

Projects for the Dobrogean Colonization of Romanian Communities in Serbia

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Abstract. The means through which the integration of Dobrogea into the Romanian political system was achieved was characterized by persuasion, occurring peacefully, without incidents. The inhabitants of Dobrogea, who had become Romanians, willingly accepted the new political authority, as well as the new groups of settlers who had begun to be relocated to the newly integrated territory. At the same time, the coordinators of the teams in charge of the relocation process also had the role of disseminating the Romanian social culture and familiarizing the new colonized groups in Dobrogea with the specifics of the province and the particularities of the territory. Meetings were organized to inform those who were part of the communities that settled in Dobrogea as well as those from the local administration, magistrates, military prefects and mayors, about their role in colonization. In this context, several groups of Romanian peasants from the Serbian Banat came to settle in the area, an episode that we will discuss in the present study.

Keywords: colonization, Banat, Dobrogea, social culture, social communities

1. Introduction

The nineteenth century was called the century of nationalities/nations and, consistent with this desire, states tried to legitimize a living space and a majority political body that would impose the authority of the nation. The political milieu in Bucharest also acted according to this model regarding the issue of Dobrogean political rights. In the context of the integration of Dobrogea into the Romanian territory, Romanian communities from almost all

the traditional Romanian provinces were settled in this region. Dobrogea was likewise colonized with Romanian communities from the Balkan states, such as the Aromanians from Albania and Greece, as well as Romanian communities from the Serbian Banat. The context in which these waves of colonization took place was generated by the geopolitical reconfiguration of Eastern Europe after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. The Romanian communities in the Serbian Banat wanted to colonize Dobrogea due to the lack of land and the material difficulties they faced under the Austro-Hungarian administration. The intention to re-settle the Romanians in the Serbian Banat to this region were based on the ties of nationality with the Romanian state. Therefore, the idea of nation, the precarious material conditions overlapped with the agrarian problem which had went unresolved by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy were the reasons that determined these communities to accept relocation to Dobrogea.

2. The two attempts to colonize the Banat Romanians in Dobrogea

We can say that granting political rights to a state over a certain territory justified the confiscation of public discourse by the majority dominated by the "national conscience". This is a false problem due to the fact that there were groups within the political majority that had a concrete interest in instilling national feelings, which were natural, aggressive, militant, and employed propaganda specially directed against this type of potential danger (Hobsbawm 1997: 122). Most social researchers identify nationalism in relation to the transformations that societies belonging to the Western world went through in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, events that shaped the rise of nation states.

An excellent study by Benedict Anderson notes how in industrial society it leads to national legitimacy in several stages (Anderson 2004: 133). The theory of the emergence of nationalism supported by Ernst Gellner offers an overview of the world, dividing the entire human evolution into 3 stages of evolution (the pre-agricultural era, the agricultural age and the industrial age), considering the nation state as an element of cohesion and defining concept of these stages (Gellner 1997: 14).

Ernst Gellner demonstrates how the needs of different eras led to the emergence of nations (as entities) and *nationalism* (as an ideology) (Gellner 1997: 24). However, in the stage of industrial society, the cohesion of traditional groups dwindled, and other groups replaced old social relations. The demographic growth evolved in parallel with the emergence of groups that did not belong to the patriarchal era, groups that allowed the rapid development of

society and its *nationalization* (Gellner 1997: 84). In the Romanian case, within the limits of the 1923 Constitution, the national state was a simple form without content. The 1938 Constitution concludes a new state order in which the priority to organize according to national interests is imposed, in which the nation is less a legal community or a political collectivity, but more a spiritual and organic collectivity based on the law of blood from which a hierarchy of political rights springs (Rizescu 2013: 35).

The national state, in the formula of the Constitution of February 27, 1938, was based on the legal and political distinction between the *Romanians by blood* and the *Romanian citizens* (Rizescu 2013: 38). Thus, the issue arose between the citizens who were to be part of the Romanian social body as subjects of the nation and part of the political body targeted by the new constitution (Andreescu 2004: 51-68). Several decrees would be issued that would distinguish between certain citizens divided according to confessional criteria, the Jews who also lived in Dobrogea, in relatively small numbers compared to other regions of Romania.

