of the municipality Grigorescu. What's more, Mr.

Grigorescu was received by the Sovereign at the Royal Pavilion in the port, where he presented all the plans related to the transformation of the port and the city.

For 2 and a half hours, the discussions around these future problems lasted. The problem of water and the consolidation of the banks, which promise to soon make Constanța an island, the sewerage, the arrangement of the beaches and especially the transformation and widening of the Mamaia beach, whose plans were completely changed following the observations made by the Sovereign, did not escape His Majesty the King. Upon Mayor Grigorescu's observation that everything that was done during his mayoralty was achieved from the income brought in by taxes on oil, taxes that are intended to be passed on to the municipality of Ploești, the Sovereign promised his protection of the city, even expressing his desire to make Constanța a royal residence, just as King Carol I had there before the war (xxx După vizita, 1934: 4).

Inauguration of the Export Slaughterhouse in Constanța
The Course of the Ceremonies.- Speech by Mr. V.P. Sassu, Minister of Agriculture.-
Speech by His Majesty King Carol II

As we announced in the previous issue of the newspaper, the solemn inauguration of the export slaughterhouse in the city of Constanța took place on Sunday. On the eve, the members of the government and guests from the capital arrived by train at 10.40 pm. His Majesty the King arrived in the town at 10.10 am by a royal train, pulling directly in front of the 'Queen's Nest' in the port. When he got off the train, members of the government and the heads of civil and military authorities were present. Mr. Scarlat Huhulescu, the Mayor [guarantor] of the municipality, welcomed the Sovereign with the traditional bread and salt, wishing him a 'welcome'. A company from the Royal Navy gave the honors and the military band played the Royal Anthem. The Sovereign, accompanied by members of the government and officials, then got into the car, heading for the slaughterhouse.

Constanța in celebration

Since the day before, Constanța had put on the chosen clothes for the celebration. The honor that the Sovereign does to the city is rewarded by the participation of thousands of citizens. All the breath in a tumult of joy stirred at the command that commanded 'Honor to the King'. On the highway that leads from the city barrier to the seaside resorts, right up to the entrance to the slaughterhouse, a carpet of grass was laid. 500 m in front of the monumental edifice, a triumphal arch awaited H.M. the King. Arriving in front of it, H.M. cut the tricolor ribbon. Throughout the journey, the Sovereign and the entire convoy were accompanied by endless cheers, impressive declarations of love from thousands of citizens. The city streets, the windows of the houses, decorated with greenery and national barks, were bustling with people. The tricolor everywhere, as on great holidays.

(...)

Speech of His Majesty the King

His Majesty the King gave the following speech:

"In the economic development program of our country, the slaughterhouse that we are inaugurating today is a key pawn, meant so that, through its channel, the products of our soil can be transported across the borders. As the Minister has shown, it will play a primary role.

For Me, however, it also means another stage in our development, it means that we have all understood that agriculture, as it has been carried out until today, can no longer be carried out from today onwards.

Living on raw materials is no longer possible.

We must not only be consumers of our products, but we must become transformers of these products, to further elevate and strengthen our economy.

With these feelings, I came with full satisfaction, especially to inaugurate this slaughterhouse today, which I wish, with all My heart, to be what it should be, that is, a fulcrum of our national economy".

HM THE KING VISITS THE NEW SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The Sovereign then visited the halls of the new slaughterhouse. The reception commission composed of Messrs. Cicero Gorciu, G. Ionescu-Brăila, I. Fianu, C. Grigoriu, Băcleșeanu, and Florea Stănciulescu gave the Sovereign the necessary clarifications, revealing the systems perfected by the sacrifice and conditioning of the various products, which, apart from meat, remain from the animals.

*

Upon exiting the great hall, little Elisabeta Lupu handed the Sovereign a bouquet of flowers.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE

At the entrance to the great hall, there is a bronze inaugural plaque fixed to the right wall, at the head of which stand face to face, the figures of His Majesty King Carol II and Prince Mircea the Elder, between which appear the royal insignia and those of Dobrogea.

The founding inscription follows (xxx Inaugurarea, 1936: 11).

The Great Maritime Celebrations in Constanța

The Banquet on the Ship 'King Carol'. - Speech of His Majesty the King

The Speech of His Majesty the King

Mr. Minister, Gentlemen,

It is also an unspeakable joy for Me to be able to celebrate this Navy Day under the new auspices of a State body, which will have the exclusive care of this branch of national activity, the new Ministry of Air and Navy.

In My speech last year, I indicated this necessity as one of My long-cherished desires. Today I am happy that it has been fulfilled and to note that it has begun to bear fruit.

This ministry, which began modestly and which I have the pleasure of announcing today, will be completed by the transfer of the direction of ports and water communications from the Ministry of Communications to that of the Navy, will be called upon, I am sure, to strengthen and develop our navy, as I have conceived it, as a unique organism of national prosperity.

Today, we can say that we are celebrating for the first time, here, the celebration of the unified navy of the Romanian country. We are not talking here about the Merchant Navy and the Navy of War, but we are talking about the Navy, and it is not the celebration of navies, but the celebration of sailors.

