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Iorga"**



TEZA DE DOCTORAT

**THE HISTORY OF TURKISH COMMUNITY IN DOBRUDJA
THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE MUSLIM SEMINARY IN
MEDGIDIA**

**(Istoria jromunitatii turce din Dobrogea prin prisma Seminarului
Musulman de la Medgidia)**

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Chapter I Introduction

1.1. Objectives

The core subject of this study entitled "The History of the Turkish Community in Dobruja through the Prism of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia" revolves around the evolutionary process of the *madrasa* in Babadag in the 17th century into the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia in the 20th century and the subsequent effects of this evolution of the symbolic institution on the Muslim minority in Dobruja partly dwelling upon the history of the Dobruja region and its Turkish-Tatar inhabitants. The study benefits from the rich Romanian and Turkish historiography to show how the seminary was crucial to the Turkish community to maintain their cultural identity, and its important role in the Turkish-Romanian relations after Dobruja was integrated into Romania with 1878 Berlin Treaty.

The dissertation in the following pages can hardly be categorized as a monograph which would be an outcome of a microhistorical research focusing merely on the Muslim Seminary history of the region. On the contrary, it targets to depict the situation of the Turkish-minority in Dobruja in different phases after 1878 up to now from political, social, cultural and economic perspectives by referring the developments related to the seminary.

No matter how much emphasis is placed on the seminary or avoided generalizations, the study cannot be confined to the domain of the microhistory¹, as the political and other developments determined the fate of the school, not the vice versa. We can observe that the seminary undeniably designed new generations of the Muslim minority in Romania for decades, but within the limits imposed by the political regime. On the other hand, the study resembles a work as the seminary is at its focus being a small unit belonging to the Turkish community, how students and teachers at the seminary conduct their lives and interact with the society is given in depth to understand the other trends in the larger community. In a sense, it reduces the scale of the observation to the seminary as one of the typical characteristics of the microhistory². However, the seminary is one of the main themes of the Muslim community in Dobruja, and this centrality contradicts with the basic principle of microhistory that dwells on mostly on margins of power rather than center. Besides, marginalized subjects leave few traces or documents regarding their lives and experiences, in other words, do not have enough

¹ Georg G. Iggt: *Challenge, Hann*

² Sigurdur Gylfi :rs, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century from Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern over*, NH, 1997, p. 108. Magnusson, What is Microhistory?, <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/23720>.

reference material to study.³ Whereas, being in the center of the lives of the Muslim community in Dobruja, the seminary is not a marginal matter with having plenty of reference material related to its establishment, objectives and functions.

This study is also hard to be called as an isolated case of cultural history. German historian Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886) and his followers found cultural history as marginal or amateurish as it did not use official documents from archives.⁴ Since this study benefits from official archival documents or correspondence in putting forward its thesis, it becomes difficult to classify it within the definition of cultural history. Nevertheless, it also displays some distinctive features of this special sub-branch of history. First and foremost, its core matter, the Muslim Seminary, encompasses the continuum of events occurring in succession leading from the past to the present and even into the future pertaining to a culture, in a sense, from cradle to grave being a domain of culture.⁵ Secondly, the study gives some cultural explanation to the educational aspiration and need of the Muslim minority stressing the role of the Islamic ethos or value system. However, it is not ambitious enough to claim that it inspired from great work "the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" by the famous sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), in which the author offered cultural explanation based on Protestant value system for economic change.⁶ Thirdly, the study looks like a work of cultural history as it tries to interpret past events related to the Muslim Seminary through the political, cultural, social and economic milieu. While benefiting the notion of aggregate of past cultural activities from Jacob Burckhardt's (1818-1897) approach for historical studies, it also utilizes cross-disciplinary practice, which is the hallmark of the essence of the cultural history.⁷

1.2. Methods

By examining narrative descriptions of past knowledge, customs, personal experiences and memories of a certain group of people living in a specific area, the dissertation indeed combines history with other disciplines like geography, cultural anthropology, sociology, political economy and international relations. In this sense, the study can be seen seeking to break down the barriers between history and other sciences as the founders of the *Annales*

³ What is Microhistory?, <http://www.web.uvic.ca/w/studenWicbrewery/content/microhistory.htm>.

⁴ Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008, p. 8.

⁵ Miri Rubin, *Cultural History I: What is in a Name?*, http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/cultural_history.html.

⁶ Peter Burke, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

⁷ Miri Rubin, *op.cit.*

School, Lucien Fèbvre (1878-1956) and March Bloch (1886-1944) suggested, and within the concept of total history defended in later stage by Fernand Braudel (1902-1985).⁸

Apart from this theoretical discussion of the structure of the dissertation, the study uses narrative descriptions for the history of the Muslim Seminary in an account of sequence of events presented (in chronological order. However, it differs from storytelling narrations, as the

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events related to the case study are considered real and nonfictional supported by official study both documents. With its narrative style, though similar to traditional historians' descriptive approach, works, it does not involve a close study of changes over the short term, but also and a evolution changes in the long term.⁹ The traces the events and relations from past to present on the basis of quantitative so strives for putting forward a qualitative analysis or interpretation of the Turkish-Romanian relations through the prism of the Muslim Seminary. The theme chosen is relevant in order to understand in a more profound manner the place of the Turkish-Tatar community in the Romanian society and in the relations between Romania and Turkey after Dobruja joined Romania. It attaches special importance to the seminary of the community as the unique source to educate religious clergy and teachers of Turkish language, both being the indispensable pillars of the social and cultural identity of the minority.

While the study inquires the institutional setting of the seminary from Babadag to Medgidia in detail, it also focuses on its surrounding political, economic, social and cultural environment, and other elements, which affected the destiny of the young generations of the Muslim minority.

1.3. References and Summary of the Chapters

The references used in the study encompass first and secondary sources ranging from archival documents, belonging to various Romanian and Turkish state bodies whose full list is given in the bibliography section of the dissertation, to the works of respected scholars and interviews conducted with alumni of the seminary, members of the Muslim community and the Turkish officials who served in Romania. The official archives of both sides allow us to identify

⁸ *Annales School*

⁹ **Peter Burke**

*Companion
Volu*

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Annales-school>.

Concepts of Continuity and Change in History". *The New Cambridge Modern History XIII* me, Peter Burke (ed.), Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 1.

the position of the authorities and the measures introduced regarding the Turkish-Tatar minority in Romania. Memories or experiences of the social actors complete the whole picture of the status of the seminary and further the minority itself.

The study is composed of nine chapters including the parts of Introduction and Conclusions, the second being dedicated to the history of Dobruja region including the origins of the name of Dobruja, settlement of the Turkish tribes in Dobruja in pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, the installing of Ottoman rule in the region starting from the 15th century, the administrative structure of the region up to the 1878 Berlin Treaty, significance of Dobruja for the Ottomans from military and economic perspectives and lastly integration of the region into Romania and its repercussions on the Turkish minority. The chapter emphasizes the role of the monumental educational institution, the Muslim Seminary, as the legacy of the minority coming from the Ottoman period and functioning as a state institution after the integration of Dobruja into the territory of Romania.

Based on the case study of the seminary, the third chapter analyzes the education system of the Ottomans in different stages from *mektebi sibyan* (Primary Schools) to *ruşdiye* (Secondary Schools) and then *madrassa* (High Schools) in depth. It examines the reasons and origins of the concentration on the religious education in the classical period of the Empire and the motivations of the evolution of this education into the more secular one in its declining period. While the chapter gives satisfactory quantitative data on student profiles, school numbers and types in *Vilayets* of Danube, Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosova of the Empire, it aims at a providing comparative view of the situation of education across the Empire. The chapter dwells upon similarities of the education system in Dobruja region with the other parts of the Empire by reviewing developments in this field with the inauguration of the *Tanzimat* period reforms as of 1839. The chapter diagnoses that the Ottomans strove hard to catch up with the Western powers by improving their education system first in the military field and then for the civilians ending up ultimately in a partial success.

The fourth chapter of the study entitled as "Integration of the Turkish Community in Dobruja into the Romanian Ruling System (1878-1914)" investigates challenges of the integration of the Muslim minority into the new state from 1878 till the outbreak of the First World War by the Romanian authorities. To this end, it summarizes those obstacles ahead of integration as conflictive political discussions of the period, demographic density of the Muslims and backward economic structure of the region. It gives detailed information on the exceptional administrative regime of Dobruja which was established to carry out ethnic

assimilation, economic modernization and cultural homogenization in the Dobruja region on



the way of full integration.¹⁰ While it analyzes those integration policies of the Romanian state, it does not neglect to present the legal regulations at the background beginning from "The Law Concerning Dobruja's Administrative Organization" dated 1880. In addition, it emphasizes that the Bucharest authorities sought to avoid creating social problems through the measures taken in the field of religion and education for the majority of the population living in the region with traditions completely different from the rest of the country. It also probes into customs and the subject of using education as a tool for nation building in the process of integration, and highlights the important place of the seminary in Medgidia after it was converted into a state school in this process. The chapter ends with the clarification of reasons of mass emigration of Muslims from Dobruja on the basis of integration policies followed by the Romanian state.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation inquires deeper into the institutional development of the Muslim Seminary between 1878 and 1914. It explains the reasons of turning this school into a state body by the Constitution of Dobruja within the context of integration policies, its relocation from Babadag to Medgidia and the problems arose after the relocation. The chapter goes into details of the composition and the structure of students and putting special teachers of the seminary on a modern secular emphasis on its *curriculum* which combined the theocratic education with successful courses in Romanian language. It takes note that the seminary became a modern institution of high *curriculum* and high standard of education which led the graduation members of the Muslim community either as religious clergy and Turkish language teachers or university students in other branches.

The sixth chapter starts with examining the elevated situation of the Turkish-Tatar community from having special citizenship status to a normal one as of 1910. It elaborates on the positive effects of the incorporation of Southern Dobruja into Romania following up the Balkan wars in 1913 and its impact on the approach of the Romanian state to the Muslim minority. It also adds that the Muslim population preferred the Romanian rule to the Bulgarian one as the latter pursued more repressive and assimilationist policies towards the minority. It notes that the Muslim minority could be a factor in achieving harmony

¹⁰ Iordachi, 'The Integration of Northern Dobruja into Romania', in: Trencsenyi, Dragoș Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi and Zoltan Kantor (eds.), *Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, Budapest, Regio Books, 2001, p. 129.

urkish community being a small minority in Romania was always cautious to with the political system in order to survive while it did not cut off its organic relations with motherland Turkey. In the following pages of the chapter, the constructive role



of the Seminary in Medgidia in bilateral relations of Romania and Turkey was put into light by giving examples from meetings and visits of the Turkish Ambassador Hamdullah Suphi Tannover in Bucharest who served between the years 1931-1944. The chapter highlights politically good relations between two countries paved the way for a more positive attitude towards the Turkish minority in Romania and even Gagauze minority in Moldavia, which is ethnically Turkish having Orthodox Christian belief. Yet, both Dobruja regions witnessed huge exodus of the Muslim population towards Turkey in this period especially after the 1930s. The chapter analyzes the reasons of this mass emigration, of which the total figure is around 120.000, from the perspectives of homogenization policies pursued by the Romanian rule to the need of man-power of developing Turkey in detail. It completes the whole picture stating that the Agreement dated 1936 on emigration between Romania and Turkey facilitated the regular flow of emigrants to Turkey and constituted another example of good relations between Romania and Turkey in the interwar period.

The seventh chapter of the study deals with the negative consequences of the Second World War on the Turkish Muslim minority in Romania, which caused change in the territorial map of Romania and in its political regime. It expounds how heavy collectivization and industrialization policies of the Communist regime changed the way of life of all society including the Muslim minority, and forced to give concessions from their belief system. The regime reached its goal to mobilize, control and integrate the population under these Stalinist policies by putting tremendous pressure on the minorities in order to destroy their cultural identities and affiliations with their motherlands. It elaborates on the diminished significance of the religion on the young generations due to the restrictions in the fields of education and religion. It notes that the continuity of *the Muftiate* in this period as an institution did not help the minority as this body turned into an agent of the regime. It defends that the closure of the Turkish schools and the most importantly the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia in 1967 was the greatest blow to the maintenance of the cultural identity of the Turkish-Tatar community.

The eighth chapter focuses on the situation of the Muslim minority after the Communist rule was toppled down in 1989 by a popular movement. It reviews the developments regarding how the Turkish and Tatar communities immediately started to reconstruct and restore their cultural, religious and educational institutions and revive their cultural heritage by having the strong constitutional support behind them. It summarizes the process of institutionalization of Turks and Tatars under different umbrella associations as Democratic Turkish Union of Romania (Uniunea Demócrata Turca din Romania or UDTR), and the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars of Romania (Uniunea Demócrata a Tătarilor Turco-Musulmani din

Romania or UD (TTMR). The chapter gives insights about the internal debates and conflicts rity, among the which was divided officially anymore and represented separately at the ne quota mino deputy for each. It analyzes the role of Turkey in the process of jn of Turks and Parliament by o Tatars after a new era began following the fall of the iron s interest in the Dobruja institutionalizat Muslims is studied closely in different perspectives litical aspirations to cultural i curtain. affinity. To this end, the study emphasizes the ;e to the minority in the fields of Turkey' ranging education and religion through its different ce Turkish Cooperation and from pc Coordination Agency (TIKA) and Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers as well Turkish assistan as Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs. It does not underestimate tt e state agencies li financial support of the Turkish businessmen associations to the minority in various forms. The chapter dwells upon the reopening the emblematic educational institution of the Turkish c ommunity in 1995 in Medgidia by the initiative and support of Turkey and cooperation of the Romanian authorities under the name of Kemal Atatürk National College (Colegiul National Kemal Atatürk). It highlights a new revival inaugurated by this reopening of the historical school to preserve and develop the elements of cultural identity of the Turkish- Tatar communit|y.

In the conclusion part of the sudy it is pointed out that the presence of the Turkish- Tatar minorities in Romania is regarded as an asset by the Turkish-Romanian governments on the way of improving bilateral relations rather than a liability, especially after the 1989 revolution. It notes that Kenal Atatürk National College in Medgidia with bearing of the the name of the founder 3f Turkey occupies a special place in the bilateral Republic and relations of the two countries, that as the Muslim Seminary played an diagnoses unprecedented role in connecting urkey after 1878, its reopening under Kemal Romania and Atatürk name with a joint effort of the two countries in the wake of the T Communist era is a strong message of their good cooperation with regards to the adds that the m Muslim minority rather than being a point of conflict. It also Dral and material is vital to the support given by Turkey to the Muslim minority in Dobruja dstence and survival e: of the community while the Romanian financial support and preparing a tolerant legal ground for preservation of its ethnic and cultural identity is equally appreci ited. It concludes that the Romanian society tolerates multiculturalism and cohabitation and with this valuable surplus Romanian democracy deserves to be shown as an exemplary model to the region and even to the world.

Chapter II Dobruja-History and Historiography

2.1. Dobruja

Dobruja spelled as "Dobrogea" in Romanian, "Dobrudzha" in Bulgarian and "Dobruca" in Turkish languages is the name of the region that is situated between the lower Danube River and the Black Sea in the Balkan Peninsula stretching from Sulina (Romania) in the north to Ecrene-Kranevo (Bulgaria) in the south. The larger, northern part belongs to Romania, the smaller, southern part to Bulgaria. It is a tableland of some 23.000 square km in area, almost 15.500 square km in Romania, and more than 7.500 square km in Bulgaria in modern times. The Romanian and Bulgarian parts cover the provinces Tulcea and Constanta, and Kaliakra (Bazargic) and Durostor (Silistra) respectively.¹¹

Dobruja was the target of invaders from the east and north seeking to reach Constantinople for centuries as the Black Sea and the Danube offered the shortest distance to Constantinople. Owing to its openness to the sea and its position as a zone of passage it was called also as "Via Gentium" between the Balkans and the steppes in the north of the Black Sea. It happened to be a battlefield between different powers for ages, between the 1st century BC and the 3rd century AD, Rome dominated the region, which was known as Scythia Minor or Lesser Scythia, and from the 5th to the 11th centuries Byzantine rule was contested by successive waves of nomadic peoples, including Huns, Avars, Slavs, Bulgars, Pechenegs, Uz (*Oguzs*) and Cumans (*Kipchaks*). The Byzantine Empire even settled *Seljuki* Turks in the region in the 13th century to ward off attacks coming from the northern steppes. Beginning from the 15th century the Ottomans were the leading power in the whole Dobruja. They were challenged first by the Romanians in the 15th century and later by the Russians as of the mid-18th century. In 1768-74, 1855 and 1877-78, Russian troops crossed Dobruja from north to south and repeatedly destroyed mosques and Muslims schools, forced the Muslim population to flee southward. Dobruja besides being a transit region inhabited many civilizations through its long history. The earliest inhabitants of the Dobruja were the Getae, or Getians, a Thracian people whom Greek colonists encountered when they established trading cities on the Black Sea coast in the 6th century BC. After the domination of the Romans, Byzantines and the Turkic origin tribes

¹¹ Anca Popescu, "The Region of Dobrudja Under Ottoman Rule", *Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World* (<http://blacksea.ehw.gr/Forms/fLemmaBodyExtended.aspx?lemmaID=12392>), Black Sea, 2008. See also, Paul Wittek, "Yazijioghlu Ali On the Christian Turks of the Dobruja", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BSOAS)*, Vol. 14, No. 3, University of London, October 1952, p. 639. See also, Müstecip Ülküsal, *Dobruca ve Türkler (Dobruja and Turks)*, Ankara, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1987, p. 27.

including Bulgars, the ruler Dobrotitsa, who gave his name to today's Dobruja, merged the region under his rule in the 14th century.¹²

Historians in general agree upon that the name of Dobruja is derived from the name of Dobrotitsa or Dobrotici also known as the Despot of Dobruja, who was the ruler of the Principality of Karvuna in Bulgaria in the 14th century.¹³ Dobruja means 'Land of Dobrotitsa'. It was a quasi-independent polity in the region of modern Dobruja that split off from the Second Bulgarian Empire under the influence of the Byzantine Empire. The toponym Dobruja is seen in sources since the first half of the 15th century. It is acknowledged that Turks followed their ancient habit by giving the name of their ruler or their family to a region.¹⁴ Whereas, the ethnic origin of the ruler Dobrotitsa is disputed among historians. To some he was a Bulgarian prince.¹⁵ Some consider him as a Bulgarian noble offshoot of the Tatar dynasty descending from the Cuman Terteroba clan¹⁶ while most Romanian historians claim that he was a Vlach because the name Dobrotici or Dobrotita sounded a Slavic name.¹⁷ On the other hand, Mehmed Neşri, accepted as a reliable Ottoman historian of the 15th-16th century writes that his origin is Turkish.¹⁸ Another famous Turkish historian in the 12th century, İnalçık also defends that he was a Christianized Turk.¹⁹ Though it lies beyond the scope and aim of this study to decide upon the real origins of the ruler Dobrotitsa, it may be assumed that he was coming from the Turkish roots being baptized at an earlier stage.

The Turkish historiography asserts that the Byzantine Empire used to recruit soldiers in the 13th century from the Principality of Karvuna where mostly Christianized Oguz people lived. In this sense, it was crucial for the Byzantine to control the Turkish origin Oguz tribes in

tannica. com/place/Dobruja.

"Dobrogea otomana (Ottoman Dobruja)", Valentin Ciorbea (coord.), *Dobrogea: 1878-2008: e de mandatai european. Dobrogea (Dobruja: 1878-2008: Horizons opened by the European ita, Editura Ex Ponto, 2008, pp. 139-140. See also, Marie-Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca des, Ottomans et l'espace roumain, Istanbul, Editions Isis, 2006, pp. 309-321. 140. See also, Virgil Coman (Coord.). Dobrogea in izvoare cartografice otomane (sec. XVI- ottoman Cartographic Sources- XVI-XIX Centuries), Bucureşti, Editura Etnologica, 2015, p. 7. cit., p. 639.*

Romen Türk Dostluğunun Tarihi Temelleri (Historical Basis of the Romanian Turkish i Türkiye, Yıl 1995, no:3, p.302. See also, Yusuf Uralgiray, Romanya 'da Türk ve İslam Kültürü- ü, bugünü ve yarını (Turkish and Islamic Culture in Dobruja-Past, Present and Future of Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981, p. 299.

'Histoire des Roumains, III", Bucharest, 1937, p. 339. See also, Nicolae Iorga, "Notes d'un aux événements des Balcanes", Bulletin de la Section Historique de l'Académie Roumaine, See also, Anca Popescu, "The Region of Dobrudja Under Ottoman Rule", op.cit., pp. 3-4.

Cöymen, Faik Reşit Unat, Kitab-ı Cihannüma Neşri Tarihi, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1949,

Dobrudja", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, II, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 611 a-b, 1998. See also, Paul Wittek,

between 1406 this region for enabling its security. The Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologos granted this region (*Dobruca eli*) to the *Seljuki* Sultan Izzaddin Kaykavus after he recaptured Constantinople from the Franks in 1261. As soon as Kaykavus settled the rule of and founded his state in the Karvuna region, the Byzantines felt secured against any invasions coming from the north and also the attacks by the Bulgarian Tzar. Mi|n the area To assign the Dobruja region to them was the ideal solution: This corridor had to the through which the Tatars of the Golden Horde recurrently swept down for deep incursions into the Balkans, was nominally part of Bulgaria but in reality more or less a no- man's-land. Besides, Michael VIII was on bad terms with the Byzant Bulgarians and as the restorer of the empire would not have hesitated to dispose secured it of a territory once Byzantine had, though actually not in his possession. after Immediately after the reconquest of Constantinople he had reestablished Byzantine control of the Danube delta, where Vicina was an outlying possession, communicating with the empire only by sea. To back this outpost by filling its hinterland, Dobruja, with warlike allies and to erect there an obstacle against the Tatar incursions was excellent policy.²⁰

Izzaddin Kaykavus, a short while after having established his state, left for Constantinople permanently and his uncle Sari Saltuk took over the rule of the state in 1263. Christianized Turks who were later called *Gagauze* were the main constituent elements in this state and were directly attached to the Constantinople Patriarchate. After the death of San Saltuk a Cuman origin Christian commander named Balik became the ruler of this *Seljuk* state. Balik was in solidarity with the Byzantine Empress Anna of Savoy, and in 1346 dispatched his brothers Theodor and Dobrotitsa to help her with 1.000 cavalries in the civil war against John VI Kantakouzenos. The Empress, in return for this appreciable assistance awarded Dobrotitsa making him a commander in the ranks of the Byzantine army.²¹

The following year, after the death of Balik, his brother Dobrotitsa ascended the throne of Dobruja. Under his rule between 1347-1386, ruling with the title of be< "despot" after 1357, the principality came to its greatest power and extension and its capital was moved to Caliacra. In 1386, Dobrotitsa passed away, and was succeeded by Ivanko, who was referred as ' *'Dobruca- oğlu*' (the son of Dobruja) in the Ottoman sources.²² Soon after Ivanko being killed in a battle in 1388, Varna fell to the Ottomans in 1389. However, starting from 1390 and especially to 1417, most of Dobruja, with Durostor citadel (modern Silistra), was put under cea eel Batran of the Principality Wallachia.²³ Before this shift of power in 1414 :en devastated by Tatars coming from the north. In 1413, Varna

²⁰ Paul Wittek, *op.cit.*, p. 655.

²¹ Müstecip Ülküsal, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

²² Mustafa Ali Mehmet, *Some Thoughts on the Turkish Cultural Legacy in Dobruja*, Paper presented at Symposium held in Constanta on 24-25.09.2013, p. 6. See also Mevlana Mehmed Neşri's (He is the most famous historian of the era of Sultan Bayezid II, 1482-1512) *Cihannüma* prepared by Necdet Öztürk, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2014.

²³ Lauren(iu Radvjan, *At Europe's Borders: Medieval Towns in the Romanian Principalities*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2010, p. 508.

was handed back to Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos until 1444 when the Ottomans completely won the fierce battle of Varna.



2.2. Brief history of the Turkish Community in Dobruja

Historically, Dobruja served as a place of transit, refuge and settlement ground for a variety of ethnic and religious groups. Among others, various Turkish people (tribes of *Turari*) had different kinds of beliefs but especially *shamanism*, which is a way of life on how to connect with nature and all of creation, started to flow into Dobruja from the north as of the 5th century. This connect with nature and all of creation, started to flow into Dobruja from the north as of the 5th century. This connect with nature and all of creation, started to flow into Dobruja from the north as of the 5th century. As a result, an unstoppable influx of different Turkish tribes continued up to the 15th century, after of fact, as stated earlier, the region of Dobruja met Islam for the first time with the arrival of Kaykavus and San Saltuk in the 13th century at an age the region was called the land of *Kipchaks* or Cumans who are accepted as one of the Turkish tribes.²⁴ Yet, from this Islamic heritage which could reach this century is the legendary name of Sari Saltuk associated with his tomb in Babadag. Dobruja witnessed new and much bigger waves of Muslim Turkish people from the beginning of the 15th century, this time from the south shores of the Black Sea, from the direction of Anatolia. This move initialled totally a new era which could be named "Turkish-Islamic Period in the Balkans".²⁵

The period before Islam in Dobruja had greatly influenced culture and style of life in the region, shortly the whole civilization. In modern times the traces of this period are still seen in the geographic names and the rich culture of cuisine. On top of that, some claim that the vestiges of the process of building of the Romanian nationality can be found in this specific period of time.¹ On the other hand, arrival of the Ottomanic people and the rule left much deeper and longer impact in the region. All these layers of historical events would be reflected in some complex ways on the Muslims and on their religious and educational institutions, including the Muslim Seminary of Babadag/Medgidia in the future.²⁶ However, before elaborating on those

The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, Leiden- 2, pp. 241-242. Ahmet, op.cit., p. 5.
traçcu, Stoica Lascu, ' 'Dobrudja under Ottoman Rule' ' Stoica Lascu, Melek Fetisleam (eds.), *Research in Turkology and Eurasian Studies. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Tasin Gemil on 70th birthday*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2013, p. 688.

²⁴ Virgil Ciociltai

Boston, Brill, 201

²⁵ Mustafa Ali Mel

²⁶ Gheorghe Dumit

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lasting impacts, it is deemed necessary to look closer at the historical developments evolved in the region.

Dobruja was invaded in the 7th century by Bulgars, who went further west to establish the first Bulgarian state. After those Bulgars were assimilated by the Slavic tribes and lost their Turkic language, late in the 9th century they accepted Orthodox Christianity under Kneaz Boris. Consequently, modern-day Bulgarian historians have regarded Dobruja as their native land, a rather unsubstantiated claim that has affected Bulgarian policy towards Turkey and Romania up to now. In the 11th and 13th centuries, some Pechenegs and Cumans from the northeastern plains crossed the Danube into Dobruja, were converted to Orthodox Christianity by the Byzantine rulers, and became part of the local population. The Cumans were a Turkish speaking people pushed south by the Mongols and Tatars.

The first major ethnic Turkish settlement in Dobruja occurred around 1263, after 12.000 "*cadir*" or tents of approximately 60-70.000 *Turcomans* under *Seljuki* Sultan Izzaddin Kaykavus who was defeated by the Mongol army in central and eastern Anatolia sought refuge in the lands of the Byzantium of which Dobruja was a part. Emperor Michael VIII Paleologus had retaken Constantinople, restarted the primacy of Orthodox Christianity in 1261, and set to retake the Balkans from the former crusade commanders who had established a feudal order, especially in the southern Balkans, modeled on the feudal regime in Western Europe. In need of soldiers, Emperor Paleologus settled the *Turcomans* under the leadership of Kaykavus on the western shores of the Black Sea in Dobruja.

Kaykavus was supported by San Saltuk, called also Saltuk *Baba* or *Baba* Saltuk, who settled in the northern part of Dobruja and founded a town which still bears the name Babadag, meaning mountain of *Baba*. The term *Baba* (father) implies leadership in Turkish and was used to be given to the mystic *dervishes* who were devoted Muslims, but also adopted reconciliative Islam and later played a major role in the Ottoman conquests and conversions to Islam in the Balkans.

Sari Saltuk believed to be a follower of Hodja Ahmed Yesevi who was this the symbol name of the Turkish *sufism* living in the 12th century, preached settlement. liberal, tolerant, warm, humanist, open-minded and worldly Islam. This Turkish tribes understanding of Islam did not cut ties with the material world and tried to connect the living earth with the other world after the death. Hence, he could penetrate into the Christian Orthodox society and could convert some of them into Islam.²⁷ As have its origins mentioned, it was the first time that Dobruja faced the values and belief system of Islam with

²⁷ **Kemal H. Karpaz**, *Dağı Delen Irmak (The River Transcending the Mountain)*, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2010, p. 18. th

Kaykavus and Sari Saltuk played an important role for the other non-Muslim under the rule of the state of Golden Horde to adopt Islam with a pure understanding of the religion. Eventually, one of the Princes of the Golden Horde named Noghai accepted Islam and started to fight in the name of Islam in 1265 under the influence of this *Seljuki* group of people. The name of Noghai assumed by a part of Dobrujan Tatars must in the settlement of that period of time. It is widely acknowledged that Sari Saltuk Baba built a place of worship in Babadag around 1265-67 and also used it as a sort of informal school where he invited locals to accept the religion of Islam. This school became the founding stone of the famous *madrassa* and seminary in Babadag in the 17th century and the later in the 20th century the seminary in it would have prominent impact on the Turkish community. It may be easily claimed that Sari Saltuk put the first brick of this prominent educational center and provided framework for the upcoming generations.

Originally known from the chronicles of Ibni Bibi, an Iranian historian whose real name is Nasiretdin Huseyin bin Mohammad lived in the 13th century, and Yazicioglu Ali (An Ottoman historian lived in the 15th century famous with his book titled "*Tarih-i Al-i Selcuk*" on the history of Anatolian Seljuks) and other sources that Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) tomb discovered the tomb of Saltuk Baba-which is the most important witness of the presence of the *Seljuki* Turks in Dobruja²⁸ and built there a mosque, bath and a seminary after he conquered



²⁸ Ali Aksu, *Tarihi Gelişimi İçerisinde Siyasi, Kültürel ve Eğitim Açısından Romanya Müslüman Türklerinin Dünü Bugünü* (The Past and the Present of the Romanian Muslim Turks from the the Political, Cultural and Educational Perspectives in the Context of Historical Development), Bucharest, TİAD Publications, 2003, p. 6.

Kilia (Chilia) and Akkerman (Cetatea Alba) in 1484. Before Bayezid's discovery of Baba's tomb, around 1470 or so, Cem Sultan, the son of Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481) the however Constantinople, wintered with his army in Dobruja-probably in Silistra. A poet conqueror of dedicated to art, Cem Sultan listened during the long winter nights to poems and C songs of the local composers as well as to stories about Saltuk Baba. Impressed, he then ordered Ebul Hayir Rumi, a court adviser, to gather all the stories of Saltuk Baba into one book. The result, after seven years of work, was a fairly compiled San good-sized epic, the *Saltukname*, the book of Saltuk. It Saltuk's legends, wars, deeds. miracles and adventures reflecting his thoughts and e in Latin script, the book Availab Asia, includes a variety of stories that took place in Central and the Balkans at various Anatolia times, some dealing with Christian subjects, and all generously attributed to Saltuk Baba. Even though it is widely believed that his tomb is in



Babadag, there are many tombs dedicated to his name in various Anatolian cities and in Albania, Kosova, Macedonia and Bosnia. All this indicates that he has come from Anatolia as a messenger of Islam, preached the religion in the Balkans and died in Babadag. A rigorous critical analysis of the *Saltukname* could uncover interesting facts about the history of the Balkans and Romanians. It is no doubt that the Turkish tribes coming from the north and the *Seljuks* under the Kaykavuz together with the legendary Sari Saltuk left undeletable traces in Dobruja. For instance, even today traces of the language of the Pechenegs and Cumans can be found in the Turkish spoken by the Turks of the Balkans, including the *Gagauze*.²⁹ After San Saltuk's death around 1300s, some Muslim settlers returned to Anatolia, the rest under the influence of the Byzantine Church converted into Orthodox Christians. However, they kept on using their native language, which was Turkish and out of this converted old Turkish tribes and *Seljuks* a Turkish speaking Orthodox group appeared on the stage of history. They were called *Gagauze*, a name which was derived most probably from Kaykavus meaning his followers. Whereas, another thesis defends that the root of the name of *Gagauze* goes back to the *Uz* who are regarded as the western branch of *Oguz* tribes coming from the Central Asian steppes.³⁰

Dobruja, claimed as the ancient Romanian land by the nationalist Romanian historiography³¹, -In essence, it was rather a transit corridor which was inhabited by a mixture of different ethnicities- was conquered in stages. The Ottomans expanded their rule to the south of the Danube in the first two decades of the 15th century-which would lead to the dislocation of the Transdanubian Romanian territory from the political-administrative system of the Romanian principalities. First, the Bulgarian kingdoms in Tarnovo in 1393 and in Vidin in 1396 were taken under control of the Ottoman rule, and then the Wallachia suffered more attacks. Though, through his clever and energetic defensive policy, Mircea the Great or Mircea the Old, as well as his descendant, Mihail, to a lesser extent, could maintain, for a period the freedom of the Romanian Danubian-Pontic land, the Ottomans succeeded the completion of their conquest of Dobruja only after many battles.

²⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, "Foreword: The Story of an Institution and a Former Student's Memories", *The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia-Documents and Memory*, Adriana Cupcae, Manuela Marin, Metin Omer (eds.), Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2016, pp. 137-138. See also, "Saltuk Name" by Ebü'l Hayr-ı Rûmî written between 1473-1480 prepared and updated by Necati Demir and Mehmet Dursun Erdem, İstanbul, Destan Publications, 2007.

³⁰ Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk Kavimleri ve Devletleri* (Turkish Tribes and States), Ankara, Murat Kitapevi, 1992, p. 67.

³¹ Adrian Radulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria romanilor dintre Dunare și Mare, Dobrogea* (History of the Romans between the Danube and the Sea, Dobruja), București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979, pp. 15-121.

The installing of the Ottoman rule in Dobruja was concluded in two stages on which the contemporary Romanian historiography and the researches of the Turkish specialists corroborate, namely marked by the years 1419-20 and 1484³². In the first stage, the effort of the together with army of the Wallachia, led by Voivode Mihail, the descendant of Old at the throne Mircea the Great of the country, the Ottomans succeeded during the campaign from 1419 to domination in the most part of Dobruja, until, inclusively, the citadels and Enisala, which became boundary citadels at the northern border of the Ottoman Empire. The land conquered became the *Dar-ill Islam*, which means Land of Islam or House of Peace, which was entrusted for administration to the *Udjbei* (Uc) from the *Udju* of Dobruja that extended its jurisdiction until Isaccea, which was created in 1415.

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foreign clear sign of Ottoman interest in the two trade centres, which was renewed during the

Mehmed crucial The bolder line marked by the two citadels Kilia and Akkerman continued
part in to be the main Romanian principalities for over a century until 1484 when the

initiative of Ottoman Empire took place. It was the moment that marked the end
of second taking Dobruja.³³ In fact, already back in 1419-1420 an Ottoman campaign led by

Celebi towards the Lower Danube included Kilia and Akkerman among this
the Crimean particular one and successive campaigns did not yield the expected result.³⁴

Kilia and

military presence of II and Bayezid II. Both ports also had a strategic value, and Kilia played a
crusading projects from the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg until the fall of

Constantinople.³⁵ Whereas, Prince Stephen the Great viewed the conquest of

**Condițiile instaurării dominației otomane în Dobrogea" (Conditions of the Installment of the
ion in Dobruja), Studii istorice sud-est europene, București, Editura Academiei Republicii a,**
1974, p. 87.

**See also, Mihai Maxim, O istorie a Relațiilor Romano-Otomane, cu documente noi din arhivele
Perioda Clasică (1400-1600) (A History of the Roman-Ottoman Relationship, with new e
Turkish archives Vol. I, Classic Period-1400-1600), Braila, Editura Istros a Muzeului Brailei,**

**Lupta antiotomana a Tarilor Romane în anii 1419-1420 (The Anti-Ottoman Struggle of the
in the Years 1419-1420)", Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj-Napoca, 19, 1976, so,
Virgil Ciociltan, "Competiția pentru controlul Dunării inferioare (Competition for Lower ,
Revista de Istorie, 35, 1982, pp. 1191-1203.**

³⁵ Liviu Pilat, *Ov*

the 15th Century,

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 19-

the two fortresses by the Ottomans would have jeopardised the security of Moldavia, Hungary, Poland, and all of Christendom. However, the situation in the region was complicated by the fluctuation of the political and military relations in northern Black Sea region together with the subordination of Moldavia to the Ottoman Porte. The latter event significantly increased the political pressure on Moldavia, thus limiting Stephen the Great's room of manoeuvre.³⁶ As



diu Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during* Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018, p. 60. 123.

a result of successful military campaign of Bayezid II in 1484, Dobruja became a constituent part of the Empire belonging to the great *Beylerbeylik* of Rumelia. However, Stephen the Great continued to disturb the Ottomans for a certain period of time, and the Sultan decided to send back-up troops to Caffa and to repair the fortresses of Kilia and Akkerman. He also put into implementation of a plan for dethroning Stephen the Great by using military force.³⁷ While distrust and animosity between the Ottomans and the Moldavian Prince prevailed in general terms, it is also interesting to see that they had collaborated against the threat of Poland.³⁸

From the beginning of the conquests, the Romanian principalities continuously attacked the Ottomans to take the lost territories back. Those actions of re-conquering Dobruja by the descendants of Mircea and Mihail at the throne of the Wallachia were based on the certitude of the inheritance rights on this ancient territory. However, inclusion of Dobruja, Silistra, or Podunavia in medieval Wallachia can at best be mentioned as a project, and not as a reality. It is a failed project of extending the country beyond the Danube.³⁹ Dan the Second succeeded in 1423 to re-occupy for a short period the Transdanubian territory. In the fifth decade of the same century, Vlad Dracul succeeded the same thing. So did his son in 1462, Vlad the Impaler (Tepeş) to impose domination in Dobruja following the attacks directed from his territory. As stated above, Stephen the Great tried his best to repel the Ottoman forces in order recapture two strategic castles on the northern Black Sea shore. At his return, Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul) performed more actions that aimed at the liberation of Dobruja. He often attacked Dobruja between 1593-1595 and put the local rulers and people under trouble. In 1595 a major war with the Ottomans took place near the citadel of Harşova which ended with surrender of over 7.000 Ottoman soldiers.⁴⁰ It is significant, in the same context, the intention formulated by the Voivode of the Union to include Dobruja within the borders of the Romanian unitary state from 1600 onwards.⁴¹ Romanian historians debated the role of Michael the Brave in unifying Romania. To historians like Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Şincai, Damaschin Bojinca and Mihail Kogalniceanu, Michael appears as a great

³⁷ Nagy Pienaru, "Moldova şi Imperiul Otoman. Solia lui Țefan eel Mare din 1485 (Moldova and the Ottoman Empire. The Message of Stephen the Great in 1485)", *Putna. Ctitorii ei si lumea lor*, Bucharest, Oscar Print, 2011, pp. 85-93.

³⁸ Liviu Pilât, Ovidiu Cristea, *op.cit.*, pp. 251-252.

³⁹ Marian Coman, *Putere şi Teritoriu-Tara Romaneasca medievala (secolele XIV-XVI)(?o\\cr and Territory-Medieval Romanian Country (14th-16th centuries)*, Bucureşti, Editura Polirom, 2013, p. 1042 (internet library-epub extension).

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 1131-1132.

⁴¹ Tudor Mateescu, "Dobruja According to Michael the Brave's Plan", *Reveu des etudes sud-est europeenes*XY, 2, 1977, pp. 273-278.

warrior, a hero indeed, but certainly not a unifier. For the first time, Aaron Florian gives an important place to his actions in the



foundation of Romanian national unity in his book titled "Quick Idea of the History of the Principality of Wallachia" published in 1837. We observe that Michael the Brave underwent a process of transfiguration after the 1830s up to 1860. From being a warrior and Christian hero, he becomes a symbol of the Romanian unity. Thanks to what Nicolae Balcescu wrote in History of the Romanians under the Voivode Michael the Brave", he was set up decisively and definitively as the first founder of the modern Romania.⁴²

While wars were waged, in each stage of conquests, the Ottoman administration settled new Turkish colony groups in the region. Sultan Bayezid I brought Tatars to the area of Babadag. Later on Sultan Mehmet I colonized both Tatars and Turcomans from Anatolia in Dobruja. Semi-nomadic Turcomans were also settled in the region of Dobruja for the military purposes. According to one of the registration books dated 1573, these Turcomans were given



⁴² Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2001, pp. 40-42.

lands in 106 villages, 28 out of them in *Tekhfurgölü* (Techirgöl) *kaza* and 70 in Harşova *kaza*.

The famous Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi of the 17th century in his "*Seyahatname*", meaning book of travels, wrote that Sultan Bayezid II settled Anatolian Turks and janissaries together with" atars from the north of Black Sea in Dobruja after he captured the region from Bulgars, Vlachs and Moldavians.⁴³

The re massive Muslim Turkish settlement in Dobruja took place in the late 15th and 16th centuries with the obligatory dislocation of people which was taken as a security measure face of *Alevite* or *Shiite* rebellions in eastern and central Anatolia instigated by in the appearance, some seven or eight large Turcoman tribes rebelled against the Shia Iran. imposition of taxes on sheep. However, the real reason behind their rebellion was Ottoman the provocation of the Safavids, who were vying for supremacy in the region. state' The rebel tribes accepted Shah Ismail Safavid of Persia as their leader, who teachings into turned the pacifist Shia a revolutionary political ideology directed against Sunni- Ottomans, the defenders of >x Islam. After Shah Ismail was defeated in definitive Orthodox terms by the army of the Ottoman Sultajn Selim I in 1514, the overwhelming majority of the Turcoman tribes retreated into western Iran, today's south Azerbaijan. Yet fairly large number of Shiites, known as *Kizilbas* meaning red-headed, because of their red hats, remained in Anatolia and when an opportunity arose, again rebelled. The Ottoman government then settled them in south Dobruja, in the region of Silistra, mainly in the area known as *Deliorman*, which induced the Romanian

⁴³ Mihai Maxim,

⁴⁴ Evliya Çelebi,

name Teleorman, and in north Dobruja, south of the town of Săcacea. This name, in fact, derives from Baba Isak, an Anatolian *Alevite* rebel.⁴⁴ This example showed how the Dobrujan lands got populated by various Turkish origin people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. This diversity of human stock would be enriched further the ages to come.

While Dobruja was passing through an unending struggle between the Ottomans and the Wallachian Princes in the 16th century, many Tatars from Crimea and especially from Bassarabia (*Bucak*) continued to be settled in the region. In essence, the Turkification process of Dobruja was complete in the early 17th century.⁴⁵ After the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 1783, the Tatars left the peninsula *en masse* towards Ottoman land, which is also called *Aktoprak* or Pure Lands, using either by road or sea routes. Some of those who traveled on land passed through Dobruja preferred to stay in the region as they were lured of the mild climate and fertile lands. Then afterwards, the Tatar migration to Dobruja from Crimea invariably continued. However, the highest number of Tatar migrants from Crimea came to Dobruja in the aftermath of the war of 1853-56. According to one estimation, between 1856-1860 the number of Tatar migrants to Dobruja reached 100.000⁴⁶ According to the Turkish sources, a total of 595.000 immigrants, mostly from Crimea plus a few from Kazan, found refuge in the Ottoman lands. Of these, approximately 120.000 were settled in Dobruja and in Bulgaria, although after the 1880s many of these settlers moved to Anatolia. The Russian sources place the total number of emigrants from Crimea between 1856 and 1862 at approximately 230- 250.000, or about the half the figure given by the Turkish sources.⁴⁷ A leading Tatar intellectual Mustecip Ulkiisal quotes from Al. P. Arbore, a Romanian historian, that the population grew to 240.000 in all Dobruja in the year of 1866 proving the truthness in the substance of the name of "Tatarian Dobruja".⁴⁸

To accommodate such a big flow of population, the town known in the past centuries as *Karasu* was reconfigured in 1856-57 according to the plans drawn in Istanbul and financed by the Ottoman government. The sultan of the time, Abdulmecid (1839-61), whose name was given to the town, wanted to build the city as a center of trade and commerce, and to continue

⁴⁴ Kemal H. Karpat, "Foreword: The Story of an Institution and a Former Student's Memories", *op.cit.*, p. 138.

⁴⁵ Frederick De Jong, "The Turks and the Tatars of Romania", *Turcica. Revue des etudes turques*, Vol. 18, 1986, p. 167.

⁴⁶ Francois Bianconi, *Ethnographie et statistique de la Turquie d'Europe et de la Grèce: races musulmanes et Raï'as*, Paris, A. Lassailly, 1877.