In the view of these decrees, the following were to be considered Jews: those of the Mosaic religion, those born of parents of the Mosaic religion, those who had converted to Christianity but whose parents were unbaptized and belonged to the Mosaic cult, Christians born of a Christian mother and a father of the Mosaic religion who were not baptized or those born of a mother of the Mosaic religion out of wedlock.

Once one was assigned the status of “Jew”, the law could further distinguish them into one of three categories. The first category included Jews who came to Romania after 1918, the second category included those naturalized by individual law until December 30, 1918, those collectively naturalized as a result of participation in the War of Independence of 1877, those who lived on the territory of Dobrudja and benefited from naturalization as a result of the laws of 1877, 1909, 1912 and those who fought in Romania's wars, mainly on the front lines.

Excepted were those Jews who were taken prisoner or who had disappeared individually, the wounded, those decorated or cited with orders for acts of heroism undertaken, or the descendants of those who had fallen in the line of duty. The third category included the compact mass of the Jewish population on the territory of the Old Kingdom collectively assigned Romanian nationality/citizenship by the laws of 1919, laws that were guaranteed by the Constitution of 1923. For Jews in categories 1 and 3, restrictions were instituted on their access to public office. Thus, they could not be lawyers, experts, members of the boards of directors of enterprises of

any kind, merchants in rural communes, publish books, newspapers, magazines, nor could they play in sports associations, or work as janitors in public institutions. Through three successive decrees, drafted between November 1918 and February 1919, the Jews of the Old Kingdom received Romanian citizenship.

They participated in the War of Reunification in the regiments of the Romanian army and under the Romanian flag. An aspect that has been talked about very little in military history works is the number of soldiers belonging to minorities living in Romania, incorporated into the ranks of the Romanian army as Romanian citizens. Turks, Russian-Lipovans, Germans, Roma, Tatars, Jews, Aromanians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Armenians, Ruthenians, Greeks, Serbs, Ukrainians, fought under the Romanian flag in the First World War alongside the Romanian soldiers who made up the bulk of the army. Individuals who stemmed from these minorities had the rank of officer in the Romanian army and led in battle both Romanian soldiers as well as those belonging to national minorities, many of whom perished on the battlefield defending the Romanian state they considered to be their homeland.

The treatment of the subject of this study also involves a detailing of the demographic evolutions that occurred as a result of colonization (Scurtu & Boar 1995: 7), with direct consequences on the share of national minorities among which we also find co-units from the Yugoslav Banat. A first estimate of the share of national minorities (ethnic communities) dates back to 1920 and reflects the ethnic composition of the population. Thus, about 45% of the population lived on the Dobrogea territory, which will be represented by minorities. In this context, a number of 300 families from the south-western part of the historical Banat wanted to be re-settle in Dobrogea. These families came from the localities of Sânt Mihai (today Locve), Sânt-Ianăș (today Barițe), from the communes of Mărghita, Alibunar and Uzdin. These families left for Bucharest in a first attempt at colonization in December 1881 hoping that they would reach Dobrogea, which did not happen (Măran 2015: 321).

The intervention of the Austro-Hungarian consul in Bucharest would determine the Romanian government not to allow colonization due to the dualist monarchy's fear that "the phenomenon shall take on a mass character" (Măran 2015: 321). After the end of the First World War, Austria-Hungary was dismantled as a multi-ethnic state and the Romanian communities in Banat were neglected and even wronged by the new authorities. The impoverished Romanian peasants in the Yugoslav Banat did not benefit from the agrarian reform carried out by the authorities, therefore the agrarian problem remained unresolved. The difficulties related to the agrarian problem worsened in the

years of the economic crisis that would lead to the intentions to colonize impoverished peasant groups in Dobrogea.