The sailor spirit, which requires a special education, which makes anyone who has passed through the Navy become and remain a conscious citizen and useful to his country, is the spirit that I want to reign in both the Merchant Navy and the Navy of War.

Our navy has gone through countless hardships, it has gone, I can say, through years of sorrow. Starting today, I affirm – and I will take care that this is a reality – that our navy has stepped onto the path of prosperity, of its increase and strengthening.

The attempts that have been made, modestly, today are beginning to develop more and more, in the realm of the merchant navy, the acquisition of those first ships a few years ago, and next year the bringing of two new passenger ships, which will bear the names of “Transylvania” and “Bessarabia”, in order to carry thus the pride of our united provinces across the seas and lands.

This development, which began as a trade marine, will continue from today – I can affirm – also with the war navy.

It is an expensive navy, yet we need it.

What specific ships will be purchased I do not have the possibility to indicate here.

But I can affirm again that our navy will increase in the years to come.

I also have the joy of announcing that an old project – which I know is dear to all sailors’ souls –, the famous naval base, will begin to be realized.

This is the good news that, on this holiday, I can bring to My sailors, to whom – I think it is almost superfluous to repeat – My soul is so strongly attached and who can count on My full care at any moment.

With all the love of My soul I raise my glass to the increase and strengthening of the navy and especially to the health of My sailors.

(The last words of His Majesty the King were covered by loud applause and ovations.) (xxx Marile serbări, 1937: 1).

Speech of His Majesty the King at the Navy Celebrations.

At the Navy Celebrations, Which Took Place on Tuesday, in Constanta, His Majesty King Carol II Delivered the Following Speech at the Banquet on the Ship 'Bessarabia'

MR. MINISTER, DEAR COMRADES,

The love I bear to our Navy is no secret to anyone, a love that this year I wanted to affirm even more by enrolling My beloved Son in the ranks of the Royal Navy. As you said very well, this past year was a difficult one for our Navy; It was a year that marked real progress, both from a material and a moral point of view.

Our entire conception began to move towards the idea that the navy is not just a toy, because the navy really plays a primary role in our organization, both from the point of view of national defense and from that of our prestige and commercial expansion.

For me, there is one fact that dominates all the others: the arrival of the new "Training Ship".

I have spoken in past years of that famous spirit that created our navy today. Through the arrival of the new ship "Mircea", I hope to see a renewal of the spirit, a strengthening of the seafaring faith and a possibility that our sailors, sailing more on the waters, can affirm their capacity and virtues before the whole world.

From the point of view of national defense, the efforts that have been made to equip the navy show that those who have the responsibility of affairs in this country are determined to strengthen it – to strengthen it as much as our means allow – alongside its big sister, the land army.

Closely linked, the three elements of national defense, the land army, the navy and the air force, are aware that, on the great day of the call, they will be at their duty with all their souls. The example of those of the past, of those whom we have had the mind to commemorate today, is a guarantee to us of this soul and this impetus of all the defenders of the borders.

This defense of the borders, which must be in the soul of every Romanian, not only of those who wear the military uniform, a faith of steel, must form an unshakable rock of all Romanian souls, that what is Romanian cannot be given, that what is Romanian will be defended, and, more than this, if someone is a lover of peace, he must know that the borders once furrowed, cannot be changed without a danger of world cataclysm. I know that this is the faith of all those true patriots, who live within our natural borders.

I know that this is also the faith of our sailors, who will know, the moment we are threatened, to do their full duty, and with the thought that, by defending our borders, we are defending the entire human civilization.

With this thought, bowing before those who sacrificed their lives for the glory and future of our nation, I raise my glass to those who tomorrow, if necessary, will defend it, and if not, will always know how to keep the Romanian flag and prestige high and proud.

Long live the Royal Navy! (Prolonged cheers and applause) (xxx Cuvântarea, 1939: 1).

Signs of Our Gratitude in Perpetuating the Memory of Our Ancestors

At the beginning of the 1990s, in Constanța publications, I sketched a few pages – among the first, after the Second World War, in the Dobrudja area – about the personality and place in the history of Romanians (Lascu, 1991: 3) and Dobrudja (Lascu, 1991¹: 3) of Ion C. Brătianu (1821-1891) (when I had the chance to organize and open a photo-documentary exhibition: “as far as we know, the only event of this kind initiated in the country on the occasion of the 170th anniversary of his birth and the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of the great Romanian patriot” – Lascu, 1991²:); respectively, a few years later, about the connections of Ionel Brătianu (1864-1927) with the area of Romania at the Sea; also in that year, the proposal was made “that the memory of the great political man of modern Romania, Ion C. Brătianu, be immortalized by attributing his name to a locality in Constanța County” (Lascu, 1993: 2); and in May 1998, we pointed out that “Dobrudja, especially – to whom King Carol I constantly manifested his attachment –, must recover their historical values, giving the Captain of 1877 the due honor; one of the large and well-managed communes of Dobrudja – such as Cumpăna or Comana, for example – should dispute the primacy in bearing the name of Carol I, the issue being, of course, not political sympathies, but national gratitude”.