⁴⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, "Ottoman Urbanism. The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, 1856-1878", *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, Winter 1984-1985, Vol. 3. no.1, Madison Wisconsin, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Müstecip Ülküsal, *op. cit.*, p. 35. See also, Al. P. Arbore, ' 'Contributiuni la studiul așezarilor tătarilor și turcilor

the tradition of panair or fair of trade, which had been the hallmark of *Karasu* for centuries even attracting! foreign merchants. The town of Medgidia was thus born. Sultan's *ferman* bears the date of September 2, 1856 which should be considered as the official date of founding of the town. This document, together with other pieces of correspondence concerning the establishment of the town, is registered in the Turkish Prime Ministry Archives.⁴⁹

As the Ottomans utilized Dobruja only as a transit route, military depot and garrison for their campaigns to the north and east, the relatively fertile soil and mild climate helped revive the region's trade and crafts and increased the size of its diverse Arab families population. Even 150 Syrian *offellahs*, meaning farmers, were brought to the Later in 1843 region between 1831-1833.⁵⁰ a group of Arabs originally from *Berriyetuşam*, today's Syria, a total of 558 persons comprised of 170 families previously employed in rug making factories were settled in nine villages in the vicinity of *Hacioglu Pazarcigi*, now Tolbuhin in Bulgaria and *Yemsinli*.⁵¹ These settlements proved that due to long and intermittent wars with Russia, Dobruja suffered from scarcity of population during the first half of the 19th century resulting in the large areas of land remaining uncultivated and, therefore, bringing low revenues to the government. This need for the region. more inhabitants was met from different parts of the Empire further solidifying Islamization o

As long as Dobruja was under the rule of a Muslim power, the maintenance of religion and culture was not of concern to its Muslim population. Practically, all of its major towns and villages had their own mosques, schools, and separate cemeteries, as well as similar facilities for the other groups. On the eve of passing to the Romanian rule, Dobruja's Turkish and Tatar Muslims were the majority according to some censuses and the Ottoman *Salnames* or Year Books. Between 1873-1874 there were 100.000 Muslims and 60.000 Christian inhabitants living in the sand-drifts of Tulcea and Varna.⁵² The Turks were divided into *Kizilbas* and Sunni, and the *Kizilbas* were divided into *Oduncu* (lumbermen), *Komurcu* (charcoal makers) and other groups. An important group of Muslims, who were looked down upon by almost everybody, were the Muslim Roma (Tigani turci), who comprised several

in Dobrogea (Contributions to the Study of the Tatar and Turkish Settlements in Dobruja)", *Analele Dobrogei*, Vol. X, Bucharest, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁰ Kemal H. Karb: at, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

⁵¹ George Grigoie, , "Muslims in Romania", *ISIM Newsletter* 3, 1999, p. 99. *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri*

⁵² (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), *İrade, Meclis-i Vala no. 4805, correspondence of 6 Cemaziyelwel 1266 (20 March 1850).*

⁵² Kozak Gyula, *Muslims in Romania: Integration Models, Categorization and Social Distance*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2009, p. 11.

groups, each named according to their occupation, such as *Kalaici*. The Tatar Turks were mainly from Crimea and *Bucak* (the south of historical Moldavia). There are still three living Tatar dialects in Dobruja; the Crimean



dialect or the steppe dialect (in Tatar: *krım* or *sol till*, 70%), the Noghai dialect (in Tatar: *noghai till*, 20%) and the seaside dialect (in Tatar *yahboyi till*, 10%).⁵³

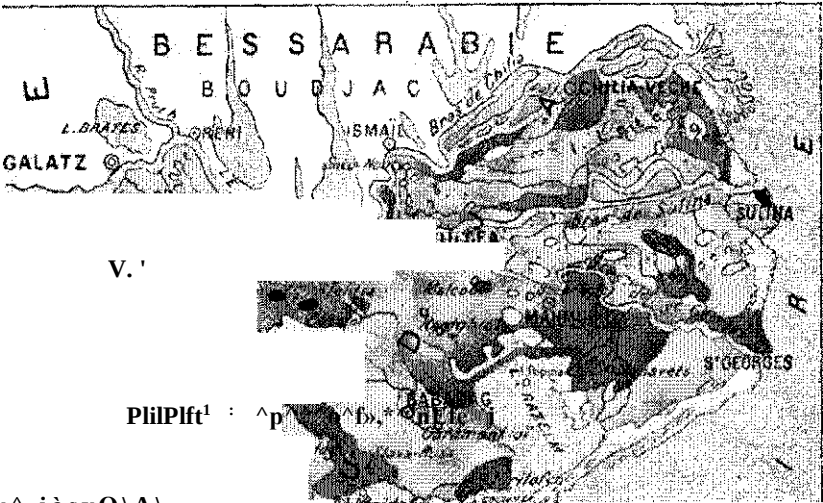
The region of Dobruja was also inhabited by Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Germans of other faiths. In another words, the population of Dobruja has been very diverse. Though the majority of the population was Muslim, Evliya Celebi's "*Seyahatname*" of the 17th century attests on many occasions to the mixture of faiths and ethnicities in Dobruja.⁵⁴ And the new immigrants in the middle of the 19th century were not all Muslims either. There were Jews, a fairly large number of Germans, and many Romanians. The Ottoman archives contain a variety of documents indicating that most of the German- speaking communities in Dobruja came from Russia, mostly in two waves after 1829 and 1854 wars. Additional Romanians settled in Dobruja in the 1840s, and especially after 1860, increasing greatly their presence in the territory.⁵⁵ Each of these different groups was further divided into a variety of subgroups, some of them old inhabitants, others relatively recent arrivals. For instance, the Russian group included Ukrainians, Kahols, Lipovans or Stara Verii (Old Believers) who were accepted as refugees from Russia after they refused to submit to Peter the Great's reforms. The Stara Verii also were divided into Bispopi and Popi (without priests and with priests). Villages such as Slava Rusa, Slava Cercheza, and Jurilovca were entirely Russian speaking and still use their language today. The Germans in the Cogealac, *Cukurova* (Ciucurova) villages and elsewhere, which had also Russian and Tatar inhabitants, had come in the 19th century from Bessarabia after the area was occupied by Russia in 1812. Despite assimilation and emigration, significant minorities, notably Turks and Tatars, remain in both parts of Dobruja today. This multiculturalism embedded with peaceful coexistence of different faiths and ethnicities continued till present and called as Dobruja model of life.

⁵³ George Grigore, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

⁵⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *op.cit.*, pp. 134-146.

⁵⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, "Ottoman Urbanism. The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, 1856-1878", *op.cit.*, p. 9.

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2.3. Administrative Structure of Dobruja During the Ottoman rule

Before going into details of the Ottoman administrative system in Dobruja, one needs to know the general administrative structure of the Empire which continuously evolved during year history. There were mainly two eras of the Ottoman administrative history⁶² first was the initial organisation that evolved with the rise of the Empire and organisation



the second was the organisation after extensive administrative reforms of 1864 during the *Tanzimat* period.

The Ottoman Empire was first subdivided into provinces (*beylerbeyliks*) in the late 14th century. The governor or *beylerbeyi* of each province was appointed by the sultan. The governor played the major role in allocating fiefs in his province or in later ages *eyalet*, and had a responsibility for maintaining order and dispensing justice. His household, like the sultan's in the capital, was the political centre of the province. A province was further subdivided into *sandjaks* which were ruled by *sandjak beys* (*sancakbeyi*), selected from the high military ranks by the central government. The office of *sandjak bey* resembled that of *beylerbeyi* on a more modest scale. *Beylerbeyis* had authority over all the *sancakbeyis* in a region. The term *sandjak* means 'flag' or 'standard' and, in times of war, the cavalymen holding fiefs in his *sandjak*, gathered under his banner. The troops of each *sandjak*, under the command of their governor, would then assemble as an army and fight under the command of the *beylerbeyi* of the *eyalet*. In this way, the structure of command on the battlefield resembled the hierarchy of provincial government. Apart from that *kazas* were further smaller subdivisions under the *sandjaks*. Toward the end of the 16th century, the *beylerbeyliks* began to be known as *eyalets*⁵⁶

It is considered extremely difficult to define the number and exact borders of Ottoman provinces and domains as their borders were changed constantly either due to wars or administrative decisions. Until the *Tanzimat* period, which started in 1839 with the proclamation of the *Tanzimat Edict*, the borders of administrative units fluctuated, reflecting the changing strategies of the Ottomans, the emergence of new threats in the region, and the rise of powerful local lords. All the subdivisions were very unequal in regard of area and population, and the presence of numerous nomadic tribes contributed to the extreme variability of the population figures.⁵⁷

Sultan Mahmud II reigned between 1808-1839 made a major effort to centralize the administration of the crumbling Empire in 1834. He divided the Ottoman territory into 28 large units called *vilayets* (provinces), 31 province subdivisions (*sanjdaksj*) and 54 independent units (*voivodas*). With the enactment of the *Tanzimat Edict* the old division was restored, the province-sized units once more termed as *eyalets* and their major subdivisions as *livas* or *sandjaks*. In

⁵⁶ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The A to Z of the Ottoman Empire*, United Kingdom, Scarecrow Press, 2003, p. 41.

⁵⁷ Gabor Agoston, Bruce Alan Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, New York, Infobase Publishing, 2010, p. 36. See also, Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, Trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973.

addition, new subdivisions under *sandjaks* were created: *kazas* and *nahiyes* meaning neighbourhoods.⁵⁹

In 1864 another reorganization was made in this field, and the *Vilayet* Law was promulgated, and by this law hierarchy of administrative units was officially established in the order of *vilayet*, *liva/sandjak*, *kaza* and village council to which the 1871 *Vilayet* Law added the *nahiye* Law added again the *vilayet* and councils.⁶⁰ At the same time, the law left to the governors vast scope for independent action as well as responsibility, as part of a system intended to achieve a large degree of efficiency in ruling the provinces.

The new provincial system could not have been introduced in all provinces at the same time, due to both insufficient funds and a lack of experience in administering the new law. Therefore, the Vidin, and newly established Danube *Vilayet*, composed of the former *eyalets* of Silistra, was Nis 1865 the selected to be the pilot project or an exemplary model for the others. By *vilayets* of four Danube, Aleppo, Erzurum and Bosnia were fully organized and in operation. Damascus, Tripolitania, and Edirne followed the suit the next year. In 1867, 13 new *vilayets* were organized, including Bursa, Izmir, Trabzon, Salonica, Prizren, and Iskodra, with Crete island being formed as a *vilayet* by Ali Pasha in 1871. By the end of 1876 autonomous the new provincial system was in operation all over the Empire, with the sole exception of the Arabian Peninsula and autonomous provinces like Egypt.⁶¹

Though Dobruja had been an integral part of the Ottoman state from the 15th century to 1878, surprisingly it never became an administrative center. The administrative structuring of Dobruja during the Ottoman rule in the first place aimed at satisfying the economic and strategic interests of the Ottoman Porte. Initially, it was organized as a boundary province (*vilayet, uç*), appearing under the name of Dobruja *Ucu*⁶², then being included in the unit of administrative Silistra, administrative subdivision, at its turn, the *Beylerbeylik* of : 16th century the e Rumelia. In subdivisions of the administrative unit of Silistra, named *kaza*, saccea, Harşova, th were Babadag, Tekfurgolii with the residence at Karasu later str. During the 20s of the Chilia, 18th century, as a result of the increase of the strategic

Medgidia,

⁵⁹ Kemal H. Sili Karatoprak, "Ottoman Urbanism. The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, *■it.*, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Martha Mundy and Richard Saumarez Smith, *Governing Property, Making the Modern State: Law, Administration i Ottoman Syria, United Kingdom, I.B.Tauris, 2007, p. 50.*

⁶¹ Stanford Jay Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Cambridge, rsity Press, 1977, p. 90.*

⁶² Anca Ghiata, "Toponimie și geografie istorica in Dobrogea medievala și moderna (Toponymy and Historical • cdieva! and Modern Dobruja)", *Memoriile Sectiei de Științe Istorice, București, Academia iste Romania, Series IV, Tom V, 1980, pp. 41-44.*

⁶² Anca Ghiata, *Geography in JV Republicii Social*

and military importance of the Ottoman province from the Lower Danube a new *Vilayet-Özü* or Silistra- was formed, divided from the *Vilayet* of Rumelia, formed of the administrative units of Silistra and Nicopol. The administrative unit of Silistra included the *kazas* Tulcea, Isaccea, Macin, Babadağ, Harşova, Mangalia, Silistra, Karasu with the *nahiye* (sub-district) Constanta and *Hacıoğlu Pazarcık*. The residence of the Pasha of Özü (Oceakov) was either here or at Babadag-town close to the north Dobrujan region, where the Ottoman armies crossed the Danube in their European warlike expeditions circumscribed to the Russian-Austrian-Ottoman battles. At the end of 18th century, after the conquest of Oceakov by Russia in 1788 the Vilayet with this name was abolished, Dobruja being still included in the administrative unit of Silistra (the regions Tulcea, Isaccea, Macin, Harşova, Babadağ and Silistra), and the Sandjak from the Border (including the regions Mangalia and Constanta); at their turn, these two administrative units or *pashaliks* were included in the Vilayet de Rusciuk as presented in the administrative structure in 1850. A decade later in 1862 in conformity with the registry containing data regarding the structure of the Ottoman administrative system, the Vilayet Silistra included the Danubian *sandjaks* {*fliva* Timavi), Sulina (with the regions Sulina and Cilia), Tulcea and Medgidia, the regions Mangalia and Constanta belonged to the administrative unit were included in the administrative unit of Varna.

This administrative division was kept until the reorganization in 1864 when-in order to strengthen economically and militarily the Dobrujan border line-it was created the *Vilayet* Danube (*Tuna Vilayeti*) that included more administrative units from the area of Vidin until the Mouths of Danube. In the new economic policy of the *Tanzimat*, the *sandjak* Tulcea had an important role in the area; it was made of 7 regions (Sulina, Tulcea, Macin, Harşova, Babadağ, Medgidia and Constanta) and 3 *nahiyes* (Chilia, Mahmudia and Isaccea), the region Mangalia belonged to the administrative unit of Varna and other villages from the south-west of Constanta county belonged to the region Silistra (included in the administrative unit Rusciuk, today Ruse in Bulgaria).⁵⁸ The Turkish historian Karpas truly puts forward that the construction of the railroad line linking Boğazköy (Cernavoda) to Constanta passing through Medgidia and the establishment of a dynamic trade center in Medgidia increased the administrative and economic importance of Dobruja, as is shown by the record of administrative change after 1860. Parallel with this development, Medgidia, not Constanta, was made the administrative

⁵⁸ Gheorghe Dumitraşcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 688.

seat in the same year. And with the enactment of the new *Vilayet* Laws of 1864 and 1871 Medgidia retained its status as district capital.

As stated above, the *Vilayet* Danube⁶⁴ was meant to become a model province, showcasing the progress achieved by the Porte through the modernising *Tanzimat* reforms, all other modelled on the *Vilayet* Danube were ultimately established throughout the *vilayets* Empire by 1876. Ruscuc was chosen as the capital of the *Vilayet* due to its strategic position as a key Ottoman port on the Danube.⁵⁹

The *Vilayet* Danube had an Administrative Assembly that included state officials appointed by Istanbul as well as six representatives, three Muslims and three non-Muslims elected from among the inhabitants of the province. Non-Muslims also participated in the civil and commercial courts that were based on a secular code of law and justice. Christian schools were also introduced, but this reform was abolished after it⁶⁶

The province was met by strong opposition by the populace.

The province disappeared after the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, when its North eastern part (Northern Dobruja) was incorporated into Romania, some of its Western territories into Serbia, while the central and Southern regions made up most of the autonomous principality of Bulgaria and a part of Eastern Rumelia.

Like other contemporary states the Ottomans too were in search of the system within the best ruling the borders of their far reaching Empire. That was one of the reasons along with others laying behind many attempts to restructure the administrative divisions. The Dobruja region from north to south was precious for harboring its large Turkish-Tatar community for the Empire and was put in different administrative structures in time owing to drastic changes either huge increase or decrease in its population's figures.

2.4. Significance

of Dobruja for the Ottoman Empire

In a general outline, the significance of Dobruja region emanates from its unique geographical position between Asian and European continents; between old Russian steppes and the Balkans.⁶⁰ The Ottomans noticed this uniqueness at very early ages, and regarded the

at, "Ottoman Urbanism. The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye, *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
Bruce Alan Masters, *op.cit.*, p. 172.

⁵⁹ Gabor Agoston.

⁶⁰ Kemal H. Karpat, *Dağı Delen Irmak (The River Transcending the Mountain)*, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

Dobruja regioili as a strategic asset as well as an economic bonanza. The Danube and the Black



Sea being major water ways surrounding this region were to be controlled strictly against the expansionist the Austria-Hungarian and Russian Empires. Consequently, the Sublime Porte organized Dobruja as a real bastion, directed against any initiative that could endanger the Ottoman supremacy upon the Danube and the Black Sea⁶¹

This also explains in a clear cut way why the Ottomans granted the Romanian Principalities the role of buffer states, and concentrated to keep the Danube as the border line in the north. Although paying tribute to the Porte and supplying it with food items, the Romanian principalities were in many ways autonomous provinces. Indeed, Mircea cel Batran of Wallachia and Stefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great) of Moldavia signed the pact of submission to the Porte in 1417 and 1489 respectively, in order to limit the hegemonic and cultural influences of Hungary and Poland by remaining under the nominal suzerainty of Istanbul. In the following period Romanian rulers strongly committed to idea of conciliation with the Turks rather than conflicting with them so as to preserve their identity against the Russian expansionism. Romanian historians admit that Romania remained Latin among the Slavic people thanks to the Ottoman suzerainty.⁶² The Ottomans too, preferred the *status quo* to a drastic revenge even when Vlad Tepes invaded Dobruja and impaled many Muslims. They did not conquer the Romanian Principalities by using force, and they also agreed not to settle Muslims on those lands for a combination of strategic and economic reasons.

In the aftermath of the heavy defeat of the Ottoman forces at the siege of Vienna in 1683, Dobruja became almost a permanent place of confrontation between the Russian, Austrian and Ottoman armies. And with the inception of the so-called Eastern Question, which in essence meant the fight on the distribution of the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire struggling in an obvious political, economic and military decline, the region increasingly witnessed much frequent and brutal wars. Therefore, Dobruja was transformed into a real military camp, on its territory passing the military roads that were crossed by the Ottoman troops that were in offensive towards the north-Danubian and Pontic territories, but also the Tsar troops that took the same roads, southwards. There were built many citadels, well bond, especially on the line of the Danube, as at Isaccea, Tulcea, Harşova, but also on the maritime territory, as in the case of the citadel *Karaharman*, today Vadu, whose period of glory vanished in the middle of the 18th century.

⁶¹ Gheorghe Dumitraşcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 688.

⁶² Tahsin Cemil, "Romen-Osmanlı Münasebetlerine Dair Bazı Mülâhazalar" (Some Thoughts on Romanian-Ottoman Relations), *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi (VIII Turkish History Congress), Bildiriler (Statements), Vol: II, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayinevi, 1981, pp. 1503-1510.*

From the battle of Prut in 1711 till the siege of Plevna in 1878 Dobruja region turned into a stage for the continuous wars between the Russian and Ottoman armies which devastated the settlement places and economic sources, mainly agricultural production and husbandry stocks. However, the most negative results related to the human thousands of sources of the region in which people either were killed or displaced causing drastic population movements. The situation of the region in this era was described in details by many Western travellers.⁶³, especially its northern part, has always become the Dobruja convergence center of cities thanks to its geographic location and its access to commercial sea through the Danube River.⁶⁴ The main function performed by Dobruja act between the 10th and 14th centuries was that of a bridge between Central Europe and Byzantium and later with an opening to the East and the Asian world.⁶⁵ With the temporary removal of the Byzantine Empire's authority by the Latins between 1204-1261, which encumbered access to the Asian markets, the Black Sea area evolved to become vital for Euro-Asian commerce, a fact which generated powerful political rivalries and military confrontations. The most prominent was the fight for hegemony between the Genoese and the Venetians, a long-lasting confrontation which ended only with the Ottoman domination in the Black Sea. However, the struggle for hegemony in the Black Sea area was complex and involved many Christian and Muslim powers. Moreover, despite the religious differences, on various occasions the Christians allied with Muslims against Christians, and Muslims allied with Christians against Muslims.⁶⁶

Dobruja keeping an important place in the Black Sea trade with its ports was economically indispensable for Istanbul. The late Romanian historian Mihai Maxim quotes from Kâtip Çelebi, a 17th century Turkish historian and geographer, that sheep from *Bogdan* (Moldavia) were flocking through Isaccea's customs towards Istanbul, a big capital hard to satiate like a giant hungry octopus. The Ottoman rule needed to take serious measures to safeguard this vital trade like banning export of sheep and cows to Poland. In 1546 the state owned a salt production field (*memleha*) in *Tekhfurgölü* with 56 workers on pay-roll. In Kilia the fish farms were adding 80.000 gold each year to the budget of the state. The government decided to centralize all customs revenues in 1593 and established a central revenue office named Danube joining all income coming from Vidin, Nicopole, Silistra livas and Constanta,

⁷⁰

Müstecip Ülkü

sal, *op.cit.*, pp. 36-37. See also, H. Beam, *Quelques souvenirs d'une campagne en Turquie*, Paris,

⁷² 1828 and C. Allard, *La Bulgarie Orientale, Mission medicale dans la Tartarie de Dobroudja*, Paris, 1864.

⁷³ *Idem*, p. 330. Liviu Daniel Stanica, *Viata Economica Din Nordul Dobrogei in Secolele X-XIV (Economic Life in Northern Dobruja 10th-14th centuries)*, Tulcea, Editura Dobrogea, 2015, p. 329.

idiu Cristea, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

Balchik, Varna and Ahyolu kazas. Official documents show that between 66.000 - 75.000 gold and minimum 100.000 sheep would have to be sent to the capital by the Danube Revenue Office per annum.⁶⁷

The Danube River passing through and ending up in the Dobruja region was the most important trade channel between the Black Sea ports and the inner Europe. The Ottomans attached importance to keep this natural channel of trade under their military and fiscal control since the early conquests by establishing not only military castles, but also customs buildings. Other European rival powers, Austria and Russia especially, systematically tried to substitute the Ottoman rule in the Danubian provinces and to take over the lucrative Danubian trade.⁶⁸ The Treaty of Edirne signed in 1829 after the devastating war with Russia gave this chance them by abolishing the Ottoman monopoly on the Danube. The river was opened to merchant shipping under all flags and the Ottoman rights to requisition fixed amounts of grain from the Principalities, even at market prices, were ended.⁶⁹ Forming the European Danube Commission in 1857 further weakened the Ottoman grip on the Danubian trade and favored the commercial activities in lower Danube mostly benefiting the Romanian Principalities. The high cost overland transport, at least twenty times which on any ship, kept the Danube only profitable route for Wallachia to reach the Black Sea. For Moldavia, there was no possible alternative. The Danube's last eastward jog to the Black Sea formed its southern border.⁷⁰

As of the mid-19th century, the economy of Dobruja region, where some important commercial roads were at conjunction, was oriented towards Principalities, so that in the last decades of the Ottoman rule to be noticed the beginning of inclusion in a great extent of the capitalist infrastructure elements. It should be noted that the town of Medgidia was founded by the Ottomans to serve as a center for the economic development of the central Dobruja.⁷¹ The economic development of the region is strongly incited after a railway was built between Cernavoda and Rasova and Cernavoda and Constanta between 1857-1860 (inaugurated on October 4, 1860) by a British company, *The Danube and Black Sea Company Ltd*¹⁹ The small port of Constanta was rapidly developed. Many public buildings in Constanta, Babadag, Harşova, Cernavoda and Medgidia were constructed. Furthermore, a channel between the

⁶⁷ Mihai Maxim, *op.cit.*, pp. 158-160.

⁶⁸ Gheorghe Dumitraşcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 689.

⁶⁹ John R. Lampe, Marvin R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550-1950: From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 96.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 100.

⁷¹ Kemal H Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, Boston, Brill, 2002, p. 203.

Danube and th î Black Sea was-crossing Dobruja-was construed, however this idea was in 1875 when the Russian monopoly over the Mouths of the Danube was abandoned latei withdrawn.⁷² Tjie table of distribution of Danubian Mouth ship traffic between 1847-1870 below shows th^t even on the eve of Dobruja's separation from the Ottoman rule the Danube I had a major maritime commercial significance for the Sublime Porte.

Distribution of Danubian Mouth Ship Traffic, 1847-70¹

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itraşcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 696. See also, I. Cojocaru, *Alpatrulea brat al Dunarii (The f the Danube)*, Bucureşti, Editura Militara, 1983. , Marvin R. Jackson, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

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Ships" 1354		1637.6 374							
1847 144						1364.7 374		159.1	
1850 96		19. 17		29.4 724		1104.7 366		17.	
1853 111		5 4		56.3		Notes: (a) Defined as the passing in or out of the Sulina channel from or to the Black Sea.		7 number of ships	
1856 239		19. 40		13.		35.		99 13.	
1860 186		5 6		6		In the final		2 23 1	
1870 223		46. 12		70.		analysis, the		32. 7 39.	
Ottomans		0 5		1		regarded the		1 9	
Dobruja region		46. 70		42.4		as a valuable asset		96.	
in different		5 3		perspectives. It was a land strip		7		in the north-south	
axis to reach		86. 54		out the Russian dominated				territories and as	
well as a		4 9		bulwark against the Habsburgs. It was a buffer zone between the					
capital and the				Danube river. It was a fertile colonization area where thousands					
of Turkish origin people were settled as the guardians of the imperial borders. This huge									
Turkish community aic ed and abetted the Ottoman rule in the region to be rooted on the one									
hand. On the other hand, it turned into a big liability for the state during the									
wars adding enormous cost to the budget far people's resettlement in other									
parts of the Empire or for the compensation of their losses. Cities and towns									
were reconstructed, public buildings and facilities were recreated if necessary									
on huge costs after the constant wars finished. The region was economically									
important and constituted a trade hub between the East and the West through									
the ports both on									

⁸⁰ Gheorghe D
Fourth Channel
^c
⁸¹ John R. Lampd

the Black Sea and the Danube. It provided high revenues for the budget and fed the Ottoman capital with its ample agricultural products and live animal stocks.

That was the very reason that the Ottoman Empire imposed an almost complete prohibition of foreign shipping in the Black Sea after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and annexation southern Bessarabia and the *Bucak* in 1538. The area including Dobruja was gradually integrated into a regional economy, whose main function was to supply foodstuffs and raw materials to meet the increasing needs of the Ottoman capital.⁷³ Other maritime powers like Geneose and Venetians from the Mediteranean coast tried to reach out the Black Sea ports, while growing Russia exerted its best effort to access to the Mediterranean ones. However, they could not break the seal of the Straits up to the 19th century. Only by the mid-1820s European powers had secured commercial agreements with the Porte, allowing them access into the Black Sea.⁷⁴

2.5. Integration of Dobruja into Romania

Decline of the Ottoman power dating back to the Vienna siege in the 17th century culminated into a dramatic disintegration in the 19th century as the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans sought autonomy, then independence, and later nationhood as distinct ethno-national entities. In response, the Ottoman Government launched the policy of Ottomanism, especially after the Reform Edict of 1856 (*Islahat Fermanı*), which was linked to the Paris Treaty of the same year that marked the victory of France and England, and other European countries allied with the Ottoman State against Russia in Crimea. The concept of Ottomanism took citizenship as the key identity of all the Ottoman subjects and declared the equality of all Ottoman subjects regardless of faith, language or ethnicity. But Ottomanism failed to integrate the non-Muslims into one homogeneous Ottoman nation and instead strengthened their sentiments of religious differences. Among the Muslims, however, Ottomanism played an unanticipated key role in creating a political identity that superseded their ethnic, religious identity without liquidating it.⁷⁵

As a matter of fact, Romanian boyars in the second half of the 18th century had already sought external aid to restore political autonomy and eventually throw off the Ottoman domination altogether. They turned first to Russia as a proven champion of the Orthodox peoples under their C

citizens of

the enabling

⁷³ Constantin I. Ardeleanu, "The Opening and Development of the Black Sea for International Trade and Shipping (1774-1853)", *Euxeinos (Online Journal of the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe)*, 14, 2014, p. 30.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁷⁵ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tannover", *op.cit.*, p. 530.

the Ottoman rule, and during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774, they erous appeals to the Empress Catherine and Russian officials urging them to rthodox fellows from Muslim oppression. Russian policy-makers responded in the Treaty of *tfuchuk Kainardji* of 1774, which ended the war, by obliging the sultan to allow Russian diplomats in Constantinople to make representations on behalf of the Orthodox Ottoman Empire. In subsequent decades, this device was to prove invaluable in a to undermine the sultan's authority in the Principalities, reaty of Paris of 1856, which ended the Crimean War, the powers acceded to two long-standing demands of Romanian intellectuals and politicians. First, they placed Moldavia and Wallachia under their collective protection, thereby discouraging future Russian and Ottoman intervention and requiring Austria to withdraw her army of occupation in place since 1854, and, second, they recognized the right of Romanians themselves to have a voice in shaping their form of government. Granted such an opportunity, the majority of Romanians left no doubt e bout their desire for union and independence, and the powers, Austria and the Ottoman Empire, grudgingly responded by promulgating the so-called Convention of Paris in 1858. This document, intended to serve as a fundamental law for the principalities, the way in outlined ch the Romanians should henceforth govern themselves. It also recognized whi < sultan the suzerain, but by this time, all the parties to the agreement knew that what as their prerogatives such as payment of the annual tribute and investiture of the prince ere remained of hi formalities. The Convention of Paris contained one major disappointment for the had become n Romanians: it said nothing about the union of the principalities. Nevertheless, the unionists, backed by a surge of popular support, took matters into their own hands. At beginning of the 859, exercising a right granted them by the Convention of Paris to elect their they 1 own chose the same man, Alexandru Cuza, in Wallachia and Moldavia The powers, princes; bowing to the inevitable and preoccupied elsewhere, acquiesced in this *fait acconipli*, Principalities and Cuza himself completed the administrative union of the principalities in 1861.⁷⁶ . The unification of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859, like that of the Romanian kingdom with Transylvania and Bessarabia in 1918, was forced through by a group of "taking a men intent on ;e" offered by local and international circumstances at that moment in chan shouldtime.⁷⁷ It d that in 1857 Napoleon III supported the demands of the diets of the two be note Turkish

⁸⁵ Keith Hitchins,

⁸⁶ Sorin Alexandfi

provinces for their autonomy and neutrality, their union under a foreign and hereditary prince, and the introduction of a constitution. When Cuza resigned in 1866, again Napoleon's support forced Turkey's acquiescence to the acceptance of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen as hereditary ruler of united Romania.⁷⁸

In essence, the union of two principalities was seen as a barrier against the Russian drive southward into the Balkans by the Ottomans. It must be emphasized that Ali Pasha, the Ottoman Foreign Minister of the era, had special respect for Cuza and personally favored the unity.⁷⁹ The revolutionaries of 1848 had received support from the Ottoman government, which was opposed to the Russian protectorate. Eventually Turkey allied herself with the West in the Crimean War, which, as is known, aimed among other things, at ending the Russian protectorate over the principalities.⁸⁰ The audacious move by the nationalist leaders of Wallachia and Moldavia substituting the Cyrillic alphabet with a Latin one before the union may also have relieved the Ottomans as it made Romania the only predominantly Orthodox country where Cyrillic was not in use.⁸¹

However, Russian expansionism did not stop, and the 14th Russian Army Corps occupied Dobruja starting from June 10, 1877. When the Romanian army also joined the Russians in November 1878, they won a decisive victory against the Ottoman Empire. It was a Romanian artillery officer who judged properly that Osman Pasha, the heroic defender of Plevna, planned to break the siege and consequently concentrated the fire of his cannons on the escape route, thus closing probably the most famous chapter in the Ottoman book of defensive warfare at a place not too far from the fields of Nicopolis where Beyazit's victory in 1396 had sealed the Turkish rule in the Balkans.⁸²

The independence of Romania, in another words, the union of Wallachia and Moldavia, was recognized and additionally, Dobruja was given to Romania officially by the Berlin Peace Treaty of 1878. According to the Article 46 of the said Treaty the islands forming the Danube Delta and the Snake Island, the *sandjak* of Tulcea, comprising the districts (*kazas*) of Kilia, Sulina, Mahmudia, Isaccea, Tulcea, Macin, Babadag, Harşova, Constanta, Medgidia are added to the Romania's borders. It also received the territory located in the south of Dobruja until a

⁷⁸ Hans Kohn, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*, D. Van Nostrand, Princeton, NJ, 1955, p. 55.

⁷⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, op.cit., p. 408.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 408.

⁸¹ Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe: The Balkans, 1789-1989, from the Ottomans to Miloseviac*, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 41.

⁸² Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays*, op.cit., p. 409.

line starting from the east of Silistra and ending at the Black Sea in the south of Mangalia. statistics
fo According of the administrative unit Tulcea, the population of eight regions galia was almost
to including 84.000 people when they joined in Romania.⁸³ Yet, although
Man Romania won Dobruja, it lost the south of Bessarabia, the old Ottoman *Bucak*.

Despite an existence of popular reluctance and opposition, annexation of
Dobruja into Romania created a national feeling of joy and happiness among the Romanian
people. Prime Minister Bratianu clearly expressed the affiliation of Dobruja in the
people such history of the Romanian "We possessed it with our blood, we lost it with the sword
as tous." On and now it came ack occasion of crossing the Danube in Macin on 14 November
the were 1878 the soldiers s Proclamation signed by Prince Carol in which it was stated that
recited th "Dobruja, this
historiograph old possession of our former princes united with Romania."⁸⁴As the Romanian
y Dobruja nationalist
reinte; asserted, in November 1878, the first units of the Romanian army entered grating this
marked as the part of Romanian land to its "rightful boundaries".⁸⁵ This date was second
fundamental stage in the process of forging the Romanians' National State Unity af er
the first Union of 1859. According to patriotic view of C. Giurescu, each village of Dob -uj a
presented the aspect of a Dacia in miniature as a result of the merger of the Romanians thi.t came
from all the historical provinces lived by them. On the land of Dobruja it was made a real
Romanian ethnic synthesis: here were mixed the native Romanians the so called *dicieni* with
those coming from the left bank of Danube, both from the Wallachia or Muntenia and from
Moldavia together with the Transylvanian shepherds coming from down with their herdjs.⁸⁶

Wherejs, transfer of Dobruja to the Romanian rule was an unexpected and bewildering
event for the Muslim inhabitants. Being the titular masters of Dobruja for more than 450 years,
they became overnight the subjects of the previously dominated group created a psychological
and cultural-political shock requiring adaptation.⁸⁷ However, Romanian Colonel Ioan Murgescu
negated this thesis. He reported at the beginning of 1878 as the member of the

'Contribute la istoria Dobrogei (aprilie 1877-noiembrie 1878) (Contributions to the History
'istaArhivelor V, 1,1962, p. 161-77. Due to the fluctuation of the population, determined by war-
drew, a part of them, with the Ottoman army, some of them coming back later-, this figure is s
than the real one, the population of Dobruja reaching in that period almost 135-140.000 9 Ubcini
appreciated its population as 242.000 inhabitants. See also, Mustecip Ulkiisal, *op.cit.*,
187'

itraçcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 702. >cu,

Ion Bitoleanu, *op.cit.*, pp. 280-284.

Giurescu, *Știri despre populația românească a Dobrogei în harti medievale și moderne* (News ian
Population of Dobruja in the Medieval and Modern Maps), Muzeul Regional de Arhelogie mta, no
Publisher name, 1966, p. 5.

iat, "Foreword: The Story of an Institution and a Former Student's Memories", *op.cit.*, p. 140.

experts commission sent to Dobruja that "all peoples, Romanians, Greeks, Turks, and Tatars eagerly wait for the occupation of Dobruja by the Romanians and everywhere they confessed that they were happy that Dobruja and Mangalia have been given to Romania."⁸⁸ In addition to that, Prince Carol wrote to his father in July 1878 that the "Population over there (Dobruja) is very happy to unify with Romania and sent me numerous notifications."⁸⁹

Indeed, the Christian inhabitants of Dobruja received the Romanian troops and the representatives of the civil authorities in a collective enthusiasm, but it is quite hard to claim that the Muslims were happy and looking forward to going under the rule of a new state even though they were assured that their religious and cultural rights would be respected as stipulated by the Berlin Treaty. However, in the end, the Muslims, notably the Turks, long attuned to obey the authority of the ruling power and with having no other plausible choice accepted the Romanian authority in relative calm. But, they were certainly aware of the fact that Dobruja had changed its master after the war and this transfer of power ultimately meant for Turks poverty, collapse and emigration. Soon after the Romanian annexation of Dobruja, a movement of Turks to the countryside took place, presumably in order to escape control by the new authorities who imposed conscription and vaccination, a policy which seems to have contributed equally to the emigration of this large community. Eventually, a substantial emigration of Turks and Tatars started, which constituted the beginning of a dramatic change in the ethnic composition of Dobruja, the only region in the European part of the Ottoman Empire inhabited by an almost exclusively Turkish and Tatar population.⁹⁰

2.6. Legacy of the Turkish Community in Dobruja

As the historical chronology proves, the Turks either willingly or under obligation of their rulers inhabited the region of Dobruja, and lived side by side with other native or foreign ethnicities and religions for centuries. The belief systems of the Turkish tribes changed from *shamanism* to Islam and even to Orthodox Christianity in time as evidenced in *Gagauze* case. Their population oscillated sharply during long ages due to the wars waged with especially the Austrians and Russians. Hence, big population movements, displacements and resettlements were often witnessed among the Turks. In spite of this fact, Turks and Romanians succeeded to keep their relations relatively calm and stable except the initial periods of the Ottoman

⁸⁸ Gheorghe Dumitrașcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 701.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁰ Frederick De Jong, *op.cit.*, pp. 166-168.

Balkans. The Ottoman government preferred the Romanian Principalities to be ruled autonomously by their Princes called Voivodas under their suzerainty, and the Turkish community in Dobruja cohabited peacefully with the Romanian and other Christian neighbours. This; good political relationship and intensive Turkish population in the region left undeletable traces on the Romanian culture till present and created friendship and confidence in each other.

The Ottoman rule, while on the one hand, tried to colonize the region with new migrants, on the other hand, spared no efforts on the urbanization of the region with its administrative structures; cultural and religious buildings. In this regard, the rise of a series of new towns and villages, as well as the expansion or rebuilding and re-population of ancient urban sites in south-east Europe especially in the 15th and 16th centuries is well documented. Needless to say that the Ottoman towns and villages of that era usually grew up at junctions of roads, around inns, around fortresses or administrative centers, or at the river crossing points and similar locations. The founding of Medgidia town in Dobruja in 1856 represented the last example of these modern urbanization efforts.⁹¹

However, back to the 16th century the town close the Danube river called Babadağ, which is believed to be founded by Sari Saltuk, a *Seljuki* warrior and sufi *dervish*, turned into a pivotal center for the Turkish community from military, commercial, administrative and educational points of view. It was of strategic importance due to its location in the north-south axis for the Ottoman army against Poland and Russia. On the other hand, it was populated by mostly Turks coming from Anatolia. It had lively commercial activities along with many

educational institutions, among them the famous *madrassa*.^m In the glorious days of Babadağ the remnants of this *madrassa* along with a still intact mosque built by Gazi Ali Pasha, a high ranking Ottoman administrator, in 1610 could reach today. None of the *madrassas* survived as did Babadağ *madrassa* thanks to its rich endowment the Turkish language. The income of two villages, Hergele (now Sarichioi) and Zebil) with their lakes and forests provided the economic basis of the *vakif* the *külliye*, the compound of mosque, *madrassa*, tomb and bazaar.⁹² A fountain

it., p. 10.

ay, *Romanya 'da Türk ve İslam Kültürü-Dobruca 'nın dünü, bugünü ve yarını (Turkish and Dobruja-Past, Present and Future of Dobruja)*, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981, writer here refers to the original historical source at the Archives of Directorate General of

⁹¹ Kemal H Karpat, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History, Selected Articles and Essays*, op.cit., p. 202.

⁹² Yusuf Uralgi

Islamic Culture i
1 pp. 342-354. The
Vakifs in Ankara

(*icesme*) built next to the mosque wall was directly accessible from the street, being a monument itself, functioned as a source of drinking water for the Babadag Seminary, the mosque and entire neighbourhood for 490 years, until its submerged canals were destroyed in the 1980s by crews laying the foundations of a courthouse.⁹³

In the aftermath of integration into Romania the Babadag Seminary was moved in 1901 to Medgidia, and its *vakif* lands were transferred to the Romanian government in exchange for a promise to finance the Seminary as long as a Muslim population remained in Dobruja. Thus, the Medgidia Seminary continued the institutional character of the earlier Babadag Seminary as well as a cultural symbol for the Dobruja Muslims who still constitute a significant minority of the province.

The history of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia is hence directly linked with the history, demography, culture and faith of Dobruja, as well as with the domestic and international events that conditioned its activities and ultimately its demise. It reveals the main trends within Dobruja's Muslim Turkish community. All those migrations, settlements and wars as well as invasions were reflected in some ways on the Muslims and on their religious and educational institutions, including the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia.

Being unique in its field, the Medgidia Muslim Seminary has always been the emblematic school of the Romanian Muslim community. From 1889, the year it was refounded, and until 1967, the year it closed, the Seminary did more than train Dobruja's Muslim clergy and primary school teachers, it also provided most of the Turkish and Tatar intellectuals living on Romanian territory. The subjects taught there, the number of students, the condition of the Seminary premises, they all reflect the ideas circulating within the community and other larger social phenomena.

Due to the Seminary's prominent place in the Turko-Tatar community, its history and the changes this community underwent had a direct impact on the school and, the other way around, the changes adopted here had lasting effects on Dobruja's Turks and Tatars. In this context, the massive migration to Turkey had direct consequences on the Seminary leading to the dwindling of its student numbers. And conversely, the Seminary was an incubator of ideas that subsequently helped spreading those ideas in the larger Muslim community. Given its mission to train the Muslim clergy and Turkish-language primary-school teachers, in other words the main means of mass dissemination of ideas, the Seminary was the main institution to convey the Romanian values to the Muslim population and possibly the first place in

⁹³KemalH. Karpaz, "Foreword: The Story of an Institution and a Former Student's Memories", *op.cit.*, p. 135.

Romania where Atatürk's modernization reforms were embraced. All these ideas, trends and values featured as topics for debate within the Dobruja Turko-Tatar communities and had long lasting effects which will be discussed separately in the following chapters of the dissertation.



Chapter III Ottoman Education System Up to 1878

3.1. Main Pillars of the Ottoman Education System

The Ottomans inherited many things including educational institutions from the *Seljuks* as being their successors in Anatolia. Beginning from its early days, the Ottoman state attached great importance to the education of people in religious and scientific fields, and built a number of schools in varying levels even in the furthest town of the Empire. Raising bureaucratic cadres for state affairs was another motive to enhance the school network. This motivation goes back to the conquest of the city of Bursa and its establishment as the first capital of the Empire in 1326.⁹⁴

With the decline of its power, as of the 17th century, the Ottoman state found another pressing motive to strengthen educational basis in the country, which was to be a counterpart to a defence against foreign competition. In this regard *Tanzimat* period beginning from 1839 brought unprecedented changes to the educational structure, and Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) increased his efforts to transform the whole educational system under increasing pressure from well financed schools operated by Western missionaries, neighbouring nationalist groups, and local minorities.⁹⁵ Especially in the era of decline and collapse of the Empire, Ottoman officials placed great faith in the power of education to strengthen the state. They optimistically believed that creating a modern, scientific system of education, modified to suit an Ottoman and Islamic context, would enable the Empire to withstand European encroachment and internal challenges. They also saw public education as a means to affect a more direct identification between students and the Empire to which they belonged, and construct a new basis of loyalty to the Empire.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Mefail Hızlı," Osmanlılarda İlköğretimin Tarihi (The History of Primary Education in the Ottoman Empire)", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Vol 6, Iss. 12, İstanbul, 2008, p. 85.

⁹⁵ Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 58.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 168.

It would be a fallacy that the education field was totally under the control of the state in the Ottoman Empire. The state indeed built and governed the schools, but at the same time encouraged citizens to construct and maintain their own private educational institutions. The *wakif* system which allowed to fund *madrasas* on donations of the rich and known personalities for a long time was a good example of this understanding. Thousands of neighbourhood schools



operly, and salaries of their teachers were paid by generous charities of the local
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lei with the high degree of importance given by Islam to education, the sed mostly
on religious teaching at the onset. This focus is materialized on the of *Quran* to the
Muslims in the form of "Read!".¹⁰⁷ However, this focus 3th century to the more
scientific approach starting from the military field as the j Empire got more visible
in this specific realm.