The attempts to re-settle these communities from the Banat were shaped by the failure to solve the agrarian problem (starting with 1913) in Southern Dobrogea, which was incorporated into the Romanian state following the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913. The issue of population exchanges between Yugoslavia and Romania was discussed. The convention on the exchange of population was to be signed between the two states, but would be blocked due to financial and political difficulties. Starting with 1930, the systematic plan to colonization of impoverished peasant families from the Serbian Banat in Dobrogea was implemented. The exchange agreement was negotiated and initiated by both states and the colonization of the families took place with the consent of the Yugoslav authorities. The colonization process was encouraged by two peasants from the communities of Sânt-Mihai and Uzdin, who had visited Dobrogea to be able to see the conditions “on the ground” (Măran 2015: 322). Upon returning to Banat, the two, Panta Mohan and Ion Țăran, convinced the locals from the villages of Toracul Mare, Toracul Mic, Seleuș, Sânt-Ianăș, Nicolinț, Alibunar, Grebenaț, Petrovasâla to accept the resettlement to Southern Dobrogea. As a result of the current created, around 500 families of impoverished peasants from the mentioned localities accepted colonization in different villages in Dobrogea.

Most of the families were colonized in the *commune of Regina Maria* in the Cadrilater, as Gligor Popi records (Popi 1996: 60). The author focuses on the Romanians from the Yugoslav Banat and describes the conditions of departure, but also the number of those who settled in different localities and the way in which the land areas were distributed to the new families colonized in Dobrogea. Mircea Măran describes the accounts of those who recorded some travel notes and the days spent on the way to Dobrogea.

The author of the travel notes, Nicolae Mităr, describes the reunion with the Banat peasants who were already in Dobrogea:

“From Cernavoda we go to Megidia (correctly Medgidia), from where we take the engine to Bazarjic and arrive at noon. In Dobrogea, there are many colonized Petrovians, many of them, we decided to go and visit them, with others being relatives. On the way to Balchik we passed through several settler villages and when we arrived in the village of Regina Maria, it was known by the wheat strings, that there are our Banat people there and also here Sandru Căta and his cousin Trifu were waiting for us. Also there on the way all our brothers were waiting for us: the Seleușeni, the Sântmieniți.

Those from other parts and the people of Sânmieș welcomed us happily and took us into their care. (...) On the way to Balchik we met a Vladimirovcean, who at our sight only knew the 2nd and for a few minutes she could not say a word but only cried and sighed, then she started with the questions about those at home in Banat” (Măran 2015: 325).

These records describe in detail how the hundreds of families from Banat experienced the long roads of colonization and distance from their native places.

In fact, a new state of affairs was taking shape, with a new authority imposing the social, administrative, political and legal order. Constantin Brătescu published an extensive study in a monumental volume edited in 1928 on the occasion of the “*anniversary of the semicentenary of the annexation of Dobrogea*”, in which he confirmed what we described above. Brătescu claimed that

“the state that dominates a province, tends over time to create an absolute majority of its compatriots there. This tendency is especially facilitated by the low population density that a state finds in an annexed province. The phenomenon was repeated in Dobrogea under the Romans, under the Turks and, today, under the Romanians. The Romanian ethnographic area in 1877 in Northern Dobrogea is more extensive than the toponymic one. At 56.9% in 1913 we have 33.3% typical Romanian names, while at 10.9% Turkish-Tatars 61.9% correspond to Turkish-Tatar topical names. Today, however, the toponymic area also extends in the wake of the ethnographic one, through a natural reaction of the Romanian element which, remaining alone as an inhabitant in its villages, understands to imprint on them a national character. We are not dealing here with an artificial administrative measure, but with a historical process that is taking place right before our eyes” (Brătescu 1928: 235-236).