Usually, in a democratic state, in which the components of civil society constitute its skeleton, the initiatives to reveal the personality of some ancestors, fellow citizens with special merits in various fields, fall not so much to the state – as in the case of a totalitarian regime – but to various categories of citizens and apolitical, socio-cultural or even administrative institutions. That is why, a year ago, the Asociația Cultural-Istorică Dobrudjană „România de la Mare” [Dobrudjan Cultural-Historical Association “Romania by the Sea”] from Constanța proposed, in the pages of this daily newspaper, that every year, on November 23 – the day the civil and military authorities entered the city, in 1878 – *Ziua Recunoștinței Constanțenilor* [the Day of Gratitude of the People of Constanța] be marked under the perpetual reminder IN MEMORIAM ILLUSTRUM CIVIUM TOMITANORUM, a proposal that unfortunately did not find the expected echo from the municipal authorities of Constanța. The only manifestations as such were limited to the Association adding four memorial plaques to the emotional heritage of the Citadel as well as to the launch, also in *Cuget liber newspaper*, of a vain appeal for the erection of the bust of the first prefect of Constanța County (1878-1881), Remus N. Opreanu (xxx 1992: 40).

We therefore take the liberty of continuing to sensitize the factors of power, having the certainty that the public opinion of Dobrudja – in particular the people of Constanța – is in consensus with the need for the ancestors to be honored in this corner of the Romanian country at the level of a contemporary civic spirit, of

European extraction, so much proclaimed otherwise. First, we reiterate the proposal that the undersigned previously made in an institutionalized county framework, namely that the memory of the great political man of modern Romania, *Ion C. Brătianu*, be immortalized by attributing his name to a locality in Constanța. At the appropriate time, we argued that the best choice would be the commune of 23 August, which, however, was assigned the so-called Unirea name. We express the hope that a patriotic mayor will be found whose locality will be proud of the name of one of the founders of modern Romania, as was done to Cuza Vodă, Nicolae Bălcescu, Mihail Kogălniceanu and Remus Opreanu – personalities who had such a beneficial influence on national and local history during the time of Ion C. Brătianu.

On the other hand, in 1990, on the occasion of the first celebration of National Day, a proposal was also made that streets in Constanța should bear the names of great patriots who identified themselves with the realization of the ideal of national unity, a proposal that was also appropriated at the time, but which was not put into practice, for reasons, we like to believe, purely bureaucratic and technical. This is why we believe that the current Local Council, the mayor would have nothing to object to some arteries in the city (at that time they were also nominated – Poporului Street, the Prelungirea [Extension] of 1 Mai Boulevard, portions of Aurel Vlaicu Boulevard) perpetuating the memory of some symbolic figures of the perpetrators of the Great Union, representing both the historical provinces and the Old Kingdom – namely *Iuliu Maniu*, *Pantelimon Halippa*, *Iancu Flondor*, *Take Ionescu*, and *Alexandru Averescu*.

It would have been, on the part of the people of Constanța, another testimony of their respect for the sacrifices of their ancestors, instilling in the younger generations, and in this reparative way – with significant civic and moral implications – the feeling of belonging to a history with rich patriotic traditions, in which personal sacrifices were put at the service of strengthening the unity of the Nation, of the prosperity of the Romanian State. It would be yet another reminder of some dominant aspects of Romanian history in a Europe increasingly concerned with recovering the national values of each people in the perspective of integration into a vast family, in which each member can rightly be proud of their exceptional personalities of European dimensions.

Ion C. Brătianu and Dobrudja

As I have shown, Dobrudja – this ancient Romanian province between the Danube and the Sea – returned to the territorial space of our state after the War of Independence, a direct result of the sacrifices and heroism of the young national army on the anti-Ottoman battlefield, but also – equally – of a favorable international (European) context, which was correctly intuited by the government of King Carol I, respectively by Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu (Cantacuzino, 2014: *passim*; Todea, 2011: *passim*; Lascu, 1991: 1, 3, 1991²: 3).

Indeed, in the years 1877-1878, Ion C. Brătianu had – alongside other politicians, including Mihail Kogălniceanu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time – a political attitude equally permeated by patriotism and a sense of reality, the issue of Dobrudja (closely linked to that of Bessarabia, Eastern part of Moldova incorporated in 1812 into the Russian Empire) being widely debated in Parliament, in the press, and in diplomatic conciliations. During parliamentary debates, Ion C. Brătianu repeatedly supported the need to pursue a pragmatic policy, which would take into account the attitude of the European Powers, favorable to Russia's territorial expansion towards the Danube Mouths, the recognition of Independence itself being conditioned by the cession of the three Bessarabian counties in the north of the Delta: under these conditions, when the balance of power was visibly tilted in favor of Russia, the defense and promotion of Romania's national interests required the reintegration of Dobrudja within the borders of the Country, Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu bringing historical, strategic, and political arguments before the members of the Legislative Bodies, some of whom did not understand the significance of the reintegration of Dobrudja into the Motherland.