Sibyan (primary schools) and *Madrasas* (high schools) formed the two main brmal
public educational system up to the 19th century in which *Riişdiyes* ols) were added
later to this structure.

as also a special educational unit under the Sultan's auspices at the palace which
run or "inner side". This unique educational institution established during the I
(1360-1389) survived up to 1909 and helped raise the statesmen and high for the
state apparatus. The candidates were chosen among the poor Christian en and were
given best education and training by the palace teachers. As this trates on the public
education in the Ottoman era, the education in *Enderun* will special attention.

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>i **Sibyan (Primary Schools)**

the classical period of the Ottomans, which is accepted as the first 300 years
of *èkiebi sibyan* or primary schools were called mostly as "*muallimhane*"
meaning ing teachers, and in later period as "*mekteb*" meaning simply school.
At court and *vakfiyes* it is witnessed that they were named as "*mektebhâne*",
"*dâru't- aile mektebf*", "*beytu 't-ta'lim*" and "*kuttâb*" as well.¹⁰⁸ Located in
almost every local people used to call them mostly as "neighbourhood
schools". *i sibyan* if not stationed in a compound of different institutions
entitled ited in general at the junction of the narrow streets close the mosques
or charity ieir architecture style resembled ordinary houses mostly having
one or two buildings were quite small consisting of maximum two rooms,
and had usually ijden. Some Turkish scholars suggest that *mektebi sibyan*
was intentionally built 3 of a house having an orchard garden to make small

pupils feel like at their

¹⁰⁷ *Quran, Sure /dakAyet no. 1.*

¹⁰⁸ *Mefail Hızlı, . 'cit., p. 85.*

homes and warm for their studies more easily since they left their families for the first time in their lives.⁹⁷ This argument needs to be carefully examined from a pedagogical perspective, but still has a plausible point.

Mektebi sıbyan was obligatory and free of charge for all children starting from kindergarten age. At the latest, each child either boy or girl who stepped in 6 year-old had to enrol at these schools. Though it was the first step of education, *mektebi sıbyan* was not as much sophisticated as the *madradas* were. They were generally under the protection of religious institutions like *vakıfs* or located close to their premises. One of them was founded by Hacı Selim Ağa *Vakıf* in 1781-1782 in Istanbul. The school aimed at teaching pupils how to read *Quran* and how to write properly.⁹⁸ Despite enthusiastic encouragement by parents and *vakıfs*, neither the number of *mektebi sıbyan* nor the standard of education given at these schools were satisfactory enough up to the 19th century even in the capital, İstanbul.⁹⁹ Beginning with this century the administration tried to ensure the enrolment of all children of proper age at the school. For instance, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) issued a *ferman*, a written order in 1824 to encourage parents to send their children to schools. He openly warned in the said *ferman* that the parents who did not allow their children to go to the schools or gave their sons as apprentice in a work place instead of sending them to the schools will be punished.¹⁰⁰ In cities and towns the schools were favoured more than the countryside. The ratio of attendance to these schools in villages was definitely less than towns because of the prevailing agrarian economic conditions of the time. Especially girls were neglected as their labour force was needed both in field and home. Girls living in towns were luckier to find more educational opportunities. Rich parents could hire private teachers specifically for their girls.¹⁰¹

In school buildings it did not exist conventional classes according to ages of children. Boys and girls all together from all ages followed courses in one class though they were grouped separately inside the room. Children did not sit at desks, but on the floor mats having lecterns in front of them. *Muallim* or *hodja* was giving his lecture by sitting on the floor as well. In the late period of the Ottoman Empire there were some *mektebi sıbyan* allocated

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

⁹⁸ Musa Bardak, "An Example of XVIII Century Education Endowments: Hacı Selim Ağa, His Endowment, Library and Sıbyan Mektebi", *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 3 (5), 2014, pp. 14-16.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, p.24.

¹⁰⁰ Mefail Hızlı, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁰¹ Mefail Hızlı, *Mahkeme Sicillerine Göre Osmanlı Klasik Döneminde İlköğretim ve Bursa Sıbyan Mektepleri (The Primary Education and Bursa Sıbyan Mektebs during the Classic Ottoman Period according to the Court Files)*, Bursa, Uludağ Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1999, pp. 27-86.

specifically for girls and boys.¹⁰² As a usual practice boys attended school till 15-16 year-old, whereas girls graduated at 12-13 year-old. These ages certainly varied from towns to villages where the economic and social conditions differed a lot. Yet, to memorize and finish all *Quran* was the most important element which determined the graduation age. Whoever finished reciting all *Quran* earlier was eligible to graduate earlier.

Mektebi sibyan was generally administered by the *imam* of the mosque which is located their nearby. *Imams* were not on the pay-roll of the state so that they were in need of people's charities or tips They could also have a second job for living. As a matter of fact, all expenses of the school including construction, maintenance and warming were born by local residents.

Primary schools were in general open between months of September and May depending upon the local climate conditions. Children attended the class between Saturday and morning till evening, only one hour break at noon. Since Friday is the sacred day in the Islankic belief, primary schools as other state institutions were off that day.

The *curriculum* of the *mektebi sibyan* mainly intended to transfer traditional religious and !S to pupils, therefore included courses mostly on reciting *Quran*, valu of Islam. the holy book *curriculum* dictated solely religious studies, it was very natural As the that the primary

schools were in close vicinity of mosques. This proximity obviously eased *Hodja's* mission and also pupils had chance to practice in the mosque on what they learnt at school.

Pupils who learnt letters of the Arabic alphabet progressed to read first verses (*Ayeis*) and collection of verses (*Sures*) from the holy book. After this step children were given simple Arabic grammar or *sarf-nahiv* in order to read *Quran* without mistake. This course was added another one called "*tecvit*" to recite *Quran* well, and those who passed from this course had the right to tak\$ other religious courses such as *hiisn-i hat* or calligraphy,/"^/? or canon law and Islamic ethics. If the *muallim* was knowledgable enough, he was mandated to teach simple mathematics, history, and geography as well. Students had to read the whole *Quran* from the first page till the last one in order to graduate.

Childr n started primary schools with a special ceremony called *Amin Alayi* meaning)r e Amen *Bed-i Besmele Cemiyeti* wearing the most beautiful dresses on the first day. Parade Fathers accompanying their kids on the school way presented different gifts for *muallim* who prayed for their success. After this collective prayer, children were given nuts

"Osmanlılarda Mektep (Schools in the Ottoman Period)", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 29, Diyanet Vakfı, 2004, p. 7.

and candies. Remembered as a nice memory in whole life this ceremony was repeated second time when



the kids passed from the alphabet to reciting *Quran*. Each ceremony was a kind of tip to the *hodja* and a big incentive for children to learn more.¹⁰³ Some *mektebi sıbyan* under rich endowments like *Had Selim Aga Vakif* operated as of the end of the 18th century encouraged students by giving them high quality dresses in the *Ramadan* month of each year.¹⁰⁴

By promulgation of the *Tanzimat* Edict in 1839 the need for reforming the *mektebi sıbyan* was underlined by either reconstructing their buildings or enriching the *curriculum* with other scientific and secular courses. In the first instance their names were altered with *Ibtidai* Schools meaning again primary schools. In the aftermath of inserting *rüşdiyes* (secondary schools) into the system during this era the longevity of education at *mektebi sıbyan* was fixed as 4 years in 1847 by a regulation/instruction called *Nizamname* or *Talimat* which inaugurated many new practices in the primary education.¹⁰⁵ Another important regulation dated 1869 kept the same period of duration as it was. The ages for boys and girls to begin these schools were also announced as 7 and 6 years respectively.¹⁰⁶ In 1868 *Daru'l-Muallimin-i Sıbyan* was established to raise teachers for *Ibtidai* schools. The following year a new regulation was put into force aiming at reforming the *curriculum* of these schools. In 1876 Abdulhamid II (1876- 1909) promulgated the first constitution of the Empire called *Kanuni Esasi* which brought gender equality in education. During his reign Abdulhamid II, though being a pious sultan, paid a special attention to the development of education in all Empire by establishing modern schools including the ones specific only for girls, whose *curricula* covered both positive sciences and religious courses. This was in fact a continuation of *Tanzimat* policies regarding the education, which underlined the importance of positive sciences for catching up with Europe, without totally neglecting religious teaching as well.

In short, *mektebi sıbyan* as being the first step in the formal educational system in the Ottoman Empire played a significant role in raising children and helping increase the literacy rate. During the whole Ottoman domination in the Balkan countries, 273 *mektebs* in Bulgaria, 315 in Greece, 1.134 in old Yugoslavian territory and 121 in Albania were built and put into service.¹⁰⁷ With this high number and distinguished role they played, they could manage to

^{1,5} Mustafa Uzun, "Mektep (School)", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 29, İstanbul, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2004, p. 10. See also, Mefail Hızlı, *op.cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴ Musa Bardak, *op.cit.*, p.15.

¹⁰⁵ Yahya Akyüz, "İlköğretimin Yenileşme Tarihinde bir Adım: Nisan 1847 Talimatı, 5 (A Step in the History of Modernization of Primary Education: April 1847 Instruction, 5) ", Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi, 1994, p. 24.

¹⁰⁶ Cahit Baltacı, *op.cit.*, p.7.

¹⁰⁷ Mehmet İpşirli, "Osmanlı Döneminde Medrese (Madrassa In the Ottoman Era)", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 28, İstanbul, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2003, p. 328.

survive up to 1924 when the Republican period began in modern Turkey that reformed and transformed all educational system.

3.3. Rüşdiyye (Secondary Schools)

The Ottoman education system included only two steps as *mektebi sibyan* for primary level and *madr* *asas* for secondary and high levels together for a long time. *Tanzimat* period introduced a new layer to this structure adding *rüşdiyye* as the secondary schools. At first they were designed as a higher class giving better education than *mektebi sibyan*, but in due course they took place between them and *madr* *asas* in later stage *darulfunun* meaning modern universities.¹²⁰ The reformist Sultan Mahmud II gave the name of *rüşdiyye* to these schools because children would reach the age of majority after finishing the *mektebi sibyan* while they were studying at those schools.¹⁰⁸

mektebi sibyan were regarded as goals of the *rüşdiyye* gradually matched up those of the French superior primary schools including the accomplishment of reading and writing skills, the acquirement of common practical knowledge about the world. They aimed to enlarge the students' world view and to accomplish their maturity through different lessons in religion, linguistics and positive sciences.

¹⁰⁸ Emel Demir Görür, "INAS Rüşdiyye Mektepleri: Yanya IN AS Rüşdiyye Mektebi Örneği (Ottoman Junior High Schools for Girl ;, An Example: Ioannina Junior High School for Girls)", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* (The Journal of International Social Research), Vol. 8, Iss. 36, February 2015, p. 312. See also, Muammer Eğitiminin Modernleşmesinde Rüşdiyye Mektepleri (Rüşdiyye Mektebs in Modernization of n)", *Türkler*, XV, Ankara, 2002, p. 44.

The first Ottoman *rişdiye*, *Mekteb-i Maarif-i Adli*, meaning School of Legal Education, was founded in 1838 during the reign of Mahmud II for boys only. The first *rişdiye* for girls, *Cevri Kalfa* School was opened in 1859 in Istanbul and for the first time girls started education at the secondary level. The number of these schools increased substantially until 1869 and laid foundation of the education system of the *Tanzimat* reform era. Between 1848 and 1869, 138

The reform process of *Tanzimat* was stamped by close collaboration between the Ottomans and France. So, the structure and the actual tasks of many state and educational institutions were modeled on French patterns. The Educational Law of Francois Guizot, who was the Minister of Education of France between 1832-1837, laid out three-stage educational system. One of the educational reforms by the Ottomans was to launch a school between (*mektebi ibtidai*) and *madrasas*, a secondary school as named *ruşdiyes*. They as supplementary schools having 4-year period of instruction. The educational

new *rüşdiyes* were founded. Whereas, this figure increased to 287 between 1869-1876. In 1868 only, 31 more *rüşdiyes* opened their doors for education in several provinces.¹⁰⁹

The first regulation regarding the *rüşdiye* schools dates back to 1839. It covered all subjects regarding the opening of a *rüşdiye*, including how many students could be boarded at the school. This number was fixed around 100 and only the poor children and those who lived far away were eligible for boarding.¹¹⁰ The regulation in the field of education issued in 1869 inspired by the French system brought new principles for the *rüşdiyes*. One of them dictated to establish one *rüşdiye* in each town with 500 households, and Muslims and non-Muslims would be allocated separate *rüşdiyes* in one settlement. All the costs of schools would be born by the governorates, but, their annual expenditure would not exceed the limit of 400.000 *kuruş* (smallest monetary unit during the Ottoman era).¹¹¹

At the inception, *rüşdiyes* were 3 year-schools, but in 1869 their period increased to 4 years. With respect to the *curriculum* and quality of teachers *rüşdiyes* were much more modern compared with *mektebi sıbyan*. In light of the great success achieved by *rüşdiyes*, as of 1875 military *rüşdiyes* were opened up in big cities of the Empire. In an increasing number, graduates of *rüşdiyes* were recruited in the state bureaucracy, which was accepted as the achievement of the *Tanzimat* era.

The expansion of chain of *rüşdiyes* all over the Empire required to establish new institutions for training teachers. The first of its kind was opened up in 1848 in Istanbul with the name of *Dârülmualimîn-i Rüşdi* meaning School for *Rüşdiye* Teachers, but just for the male. For raising female teachers *Dârülmualimât* was founded in 1870 again in the capital. This institution was indeed a historic cornerstone in the educational life of girls for all Islamic countries as it was unprecedented. It provided for the female to have a profession at *rüşdiyes* and thus, help them survive on their own for the first time.¹¹²

Curriculum of *rüşdiyes* covered both *Quranic* studies and modern ones such as calculation, mathematics, geography, history, art, music, gymnastic along with different foreign languages, primarily French. The *rüşdiyes* for girls additionally offered practical courses such as painting, tailoring, needlework and managing household works to the students.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Cahit Yalçın Bilim, *Türkiye 'de Çağdaş Eğitim Tarihi (1734-1876) (History of Modern Education in Turkey 1734-1876)*, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1998, pp. 166.

¹¹⁰ Muammer Demirel, *op.cit.*, pp. 46-47.

¹¹¹ Cahit Yalçın Bilim, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

¹¹² Cemil Öztürk, "Rüşdiye", *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 35, İstanbul, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2008, p. 302.

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 302.

The new methods of teaching and positive courses in *riiṣḍiyes* were not always respected by Conservative circles tried to intervene and block the progress in the education all field hey had chance. For instance, *Sadrazam* (Grand Vizier) Mustafa Reṣid Pasha, who was the person announcing the *Tanzimat* Edict in 1839 and supported modern education whenever

I strongly, was sacked from his post in 1848 by the Sultan as his conservative rival Sait Pasha directed him allegations of imitating the infidel. He accused him of supporting painting class for children even though it was just mapping practice in geography course. Sait Pasha quickly floated this misinformation to defame Mustafa Reṣid Pasha. In the meantime, the related Ministry, *Mekatibi Umumiye Vezareti*, had already instructed to destroy all copies of maps in *riiṣḍiyes* lest they were not closed down totally. This negative situation was only overcome by Reṣid Pasha's return to his seat after three and half months later, and the *ruṣḍiyes* were saved of being shut down.¹¹⁴

The function of *riiṣḍiyes* was so crucial for the Muslim community that the graduates from those schools were regarded as the intellectuals of the time, and were mostly employed at the state institutions. They offered modern and high standard education for the ordinary people, but more important than that was the girls for the first time found their secondary chance to continue education at these schools.

3.4. Madrasas (High Schools)

The history of *madrasas* is as much as old the religion is. The first *madrasa* in Anatolia was founded by the *Seljuks*, and in parallel with their expansion to the West, the number of *madrasas* increased too. During the Ottoman era they functioned as in secondary, the capacity of the i and college schools. Children graduating *mektebi sibyan* high the could directly begin Having Islamic teaching in character they were attended by *madrasas*. only male Muslim students.¹¹⁵

The / of Bursa turned into an attractive cultural center with 21 *madrasas* in almost cit' one century since the establishment of the Ottoman state in 1299. Historians counted 84 *madrasas* built between 1326-1451, 53 of them in Anatolia, 29 in

¹²⁷ Muammer De:

¹²⁸ Mehmet Ipşirli

jnirel, *op.cit.*, p .54. , *op.cit.*, p. 327.

¹²⁹ Ekmeleddin İnsanoğlu, "Osmanlı Medrese Geleneğinin Doğuşu (The Rise of Ottoman Madrasa Tradition)", *Türk Tarih Kurukı*

Rumelia and 2 in Jerusalem.¹¹⁶ The *madrassa* established by Fatih Sultan Mehmed II (the conquerer) (1451-1481) in 1470 known as *Sahn-i Semdn*, which means eight yards, preserved its prestige among all



u Belleteni, LXW247, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002, p. 897.

other *madrasas* for a long time with its rich endowment and also high quality education. In the 16th century *Madrasa Suleymaniye* represented the apex of the education standards in the Ottoman era.¹¹⁷

It was a well established tradition that the Ottomans founded *madrasas* everywhere they conquered. *Madrasa* was not only serving for the needs of people, but also helping disseminate the Islamic culture and values, as well as warming the local people with the Ottoman ruling system. To this end the Ottomans paid special attention to build *madrasas* in the Balkan cities. During the whole Ottoman era 142 in Bulgaria, 182 in Greece, 223 in the old Yugoslavian territory, and 28 in Albania were established and maintained.¹¹⁸ In Dobruja too, Babadağ, Constanta, Medgidia, Tulcea and Mangalia had many *madrasas* since the beginning of the Ottoman rule in the 15th century. Even some big villages like *Bülbül* (Ciorcârlia), *Hasancı* (Valu lui Traian), *Osman Fakih* (Bârâganu), *Kizil-Mutar* (Movila Verde), *Azaplar* (Tatara), *Toprakhisar* (Topraisar) and *Perveli* (Moşneni) cherished with the existence of these educational centers. Furthermore, as being the capital city, there were 126 *madrasas* in Istanbul in 1675, 166 in 1869 and 185 at the beginning of the 20th century.¹¹⁹ In the Anatolian provinces 150 *madrasas* were counted in 1528.¹²⁰

Madrasas were usually one-floor buildings having a large yard inside. All classrooms and private rooms of students (*danishmends*) looked to the yard. In each *madrasa* there were teachers (*müderris*) room. Against conventional thinking mosques or *mesjids* (small mosques) were not available inside *madrasas* as classrooms were utilized for the prayer. Covered with a dome, classrooms were decorated by rugs, and *danishmends* sitting on couches followed the *müderris* who was also sitting behind a lectern. This style of education was almost same as the *mektebi sıbyan* practiced.

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The standard of education in *madrasas* was indeed high especially in the 15th and 16th centuries during the apex of the power of the Empire as they employed best qualified teachers, and they offered not only religious courses, but also secular ones like philosophy, mathematics, medicine and engineering courses. In the early ages of the Ottoman era *madrasas* taught almost all courses regardless of a standard *curriculum*. *Müderris* could offer any course to the

¹¹⁷ Mehmet İpşirli, *op.cit.*, p. 328.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p.328. See also, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri (Ottoman Architectural Works in Europe)*, Vol. 1-4, İstanbul, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2000.

¹¹⁹ Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *XX. Asra Erişen İstanbul Medreseleri (Madrasas of Istanbul Reaching the 20th Century)*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000, p. 4.

¹²⁰ Mehmet İpşirli, *op.cit.*, p. 328.

danishmends within his capacity of knowledge. The specific subjects were to be taught in the sh and in Arabic and they were: Turkish Language, Arabic Language,



Interpretation of the *Quran*, *Sharia* Law, Writing and Spelling. The courses in general were in taught in theological schools in the other parts of the Empire. For instance, *er-Risaletii'l-Esiriyye fi'l-Mantik*, the book written by Esirüddin el-Mufaddal b. Ômer es-Lbheri (1200-1265) is the first textbook in the field of logic was used in almost

he general conviction that the best and highest education was available at *madrasas* of Istanbul as they were sponsored generously by the *vakıfs* or directly funded by the private budgets of *Sultans*. Yet, some *madrasas* outside of the capital were also famous of their high quality education. Gazi Ali Pasha *madrasa* in Babadag was like a beacon light to the

Muslims it was established at the beginning of the 1600s, just as Gazi Hüsrev Bey n 1537 in Bosnia was. Even some Western travelers of the time who toured in since Anatolia praised the quality of education in these *madrasas*. Perrot, a *madrasa* built French traveller, who visited city of Amasya (located in central Black Sea region) in 1861 called it as the Oxford of Anatolia.¹²¹

However, the level of education declined gradually as of the 17th century due to many reasons. Appointment and promotion of unqualified teachers at *madrasas* was the main reason of this deterioration. Furthermore, in line with dwindling power of the Empire in the Western front, *madrasas* started to lose their dynamism and became much more conservative excluding logic, philosophy and other scientific studies from their *curricula*. They could not renew their *curricula* in accordance with the modern mentality of education.¹²² In this declining period of the Empire, they have also lost their generous financial resources coming from revenues of *vakıfs* by which salaries of *muderrises*, board and lodging of students were met. While the Ottoman administration lagged well behind the European rivals, some modern technical naugurated since the the second half of the 18th century like engineering schools and later on faculty of medicine to catch up with the great powers. During the *Tanzimat* period the number and qualities of the new schools increased dramatically replacing *madrasas* which

were degraded to the solely religious education. This duality in the field of complex education created ems for the administration in the upcoming period.

prob During the course of time *madrasas* like *mektebi sibyan* got mostly traditional and in undisciplined the countryside of the Empire. They turned into cumbersome institutions

¹³⁴ Georges Perrbt,

¹³⁵ Mehmet İpçir İi,

, *Souvenirs d'un voyage en Asie mineure*, Paris, 1864, p. 453.
op.cit., p. 329.

losing their dynamism and ability to transform into modern educational centers in the late period of the Empire. However, it should be noted that they served to the benefit of ordinary people to make them literate at least, and to preserve their cultural identity especially in the Balkans.

3.5. Education in the Region of Dobruja

Muslims in Dobruja were traditionally very keen on learning their religion, and considered studying *Quranic* sciences as the order of the Islam religion and the prophet.¹²³ Having this kind of spiritual mindset, the education was naturally designed mainly in line with the religious principles. Modern or sciences were not favoured for a long time. Obviously, as being an important part of the Empire for ages, Dobruja was not alienated from the prevailing education mentality and the system. Focusing just on the religious education and leaving aside the scientific thinking made the Dobrujan Turks backward in time compared to the other ethnic groups in the region as it caused the Ottoman state to lose its competitiveness against the rising European powers.¹²⁴

The education system of the Ottomans was similarly implemented in Dobruja and consisted of three tiers: Primary, secondary and higher education. This system was in practice from the 14th century onwards till 1878 when the Berlin Treaty was signed. *Mektebi sibyan* was free of charge and mandatory for boys and girls without any discrimination. Local people in neighbourhood afforded all costs of the schools including their construction, maintenance and even warming. These traditional primary schools under the administration of *imam* of the mosque gave mostly *Quranic* education and some basic calculation. Pupils had to learn and memorize *ayets* (sentences) and *sure*s (set of *ayets*) from the holy *Quran*, mostly not understanding their meanings. Turkish language teaching was barely found at these schools. Yet, in every Muslim village of Dobruja one could have encountered these primary schools situated next to mosques. It is hard to find the exact figures regarding the *mektebi sibyan* in Dobruja, but, the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Celebi mentions in his book that there were 40 *mektebi sibyan* in Silistra, 11 in Hacıoglu Bazargic, 20 in Babadag, 7 Mangalia and 7 in Karasu (later Medgidia) in the 17th century.¹²⁵

¹²³ Müstecip Ülküsal, *Dobruca ve Türkler (Dobruja and Turks)*, op.cit., p. 119.

¹³¹ Nedret Ali Mahmut, *Romanya Türk-Tatar Edebiyatı I (Romania Turkish-Tatar Literature)*, Constanta, Editura Europolis, 1999, p. 401.

¹²⁵ Müstecip Ülküsal, op. cit., p. 122.

As of the 5 *Tanzimat* reformation period, the state started to share some of the burden of education on people with the aim of centralizing the bureaucratic structure and services. The crumbling *mektibi sibyan* system was converted into *mektebi ibtidai* with 3 year-duration, and their *curriculum* were enriched with some modern courses including the Turkish language

ear Book of the Danube Province dated 1876 counts 1 *mektebi iptidai* in courses. The \ Isaacea, 4 in Constanta, 6 in Mahmudiye and 4 in Tulcea.¹²⁶ The key Babadağ, 11 in mission of the *mektebi şibyan* in Dobruja was to prepare the students for the religious education at the *madrasa*.

During the 1850s-1860s all the *rüşdiyyes* in the Danube *Vilayet* (province) were obliged

to comply with religion had to and the sultan the enlarged *curriculum* laid by the Regulation of April 1847. The lessons in inspire the children with deep devotion and high responsibility to their country Seeking to carry out those aims the Ottoman government established a widespread network of *rüşdiyyes*^{ux} In 1876 their number reached 365 across the Empire.¹²⁷

Dobruja, like other parts of the Empire, was in a dire need of *rüşdiyyes* in the 19th century as the primary schools and *madrasas* were derailed from their original objectives. The gradual

I development of the network of *rüşdiyyes* was inaugurated in 1853 starting from Lovech in today's Bulgaria. In the autumn of 1858 the establishment of *rüşdiyyes* went on in the town of Sofia and Vidin. By the year of 1869 the local Ottoman government had managed to set up further 10 *rüşdiyyes* in Varna, Medgidia, Hacıoglu, Bazargic, Constanta, Nish, Ruscuk, Silistra, Tirnova and Tulcea.¹²⁸ Up to 1878 Babadag, Macin and Mangalia had their *rüşdiyyes* as well. In addition, girl *rüşdiyyes* were put into service in Tulcea, Macin total were and Mangalia. 44 *rüşdiyyes* in the Danube *Vilayet* till 1876 having four< among 2,205 students.¹²⁹ It was the highest *ilayets* on the same date. During the other v 1870s in Dobruja, the Romanian schools were also allowed to function and their number reached 38.¹³⁰

Salname-i Vilayet-i Tuna (1293-1876), Defa 9, Matbaa-i Vilayet-i Tuna. reva,' 'Pupils Instruction at the Rushdiyyes in the Region of the Danube Vilayet during the 60s Ankara, 2012, p. 63.

it, *Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti Tarihçe-i Teşkilat ve İcraatı-XIX Asır Osmanlı Maarif Tarihi* (nties of Organization of the Ministry of Public Education and History of the Ottoman Education y), prep, by: T. Kayaoğlu, Ankara, 2011, p.

145. Cahit Yalçın Bilim notes the number of total *rüşdiyyes* in all Empire as 425 in 1876 in his book *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Eğitim Tarihi (1734-1876) (History of Modern Education in Turkey 1734-1876)*, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1998, p. 166.

¹²⁸ Margarita Dot'reva, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

¹²⁹ Mahmud Cevat, *op.cit.*, p. 144. Dumitru Şopu "Şcoli româneşti în Dobrogea până la 1878 (Romanian schools in Dobruja until 1878)'Virgil Coman (ed.), *Dobrogea-model de convietuire multiethnică şi multiculturală (Dobruja-Model of Multiethnic and Multicultural Cohabitation)*, Constanta, Muntenia, 2008, pp. 96-102.

Schools in Town	1869	1872	1873	1874	1876	1877
Babadağ	5	5	4			
Hırsova	1	3	3			
Isaacea			4	4	4	
Constanta	7 (Muslim and non-Muslim)		1	4	4	4
Mangalia	3	2				
Macin	2	2		2		
Mahmudiye			1	1	1	
Medgidia	11	1				
Sulina	3 (Muslim and non-Muslim)	3				
Tulcea	15 (Muslim and non-Muslim)	15 (Muslim and non-Muslim)		3	3	

The chart above is based on the data derived from the *Salname-i Vilayet-i Tuna* dated 1869, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1876 and 1877. It includes some inconsistent figures on the existing schools conflicting with the historical facts due to the possible non-registration or mis-registration of the schools in the Dobruja towns.¹⁴⁶

The girl school in Macin having 40 students in the education year of 1874 offered an intensive training in reading and writing next to the lessons in religion. The girls practiced embroidering on canvas patches, and they sewed the patches onto pillows, slippers and tobacco pouches. They sewed shirts designed on European models and knit laces on two needles. They learnt to count the numbers while practicing sewing and embroidering. This school in Macin evoked the Muslims' interest by its adherence to the traditional values and social models and by the practical skills which guaranteed to the female pupils not only a successful marriage, but a source of minor incomes. The Muslim community in Tulcea

schooling as we admired the idea of female
Ruḡdiyyes 11, and completed their school building in 1869.¹³¹ with their secular and
 thinking modern education embedded in traditional way of popular for the Turkish
 became were community in Dobruja. The graduates of these schools as the intellectuals
 respected of the period. Nonetheless, the inquiry into the actual *ruḡdiyyes* of the
 instruction at Danube *Vilayet* evinces that the realization of their educational purposes
 the was impeded by a couple of reasons like shortage of funds, irregularity in
 supply of textbooks, shortness of the education period for mastering of all
 courses, insufficient schooling of pupils who had been enrolled, and lastly inadequate training
 or poor self-discipline of teachers.¹³²

In the region of Dobruja the higher educational institution above the *ruḡdiyyes* were *madrasas*. Arabic language and religious courses were taught by traditional methods in those *madrasas*. Constanta, Medgidia, Hacıoglu Bazargic, Silistra, Babadag, Tulcea and Mangalia had a long past of *madrasa* training. However, the oldest *madrasa* was built in Babadag in 1484 by the order of the Sultan Bayezid II.¹³³ The exact number of *madrasas* in Dobruja is hard to give because they were not regular educational institutions, and opened up not only in big towns, but also in some villages where students gathered at some private houses or they attended courses at teachers' premises in varying numbers of years. This meant an undisciplined and irregular educational system if it is compared with the regular *madrasas* in towns. Teachers or *muderrises* were paid by personal donations. Students afforded their expenditures or were dependent on charities. They dressed up in a similar
¹⁵⁰ fashion like *hodjas*
 of mosques

¹³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 755

¹³² Margarita Dotreva, "Pupils Instruction at the Rushdiyyes in the Region of the Danube Vilayet during the 60s and 70s of Nineteenth Century", *op.cit.*, p. 64.

¹³³ George Grigoie, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

Even on the eve of incorporation of Dobruja into Romania new *madrasas* were inaugurated by the personal efforts. *Müderris* Hacı Abduşşah Efendi had opened a *madrasa* in *Toprakhisar* (Topraisar) before the 1877-1878 war with 5-6 rooms and accommodating 10-12 students in each room. Kurt-Seyit Efendi had run a *madrasa* in *Hasancı*, Valu lui Traian until 1886 when he was replaced by Kirpi Hüseyin Efendi. Hacı Fazıl Efendi had run *madrasas* first in *Kizil-Mutar*, today Movila Verde, a village in Constanta county, later moved to *Azaplar*, Tatara. There was another *madrasa* in Constanta before the city's public bath was built in its place.¹³⁴

In addition to the establishment of new *mektebs* in Dobruja, the central and local Ottoman authorities attempted to inspect the actual *mekteb* network, to provide their efficient funding, to update the traditional instruction and to foster the pupils' enrolment at schools. The *mekteb* network of the 15th-18th centuries was affected by various factors such as wars, fires or natural disasters, the misuse of the *vakıf* revenues or the infeasibility of the buildings' renovation. In order to surmount their negative effects upon the *mektebs* the locals mostly approached the Central Government.¹³⁵ The Governor of the *Sandjak* of Tulcea audited the *vakıf* expenditures in Babadağ in 1868 during one of his visits to the town. He found out that the local accountants regularly portioned out an amount of 30.000 *kuruş* from the revenues of the *Vakıf* of Gazi Ali Pasha among some persons who were not entitled to get financial relief. Ultimately, he ordered to spend the interest incomes of the *vakıf* on the *mektebi sıbyan* and the high religious school, which was the *madrasa* founded by the same Pasha.¹³⁶

In most parts of Dobruja local people continued to support the schools in various ways as the state could not afford all the cost. In fact, the Law of Public Education dated 1869 stipulated that each school had to establish its private fund to pay for teachers and reimburse daily expenses. By 1876 the Muslim villagers in the *kaza* of Mangalia already had renovated the school buildings on their own. In the village called *Gerendjik* (Peceneaga), Wali-ullah Efendi paid for the construction of a *mektebi sıbyan* and for the text books sent out to the pupils there. Muslims of Dobruja usually used the revenues of the furs of rams which were sacrificed on the occasion of *Eid al Adha* to meet construction costs of the school buildings. In March 1874 the *Vilayet* Danube granted for the construction of a new school in Tulcea, of which the total cost, 1.833 *kuruş* from the sale of ram furs in Tulcea and 3.169 *kuruş* from the sale in

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 124-125. See also, Metin Ömer, "The History of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary (1889-1948)", Adriana Cupcea, Marin Manuela, Metin Ömer (eds.), *The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia: Documents And Memory*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2016, pp. 153-173.

¹³⁵ Margarita Dobrevă, *op.cit.*, p. 742.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 745.

Mahmudiye was provided by the local Muslim community.¹³⁷ In the spring of 1877 local officials and the community were very much concerned about the Russo-Ottoman war, and as a result, the attempt to raise capital for the sustenance of the school network failed largely in the Dobruja region.

Even in the last days of the Ottomans it was quite hard to see modern and scientific educational centers across the Empire, except a few cities like Istanbul, Monastir (located in today's Macedonia), Edirne or Bursa. Keeping in mind this, in Dobruja apart from *ruçdiyes* for boys and girls, modern military schools or *madrasas* were not founded. Whereas, the

madrasa institution with in Babadag functioned properly since the 17th century was known as the best high educational institution with ample resources depending on Gazi Ali Pasha *Vakif*'s revenues extracted from its rich *curriculum*, highly qualified teachers, and most importantly with its financial resources depending on Gazi Ali Pasha *Vakif*'s revenues extracted from hectare lands, 8.000 brests and lakes. After Dobruja came under the Romanian rule, this : was chosen *madrasa* the model for the Muslim community and reactivated in 1889 as as the Muslim Seminary under the Romanian national education system. Later due to the various reasons it was relocated to Medgidia in 1901, and survived up to 1967 when it was closed down by the Communist regime.

3.6. Education in the Other Balkan Regions of the Empire

3.6.1. Education in the Vilayet Danube

When the *Vilayet Danube* was founded in 1864, it was contemplated as the pilot province for launching new and modern practices in the administrative system. The province located mainly in today's Bulgaria, which comprised of *sandjaks* of Ruscuc, Sofia, Tirnova, Nish, Varna and Vidin and Tulcea (having Tulcea, Babadag, Medgidia, Hirsova and Sulina, Isaacea, Macin, C the anstanta *kazas* in today's Romania), was also set up as the exemplary model for reforms. The Governor Mithat Pasha launched an educational campaign in the province in order to modernize the methods and means of instruction. Danubean Province Indeed, one of his aims was to open a *ruçdiye* in every town and an *idadi* school or high school in every

¹³⁷*Ibidem*, p. 748

sub-province.¹⁵⁵ But, in 1870 there was still no *idadi* school neither in the Danubean Province,



nor in the whole Empire. The first this kind of high school was opened in Istanbul only in 1872. Nonetheless, 40 *rüşdiyes* and 150 *madrasas* were actively running in this province in 1875.¹³⁸

In compliance with the instruction coming from the Ministry, education councils were established in every province center. Hence, the Danubean *Vilayet* Educational Council drafted a specific regulation on the training in the *mektebs* of the Danube *Vilayet*. Sanctioned by the Ministry of Education, the regulation was sent out to all *sandjaks* and *kazas* of the province in 1874. It promoted the class instruction method and the establishment of primary schools of 150-200 children. However, it did not help remove inconsistencies in the *curriculum* of these schools as they differed from each other not in complying with the official regulation based on the 1869 Educational Law. Varying qualifications of teachers and traditional ways of teaching still prevailed although textbooks were prepared in Istanbul and dispatched to the region in the upcoming years.

The Ottoman rule did not interfere in the non-Muslim school network in the Empire. Each non-Muslim minorities had their own schools instructing in their mother tongue. They were administered and directed by their religious high authorities.

The table presented below shows the number of primary and secondary schools as well as their enrolled student numbers in 1874 in some of the administrative units of the *Vilayet* Danube.¹³⁹ It is clear from the figures in the table that non-Muslim population had the chance to educate their children under the same conditions with the Muslims, but in separate education institutions. The lower number of non-Muslim students is directly related to the population of the residents in the region. The second important data derived from this table is the high number of the girls who attended schools towards the end of the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, which meant a new understanding and opening in girls' lives. It is unfortunate that there is no available data for the schools in villages. However, it is easy to guess lower level of attendance by Muslim girls to the village schools due to more conservative mentality of the neighbourhood and more hardships of agrarian life.

¹³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 244. The author here refers to the Year Books of Tuna Vilayeti (Salname-i Tuna) dated 1873 and 1874.

¹³⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı Nüfusu 1830-1914 (Ottoman Population 1830-1914)*, İstanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2010, pp. 447-448.

		Muslim students			Non-Muslim Students		
Administrati Units	ve	Number of schools	Number of girls	Number of boys	Number of schools	Number of girls	Number of boys
Ruscuc		143	736	1365	92	861	1678
Silistra		181	1135	2088	40	331	912
Plevna		35	896	1604	23	434	652
Vidin		24	215	524	64	457	883
Varna		63	337	1120	25	395	889
Bazargic		120	1417	1728	16	155	590
Balcik		91	245	1358			

The Russo-Turkish war in 1877-1878 did away with all the reforms, and school buildings were destroyed or occupied by the Bulgarians under the effect of the Russians. According to the Bulgarian Education Law dated 30 January 1885, there were two types of

schools in the newly established Bulgarian Principality; national and private schools. The administration of the former belonged completely to the Bulgarian Government. The private ones were directed by the religious, national or professional groups. The Turks had three types of schools like in the past as elementary, secondary and religious schools, i.e. *madrassa*. The education language at schools was Turkish, but Bulgarian was compulsory.¹⁴⁰

In 1892 a new law declared that the Christian private schools in the Bulgarian Principality were to receive their education in the Bulgarian language. Especially Greek, Armenian and *Gagauze* private schools were to be negatively affected by this law. But, the Greek Government protested so strongly that this new law was not put into force. Nonetheless, the Bulgarian Government decided to implement the 10th article of the Bulgarian Education Law. This law required that all the Christians in Bulgaria should get their first elementary education in Bulgarian, the official language of the state. In that way the government had an opportunity to control and check the Greek schools. Some Bulgarian newspapers favoured the inclusion of the Turkish and Jewish schools within the scope of the 10th article as well.¹⁴¹

Parallel with the rise in the Bulgarian nationalism and segregation towards the remaining Turkish community, the budget allocated for the Muslim schools declined dramatically over the years. During the 1894-95 education year, 258,119 *levas* were spent on the Turkish schools in the Bulgarian Principality of which the Bulgarian government supplied 9, 946 *levas*, which was 4 % of the total expenditure, and the remaining was provided by the Turkish community. During the same education year, the government supplied 51% of the Bulgarian schools' expenditure.¹⁴² Hence, history once again demonstrated that education and culture could be tools of identity construction.¹⁴³ It is noteworthy that due to this negative official policies no Turks could graduate from Bulgarian universities or high schools in the South Dobruja under the Bulgarian rule between 1878-1913.¹⁴⁴

3.6.2. Education in the Vilayet Bosnia Herzegovina

The education system in the province of Bosnia Herzegovina, which was captured by the Ottomans in the 15th century and was lost to the Austria-Hungary Empire in 1878, was

¹⁴⁰ Omer Turan, *op.cit.*, p.220.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 230.

¹⁴³ Irina Livezeanu, *Culture și nationalism in Romania Mare (Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania)*, București, Humanitas, 2008, p. 28.

¹⁴⁴ Nedret Ali Mahmut, *op.cit.*, p. 407.

similar to the ones in other parts of the Empire. It was comprised of mainly *mektebi sibyan*,



madrasas and *k.ter riişdiyes* with the *Tanzimat* period. Evliya Çelebi counts 180 *mektebi sibyan* and 18 *madrasas* in the 17th century in this province of the Ottoman state.¹⁴⁵ There were 12 *madrasas* in Sarajevo, 20 in Gradcanica, 11 in Çelebipazar and 5 and 1878.¹⁴⁸ T Banjaluca only between 1466 onwards the end of the Ottoman rule the number of decreased to 7. *madrasas* in Sarajevo in Banjaluca to 2.¹⁴⁶ This high number of schools in Bosnia showed the Bosnia mians's great interest to educate their youth. Especially, the *madrasa* Hiisrev Bey lc of Gazi cated in Sarajevo was well known with its high quality education and the contribution to scientific and cultural life of the province.¹⁴⁷ Bosnian people increased their demands from the central government for opening up new educationall institutions in the aftermath of the announcement of *Tanzimat*, and the capital responded positively to these wishes as much as possible staying within the limits of the budgetary constraints, and supported the establishment of new schools in the region. The enlargement in the school network did not only include the Muslims, but also the Christians. Hence, by the y ear 1875 the number of schools in the region was 1.500, and of students reached to 43.000.¹⁴⁹

In 1866 a special commission in the field of education was established in the Bosnia Herzegovina Province, of which the members were generally the high level bureaucrats like *Mufti*, *kadi* or inspector being among them. As of 1870, non-Muslims were also given membership roles in this commission.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Murat Akgündüz, "Osmanlı İdaresi Döneminde Bosna-Hersek (Bosnia-Herzegovina under the Ottoman Administration)", *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, No. XVIII, İzmir, 2003, p. 127.

¹⁴⁶ *Salname-Bosnia-Herzegovina*, IRCICA Newsletter Bulletin D'Information, Nr. 31, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 1292 (1875), pp.

¹⁴⁷ Mehmet Süleyman, "Saraybosna'da Gazi Hüseyin Bey Kütüphanesi (The Library of Gazi Hüseyin Bey in Bosnia Herzegovina)", *Salname-Bosnia-Herzegovina*, No. 31, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 1292-1293 (1875), pp. 1293-1294 (1876), pp. 1294-1295 (1877), pp. 1295-1296 (1878), pp. 1296-1297 (1879), pp. 1297-1298 (1880), pp. 1298-1299 (1881), pp. 1299-1300 (1882), pp. 1300-1301 (1883), pp. 1301-1302 (1884), pp. 1302-1303 (1885), pp. 1303-1304 (1886), pp. 1304-1305 (1887), pp. 1305-1306 (1888), pp. 1306-1307 (1889), pp. 1307-1308 (1890), pp. 1308-1309 (1891), pp. 1309-1310 (1892), pp. 1310-1311 (1893), pp. 1311-1312 (1894), pp. 1312-1313 (1895), pp. 1313-1314 (1896), pp. 1314-1315 (1897), pp. 1315-1316 (1898), pp. 1316-1317 (1899), pp. 1317-1318 (1900), pp. 1318-1319 (1901), pp. 1319-1320 (1902), pp. 1320-1321 (1903), pp. 1321-1322 (1904), pp. 1322-1323 (1905), pp. 1323-1324 (1906), pp. 1324-1325 (1907), pp. 1325-1326 (1908), pp. 1326-1327 (1909), pp. 1327-1328 (1910), pp. 1328-1329 (1911), pp. 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The teachers at the Bosnian schools were dispatched from Istanbul, and they could not quit their missions unless the new ones replaced them. If the teachers did not make a big mistake, they kept their positions in their schools for many years and that meant the continuity of the education was highly respected. According to the archival documents, this principle was abode specifically for the teachers at the *rişdiyes*, which were newly established and quickly



gained popularity among people. The Sublime Porte instructed the relevant authorities to become attentive on this matter.¹⁵¹

The Porte extended financial aid to the building and maintenance of schools for non-Muslims though most needs were met by their communities. Upon the application of the Principal of the Girls School in Sarajevo belonged to the Christian community, 40.000 *kuruş* was provided to her in 1868 to meet the needs of the school. In addition to that, 2.000 *kuruş* were allocated to this girls school on a monthly basis. This kind of financial and material assistance to the non-Muslim schools was frequently seen in the province of Bosnia Herzegovina. In 1869 the Porte allocated 100.000 *kuruş* to be used for the non-Muslim schools and churches, and with this fund more than 30 schools and churches were built in the province. In 1870 another 100.000 *kuruş* was sent by the government for the same purpose.¹⁵² All these generous educational funds for the Bosnia-Herzegovina prove that having the sympathy of non-Muslim population was important to the Ottomans because on the eve of 1877-1878 war with Russia, they did not want any trouble coming from those Orthodox Slavic people living in Bosnia.