The Romanian social and administrative culture was slowly but surely gaining ground in Dobrogea. This social culture was completely foreign to the mentality of the ethnic communities existing in the newly integrated province of Romania. At the same time as the policy of massive colonization of the Romanian population, calls and actions were launched to popularize Dobrogea's opportunities in the other Romanian provinces in order to motivate colonization and give the province a Romanian consistency (Abraham 2008: 30). It is the record of a state of affairs that had occurred after 1877 and that replaced the demographic ratio in favor of the Romanians who were

colonized and owned on the basis of the exceptional law of 1880. The colonization process was a national priority of Romania at the time. Similarly, European states settled their citizens in the territories they had annexed on different occasions. The colonization model that Romanian officials applied was confirmed at the time by the same Constantin Brătescu. The author argues that

“the speed with which colonization is carried out depends on different causes. In Dobrogea, colonization took place at a slow pace. The cause must be seen not only in the low density of the population in the Romanian regions immediately adjacent to the river in 1878, but also in the political circumstances, in the spirit of organization, in the degree of penetration of national interests. Countries like Italy or Germany, which before the Great War expatriated (colonized sbl. ns.) annually up to 600,000 and even 800,000 compatriots would have colonized Dobrogea with the surplus of their population in a single year” (Brătescu 1928: 236).

3. The population of Dobrogea after the first stage of colonization, June 1913¹

The colonization process that began in 1878-1880 produced fundamental changes in the ethnic structure due to the fact that several stages of settlement with Romanian population had taken place in the areas with a high density of inhabitants. The Romanian governments after 1880 were concerned with an organized colonization set up by a political will to implant the political system of the Old Kingdom. The administrative authorities received and registered applications for settlement in Dobrogea several counties such as: Tecuci, Covurlui, Tutova, Muscel, Dolj, Mehedinti, Râmnicu-Sărat, Buzău. These requests were, obviously, the effect of the promotion by the Romanian governments of the advantages that Dobrogea offered. Based on the assurances given by the authorities, the movements and colonization of the population from these areas of Romania to Dobrogea, which offered important development conditions, began. The numerical increase of the population of Dobrogea is explained, in addition to the waves of colonization after 1878, also by the actions taken by the state for the economic and social transformation. Among the promoted actions we can mention:

¹ Statistics of Northern Dobrogea (old) published by Roman (1922): 460. The same statistic is taken over and introduced in the study on the population of Dobrogea that Constantin Brătescu published in 1928.

- a) the modernization of the port of Constanța;
- b) the encouragement of the emergence of small industrial enterprises;
- c) the redemption of the works from the English company that managed the Cernavoda-Constanța railway;
- d) the improvement of the health system of the province, which at the beginning faced great shortages in terms of endowment and rejection by the Muslim population of this service².

In Dobrogea, for almost five centuries, the Ottoman Empire had ruled, and had managed to create a political system based on religious principles, namely on the prescriptions of the Qur'an³, but also a political and administrative culture that was rudimentary in relation to the model that the Romanian state had taken over and tried to apply in the province. The imperative was to alter the ethnic composition of Dobrogea, which had to *become Romanian* in the context of the idea of “*nation*”. The main cities concentrated an increasing number of people educated in bourgeois culture, familiar with the science and technology of the advanced countries. The local peasantry, on the other hand, was far behind in economic terms compared to rural inhabitants in Western countries, and the rural economy was facing technological stagnation.

Due to the fact that Dobrogea was an important communication hub, a cereal trade was developed that allowed the purchase of wheat that provided food for the inhabitants of this province. *Wheat* has received special attention

² Extremely popular and appreciated at the time was the doctor Marin Sadoveanu, father of the writer Ion Marin Sadoveanu, for whose appointment as doctor of the city intervened over 60 citizens of the city, signatories of a petition dated November 14, 1896. They write to the mayor at the time that he “*left the most beautiful impression of the care he gave to the sick. We hope, Mr. Mayor, that both you and the entire communal council sufficiently recognize the qualities of Mr. Marinescu Sadoveanu, you will intervene to approve his appointment, in which all citizens have confidence.*” At that time, Mihail Coiciu was in the position of mayor and gave the following resolution to the above-mentioned request: *Happy that I was able to understand the feelings of the citizens beforehand and already intervening at the ministry in this regard, this petition will be attached to the file.* Compare the data at the National Archives of Constanta, City Hall fonds, file 1/1896, f. 32-33.