In Ion C. Brătianu's vision, Romania's historical right to the territory between the Lower Danube and the Black Sea appears to be indubitable, undisputable. Being a long historical period in the path of Asian invasions, this territory colonized by Trajan belonged to the Romanians who "drove the Tatars and possessed Dobrudja", the Bulgarian rule being random. "I challenge anyone to come up with a single document to prove that Dobrudja was part of the Bulgarian state. Turkey came at the beginning of the 15th century to take it from us with the sword and now that it has been taken back from Turkey, it has been taken again with the help of Romania's arm. Let us not be told that Dobrudja belonged to Bulgaria – said Ion C. Brătianu in September 1878, from the tribune of the Romanian Senate; WE POSSESSED IT WITH OUR BLOOD, WE LOST IT WITH THE SWORD AND NOW IT HAS RETURNED TO US AGAIN WITH THE SWORD!" (Brătianu, 1932: 102-103).

Among the arguments with pragmatic value invoked by the Prime Minister in favor of Dobrudja, the one regarding the necessity of the country's access to the sea (after the loss of the three counties in the northern Danube Delta) is pertinent, because "by taking Dobrudja we open a gate through which we can relate to the whole world and to the West, towards which you say you have all your aspirations" (he was addressing those who feared the expansion of Russia's influence, by accepting Dobrudja). He was convinced of the strategic importance of Dobrudja for Romania's defense against the Slavic neighbors who surrounded it to the northeast and south, as well as for the stronger imposition of the Romanian State, having Dobrudja, before the European Great Powers: "Only then can Romania be of European interest, when we have the mouths of the Danube in our hands. But when we do not have Dobrudja – *warned Ion C. Brătianu* – we will not have the mouths of the Danube and our country will no longer represent any European interest, then the first foreigner to come will

play his horse in Romania, according to his liking and those who have always wanted to swallow us will rule over the will of the Romanians”.

Ion C. Brătianu showed a constant interest in the economic development of Dobrudja, in improving the lives of its inhabitants. He started from the premise that “gentlemen, the lungs, the mouth through which Romania will breathe and breathe is the Romanian seaport, Chiustengea and Chiustengea will also be the fortress of Romania’s defense: with it we will have to relate to the whole world, through it we will have the greatest means of communication for our trade, especially when the neighboring powers will try to close our gates”. The pragmatic politician was also a lucid visionary, when he stated that “Dobrudja will be not only the garden of Romania, but of the whole of Europe, if only we were active and courageous”, and “Constanța is destined to become one of the first and best ports of the Black Sea”. In 1882, when the issue of buying back the railway line between Constanța and Cernavodă from the English company that had built it in the period 1858-1860 was raised, Ion C. Brătianu highlighted the multiple advantages for the Romanian State, for the wholesalers of the real estate, for this railway line to be bought back: “I am convinced that the railway to Constanța will develop our economic interests and will attract a large part of the traffic not only of the transports made in the East, but also of that from the West and that the traffic will increasingly grow more”.

Ion C. Brătianu also had notable concerns in the sphere of the administrative organization of the new region, noting, in 1883, that “there is no State in the world that has done more for an annexed province than we have done for Dobrudja”, a fact recognized “by the opinion of all the statesmen in Europe”. In his opinion, there were two causes that led to the undeniable progress in the modernization of Dobrudja – the sending here of honest and experienced senior civil servants and the granting by the state of an economic and fiscal regime favorable to the idea of progress: “we occupied Dobrudja with all our might, we gave it a lot of advantages; not only did we send the most distinguished, the most capable and the most honest people there, but we did not subject the people of Dobrogea to any taxes for years, while the poor Romanian villagers (from the rest of the counties of the country – ed.) paid taxes and heavy taxes to support Dobrudja” – declared Ion C. Brătianu in the Assembly of Deputies in November 1883. And here too, in February 1879, he had supported the acute need to help the people of Dobrudja, by opening a credit by the government “to come to the aid of the suffering people of Dobrudja. It is beyond our power to let those people die of hunger, who because of the war left their homes, and today, returning to their homes, have found nothing at home”.

Regarding the relationship between the native Romanian population and the foreign ones, Ion C. Brătianu has an honest historical vision, full of truthfulness: “In Dobrudja there are some Bulgarian colonies smaller than the colonies in Bessarabia, which proves that the main population of Dobrudja are Romanians, and not the Bulgarians who came later and settled here as colonists” – he said in September 1878. As for the native population, Ion C. Brătianu declared before the

deputies “that in Dobrudja we will not find any resistance. Have faith in the manhood of the Romanians, that they will know how to make a free Romania out of a country that was our ancestors’, out of a rich country that provides us with the mouths of the Danube” (Lascu, 2018: 142-143).