The school textbooks and other educational materials were also shipped by the government to the Muslim schools in Bosnia Herzegovina similar to other *vilayets*. They were printed in Istanbul and first dispatched to the *Vilayet*, and then to the *sandjaks* and *kazas* in row. The concerned authorities in the capital were meticulous in distributing the textbooks in time to the relevant schools and often warned the governorate in this regard.¹⁵³

The figures in the Year Books of the Province related to the schools in the 19th century are not precise, mostly repetitive and erratic. This was partly due to the non-classification of the school types up to 1873. The official classification based on the difference of religions. In this year and in 1874 the number of the Muslim primary schools was 897 and of the non-Muslim ones was 453 totalling 1.350. It is only possible to find information regarding the number of school types and students attending those schools in the Year Books (*Salname*) of 1874 and the following years.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Vilayat Gelen-Giden (Sublime Porte Documents Room, Province In Bound-Out Bound), Bosna Giden Defteri (Bosnia Out Bound Book), No. 465, p. 75, 27 Şevval 1290/18 December 1873.*

¹⁵² *Zafer Gölen, Tanzimat Döneminde Bosna Hersek'te Eğitim (Education in Bosnia Herzegovina During the Tanzimat Era), op.cit., p. 217.*

¹⁵³ *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Vilayat Gelen-Giden (Sublime Porte Documents Room, Province In Bound-Out Bound), Bosna Giden Defteri (Bosnia Out Bound Book), No. 465, p. 105, 27 Şevval 1290/18 December 1873.*

¹⁵⁴ *Zafer Gölen, Tanzimat Döneminde Bosna Hersek'te Eğitim (Education in Bosnia Herzegovina During the Tanzimat Era), op.cit., p. 218.*

given below shows inconsistent and repetitive figures related to the number of selected *ruşdiyes* in Bosnia Herzegovina in the 1870s.¹⁷³ Comparing with the schools in *Vilayet Danube*, the *ruşdiyes* in this *vilayet* seem to have less as the Bosnians were enthusiastic about education, this inconsistency can be of precise data about schools and their students.



	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877
<i>KazasfNum</i>						
<i>bqr</i> of						
<i>Rüşdiye</i>						
Students						
Sarajevo	65	65	54	70	60	60
Travnik						
Mostar						
Celebipazar						
Banjaluca						
Taşlıca						
The girl	education was paid a special attention in the province of Bosnia Herzegovina,					
and with the ir	62	62	33	38	45	29
in this	auguration of the					
provino?	Tanzimat period, the 4-year <i>rtiçdiyes</i> for girls were opened up too. Bosnia was					
	85	85	78	128	84	87
	among the privileged provinces like Crete,					
	Konya and Trabzon					
	35	35	43	43		
	<i>lyet-i Bosna (The Year Book of Bosnia)</i> -1290 (1873), p. 83, 85, 110, 1291 (1874), p. 57,60, 32 (1875), p. 57, 68, 73, 94, 97, 103, 109-111, 1293 (1876), p.68,70, 90, 105-106, 108, 1294 112, (1877), p.55, 57, 120, 122; <i>Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye</i> -1289 (1872), p. 233,1290 (1873), p. 206.					
	39	35	23	18	18	54
	32	61	41	48	48	32

¹⁷³ *Salname-i Vilfr*
70, 81, 83-85, 12

where the *rü^diyes* for girls established. Along with the religious courses, language, grammar, calligraphy, history, geography, literature, household management, sewing, calculation, drawing, music and etc. were taught to them at these *rü^diyes*¹¹⁴

The Bosnian Muslims sent their children to schools as much as possible and constituted the most educated group in Bosnia Herzegovina. This situation did not alter during the Austrian conquest, and even during the Yugoslavian government.¹⁵⁵ The Ottoman rule reciprocated positively to this high interest of local people by establishing not only *mektebi sibyan* and *rüşdiyes*, but also by founding a Military High School (*tdadi*) and a Teacher School for Boys (*Dar'ül Muallimiri*) in Sarajevo.

The Military High School was a pioneering move in the field of education though it was built and operated in 1873 long after the similar ones were already established in Bursa in 1846, in Edirne and Monastery in 1847 and in Damascus in 1848.¹⁵⁶ The Porte allocated sufficient fund for providing necessary education materials and salaries of teachers and students. The number of teachers was 6 at the beginning, and all of them was coming from military ranks teaching math, literature, French, Arabic, Persian languages, geography and the Ottoman law. During the course of time, new courses like history, science, gymnastic and grammar were added to the *curriculum* and accordingly the number of teachers increased. In 1878 the school had 55 students.¹⁵⁷

The first Teacher School for Boys across the Empire was established in Istanbul in 1847. To meet the increasing demand a *Mektebi Sibyan* Teacher School in 1862, and another Teacher School for Girls in 1870 in Istanbul were inaugurated.¹⁵⁸ As the Porte could not send sufficient teachers to Bosnia Herzegovina where the interest in education was very high, the idea of founding a teacher school for the primary level was put forward. The Porte did not allow this school to be established due to existence of one in Istanbul, but it gave permission to the *Dar 'ül Muallimin* to be built. Yet, under the heavy pressure of urgent needs, without putting its name a teacher school for primary education was initiated within the *madrassa* of Gazi Ayni Bey. The number of students of this school was limited to 20, and the candidate

¹⁵⁵ Zafer Gölen, *op.cit.*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁶ İlhan Tekeli, Selim İlkin, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 'nda Eğitim ve Bilgi Üretim Sisteminin Oluşumu ve Dönüşümü (The Formation and Transformation of Education and Know-How Creation System in the Ottoman Empire)*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1993, p. 68.

¹⁵⁷ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Bosna (The Year Book of Bosnia)-1295 (1878)*, p. 90; *Salname-i Devlet-i Aliye-i Osmaniye-1295 (1878)*, p. 343.

¹⁵⁸ İlhan Tekeli, Selim İlkin, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

teachers would be given 30 *kuruş* as a salary on a monthly basis. Teachers at the school would receive 300 *kuruş* salary. The graduates were to be given 150 *kuruş* when they were appointed to different primary schools in Bosnia.¹⁵⁹ The official school, *Dar 'ül Muallimin*, was one of the firsts in its field after Crete and Konya in the periphery of the Empire. The school started its education in 1875 and with its a few teachers and students continued to function up to the Austrian occupation.

As already stated, people in Bosnia Herzegovina, either Muslims or non-Muslims were keen on learning and sending their children to schools. This willingness increased after the *Tanzimat* period initiated and more schools were introduced to the province. In 1870, 6.5 % of the inhabitants, 1.5 % of the Orthodox people and 0.5 % Catholics were enrolled at the schools. This proved the high interest in education among the Muslims of Bosnia in those times which still continues in modern times.¹⁶⁰

3.6.3. Education in the Vilayet Kosova (Sandjak Ipek)

The region of Ipek was included in the territory of the Empire with Kosova in 1389. In 1479 in a battle it was put within the administration unit of Shkodra *sandjak*, and later in the Vilayet Prizren. It was elevated to status of *sandjak* in 1879 and incorporated into the Vilayet Kosova.

Like in other vilayets the education system comprised of three stages as *mekteb-i sibyan*, *ruşdiyyes* and *madrasas* in the Vilayet Kosova following the *Tanzimat* reforms in 1839. *Maaarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* (General Regulation on Education) adopted in 1869 stipulated that *mekteb-i sibyan* would be transformed into *ibtidai* schools. The first examples of this decision was witnessed in 1873, and the number of *ibtidais* increased rapidly in the Empire. The *mekteb-i sibyan* in Ipek *sandjak* followed the suit, and soon after *ibtidais* were inaugurated. These primary schools were sometimes established within a *ruşdiyye* school as a sub-school due to the non-existence of a building. The official correspondence dating back to those years prove that there had been such a discussion to open *ibtidais* within the *ruşdiyyes*, but it was decided that there was no need for this kind of practice because the Ipek *sandjak* had enough *ibtidai* schools.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), İrade Şura-yı Devlet, no: 753, Lef. 1, Meclis-i Maarif Mazbatası dated 25 Şevval 1286/28 January 1870, Arz tezkiresi 5 Zilkade 1286/6 February 1870, İrade dated 6 Zilkade 1286/7 February 1870.

¹⁶⁰ Zafer Gölen, *Tanzimat Döneminde Bosna Hersek 'te Eğitim* (Education in Bosnia Herzegovina During the Tanzimat Era), op.cit., p. 229.

¹⁶¹ Seda Şahin Ahmetaj, "Osmanlı Döneminde Balkanlar'da Eğitim-Öğretim Müesseseleri, 19. Asır İpek Sancağı Örneği (Educational and Teaching Institutions in the Balkans during the Ottoman Era, Example of Ipek Sandjak in the 19th Century ", IV. Türkiye Lisansüstü Çalışmaları Kongresi - Bildiriler Kitabı, Vol. III, Kütahya, 14-17 May 2015, p.271.

As it was usual practice, local people supported the construction and maintenance of the schools in Ipek too. When the budgets allocated by the Sublime Porte for this aim did not suffice, the generosity of people would take the lead. It was possible vice versa too. Local community in Ipek started to build an *ibtidai* school on their charity in the 1870s, but could not finish it because of lack of financial sources, and they applied for assistance to the Sublime Porte through the *Vilayet Kosova*. But, the Ministry of Education rejected this demand excusing the insufficient budgets, and warned the authorities that local people should first get the financial guarantee from the Porte, then should attempt to build it. Though the situation on the ground was this, the construction of *ibtidais* continued in a full steam in the 1890s, one in Radtnanice village in 1894, and three in Gosine *kaza* in the same year. According to the files belong to the years 1893-94 in the Ipek *sandjak* 54 *ibtidai* schools existed, and the number of students enrolled at these schools was 2747 along with 54 teachers.¹⁶²

Ibtidai Schools in the Ipek Sandjak in 1893-1894¹⁶³

Girls				Boys		
<i>Kazas</i>	Students	Teachers	Schools	Students	Teachers	Schools
ipek	62	1	1	180	18	18
Tirgvište	172			204	7	7
Berane	45			90	3	3

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 271-272.
¹⁶³ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Kosova*, 1311, 1893-94, pp.226-227.

Gosine		111			474	6	6
Yakova		308	4	4	1101	15	15
Total		698	5	5	2049	49	49

The construction of *rii\$diye* school in Ipek started in 1863 and continued up to 1877. In Yakova one already started its activities in 1868. In Berane *kaza* another one was opened up in 1893. All *ru\$diyes* in this *sandjak* were for the boys, and after 1867 the non-Muslims were accepted to these *rii\$diyes* as well.

Ru?diye Schoojs in the Ipek Sandjak in 1893-1894¹⁶⁴

<i>Kazas</i>		Students	Teachers	Schools
ipek	;	33	2	1
Berane		25	1	1
Yakova		120	3	1
Total		153	6	3

The presence of *madrasas* in the Ipek *sandjak* in the aftermath of the announcement of the *Tcmzimat* period continued like in other parts of the Empire even in a surprising increase in their numbers. In 1878-79 there were 32 *madrasas* in the Kosova *Vilayet*. This number increased

¹⁶⁴ *Salname-i Viltyyet-i Kosova*, 1311, 1893-94, pp. 226-227.

to 35 in 1893-94, and in 1903-1904 it reached to 43 while Ipek having 2, and Yakova having 2 *madrasas* in in 1893-94.¹⁶⁵ As of long tradition and practice only the Muslim boys attended the *madrasas*.

Madrasas in the Ipek Sandjak in 1893-1894¹⁶⁶

<i>Kazas</i>	Students	Teachers (<i>Müderris</i>)	<i>Madrasas</i>
Ipek	64	2	2
Yakova	47	2	2
Total	111	4	4

Up to the *Tanzimat* period the Ottoman education system functioned only in two stages for the public as *mektebi sibyan*, primary school, and *madrasa*, high school. While *mektebi sibyan* accepted both boys and girls, *madrasas* were only for boys. This practically hindered the role of female in the society keeping them at home. Though the statistical data regarding the number of girls at *mektebi sibyan* are not available till the 19th century, it is easy to guess that it never matched the boys'. This had a number of reasons including the conservative mentality of the parents or need for female labour at home and field. Whatever the reason be, the low level attendance of girls to schools was an important obstacle ahead of the development of the Empire.

¹⁶⁵ Seda Şahin Ahmetaj, *op.cit.*, p. 274.
¹⁶⁶ *Salname-i Vilayet-i Kosova, 1311, 1893-94*, pp. 226-227.

While the numbers of those two kinds of educational institutions were really high across the Empire and their presence was visible even in villages, the output was not satisfactory due to multiple complex reasons. The quality of education generally depended upon the qualification of the teachers and the size of the funds allocated by *vakifs* or personal contributions. The *curricula* without any standard based on mostly theological instruction did not help I up with the modern teaching techniques of the West. *Mektebi sibyan* sufficed catchini to give basic religious knowledge just to be basis for *madrasa* education. *Madrasas* were children designed to cover both religious and worldly education at the beginning. They offered positive sciences like mathematics, physics, astronomy, geography, literature and history to their students and especially in the 16th century the ones in istanbul were able compete with their counterparts, universities in the West with their scientific studies and research. *Madrasas* in the countryside remained much conservative and closed to the world developments. Religious devotion was higher at *madrasas* in villages than the ones in towns, and that was one of the reasons that they did not follow secular courses.

With the descending power of the Empire at the end of the 17th century, the Ottoman elite for the first time in history felt the need to overhaul the education system, but in the first instance limiting to the mere military instruction. As a matter of fact, Koçi Bey (death 1650) as an author ami historian who was involved in state affairs, had already presented his various reports to the rulers of the Empire pointing at the reasons and harms of decaying of education at *madrasas*. Yet, his reports mentioning about widespread corruption and bigotry at *madrasas* were not duly heeded and necessary steps to reform the education system were not taken on time.¹⁶⁷ All educational system was falling apart in tandem with the increasing loss of territory and lack of financial resources. *Madrasas*, attached to just theological conception and being under severe authority of the Muslim clergy, lost their dynamism. On the other hand, Western universities were more institutionalized by adding secular knowledge to their theological ort, *curricula*. In *madrasas* could not transform themselves into modern universities and thus, iind sh lagged well them in scientific research and studies. The Ottoman army took important svent be measures decline of the military power based on the French system beginning from the to pr 1790s. At newly opened military schools French model of instruction was practiced. New army units were trained. However, this caused unrest among the *janissaries* who were main body of the army at that time. The reformist Sultan Mahmud II solved this big unrest by a

nirel, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

radical move of a total dissolution of the *janissaries* in 1826. By his order the first day of the rebellion, which is 14 June 1826, more than 6.000 janissaries were killed either by canon shells or by gun fires. On 16 June, the last day of rebellion, death toll climbed up to at least 20.000. It is reportedly told that the residents of Istanbul were not able eat fish from *Bosphorus* for months because of the floating corpses of *janissaries* in the strait.¹⁶⁸

Against the rising Western offensive in economic, military, political and cultural fields, the *Tanzimat* period starting from 1839 introduced pioneering reforms in whole education system creating in the meantime a duality between traditional and secular-modern way of instruction since the old *mektebi sibyan* and *madradas* were not totally eliminated while *riiṣdiyes*, secondary schools, were introduced to the system. Thus, three-stage educational system was gradually institutionalized all over the Empire, and evolved from mostly theological to more scientific instruction. This Western pattern helped more women's emancipation. Non-Muslims were given freedom to educate in their languages and allowed to be funded and administered by their churches. As all provinces of the Empire, the Dobruja region received its share from those modernizing efforts and attempts, and the schooling and the attendance ratios dramatically increased in this period. *Tanzimat* rulers favoured to disseminate modern education facilities to the all provinces not only to compete with the Western powers, but also to keep different ethnicities and faiths under the same roof. Large liberties and funding given to the non-Muslims in the field of education were instrumental to keep intact the Empire's territories. Even though this policy eventually did not yield the expected outcome for the Empire, Abdulhamid II and the following Young Turks rule continued to aspire more modern education in the country.

In a similar vein, some Turkish intellectuals and thinkers like the Ottoman rulers consistently dwelt upon ways of modernizing the education system for the Muslims. In this sense, one should not neglect the remarkable contribution of Ismail Bey Gaspirali (1851-1914), a great Tatar-Turkish thinker, educator, journalist and reformer of the Tatar society. Gaspirali's *usul-u cedit* (the new way) focusing on teaching mother tongue with a combination of religious and secular subjects were revolutionary in the Muslim schools in Russia at the end of the 19th century.¹⁶⁹ Gaspirali greatly inspired and encouraged all the Turkish world to have unity under

¹⁶⁸ Abdülbaki Can Külük, "Osmanlı Ordusunun Simgesi: Yeniçeriler (The Symbol of the Ottoman Army: Janissaries)", www.academia.edu, 2017, p. 20.

¹⁶⁹ Hakan Kırımlı, *İsmail Bey Gaspirali*, Ankara, Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Genel Merkezi Yayınları No. 4, 2004, pp. 13-14.

a modern educational system and circulated his ideas through his newspaper called "*Tercüman*" published between 1883 and 1919 (after his death it survived for another 5 years).

In Gaspıralı's view the key to progress rested in the limitation of traditional education based exclusively on the study of the *Quran* and the Arabic language, by referring to the assimilation of modern sciences, the education being practiced in the native language, the Tatar

Turkish. In this respect the idea designed to establish a modern educational system by opening *usul-ü cedid* schools is exemplary, which became soon the key to school and social success. The educational concept promoted by İsmail Gaspıralı focused on the modern system of adapted European culture way of teaching to the Islamic ancestral culture promoting continuous progress. His considered curriculum with (geometry, Turkish language, history, maths, health the most relevant aspect was education etc.) the emancipation of Muslim girls by facilitating their access to study.¹⁹⁰

Gaspıralı met a number of obstacles in his quest of modern education system. First, it was hard for him to convince the conservative Muslims to send their children to new schools. Second, he had to find financial resources to establish these schools. And, the last but not least, he had to train teachers in sufficient number for the schools. Finally, he overcame all these challenges with vigour and patience, and the number of *usul-u cedid* schools in Russia reached 5.000 when he passed away in 1914.¹⁷⁰

1895 and Gaspıralı's views regarding the education inspired and greatly influenced the late Ottoman intellectuals including the founders of the Turkish Republic. The Dobrujan Turkish-Tatar intellectuals and educated people like Mehmed Niyazi and Mıstıkcıb Ulkusal followed his way of thinking and tried to raise the awareness of the community about the modern education.¹⁷¹

All in all, the *Tanzimat* period and the following Abdulhamid II reign succeeded tremendous achievements in modernizing education system, and the students of this era constituted specific the core cadres of the Turkish Republic in the aftermath of the demise of the Empire.

¹⁷⁰ *op.cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁷¹ Hakan Kırımlı
Ibidem, p. 42.

Chapter IV Integration of the Turkish Community in Dobruja into the Romanian Ruling System (1878-1914)

4.1. Romania from the Ottoman Suzerainty to Independence

Baron Prokesch-Osten, the Austrian Ambassador to Istanbul, had stated at the Congress of Paris in 1856 that the Romanians aspired to create an independent state that was to include the Bukovina, the Romanian portion of Transylvania and the Banat, with the Balkans as frontiers.¹⁷² To the dismay of the Romanian rulers, their aspiration did not come true with the Paris Peace Treaty concluded on 30 March 1856. The Great Powers dominating the peace table did not allow a full independent Romania to be established by accepting the continuation of suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire over the two Romanian principalities, namely Wallachia and Moldavia. It was a prize for the Ottomans for their alliance with Britain and France against Russia at the Crimean War (1853-1856). However, the Ottoman influence arising from that limited suzerainty right over the principalities diminished sharply after new organic regulations came into effect there especially with the announcement of the unification of the two principalities in 1859. The Ottomans were forced to recognize this *fait accompli* in 1861 causing their leverage on the principalities to decrease to almost zero level.¹⁷³

Although Romania did not get full independence in Paris, it acquired a big advantage in replacing Russian dominance at the mouth of the Danube and the two principalities under the joint guarantee provided by the European Powers. Russia had to vacate the territory around the mouth of the Danube in accordance with the Article XI of the Paris Treaty, and the Russian influence over Wallachia and Moldavia was eliminated with the Article XXII. Furthermore, control over navigation on the Danube was withdrawn from Russia and a commission of riparian states was established to supervise the declared principle of freedom of navigation as stipulated by the Article XVII.¹⁷⁴

In the aftermath of the Treaty of Paris, it should be noted that Romania benefited a lot from the protection of Great Powers, the winners of the Crimean War. On the one hand, this protection gradually eroded the suzerainty of the Ottomans over the principalities, and helped Romanians to function as a state having all organs including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹⁷² Sherman David Spector, *Rumania at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study of the Diplomacy of Ioan I. C. Bratianu*, New York, Bookman Associates, 1962, p. 15.

¹⁷³ Mehmet Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 85.

¹⁷⁴Theodor Schieder, *Paris Peace Treaty (1856)*, Oxford Public International Law, <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e731>.

and more importantly a unified army. On the other hand, it helped the Russians withdraw from the region for a certain time of period. However, when the Russo-Ottoman war began in 1877, Romania found a golden chance to declare its independence from the desperate and feeble and at the request of the Great Duke Nicholas, the Supreme Commander of /, the Romanian troops crossed the Danube on 19 July 1877 actively joining the war. The victory against Ottoman Empire, the Russian army the Ottomans brought Romania full independence adding all Northern Dobruja comprising of Constanta and Tulcea provinces along with the Danube Delta stipulated in the Berlin Treaty. This milestone is celebrated by the Romanian the second stage of the creation of a national and unitary Romanian state after to its territory as the first union of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859.¹⁷⁵ historiography as

Debates on the Annexation of Northern Dobruja

4.2. Internal Despite all the efforts exerted by Romania on the way of becoming a full independent state with a view of expanding its geographical borders, it is interesting to see that at the initial stage many Romanian politicians either opposed to the integration of Northern Dobruja in the new Romanian state or publicly expressed their hesitations on the subject during the process for the Berlin Treaty. In the rhetoric of the opponents, Dobruja was a foreign territory, the symbol of an onerous bargain, a fatal gift or a geopolitical embarrassment for of preparations perceived the province's geo-political location and multiethnic population as Romania. country's ethnic homogeneity and political stability. Some others thought that Many a danger Dobruja was a Muslim populated wetland, poor in economic terms and culturally to the backward.¹⁷⁶The debate on the subject continued even at the Parliament sessions convened for the ratification of the Berlin Treaty. Some Romanian politicians did not want to sacrifice Southern Bessarabia, a territory that was regarded as an integral part of Romania and a vital commercial outlet for foreign trade through its access to the Black Sea. When the Russians officially informed Romania about their intention to regain possession of Southern Bessarabia and suggested Dobruja as a possible compensation in January 1878, it caused great resentment in the Bucharest political circles.¹⁷⁷ On January 26 1878, the Romanian Senate adopted a

¹⁹⁶ Alexandru Rai

¹⁹⁷ Constantin (Iulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *op.cit.*, p. 284.

loi Romania, dachi, *Citizenship, Nation, and State Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into 1913, 1878- Studies, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh, Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European 8-12.*

2001, pp iceanu, *Opere (Works)*, Vol. 4, *Oratorie 11, Part IV (1874-1878)*, Georgeta Penelea (éd.),

¹⁹⁸ Mihail Academiei, 1989, p. 529.

resolution stating that its determination to reject any breakup of its land under any conditions and regardless of any territorial or financial compensation.¹⁷⁸ However, this resolution and all other opposing voices could not prevent the loss of Southern Bessarabia to Russia in Berlin. The anti-Dobrujans continued to claim that the Great Powers tricked Romania by offering Dobruja at the expense of Southern Bessarabia that was a historical Romanian territory.

When the Article 43 of the Berlin Treaty put crystal clear that Northern Dobruja was ceded to Romania and its border with Bulgaria would be demarcated by a commission¹⁷⁹, the negative attitude and harsh opposition by the Romanian politicians towards integration of Dobruja gradually changed into a positive one because it would be a political suicide to resist to the European decision.¹⁸⁰ As a result, Dobruja was praised as a war award, compensation for the blood of martyrs who lost their lives and reparation for the loss of Southern Bessarabia to Russia. Amid this positive atmosphere the Parliament voted in favor of annexation of Dobruja into Romania adopting the Berlin Treaty. In essence, it was not so appalling that the Romanian national discourse about Dobruja underwent a spectacular transformation in a very short period of time, probably out of helplessness under the pressure of the Great Powers who drew the geographical borders of the new born states. As a matter of fact that, the British Prime Minister and politician William Gladstone summarized those Romanian internal debates as such that the "region of Dobruja was a gift ungraciously given and reluctantly received."¹⁸¹

A key role in persuading Romanian politicians to agree to the reception of Dobruja was played by Prince Carol I, Foreign Minister Mihail Kogalniceanu, and Prime Minister Ion. C. Bratianu, though the last two figures were once adamantly opposing the idea of annexation. The three political leaders have promoted the importance of the province's economic potential through its ports and the geopolitical advantage of its positioning. As a result, Dobruja was reconsidered almost unanimously as an ancient Romanian land, and an integral part of the Romanian national heritage.¹⁸²

In 1908 the most famous Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga suggestively synthesized that Dobruja was 'twice dear to Romanians since it was paid for twice: The first time with

¹⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷⁹ **Jerre Albin**, *Les Grands Traités Politiques: Recueil Des Principaux Textes Diplomatiques Depuis 1815 Jusqu' à Nos Jours Avec Des Notices Historiques Et Des Notes*, Paris, **Librairie Félix Alcan**, 1911, pp. 204-228.

¹⁸⁰ **Ion C. Bratianu**, *Acte și cuvintari (Acts and Speeches)*, N. Georgescu-Tistu (éd.), Vol. 4, (1878-1879), Bucharest, **Cartea Romaneasca**, 1932, p. 103.

¹⁸¹ **Constantin Iordachi**, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁸² **Mihail Kogalniceanu**, *Opere (Works)*, Georgeta Penelea (éd.), Vol 5, Part I (1878-1880), Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1977, p. 639.

blood, and the second time with land.' Iorga further legitimized the integration of Dobruja into Romania by claiming that it entered "within the radius of the Romanian expansion.

Assessing the composite ethnic configuration and the value of Dobruja, Iorga²⁰⁵ further identified and emphasized 'three Dobrujas', three parallel strips of land along the North-South axis of coast of the Black Sea, which functioned as a commercial outpost; the middle part of the province: the province, which served as a boulevard of military communications between Constantinople and Southern Bessarabia; and finally, the agricultural riverside of the Danube, which was inhabited mostly by Romanians and was in permanent contact with the Wallachian neighboring counties.²⁰⁶

4.3. Perceptions of the Inhabitants about the Incorporation of Dobruja into Romania

In parallel with the prevailing view about the advantages of annexation of Dobruja, the Romanian governing elite tried to portray the new rule was well received by inhabitants. The Dobrujan Carol wrote to his father in July 1878 'Population in Dobruja is very happy and sent me numerous notifications in this regard' ¹⁸³ At the beginning of the year of 1878, the Romanian Colonel Ioan Murgescu, member of an Experts Commission sent to Dobruja reported that "All the peoples, Romanians, Greeks, Turks and Tatars eagerly wait for the occupation of Dobruja by the Romanians and everywhere they confessed that they are happy that Dobruja and Mangalia were given to Romania."¹⁸⁴

It is certainly true that the Dobrujan ethnic minorities did not desire to remain under the Russian rule after long devastating wars waged with them. Moreover, it was clear that the Ottoman authorities also favoured the Romanian administration to be set up in Dobruja in the shortest time. Due to the war circumstances, the Dobrujan inhabitants had a very poor socio-economic situation that forced them to leave their homes. To mitigate the plight of the emigrants, the Romanian administration was urgently to be established. As a matter of fact, as early as October 1878, a delegate of the Ottoman Empire, expressing the wishes of the Muslims in Dobruja, had asked Carol I to speed up the installation of the Romanian administration so that the Turkish refugees could return to their homes.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Gheorghe Dunăițașcu, Stoica Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 701.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸⁵ Mehmet Ali Ejekrem, *Din Istoria Turcilor Dobrojeni (The History of Dobrujan Turks)*, București, Kriterion, 1994, p. 73.

However, transfer of Dobruja from the Ottoman rule to the Romanian administration made Turks and Tatars most traumatized among other local residents as they were the ones left without a protective state under which they were living for centuries. On top of that, it was a totally new phenomenon for them to live under a non-Muslim rule. Still, they knew that the Ottoman rule ended in definitive terms in Dobruja and they had to live under the sovereignty of newly born Romanian state. They had no other option rather than trusting the secular concept of citizenship imposed by the powerful states on the new nation-states under the Treaty of Berlin, which meant for the Muslims living within the borders of the new states that their rights of residence and of ownership as well as their religious freedom were guaranteed.¹⁸⁶ Article 44 of the Berlin Treaty was an important guarantee for different ethnic or religious communities living within the borders of Romania as it obliged to ensure freedom of all cults and equality between all nations.¹⁸⁷

Interestingly, there were very clear regulations for minority cults in the case of the other states that gained independence with the Treaty of Berlin. Thus, for example, Montenegro's independence was conditional on Article 27, which stated that "the distinction of religious beliefs and confessions cannot be opposed by anyone as a reason for exclusion or incapacity..." Furthermore, Article 30 clarified the protection of the properties of Muslims in Montenegro.¹⁸⁸ Similar conditions were also imposed on Serbia and the Bulgarian Principality, which also became independent in 1878. Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire were the only states which annexed Ottoman territories populated with Muslim residents without any regulation.

As underlined above, there was no direct reference in the Berlin Treaty related to the situation of the Muslim minority in Romania, which gained its full independence from the Ottoman Empire and awarded with the Dobruja region where the majority of inhabitants was Muslim.¹⁸⁹ This privileged status of Romania probably rested on both its external relations and internal situation at the time. Externally, Romania was under the protection of the Great Powers. In its internal situation, Romania was also strong as its constitution promulgated in 1866 already upheld the principles of national sovereignty, rule of law and a functioning justice system. The same constitution had clear articles on religious confessions and relations between

¹⁸⁶ **Adriana Cupcea**, *Turk, Tatar, or Turko-Tatar. Challenges to the Identities of Dobruja Turks and Tatars in Post-Communism*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2015, p. 35.

¹⁸⁷ **Pierre Albin**, *op.cit.*, pp. 204-228.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 204-228.

¹⁸⁹ **Justin McCarthy**, "Ignoring the People, The Effects of the Congress of Berlin", *War and Diplomacy: the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett (eds.), Salt Lake City, The University of Utah Press, 2011, pp.433-435.

the majority and the minorities living in Romania. All these factors contributed to the Romania's distinguished status gained under the Berlin Treaty.¹⁹⁰

Being aware of the uneasiness occurred among the different ethnicities in Dobruja in the aftermath of the annexation, Prince Carol I issued a proclamation in Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish languages on 14 November 1878, and assured the Dobrujans that: "You now belong to a state governed only by laws debated and approved by the nation. Your life, your honour and your prosperity-the Saint and the most cherished goods of the mankind- are under the protection of the Constitution. Muslim inhabitants, Romania's justice does not know the difference between nation and religion. Your faith, your family will be protected as well as Christians. The affairs of religion and family will be entrusted to you through *mufti* and judges. Christians and Muslims, you receive the Romanian authorities with confidence; they come with

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a task to put the painful attempts you have made, to heal the resurrection's wounds, to defend your person, wealth, and legitimate interests, in order to develop your good moral and material state.²¹⁵

Furthermore, Article 5 of the Law Concerning Dobruja's Administrative Organization adopted in 1880 assured that : "All the inhabitants of Dobruja who have become Romanian citizens are equal before the law, enjoy all the civic rights, and can be appointed to public functions, regardless of their origin or religion."¹⁹¹

It proves that all assurances given by the Romanian rulers and the laws to the minorities including Muslims intended to mollify their concerns regarding their future during the integration process.

4.4. Challenges Ahead of Integration

Despite all soothing guarantees extended for the minorities in Dobruja by the new rulers, the task of integrating the new territory into Romania proved complicated for various reasons. First of all, the foremost, Dobruja had been under the Ottoman rule since its incorporation into the empire in 1417. During this almost 500-year rule, its economy and social-cultural life, transport had been naturally oriented toward Constantinople. In the words of well-known poet Mihai Eminescu, Dobruja was no longer Transdanubian Romania, but a

"Tarii din Dobrogea (Romania) de la 1878 până la al Doilea Război Mondial (The Tatars from Black Sea. The Tatars from Dobruja), Adriana Cupcea, Metin Ömer (coord.), Cluj-Napoca, *studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale*, 2017, p. 22. *ial al Romaniei*, 16 (28) noiembrie 1878, no.255, p. 7161. *ganisarea Dobrogei*, *Imprimeria Statului*, București, 1880.

foreign country.¹⁹² Again, under this long reign, it had been open to extensive immigration, particularly of Muslim Turks and Tatars and Bulgarian Christians, which changed the ethnic balance of the region significantly. Furthermore, the region witnessed endless military clashes between Turks and Russians, which caused unceasing displacement of different ethnic peoples and thus, paved the way for a multiethnic and multiconfessional demographic diversity in Dobruja.¹⁹³

Indeed, Dobruja suffered from severe economic and population losses because of the war of 1877-8.¹⁹⁴ It is estimated that Dobruja lost 90.000 Muslim inhabitants following the Russian war. But, in the past it had been repopulated with more than 100.000 Tatars coming from Crimea after the Crimean War (1853-1856). These figures show that the number of people who settled in or left Dobruja fluctuated greatly in short intervals. As a direct consequence of these mass movements, demographical statistics regarding the Dobruja region differ remarkably. According to a census conducted in 1878, out of total 225,692 inhabitants living between the Danube River and the Black Sea, 71,146 were Tatars (31, 5%), 48,783 were Turks (21, 6%) and 46,504 were Romanians (21%).¹⁹⁵ However, according to the official Romanian sources, in 1879- one year after the annexation of Dobruja by Romania- the three main ethnic groups in the province were Romanians, totaling 31,177, Bulgarians 28,715, and Turks and Tatars 32,033, out of a population of 106,943.¹⁹⁶ One thing common in the figures was that Dobruja still protected its predominant Muslim character. Whereas, Baron d'Hogguer recorded 6,424 Tatars and 4,812 Turks immediately after the war in 1879 depicting a dramatic decrease in the Muslim population in the region.¹⁹⁷ Turkish-Tatar intellectual Ülküsal with reference to A. Ubcini gives the figure of 80-90.000 Muslims who fled from Dobruja following the war, and adds that 160.000 Muslims left present Bulgaria towards Edirne and Istanbul too. He claims that in the following period, even after the signing of peace treaty, though some of the emigrants returned their homes, the number of Turks and Tatars in Dobruja continued to

¹⁹² **Constantin Iordachi**, *Citizenship, Nation, and State Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878-1913*, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁹³ **Frederick de Jong**, *op.cit.*, pp. 166-167. See also, **Justin McCarthy**, *op.cit.*, pp.431-432.

¹⁹⁴ **Keith Hitchins**, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁹⁵ **Metin Omer**, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁶ *Statistica din Romania, Bucharest, 1879*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ **Baron d'Hogguer**, *Renseignements sur la Dobrodja, son état actuel, ses ressources et son avenir*, **Bucharest, 1879**, p. 40.

decline steadily.²³ According to Captain M. D. Ionescu's estimates, there were 28,320 Tatars in and 12,306 Dobruja in the year of 1900 proving this sharp decline.¹⁹⁸ the Second Balkan War in 1913, Southern Dobruja was annexed to Romania ease in the Muslim and a sudden population occurred in Romania. In 1930, 150,773 Turks and 22,092 Tatars in total lived in the country. Of these, 38,430 Turks and 4,661 Tatars were from Caliacra, and 90,595 Turks and 2,085 Tatars from Durostor.¹⁹⁹ Overall, only 37,094 Turks and Tatars remained in Northern Dobruja.

In addition to the demographic problem created mostly by Muslims, the new Romanian administration found the Dobruja region culturally backward defining it as the uncivilized part of the Orient. It 'gave Romania's noble "European mission" to introduce its high culture in the province so as to extend the boundaries of the West in the Balkans.²⁰⁰ For a state like Romania, the second half of the 19th century meant a process of constructing membership, at least theoretically, to the Western European civilization. The deviation from the oriental model was quite clear at the level of the elites who led the building process of Romania, in a similar manner with Serbia and Bulgaria in the same period. The high aspirations towards Westernisation prevailed in Romania also gave way to set a Romanian majority in Dobruja by resorting to the phenomenon of colonization. This ultimately ended up by encouraging mass internal migration to Dobruja.²⁰¹

In the same line, after the annexation of Southern Dobruja, the colonization of the Aromanians in (this region was put into action to minimise the Bulgarian and the Muslim population, composed of mainly Turks and Tatars. This assimilation process would guarantee a politically and socially loyal territory for the Romanian state in the view of the Romanian political authorities.²⁰²

Dobrogea in pragul veacului al XX-lea. Oeografia matematică, fizică, politică, economică și on the Threshold of the Twentieth Century. Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Politics, Economy and Military) Part I. (1st edition published in 1904), Iași Tipo, Moldova, 2010, p. 342.

¹⁹⁹ Sabin Manuila, *Recensământul General al Populației României din 20 Decembrie 1930 (General Census of the Romanian Population on 20 December 1930)*, Vol II, Neam, Limba maternă, Religie, Monitorul Oficial, Imprimeria Națională, București, 1938, p. 33.

²⁰⁰ Constantin Iordachi, *Citizenship, Nation, and State Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878-1913*, op.cit., p. 15. See also, Alexandre A. C. Sturdza, *La Roumanie moderne corame facteur de la civilisation en Orient*, Paris, Librairie J. Rotschild, 1902.

"Colonizarile dobrogene-parte a unui proiect politic important al României după 1878 Dobruja-Part of an Important Project of Romania after 1878)", Tulcea 1878-1948: *Memoria și mîndrie de o cetate*, Daniel Flaut, Mihaela Iacob and Dorel Paraschiv (eds.), Braila, Editura Istros

The agrarian structure of the economy in Northern Dobruja province was another acute problem for reformers. They had to take into account such complexities as the Ottoman Land Law dated 1874 concerning property rights, and had to replace old institutions carefully in order to avoid economic chaos.

In brief, there were important obstacles ahead of implementing smooth integration policies for the new born state. On top of that, at least in the initial phase, Romanian public opinion showed little enthusiasm for the acquisition of this large area (15,600 square kilometres) and thought that it was an unfair exchange for the loss of Southern Bessarabia. Yet, in due course the region was developed to bring substantial economic benefits to Romania as agricultural production increased, and the port of Constanta turned into a major commercial gateway for Romanian exports and imports.²⁰³

4.5. Exceptional Administrative Regime for Dobruja

The entry of the new territory between the Danube and the Black Sea into the Romanian borders made the political class in Bucharest face a new situation. It was the first time that Romania had a huge Muslim minority within its national borders. For this reason, the central authorities had to develop strategies to integrate this multiethnic and multiconfessional territory and especially the Muslim population of Turks and Tatars, strongly linked to the Ottoman Empire. Sooner it became obvious that in the confrontation between nationalism and liberalism in the organization of Dobruja, the nationalist policies prevailed. To this end, the rights of ethnic minorities in the province were acceptable provided that they did not challenge the Romanian political interests. The strong guarantees given by Carol I and the constitution to the local people rapidly evaporated during the transitional process.²⁰⁴

additionally, In order to reach nationalistic goals, a three-stage mechanism composed of ethnic assimilation, economic modernization and cultural homogenization, which also combined industrialization attempts with a campaign for national consolidation was pursued. Built on restraining citizenship legislation, this mechanism facilitated the integration of Northern Dobruja at the following levels: a) colonization of Dobruja with ethnic Romanians b) nationalization of the real estate property in the province c) cultural homogenization of the Dobrujans d) implementation of a highly centralized political regime, which promoted the interests of the Bucharest-based political elites and weakened regional political resistance, and nation of Dobruja's non-Romanian

²⁰³ Keith Hitchins, *op.cit.*, p. 52.

²⁰⁴ Mustecip Ulkusal, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

economic elites from political rights.²⁰⁵-layered mechanism the Romanian authorities initiated a series of measures that eventually resulted in the Romanization of the province.



iijdachi, "The California of the Romanians....", *op.cit.*, p. 129.

After 1880, the Romanian Parliament adopted a number of laws regarding the Dobruja region, which followed three main objectives: formation of a large Romanian community in Dobruja, elevation of the status of the Romanians on the economic level and promotion of the Romanian political elite. The central authorities practiced the policy of colonization in order to achieve the first objective, which was establishing an absolute Romanian population majority in Dobruja. However, it was necessary first to find enough land to be allocated to the colonists. To this end, a series of property laws were promulgated yielding in transfer of lands owned by Dobrujan residents to first the Romanian state and then to the colonists.²⁰⁶ Romanian administration preferred a modernizing project in Dobruja under a strong bureaucratic nationalism. The government replaced the old Ottoman administrative structure with three *județe* (governorates) and their subdivisions while introducing the practices of centralized control from Bucharest. On 13 November 1878, the Regulation for the Division and Administrative Organization of Dobruja was put into force, establishing three counties as Tulcea, Constanta and Silistra-Noua. The counties were in turn divided into districts, of which

cit., p. 28.

several cities and villages belonged. A *prefect* (governor) ran each county. He was the f the representative Government in the region. On the same date, King Carol I signed a decree irst c appointing Romanian *prefect* of Constanta County, Remus Opreanu. In the same vein, the Gheorghe Ghicja was appointed as the *prefect* of Tulcea County, and Tobias Ghergheli for Silistra Noua County. All three governors were important people in the political life and the Romanian administration. Tobias Ghergheli and Gheorghe Ghica had been ministers, while Remus Opreanu was general attorney at the Bucharest indicated that Court of Appeal.²⁰⁷ These appointments îe Romanian state paid a special t Thus, V\ attention to the newly acquired region, e could identify two phases of the integration of Dobruja. The first is habituation in which the ce itral authorities have adopted measures systematically in order not to destabilize the situation in the province, and tried Dobruja gradually to adapt to the institutional and administrative system. This period ended with the adoption of the Law Concerning Dobruja's Administrative Organization on 9 March 1880, also known as the Constitution of Dobruja, of



which its 5th Article guaranteed all the inhabitants of Dobruja who have become Romanian citizens are equal before the law. However, the second stage which is characterized by the adoption of legislative, economic and cultural measures that led the province to be colonized by a Romanian majority.²⁰⁸ The term colonization does not only refer to the different forms of expansion of political power beyond its sphere, but also to the way colonists are installed in generally less populated regions with agricultural potential, raw materials and unexploited resources. Dobruja had a vast agricultural capacity and the population balance changed progressively in this region as the colonization marginalized the indigenous population at the end of a process of infiltration or systematic advancement in the territory.²⁰⁹ Moreover, although nominally Romanian citizens, the Dobrujans had no political rights, and were denied political representation at the Parliament. They could not acquire immovable property once they crossed other side of the Danube. Worse than that, they were treated as foreigners from 1878 till 1909.

The ruling party, National Liberal Party (1876-1888) designed a so-called "exceptional administrative regime" for Dobruja which was put into action in three main stages: a) the regulatory period (1878-1880) when the province was ruled by *ad-hoc* regulations issued by the government b) the second period (1880-1909) when the province was administered on the basis of a separate law issued by the Parliament c) the third phase (1909-1913) when Dobruja's administrative and political organization was gradually harmonized with that of Romania.²¹⁰ According to Mihail Kogalniceanu, Minister of Interior between 11 July 1879 and 16 April 1880, the separate administrative regime in Dobruja was conceived as a temporary measure meant to rebuild, repopulate, and reorganize the province ruined by the devastating 1877-1878

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²⁰⁸ Frederick de Jong, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

²⁰⁹ Enache Tuşa, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

²¹⁰ Constantin Iordachi, "The California of the Romanians'...", *op.cit.*, p. 129.

The Bucharest authorities took a series of measures over the course of a few years to integrate Dobruja into the system. These measures included a series of legislative initiatives, cultural activities and economic ones. The legislative initiatives mainly aimed to facilitate the transition from a specific organizational and institutional system to the Romanian one. In addition, through the measures taken, the central authorities sought to avoid creating social problems, especially since the majority of the population in the region was one with customs and traditions completely different from the rest of the country. The economic measures also



meant to link the rest of the country with the new territory recently joined into the Romanian borders.

The first legal regulations on Dobruja were adopted before the official takeover of the province by the Romanian authorities from the Russian administration. On 28-30 September 1878, the Legislative Bodies authorized the Government to take over the new province through *ad hoc* regulations until its final organization.²³⁸ Thus, on 12-24 November 1878, the Official Regulation of the Judicial Organization in Dobruja was published in the Official Gazette of Romania.²³⁹ This Regulation facilitated the transition from the Ottoman legislative system to the Romanian one. There was no provision for the application of the Romanian law but for transitory rules. Within this context Article 1 of the Regulation provided that in each rural commune the peace judges would compose of the mayor of the commune (*muhtar*) and two jurors (*azas*) elected for one year by the community of the notables or the commune of the places where lived several ethnic groups, a juror would represent each commune, attributions of the courts in the rural communes, they had the task of elder. In judging the problems that arose among the inhabitants of the respective commune. In order to facilitate the transition from the Ottoman administrative system to the Romanian one, some old names

I have been preserved, such as *muhtar* or *aza*.²⁴⁰

The rules on justice in this Regulation were in operation until 1-13 September 1886, when the "Law on the Judicial Organization of Dobruja" came into force which was published in the Official Gazette of 30 March -11 April 1886.²⁴¹ As compared with the Regulation of 12-24 November 1878, this law brought some changes to the Romanian legal system, which proved there was already a transition process. For instance, in the case of the municipal courts, there was no stipulation any more regarding the presence of jurors from each nationality. In addition, the Ottoman terms used to designate various administrative functions like *muhtar* or *aza* disappeared from the text of law.