³Gheorghe Brătianu, based on Byzantine sources, advanced the idea that since the twelfth century Dobrogea was ethnically semi-Turkized by *Pechenegs* and *Cumans*. The fact is that the number of Turks and Tatars increased greatly after the Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth century. The Tatars were brought in large numbers in the period of the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries precisely so that in Dobrogea it would be possible to create an Islamic world through political, administrative, religious behavior and at the level of the mentality of the communities. The Tatars were different in language from the Turks (although related in origin) and traditions, but they lost their own language along the way they became Islamized, adopting that of their Muslim coreligionists, in this case Turkish-Osman. See Brătianu (1988): 327-329. See also Sala and Vintilă Rădulescu (1918) (Eds): 251-254.

in European trade, which has had resulted in an increase in demand on the international market that influenced its price. In such a commercial relationship and the transit of products, the Romanian space had become a cornerstone of the grain trade. A researcher of the time claimed that:

“Romania's progress in grain cultivation was impressive. By the end of the nineteenth century, cereals (especially wheat) accounted for almost 85% of the total value of exports and in 1910 Romania was the fourth world exporter of wheat. The area under grain cultivation doubled from 1860 to 1890, resulting in a cultivated area per capita 40-70% larger than that of Greece, Bulgaria or Serbia” (Pavlowitch 2004: 130).

The effect was that of increasing the labor obligations of the peasants without taking into account a modernization of the means of agricultural production (Câlția 2011: 158), which had serious gaps with Western agriculture since the eighteenth century. This ratio accentuated the social divide between peasants and elites (made up mostly of landowners), leading to gradual impoverishment, ingenuity and an acute disenfranchisement which fueled important social tensions. This contrast is well highlighted by the 1914 report of the multinational commission for the analysis of the causes of the Balkan wars (Todorova 1994: 456).

The report mentions that the two Balkan wars had distinct causes and speaks of *the duty of the civilized world to stop exploiting this area for wheat* (Todorova 1994: 461) and to arbitrate disputes in the Balkans (Woodsley 1915: 279-281). After 1936, the population of Dobrogea increased to 893,739, with almost 17,000 individuals, mainly as a result of the colonizations in the area of Southern Dobrogea, which was recorded to have experienced an increase in the rural population (Manuilă and Georgescu 1939: 183-186). The population increases were constant after 1937, registering an increase of 9.1%, which would correspond to a number of 8000-10,000 inhabitants (*Romanian Encyclopedia* 1939: 183-186). Thus, in 1937 the population of Dobrogea had increased to 907,588, and in 1940 the statistical data show a number of 911,926 inhabitants (Brătescu 1938: 196). According to other sources of the time, the demographic growth stood at a percentage of 12.7% (Seișanu 1928: 29-30). In the years 1938-1940, for the population of the Cadrilater, the figures were constant, with no significant population increases recorded in these final two years of Romanian administration (Brătescu 1928: 235).

After 1940, when the Romanian state lost Southern Dobrogea, the population decreased dramatically as a result of the loss of territory and as a result of the exodus of the population of German origin from Dobrogea to Germany, but also of the compact Bulgarian population from the Dobrogea territory that was transferred to the neighboring state to the south. Through the stages of colonization, by encouraging the settlement of the Aromanians in the Balkans but also of the Romanians from other provinces, the share of the Romanian element increased significantly until 1940. This case can be assimilated with the theory of identity space exemplified above, as well as with the area of a political culture, in our case the Romanian culture. Already in the 1930s, Romanians constituted a percentage equal to that of Bulgarians (around 37% of the total inhabitants).

Romanians from the Bulgarian Timoc have also settled in Cadrilater (Southern Dobrogea), which somehow consolidated the Romanian element in this new political and administrative space of the Romanian state.

The Turkish-Tatar population that had begun to emigrate constantly after 1925, would leave room for the evolution of Bulgarian nationalist sentiment. Immediately after the incorporation of Southern Dobrogea into Romania, the Turkish-Tatars numbered 141,650 people in the counties of Caliacra and Durostor, they began to emigrate to the territories that the Ottoman Empire still held.