Indeed, the decades that followed proved Ion C. Brătianu’s premonition regarding the transformation of Dobrudja into a province with modern institutions and infrastructures, the interest of the Romanian State combined with the work of the Dobrudjans catapulting this province of the Country from a specifically oriental backwardness to a development typical of the end of the 19th century. This is why, upon his passing, on May 4, 1891, the pain of the Dobrudjans is natural, through the disappearance of Ion C. Brătianu, the Romanian region between the Danube and the Sea losing not only a former prime minister of the state among the most capable, but also a true father, co-author – together with Mihail Kogălniceanu and Prince Carol I – of the return of Dobrudja to Romania, of its reintegration into the natural area of the unitary evolution of the Romanian nation; thus, the sorrowful lines written from little town Ostrov by Elisa V. Pius in May 1891 appear all the more understandable and justified: “The Romanians of Dobrudja shed on the venerated tomb of the great patriot Ion C. Brătianu streams of endless tears, deep and inconsolable regrets, leaving History, this impartial judge of nations, to restore to him what human pride had tried to suppress” (Lascu, 1991³: 3).

Ionel Brătianu and Dobrudja

130 years ago (written material in 1994) (Lascu, 1994: 1,6), on August 20, 1864, saw the light of day the eldest son of Ion C. Brătianu – *Ion (Ionel) I.C. Brătianu* (Scurtu, 192: *passim*; Scurtu, Cojocaru, 2017: *passim*); Todea, 2014: *passim*; Noica, 2017: *passim*) –, a prominent personality and reader of modern Romania, a patriot from the pașoptist generation, whose name is linked to fundamental acts in the prosperity of our country in the second half of the last century.

Upon his death, in 1891, the leadership of the National-Liberal Party was taken over by his brother, Dimitrie Brătianu, and after his death, the following year, Dimitrie A. Sturdza was elected president.

The latter would co-opt, in 1897, as a member of the government led by him, for the first time, Ionel Brătianu, as Minister of Public Works (he was an engineer by training), which would constitute the beginning of one of the most prodigious political districts in Romania in the first third of our century.

A career that would be crowned – and would give it truly historical dimensions – through his subsequent activity as Prime Minister of Romania, in several periods: December 1908-December 1910, January 1914-January 1918, November 1918-September 1919, January 1922-March 1926. Starting in January 1909, Ion I.C. Brătianu was also elected president of the P.N.L., which he would lead with undisputed authority until his death – which occurred unexpectedly, on November 24, 1927, due to a “streptococcal angina with septicemia”.

Thus, prematurely, one of the most prominent men of our history passed away, the political personality whose unsullied patriotism guided him throughout his entire activity, his public conduct being forever offered as an example to those of our fellow citizens who take responsibility for the affairs of the City and the destinies, in general, of the Nation: "You are, gentlemen, the representatives of a people who are proud of their past and who must have great confidence in their future. Do not diminish the role that they must have in the world; be as modest as possible for yourself, do not be modest for the people you represent" – he addressed the parliamentarians in December 1919.

As for his father, for Ionel Brătianu, Dobrudja represented a corner of the Country for which he had a special affection. He visited it for the first time in 1879 "when, as a child, I accompanied my father to Tulcea who was making, as prime minister, his first official visit to these places. The evocation of this memory produces in me, as you can easily imagine", he confessed in a toast delivered in Tulcea, on September 20, 1910, a deep emotion.

For Ionel Brătianu, Dobrudja represents an old Romanian territory, which, in 1878, had been regained "through the victory of the Romanian armies", he is being aware that, in Dobrudja, "apart from historical rights, we also represent the element of culture and progress". As Minister of Public Works, Ion I.C. Brătianu pleads for the state to take over, in management, the construction works of the Port of Constanța, in 1899; the private entrepreneur – the Frenchman Hallier – by not honoring his contract, caused damage to the Romanian State, a reason for an energetic intervention by its authorities, led by the Minister of Public Works – Ion I.C. Brătianu.

In the same capacity, as a member of the Government, he pleads for the modernization of our Maritime Fleet, requesting Parliament to vote on credits in this regard, both for the purchase of ships (boats – as he called them), and for the training of navigation personnel abroad, with the idea of giving up the services of "foreign boat captains", so that "little by little we will introduce elements taken from the state navy, that is, Romanian elements", and "gradually we will seek to have only Romanian elements" – he expressed, in the Chamber, on May 6, 1898, the exigency of a national imperative of the era.

Towards the end of the first decade in 20th century], the issue of granting all constitutional political rights to the Dobrudjans would become very topical; on the one hand, the situation in the Balkans was deteriorating, on the other hand, the civic maturity of the Dobrudjans demanded the resolution of a constitutional provisionality that had lasted since 1878 (the Dobrudjans had no representatives in Parliament – until 1912). Highlighting, on December 13, 1908 – in the Response ([Brătianu], 2018: 698-720) to the traditional Message of the King, at the annual opening of the new Parliament's session –, the internal imperatives and the complexity of the international situation, the Minister of the Interior Ion I.C. Brătianu (and Prime Minister from December 27, 1908) pointed out that "We are not a Balkan State, *neither geographically nor politically* (our emphasis)".