Against this backdrop, immediately after the establishment of the Romanian administration in Dobruja, representatives of the Turkish and Tatar communities entered into the bureaucratic apparatus. It would be a good example that Ferhat Emin and Emir Salih who were residents of Mangalia were elected as members of the Mangalia Urban Commune in 1878. Further than that, based on Article 23 of the Regulation for the Organization of Dobruja, Ferhat

AMAE, Fond ²³⁸ Ioan N. Roman, "Proprietatea imobiliară rurală din Dobrogea (Rural Real Estate in Dobruja)", *Arhiva Dobrogei* 2, 191S, pp. 47-59.

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²⁴⁰ Metin Omer, *bp.cit.*, p. 20.

²⁴¹ *Official Gazette of Romania*, 30 March-11 April 1886, no. 286, pp. 5746-5751. Constantinopol, Vol. 110, f. f.



Emin was appointed as the mayor of the city. On December 7 of the same year, residents of Medgidia, Zecheria Bey, Curt-Molla Efendi, Cherim Bey, Stefan Calis and Anghel Masinov were elected to the city council of Medgidia too. At the elections for the city council of Isaccea held on 21 November, Mustafa and Mehmet Vartoglu represented the Turkish community as being prominent members. However, it should be fairly noted that even though Muslim representatives occupied some positions in the local administration, their representation was not proportional to their population.²¹¹

The Romanian decision-makers had to take into account the legal framework for minorities, imposed by the Great Powers through the Treaty of Berlin. Yet, the notion of guaranteeing equal citizenship for Muslims by the same Treaty was often met with opposition. As stated above, the Article 44 of the said Treaty stipulated that the freedom and the practice of any religious cult would be provided to all the subjects of the Romanian State, as well as to the non-citizens. Besides, there would be no interference in the hierarchical organizations of the different communities including their relations with their religious authorities. Nationals of other states, either merchants or other professionals would not be discriminated on the basis of religion, rather would be treated on the basis of perfect equality.²¹² As a reminder, no reference was available related to the Ottoman property system in Dobruja, and the Muslims were not mentioned directly in the Treaty of Berlin. Having said that, it should be remembered that the debates on minority rights in Romania did not focus on the situation of Muslims, but mostly on Jews. In this regard, amending Article 7 of the Romanian Constitution was the main source of dissatisfaction. The Article initially allowed the acquisition of Romanian citizenship by only "Christian aliens". At the end of discussions, this article was finally revised in 1879 with such a formula "The difference in religious beliefs and denominations is not a barrier to acquiring civil and political rights and exercising them in Romania".²¹³

The exceptional administration established for Dobruja aimed at limiting and melting the different ethnicities within the new state structure. "The Law Concerning Dobruja's Administrative Organization" had as its primary aim as the assimilation of Dobruja within Romania. As a matter of fact that, Article 3 of the Law read that all the inhabitants of Dobruja, who were Ottoman citizens on 11 April 1877, have become Romanian citizens.²¹⁴

The law

²¹¹ Metin Orner, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

²¹² Pierre Albin, *op.cit.*, pp. 204-228.

²¹³ *Monitorul Oficial al României*, 13/25 Octombrie 1879, no. 232, p. 6597.

²¹⁴ Constantin Hamangiu, *Codul General al României* 104. 2, Bucharest, Leon Alcalay, 1910, pp. 267-272.

ceased the regime of the *ad hoc* regulations, and governed aspects of the territory of Dobruja, the administration, the judiciary, the finances, and the armed power.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the final version of the law, which is considered also as the Constitution of Dobruja, came out with collaboration and contribution of the Ottoman authorities. The Ottoman diplomatic representative in Bucharest during the period, Minister Plenipotentiary Suleyman Bey involved in the drafting process of the said law. He presented some remarks to the Romanian authorities related to the the Turks and articles of the said law on the living in Dobruja. At the end of discussions, he prepared a detailed report sent it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire dated 9 February 1880 just one month before the law was adopted.²¹⁵ This active involvement in making the Dobrujan law shows that the Ottoman authorities were still concerned about the situation of Muslims in the province, and the Romanian authorities were receptive to the Ottoman assistance for a smooth transfer of rule in the region.

Article 11 of the Law Concerning Dobruja's Administrative Organization mentioned that the *miri* and *miri* properties established by the *tapu* (land registration) papers or by a 20-year possession (under the Ottoman law are guaranteed and transmissible. Article 21 referred to acts of civil law, mentioning that an administrative law would regulate exceptions to Muslims and Lipovans. Article 23 stipulated that no inhabitants of Dobruja gained Romanian



citizenship not, without the authorization of the Government, enter the service of a
cann state foreign *o facto* losing his civil rights. Article 59 established that the courts
without *ip.* of Dobruja depending on ail appeal by the Court of Focsani. Article 79
mentioned that one year of period is given for rural residents to return to
Dobruja, who emigrated due to the war conditions.
Otherwise, would have lost all their rights related to the land. Finally, Article 75
they for the provided ment of a notary service by a future law in rural communes.²¹⁶
establish The Ottoman envoy Suleyman Bey proposed changes in some of the
articles in the provisions of the
aw asking the Romanian authorities to make amendments in those articles in
favor of the M islim community. In this regard, he called for separation of the categories of
rnulk and *miri* properties since the former meant absolute ownership. At the same time, m,
according to hi the 20-year possession had to be 10 years if it was related to Ottoman laws.
He also wanted to put into the law fundamental principles of the rule of administration or the
promulgation of the regulation in order to avoid any possible abuse related
to the exemption

²⁴⁶ **Başbakanlık**

SYS.) (Foreign Pi

²⁴⁷ *Lege pentru o,*



from Article 23. In this regard, he claimed that there might be some Dobrujans who involved in the state services of Turkey or who could be in other provinces of the Empire in that specific period without being aware of the contents of the said article of the law. He wanted the establishment of a Court of Appeal in Dobruja in stead of Focșani along with creation of a fair notarial service authority. He also proposed to extend the period given for the Dobrujan inhabitants who wanted to return to the province from one year to three years.²¹⁷

The Romanian legislators chose not to go into all the details of the articles of the law as Suleyman Bey suggested. For instance, in the case of Article 11, 10 or 20-year ownership of land was not mentioned at all in the text. It was written that the property was possessed and transferred in accordance with the Ottoman laws in force on 11 April 1877, the day on which Romania had declared war on the Ottoman Empire. In some other cases too, Romanian politicians did not pay attention to the observations of the Ottoman envoy. This was the case in Article 21 of the draft law, now Article 22 in law and Article 75. In some other articles of the law, his proposals were partly taken into account, like in the Article 23, which became 24 in the promulgated law. Accordingly, just one year is granted to those who were in the service of a foreign power when the war started and sought the authorization from the government of Romania to return the country.²¹⁸

A long-discussed issue between the Romanian and the Ottoman side during this drafting process was about the Muslims' performing military service in the Romanian army ranks. Military service in a Christian army was one of the main reasons for dissatisfaction occurred among Muslims and caused their mass emigration during this period. Thus, Suleyman Bey, the diplomatic representative of the Ottoman Empire in Bucharest, mentioned in a report dated 13 February 1880 that he addressed the Foreign Minister of Romania asking him to exempt Muslims from the obligation to perform military service. He also added that he had discussions in this respect with some of the deputies at the Parliament, and received good returns from them.²¹⁹ Consequently, Article 67 of the Constitution of Dobruja stated that for 10 years there would be no recruitment from Dobruja for the "line army". Article 68 stipulated that Muslim inhabitants would form separate companies within the Territorial Army in their uniform, paid by the state, observing their religious days and keeping their *fez* (traditional hat).²²⁰

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*, file. 002-003-009.

²¹⁸ Metin Omer, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

²¹⁹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry), Folder Hariciye Siyasi (HR. SYS.)(Foreign Politics), dossier 1060/3, file 2.

²²⁰ Metin Omer, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

Costin Scurtii, "Turco-tarii din Dobrogea in armata romana [Sfarșitul secolului al XIX-lea inceputul secolului XX] (Tie Turks-Tatars from Dobruja in the Romanian Army (The end of the 19th century beginning

However, surprisingly in a few years, more and more Turks and Tatars accepted to carry out their military service in the Romanian army. Moreover, during the First World War they were among the distinguished in the battle, consequently being decorated with different national honor (medals. Further than that, they sacrificed their blood in the war. Kazim Abdulachim, the brother of prominent Turkish politician Selim Abdulachim is the best example who lost his life at the battle of Marasesti in the summer of 1917, and remembered always with due respect.²²¹

Amid all those debates, Dobruja remained under a different extraconstitutional administrative regime that lasted until 1913. Despite all discourse, Romanian officials did not accept the equality of the Dobrujan people with the Romanians up to 1909. This well proved the Constitution of Dobruja was after all a dialectic of symbolism and administrative exclusion.²⁵³ The new administration classified Dobrujans into four categories:

- Those having Ottoman nationality up to 11 April 1877
- Bulgarian and German farmers settled in Dobruja in accordance with the 1882 Law
- Romanians who were brought and settled in Dobruja from the inner Romania - Romanians settled from Transylvania and Bessarabia

Due to the special status administered in Dobruja, the people living in the province enjoyed a local version of citizenship which denied them political participation and representation. The special administration simply prevented them from owning property outside the borders of the province. As a religious minority *sensu stricto*, the Muslims had formally enjoyed a large degree of religious autonomy, but in practice, the interference of the state was observed.²⁵⁴

Although, being nominally Romanian citizens, Muslims did not have equal rights with the other Romanians and their political immaturity was shown as the excuse to this practice.²⁵⁵ On 19 April 1909, the Law on the Granting of Political Rights to the Residents of Constanta and Tulcea was promulgated. This law extended political rights to the inhabitants of the provinces of Constanta and Tulcea. The law also covered the Ottoman inhabitants who had

the 20th century
(*Ethnic Minorities*)

of Venera Achim-Viorel Achim (coord.), *Minoritățile etnice în România în secolul al XIX-lea și în România în the 19th Century*), București, Editura Academiei Române, 2010, pp. 142-143.

²²¹



their real estate in the provinces of Constanta and Tulcea on 11 April 1877, and their descendants, even those born in the past, if they would prove that they did not emigrate or enjoy some foreign protection. The same law was amended a year later on 14 April 1910, reaching its final version on 3 March 1912.²²² Thus, all former Ottoman citizens, even those who emigrated during the 1877-1878 war, had political rights, but they should have come back at least two years before the promulgation of the law. Ethnic minorities with rural properties had been given the same rights, but those minorities living in the urban area were still excluded.

These laws were adopted because of the pressure made by the Dobrujan Romanian elite for the sake of their political interests. Indeed, by adoption of these laws, 12,872 inhabitants of the 368,189 inhabitants of Northern Dobruja in 1912 had acquired the right to vote. Eight MPs were elected in Dobruja, 4 of them in Constanta County and 4 in Tulcea County. Yet, Dobruja remained marginalized in the politics being under-represented at the Parliament. In the other Romanian historical provinces, the representation in Parliament was broader. For instance, 79 deputies were elected in Moldova, 75 in Muntenia Mare, and 29 in Oltenia.²²³ As for the Muslim community, even if it represented an important percentage of the population and had members in the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, it did not have a representative in Parliament until after the First World War.²²⁴

4.6. Role of Land Redistribution in the Integration Process

At the second stage of homogenization process in Dobruja, the Romanian state established a monopoly on the land redistribution in the region through a number of laws, assuring the gradual transfer of ownership to ethnic Romanians. To this end, the 1882 Property Law provided the government with the necessary legal framework for Dobruja's ethnic colonization. This law regulated the way in which the property of Dobruja is acquired, preserved, transmitted and lost. It integrated the property system of the former Ottoman province into the Romanian one with some exceptions. The legislator granted the right to own property only to the Romanian citizens. The Land Law of 1903 stipulated that the soldiers involved in the war of independence would be given a plot of land of 2,000 sqm for house building, 8 hectares of land for agriculture, building materials for the house, agricultural

²²² Constantin Hamangiu, *op.cit.*, pp. 936-938.

²²³ Constantin Iordachi, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

²²⁴ Miistecip Ūlkiisal, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

inventory and Exemptions from taxes for 5 years provided that they are not sold for 30 years.²²⁵ It is worth mentioning here that Mihail Kogalniceanu put the demands of the veterans of the war of independence to settle in Dobruja in 1878 at the beginning of the priority list.²²⁶ The distribution on lands belonged to the minorities would help multiply the population of the Romanians in the new province, would increase the prosperity and the revenues of the state, and at the same time would give some satisfaction to those who had the rights to the country's gratitude.²²⁷

Historian Constantin Iordachi divides the process of naturalization of the lands into four stages: 1) Acquisition of the property rights of the Ottoman Empire by Romania 2) Taking of a part of the lands owned by Dobrujans by Romania; 3) Opening virgin lands for the cultivation of Roman colonists 4) Distribution of remaining lands from those who emigrated to the Romanians.

²²⁸Overall, during the period between the years 1889-1912 the state confiscated 127,483 hectares of land from the native Dobrujans. In the period 1889-1914, 82,127 hectares of land were given to the ethnic Romanian colonists in order to strengthen the Romanian province. By 1905 the Romanians had already managed to acquire two-thirds of Dobruja's land property.²²⁹ According to the data provided by Ioan private property in Northern Dobruja (Constanta and Tulcea counties) in 1903 was 615,821 hectares, of which 431,862 hectares in Constanta County and 183,959 hectares in Tulcea County. Ethnic Romanians owned 63% of private property followed by Bulgarians and then by Muslims (Turks and Tatars).²³⁰ Another source states that between 1889 and 1911, the state succeeded, through dispossession, to restore to its patrimony over 164,794 hectares, which is equivalent to 24.7% of the agricultural area of Dobruja. Between 1893 and 1914, 104,200 hectares of the total area was confiscated by the Romanian State to the detriment of the minorities, but to benefit of the veterans, married ones and cattle breeders. Until 1907, 5,700 families of veterans, and 4,904 families of marriages

²⁵⁹ Adrian Radul p. 358.

²⁶⁰ Enache Tuşa,

²⁶¹ Marian

Vicol, and Ilescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei (History of Dobruja)*, Constanta, Editura Ex Ponto, 1998,

National

²⁶² Constantin

loi 1878-1913",

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Dobrogea, Cinci

²⁶⁴ Ioan N. Romm

scu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei (History of Dobruja)*, Constanta, Editura Ex Ponto, 1998,

op.cit., p. 221.

Georghe Dumitraşcu, "Legea agrara din 1882 şi implicaţiile ei naţionale (Agrarian Law of 1882 replications)" *Anelele Dobrogei*, XIV, no. 1, 1997, p. 77.

dachi, "The California of the Romanians: The Integration of Northern Dobrugea into Romania," *ibid.*, p. 133.

"Asupra proprietăţii şi colonizării în Dobrogea (On property and Colonization in Dobruja)", *zece ani*, p. 274.

i, op.cit., pp. 47-59.

with a Romanian citizen were distributed lands aiming at Romanizing Dobruja.²³¹ Going along the same line drawn by the law of appropriation of veterans from the 1877-1878 war, the officers participating in the Balkan war and their descendants were also given the opportunity to buy up to 150 hectares in Dobruja in 1912.²³²

In order to regulate the property in Dobruja, the Romanian officials had as their reference the Law of Ownership (*Kânunnâme-i Arâzi*) of the Ottoman Empire promulgated on 6 June 1858. This law was the product of the efforts of the Ottoman authorities to legalize the property system in the Empire. Until then, property in the Ottoman state complied with Islamic jurisprudence, supplemented by sultans' regulations. The law favored private property and its transmission through inheritance. In addition, through this law, a better systematization of the properties was obtained, and property documents were released to all those who used the land.

According to the Ottoman legislation in force, there were five categories of property in Dobruja: *miilk*, absolute private property, *miri*, state property that was leased in exchange for the payment of taxes, *mevkufe*, *vakif* lands, *metruke*, the ones left for public use, and *mevat*, unusable dead lands.²³³

The Romanian government legitimized the expropriation of lands of the Muslims based on the fact that they were mostly *miri* lands which in fact belonged to the state during the Ottoman era. As the Ottoman state lost the war, it was claimed legal to transfer those *miri* lands to the successor new Romanian state.

The Romanian government formed a commission in accordance with the "Regulation for the Establishment and Verification of Ownership and Real Estate Ownership in Dobruja" dated 23 July 1880 to check the authenticity of declarations of local people on properties comparing with the archival documents. If it had been found no documents related the concerned property, the commission was entitled to give its own verdict. The commission included representatives of Ministries of Internal Affairs and Justice along with an Ottoman member. By this commission, the new Romanian administration tried to obtain a clearer status of the property regime in the new province and to avoid possible future complaints. The Ottoman Empire also cooperated with the Romanian rule by delivering property registers in Dobruja. This enabled officials to determine which property belonged to whom, the state or a

²³¹ Adrian Radulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Moria Dobrogei (History of Dobruja)*, op.cit., pp. 358-359.

²³² *Ibidem*, p. 358.

²³³ Huri islamoglu, "Property as a Contested Domain: A Réévaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858",

private person.²³⁴ However, this was not a very simple task. There have been many cases in which various abuses have been claimed. For instance, a group of Muslims from Dobruja sent a complaint to the Ottoman government accusing that the Romanian authorities did not recognize their property rights, and added that the Romanian government acknowledged the rights only to those who opted for the Romanian citizenship. That meant Muslims are indirectly forced to leave Romania.²³⁵

As a result; of these policies of the official authorities, the demographic and ownership ratios in the region have changed radically. Under the impact of state-sponsored ethnic colonization, the overall population of the province saw a dramatic increase: from approximately **100,000** inhabitants in **1878** to **261,490** in **1900**, and to **368,189** inhabitants in **1912**. The **1913** census indicated **17** ethnic groups living in Dobruja among them Romanians with a number of **216,425** or **56,9 %** of the total population.²³⁶

4.7. Education As a Tool to Build a Nation in Dobruja

Another educational system
 Another pillar of the Romanian administration in Dobruja after **1878** was the **^m**. In other words, ethnic assimilation in Dobruja was accompanied by a cultural offensive based on two main pillars: church and school. The Romanian political elite acknowledged the major role of education and culture in the process of nation-building in Dobruja. Even back to **1864** the primary education had become state sponsored in Romania aiming at promotion of the national identity. The school was regarded as the main institution for fostering cultural homogenization and for overcoming the local parochialism and segregation that characterized the life of ethnic communities in the province.

Kogalniceanu defended the rights of ethnic minorities in Dobruja to educate in their own language only if they studied courses in Romanian as well, to practice their own religion on the condition that they accepted the jurisdiction of Romanian civil laws, and to have a minimum standard of civil rights and liberties except for cases putting the public order in jeopardy.²³⁷

By the time of the incorporation into the Romanian state, the Muslim population in Dobruja was mostly rural and poor. Though the Ottoman rule spared no effort to improve the

²⁶⁸ AMAE, Fond
²⁶⁹ Ibidem, Vol. 4]

Roger Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000, pp. 3-62.

Constantinopol, Vol. 417, f. f. 17,
 f.f

²³⁶ M. D. Ionescu, *op.cit.*, p. 456.

²³⁷ See Vasile Kogalniceanu, *Dobrogea 1879-1909. Drepturi politiceşrd libertăti*, Editura Librăriei Socec & C- ie, Bucureşti, 1910.

education system by opening new schools in the 1860s and 1870s, the quality of education did not reach to the desired level. Until 1878 Dobruja possessed a network of Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Russian confessional schools supported by local communities. Under the Romanian rule, the 1880 Law reiterated that the primary education would be under state control. This introduced compulsory schooling for all children between 8 and 12 years of age in the towns, but not in the villages, because of the lack of teachers and financial resources. It also allowed the functioning of local schools in minority languages provided that they would teach courses in Romanian too. Supported by the central administration, the network of Romanian state schools in Dobruja increased, while that of confessional schools gradually decreased.²³⁸

In the immediate aftermath of 1878, the education system for the Muslim community in Romania has not changed. Romanian authorities showed a certain degree of consideration for the particularities of the Turks and Tatars living in the newly-acquired territory, Dobruja. They preserved the schools teaching religion and Turkish language. The Turks and Tatars continued to attend schools left by the Ottoman administration, graduating from the *mektebi sibyan*, *rtifdiye* and *madrasas*. When Dobruja came under the Romanian administration there were several active *madrasas* which remained open for quite a while in Babadag, Topraisar, Valu lui Traian and Medgidia on which the second chapter of the this study elaborated in depth. All these *madrasas* operated outside the Romanian education system. They had their own funds, and did not follow any fixed *curriculum*, the lessons were taught as the teacher saw fit. It was impossible to imagine that those schools who were not fitting the official education system would be put under a discipline sooner or later.²³⁹

Although the Ottoman education system continued to exist, Turkish and Tatar pupils gradually began to be integrated into the Romanian educational system. A first step in this direction was the introduction of the Romanian language as a compulsory subject at schools. Article 17 of the Education Law in 1880 guaranteed the freedom of education in the Turkish-Tatar communities with the condition that the schools are under control of Public Instruction Minister and that in each village, together with the Turkish language, the Romanian language should be taught too. Under Article 21 of the 1880 Organic Law of Dobruja, a Muslim seminary was to be established with state funding to train the leaders of the mosques and primary-school

²³⁸ Constantin Iordachi, 'The California of the Romanians: The Integration of Northern Dobrugea into Romania, 1878-1913', *op.cit.*, p. 137.

²³⁹ Metin Omer, 'The History of the Medgidia Seminary (1889-1948)', Adriana Cupcea, Manuela Marin, Metin Omer (eds.), *The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia-Documents and Memory*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studiile Problemele Minoritatilor Nationale, 2016, p. 155.

teachers for the **Muslim** community.²⁴⁰ The 1898 Law on Secondary and Higher Education was enacted to complete the education structure for the ethnic minorities. The Turkish schools operated under these laws in this integration process.

Interestingly enough, the Muslim Seminary (*madrasa*) located in Babadag was the only non-Christian Orthodox theological seminary whose creation was specifically provided in the *Constitution of Dobruja*.

The seminary first opened in 1889 in Babadag. The location was not randomly chosen as the Babadag *madrasa* that was converted into the Muslim Seminary had been founded by Gazi Ali Pasha in 1610. According to the perception of Dobruja Turks and Tatars this seminary has always been their pioneering school. This character of the school became more apparent after 1901 when the Seminary moved from Babadag to Medgidia. The official reason behind the move was the dwindling Muslim population in Northern Dobruja following the 1899 massive migration towards the Ottoman Empire. Medgidia was chosen not only due to its migration population, but also because it already had a private seminary, which lacked the numerous necessary approvals from the state authorities, and was not integrated in the Muslim Romanian education system.²⁷⁵

Under the Ottoman rule, the seminary in Babadag was financially autonomous due to the *vakif* system. Under the *vakif*, the founder of the seminary, Gazi Ali Pasha had left his estate-comprised of Zebilul, Herghelia and Babadag Lake, approximately 8.000 hectares to cover its maintenance expenses. Once Dobruja came under Romanian administration and the decision was made to set up the Babadag Muslim Seminary as a school that would train the imams and Turkish language teachers of the Muslim community, the *vakif* estate was transferred by the leaders of the Muslim community to the Romanian state in exchange for the state's commitment to cover the maintenance expenses for the seminary premises and to pay the wages of the teachers.²⁴¹ This smooth transfer of *vakif* property of the *madrasa* to the ownership of the Romanian state represented a unique example of mutual understanding between the two sides contradicting with many problems stemmed from the colonization policies in the Region.²⁷⁶

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Thesis submitted

²⁷⁵ Metin Omer, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

²⁷⁶ Mehmet H. V

Elis Bechir, *Assimilation and Dissimilation: Tatars in Romania and Gagauze in Moldova*, Master of Arts ani Yurtsever, Dobruca 'mn Dawuşı, Constanta, Editura Ceconi, 2013, p. 48.

Given its mission to train the Muslim clergy and Turkish-language primary-school teachers, in other words the main means of mass dissemination of ideas, the Seminary was the main institution to convey Romanian values to the Muslim population.

This historically prominent educational institution was preserved by the law since the graduates of the seminary had to act as "agents" of the Romanian state and to locally promote the Romanian nation building project among a population that not only was ethnically non-Romanian, but also, it had been included within the borders of the Romanian state very recently. In line with this consideration, there was a convergence between the national construction policy of the Romanian state and the education given in the Muslim Seminary.²⁴² The *curriculum* of the seminary included both Islamic and Romanian courses and helped equip students fully for their community and the society in general.

The Romanian authorities also took into account of certain peculiarities of the Muslim population in Romania by choosing to maintain its main institutions of *Mufti* who dealt with the religious matter and the *Qadi* who dealt with the civil legal matters.²⁴³ Thus, the *Muftilik*, *Qadilik* (Islamic courts) and Muslim Communities were established. The *mufti* and the *Qadi* also functioned during the Ottoman period, being transformed by the new administration to comply with the Romanian laws. The *Qadiliks* were institutionalized for the first time by the Law of Organization of Dobruja in 1880, and later established by the Law on Judicial Organization in Dobruja of 30 March 1886. Article 30 of this Law stipulated that for the matters concerning the organization family, parenthood, marriage, and inheritance of Muslims two tribunals were set up in Tulcea and Constanta.²⁴⁴ These tribunals were composed of a *qadi* recommended by the *mufti* and confirmed by the Minister of Justice. Their staff were paid by the Romanian state.²⁴⁵

Whereas, the Muslim Communities were the newly emerging formations to which the Romanian authorities chose to leave the administration of the *vakifs* in Romania. According to the strategy of the Bucharest politicians, on the one hand, these old institutions have been preserved, but on the other hand, the creation of a new system that is compatible with the Romanian laws has been pursued. It should be kept in mind that in the Treaty of Berlin, there were no strict provisions referring to the organization of the Muslim cult in Romania.

²⁴² Manuela Marin, "After the 'Great War': The Muslim Seminary in Medgidia in Greater Romania", Ioan Bolovan, Gheorghe Cojocaru, Oana Mihaela Tâmaș (eds.), *World War 1, A Historical and Historiographical Perspective*, Academia Română/Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2015, p. 570.

²⁴³ Metin Orner, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

²⁴⁴ Constantin Hamangiu, *op.cit.*, p. 442.

²⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

Both the Romanian and the Ottoman authorities were concerned about the drafting of a regulation on the election of *mufti*. To this end, there was an ongoing diplomatic dialogue between Romania and the Ottoman Empire on how the institutions of the Muslim community would function properly. Eventually, the first two *muftis* were nominated directly by Istanbul in 1880, based on an agreement signed in 1879 between Mihail Kogalniceanu, *ad interim* Minister of Internal Affairs in the Government of Romania, and Süleyman Bey, the diplomatic officer of the Ottoman Empire in Bucharest. As a result, Hagi Mustafa Sheriff was appointed as the *mufti* to Constanta and a while later Enis Efendi was nominated as the *mufti* of Tulcea. These two clergies were the first and last *muftis* appointed by Istanbul.²⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Ottoman representatives were directly interested in regulating the Muslim worship issues in the territories they had to cede. In 1886, *Şeyhülislam* (Chief *Mufti*) residing in Istanbul prepared a regulation organizing the religious affairs of the Muslim communities in Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina, territories that were administered by Austria-Hungary under the Berlin Treaty. Although some provisions of the regulation have been enforced, Romanian politicians did not fully abide by its provisions of appointing *muftis* following the initial postings by the *Şeyhülislam*. However, in the symbolic tradition, *Şeyhülislam* continued to give his opinion regarding the appointments of *muftis* in Romania until 1923 though the *muftis* were Romanian citizens appointed by the Minister of Cults and Arts. In fact, the issue of electing *muftis* was not solved, but simply delayed. During the election of the *mufti* of Constanta in 1908, a report of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that this matter had to be resolved as the approval of the *mufti* by Istanbul was considered as *in* interference in Romania's internal affairs, especially since the *mufti* was a Romanian official and his salary was paid by the state.²⁴⁷

It is worthy that despite the Romanian state's post-1878 commitment to provide for maintenance of the Muslims' worship places and schools along with the wages of many-schooled teachers, the local Muslim communities still had to make their own contributions to maintain *imams* and priests. The state-allocated funds. As a result, the Muslim community had to bear the cost of additional *imams* when they needed more than one. They also donated for repairing contributions to

Consec
260 mosques open to worship in Northern Dobruja. In the same year, most of the mosques on
and even building new mosques or schools.
uently, Islam was thriving in Romania in 1900 despite all hardships. There were

²⁸¹ AMAE, Fond, Constantinopol, Vol. 110, no file number.
²⁸² Ibidem, Vol. 110, f.f. See also, Metin Omer, "Tatarii din Dobrogea (Romania) de la 1878 pana la al Doilea Razboi Mondial (The Tatars from Dobruja (Romania) from 1878 to the Second World War), *op.cit*, pp. 34-37.

Romanian soil were allotted ten hectares of land for their maintenance. This provision was later formally embedded in the Land Law of 1921.²⁴⁸ The construction of King Carol Mosque in Constanta in 1913 was regarded as a kind gesture and warmly welcomed by the Muslim community. The mosque is still remembered as a sign of good will of the Romanian authorities towards the Muslims in Dobruja.

4.8. Emigration of Muslims from Dobruja

Despite a relative religious and cultural autonomy accompanied with tolerance for the Muslims, the legal and economical measures taken by the Romanian authorities in Dobruja in the context of the exceptional administrative regime led to an enormous emigration of Muslim population from Dobruja, and consequently made them minority.²⁴⁹ The greatest catalyst of migration was the enactment of a series of laws from 1880 to 1885 that confiscated lands of the Muslims. Frederick de Jong even speaks of a 30 years of terror prevailed on which the lands were taken by the Romanian authorities.²⁵⁰ This time, Prime Minister of that period, Mihael Kogalniceanu gave a strong support to this argument in his speech in 1899 March articulating explicitly one of the reasons for the Turkish emigration from Dobruja to Turkey. He said that "The province of Dobruja given to us at the expense of Bessarabia suffers from the repression of the Romanian tax collectors and notaries worse than the janissaries."²⁵¹

Article 9 of the 1882 Property Law stated that emigrants who have left their places could claim their land, and their rights, being verified and admitted, would be administratively owned by the Romanian State, as they have claimed and resettled with their families to shall be given their homes, within one year of promulgation of the law. Emigrants returning and individuals as wishing to sell their land could do so only after paying their taxes to the state. p d) all lakes, Those who emigrated and did not return within one year automatically lost their pon land in favour of the state.²⁵³ In order to enter the final possession of the land, the owners were obliged to redeem their taxes. The Romanian state, which had replaced the Ottoman state under a previous law, fixed the redemption fee at 55 lei / hectare. The tax had to be paid within three years; otherwise the landlord would lose his right to the land. Given that a large proportion of the population had emigrated from the war or just returned to a different context, in a state whose laws were unknown, in a society with unknown rules and traditions, it was quite difficult these conditions are met. By the same law, the state's property was left for

Bui the Turks
²⁴⁸ Elis Bechir, *op.cit.*, p. 38.
Of ²⁴⁹ Calik Gyula, *Muslims in Romania: Integration Models, Categorization and Social Distance*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2009, p. 11.
Turkey ²⁵⁰ Frederick de Jong, *op. cit.*, p. 169,
²⁵¹ Vasile Kogalniceanu, *op.cit.*, p. 130.
region ²⁵³ Constantin Hamangiu, *op.cit.*, pp. 450-456.

ages they 118
shared the In a
sense, D
ethnicities lost

was also defined as such; a) all places and buildings belonging to the Ottoman Government before 11 April 1877 b) all forests, apart from the specified portions, o communes in accordance with the present law and those possessed by operty verified and admitted in accordance with the present law c) all mines ds, canals and fisheries of all kinds e) all lands referred to in Article 10."²⁵⁴



However, it would be a grave fallacy that Romanian policies regarding the ethnic minorities in Dobruja were unique in the Balkans. Though the Muslims in Dobruja were regarded as troublesome, and therefore were subject to assimilation policies, Muslims in other Balkan states were definitely treated harsher than in Romania. For instance, even though the Treaty of Berlin accepted Islam as one of the official religions in Bosnia, Austria tried its best to cut off all relations between Muslims of Bosnia and the Ottoman State, and forced them migrate to the Ottoman lands.²⁵⁵ The situation of Muslims in Southern Dobruja region which was even worse than Bosnia. Under the Bulgarian rule from 1878 to 1913, Muslims had been severely oppressed, deprived of rights and forced to emigrate.

The underlying reason for the relatively softer attitude against the Muslims in Romania was that the Muslim community and other ethnicities cohabited peacefully in this transiting area, and they did not have longlasting wars between each other. On the contrary, same destiny against the Russian invasions coming from the northern direction. Dobruja was a land for tolerance and multiculturalism. Muslims and other ethnic groups found their unique protector state, and had to accept the authority of the newly emerged Romanian state provided that they had been treated as the first rate citizens. Unfortunately, this did not materialize at the initial phase of the integration process as the nationalist feelings flew high and even Alexandru C. Cuza in the capacity of Prime Minister admitted that some irresponsible state employees mistreated the local inhabitants and practiced extreme nationalist policies leading to the mass emigration of the Muslim population.

To sum up this part of the study, Dobruja became a melting pot of different ethnicities for fostering Romanian national identity out of this rich diversity following

Honor of Profession
2013, p. 539.

Yeniden Kurulan Hayatlar, Boşnakların Türkiye'ye Göçleri (1878-1934) (Restablished Lives, niacs to Turkey (1878-1934), İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2012, p. 143. "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver", Stoica Lascu and Melek Fetisleam (eds.), Contemporary Research in Turkology and Eurasian Studies. A Festschrift in

its incorporation into the new state. The region was labelled as "Dacia in miniature" or "a mosaic of Romanian races."²⁵⁶ Although the nationalistic approaches and practices prevailed regarding Dobruja, Romanian authorities displayed a certain degree of tolerance for the Turks and Tatars living in this newly-acquired territory. In this regard, they were allowed to maintain the institutions of the *Mufti* who dealt with the Muslim communities' religious issues and the *Oadi* who dealt with civil legal matters. As far as education is concerned, they preserved the schools teaching religion and Turkish. For the purpose of training *imams* and primary-school teachers, an old *madrasa* in Babadag was replaced with a modern school incorporated in the Romanian education system. However, the policy of tremendous confiscation of lands and political restrictions imposed upon Muslims left them in despair and unhopeful about their future in the new state which triggered their emigration to the Ottoman Empire *en masse*.

Romanian elites used economic progress as a legitimizing factor for settling the Romanian rule in the province. Among many development projects carried out in the region, the port of Constanta was invested on the Black sea coast, new roads were built and modern agricultural techniques were adopted. All those projects made the new rulers jubilant enough to claim that in the decades following the "Reunion of Dobruja with the motherland", a real economic, social, political and spiritual rebirth was registered.²⁵⁷

On the other hand, thanks to the lessons taken in Northern Dobruja, when Southern Dobruja comprised of two counties, namely Durostor and Caliacra, was annexed to the Romanian borders in 1913, the integration of the Muslims in this region was carried out much easier. Cadrilater, the name given by Romanians to Southern Dobruja, possessed a larger population of Turks and Tatars compared with the Northern part. It had already well-known Muslim institutions, which strongly anchored in Romanian realities through their close relations with the relatives living in Northern Dobruja. Moreover, the Turks and Tatars in Northern Dobruja having the experience of working with the Romanian administration were acting in some way as intermediaries for the integration of Cadrilater into Romania. That was the reason for the Romanian administration to regard the Turks as its allies against the aggressive Bulgarian efforts to regain control of Cadrilater. The Romanian newspaper *Tuna* (Danube) even called the Turks and Tatars as the guardians of the south border with Bulgaria. The Romanian rule therefore restored the Turks' rights and their freedom to establish their own schools and places of worship. The Turks of Cadrilater consequently became enthusiastic supporters of the Romanian administration on the eve of the First World War and the emigration to Turkey ceased or diminished.²⁵⁸ The history once again showed that convergence of interests made old adversaries best friends.

²⁵⁶ Constantin Iordachi, "The California of the Romanians: The Integration of Northern Dobrugea into Romania, 1878-1913", *op.cit.*, p. 135.

²⁵⁷ Adrian Radulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria romanilor dintre Dunare .p Mare, Dobrogea (History of the Romans between the Danube and the Sea, Dobruja)*, *op.cit.*, p. 290.

"The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tannover", *op.cit.*,

Chapter V Status of the Muslim Seminary between 1878-1914

5.1. Creation of the Seminary out of Madrasa

The members of the Muslim community of Dobruja were subject to the Islamic education starting from *mektebi sibyan* up to *madrasas* for ages. Since the beginning of the Turkish domination many *madrasas* were established and continued to function across the Dobruja region with minimum state interference and budget support. The *madrasa* in Babadag in Northern Dobruja whose history goes to back to the beginning of the 17th century was one of the prominent among those many. Founded by the Governor Gazi Ali Pasha in 1610, the *madrasa* maintained itself up to 1878 by the revenues derived from its rich *vakif* estates given by the governor himself. The *vakfiye* -document that declares specific estates and property belongs to mosque, *madrasa* or a charity institution- of Gazi Ali Pasha dated *Rebiulevvel* 1019 in *Hicri* calendar (June 1610) gives all details regarding this *madrasa* and its *vakif* estates comprised of mainly Zebilul (Zebil), Herghelia (not exist today), and Babadag lake, approximately 8.000 hectares.²⁵⁹ Under the Ottoman rule, the *madrasa* was financially autonomous thanks to this *vakif* system. In 1837 with the financial support of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) a new building was constructed which would host the *madrasa* until 1901, with an interruption between 1877 and 1889.²⁶⁰

As a matter of fact, when Dobruja came under the Romanian rule, there were other several active *madrasas* in the region along with the one in Babadag, which were cited in the book of the Dobrujan born intellectual Mustecip Ulkiisal.²⁶¹ All those *madrasas* remained outside of the control and monitoring of the newly emerged Romanian education system. They had their own funding, and did not follow any uniform *curricula*, lessons being taught as teachers saw fit.

The Romanian government, after incorporating Dobruja and its large Muslim inhabitants in 1878, did not deny their right to education and religious practising. It maintained the institutions of the *Mufti* who dealt with the Muslim communities' religious issues and the *Qadi* who dealt with civil legal matters. As far as education concerned, it preserved the schools

²⁵⁹ Archives of Directorate of Foundations (*Vakifs*) of Turkey, *Küçük Evkaf Tası* (Small *Vakifs* Book) no 633, p. 104, row.37. See also, Yusuf Uralgiray, *Romanya'da Türk ve İslam Kültürü-Dobruca'nın Dünü, Bugünü ve Yarını* (Turkish and Islamic Culture in Dobruja-Past, Present and Future of Dobruja), Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1981, pp. 332-353.

²⁶⁰ Manuela Marin, "After the 'Great War': The Muslim Seminary in Medgidia in Greater Romania, *op.cit.*, p. 571.

²⁶¹ Müstecip Ülküsal, *Dobruca ve Türkler* (Dobruja and Turks), *op.cit.*, pp. 124-125.

teaching religion and Turkish language. For the purpose of training *imams* and primary school teachers, the old *madrasa* in Babadag was converted into an institution which was renamed as seminary and incorporated in the Romanian education system.²⁹⁷

The Muslim Seminary is thus created under the Article 21 of the 1880 Organic Law of Dobruja, with the purpose of training clerics and primary-school teachers for the Muslim community. It was the only non-Christian Orthodox theological seminary whose creation was specifically provided in this "Constitution of Dobruja".²⁹⁸ The seminary would be financially supported by the state itself.

The creation of the Muslim Seminary subordinated to the Romanian state by a law can be construed as a sign of the Romanian authorities' interest in the Muslim community. Even if Dobruja had *madrasas* for a very long time, it needed an institution that would foster Romanian culture and values in the newly acquired territory. While the new rule showed a visible sensitivity towards the spiritual needs of its large Muslim community in Dobruja, it did not hide its aim to integrate them into the state structure through education. In other words, it was evident that the Romanian government used education in order to promote its project for building and consolidating the nation and the Romanian state.²⁹⁹ So, it consequently chose to create an institution that would train Muslim clerics and Turkish language teachers. The graduates would become the best mediators between the Romanian authorities and the Muslim community. From another point of view, the graduates had to act as agents of the Romanian state and to locally promote the Romanian nation building project among a population that was not ethnically Romanian, but also it had been included within the borders of the Romanian state very recently.

Though the Romanian government naturally considered its national priorities at the first place by establishing the Muslim seminary, it did not mean exactly that the idea was against the interests of the Turkish-Tatar community. On the contrary, against the background of dwindling number of the religious clergy in the aftermath of 1878, as a result of either their emigration to Turkey or death in natural ways, the decision to set up a new educational institution in Babadag was very instrumental for the community to respond to their growing religious needs. The location of the seminary was not accidentally chosen by the new rule as Babadag was a significant town in the past centuries from economic and military perspectives, and due to it was densely populated by the Muslims. Another important factor for these reasons

²⁹⁷ Metin Ömer,
²⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 15f
²⁹⁹

"The History of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary (1889-1948)", *op.cit.*, p. 155. Irina Livezeaiju,
op.cit., pp. 14-29.

choosing this *madrasa* in Babadag was that it symbolized a powerful center for teaching Islamic doctrines. The Romanian government must have thought that the existing *madrasa* could easily be converted into a modern Romanian education institution which would benefit both the state and Muslim community.

When the seminary opened up its doors in 1889, its building consisted of only two classrooms and two rooms used as small dormitories. Whereas, Kurt-Seyit Efendi's *madrasa* in Valu lui Traian close to Constanta had 7-8 rooms.²⁶² However, another source claims that the seminary had 14 rooms with 2.000 m² yard surrounded by a stone wall. In the beginning 35 students were enrolled on board. Having more rooms with larger yard seems to be more fitting the fame and function of the *madrasa* in Babadag. The main building was designed in the Turkish architecture and it had a mosque in its yard with its running water system adjacent to it.²⁶³

Once Dobruja came under the Romanian rule and the decision was made to set up the Babadag Muslim Seminary, the *vakif* estate was transferred by the leaders of the Muslim community to the Romanian state in exchange for the state's commitment to cover the maintenance expenses for the seminary premises and to pay the wages of the teachers. Thus, the entire estate used for maintaining this educational institution became the state's property.²⁶⁴ Article 21 of the Organic Law of Dobruja ensured that the state would support the seminary. To this end, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education provided 300-1,000 Lei for the maintenance of the seminary building and 700 Lei for the residence of the principal of the seminary *per annum* in addition to payment of the salaries of the teachers.²⁶⁵

This was a new situation for the Romanian state, namely administering an institution belonging to a rather numerous Muslim minority. So necessary changes had to be made gradually. To this end, the Romanian Government opted for a step by step approach for the integration of the Muslim Seminary into the official education system. This explains why it took time before some courses in the Romanian standard *curriculum* were started to be taught at the seminary. The very first lesson inserted to the *madrasa curriculum* was to be the Romanian language class in 1894. The logic behind this move was that even if new citizens belonged to a foreign culture, they had to know first Romanian values and culture. Then,

²⁶² Mustecip Ulkusal, *op.tit.*, p. 124.

²⁶³ Aurelia Lapușan, Ștefan Lapușan, *Medgidia Carasu, Constanta, Editura Muntenia, 1996, p. 105.*

²⁶⁴ Nureddin İbrahim, *Comunitatea musulmană din Dobrogea: repere de viață spirituală: viața religioasă învățământ în limba maternă (Muslim Community in Dobruja: Spiritual Life Points: Religious Life and Education in Mother Tongue)*, Constanta, Editura Ex Ponto, 1998, p. 153.

²⁶⁵ Aurelia Lapușan, Ștefan Lapușan, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

Alexandria Alecu was appointed as the first lecturer for the Romanian language course, and then in the same year he also undertook the administration of the seminary.