4. The settlers from the village of Regina Maria - Slovakia county. Caliacra

In the *village of Regina Maria*, several hundred families of impoverished peasants had been colonized in the 1930s from the Serbian Banat. In Southern Dobrogea, the settled families were given land and houses, an aspect that reaches the localities of origin in the Serbian Banat through the Romanian-language press in that place. Therefore, in 1934, the author of the article related how

“a group of nine peasants from the localities of Sân-Ianășand Râtișor (a village near Vârșeț) made a trip to Romania, being received in Sinaia by King Carol II himself. The group of Romanian peasants then left for Bazargic and Balchik, after which they arrived in the village of Regina Maria, where most of the families lived from the villages under Serbian administration, in the Serbian Banat” (Seișanu 1928: 30).

Another group of peasants from Banat visited their families and relatives on a trip organized in the summer of 1937 to the villages of Cadrilater, as recorded by one of the participants in that trip to Romania, named Nicolae Mitâr. He records several travel notes later published in the weekly *Nădejdea* in Vârșeț. Among other details, Nicolae Mitâr notes that:

“in Dobrogea, as there are many colonized Petrovians, many of us decided to go and visit them with others, given that we were kin. On the morning of August 18 (1937) with the bus at our disposal, we left for Balchik, which is 30 km from Bazargic. On the way to Balchik we passed through several villages with settlers. There are people from Banat and also here, on the main road, Sandru Căta and his cousin Trifu were waiting for us. After I stayed for two days” (Brătescu 1928: 326).

Relevant for the group of those originating from the Serbian Banat is the record in the *Student Teams Courier*, which reported from the commune of Regina Maria where *“the team works in a village founded only four years ago and composed of settlers from foreign lands: Macedonians from Bulgaria and Greece, Banat from Yugoslav Banat and a small number of Oltenians and Wallachians”* (Student Teams Courier 1935: 7). Many of the actions and work of the team members were recorded in the pages of the mentioned publication: 479 medical consultations, 10 medical visits at home, 3 medical conferences, another 40 consultations and 2 conferences were held on the issue of agriculture. The actions continued to be listed: 46 veterinary medicine consultations and 377 preventive vaccinations. Within the households, 6 practical lessons were held and 15 dwellings arranged according to the standards of the time.

As far as cults and confessions are concerned, discussions were held with the villagers and with the members of the sects, 3 sermons were held. The columns in the newspaper also inform us that the *“Straja Cadrilaterului”* Cultural Center was established, with the help of the team members. A *“Committee”* was also formed to achieve three goals: the construction of a church, the construction of a fountain and the arrangement of the communal land (Student Teams Courier 1935: 7). In issue 9 of the Courier, the idea of building the church materializes, on which occasion we find out that

“Her Majesty Queen Mary has kindly received the presidency of the Committee for the construction of a church in the village near Balchik, Queen Mary, founded by Macedonian, Romanian, Yugoslav and Oltenian settlers. The church is built on the initiative of the local Student Team sent by the

Prince Carol Cultural Foundation and guided by the director of the Bazargic High School, Mr. Constantinescu-Mircești, inspector of the Royal Foundation. The whole village works together with the team to build the construction?”. (Curierul Echipelor Studentești 1936: 8).

According to the same publication, a cash subscription was made that had reached the figure of 134,056 lei, of which the following sums were donated by Her Majesty Queen Mary - 50,000 lei, the Ministry of Cults - 40,000 lei, the House of Schools - 5000 lei, the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation - 20,000 lei, the Macedonian-Romanian Society - 5000 lei, the National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women - 3000 lei, the Holy Diocese of Constanta - 2000 lei, The Bazargic Red Cross Society - 2000 lei, the Christian Women's Association - 5056 lei (Curierul Echipelor Studentești 1936: 8).