As a result of granting political rights to the Dobrudjans, starting with 1908-1909, the foundations were laid – in Constanța and Tulcea – of national party organizations, Ion I.C. Brătianu would be present in Constanța in October 1910, when the National-Liberal Club was inaugurated; later, the speech delivered at the general assembly of the Constanța liberals, on November 20, 1911, was developed on the idea of revealing the liberal doctrine ‘By Ourselves’ [*Prin noi înșine*], of a party that “seeks to strengthen our (rectus – the Country [*Țara*]) in the economic realm, in order to be as little as possible – and to end up not being at all – tributary to others. He tends to *value our work and capital* (our emphasis). The former and future prime minister does not miss the opportunity to touch the local patriotism of those present, promising that “We [the liberals] want to make Constanța *a center of light and prosperity that will reflect like a lighthouse, far and wide, on the other shores of the Black Sea, Romanian life and civilization* (emphasis added)”.

And on another occasion, Ion I.C. Brătianu in Constanța: thus, on December 1, 1913, he pleads for the success of the social reforms projected by the P.N.L., confessing, in front of the “big landowners in Dobrudja”, that “there are *few Romanians across the Danube who are more connected to Dobrudja than to me* (our emphasis)”; here, however, is the text of the speech delivered before the liberal leaders in Constanța: “There are few Romanians across the Danube who are more connected to Dobrogea than I am.

I could say, in any case, that there is none from my generation, because we were still children when, during the first visit that Ion Brătianu made to Dobrogea, then re-established as Romanian, I had the happiness of accompanying him.

Since then, a secret and personal connection has been established in my soul, even as a child, with this land of the Romanian country. I then experienced the first moments of Romanian national life in Dobrogea and in the warmth of these feelings a lasting connection was made between me and Dobrogea.

Gentlemen, that is why it was perhaps even more natural for me to be one of the first who, when the Eastern crisis broke out, understood that our national duty was that from this crisis the borders of Dobrogea should be enlarged.

We, the National Liberal Party, have considered from the beginning that our demands had to be satisfied at any cost.

Thanks to the national consciousness, thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of our army, these demands are satisfied today. And today I am happy to find myself in an enlarged Dobrogea. And because you have new powers today, new duties are also imposed”; and in the toast given in his capacity, at the Casino, the celebrant would express beautiful appreciations to the people of Constanța: “Gathered in Constanța, the lung of our economic life, the chosen flower of the Romanian civilization, a focus from which we claim that this civilization radiates as intensely and as far as possible in the East called to a new life”.

Ion I.C. Brătianu had a consistent patriotic attitude also vis-à-vis the need to reunite Dobrudja, by recovering, in 1913, its Southern part, dislocated by the Great

Powers in 1878. In his capacity as party president, he made the following declaration to the Senate, on September 5, 1913: "In the name of the national-liberal party, we declare that we are happy to vote for the annexation of the new territory, which consecrates the enlargement of the Kingdom and constitutes the reward for the great momentum of the nation and the army"; also, in his capacity as prime minister, when, in March 1914, the Law on the Organization of New Dobrudja [*Dobrogea Nouă*] was discussed in Parliament, he supported its adoption, highlighting its comprehensive functions towards the alien populations, but also the firmness of the Romanian legislator in ensuring the integration of the two sub-Dobrudja counties.

Devoted son to his people, Ionel I.C. Brătianu remains in national history as one of the most exemplary personalities, with an exemplary activity for the generations of Romanians who followed him, and for us, the people of Dobrudja, his memory demands all the more honor as he had such a special affection for the issues and fate of the region between the Danube and the Black Sea – Dobrudja.

Gheorghe I. Brătianu and Dobrudja

The great Romanian historian (Spinei, 1988: 91-267; Pentelescu, 2003: *passim*; Otu, Pentelescu, 2003: *passim*; Todea, 2014: *passim*) (January 28, 1898-April 23/24, 1953) was the son of Ionel I.C. Brătianu; graduate of the Sorbonne University (with a PhD in 1929), Professor of History at the universities of Iași (from 1920) and then Bucharest (from 1940), full member of the Romanian Academy (1942), director of the Institute of Universal History in Iași (1935-1940), respectively of the 'Nicolae Iorga' Institute of Universal History in Bucharest (1941-1947).

Specialist in the history of the Middle Ages and the history of the Black Sea. In terms of political activities, he will, naturally, be active within the National Liberal Party, from which he will form a dissidence – in the summer of 1930, after the accession to the throne of Carol II, whose follower he was –, as another separately/independent Liberal Party (in February 1938 he returns to the core of the National Liberal Party) (Gruber, 2013, *passim*). In the 1930s, the National Liberal Party (George Brătianu) was active in the socio-political life of Romania (Scurtu, 2003: *passim*), he will be present in Parliament, and his leader will manifest attitudes that campaigned for a rapprochement/alliance with Germany and against a rapprochement/alliance with the Soviet Union.