5.2. Moving Seminary from Babadağ to Medgidia

In 1901 the seminary moved from Babadag to Medgidia. The official reason behind the move was the diminishing Muslim population in Northern Dobruja following the 1899 massive migration to the Ottoman Empire, after a severe drought hit the poor families. The density of migration to the region had already dropped dramatically after the 1877-1878 war. Yet, the decision to relocate the seminary was initially on a temporary basis. However, once it moved to Medgidia, the seminary permanently remained there for many different reasons.

was moved to Medgidia

Medgidia, located at the center of old Dobruja, was chosen not only due to its numerous Muslim population, but also because of its high rate of connectivity, in terms of infrastructure, with the entire region.²⁶⁶ The population of Medgidia in 1894 and 1903 was 2,449 and 2,858 respectively, having a powerful Muslim community. In the 1890s there were 6 mosques with 6 *imams* on duty. The city was the capital of Dobruja in economic, administrative and cultural terms. The agricultural production, especially wheat, barley and corn, was considerably high.²⁶⁷ The railway connection between Cernavoda, Medgidia and Constanta worked properly since the 1860s. Thanks to the road and railway infrastructure, two trade fairs were held in Medgidia in a year, one on 15 June, and another on 15 October, each lasting 10 days. Those fairs brought great dynamism to the city, prospering its residents as well.²⁶⁸

Furthermore, Medgidia had another advantage to relocate the seminary because it already had a private seminary run by İsmail Efendi, which lacked the necessary approvals from the state authorities and was not integrated in the Romanian education system. As a result, the students of this private seminary had to pass an exam in order to be admitted to the Muslim Seminary recognized by the Romanian state.²⁶⁹ In a petition to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Medgidians proposed that the Muslim Seminary be moved from Babadag to Medgidia, within the premises of the existing private seminary owned by İsmail Efendi. The latter had been built by the Muslim community of Medgidia and was large enough to accommodate both schools.²⁷⁰ The Medgidia building was in the same design of

³⁰⁵ Nureddin İbanoğlu, *The Muslim Community in*

Dobruja, *Constanta*, Editura Ex Ponto, 2011, p. 117.

²⁶⁶ Manuela Marijn, *op.cit.*, p. 572.

²⁶⁷ Ștefan Lapușan, *Comunitatea musulmană din Dobruja: Pagini de cultură și civilizație (Muslim Community in Dobruja: Pages of Culture and Civilization)*, Constanta, Editura Ex Ponto, 2011, p. 117.

²⁶⁸ ANR, Fund of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, file no:326/1901, f. 6.

²⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, f. 10

madrasas but short of their magnificence. It was a simpler one having a yard inside surrounded by classrooms.

Apparently, the seminary was not relocated from Babadag to Medgidia against the will and desire of the Turko-Tatar community. On the contrary, the decision was well received and at certain times the community even insisted that the seminary would stay permanently in Medgidia. On the other hand, the small wages of the teachers of special disciplines -such as Arab language or the Interpretation of the *Quran*- and the bad conditions of the premises remained as constant concerns throughout the school's early period. The seminary teachers and the community representatives had to continuously remind the authorities that it was their duty to solve these problems, rightfully invoking the state's commitment to take over all the expenses for the school in exchange for ownership of the *vakif* estates. Unfortunately, such demands were often left unanswered by the authorities.²⁷¹

5.3. Problems Surfaced After the Relocation

The relocation of the seminary from Babadag to Medgidia constituted an important milestone in the history of the institution, and it took some time to settle down problems in this town. First, the move required that some adaptations and improvements to be made to the existing private seminary premises. Second, the wages of teachers were very low and this made hard to find qualified teachers for the school. But the most important problem was that the Muslim community was rapidly getting poorer and it was the most challenging predicament ahead of recruiting students to the institution in sufficient number.

In the first year after the move, in 1902, the principal of the Muslim Seminary petitioned to the Ministry of Culture by asking the speeding up of repair works at the building. Among the urgent works, a prerequisite to the building being in operational condition, were: repairing the roof, painting the walls, furnishing an additional classroom, and building a gate.²⁷² According to a report on the condition of the seminary in the early years after the move, the dormitory consisted of 7 rooms equipped with 35 iron beds.²⁷³ Given that in the 1903-1904 school year, 73 students were enrolled at the seminary, it can be safely assumed that the number of beds was insufficient. That same year, attempts were made to improve the premises: to

²⁷¹ Metin Omer, "The History of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary (1889-1948)", *op.cit.*, p. 157.

³¹⁰ ANR, *op.cit.*, file no: 789/1902, f. 23.

²⁷³ *Ibidem*, file no: 245/1904, f. 37.

rebuild the seminary's mosque, to build a fence around the courtyard, to set up a
install a Chamber pharmacy, to

and-Pasteur water filter.²⁷⁴

Though three years had passed after the seminary moved from Babadag to Medgidia, still
there were problems to be solved. Among others, the use of the land surrounding
plant trees on the seminary was standing a step ahead. Alexandru Alecu, the principal of the
this the land, school, wanted to
wanted unused land. The Muslim community on the other hand, the actual owner of to
community was build an inn and a coffee shop on it. However, this suggestion by the found
unacceptable by the principal Alecu and more importantly by the Minister of Religious Affairs
and Public Education, Dimitrie A. Sturdza. Despite the proof which showed that the land had
been donated to the Muslim community by Agi Ebu Zahit and Agi Fet Isleam who were rich
people of Medgidia in order to cover the maintenance costs of the mosque located next to the
seminary, the objection of the Romanian authorities persisted. The mosque named Geami Veli
Bey was important to maintain as the seminarians used it for the religious practical training.²⁷⁵ In
due course, the issue of the use of the land around the seminary was settled
buildings on through the blackmail of the principal of the seminary backed by the Ministry. The
the Babadag, blackmail entailed that if the Muslim community had insisted on constructing
which land, the principal Alecu would have proposed to move back the seminary to the
local Muslims did not want it at all. Taking this chance Alecu exploited at the same time to solve
the issue of the ownership of the premises of the seminary.

Although the building of the seminary was constructed by the local Muslim community,
the principal Alecu believed that the ownership should have been in the hands of the state, and
argued that this was the only way to avoid any possible change of use of the school premises.
According to a report dated 1903 penned by Alecu, the whole premises of the seminary
belonged to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, and that proved the transfer of ownership
of the building of the school from locals to the state was actually materialized.²⁷⁶

In a general outlook, the administration of the seminary had three options to find
solutions to the problems which they faced. First, it could ask for help from the Romanian state.
In his annual reports or special letters, the principal applied to the authorities for help in specific
matters. For this purpose, the administration would itemize estimated costs for furniture,
firewood, various construction works or any other needs. In return, the official
their best to meet authorities tried
meet those demands of the seminary within the budget limits.

³¹² *Ibidem*, file no

³¹³ *Ibidem*, file no 245/1904, f. 38.

³¹⁴ Metin Ömer. :789/1902, f. 33.

"The History of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary (1889-1948)", *op.cit.*, p. 156.

The second option to obtain the necessary funds for the maintenance of the Islamic school was to raise money from the Muslim community. This practice was very common for the Turks and Tatars. Despite the Romanian state's post-1878 commitment to provide for both the maintenance of the Muslims' mosques and schools and the wages of *imams* and primary school teachers, the local Muslim communities still had to make personal contributions to supplement the insufficient funds allocated by the state. As a result, in addition to the one *imam* per community paid by the state, they could hire another one paid by themselves. They could also spend this money to repair and even to build new mosques or schools.

Finally, the third option to solve part of the seminary's financial problems was through student contributions. In addition to the tuition fee, the students could be asked to bring their own supplies for instance, bed linens, tableware, food, etc.²⁷⁷

Both during its Babadag days and after its relocation to Medgidia, one of the long-lasting problems the seminary faced was the permanent shortage of students. From 1891 to 1904, 148 students attended its classes.²⁷⁸ In the 1892-1893 school year, the teachers taught only 3 classes, a total of mere 18 students.²⁷⁹ In the period of 1893-1894, still 3 classes and 14 students were available at the seminary.²⁸⁰

The main reason of the low rate of the enrolled students was the dire poverty conditions prevailed among the Muslim community. The principal of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary underlined this dramatic problem on several occasions. For instance, on 18 May 1904 Alexandru Alecu asked the Ministry to exempt his students from celebrations of the 2nd of July because many of them were poor, and they had to work during summers to support themselves.²⁸¹ However, Alecu had a secondary motive while he was proposing this idea to the Ministry. Actually, on the 2nd of July Romanians used to celebrate the heroism of their medieval leader Țepeșea Mare (Stephen the Great) and "celebrating loudly the Hero who defeated the proud Crescent could offend the Muslim children".²⁸²

Granting scholarship was one of the incentives that the administration of the seminary used to attract the poor students. But, as the seminary did not have the necessary funds for sufficient scholarships, it needed to look for alternative sources. One such possibility was to try to receive subsidies from the local administrations. For instance, in March 1906, the

Ibidem, p. 159.

²⁷⁸ ANR, *op.cit.*, file no:245/1904, f. 73.

²⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, file no:428/1893, f. 7.

^{3,8} *Ibidem*, file no:450/1894, f. 5.

²⁸¹ ANR, Fund of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, file no:245/1904, f. 23.

²⁸² *Ibidem*, f. 23.

principal of the seminary sent a petition to the Church Administration, which was in charge of theological seminaries, to take the necessary steps with the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a view to having the amount of 400 Lei per student per annum allotted from the budgets of the local administrations of Babadag, Sulina, Mahmudia, Tulcea, Isaccea, and Macin.²⁸³ This choice of towns in Tulcea County was not random. In the 1905-1906 school year, only two seminarians came from whole Tulcea County. The reason was uttered as such that "their parents lived in outmost poverty"²⁸⁴ However, the attempt was not successful. Of all local administrations mentioned above, only the one in Babadag spared the requested amount of money, but it could not be utilized because no student from this town was enrolled in the seminary.²⁸⁵

Another solution that the seminary administrators found was to offer tuition waivers to attract the poor students to the school. From a report of the principal of the school, we learn: "There are two kinds of tuition fees that the students pay: *frecventa* and *solva* (in the early 20th century Romanian school system the *frecventa* fee was the standard fee paid for full-time attendance and the *solva* fee was paid by those students who did not receive a merit scholarship), the former ranging from 700 to 3,000 Lei per annum, proportionate to the income of the parents, while the latter was 400 Lei per month per student, holidays excluded". Tuition waivers were granted in the form of merit scholarships. For instance, the eligibility requirements for scholarships in 1910 were: "to be Romanian citizens, to be aged between 12 and 16, to know how to read the *Quran* and to have a robust body". From these criteria, we gather that the scholarship recipients were those students most likely to stay in Romania and become Muslim clerics in local mosques. The Romanian citizenship criterion was not there to reflect the fact that the institution was under the administration of the Romanian state. Besides, the seminary had Albanian scholarship recipients. The seminary had a mission of integrating the Dobrujan inhabitants into the Kingdom of Romania. As early as the 1877-1878 Russian-Turkish War, many Turks and Tatars started to immigrate from Dobruja to the Ottoman Empire. Dobruja had a special status; its inhabitants gained Romanian citizenship as late as 1909. In this context, a person who held Romanian citizenship in 1910 was more likely to stay in Dobruja than choose to emigrate. The age limit and having a robust body criteria were with the desire to invest in someone who would provide services to the community for as long as possible. As a result, scholarships were offered to students who were

²⁸³ *Ibidem*, file 4:128/1907, f. 9.

²⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, f. 9.

²⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, f. 9.

to graduate the seminary at a young age and could therefore practice their profession as *imams* for a longer time and to those who seemed healthier since there had been cases of seminarians who had to leave the seminary because of health problems or who even died.²⁸⁶

Another kind of economic hardship that the seminarians had to face was the difficulty to find a job after their graduation from the seminary. In contravention with the target of the seminary, most of them did not prefer to become *imams* at the mosques. The main reason for this was the low wages that *imams* received, which did not attract them. Under the Romanian law, the clerics were paid by the state budget. But, the authorities never fully covered the wages of the necessary staff. To supplement the state-funded staff, the Muslim communities paid themselves the wages of additional *imams* and *muezzins*.²⁸⁷ This was a source of dissatisfaction for the graduates. Additional reason for not preferring to be *imams* was the lack of enough vacant positions close to the homes of the graduates. Every graduate wanted a nearby neighbourhood to his home town and relatives. This request was rather difficult to be fulfilled by the *Muftiate* for all the alumni.

5.4. The Legal Ground for the Seminary and Its Curriculum

The seminary was created as a Romanian education institution under the Article 21 of the 1880 Organic Law of Dobruja. The Romanian Parliament further passed other laws to that effect in both the pre-war and the inter-war periods. The 1898 Law on Secondary and Higher Education, the Law on Primary and Normal Education dated 26 July 1924, the 19 December 1925 Law on Private Education, and the 22 April 1928 Law on the General Status of Religions were the primary ones, all providing the legal basis of establishing schools for Romania's various minorities and faith-based groups. The Turkish schools including the seminary operated under these laws and different regulations enacted during the course of time.

The first regulation adopted in 1892 regarding the operation of the seminary in Babadag stipulated;

-to recruit only the Romanian citizens to the school

-*Imam* teachers would give the lessons of Arabic *Quran* recitation in the morning session -

Students would attend the public schools in the afternoon session -Graduates would have

the right to become *imam* or *muezzins*,²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Metin Ömer, *op.cit.*, p. 162.

²⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 163.

²⁸⁸ Nureddin Ibram, *Comunitatea musulmana din Dobruja...*, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

Whereas, the Regulations for the Organization of the Muslim Seminary in Dobruja dated 1904 included an organization chart for the historic school for the first time. Accordingly, the principal of the seminary was to be a Romanian citizen and a fluent speaker of Romanian language. He would be a member of the school's academic staff and would be appointed by a royal decree. Demirgean *Efendi*, the first principal of the school, would also happen to be the last Muslim director. After his death, Alexandru Alecu was appointed as the principal of the school. The principal would be supported by an assistant director appointed by the Ministry among the seminary's Muslim teachers, upon recommendation of the *Mufti* and with the principal's consent. He would basically offer his views on spiritual and moral issues. Alecu's assistant was Ali Hagi Mustafa in the beginnings of the 1900s. In depth, the spiritual assistant principal had a mission to supervise how Turkish and Arabic classes were taught; to make sure that the students' moral and religious education abode with the rules and prescriptions of the *Quran*; to participate in the students' prayers in the seminary mosque; and to be their spiritual leader. The assistant principal could make no decisions without the principal's approval, one of his duties being to supervise the teachers of Turkish language and Islam.²⁸⁹

The 1904 Regulations also set forth the procedure for the appointment of teachers to the seminary. According to this procedure, Turkish and Arabic classes were to be taught exclusively by the Muslim teachers having Romanian citizenship, while the remaining courses were to be taught by Romanian secular teachers. The Muslim teachers were first approved by the *Mufti*, whereas the Romanian teachers were approved by the principal himself.²⁹⁰

Before the adoption of the Regulations for the Organization of the Muslim Seminary in Dobruja on 17 August 1904, the courses and their contents differed from one teacher to another.

That explains why the pre-1904 *curriculum* of the seminary is unknown. Most Islamic courses In Regulations, were just two teachers who taught specific courses belonging to a 1904, there Muslim e.g classes of Islam, Arabic, Ottoman and Turkish **languages**, the process of theology introducing secular courses in the Muslim Seminary's school. Though *curriculum* we it before 1904, it was only after this date that the final classification of topics into as secular and theological was realized. On the one hand, there were courses taught in Romanian mainstream schools, and on the other hand, there were ones specific to an Islamic theology school. All these courses would continue to be taught at the seminary until the Second

²⁸⁹ Metin Ömer, ["The History of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary (1889-1948)", *op.cit.*, p. 164; see also Murat Akgündüz, *Osmanlı Medreseleri*, Beyan Yayınları, İstanbul, 2004.

²⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 165.

World War. The first non-Islamic course introduced was the Romanian language although at first the seminarians had to go to the elementary school in Babadag for their Romanian classes. The other secular subjects were Romanian History, Romanian Geography, the Basics of the Geography of the Five Continents, Arithmetic and Geometry and Practical Notions of Agricultural Surveying, Physical and Natural Sciences, Basics of Pedagogy and Its Practice in Teaching Primary School courses; Basics of Civil Law, Basics of Hygiene and Traditional Medicine, Tree and Vegetable Growing, Technical Drawing, Calligraphy and Music.²⁹¹

The case of the courses on theology was much less straightforward. Until the end of the First World War, more precisely until the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the Turkish Republic, the *curriculum* for the specific courses focused on the study of religion. The specific topics were to be taught in Ottoman Turkish and in Arabic and they were: "Turkish Language, Arabic Language, Interpretation of the *Quran*, *Sharia* Law, Writing and Spelling (*Yazi, Imla*)"TM Under each course main topics were listed for discussion. So, teaching Turkish language to the first year students covered "reciting *Quran*, teaching basic notions of Turkish grammar and practicing writing and spelling."²⁹²

The students started studying the interpretation of the *Quran* in the first year and took the course of *Taalim-Caraiet Tegivid* (Recitation of *Quran*). In the second year they were given *Muchemel* (Speaking), in the third year *Halebi gild-evel* (first volume of Muslim scholar Halebi's book), in the fourth year *Halebi gild-sani* (second volume of Halebi's book), in the fifth year *Multeca gild-evel* (first volume of Multeka's book), in the sixth year *Multeca gild- sani* (second volume of Multeka's book), in the seventh year *Mev-Ize* (Sermons) and in the eight and the last year of the school, *Usula-Jici* (Islamic jurisprudence).²⁹³ So, in the first year of study, they learnt the correct way to recite the *Quran*, in the second year, they learnt the correct way to speak, and from class 3 through 6, they studied the books of Ibrahim b. Muhammed-el-Halebi (?-956), a *Hanafi* Muslim scholar, and in seventh grade, they were taught how to give sermons in mosques as *imams*, while the final year was dedicated to Islamic jurisprudence.

Students began learning Arabic language in the second year, and continued to take *Sarf* (books of *Emrile*, *Bina*, *Izi*) in the same year; *Nahiv* (books *oiAvamil*, *Izhar*) in the third year; *Nahiv (Geami-gild-eveT)* in the fourth year; *Geami-gild-sani* in the fifth year; *Mantic (Jsagoci*

²⁹¹ Constantin Hamangiu, *op.cit.*, p. 132.

²⁹² *Ibidem*.

²⁹³ *Ibidem*.

Şemsie) in the sixth year; *Maani* and *Ali aca* in the seventh year, and lastly *Acaid* in the eighth year."³³³ So, in the second grade they would study Arabic verb conjugation using the same books as in the Ottoman schools, such *Emsile*, *Bina*, *Izi*; in third year they studied Arabic grammar from the *Nahiv* textbook; in fourth and fifth years they studied more advanced Arabic grammar; in the sixth year, they were familiarized with notions of logic from the *İsâgôcî* textbook, or the long title *er-Risaletü 'l-Esiriyye fi 'l-Mantik*, written by Esirüddin el-Mufaddal b. Ómer es-Semerkandi el-Ebheri (1200-1265); in the seventh year, they studied more in-depth the multiple meanings of words; and in the eighth year, they studied the book on faith. The study of *Sharia* (religious law) was reserved to classes 7 and 8, with a focus on inheritance jurisprudence. The Turkish and Arabic courses were allotted equal number of lessons throughout the eight years. The courses in Romanian were taught according to "the urban primary school *curriculum*, from the first through the sixth grade; and the last two grades would be dedicated to reading books of various authors, to writing short essays on the most known topics, to a more advanced study of the country's history after 1821, to learning the basics of pedagogy and to) applications of the concepts learnt, to studying the art of growing trees and vegetables and from civil law, hygiene to traditional medicine".³³⁴

Although the *curriculum* followed under the guidance and instructions of the 1904 Regulations does not mention the study of Persian language, interestingly, in a meeting conducted on 26 February 1908, the teachers of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary decided to remove Persian from the *curriculum*,³³⁵ In due course, it was witnessed that the hours of the Arabic classes declined at the expense of Turkish language, *Quran* and religious ones, and the French language was added to the *curriculum*.

An analysis of the specific courses taught at the Muslim Seminary reveals that they were in line with those in similar theological schools in the Ottoman Empire. For instance, as stated above, *er-Risaletü 'l-Esiriyye fi 'l-Mantik*, the book written by Esirüddin el-Mufaddal b. Ómer es-Semerkandi el-Ebheri, is the first textbook of logic used in *madrasas* all over the Islamic world.

[Though this book and others prevailed for ages in the theological education, as opposed to secular ones, the religious courses at the seminary underwent some adaptations the and inter-war period.³³⁶ changes in

³³³ *Ibidem*.

³³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³³⁵ ANR, *op.cit.* , file no: 1175/1908, f. 34. Metin Ómer, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

³³⁶

Between the years of 1911-1914 the *curriculum* of the courses given in the Romanian language had already been revised and matched with the contents of the secondary schools. In addition to this, the contents of the religious courses were updated with the assistance and contributions of the *Müfti* of Constanta, Hafiz Rifat and the *Qadi* ibraim Efendi. In 1913, it was decided that all changes related to the *curriculum* of the seminary would be made by the Ministry, not by the principal of the seminary. However, the Ministry would naturally heed the recommendations and proposals of the principal of the seminary, as well as teachers while it intended to revise and update the *curriculum* or any other issues related to the school.²⁹⁴

5.5. Teaching Cadres of the Seminary

In its early ages, the Muslim Seminary in Babadag had just two teachers, Demirgean Efendi and Hagi Ali Mustafa. This overlapped with the time when the school did not follow a standard *curriculum* or any other official rules. Demirgean Efendi was the teacher of Arabic language and acted as the principal of the school, while Hagi Ali Mustafa taught Islamic Jurisprudence and the Interpretation of the *Quran*.

²⁹⁴ Nureddin Ibram, *op.cit.*, p. 119.

In later stages, the number of teachers increased partly due to the higher number of students and partly due to the introduction of Romanian language classes in addition to Arabic and Turkish classes. So, in 1903-1904 education period, there would be four teachers at the seminary: Alexandru Alecu, teacher of Romanian language and the administrative director, Demirgean Efendi, teacher of Arabic language, Enan Iaia, teacher of Arabic studies, and Ali Hagi Mustafa, teacher of Interpretation of the *Quran*, Islamic Jurisprudence and acting as academic director.²⁹⁵ Apparently, the main obstacle preventing the diversification of the topics taught at the seminary was the lack of funds for paying the wages of teachers. Supporting this hypothesis is the case of D. D. Nitescu, primary school teacher at another school in Babadag, who offered to teach seminarians *canto* for free in 1896.²⁹⁶ The second reason could be that the Romanian government might have thought the changes regarding the Muslim school needed further time. As this school was a unique experience dealing with the Muslim community, the new rule apparently needed to watch out its steps very carefully. As it is stated above, in line with the 1904 Regulations, appointment of teachers was put into a standard procedure. Religious courses would be given by the Romanian national Muslims, and the secular ones

²⁹⁵ ANR, Fund of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, file no:245/1904, f. 38.

²⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, file no.303/1896, f. 5.

would be lectured by the Romanian teachers. The Muslim teachers were first approved by the *Mufti*, whereas the Romanian teachers were approved by the principal of the school. The Regulations also required that the teachers of the courses of the Turkish language and Islam would be appointed among seminary graduates. Besides, to further train seminary teachers, the Romanian state granted scholarships to outstanding students to study in Istanbul. Such a case is that of Sabri İlefi Vuap, graduate of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary, recipient of a scholarship provided by the Romanian government studied in Istanbul, and later worked as a teacher at the seminary.²⁹⁷

The teachers, who invariably complained about their low salaries, generally got along well with each other, with conflicts arising only in connection to appointments or promotions. There was one exception though in 1908 when several teachers and parents accused the principal Alecu for his alleged attitude, which was regarded as being offensive to the Muslims, causing many students to drop their studies at the seminary.²⁹⁸ Following the complaints, Alecu first made the plaque on the school's wall with the name of the seminary bilingual in both Romanian and Turkish. He announced Fridays as holiday. He declared that military drills were no longer compulsory, but learning the royal anthem and Romanian language remained compulsory.²⁹⁹ Despite such efforts, the principal Alecu was replaced with Constantin Th. Mălinescu. However, after a short while he was restored to his seat. In his memoirs, Müstecip Ülküsal describes him as a true nationalist, and he recalls an incident when he was scolded by the principal Alecu in such: "You seem to have started promoting nationalism here. This is not Turkey, this is Romania; get your act together or I'll expel you from the school."³⁰⁰

Teachers of the seminary were responsible for holding exams. Having completed eight years of study, the students had to take a final general exam. Before 1904, the structure of the examination was left up to teachers. According to the 1904 Regulations, the final exams were to be taken in the presence of a committee composed of the school's teachers, one of the *Muftis* appointed by the Ministry, as well as a special delegate from the Ministry. The exam dates would be set in the interval 1-5 June and the exam would consist of a) two written exams, one in Romanian with a history or literature question and the other in Arabic with a religious or

²⁹⁷ Metin Ömer, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

²⁹⁸ ANR, Fund of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, file no: 1175/1908, f. 11.

²⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, f. 20.

³⁰⁰ Müstecip Ülküsal, *Kırım Yolunda Bir Ömür. Hatıralar (A Life on the Way to Crimea. Memoirs)*, Ankara, Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği Genel Merkez Yayınları, 1999, p. 50.

Sharia question, and b) an oral exam of all the knowledge acquired by the students during the eight grades of school.³⁰¹

On the other hand, the efforts of the teachers working in difficult conditions were often appreciated by the Romanian officials. In line with this appreciation, King Carol I decorated all teachers of the seminary with the medal of "Rasplata muncii" (Award of Work) during his historic visit to the Medgidia Seminary in 1913.³⁰²

5.6. Education Standard at the Seminary

The seminary, having been established in *sui generis* conditions of the history, met vital needs of both the Romanian state and the Muslim minority living in Romania. In line with this, both sides tried to strengthen its physical structure and raise its education standards and quality. There were many problems which are outlined above ahead of reaching these targets. The seminary's dire situation, explained the principal of the school Cătălin Arsenescu, had several causes: the poor economic conditions of the Muslim families, especially in the years when they had bad harvest because of drought; the negative propaganda of *hodjas* in Istanbul who were afraid of seminary graduates' competition; the phenomenon of migration to Turkey and lastly, the failure of the *Muftis* in the four Dobruja counties to make counter-propaganda after 1912.³⁰³ On top of those bad elements, one could add the students' hardship in finding a job after their graduation.

Though accused as a nationalist by some Turkish-Tatar students, with 30 year-mission in charge, the veteran principal of the seminary Alexandru Alecu's contributions to the school were admittedly great and horizon-opening. He, being the first teacher of the Romanian language, introduced gradually new secular and modern courses into the *curriculum* and helped revising and modernizing the outlook of the theological lectures. He, together with the support of the Muslim community, tried to improve the physical infrastructure of the seminary which would pave the way for attracting smarter students to the institution. As a result, Alecu boasted that the graduates of the seminary were much more educated than the ones in Istanbul in terms of the education quality and development of the mentality. He even further stated that the first

³⁰¹ Constantin Hamangiu, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

³⁰² Nureddin Ibram, *Comunitatea musulmana din Dobrugea: Pagini de culturula și civilizatie (Muslim Community in Dobruja: Pages of Culture and Civilization)*, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

³⁰³ ANR, Fund of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, file no:177/1924, f.39-40.

seminary in Istanbul emulating Medgidia Muslim Seminary was established in 1909, and it requested the *curriculum* of the seminary to benefit.³⁰⁴

The newspaper *Ikdam* (Diligence) published in Istanbul printed an article on 6 June 1913 in the name of Ali Kemal Efendi who was also the director of the said paper praising the high quality of the education given at the seminary. In the article quoted by the Dobrogea Juna (Young Dobruja) on 23 September 1914 he wrote that the graduates, who were of high culture, were open equipped with all virtues of modern education. He added that they were for minded and practical needs of life.³⁰⁵ The more the seminary was known among the public, completely the more students wished to enroll at it. At the beginning, most of the students ready thought that attendance to the seminary was a way of escape from the obligatory military service. In due course of time, in parallel with its increasing reputation of high standard of education, even a bigger competition among the candidates broke out. This further influenced positively the level of quality of students and their faster integration into the society. The seminary began to register students on scholarship for the first time in 1906, and under the pressure of high demand and non-availability of enough and good accommodation chances for young persons in the Medgidia town the boarding facility was put into service in 1907. In 1914 the seminary had 70 boarded students who were given free food and beji.³⁰⁶

The seminary gave no graduates in 1896, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1907, 1909 and 1914. It had only one graduate in 1895, 1897 and 1907, two in 1905, four in 1906 and 1913, five in 1912, and six in 1911 according to the Year Book of the seminary. Between the two world wars the number of graduates increased dramatically even up to 16 in one year.³⁰⁷ In 1912, Dobruja Muslim Seminary Alumni Association (Asociatia Absolventilor Seminarului Musulman din Dobrogea) was founded by the graduates and put forward the following objectives for the association:

- Rooting out the fanaticism and illiteracy of the Muslim community
- Raising the ethical level of the community in Dobruja, teaching and strengthening the love for the country
- Getting right to become *mufti* or *qadi* for the alumni of the seminary (Up to that date these posts were spaced for the graduates from Turkey only)

³⁴⁸ ³⁰⁴ Nureddin Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

A Constanta, *Contributii la istoria Dobrogei (The Proves related to the History of Dobruja)*, Vol.11, II Muz© de Istorie Nationala si Arhologie, 1999, p. 635.

³⁵⁰ ³⁰⁶ Nureddin Ibrahim, *op.cit.*, p. 120.
Ibidem, p. 120

-Getting the same amount of salaries for the *imams* on par with the Romanian priests.³⁰⁸

On several occasions, the Muslim Seminary graduates in Medgidia complained in public that they were not supported by the *Muftis* in Constanta and Tulcea counties. The *Mufti* of Constanta, Hafuz Rifat Abdul Gelil stated in one of his interviews that "our young graduates, as they graduated the seminary, had great ambitions and claimed that appointments were carried out contrary to law. The degrees were of no importance to them. They asked to be appointed to the cities and in different positions which were already occupied; they always demanded increase in their salaries and other benefits. I found their action of complaining to the Ministry anarchical."³⁰⁹

While the *Mufti* was upset of the complaints of the graduates, the Alumni Association was spending efforts to get same rights for the graduates with the Romanian citizens, but the inequality still stood there. As a Romanian teacher got a salary of 3.000 Lei, a Turkish one got only 1.000 Lei. While a Romanian teacher had a guarantee of appointment, promotion and transfer by the government, a Turkish one needed to be appointed each year without any guarantee. Against all these negative elements, many seminary alumni succeeded to pass the graduation exam of the Romanian Teachers School and got their diplomas, which meant the education at the seminary was as good as in other Romanian schools.³¹⁰

After annexing the two counties in Southern Dobruja in 1913 into Romania, there had been a fierce debate among the Muslims of both Dobrujas about the quality of education at Muslim schools in two parts of Dobruja. A Muslim student Ahmet Meneşi from Northern Dobruja wrote at that time that 'the Seminary in Medgidia maintained by the state and it raised many religious clergy with superior knowledge. The graduates are directly accepted to any secondary school through a Royal Decree, without an examination, which could only rarely be observed elsewhere. Currently, Constanta and Tulcea counties have a lot of students in regular, military, secondary and high schools and so on, where our students are trained on the basis of European culture, and from whom both the state and nation expect a lot. I have learned that the Romanian state considers its Muslim subjects trustable, not like Bulgarian state.'³¹¹ This

³⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

³⁰⁹ Stoica Lascu, "Aspects of Spritual Life of the Turkish-Tatar Community in Dobrudja (1913-5) (with two appendices: the Turks and Tatars in Romania according to censuses from 1889 to 2011)", Stoica Lascu, Melek Fetisleam (eds.), *Contemporary Research in Turkology and Eurasian Studies. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Tasin Gemil on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2013, pp. 795-796.

³¹⁰ Mustecip Ulkusal, *op.cit.*, p.132.

³¹¹ Ahmed Meneşi, Student at normal school in Iaşi, "Emigrările musulmanor. Un pas greşit (The Emigrations of Muslims. A Misstep)", *DobrogeajunaX*, 17, May 15 1914, pp. 1-2.

discussion among the public on the quality of education in two Dobrujas continued even after the First World War.

The graduates of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary represented what could be generically called the local ^{cists.}³⁵⁵ national elite of the Turkish and Tatar minorities of Dobruja. This was because the graduates had the chance of finding job in ecclesiastical positions in the mosques

in Dobruja and in later stages for becoming *muftis* and the presidents of religious courts. Secondly, they could be appointed as teachers of Turkish language in public schools. Thirdly, graduates of the seminary had opportunity to continue their religious studies in 1, which was a great incentive to attend the seminary. Last but not least, option to choose secular professions like doctors, economists, engineers, men

some of the graduates went to Turkey or Egypt. Graduates had the opportunity to write letters or publish

To sum up, with the exception of a few incidents fueled by the nationalist excesses of some Romanian officials, the seminary's existence was a peaceful one until 1914. The representatives of the Turks and Tatars made good use of the seminary as this was the main way to create their own elites. The Romanian rule as well benefited from the creation of this institution as this the formal education system by facilitating the integration of a foreign culture under into the Romanian system. During the First World War, just before Dobruja was occupied by the Central Powers army, the seminary was turned into a Red Cross hospital. During the evacuation of Dobruja in 1916, almost all the effects of the seminary like sheets, blankets, and cutlery, etc. were taken by the Red Cross. During the same occupation, the seminary's archive was destroyed too. This event interrupted educational life and destroyed the physical facilities of the historic institution in Medgidia. The school could resume its activity only in 1919 after the peace and stability restored.

Chapter VI The Place of the Turkish Community in the Turkish-Romanian Relations between Two World Wars

6.1. Perception of the Turkish-Tatar Community about the Romanian rule

Following the 1878 War, -as it was already said- the Muslim community having lost their long-lasting protector, the Ottoman Empire, passed through tough tests of integration into the new Romanian state. Combining with the feeling of great humiliation, up to the 1910s they had no political and property rights as the Romanians enjoyed. Many of them emigrated to the motherland Turkey due to the uncertainty about their future, adaptation problems to the rules of a non-Islamic state and the worsening economic conditions. However, there were adamant believers of cohabitation and coexistence with the new rulers among the Muslim population, who persistently remained loyal to the Romanian state. This proves that the Muslim community in Dobruja considered the new rulers more civilized and humane in their treatment and attitude, compared with the other newly born states of the Balkans, towards their kins and relatives. Indeed, it was such that the laws concerning their religious and educational rights could be regarded superior to the others in the region. The Turkish-Tatar community, including the representatives of the Istanbul government, expressed their heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the Romanian rule for their tolerance towards the Muslim population on different occasions.

The opening ceremony of the Royal Mosque in Constanta on 31 May 1913 was one of these occasions. In the presence of King Carol I and Queen Elizabeth, the Minister of Interior, Minister of Cults and Public Education, local officials like mayor, *mufti* and the graduates of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, the representative of Sultan Mohammed V of the Ottoman State, Cadastral Minister Esad Efendi stated:

"Your High kindness to chair this solemnity (addressing King Carol I) is a comfort to the soul of my Sovereign, and also to the Muslim population, for there are crumbling mosques everywhere, but here in your Highness' country new sanctuaries are rising for us; Turks can live happily under Your Highness' rule. I am the interpreter of Islam and in his name I submit to your feet the most respectful greetings of happiness with the whole dynasty, for the good and prosperity of this beautiful country."³¹²

Hafuz Rifat Abdul Gelil, *Mufti* of Constanta between 1909-1914, in his speech in the same event underlined the tolerance and inter-community civilization of Romanians by stating:

³¹² ' *Discursurile rostite la inaugurarea moscheei Melik din Constanta (Speeches spoken at the inauguration of the Melik (King) Mosque in Constanta)* ", *Minerva* V, 1604, June 4 (1913), p. 2.

"Today we witness the inauguration of a beautiful mosque, which due to the initiative and willingness of Your Majesty, and to the generosity of the Romanian state, will write an important page of the history of the country. This work of piety and high patriotism is meant to cement the love between Romanian and Muslims will be blessed by the good Creator, pouring all the happiness on the earth inhabited by a people that knows no hatred of race and religion, and equally shares with all its fellow citizens the light and blessings of civilization."³¹³

These warm words uttered by the Ottoman representative and a local Muslim leader were not just for the sake of kindness, but reflected true feelings of the Turks towards the Romanian state. It seemed that pains of integration in the aftermath of 1878 were mitigated by such gestures of incorporation; the King Carol I.

Integration of Southern Dobruja into Romania in 1913 might have had another triggering positive effect on the lenient Romanian policies towards Muslims, since it had a larger Turkish community than Northern Dobruja had. According to a Bulgarian survey, in the two Southern Dobrujan counties Turkish-Tatars represented half of the population (48%) in 1912.³¹⁴ Another statistic claimed that the Muslim population of Romania swelled to nearly 300,000 after the annexation of Durostor and Caliacra, and it was natural to think about how to absorb this huge minority into the Romanian society which differed on both ethnic and religious grounds.³¹⁵

At the First Congress of the Muslims in Dobruja held in Constanta in the autumn of 1913, the President of the Congress Suliman Abdul Hamid reiterated in his speech the commitment, devotion and dedication of the 235,000 Muslims in two Dobrujas to the Romanian state. He felt obliged to state that the Muslim citizens of old Dobruja would be brothers in the new Romania with Durostor and Caliacra counties. He added it was his duty to cultivate their that it and civilize them, raising them to the same level with Romanians.³¹⁶ Though the congress was organized for all matters from cultural, economic and social aspects related to the interests of Muslims, it was evident that it targeted to support the integration of the fellow Muslims in Southern Dobruja into the Romanian system. The establishment of Islamic courts in Turtucaia and Balchik, the creation of Muslim seminaries in Silistra and Dobrich, namely Bazargic, providing scholarships for Muslim students at

³¹³ *Ibidem*. See also, Stocia Lascu, *op.cit.*, p. 791.

³¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 793.

³¹⁵ Frederick De Jong, *op.cit.*, p. 170.

³¹⁶ "Congresul Musulmanilor din Dobrogea la Constanta," (The Congress of the Muslims from Dobrudja at Constanta) *Seard*, IV, nr. 1316, 23 November 1913, p. 2.

vocational and agricultural schools, the foundation of a vocational school for girls were some issues which were discussed during this congress. In the same congress, the participants rejected unanimously the proposal to establish a wide ecclesiastical body in Dobruja and accepted maintaining the existing structure, which meant appointing a *mufti* for each county.³¹⁷ At the end of the congress, Mehmet Fihmi from Silistra in his closing remarks praised the dignity and chivalrous attitude of the Romanian army towards the Turkish population in Cadrilater. Suleiman Abdul Hamid from Constanta even proposed to raise a memorial statute in Silistra in the honour of the glorious Romanian army, on the expenses of Muslims, in order to cherish the memory of freeing of the Turks in Cadrilater from the Bulgarian yoke. To nobody's surprise, his proposal was adopted with a unanimous applause.³¹⁸

Something was clear that Muslims in Northern Dobruja were treated better than their kins and relatives in Southern Dobruja under the Bulgarian rule. This feeling was well articulated by a Muslim student, whose name was Ahmed Meneşi, in his letter to the journal of "Dobrogea juna" (Young Dobruja) in May 1914: "Here in Romania, no one obliges you to change your name to Mehmedescu. Romanians hold you dearer when they see that you respect and keep your customs. In terms of religion, they allow you to worship to whoever and whatever you want. They encourage you to construct your religious buildings like mosques in Constanta and Tulcea, especially the one in Constanta built by His Majesty King Carol I himself, our Sovereign to whom we will remain forever grateful. Brothers, we owe very much to Romania because it is the only state that loves us and protects all our interests. If the circumstances will make the Romanian people need the help of our arms, then openly run, and at any sacrifice seek to defeat the enemies of the country that hosts us. Then, brothers, we prove not only to Romania, but to all the civilized states that the Muslim people know how to honor the sympathy of the Romanians towards us, and we have the ancestral ambition in our hearts, which is to sacrifice our blood to show our gratitude."³¹⁹

The adaptation of the two counties annexed from Bulgaria to social, political, cultural and economical conditions in Romania stood as a real problem as the half of their total population was made up of Muslims. The international context, which would eventually lead to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, was not favorable for the Romanian authorities to find appropriate solutions to the problems either. On the other hand, there were Bulgarian

³¹⁷ *Ibidem.*

³¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

³¹⁹ Ahmed Meneşi, Student at normal school in Iaşi, "Emigrările musulmanor. Un pas greşit (The Emigrations of Muslims. A Misstep)", *Dobrogea juna* X, 17, May 15 1914, pp. 1-2.

agitators who were constantly provoking the fears and suspicions of the local the Romanian people against rule. Nevertheless, and people.

is, Romania followed the same route as it did in Northern Dobruja, and put into implementation of the "Law on the Organization of the New Dobruja" in 1914. This law was based on the model of Organic Law of Dobruja dated 1880. Thus, the Romanian politicians started to settle Romanians and Aromanians in the region aiming at Romanizing the region. It was also for legitimization of territorial demands in Southern Dobruja after the Second Balkan Wars.³²⁰

Even though the Romanian rule imposed a special administration and restricted political rights for the Muslims in both parts of Dobruja, this new regime was much preferable for the community compared to the Russian or Bulgarian rules, as it provided to them a breathing room in the fields of religion, education and culture. Under the Bulgarian rule from 1878 to 1913, the Turks of Cadrilater had been oppressed, deprived of rights and forced to emigrate to Turkey. It

should be noted that after the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 the independent states of Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria massacred over 400.000 Muslims and forced approximately 500.000 to leave their homes in Macedonia, Northern Greece, and Bulgaria for seeking Muslim refuge in Turkey. Unlike the Muslims of various ethnicities who had taken refuge in Anatolia and the Balkans, from 1856 to 1877, the overwhelming majority of the refugees of 1912-13 were ethnic Turks with ancestral roots in the core territories of the Ottoman State. But the Romanian administration, that took possession of Cadrilater in 1913, regarded the Turks as its allies against the aggressive Bulgarian efforts to regain control of Cadrilater. It therefore restored the Turks's rights and their freedom to establish their own schools and ways of worship, as the Romanian newspaper "*Tuna* (Danube)" called the Turks and Tatars the guardians of the south border with Bulgaria. The Turks of Cadrilater consequently became enthusiastic supporters of the Romanian administration, and their emigration to Turkey ceased or diminished.³⁵⁵ In the

same vein, the *hodjas* conducted Friday prayer and *hutbe* or preaching that ended pledging loyalty to the King. It is worth noting that the mention of a person's *hutbe* in with name in Islam implies recognition of that person's authority over the community, occupation the *hutbe*. After the occupation of Southern Dobruja by Bulgaria during the First World War (1916-1918), the oppressive

³²⁰ Tuşa Enache, *Imaginar politic și identități colective în Dobrogea* (Political Imagery and Collective Identities in Dobruja), București, Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, 2011, p. 221.

1918) led to a deeper appreciation of the Romanian rule among the Muslim population even though the Ottomans and the Bulgarians were allies in the war.

Following the annexation of Northern Dobruja into Romania in 1878 the number of young Turks enrolled in the Romanian schools rapidly increased and among them many doctors, pharmacists, judges, engineers, etc. as well as military men served for the Romanian state. The first mayors of Medgidia town after 1878 were of Turkish-Tatar origin [Zeccheria Zaid (1878), Hagi Cherim (1878-86), Kemal Agi Amet (1886-99) with the intermissions and Mustafa Ismail (1917-8)] due to the importance of this ethnic community both numerically and economically.³²¹ However, it is noteworthy that no Turks could graduate from the Bulgarian universities or high schools in Southern Dobruja under the Bulgarian rule between 1878-1913. After it was transferred to the Romanian rule, Turks here from this region too attended universities and ultimately became doctors, judges or engineers.³²²

In a broad sense, the Turkish community being a small minority in Romania was always careful to be in harmony with the political system in order to survive. This stance should have eased the work of diplomats. Even when Carol II launched the ruling system in 1938 named as "the Royal Dictatorship" by the Romanian historiography, the outspoken journal of the Turkish Union praised this move as the one of the golden pages of the Romanian history.³²³

6.2. The Role of Medgidia Muslim Seminary in the Romanian-Turkish Relations

As stated earlier, one of the pivotal tool of the Romanian special administration in Dobruja was the educational system. The Romanian political elite acknowledged the major role of education and culture in the process of nation-building in Dobruja.³²⁴ Romanian state's continuing nation-building project in the inter-war period influenced the functioning of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia as there was a convergence between the national construction policy of the Romanian state and the education given in the Muslim Seminary.³²⁵ While the

³²¹ Adrian Hie, "Tatars Involved in the Local Administration of Medgidia City (The Second Half of the 19th Century)", Stoica Lascu and Melek Fetisleam (eds.), *Contemporary Research in Turkology and Eurasian Studies. A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Tasin Gemil on the occasion of his 70th birthday*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2013, pp. 776-778.