The visits they organized were also attended by the priest, the mayor and the village teacher. Among other goals they fulfilled, the consultations offered to the villagers constituted the means of propaganda to combat religious sectarianism. In this context, Constantinescu-Mircești records details about the beginning of the construction of the church in the village. The decision to build the place of worship had been taken a year earlier. The coordinating author writes:

“the construction of the church that will begin in a few days from the initiative of the team (taken in the summer of 1935 as mentioned above) will have the gift of strongly influencing the religious life of the village and perhaps with the construction work, the missionaries of the team will have the opportunity to convert more easily the soul of the few lost families” (Curierul Echipelor Studentești 1936: 3).

In the same article we find the information according to which on July 12, 1936, a group of scouts accompanied by a teacher came to the village:

“On Sunday, July 12, Professor Goia from Cluj descended on the village bringing 20 scouts who will join the ranks of the teammates. We realize the invaluable assistance that the scouts will give to the Team, especially since they offered with all their enthusiasm to work together with the team members on the construction of the church and on the restoration of some broken bridges in the village. On Sundays and in the evening of each working day, the same scouts will organize meetings with the team's assistance. Animated by the most beautiful feelings, wishing that in the future all the royal teams would also include teams of scouts, Professor Goia decided that in a few days he would

send 20 more scouts to Queen Mary” (Curierul Echipelor Studentești 1936: 3).

In the same year, Emanoil Bucuța published an article in the Student Teams Courier in which he presented the way in which student teams worked in Romanian villages in different provinces. In the commune of Regina Maria, the works occasioned by the construction of the church were recalled. The activities of the student team presented by Bucuța were relevant:

“they are three teams worth’, as far as I know, to shyly stand next to the best who filled the country with the spirit of their hard work. The works planned and completed by them surpass everything we imagined a few young people full of any enthusiasm and helped by any amount of goodwill, private or official, will be able to do. I am thinking of the beautiful village of Musceli, Stănești, sung by the Doamnei river and shaded by mountains, and of the Dobrogean settlements of settlers; one Cusuinul din Vale or Timoc with Romanians from Bulgaria, in Durostor on the Danube and another, Regina Maria or Poarta Balchiului, with Macedonian, Yugoslav and Oltenian Romanians, in Caliacra, above the sea. (...) At the other end of the Quadrilateral (at Regina Maria n.n.) The team is working hard with the Sea and the Balchik over the edge of the terrace, at one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful church in the new Dobrudja. It gives a youthful answer to the other fact, which comes out of the same construction will that is the salt of the Balchik port from the valley” (Bucuța 1936: 8).

In the summer of 1937, additional records were drafted about the progress of the construction of the church that had begun to take shape in the village of Regina Maria. The organization of the camp by the Command of the Phalanx of the Guards (*Comandamentul Falangei Străjerilor*) together with the Royal Student Teams is presented so that the guards can also contribute to the work that was to be carried out in the village. The help from the guards and students was necessary because *“the commune of Regina Maria, whose inhabitants, Romanian, Macedonian, Banat, Transylvanian and Wallachian settlers were brought to constitute a nest of pioneers of Romanianism in the midst of the mass of minorities in Dobrogea, does not yet have a church”* (Student Teams Courier 1937: 8). In the previous year, the foundations were laid, and in the summer of 1937 new workers were brought in to *“raise from the ground the holy place where the Romanians who came from the Macedonian lands will be united with those who came from the Banat plain, from the Transylvanian Mountains and from the valleys of Muntenia”* (*Curierul*

Echipelor Studentești 1937: 8). From the same publication we find out that together with the student team working in the village, a group of 76 guards-scouts who came from Cluj, Braşov and Bucharest to help build the church worked for a month.

A second group of scouts continued a “tradition of social volunteering” begun in the summer of 1936. This group of 60 guards-scouts from the C.F.R. Workshops in Cluj and 24 from the Apprentices' Home in Braşov returned to help in the construction of the church in the village, setting up camp next to the team of students with whom they worked in the village of Regina Maria. The initiative to build the church belonged to Emanoil Bucuţa who initiated the collection of funds necessary for the construction of the place of worship. We also find out about the state of health that the team members and scouts acquire, in this way maturing through the experience they had in Cadrilater. The daily program included the raising of the flag, physical exercises, mealtimes, as well as a physical and cultural work program. The courier described in detail the daily life of those who spent the summer helping the community in the village of Regina Maria.