After August 23, 1944 – when Romania leaves the alliance with Nazi Germany, joining the United Nations Coalition – he will be isolated in the new social-political framework (Onișoru, 1999: 37-44); he will dedicate himself to scientific research – especially research on the history of the Black Sea –, in June 1948 he will be excluded from the new Romanian Academy, and in May 1950 he will be arrested and imprisoned without a trial; he will die in prison in Sighet on the night of April 23/24, 1953.

The materials below reflect his connections with the Romanian space between the Danube and the Sea, respectively with the recent history and the issue

of the Romanians (improperly called “colonists”) who were settled in the counties in the South of the region – Durostor and Caliacra, the so-called Quadrilater – many of whom were Vlachs (Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians) from the former Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire (respectively, from Ottoman Macedonia, incorporated in 1913 into Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Albania).

Hopes Coming from Macedonia
Prosperous Colonies of Macedonians in Quadrilater
A Vast Colonization Program

- Interview with Prof. George Brătianu, MP -

(...) “Of the four villages visited in detail (Uzungi, Orman, Tatar Atmagea, and Frașari), I will only talk to you about two, which I consider particularly characteristic”.

At Tatar Atmagea

Tatar Atmagea. Old village. The Macedonians [*Sic!* -- it’s about Vlachs, *recte*: Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians] settled there by purchasing real estate from the locals and especially from Turkish emigrants.

“The Aromanian colonists in Tatar Atmagea succeed through their sober life and through a strong vitality, manifested in abundance. The richness of the harvests and the intensive cultivation of the land call for the vigorous activity of the Aromanians in that village. I found elderly people, very elderly – who nevertheless condemn themselves with the robustness of young people. Please emphasize that these people, in their vast majority, were engaged in trade and shepherding until the present day, and now they are skilled, capable and passionate plowmen. Does this hasty, easy and complete transformation not reflect a rare spirit of initiative? But does not the case of the Aromanian from the village, who saved up penny by penny and built the mill with an electric motor, show the same spirit of initiative and a definite ability to keep up with the new times?

‘By Ourselves’

Frașari. The second village, in a completely different characteristic. New commune, barely two years old. Exclusively, Aromanian colonists and inhabitants of the Kingdom, especially from *Muntenia*.

The contrast between the two categories of inhabitants exists.

The Macedonians. I admit, they had difficulties – the difficulties of the beginning. They are proud that they overcame them. They formulate new plans. And to achieve them, they do not ask for outside help but rely exclusively on their own strength. I have the impression that if I had awakened their hope in help, perhaps they would have felt vexed. An unyielding “through ourselves”, Mr. Brătianu observes, laughing.

The colonists from the Kingdom. Brave, energetic, tenacious. But from their ranks, some were found to take advantage of our passage there and request our interventions in Bucharest. Which did not happen with the Aromanians.

The Current for Emigration in Romania

The Aromanians from Frașari spoke to me insistently about the wishes of those who remained in Greece to come to us. Moreover, only a small part of the 1200 emigrant families in Frașari actually came. The others are expected and the day after, some of their envoys have come to see if the installation is ready for them.

Speaking of the Frașari, I must add that many Macedonians from there have also passed through America (I spoke English with some of them), which explains, in part, their intrepidity and passion for modern means of work. In this latter regard, I will mention that although the agricultural routine of the Aromanian colonists is of recent date, the methods for cultivating the fields are, almost exclusively, among the most modern".

Extensive colonization

- A guiding control will be established over the political parties -

Mr. Prof. Univ. George Brătianu continued:

"Naturally, such elements must be received, encouraged, helped. When the Italians raise the issue of emigrating to Tripolitania, or when the Greeks urge them to emigrate to America, the Aromanians hesitate and only with difficulty decide, because their eyes are directed towards Romania. Energy, spirits of initiative, sobriety, applications for modernization and nationalism like those of the Aromanians eager to settle in our country, are necessary not only for the Quadrilater, but also for other lands. Therefore, a vast colonization program must be conceived and applied.

In the fall, we will establish a committee that will include figures from all political parties, and we believe that no refusal will be possible to our appeal, the issue having such a precise and highly national character.

Immediate measures

I reminded Mr. Brătianu that there are some problems that require immediate resolution. Thus, the Central Consumer and Production Cooperatives gathered in Constanța, Murfatlar, and Caraomer [Negru Vodă] (in the center of the colonization region) 5,000 cubic meters of timber, necessary for the colonists for construction, as well as about 700 thousand roof tiles, which the House of Proprietors cannot distribute, because it does not have the necessary funds to cover the expenses made by the cooperatives. In particular, there are about 300 houses there, built up to the roof, which will be ruined by the weather if they are not covered before the arrival of winter.

I know these needs, the unsolved of which is mainly due to inheritances”, Mr. George Brătianu answered me. “In a few days, I will return from Iași and I will intervene urgently, so that what is urgently needed and everything that is possible to satisfy is satisfied in the shortest possible time” (Miciora, 1927: 1).

For the Macedonian colonists
- Saving the 300 uncovered dwellings -
Intervention of Prof. George Brătianu, MP

The sad state of affairs, which we were forced to reveal yesterday, following the letter of Prof. Muzaca (of Vlach origin / Balkan Romanian – our note), had beneficial consequences. The appeal, that measures be taken without delay, at least regarding the urgent needs of the Macedonian colonists, was heard, taken into account and – what is most important – the beginning of its satisfaction is signaled.