³²² Nedret Ali Mahmut, *op.cit.*, p. 407.

³²³ Metin Omer, "Romanya'da Çıkan Türk bir Gazete: Türk Birliği (A Turkish Newspaper Published in Romania: Turkish Union)", *Journal of Modern Turkish History*, Vol. 9, no. 17, Spring 2013, Ankara, Hacettepe University, p. 181.

³²⁴ Constantin Iordachi, 'The California of the Romanians': The Integration of Northern Dobrugea into Romania, 1878-1913", *op.cit.*, p. 137.

³²⁵ Manuela Marin, "After the 'Great War': The Muslim Seminary in Medgidia in Greater Romania", *op.cit.*, p. 570.

praised the achievements and quality of education given at the seminary, they hoped that finishing the school would provide them better life in this specific period. Therefore, though the seminary remained closed during the World War I, it continued to be a centre of transferring Romanian values to the Muslim inhabitants between the two great wars. Being aware of the vital role of education, the Romanian rule did not suffice with the existence of the seminary in Medgidia. The educational reform in 1924 paved the way for a spectacular increase in number of the schools in the Dobruja region. In 1928, there were 223 schools in different fields in the boundaries of Constanta Governorate, and in a similar way 32 new schools were built in Tulcea between 1933-1936 despite the ongoing economic crisis. The same reforms were implemented in Southern Dobruja as well. The increase in the number of schools in Dobruja showed Romanian state's concern in the field of education between the two world wars continued in an incremental manner.³²⁶

Nonetheless, the graduates of the Medgidia Seminary in close interaction with Turkey formed the only elite that could culturally and politically influence the Muslims of Dobruja. Ibrahim Temo and some other teachers who taught at the school were ex-members of the Union and the Progress Party in Turkey and their contribution to the level of modern education was undeniable. While the seminary provided the only channel of upward mobility for the Turkish youth of Dobruja, they could not enrol in the higher level Romanian schools in the inter-war period supposedly due to their insufficient training. In reality, the seminary's teacher-training program, comprising one-third Islamic-Turkish courses and two-thirds taught at regular Romanian high schools, was quite sufficient to prepare its graduates for the university education. In addition, because the graduates were expected to meet the multiple needs of the village school and mosques, the *curriculum* included professional courses in agriculture, health, etc.³²⁷ This policy of non-acceptance of the seminary graduates directly to universities contrasted with the positive rhetoric of the high level people about the seminary. It might show the intent of the officials to limit the access of the Muslim people to the higher education in the country.

It was the reason that most graduates believed Turkey offered them better chances for advancement of their education during the inter-war period, and consequently many left for the high school and university education in Turkey especially in Istanbul. This situation was

³²⁶ Adrian Radulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei (History of Dobruja)*, op.cit., p. 443.

³²⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, 'The Emigration of Turks' ... op. cit., p. 540.

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touched upon in a report of the Turkish Consulate in Constanta sent to the Embassy in Bucharest in 1946. The Consulate reported that the Romanian Government did not like many graduates of the seminary were leaving for Turkey because they were mainly educated to become Islamic clergy and primary school teachers in Romania. Therefore, it was said that the Government started to replace more seminary *alumni* at the Romanian universities.³²⁸ The report discloses the fact that the Romanian rule lived a dilemma between two choices, either accepting more Muslim graduates into universities or losing them to Turkey.

On the other hand, as the Turkish Ambassador to Bucharest Hamdullah Suphi Tannover rightly put forward, the seminary needed urgent reforms to catch up with the modern era. The Ambassador was very instrumental in defining the Turkish Government's policy towards the Balkan Turks, particularly the Romania's Muslims. During his tenure, he established excellent relations with the Romania's leaders, including King Carol II, that brought about the 1934 Balkan *Entente* as well as a variety of measures beneficial to the Turks of Dobruja and their emigration to Turkey. He played a major role that affected not only the education and the emigration of Muslim Turks from Romania, but also the situation of the Orthodox Christian *Gagauzes* in Bessarabia, now part of Moldova and Ukraine. He was very keen on protecting *Gagauze* people and in line with this policy he employed majority of the Embassy's servants out of this minority during his tenure. Due to his protectionist attitude the Ambassador was even satirically called as the 'Metropolitan of the *Gagauzes*' by the career diplomats working under him.³²⁹ In the 1930s he was a zealot supporter of Atattirk's reforms and he fervently believed the seminary needed reforms to modernize. To this end, he sought a series of important reforms when he met with Romania's Minister of Education Dr. Constantin Angelescu on December 17, 1934. Ambassador told the Minister that he had learned the Medgidia Muslim Seminary was a nest of reactionaries whose students were exposed to misery, deprivation, and outdated training that did not prepare them for any meaningful or practical occupation. Citing both an alliance concluded in 1934 between Turkey and Romania to oppose Bulgarian demands for Dobruja and friendly relations between two countries, the Ambassador stressed the need for reforms in the seminary. The Minister responded that he was ready to do whatever necessary



³²⁸ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, **Romanian Emigration File, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:92/5,27.03.1946, p. 7.**

³²⁹ **Zeki Kuneralp, Sadece Diplomat-Anılar-Belgeler (Just Diplomat-Memories-Documents), Istanbul, İSİS, 1999, p. 31.**

to train the young Turks of Romania to be useful to their community, and agreed that the school

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meeting the Turkish Ambassador paid a visit to the seminary in Medgidia in 1934 and marked the needs on the spot. Following his visit, the *fez* (traditional hat) of the students needed was replaced by a modern hat, the hours of Arabic classes were reduced, the Latin reforms. After alphabet was adopted, new courses mostly in Romanian were added to the curriculum and the number of Romanian teachers increased. In addition, budgetary allocation by the Romanian government and the flow of books from Turkey increased.³³⁰ Thus, the initiative taken by the modernize the seminary had yielded positive results.

his example in mind, it could easily be claimed the seminary in Medgidia was ion Ambassador to that linked the whole Muslim community in Dobruja with Turkey between d Having a henceforth influenced the Turkish-Romanian relations in a positive way. The strong institut developments In Turkey after the Republic was proclaimed directly affected the the two wars Muslims in Romania. At that time in Dobruja there was lack of information on the ar Ottoman history or modern Turkey'. Yet, the overwhelming majority of students admired Mustafa Kemal and his reforms. Many Turks of Dobruja backed Atattirk's admiration modernist reforms in Turkey because of their progressive character, while many and reforms Muslims in Greece and Bulgaria opposed to them. The support of the Turks in turned Dobruja continued even after 1932, when those secular into a positivist view of Western religion and led to the abolition of religious schools. The seminary also orient consequently became subject to modern reforms, stemming from the basic perception of ation of both Romania and Turkey by undergoing a rather marked change in the the religious Dobruja's Muslims. Once regarded as a rank-and-file ordinary place of ng, it learn: became the symbol of their Muslim identity and cultural difference as well as a source of communities" leaders.³³¹

The Turkish-Tatar origin historian K. Karpat, who is a graduate of the seminary, writes that the seminary in 1935 was a microcosm of the Turkish world of Dobruja. The student body consisted of a Tatar majority, originating mainly in Crimea; Turks from Silistra city and Durostor province, many of them *Kizilbas* and Turks from urban centres, about eight to ten of them from Medgidia and Constanta.³³² The seminary was bringing together different elements

as 247/668/14.
irpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tanndver",
ord: The Story of an Institution and a Former Student's Memories", *op.cit.*, pp. 141-143.

of the Muslim Turkish minority and providing a unique forum for them to know each other better. There was a small group of Tatar students at the seminary, who appeared to defend some sort of Crimean nationalism, derived from their ancestors' nostalgia for the lost paradise of Crimea and expressed in the poems of Mehmet Niyazi, who taught at the seminary for a while. There were also other self-proclaimed Tatar nationalists, but their influence did not go beyond a small group of people, and, like other students, they were most keenly interested in preserving their cultural and linguistic heritage, be it Turkish or Tatar. Mehmet Niyazi was a Crimean nationalist, but his influence was cultural and literary, and he was also a modernist. He died in 1932 and is still well remembered by the Tatars of Dobruja.³³³

In the final analysis, the opposition to the reform of the Medgidia Seminary remained restricted and subdued because of the composition of its student body. Islam in Dobruja maintained its liberal, tolerant and moderate spirit. In this direction, the alphabet reform in Turkey in 1928 was adopted in Dobruja region of Romania, only a small segment of community resisted to change the alphabet from the Ottoman letters to the Latin letters. However, the visit by the Turkish Ambassador eliminated all hesitance for this important reform and immediately after the seminary began to use Latin alphabet, other primary and secondary schools teaching Turkish language followed the suit and adopted the new alphabet.³³⁴ In another words, the seminary played its well-known pioneering role in the lives of Muslim community of Dobruja once more through the direction and assistance of Turkey.

The Turkish-Romanian relations in the education field through the seminary in Medgidia were not confined to the Dobruja region, but extended to the *Gagauze* region in Bessarabia. In his talk with the Education Minister Angelescu, Ambassador Tannover stated that during his last visit to the *Gagauzes* living area in Bessarabia in the 1930s he witnessed that those people coming from the Turkish origin but having Orthodox faith were saddened not to have schools in their own language, such as the Bulgarians, Hungarians and Germans, and they needed to perpetuate their national traditions. When Angelescu agreed in principle that the *Gagauzes* should have had their own schools, but said that he could not provide them with textbooks and teachers, the Ambassador promptly replied that teachers could be recruited from the graduates of the Seminary in Medgidia and the textbooks could be brought from Turkey.

³¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 150.

³³⁴ Metin Ömer, "Romanya'da Çıkan Türk bir Gazete: Türk Birliği (A Turkish Newspaper Published in Romania: Turkish Union)", *op.tit.*, p. 180.

On top of all assistance, the Romanian Minister also offered the use of two classrooms in the high school in Komrat to train teachers of the Turkish language. Thanks to the



cooperation and coordination between Turkey and Romania, 24 Turkish schools were run in the *Gagauze* area by a number of Turkish teachers, many of them graduates of the Medgidia Seminary. This joint work helped strengthen to great extent the *Gagauzes'* consciousness of their Turkish-*Gagauze* identity.³³⁵

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6.3. The Debate on Moving the Seminary from Medgidia to Silistra

Intellectual quality and level of Muslim people in both Dobrujan counties were under discussion after the annexation occurred in 1913 as such the education was linked to Turkey, primarily to Istanbul. Some claimed that the graduates of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, who were cultivated citizens of Romania, should have been given all functions of teacher, *mufti* or *qadi* instead of immoral, foreign and free cultural elements imported from Turkey and arrived in Cadrilater. This view suggested that students who were raised in Medgidia were superior in quality than the ones in Southern Dobruja. However, some others believed that the qualifications of the graduates of the seminary in Medgidia did not need to be compared with the graduates of the Istanbul universities. It was wrong to assume that all young

people who left temporarily their country to accomplish their studies in the Turkish capital were foreign and contaminated by immorality, so that only those in Medgidia deserved all the and

worship. According to them, there were more educated and elite Muslims in glory, honour

moving the Muslim Seminary from Medgidia to Silistra. The debate took place in two stages during the early 1920s. All stakeholders tried to

show that placing the seminary in Medgidia or Silistra best answered the interests of the Romanian state, meaning that it ensured a "national education" for future religious clergy or teachers. Also, when taking the final decision to keep the Muslim Seminary in its original

Dobruja, the officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts considered

place, the old that an institution of the Romanian state, such as the seminary in Medgidia, could do better serve its interests within the Romanian territory.³³⁷

place, the old

that an institution of the Romanian state, such as the seminary in Medgidia, could do better serve its interests within the Romanian territory.³³⁷

³³⁵ Kemal H. Kjarpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tannöver", *op.cit.*, pp. 546-547.

jali,' 'In chestia musulmanilor din Dobrogea. Un raspuns (On the Issue of Muslims from Dobruja.

³⁸² *Dobrogea juna*, XI, 16, April 18, 1915, p. 2. Manuela Marin, *op.cit.*, p. 574.

Husni A. Caij; Response)",

The fact that Cadrilater became a part of Romania raised the issue of having the denominational schools existing there authorized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts.



Thus, in Bazargic and Silistra two private Turkish seminaries functioned without any official authorization. In 1921, travelling in the two towns of Southern Dobruja, the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs and Arts found out that the seminary in Bazargic did not function any longer due to lack of students, who chose to attend public schools. In Silistra, four classes of the seminary were still functioning and during discussions with the Romanian official the representatives of the local Muslim community expressed their interest to keep the seminary open and to obtain the necessary accreditation from the Ministry. The community members further proposed to the representative of the said Ministry to move the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia to Bazargic or to Silistra as a solution for the convenient settlement of the seminaries' situation in the two Dobruja's counties.³³⁸

This discussion resumed in 1923 when the Muslim community of Durostor asked again, this time through Senator Mehmet Fehmi, to move the Muslim seminary from Medgidia to Silistra. According to the testimony of the representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, this proposal was supported by the *Mufti* and by a Senator from Caliacra County. In his capacity as the Deputy General Manager in the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Gheorge Comşa met with the representatives of the Muslim community on 13 August 1923, in order to investigate the circumstances which determined the Muslim population in Durostor to ask for the movement of the seminary from Medgidia to Silistra. In his report the Romanian official mentioned that the request to move the seminary was supported by highly appreciable reasons. The lack of staff (which included not only *imams*, *hodjas* but also *hatips* and *muezzins*) for the mosques in the two counties of New Dobruja would have been solved by moving the seminary to Silistra, where 300 students could have been easily accomodated, including those transferred from Medgidia. In this way, a greater number of young Muslims could be brought up in a spirit required not only by the religious needs of the Muslim population, but also in line with the interests of the state. Moreover, touching upon sensitive topic for the Romanian state, the representatives of the Muslim community declared that by unifying the two seminaries' students will have the required *imams* who will know their duties, will know the language of the state and will be educated to be devoted to the state, thus increasing Muslim sympathy for the Romanian state.³³⁹

The discussion also addressed specific issues related to the actual location of the seminary, as the Ministry representative inquiring whether Silistra had an appropriate location

³³⁸ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 133/1921, ff. 16-17 f-v.

³³⁹ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, f. 19 f.

for the seminar³³⁶ and its dormitory. The answer of the Muslim delegation pointed out that the population would be willing to financially support on its own the transformation of the *Ac Kapu* mosque into a school building. Thus, it was proposed that the building of the current private seminary should be converted into a boarding house for the students, alongside a military barracks in Silistra. But, in return for their financial assistance, the Muslim community demanded 300 Lei to be granted by the Romanian state for repairing the royal mosque destroyed during the war. The Muslim representatives also asked that the new dormitory would be 400. which equipped with inventory items brought from the seminary in Medgidia, including was des textbooks and other teaching materials.³⁴⁰

In his report the Romanian official stated that if the sum of 400.000 Lei, requested by the Muslim community in Silistra, would be approved, and if the Muslim population of other counties and the teaching staff in Medgidia adhered to the proposal, then nothing would stand against moving the seminary in the following year.³⁴¹

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts did not reject the idea of moving the Muslim seminary from Medgidia to Silistra right away, and it eventually remained where it had been located since the early 20th century. There were several reasons that prompted the Ministry officials to take this option into account. First, the representatives of the Muslim community, representing 65% of the population in Silistra County were the ones who requested the relocation of the seminary. This request was also supported by the Muslims whose presence was largely visible in Bazargic County.³⁴² Secondly, Silistra was also the headquarters to one of the four *mbftiates* that were active in the interwar period.³⁴³ A third reason referred to the material of the seminary, which at the end of the war was in dire circumstances. Thus, the situation in principal unsuccessfully tried to recover part of the estates belonging to the boarding early 1921 house of the Muslim Seminary, which were taken to Braila. When Medgidia was evacuated in (f)ctober 1916, some of its belongings were handed over to the Red Cross, w inventory of the hich had a hospital installed in the boarding house of the seminary. belongings in These ;luding sheets, pillowcases, cotton blankets, beds, napkins, tableware, buckets were mixed vjrith those of the Red Cross Macin Hospital and were used for the needs of the **hospital** that operated in Braila between November 1916 and April 1917. Some of these objects were taken by the Germans. When the hospital in Macin was closed down, its entire property

³³⁶ ANR, Minisi

³³⁷ ANR, Minisi

³³⁸ ANR, Minist

³³⁹ Nureddin

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of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, ff. 19 f, 22.

:tiy of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, f. 24 v. ;toy

of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, f. 20 f-v.

Ibram, *Comunitatea musulmana din Dobrugea: Pagini de cultura și civilizație (Muslim Dobruja: Pages of Culture and Civilization)*, op.cit., p. 117.

was handed over to Braila city hall, which redistributed it to the hospitals in its administrative area. After failed attempts, the Muslim seminary couldn't get back its inventory items belonging to its boarding house.³⁴⁴

On the other hand, the boarding house of the seminary in Medgidia was not functional for a few years, probably because the building was damaged during the fights took place in the region. In addition to this, seminary students were not received well by either Muslims or Romanians out of a strong prejudice to growing number of single people in a small town. These negative elements forced students to find alternative accommodation venues like hostels or private rents. But, these alternatives caused them to come in contact with all sorts of people who had low ethical values. Being aware of the fact that the education of students and school prestige were harmed by the perpetuation of this situation, the principal of the seminary repeatedly asked for the support of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts in solving this problem, but according to his testimony, this was of no avail.³⁴⁵

Under these circumstances, the option of moving the seminary to Silistra seemed to be a proper solution which would not only have solved the grave material problems of the school, but also would have partially relieved the Romanian state from further expenditure for this purpose. Yet, the Muslim seminary continued to function in Medgidia until its closure in 1967. This outcome was determined by several factors. The most important element in this regard was the strong opposition of the Muslim community in Northern Dobruja to the relocation. In this regard, the *muftis* of both Constanta and Tulcea declared their rejection towards the unification of the two seminaries in Medgidia and Silistra, and addressed to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts in writing by putting forward some arguments for their position. The Muslim community in Constanta proved that it had a similar stance by sending a letter to the Ministry suggesting to hold a meeting with one of their representatives. They hoped to explain to the Government why they opposed to the relocation of the seminary. In summary, the community had mainly five justification points for the rejection of moving the seminary to Silistra.³⁴⁶

First, Medgidia had a special meaning for the Muslim community being one of their oldest settlements in Dobruja. Secondly, Medgidia had always hosted a theological educational institution, even before the relocation of the seminary from Babadag in 1889. Thus, the seminary had become a symbol of the city, and ultimately the city turned into the cradle of the

³⁴⁴ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 107/1922, ff. 68 f-v, 71, 77.

³⁴⁵ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 107/1922, ff. 158 v-159, dossier 174/1923, f. 70 f.

³⁴⁶ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, ff. 27, 30, 76 f-v, 77, 88 f-v.

highest religious institution.³⁴⁷ Thirdly, Medgidia was in the epicentre of Dobruja, forming a railway junction which ensured a smooth and reliable connection to the capital. But more than that, its close appproximity to villages and towns which students visited during major holidays and fasting periods for religious services offered an indispensable chance for both the minority and the students.) In contrast, Silistra was positioned on the far edge of Dobruja and the only transportation refute to Northern Dobruja was over the Danube River, which became inaccessible durihg the winter time. However, as stated by the *Mufti* of Tulcea, the seminary ;i of the Romanian state which had to be founded in a Romanian centre like students was an institutio could also get education with Romanian feelings which was by no erest of the Medgidia where country.³⁴⁸ Fourthly, as a matter of fact, two Cadrilater counties had become part means for the of the Romanian state very recently, and Bulgarians constituted significant in: portion of the population of those two counties implying that their loyalty to the Romanian state was questionable.³⁴⁹ Fifthly, as the representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts remarked o s early as 1921, Silistra was not safe area because the Bulgarian population there was provoking hatred against the other nations.³⁵⁰ Hence, the frequent attacks

Bulgarian of *tadjis* (armed gangs) that targeted the residents of Southern Dobruja was to the Romanian authorities for keeping the seminary in Medgidia.

Com. another

concern **6.4. Interviews with Two Prominent Graduates of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary**

The senjiinary accommodated Turkish and Tatar-Turkish students from both parts of Dobruja during the inter-war period when the southern part was within the borders One of the Tu of Romania.

Mustafa Ali M rkish origin students who entered the seminary at the end of the 1930s was ehmet, who would be a prominent historian in the upcoming years, was from village of *Giirgenli* located in Bazargic in Southern Dobruja. He narrated his school life in his two interviews conducted on January 6, 2017 and November 8, 2018. Coming from a poor family his pare nts wanted him to be an *imam* to have his own income. His recitation of *Quran* from first page to the very end at 7 years old supported his parents' way of thinking. One of his friends from his

village attending the 4th grade at the seminary took him to the school to enroll after o)vering 50 km route to Medgidia. Beginning from 1937 he completed his education at this institution in 1945.

³⁴⁷ ANR, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, f. 27.

³⁴⁸ ANR, Ministijy of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 174/1923, if. 76 v, 88 f-v, dossier 174/1923, f.88, f.

³⁴⁹ Manuela Marin, *op.cit.*, p. 577.

³⁵⁰ ANR, MinistJy of Religious Affairs and Arts, Dossier 133/1921, f. 17, f.

Mustafa Ali Mehmet cherishes the first three years at the seminary with good memories as his hometown was under the Romanian rule until 1940. He could easily travel between Medgidia and Bazargic and visit his parents. However, after Southern Dobruja was left for Bulgaria, he had to stay in Medgidia while his parents were on the other side of the border. This made him suffer to a great extent as he did not have much chance and means to see his close relatives. After the border was sealed to crossing, and having no Romanian identity card yet, he confesses that he had very hard times to continue his life without any scholarship. Although he was a boarded student, he worked in fields during the harvest time to make some money, which he does not want to remember even.

Apart from the poverty and home-sickness, he commends the success of the seminary during the WWII with more than 100 students. He emphasizes the importance of teaching both religious and secular courses by Turkish and Romanian lecturers. He believes that the method of training at the seminary was the secret of its success. However, he adds that they learnt reciting *Quran* without understanding its meaning because they they were not taught Arabic language in a sufficient manner. Yet, he claims the seminary was unique in the Balkans and the efforts of the Turkish Ambassador to Bucharest, Hamdullah Suphi Tannover to modernize the *curriculum* and method of teaching resulted in success.

He answers a question related to political activities of students in such that Turkish or Tatar nationalism was not widespread among his friends though Tatars were outnumbering Turks at the school. He defends that German or British supporters were much popular among the students during that specific war period.

Mustafa Ali Mehmet was appointed as *imam* of the mosque in *Recep Kuyusu* (Tudor Vladimirescu) nearby Medgidia after graduation, and had been on pay-roll of the *Muftiat*. Parallel to this job he gave Turkish lessons at schools. But, he kept his aspiration alive to continue his higher education. In the end, he was accepted to the faculty in Bucharest in 1950, and took the first step to become an academician in the future.³⁵¹

The second exemplary graduate of the Muslim Seminary is Kemal Haşim Karpat, who is another eminent historian taught in the US for long years. Born into a family of *Kipchak* Turkish father and an Anatolian Turkish origin mother he boasts that he is a synthesis of Tatars

³⁵¹ Interviews conducted with Mustafa Ali Mehmet, Historian and Graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, Bucharest, January 6, 2017 and November 8, 2018.

and Turks. He is from village of *Armutlu* (First Pernor, later Turda) close to Babadag in the northern part of Dobruja. His father was wealthy enough dealing with agriculture and trade. Karpat stresses that his hometown and surrounding region represented free and liberal version of Islam following the footprints of Sari Saltuk Baba who lived there centuries ago. He even does not hesitate to say that his father produced and sold wine though he led the locals in religious affair¹. He adds that his father was knowledgeable in many fields including politics of the Liberal Party. He supported financially the journal *Emel* which was the outlet of the Tatar being a nationalists aspiring the freedom of Crimea from Russia.

Adopting a liberal understanding of Islam it is surprising that he preferred to continue his education in the Muslim Seminary where the graduates became mostly *imams*. He presents a logical explanation for choosing the seminary for his studies stating that he surprisingly failed at the secondary school (considered as high school) in Tulcea which he attended the first grade and he was full of will to prove himself to his parents. That was the reason of his enrolling at the seminary in Medgidia far from his hometown in 1935 when his father presented this alternative to him.

He narrates his school years in Medgidia between 1935 and 1942 with a clear-cut vision. He remembers that there were 100-110 students in total at the seminary knowing each other very well. He estimates that 80% of the students were Crimean Tatar origin and the rest is *Kızılbaş* Turkish origin coming from *Deliorman* region in the southern part of Dobruja, and just 3 students from Tulcea and Babadag. He claims that this composition of students represented a richness in terms of cultural accumulation which enabled him to see things in wider spectrum.

He improved his Tatar language thanks to the Tatar majority at the seminary, and mastered at the Romanian language with the help of strong and efficient *curriculum* for the courses, which was designed on the basis of the French education system. However, he refrains from praising the *curriculum* prepared for the Islamic courses by the Turkish professors, seeing them dogmatic and traditional going against the logic and reasoning.

In this atmosphere he confesses that he did not feel of belonging to this dogmatic understanding of Islam, and he got lower marks at Islamic courses. Yet, he admits that he learnt main tenants of Islam on the way becoming an *imam* though he never desired.

Prof. Karpat truly delivers the significance of the role which was played by the seminary for the Turkish-Tatar communities for long years and pities for its closure in 1967 by the communist regime. According to him, the school helped the Muslim minority to raise its

religious and educational elites besides cultural intellectuals who gave direction to the young generations while preserving their loyalty to the Romanian state³⁵²

The interviews conducted with two graduates give us chance to obtain first hand information about the seminary and its role as well as a comparative idea about the composition of its student structure.

6.5. The Issue of Emigration of Muslims in Relations Between Romania and Turkey

The Muslims of Romania in the early 1930s were concentrated in four provinces of Dobruja: Durostor, Caliacra, Constanta and Tulcea. Their population in those four provinces was around 250.000 and consisted mainly of ethnic Turks and about 30% of Tatars.³⁵³ On the other hand, according to the report of the Turkish Consulate in Constanta, sent to the Bucharest Embassy on 27 March 1946, the number of the Turks living in two Dobruja s counties was 116.830 in 1937.³⁵⁴ Their distribution to the four provinces in the whole Dobruja region was shown in the report as such:

Durostor (Silistra)	: 63.054
Caliacra (Bazargic)	: 26.151
Constanta	: 23.541
Tulcea	: 4.084

Again, in the same report of the Turkish Consulate it was stated that there were 25.272 Turkish people in Constanta and Tulcea according to the census conducted in 1945 June. The report gave the number of Turks in Constanta and Tulcea, 22.654 and 2.618 respectively.³⁵⁵ As it is compared, there is not much dramatic decrease in the Turkish population of these two Northern Dobruja provinces before and after the World War II. Another report of the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy in Bucharest dated 6 March 1935 shows that Southern Dobruja gave the main bulk of the emigration to Turkey in those years, of which the details will be provided herebelow.

³⁵² Interview conducted through e-mail with Kemal Haşim Karpat, Historian and Graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, Wisconsin-USA, November 13, 2018.

³⁵³ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tannóver", *op.cit.*, p. 537.

³⁵⁴ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:92/5,27.03.1946, p. 1.

³⁵⁵ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:92/5, 27.03.1946, p. 2.

Before dwelling upon the figures of the emigration to Turkey, it should be remembered that the Republican Turkish Government considered the Tatars and other Muslims of Romania and Bulgaria as a part of authentic Turkish stock and wanted to settle them in Anatolia to meet its population needs, provide manpower for the military and spur economic development. This was one of the motivations that caused mass emigration from Dobruja to Turkey in the 1930s. In one of the diplomatic correspondence cabled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in Bucharest in 1932, it was spelled out that encouraging the Turks to emigrate to the motherland who lived outside of the borders of Turkey and helping them as much as possible at their new homes within the budgetary limits was one of the major principles of the politics of the Republican Turkey in those years.³⁵⁶ However, the world economic crisis prevailed in the same period was an important impediment for the Turkish Government to follow this policy full-fledged, because the budget did not have enough funds for this years of 1932 and 1933. The diplomatic correspondence specified that the Turks coming from Romania at their expenses who were economically good enough purpose in would have the privilege of choosing the place of settlement in Turkey and the the farmers among them would be allocated sufficient size of land in accordance with the relevant law. But, the arrivals of those who did not have enough wealth would be delayed until the budgetary conditions of the country would get better.³⁵⁷ With the adoption of the Law on Settlement in June 1934, this restriction was removed and the immigrants were issued free visa. The law also abolished the requirement of having 30.000 Lei to prove the financial situation of an emigrant. All these incentives of the Republican Turkey encouraged further emigration from Romania.³⁵⁸

The second and possibly the major reason behind this large *exodus* was related to the colonization policy of the Romanian state in Southern Dobruja. As a matter of fact, the history repeated itself similar to the mass emigration following the 1878. Although the journals published in Dobruja after the First World War such as "*Hak*" (Justice), "*Hakkin Sesi*" (Justice's Voice) or the Romanian publications like "*Dobrogea juna*" (Young Dobruja) are full of the Turks' praise for the Romanians, that praise diminished after 1925, as the government in Bucharest began to colonize Cadrilater with Romanians from Oltenia and Banat and Macedonian Romanians (Vlachs, Aromanians) from the Balkans. Articles in a variety of Dobrujan publications criticized this hasty, improvised colonization of thousands of Romanian

³⁵⁶ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, **Romanian Emigration file, Correspondence cabled to the Embassy of Bucharest by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vol. I-a-8, document no:6032/30, 24.04.1932, p.1.**

³⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 2-3.

³⁵⁸ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, **Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:2629/50,06.03.1935, pp. 3-4.**

families in the Turkish villages of Cadrilater ³⁵⁹ In fact, the law dated 1924 stipulating changes in the Turkish names of the places into Romanian, some by translating the original name, so that the newly settled Romanian population would easily adapt to the new life in parts of Dobruja, had already caused an unrest among the Turkish community members.

The homogenization policy in Southern Dobruja was similar to the one in the northern part and Turkey made feel its discomfort of this policy through its Embassy in Bucharest. Turkish Ambassador complained about ill treatment of the Muslims by government officials and the housing of colonists from Oltenia and Banat in Muslim homes in south Dobruja during the inter-war period to both the Romanian Foreign Minister and to King Carol II in 1934. Indeed, Turks were badly treated by the colonists in the way of putting heads of pigs into their houses, greasing pig fat on the fountains, impounding the half of the harvest and most importantly threatening with death. They were desperate and could not find any other solution but emigration in the absence of a real protection by the Romanian state.³⁶⁰ In a dispatch dated 25 January 1933 to Ankara, Ambassador Tanrioer reported on a meeting with the Romanian Prime Minister Alexandru Vaida-Voevod. After the premier's discussion of Romania's internal and external affairs, they tackled the question of the Turks' emigration. Vaida-Voevod assured Tanrioer that the Interior Minister would strive to address all problems that caused the Turks' emigration, and he urged the Ambassador to meet with the Minister and inform him about all these problems.³⁶¹

At his meeting with the King Carol II on 24 December 1934, Ambassador Tanrioer told the King that the settlement of Romanian colonists from Oltenia and Banat in Cadrilater had been so ill planned that entire Romanian families were being housed in Turks' homes that contained only two or three rooms, causing great distress to all involved. In addition, he complained that Turks in the villages along the Romanian-Bulgarian border were being forced to transport in their own carts construction material, wood, charcoal, and food from long distances without any compensation. Tanrioer in turn, complained that contrary to the Land Distribution Law that allowed a maximum expropriation of one-fourth of an owner's land, Romania's Turks had been subjected to expropriation of one half or more of their land. This policy made Turks who were dependent mostly on agriculture fall in a deep trouble. The King

³⁵⁹ Kemal H. Karpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania to Turkey and Hamdullah Suphi Tanrioer", *op.cit.*, p. 540.

³⁶⁰ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:2629/50,06.03.1935, p. 3.

³⁶¹ Communication of the Turkish Embassy to Bucharest Number 53/28, January 25, 1933, registered as "secret" by the Foreign Ministry, section 2, subsection 2, no: 28656/199.

responded that he had done his best to correct the situation. He had travelled two or three times to the southern part of Dobruja and *Deliorman*, but despite his good feelings towards the Turkish people) and his desire to protect them, the long distance and pressing local needs and conditions had prevented the implementation of his "fatherly" thoughts. He also attributed the land problems to the survival of old Ottoman land laws, meaning the old *miri* state lands, which the Turkish families had farmed for centuries as their property. The new Balkan states had conveniently designated themselves heirs to *miri* property and confiscated it in a conscious misinterpretation of the Ottoman land system.³⁶² The King added in the meeting with the Turkish Ambassador that he was "very sorry to see a people with a high morality, faithful to and orderly, leave our country".³⁶³ Apparently, the affection shown by the royal 5 its word, Muslims did not halt their emigration.³⁶⁴ The tolerant and protective policies loyal family towards the Ti(irks living in Cadrilater at the beginning of the annexation faded toward away with the harsh homogenization practices in the hands of local state employees.

It should be noted that the New Dobruja Law adopted in 1924 was not covering only the Muslim minorities, but also the others. Whereas, the Turks, with widespread ignorance and unorganised structure, could not prove the ownership of their lands and lost them to the colonists. On the other hand, another important minority living in Southern Dobruja, the Bulgarians, were sufficiently organized and prepared for the Romanian colonization, and they did not let their lands to be confiscated.³⁶⁵ On top of land confiscations, all the *vakifs* belonging to the Muslim community were rescinded in 1935 and the property under those *vakifs* were nationalized. Only a few buildings still remained as property of the Muslim minority in cities such Constanta, Medgidia, Mangalia, Tulcea, Harşova and Babadag. Another factor that Turkish community in Romania in the inter-war period was the closure of the affected the institutions of the *Qadi*, mainly religious courts in 1935. It made them uneasy about losing their religious prerogatives given by the state.

To be sure, the Ankara Government planned to use the emigration of ethnic Turks from the Balkans to provide much-needed manpower for agriculture, the industrialization it launched after 1932, the army and the re-population of Anatolia with ethnic Turks that was part of the regime's Turkish nationalist policy. But, what forced the Turks' emigration was the settlement

K^rpat, "The Emigration of Turks from Romania..."*op.cit.*, p. 539.

ion of the Turkish Embassy to Bucharest Number 1045/155, December 24, 1934, registered as Foreign Ministry, section 2, subsection 2, no: 1774.

at, *op.cit.*, p. 541.

yj[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Embassy of Bucharest, document no:2629/50, 06.03.1935, p. 3.

of the Romanians that took advantage of the peaceful, friendly attitude of the Turks appear to have encouraged the aggression of the colonists as well as the corruption, abuse of power and extortion by officials that made the Turks see emigration as their only salvation. It was painful and disappointing for Muslims to leave their homeland for ages where they respected its new rule and integrated their lives in peace.

An additional factor played an important role in the emigration of the Turks to Turkey was related to the schools. The Romanian Government under the pressure of budgetary hardships cut the salaries of the Turkish teachers year by year in the 1930s. This made Turkish class almost perish at the schools and caused deep unrest among the Turkish families as they feared of losing their children under the dominance of a foreign culture.³⁶⁶

It should be noted that all these intertwined reasons and factors caused an unrest among the Muslim population and led them to emigrate to Turkey during this period creating a negative agenda item in the Romanian-Turkish relations. It should also be noted that the increasing number of emigrants from Romania were not easily absorbed and settled down in comfort in Turkey. The flow of emigrants were cut sometimes by the governmental decisions. This situation was clearly elaborated by the Ambassador Tanrioer in one of his letters to the Prime Ministry in 1935. For instance, he criticized the instruction of the Minister of Interior of Turkey, at the end of 1935, to stop the emigration for an indefinite time of period as the budget did not allow any extra settlement. He was furious about this instruction because it was the Turkish Government who partly encouraged the Turks to emigrate, and many people got prepared for this emigration by selling their houses and lands. It would be cruel to leave them without any home in the middle of the cold winter. He requested from the Prime Minister to re-evaluate the situation, and proposed new settlement areas in Turkey.³⁶⁷

Against all negative elements, both Turkey and Romania did not let the emigration issue poison the good spirit of relations. After long and tiring negotiations they signed an agreement pertaining the emigration on 4 September 1936, and regularized the flow of people from Romania to Turkey. The Agreement was concluded in acknowledge of the urgent need in this field and was a special achievement of Ambassador Tanrioer although similar migrations occurred from other Balkan states, too. While Turkey meeting its manpower to populate the country with this agreement, Romania was also satisfied to send the emigrants in a legal and

³⁶⁶ *Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:2629/50,06.03.1935, p. 4.*

³⁶⁷ *Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration file, Letter by the Ambassador in Bucharest to the Prime Ministry, document no:801/295, 11.11.1935.*

regular framework. As a result of enforcing this agreement more than 100.000 Muslims migrated to Turkey from 1936 to the first years of the Second World War.

The total number of emigrants from the Romanian Dobruja from 1878 to 1940 can be derived from 4 variety of sources. By 1885, some 75.000 Turks and Tatars already emigrated to Turkey, particularly from Northern Dobruja where the *exodus* began. Piecemeal emigration continued without amounting to a mass migration until it accelerated in the 1930s. According to Refik Saydalm, a former Health Minister of Turkey involved in the settlement of migrants in 1935, some 21.554 Turks from Romania were settled in the region of Thrace in Turkey. The following years' immigrants from Romania numbered 20.114 out of 31.945 from all of the Balkans, and in 1937 the immigrants from Romania equaled around 15.000. During these years, when the total number of immigrants from the Balkans was around 120.000, those from Romania amounted to 63.671. According to another source, in the years 1923-1938 a total of 113.710 people (75.771 settlers and 38.000 free immigrants) came to Turkey from Romania, but in the war time and the communist period of 1939-1960, the total figure fell to 7.631 (3.576 settlers, and 4.055 free immigrants)³⁶⁸ Another acknowledged source places the number of Muslim immigrants to Turkey in the years 1935-1940 at 64.570.³⁶⁹ The Turkish Consulate reported to the Embassy in Bucharest in 1935 that the number of visas issued for Turks living in four provinces between 1 June 1934 and 1 January 1935 totaled 4.172. Of them 2.962 was from Durostot, 1.001 from Caliacra, 140 from Constanta and 69 from Tulcea.³⁷⁰

Besidejs, the Turkish Immigration Office gives emigration figures from the Balkan countries as following³⁷¹:

Between 1923 and 1945: 800.000 Turks in total were forced to emigrate to Turkey from the Balkans. Out of this number 79.287 were from Romania as the registered settlers, and 43.271 people; came to Turkey as free emigrants. The total emigrants thus exceed 120.000 from Romania in this period.

Between 1925 and 1949: 218.998 Turks emigrated to Turkey from Bulgaria on the basis of an agreement. This flow of people continued during the socialist regime too.
Between 1922 and 1938: Almost 384.000 Turks left for Turkey from Greece.

Ağanoğlu, *Osmanlı 'dan Cumhuriyet 'e Balkanların Makûs Talihi Göç (From Ottoman to Republic Migration in the Balkans)*, Istanbul, Kum Saati, 2001, p. 332.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, *Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Romania*, document no:2629/50, 06.03.1935, annexed table.

³⁶⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Integration of 400,000 Turks from Romania into Turkey*, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 1971, p. 542.

³⁶⁹ H. Yıldırım, *111 Fate of the Mi*

³⁷⁰ *Archives of I Bucharest, Roman*

³⁷¹ <http://www.goc>

As seen from the figures above, Turkey was receiving large numbers of emigrants not only from Romania, but also from other Balkan countries, mostly causing pains and sorrows, but also creating negative agenda item in the bilateral political relations.

The Agreement dated 1936 on emigration of the Turkish minority to Turkey constituted another example of good relations between Romania and Turkey in the inter-war period. It smoothed many irregularities and pains suffered by the community. It is interesting that it starts with an observation that some of the Muslim Turks of Dobruja had willingness to emigrate to Turkey for more than fifty years (which means following the 1878 war), and acknowledges that this was their legitimate right though appreciating the Romanian rule for its tolerant and compassionate policies towards them.³⁷² According to the Articles 1 and 2 of the Agreement, those originally Turks, Muslims and Romanians who lived in Durostor, Caliacra, Constanta and Tulcea provinces and wished to emigrate were given permission to leave Romania during five-year period. The Article 2 continued to count the order of emigration of people as such; -First, 15.000 people group who already sold out their property since 15 April 1936, -In the second year, an area on the border of Romanian-Bulgarian border which extended eight km, -In the third year, Bazargic city and Ezibeyi and Kurdpinar *sandjaks*, -For the fourth year, Acadanlar and Turtukaya *sandjaks*, -For the fifth year, Silistra city, its *sandjak* and the rest of the Dobruja territory

The same Article stipulated that the Turkish Government would inform the Romanian side about the number of the emigrants that it wanted to receive at the beginning of the each period, as was marked above. If the number of the emigrants in a specific period exceeded more than the Turkish Government specified, then the extra part would be postponed to the following period.

The Article 3 of the Agreement gave right to the Romanian side to own all property of the emigrants located in the rural area, outside of cities when they left. However, the emigrants would continue to preserve their full ownership on their properties inside the cities.

The Article 4 continues that the Romanian Government would pay 6.000 Lei for each hectare land in the rural area to the Turkish Government. But, the property belonged to the

³⁷² Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Romanya Kırallığı Hükümeti arasında Bükreş'te 4 Eylül 1936 tarihinde akid ve imza edilmiş olan "Dobruca'daki Türk ahalinin muhaceretini tanzim eden Mukavelename" ve merbutu olan dört mektup" (The Law Which Ratifies the Agreement Between Turkey and Romania on the Emigration of the Turkish Community in Dobruja), *Resmi Gazete (The Official Gazette of Turkey)*, 2 February 1937, nr. 3523, pp. 7615-7618.

Muslim Communities or *vakifs* would be handled by another agreement to be signed in the future.

The Article 11 allowed the emigrants to take beside their personal belongings, animals (maximum 5 bovines and 15 small cattle), agricultural machinery, personal jewellery and 1.000 Lei in cash and foreign exchange amounting 2.000 Lei.

The Article 16 established a special committee of one judge and the Ministries representatives from of Interior, Finance and Agriculture including one or two Turkish persons from the unity from where the emigration would occur. The committee would prepare the list of emigrants and their properties in detail and *vakifs*, together with the property of the Muslim Communities

The Article 19 stated that other emigrants who emigrated before signing this Agreement would benefit from its advantages.³⁷³

Even after the annexation of Dobruja by Romania the Turkish community continued to perceive Turkey as its protective motherland. Homogenization policies pursued by Romania in both sides of Dobruja helped this understanding remain alive among the Muslim inhabitants. First, the Ottoman State and after its demise its natural heir Turkey did not turn a blind eye to this continuously dwindling community's needs and complaints. In the 1880s Turkey proposed names for the *Muhtis* and *Qadis* in Dobruja. The curriculum of the Muslim Seminary was shaped and put into action in line with the suggestions and directions of the Turkish authorities in Istanbul. Turkey provided educational material and some teachers to the seminary, and eventually the graduates looked for their future in Turkey.

Turkey's interest to the Muslim community in Dobruja did not cease after the disintegration of the Ottoman State. The new Turkish Republic under the leadership of Atatürk, regarded all Turkish population in the Balkan states as the "Evlad-i Fatihan (Sons of the Conquerors)" and tried its best to defend their rights everywhere including Romania. This effort traced from the representations of the Turkish Ambassador to Bucharest in many fields pertaining to the problems of the Turkish minority. Yet, Turkey's initiatives did not bother the authorities to the extent that they did in other Balkan countries where anti-Romanian Turkish feelings were higher. Annexation of Southern Dobruja by Romania with a huge Turkish population in 1913 might have played an important role in having good relations with Turkey against a common enemy. This vigilance and cooperation continued between the two wars as Bulgaria coveted Southern Dobruja and in the end yielded in a defence pact in 1934.

Signing

³⁷³ *Ibidem*.

the Balkan Pact was a tremendous achievement for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and Romania.

In this period the Turkish community followed closely the developments in Turkey and quickly adopted its modern reforms starting from the Medgidia Seminary students and teachers. The minority played a constructive role in developing the relations between two countries during the inter-war period although it suffered from losing their lands and homes under negligence, corruption and lack of interest of the local officials, which were clearly documented and presented by the Turkish Ambassador to the high level Romanian rulers. Turkey's positive approach to solve the problems related to the Muslim minority helped the bilateral relations to be kept on balance. Though the discourse and practice of the Romanian politicians regarding the Turkish-Tatar community differed a lot, they could able to maintain good relations with Turkey on the eve of the Second World War.