“In the camp they live a healthy life, harden their souls and strengthen their bodies to overcome the hardships of later life – wholeheartedly enrolled in the new Romanian spirituality that is the basis of the institutions created by M.Sa. The King, the Voevod of Romanian Culture for the good and salvation of the country. Divided into teams at the various works entrusted to them, they leave as cheerful, singing as when they go to bathe in the sea” (Curierul Echipelor Studentești 1937: 8)

As an example, the campaigns of the student teams in the summer of 1935 highlighted this aspect. If in the *commune of Pecineaga* in Tulcea county the life of the community registered a continuity, in the village of Regina Maria, the groups that had gathered from different places of origin, established the community through the colonization process.

The courier of the Student Teams records the fact that “on August 15, 1935, at the initiative of the team, the Navy Holiday was organized” (*Curierul Echipelor Studentești* 1935: 7), which somehow linked this celebration to a tradition. Moreover, invoking continuity within the community, the team members convinced the community of the need for such a tradition due to the fact that the village was located in the immediate vicinity of the Danube. The situation was different in the village mentioned above, Regina Maria, where there was no tradition of habitation (the village being established in 1931) and, therefore,

there were no traditions related to certain auspicious days. In the same vein, the community of *Ferdinand I commune* presented the multiethnic tradition of living in the community, an aspect recorded by the team members in the monographic material regarding the family and the household inventory as well as the data related to the movement of the population.

5. Conclusions

At the end of our study, it is necessary to remember and evoke the destiny of the 500 families from the Yugoslav Banat who were colonized in the Cadrilater. In the study cited above, the researcher Mircea Măran originally from the Serbian Banat, described the entire colonization process that had two stages. A first attempt at colonization took place in 1881, when a hundred families tried to settle in Dobrogea, but the attempts at colonization failed due to the opposition of the Austro-Hungarian consulate which imperatively asked the authorities in Bucharest to return them to their native localities because the Serbian Banat was under the authority of the Austro-Hungarian Empire due to fears that “*the phenomenon of emigration and colonization would take on a mass character*” (Măran 2015: 320). The second stage took place in the thirties when the settlement of poor peasant families from the Serbian Banat in Dobrogea took place, with the consent of the then authorities of Serbia-Yugoslavia (Popi, 1996: 60). Around five hundred poor peasant families from the villages of *Sân-Mihai, Toracul Mare, Toracul Mic, Seleuş, Sân-Ianăş, Nicolinţ, Alibunar, Grebenaş, Petrovasăla* were colonized mainly in the commune of Regina Maria and in several villages along the Balci-Teke-Ekrene road (Măran 2015: 320).

The families of Banat settled in Dobrogea lived for about ten years in the Cadrilater, due to Southern Dobrogea being ceded to the Bulgarian state in 1940. Many families returned to the former villages of Yugoslavia. The families who wanted to remain under Romanian administration settled in the Romanian Banat area in villages such as Cărpiniş or Banloc, where the descendants of those families still live today. The process of settlement of the Banat people in Dobrogea was not a success as it happened in the case of other families in the Romanian provinces. The two colonization attempts previously described in this study were designed and carried out in different periods and with different resources. Both attempts were unsuccessful due to the geopolitical conjunctures and historical contexts that marked their existence. During the first attempt in 1881, carried out in a disorganized manner and blocked by the administration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which did not agree that the Banat Romanians it administered should leave for Dobrogea. In the case of the second colonization attempt (in the 30s), things went according to plan in

the first phase, which satisfied both parties in question, both of the peasants who came from Banat and of the Romanian authorities who administered Dobrogea. The peasant families who had received land in Cadrilater felt completely alien to those places about which Nicolae Mitar recorded that “*our brothers from Dobrogea would live very well there because the land is good, but they are weak, they are sad and they say that they hate it there*” (Măran 2015: 321). The geopolitical situation that was taking shape in Eastern Europe after the end of the Second World War led to the failure of the colonization project of the families in the Yugoslav Banat.

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