Thus, we are given the information that Mr. Chițoiu, the director of colonization at the Central House of Proprietary Affairs, intervened for the urgent acquisition of a loan of 20 million lei, necessary for the payment of lumber and tiles, which the Central Cooperatives collected in Dobrudja and Cadrilater, for the completion of the 300 homes of the colonists, exposed to ruin, if they are not covered and closed before the arrival of bad weather.

Mr. G. Cipăianu, Undersecretary of State for Agriculture, approved the intervention and personally, is interested in the rapid acquisition of the aforementioned loan (Mic., 1927: 7).

After the Disaster at Tatar-Atmagea
The Impressions of Mr. Gh. Brătianu

Mr. Gheorghe Brătianu visited the Tatar-Atmagea locality where a fire destroyed numerous households, leaving the settlers on the roads.

To one of our editors, who asked for his impressions of this visit, Mr. Gheorghe I. Brătianu said:

“Learning of the disaster that struck the flourishing households of the Macedonian settlers in Tatar Atmagea, whom I had seen a few years ago, I accepted the proposal of my friends, Mr. Constantin Hentzescu and Victor Papacostea, former deputies elected in the counties of New Dobrudja [*Dobrudja Nouă*], and I went to see the effects of the disaster on the spot.

Through an unfortunate confluence of circumstances – the men taken to another commune for elections, the strong wind blowing straw from house to house, the lack of any effective means of extinguishing the fire in the locality – the effects of the fire in these times of drought were truly catastrophic.

More than half of the houses were destroyed. Barns with corn, wheat and oats were completely burned; stables were reduced to ashes, with cattle all. The Macedonian [*Sic!*: Aromanians and Megleno-Romanians] colonists had built solid settlements, which I had visited seven years ago, at their beginnings, when I had already spoken

to your newspaper about this matter. Today only a few collapsed walls remain. I remember the image of an old colonist, with his characteristic bearing, stunned like a stone wall on the ruins of his house, his gaze lost in the distance, unable to utter a word. The same pitiful sight on the hardworking Turkish inhabitants, whose farms were hit just as hard.

What is more regrettable, however, is the fact that we were the first, after more than eight days, to take an interest in the fate of these unfortunates. No help to put out the fire, no authority is taking care of the victims. Moreover, as seven years ago, I found the same characteristic trait in the colonists: the pride of only asking for what they believe is their due. Settled without the help of the state, even in the hour of misfortune they do not ask the administrative bodies for more than that minimum of solicitude to which their work and spirit of enterprise give them a full right. I have once again confirmed my opinion that our nation has nothing but to gain by placing these elements of a constructive and stubborn nationalism, at all borders as well as in all sectors of economic struggle. Too much time has passed anyway. There are problems that demand their solution more and more urgently. It is a true state crime not to deal with all the care with the elements that can form a national elite in the economic life of the country. Let us not pay too dearly, in soon, for the effects of the inexperience and carelessness of recent times" (xxx, 1934: 6).

Romania Between Germany and the Balkans

(...) I must touch on one more issue that may be misinterpreted: that of the counties of Southern Dobrudja [*Dobrudja de Miază Zi*]. Annexed by Romania in 1913, at the end of the Balkan War, reoccupied by the Bulgarians during the war, together with Old Dobrudja [*Dobrudja Veche*], from 1916-1918, returned to Romania in 1919, after long discussions at the Peace Conference, the rights of the Romanian state over this territory seemed to contravene the strict application of the ethnic principle.

It has been said that Romania's rule over the territory, which extends from Silistra to Balchik, would be only the result of strategic needs, or of the policy of balance between the Balkan states, before the European war.

Thus posed the issue – and there are still quite a few who do not conceive it otherwise – it no longer seems sufficiently justified today in relation to the possible claims of our Southern neighbors.

However, two considerations of particular importance are ignored: firstly, that this territory, inhabited at that time mostly by Turks and Tatars, was offered to us in 1878 before the establishment of the independent Bulgarian state, together with Varna and Ruse [*Rusciuc*], and if Romania did not accept it, it was because it did not want to lose its right to Southern Bessarabia through a transaction, which Russia demanded in return.

Secondly, the Romanian population of Macedonia, passing in 1913 under the rule of the Balkan states, more nationalistic than the Ottoman Empire, it was appropriate to give the Romanian state the opportunity to settle on its territory these

elements that it had taken care of until then, from an ecclesiastical and cultural point of view. In fact, although not to the extent that it should have been, there were colonizations of Aromanians in this region between 1925 and 1935 with interesting results for its economic prosperity. Moreover, following the massive population exchanges determined by the Treaty of Lausanne in the Balkan Peninsula, there is no other solution left for the problem of these minorities scattered from the main mass of the Romanian nation and destined for a slow but fatal denationalization over time (Brătianu, 1939: 2).

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