Chapter VII Situation of the Turkish and Tatar Communities During the Communist Period

During

7.1. Romania During the World War II. Communist Take Over in Romania

of the state. It the inter-war period, the Turkish and Tatar communities in Romania passed community through difficult times due to the reasons that could be attributed to the colonization to Despite the policies ph their undeniable fact that those policies triggered a mass emigration of the Muslim loyalty to the Turkey, later regularized by a bilateral agreement between Turkey and Romania, Romanian phenomenon of the unrest amongst the community, they could ultimately preserve the Romanian state and boast about their religious and cultural freedoms under rule comparing with more repressive practices on the Muslim minorities in the other Balkan countries. However, the Second World War resulted in changes in the territorial map of Romania and its political regime, which increased the pressure on the minorities including Turkish and Tatar communities living in the country.

Romania strove to maintain the system of Versailles that had established the boundaries of Great Romania between the two world wars. In order to preserve its territorial integrity, the state cultivated strong relations with France and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain. But, as a corollary to the secret agreement between the Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and the German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, Romania first lost all of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the Soviets by 3 July 1940. When the cession of Transylvania to Hungary was formally announced on 30 August 1940, Romania had already lost 30% of her territory and population. On top of this, in September 1940, Romania was coerced to sign the Treaty of Craiova with Bulgaria, in which it relinquished Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria.³⁷⁴ This loss was not just territorial, but it also caused irreparable break in the integrity of the Muslim communities of the two parts of Dobruja.

After relinquishing Transylvania, public opinion turned against the King Carol II, and he felt pressure of saving his throne by asking Marshall Ion Antonescu, who had earlier served as Minister of Defence, to form a new government. King Carol II took into consideration of Antonescu's close relations with the Iron Guard, and being an acceptable candidate to Germany. Antonescu, who had a great disdain for the King, negotiated with the leaders of the other political parties like National Peasants Party (PNT) and the National Liberal Party (PNL) to form a government. These leaders made any government formation conditional on the

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Steven D. Roper, *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution*, Amsterdam, Harwood Academic, 2000, p. 7.

removal of Carol II. Antonescu finally presented the King an ultimatum: Either abdicate in favour of his nineteen-year-old son Michael or face the possibility of a forced removal. Carol quickly renounced the throne in favour of his son Michael and left the country. On 6 September 1940, Michael assumed the throne and signed a decree granting Antonescu full powers. Antonescu quickly moved to establish his authority and his relationship with Germany. While he established close relations with Germany, his relationship with the Iron Guard deteriorated. He began to view the leaders of the Iron Guard as incompetent and dangerous. Finally, with the backing of Berlin, Antonescu purged members of the Iron Guard from his cabinet. By January 1941, he had established his military dictatorship. In June, Romania joined Germany in a declaration of war against the Soviet Union. Throughout the war, Antonescu maintained his alliance with Germany; however, he realized after the German defeat at Stalingrad that the Soviet Union was now in a much stronger position. Because of the fear of a Soviet occupation, Antonescu treated the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) very harshly. By 1944, he had alienated several parties and the monarchy, and these parties and King Michael instigated a coup against him on 23 August 1944. Three days before the coup the Soviet army had crossed the Romanian border and the swiftness of the Soviet advance caught the opposition by surprise and so they quickly decided to organize the coup. While the role of the PCR in the coup was relatively minor, with the aid of the Soviet army it emerged as the dominant party by the late 1940s.³⁷⁵

Following the war, both the monarchy and government structures remained intact in Romania, opposite to what happened in East Germany and Poland where structural disintegration occurred so rapidly that the communist parties faced no real political competition. In these countries, the parties quickly established themselves in positions of power. In Romania, however, between 1944 and 1948, the country had numerous governments with different political compositions. King Michael designated the first government following the coup, and it included representatives from all the major parties. Even though the major parties were represented, certain parties received far more cabinet positions (e.g. the PCR). The Soviets later exerted a great deal of influence in the numerous post-coup governments, and portfolios were assigned based on political reliability. The Soviets also infiltrated the two most important institutions in Romania, the military and the secret police (*Siguranta*) and started to control the strategic corners of the state.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 7-8. See also Dennis Deletant, *Romania under Communist Rule*, Civic Academy Foundation, Bucharest, 1998.

³⁷⁶ Steven D. Roper, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

In May 1945 the *Sovroms* (Soviet-Romanian joint-stock companies) were created. Sixteen *Sovroms* were established by the Soviets to exploit the vast natural resources of the country. In addition, the Soviets also exacted large reparation payments from Romania. Under the terms of the armistice, the Romanian government paid the Soviets US\$300 million in the form of oil, timber, grain and other natural resources. This amount covered the damages that the country had inflicted on the Soviet Union during the war. Furthermore, the government paid for the stationing of Soviet troops that numbered almost 150,000 in 1946. The total goods and services delivered to the Soviet Union from September 1944 through June 1948 was approximately US\$2 billion. This amount was 86% of the country's total GNP, and this left the government and the PCR with little economic means. Therefore, both institutions were dependent on the Soviet Union for financial resources.³⁷⁷ Growing influence of the communists and the economic capitulation to the Soviets eventually forced the King Michael to abdicate in December of 1947, and the monarchy in Romania was abolished paving way for a full-fledged communist regime.

7.2. Collectivization and Industrialization Policies of Communists

The communists' take-over at the end of the Great War made it clear to the world that Romania was out of the European vision horizon, and adopted a sinister Stalinist dictatorship.³⁷⁸ Romania, under the rule of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej pursued the policies of industrialization and collectivization, which meant in essence the abolition of private property embedded in the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. The collectivization took place in the Soviet Union between 1929-1933 covered 125 million peasants, and the one in Romania affected 77% of the population residing in rural areas as late as 1948 -12 million out of 16 million- than any other single act of the entire communist period.³⁷⁹ This mass action by the communists was the first step of their social, political, cultural, and economic transformation programmes, which totally changed the economic and social structure of the society resulting in alteration or destruction of values, structures and behaviour of people.

Collectivization of agriculture was not merely an aspect of the larger policy of industrial development but an attack on the very foundations of rural life. It helped the destruction of a

⁴²³ *Ibidem*, p. 18

⁴²⁴ Victor Neurrann, *Political hangup*

⁴²⁵ Gail Kligmai 1949-1962, *Prim*

, Armin Heinen, *Key Concepts of Romanian History: Alternative Approaches to Socio- tges*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2013, p. 267.
and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants under Siege: The collectivization of Romanian Agriculture*, Ithaca NJ, Princeton University Press, 2011, p. 3.

traditional rural way of life. The seizure of land plots didn't only mean the loss of economic autonomy for the peasantry, but also the dissolution of the social order based on land ownership. Rural communities were made up of individual households which also worked as their basic functional unit. As a result, the size of one's land property determined one's place in the social hierarchy, it produced or reproduced a certain social status, and it stimulated the interactions among members of the rural society. In addition, land ownership strengthened relations among kin and neighbours. Collectivizing agriculture meant dismantling the traditional social structure to replace it with collective state-owned farms, where labour didn't follow the pattern of kin. The new hierarchy was established outside the community in the form of positions within the Communist Party held by outsiders or people from the poor peasantry. Concomitantly, the transformation operated by socialism in agriculture led to a bureaucratized and politicized rural world characterized by collective farms and agricultural labour deprived of a personal meaning, reflecting the official ideology.³⁸⁰

On the other hand, the collectivization process effectively colonized social relations within the rural community in a positive way. Consequently, the replacing of individual households with collective households undermined both kinship and good-neighbourliness relations; the abolishing of private land ownership lessened the parents' power over their offspring (by taking out land inheritance from the equation of family relations); and gender equality provided women with an opportunity to enter the labour market, to become economically independent and, implicitly, it lessened the husband's authority over the wife.³⁸¹ The collectivization of agriculture also encouraged a huge segment of the rural population to migrate to urban centers, where the ever expanding industrial labour force absorbed them quickly. The regime created incentives needed to obtain this result. The socialist transformation of agriculture can thus be said to have helped break the bonds between peasants and their land while the compulsory quotas of production imposed on them led to their increased poverty. The alternative of joining the urban industrial labour force meant a better payment, considerable improvement in housing conditions, and easier access to basic utilities (running water, central heating, gas, electricity) which were not available in their homes at villages. Workers were joined by the young people who moved to the cities to pursue their

³⁸⁰ Manuela Marin, "The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia During Communism (1948-1967)", Adriana Cupcea, Manuela Marin, Metin Ômer (eds.), *The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia Documents and Memory*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2016, pp. 176-177; for the collectivization of the agriculture in Romania see Constantin Iordachi, Dorin Dobrinicu (eds.), *Transforming Peasants, Property and Power: The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania, 1949-1962*, Central European University Press, Budapest, New York, 2009.

³⁸¹ Manuela Marin, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

education and chose to stay there thus combining social mobility and socio-professional upward mobility. The extensive industrialization also stimulated a rapid urban development resulting in an increase in the number of cities but also in the urban population.³⁸²

Collectivization policies in Romania also brought undeniable benefits to rural inhabitants, especially those who had owned little or no land. It freed them from labouring on the fields of others, and it increased their control over wages lending to their daily existence a stability previously unknown to them. For many, however, collectivization meant the major trauma of the socialist period. By leaving rural inhabitants without their own means of livelihood, it radically increased their dependence on the Party-state. It both prepared and compelled them to be the proletarians of new industrial facilities. It destroyed or at least frayed both vertical and horizontal social relations that villagers were embedded and through which they defined themselves and pursued their existence. It forcibly stripped their relationship to something many of them considered an integral part of their relations to ancestors, other kin, and neighbours, rather than just an object external to themselves. For those people, collectivization was a grievous assault on their very conception of themselves as human beings.³⁸³ Due to the reasons outlined above, the process of collectivization in Romania was not always a smooth

process, and the authorities did not hesitate to use violence against the refused to allow their peasants who lands to be expropriated. By this oppression, Romania successful replica of the Stalin regime proved a than most of the communist comrades.³⁸⁴ mass collectivization was underway in Romania, the more While Communist Party and *Securitate* cadres were inflated with flocking newcomers. Robert King gives the table below in his book how the list of the Communist Party Membership enlarged between 1944 -1964.

³⁸² *Ibidem.*
³⁸³ Gail Kligmaiji and Katherine Verdery, *op. ci t.*, p. 3.
³⁸⁴ *Ibidem.*

<u>Date</u> Before	<u>Number of Party Members</u>
August 1944	884 16.000 35.000 42.633
February 194j> March	101.810 256.863
1945 April	
1945	
June/July	
194 October	
1945	



<u>Date</u>	<u>Number of Party Members</u>
June 1946	717.490
	704.857
January 1947	720.000
September	803.831
1947	1.060.000
December	720.000
1947 February	595.398
1948 May	720.000
1950	834.600
December	900.000
1955 June	1.377.847
1958	385
June 1960	
December 1961	
December 1964	



³⁸⁵ **Robert King**, *A History of the Romanian Communist Party*, Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, 1980, p. 64.

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The figures above indicate how rapidly the Party enlarged its cadres in a very short time of span through industrialization and collectivization that served the communist regime's purpose to mobilize, control and integrate the population under the one Party rule. It is noteworthy that the number of the members increased from 884 in 1944 to 1.060.000 in 1948, and when it was 1964, just around 380.000 members extra were added. In this increase, most probably the union between the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, which was an older legal party, played a major role. During the 1950s the average trend of increase in membership was relatively stable, even though it showed dramatic decrease in 1955, most probably due to the purification process from the non-believers of communism. But, the most interesting thing is that the Party attracted this huge amount of members from every walks of life. Stelian Tanase observes that the new Party members included opportunists of all stripes, agricultural workers, members of dissatisfied national minorities, prisoners of war returned from the Soviet Union, and former members of the Iron Guard and other fascist parties, especially if compromised.³⁸⁶ In addition, there were people from higher social groups, such as generals and officers, some Orthodox bishops, heads of the inter-war secret police, writers, journalists, university professors, though in less numbers entrepreneurs, bankers, and large industrialists, all wishing in the new order as they had in the previous one. The process was slightly more r the intellectuals, as they were in essence antifascist and already sympathizers ;Ideology. In the end, this mix made very heterogeneous communist elite.³⁸⁷ context, it is no doubt that many Turks and Tatars too looked for a bright future le life in becoming member of the ruling communist party. A report by the ifieral of Turkey in Constanta dated 27 March 1946 sent to the Turkish Embassy s tates that Murat Yusuf, a graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia had a tjie *Mufti* of the Muslim community in Dobruja, and to realize this wish he sought almost every political party after the war. Finally, he achieved his goal and l|he *Mufti* of Constanta in October 1945 only after he became a member of the rty. His deputy Esat Murat was also affiliated with the Party.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Stelian Tanase, *Elite și societate: Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej (Elites and Society: Rule of Gheorghiu-Dej)*, 1948-1965, București, Humanitas, 1998, pp. 46-47.

³⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸⁸ Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Romanian Emigration File, Report from the Turkish Consulate to the Embassy of Bucharest, document no:92/5,27.03.1946, p. 12.

7.3. Effect i of the Collectivization on the Muslim Community

When the communists took over the rule and started their collectivization process, Turks and Tatars living in Dobruja were negatively affected by this process as most of the community members were farmers and raising animals on their farms and lands. The provisional data of the January 1948 census prove that the Turks and Tatars represented 0.2% of the country's population (28.851 or 28.781), of which 19.370 lived in rural areas, while 9.481 or 9.411 lived in urban areas.³⁸⁹

As the collectivization process unfolded, the Turks and Tatars eventually became a part of it. The opposing voices to this policy were immediately silenced by the regime. One of the victims was Etem Kurt Mola who was the Principal *Mufti* until 1943 when this post was abolished. He dared to openly criticize collectivization policy with such a statement: "Have you seen what we have in the country? ... Only hunger and queue... In the past we had what we had to. Now, as you are criticizing, the communists are putting you in jail, and the families do not know where you are. You can die in prison while waiting for freedom..." Because of his critical discourse, he was ultimately detained for inciting the Muslim population to support the anti-Soviet war.⁴³⁶

³⁸⁹ ANR, Fund Council of Ministers- Service for Studies and Documentation, file no:1713, fT. 1.7: file no. 1714, f.4.

As stated, collectivization gradually changed the traditional way of life of the Muslims. Having lost their lands to the collectivization policy, they lost their economic autonomy, and the work they did in collective farms turned their everyday lives upside down. For instance, the Turks and the Tatars agreed to work on Fridays by omitting to take break for the compulsory religious prayer. The regime did not respect Islamic holidays as it did not for other religions or faiths. Working schedules at large farms and factories did not allow Muslims freely to do their prayers. The sermons during the *Bayram* (holy day) prayers and the Friday prayers provided the only context for religious instruction, which were not permitted on any other occasion, either in mosque or in private. Major Islamic celebrations were very much reduced to family occasions. All these caused a decrease in the number of practising Muslims, and Islam gradually lost ground among the young generation of the Turkish-Tatar communities. The religious duties and beliefs were the most powerful forces that kept the community intact for ages started to be neglected. General unavailability of religious literature including *Quran* brought an absence of knowledge of even the most fundamental precepts of Islam.³⁹⁰

With a rapidly changing social and economic environment, the two minorities, which had previously lived in their closed communities, had no choice but to establish relations with outsiders, especially with non-Muslim populations. Both ethnic communities started opening up to inter-ethnic marriages, which led their children not to learn their mother tongue well in the family. With decreasing lessons of Turkish and Tatar languages at schools the youngsters were left no option other than forgetting their own culture. In this process, the status of women also underwent a radical change. While previously they had only domestic work or laboured on their private land, they now started to go out working in fields of the state-owned farms alongside unknown men. Some of them even entered into politics and were elected members of the local popular councils.³⁹¹

Further, most Turks and Tatars learned Romanian language for the first time by attending literacy classes which also taught them basic political notions and some professional skills. Concurrently, the politicization of the two minorities' everyday lives included their participation in a series of cultural events and materialist-scientific classes, some of them even in their mother tongue. And not least, the younger generations (women included) were allowed to attend public schools where they not only learned and used Romanian, but which enabled

³⁹⁰ Frederick De Jong, *op.at.*, p. 181,

³⁹¹ Manuela Marin, *op.cit.*, p. 179.

them to find a job outside their communities after graduation. In short, the collectivization of agriculture marked the beginning of a process of dilution that concerned the birth, marriage and death customs of Dobrujan Turks and Tatars. In essence, their traditions got weakened and even changed under the influence of the customs of the Romanian majority.³⁹²

The migration from rural to urban areas, intensified by the general circumstances already discussed, affected the Turk and Tatar minorities in Dobruja as reflected in the data of the 1956 and 1966 censuses. Therefore, while in 1956 there were only 5.447 Tatars and 8.875 Turks living in urban areas, ten years later, the data indicated an increase of 56.6% and 72% respectively in the number of ethnic Tatars (9.623) and Turks (12.231) living in Dobruja's cities. By no means, this was reflected by 16.61% decrease in the Tatar rural population, but, possibly due to the rate of natural increase going up by more than 25%, in a slight increase (by 6.5%) in the Turkish rural population. As their members moved to the cities, into the new blocks of flats, found employment in the various factories, and enjoyed broader access to education, the pre-communist compact communities were broken up and the Tatars and Turks came to live scattered across the various cities and towns in Dobruja which prospered by the growth of the local industries. All these changes operated by collectivization along with urbanization and industrialization could only translate into a loss of vitality of the two communities' customs and traditions and, eventually, into a diminishing role of the religion in their daily lives.⁴⁴⁰

7.4. Policies of the Communist Rule Directed Against the Muslims in the Fields of Religion and Education

³⁹² **Ōnal**, *Din folclorul turcilor dobrogeni. Trăditii privind nașterea, căsătoria și moartea* (From the

When the communist regime took the reigns of the country and a break occurred in relations between socialist Romania and capitalist Turkey, emigration of Turks and Tatars ceased completely until the 1960s. Thereafter, only isolated cases of emigration of families and individuals were recorded. Some of the more well-known cases of migration comprise 50 families from the Island of *Ada Kale* who were allowed to go to Turkey in 1969-70. They were among 160 families who had to leave the island, which the Iron Gate on the Danube River. The island was to disappear under the lake at

⁴³⁹ Mehmet Naci Folklore of the 48-49.

⁴⁴⁰ Manuela Marin, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.



which would rise behind the electric power dam. Most of the families were resettled in the south-eastern part of the town of Drobeta-Turnu Severin.³⁹³

The population of the Muslim community in Northern Dobruja in the aftermath of relinquishing the southern part to Bulgaria was only 55.000.³⁹⁴ As the 1956 communist census recorded 14.329 Turks and 20.460 Tatars, the next two communist censuses of 1966 and 1977 recorded 18.040 Turks and 22.151 Tatars; 23.422 Turks and 23.369 Tatars respectively.³⁹⁵ These figures indicate that a relatively small Muslim minority remained in Romania after the Second World War. Though the population figures were low, the communists were still determined to eliminate all political rivals and strangle religious life indirectly while pretending to grant some cultural rights to the minorities.

The lives of Dobrujan Turks and Tatars underwent a series of radical changes after the war, which in time led to a diminishing significance of the religion, which was the strongest element for their cohesion and survival as a minority. In fact, being a religious minority in Romania, the Muslims had formally enjoyed a large degree of religious autonomy since 1878, although in practice it was a case of alternating autonomy and state interference. Specifically, they had spiritual and administrative autonomy under the formal jurisdiction of the *Şeyhülislam* in Istanbul. After the new Turkish Republic was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Caliphate and the post of *Şeyhülislam* was dissolved in 1924. Yet during the interwar period, Dobrujan Muslims had their own institutions and administrative structures although they depended financially on the Romanian state.³⁹⁶

Between the two wars, faith-based organizations managed to survive. For instance, Muslim Communities were actively organized and operated in the Muslim majority settlement places according to their own rules by their own councils elected for a fixed term.³⁹⁷ Again in this specific period, religion continued to define the identity of the Turkish and Tatar communities, thus religious identity was stronger than the ethnic one. In another words, the Ottoman socio-mental and administrative structures lived side by side with the new Romanian rules. On the other hand, Atatürk's secular and modern reforms in Turkey affected one way or another the Dobrujan Muslims by creating a sense of ethnic belonging. As discussed earlier, in

³⁹³ Mehmet H. Vani Yurtsever, "Die Tataren und die Ottomanischen Türken in der Dobrudscha", *Jahrbuch der Dobrudchadeutschen*, XXI, 1976, p. 29.

³⁹⁴ Frederick De Jong, *op.cit.*, p. 174,

³⁹⁵ Adriana Cupcea, *Turk, Tatar, or Turko-Tatar. Challenges to the Identities of Dobruja Turks and Tatars in Post-Communism*, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

³⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 35-36.

³⁹⁷ Nureddin Ibram, *Comunitatea musulmana din Dobrogea: repere de viata spirituala: viata religioasa si invatamant in limba materna (Muslim Community in Dobruja: Spiritual Life Points: Religious Life and Education in Mother Tongue)*, *op.cit.*, p. 134.

Ottoman costume and *fez* the students at the Medgidia Muslim Seminary were replaced by the European suit and hat. The seminary and all elementary schools in Dobruja adopted the Latin alphabet following Turkey's practice. In addition, local cultural and educational organizations flourished along with the existing religious institutions such as the Association of Muslim Seminary Graduates, Mehmet Niyazi Cultural Association and the Circle of the Young Turks whose main objectives were editing publications, organizing scientific and cultural developments showed a strong societal tendency towards secularization and modernization among the Muslim community.³⁹⁸ Hugh Poulton summarizes this process in such a formula that the Muslim Turks and Tatars shifted from an identity exclusively based on their belonging to Islam to one that featured an important ethnic content.³⁹⁹ This is a reasonable explanation for defining the evolution that the Muslim community in Dobruja who inspired from the ethnic nationalism promoted by Atatürk in Turkey, the country seen as the mother-state where all the Muslim minorities of the Balkans longed to emigrate.

However, the communist regime in Romania cut off ties of the Muslim community with Turkey, which was regarded as a capitalist state and a member of NATO, a representative of the Western bloc. In contrast to the inter-war years, the Turkish and Tatar communities were isolated and alienated from the rapid developments took place in Turkey and the West in general. This policy associated with the direct consequences of the processes of such as secularization, industrialization, collectivization, and urbanization or rural to urban migration and the social homogenization of all citizens regardless of their nationality left a deep mark on the minority, and also led to great social, economic and identity transformations in the Romanian society as a whole. In brief, the communists' coming to power meant that the Turks and Tatars living in Dobruja, similarly to all the other Dobrujan ethnic minorities, were subject to a homogenization process within the socialist society, which over the course of the next five decades finally led to their social and national assimilation.⁴⁰⁰

The Decree-law no. 177 dated 4 August, 1948, i.e. the new Law on Religions which remained into force with a few minor amendments until December 1989, provided that the communist state would strictly regulate all the officially recognized 14 denominations.

In July 1949, the Internal Regulations of the Muslim Denomination was approved by the Presidium of

⁴⁴⁶ Adriana Cup

⁴⁴⁷ Hugh ;ca, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

Poulton: p. 48. 'The Muslim Experience in the Balkan States 1919-1991' *Nationalities Papers*, 28(1), 2000,

⁴⁴⁸ Elena Floret *Principiile politicii PCR în problema națională (Principles of the PCR-Romanian Communist Party Policy in National Issue)*, București, Editura Politică, 1975, pp. 82-83.

the Grand National Assembly. Within this legal framework, if the Muslim minority wanted to maintain its activities, it had to present their internal regulations-setting forth how they were organized and how they operated- for the "examination and approval" of the official authorities. In addition, all meetings of the members of the religious communities had to be approved by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or its local representatives. Other provisions of the regulations stipulated that the clerics had to swear allegiance to the communist state prior to taking up their ecclesiastical offices. Furthermore, the officially recognized denominations would have the right to organize their education with a view to training their clergy under the supervision of the state, through its representative, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which would also approve the *curricula* of religious education institutions. Last but not least, all international contacts of the religious groups had to be approved by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁰¹

Overall, this document provided a certain degree of continuity for the main Islamic institutions. The *Mufliate*, with its headquarters in Constanta, was still the highest decision-making body and its head, *the Mufti* was kept as the main representative of Romanian Muslims in their relations with the Romanian state. The Muslim followers living in Dobruja established their Religious Communities praying at mosque and having a Muslim cleric generally called imam or *hodja*. Moreover, the same document confirmed the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia as the only theological education institution allowed to train the Muslim clergy.⁴⁰² It would be administered and funded by the *Mufliate* on the condition that its decisions had to be approved first by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Though everything was in order on paper, during the course of time the *Mufliate* was gradually underfunded having a negative impact on the situation of the mosques and cemeteries and the number of *hodjas* which reflected the real targets of the communist policies.

It could easily be argued that the Muslim community got the fatal strike in the field of education rather than religion in the first decades of the communist regime. Romania had recognized the right of having education in mother tongue for its minorities by the Law on Primary and Normal Education dated July 26, 1924, and by the Law on Secondary Education on May 8, 1928. According to these laws, the minorities who had the majority in a settlement unit, could open state schools in which the medium of instruction was their mother tongue. In

⁴⁰¹ Decretul nr. 177 din 1948 pentru regimul general al cultelor religioase [Decree no. 177 of 1948 concerning the general regulation of religious denominations], *legislatie. resurse-pentru-democratie.org/legea/decret-177-1948.php*. Retrieved on June 20, 2019.

⁴⁰² Manuela Marin, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

addition to these laws, the Law on Private Education adopted on December 19, 1925, the religious schools of the minorities had the right of being ruled by themselves.⁴⁰³ The Muslims had only one educational institution, the Seminary in Medgidia, survived up to the new regime in Romania, and its operation was regulated by the the Communist Education Reform in 1948 till its closure iti 1967.

There are two views regarding the closure of the seminary. The apparent official pretext for the closurc of the seminary was the dwindling number of the students over the years. Though this view is generally accepted and voiced, it does not reflect the reality on the ground. A comparison between the number of the graduates in the inter-war period and the communist period denies this pretext. While 236 students graduated from this seminary between 1920 and 1943 (includes), it gave diplomas to 165 students in total between 1944 and 1967.⁴⁰⁴ As seen, the difference in the figures of graduates in two periods is only 71, albeit there were only 3 graduates in 1^67.

Under ;the changing social and economic circumstances of the era, there obviously occurred a decrease in the demand of studying at this theological institution because young Muslims started to look for their future in other spheres of life culminating with their increasing indifference to the religion. However, it does not suffice to claim that decreasing caused the demand sure of this historical institution of Dobruja. At this point, the second view clo much gives ory answer for the related shut down. It defends that religious institutions satisfaci were le state to an extent, but the policies of communist regime indirectly deterred tolerated by t sending their children to the seminary. The relations between this religious the people from community was weakened by the communist state's suppressive and atheist institution policies. Furthermore, the school was purposely ignored and its functioning was anc frequently interfered in by the officials. The seminary's shortage of Turkish and Tatar students mostly reflected the economic and social changes that the two Dobrujan ethnic communities experienced after 1948. Both migration to the industrialized cities and the new educational opportunities in the 1950s gave the ethnic Turks and Tatars access to professions which were well paid and generated the kind of social prestige desirable at that time. In contrast, becoming an *imam* meait a poorly paid job and a permanent search for additional sources of income to

⁴⁵¹ Şule Şeyma
" in Romania at
University, 200|

⁴⁵² Special Publ

in Medgidia), ' ıldız, Avrupa Birliği Eşiğindeki Romanya 'da Müslüman Türk Azınlık (Muslim Turkish Minority the Seminarului Mu Doorstep of EU), Kinkkale/Turkey, Unpublished Master Thesis submitted to Kmkkale p. 46.
2001)), Medgidia, cation by Absolventi Seminarului Musulman Din Medgidia (Graduates of the Muslim Seminary i Kazim Bechiş, Hacı Fikreddin Mologani, Hacı İbrahim Ablachim (coord.), Centenarul sulman Din Medgidia 1901-2001 (100th Anniversary of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia 1901- 2001.

provide for a decent living compounded by the increasing lack of interest of Muslim followers in their mosques, *imams* and good compliance with daily religious prescriptions. All these were the true reasons of the diminishing demand for the seminary.⁴⁰⁵

It should be noted that even the graduates of the seminary have conflicting opinions about the real reason of the closing down of their school. Sami Geafer, a Tatar graduate of year 1958, claimed that the Romanian state had no guilt in closing the school, but the only *stimulus* terminated its operation was the shortage of students. The Muslim community is the one to be blamed for this closure.⁴⁰⁶ Another Tatar graduate of the school of year 1967, and the former *Mufti* in Constanta after the fall of the regime in 1989, Bagiş Şanghirai saw this view very simplistic by defending that suppressive policies of the communists in essence led the closure of the seminary. He claimed that there was a systematic pressure on the Muslim families not to enrol their children at the school, and this pressure eventually ended with the shut down. He reminded that he was one of the three graduates of the school at its last education period in 1967.⁴⁰⁷

After dwelling upon the causes of the closure of the seminary, it is useful to glance in depth at the incremental approach of the state towards the functioning of this unique religious education centre for the Muslims. The communists did not close this emblematic school abruptly, but obviously seemed to opt for a gradual approach. First, in 1948, in accordance with the standardization of the all religious education in Romania, the length of the study program at the seminary was reduced from 8 to 4 years. Then, entrance requirements were changed to attend the school. While previously the applicants had to be graduates of four elementary grades, in the post-1948 period, they were required to have graduated seventh grade. It thus become a middle school affecting negatively the number of enrolling students. Nonetheless, the state continued to share the operating costs with the *Muftiate* and families as the school was in the official educational system. As it was the case before the communism, the state paid the wages of the teachers, the administrative and support staff. It also undertook the cost of repair and sanitation works on the seminary premises. However, all this was done always with limited and ever decreasing budgets. Finally, starting with 1966, just one year before the total closure

⁴⁰⁵ Manuela Marin, *op.cit.*, p. 190.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview conducted with Sami Geafer, Graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, Bucharest, 9 January 2017.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview conducted with Bagiş Şanghirai, Former *Mufti* and Graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, Constanta, 11 January 2017.

Department of Religious Affairs decided that the *Muftiate* had to cover all of the school,⁴⁵⁶ expenses of the seminary.

The Education Law dated 1948 allowed the local authorities to separate the schools of the Muslim community into Turkish and Tatar schools. The regime obliged the schools to use Socialist Kazan Tatar dialect as the medium of instruction rather than the capitalist state language Turkish. It was part of systematic attempts to destroy the schools mother teaching with . Virgil Coman wrote that one of the serious difficulties encountered tongue in the schools in the 1950s and which hindered the proper development of the Turkish-Tatar educational process was the textbooks. Three types of textbooks were used at schools with Tatar teaching the ones brought from the USSR, the autonomous Tatar Republic, printed in

Cyrillic characters and differed from the language spoken in the Dobruja region. Because of this, pupils were forced to learn a new language that parents and teachers did not know before. For this reason, teachers used these textbooks, only in mother tongue teaching. The rest of the courses were taught either in the Dobaijan Tatar dialect or directly in Romanian language.⁴⁰⁸ Coman continued that situation of the schools with Turkish teaching was deteriorating rapidly both in terms of material conditions and the level of knowledge of students. This pitiful situation was largely due to the lack of support from local authorities. This explains why the majority of the schools did not provide satisfactory accommodation facilities for poor pupils coming from other villages. Furthermore, the educational inspector for national minorities was solely confined to solving organizational problems, and was not interested in raising the level of education by providing a scientific content to the lessons.⁴⁰⁹

In line with the education reform of the communists, courses such as history, geography, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology were taught in the Romanian language by justifying that the high school and university exams were held in Romanian. To further Romanization of the education system the posts of Turkish and Tatar teachers and inspectors were removed. The Romanian principals were appointed to the minority schools. The Turkish and Tatar students who graduated from the Pedagogical High School and universities were sent to different regions instead of their homeland, Dobruja. All these policies

⁴⁵⁶ Manuela Mati:

⁴⁵⁷ Virgil

Coman, într-un

Document

Language Teaching " Situatia Invatamantului din regiunea Constanta in Limbile de predare Tatară și Turcă reflectată în anul 1956 (The Situation of Education in the Constanta Region in the Tatar and Turkish Languages Reflected in a 1956 Document)", *Moștenirea Culturală Turcă în Dobrogea* de Tănasu Gemil, Gabriel Custurea, Delia Roxana Cornea (Coord.), Muzeul Istoriei Naționale, Iași, 2013, p. 317-323.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 3

aimed at destroying the ethnic, cultural and religious identity of the Turkish-Tatar community, and resulted in its suppression and assimilation.⁴¹⁰

The year 1959 was the worst year for the schools which gave education in mother tongue because all of them were shut down by the communist regime. All 152 schools giving courses in Turkish and 18 schools in Tatar languages were closed one by one, and their buildings together with their lands were appropriated and used for other purposes by the state. The Tatar Pedagogical High School opened after 1948 Education reform in order to limit the role of the Seminary of Medgidia to raise only religious cadres like *imams* and *muezzins* was also closed down in 1960. Thus, there were left practically no institutions which would raise Turkish language teachers. Furthermore, in 1972, the Tatar Language Department at the Oriental Languages Faculty of the Bucharest University closed its doors to the new comers. However, the communist regime allowed the textbooks of the grades from 1 to 7 to be printed and circulated at some schools in the Dobruja region to show that the education in mother tongue continued in Romania in the 1970s, and Romania pursued liberal policies for its Muslim minority. The regime needed a better image outside, and it used education in mother tongue as a tool to polish its image.⁴¹¹

A Turkish historian born in Southern Dobruja and a graduate of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia, Mustafa Ali Mehmet, lamented on the repressive policies of the communists on the Turks as such: "We cannot forget that many intellectuals of the Turkish community who taught us our language, history, culture and traditions of our nation perished in the jails of the communists. The Romanian Turkish community were prone to psychological pressure by the regime during the Cold War, and their primary schools were closed down. It was not satisfactory to prepare some textbooks for some courses and only 2-3 hours education in mother tongue at weekends for learning their languages. All newspapers, journals and other materials used for Turkish language dissemination were banned. The official authorities ignored the Turkish community while counting the minorities as "Hungarians, Germans and the others."⁴¹² Indeed, mass arrests among the Turks and Tatars in 1951 were mainly of those of religious and nationalistic orientation, and to a great extent supported what Mustafa Ali Mehmet said.

⁴¹⁰ Şule Şeyma Yıldız, *op.cit.*, pp. 49-50.

⁴¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 51.

⁴¹² Mustafa Ali Mehmet, *Some Thoughts on the Turkish Cultural Legacy in Dobruja*, Paper presented at a symposium held in Constanta on 24-25 September 2013.

Indeed, the state of mind of the Turkish-speaking population has long been under the close supervision of security structures. The Muslim minority was regarded as a threat to the established social order of the country after 1945. Religious figures, officials, and intellectual teachers, human and personal personalities of the Dobrujan Turkish community were imprisoned and sentenced to years although the Muslim population was negligibly small, and it did not create problems for the administration. Against this background, the Turkish-major Tatar community could not escape from the attention of the *Securitate*. Its agents strictly continued to follow the members of the community until the 1980s, and *Muftiate* and even used informants within the *'mams*, and also teachers at the seminary in Medgidia.⁴¹³ As a direct result of repressive policies, practically at the beginning of the Romanian 1960s, Romanian became the only language of instruction, and the teaching of the Turkish language came to an end in Dobruja. However, the Romanization policy pursued by the Romanian authorities has not entailed a *de facto* ban on the importation of publications in Turkish as was the case in Bulgaria. Nor have the authorities opted for a complete suppression of all in Turkish as was in the neighbouring country. Books in Turkish were occasionally published. Even collections of Friday sermons published in Turkey seemed to find their way into the country, and were used by some of the *imams* in the mosques. In all other respects, however, the Turkish minority was more or less cut off from contemporary Turkish culture and certainly suffered as did all other religious communities.

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After 1964 the communist regime gradually instituted a more assimilationist attitude towards Muslims. As stated above, mosques, cemeteries and schools were left to deteriorate. The number of *imams*, *muezzins* (person recites *ezan* calling for prayer) and *hatibs* (preacher) concurrently decreased because of lack of qualified candidates, but also because the Romanian authorities became more reluctant to endorse new appointments made by the *Mufti*. As a result, many of the mosques in the villages stopped functioning anymore, and generally were in a state of dilapidation, if they did not have any historical or artistic value. Some mosques were spared for non-religious purposes. A mosque in Mamaia (Constanta County) was converted into a holiday house with its *minaret* left intact up to now. The mosque in Braila was converted into a church. The Gazi Ali Pasha Mosque in Babadag, the Hunkar Mosque and the King Carol Mosque in Constanta were switched to museums. The actual process of destruction of the Muslim cultural heritage started after the closure of the seminary in 1967 with the transfer of

⁴⁶² Laura Stancii

⁴⁶³ Frederick De

, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

ownership over its premises to the Romanian state and the right of use to the Municipality of Medgidia that it ultimately allotted them to a Cooperative. Thus, the conversion of the seminary building into the head offices of the Local Trade Organization and the conversion of the Turkish bath into a dry cleaning facility, and of the mosque into a workshop for hand manufactured rugs mark the beginning of the irreversible process of destruction of the Muslim community's historical memory. Furthermore, the Friday and *bayram* prayers took place in a few mosques with a very low attendance mainly by those men over sixty years old. There was a deep-rooted fear among the leading figures of Muslims to ask for anything from the government lest they be branded as Turkish nationalists.⁴¹⁴

While the community was in a desperate situation, Iacub Mehmet, *Mufti* of the Muslim Cult in the Socialist Republic of Romania between 1947-1990 continuously presented a picture of general well-being of the Muslim community. He defended in a preface of a book dated 1976 that the Muslims were freely carrying on their religious activities. He continued that the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Romania (Article 30), the General Organization of Religious Cults Act, as well as other provisions of the Law proclaimed religious freedom, guaranteed its observance and ensured the unhampered practice of their creed. Together with the other citizens sharing one or another religious faith, the Muslim believers could freely practice their cult in keeping with the profession of faith and teaching of the *Quran*⁴¹⁵ Numerous visitors from Muslim countries who have come to see Romania, were able to see for themselves the religious freedom the Muslim cult enjoyed and its good relations of mutual respect and collaboration with all the other religious cults. They have been able to pray in the Muslim places of worship and take part in various religious celebrations alongside the Muslim believers in Romania - wrote the *Mufti*.⁴¹⁶

Why the *Mufti* of the Muslim community turned a blind eye to the suppressive policies of the regime is quite understandable. The *Mufti* himself gave a clear answer to this question in the same preface by stating "In 1974, the Muslim cult adhered to the Socialist Unity Front, the broadest democratic body of a representative character, of the unity and cohesion of the Romanian people. The *Mufti* of the Muslim cult is elected as a member of the National Council, the central leading body of the Socialist Unity Front. He is also a member of the National Committee for the Defence of Peace and on the Committee of the Romanian League for Friendship with Afro-Asian peoples. The Muslim believers and servants of the cult contribute

⁴¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 180.

⁴¹⁵ Radu Florescu, *Muslims in Romania. Past and Present*, Bucharest, Meridiane Publishing House, 1976, p. 17.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 18.

ards the many-sided development of our common homeland, Socialist Romania, support the state's home and foreign policies, for the promotion of relations of collaboration among people and nations, in the spirit of a new political and economic order, based on the principles of respect for national independence and sovereignty, permanently asserted by Romania in it«», international relations."⁴¹⁷

with this thinking, during the tenure of *Mufti* Iacub Mehmet especially in the 1970s, there intensive efforts to keep the Muslims away from Turkey that the Turks and Tatars accept their protective state and beyond that as the motherland. Instead of Turkey, with the consent of the regime the *Muftiate* preferred to warm up relations with co-religionists in the Arab countries, like Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Libya. As of 1973, a selected group of Romanian Muslims has been allowed to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. The cost of these annual pilgrimages were met by Libya. It was evident that the new emphasis placed upon the Muslim identity of the Turks and Tatars within the context of Romania's relations with the Arab world, which the Muslim community had never interacted before. This rapprochement with the Arab world led the Romanian Government to make some commitments concerning the Muslim minority. These comprised of future permissions for the import of *Qurans*, resumption of Islamic religious instruction in the mosques, and the intention to reestablish Turkish primary schools. However, none of these commitments had been materialized till the end of the regime.⁴¹⁸ Ceauşescu apparently continued the same policy initiated in 1949 by his predecessor, which seemed to give a room for the Muslim minority to live their culture and religion, but on the ground actually fostered a separation policy of Tatars from Turks, and hence weakened Islam and the community.

It would be unfair to claim that only the Muslim minority suffered under the communist totalitarian rule. The regime in one way or another tried to keep all ethnicities and faith based minorities under strict control. For instance, Dej's concern over the reaction of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania to the uprising in Hungary in 1956 led him to pursue a policy of integration, and his first step was to dilute the provision for Hungarian language teaching in schools, making it more difficult to receive a Hungarian language education up to university level in Romania. At the apex of the system of primary and secondary education in Hungarian stood the Hungarian language Bolyai University in Cluj, the Dr. Petru Groza Agricultural College in the same city and the Medical-Pharmaceutical Faculty at Targu Mureş. After 1956,

⁴¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹⁸ Frederick De Jong, *op.cit.*, p. 182.

this structure was abolished. Hungarian language instruction began to be moved from single language schools to dual languages ones.⁴¹⁹

This move effectively blurred the distinct status of the Hungarian language and resulted in the merger of Bolyai University and the Romanian language Babeş University in Cluj in 1959. Despite the fact that special streams in each faculty in the merged Babeş-Bolyai University were reserved for Hungarian students and classes and examinations were conducted in Hungarian, the closure of the separate university removed the distinct institutional identity, which had ensured the provision of Hungarian language teaching and exposed it to erosion from within the new structure⁴²⁰ Whereas in the school year 1955-6 there were 1.022 primary schools in which education was offered solely in Hungarian, by 1958-9, this number had dropped to 915. In that same period, the number of primary schools giving instruction in both Romanian and Hungarian increased from 38 to 124. In the sphere of secondary education, a parallel decrease in Hungarian language provision took place: in the same interval of time, the number of 493 schools had fallen to 469, whereas the number of dual-language ones had risen from 10 to 77⁴²¹

A similar dilution took place in the administrative role played by Hungarians within the merged university itself in Cluj. At the time of the merger, the rector was Romanian but two of the three pro-rectors were Hungarian. By 1967, the number of pro-rectorships had been increased to five, of whom three were Romanian; seven of the eight deans were Romanian as was 61% of the teaching staff. In the Dr. Petru Groza Agricultural College, separate language instruction in Hungarian was also dropped⁴²²

After coming power in 1965, Ceauşescu followed the policies of his predecessor Dej. He implemented a policy of re-education, stressing nationalism and a vision of himself as the defender of the Romanian values. Some impartial observers detected an initial improvement in the position of the minorities, noting a wider use of the Hungarian language in Transylvania, but still pointing out restrictions on cultural exchanges persisted. Periodicals and newspapers from Hungary were only available in limited numbers although a publishing house (namely Kriterion) in Bucharest specifically dedicated to the publication of literature in Hungarian and German languages continued to produce original works by Transylvanian Hungarian and

⁴¹⁹ **Dennis Deletant**, *Ceauşescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989*, Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 112.

⁴²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 112.

⁴²¹ **Robert, King**, *Minorities under Communism. Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1973, p. 153.

⁴²² **Dennis Deletant**, *op.cit.*, pp. 112-113.

German writers, as well as editions of novels and poetry written by national Hungarian and German authors. Ceaușescu seemingly recognised the right of the Hungarians, Germans or other minorities to their own culture and to use their own language, but actually he was firm in his condemnation of nationalism and national chauvinism. Within a short time his rule turned integration policies into assimilation ones.⁴²³

Ceaușescu stated very often that Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and other nationalities lived side by side in the country, and the success obtained in building the socialist state was a joint work of all.⁴²⁴ He equated the new socialist society with the Romanian nation and it followed from this conception that the minorities belonged not to other nations, but to Romania only. All citizens had equal rights, regardless of their nationality. However, he warned that anybody tried to pursue a policy of national hatred would be treated consequently as an enemy of the socialist nation.⁴²⁵

As the economic situation in Romania declined in the late 1970s, Ceaușescu turned more nationalistic in order to provide his regime with some measure of popularity. Ceaușescu's nationalism specifically focused on autonomy from the Soviet Union and assimilation of ethnic Hungarians which were and still are the largest minority of Romania, to a much lesser extent, of ethnic Germans. Ethnic Hungarians constituted approximately 8% of the population, and in the 1970s, the regime supported the efforts of historians that argued that the Geto-Dacian civilization (Romania's ancestor) pre-dated the influx of Hungarian and Slavic tribes. This was perceived by minorities as "an attempt to deny them historical rights of their own, and to lower them to the position of merely tolerated." Throughout the 1970s, Ceaușescu continued the policy of induced ethnic assimilation or in his word 'homogenisation'. Assimilation was encouraged in three ways: First, by the migration of Romanians into Transylvania and the emigration of the Hungarians and Germans from the province; secondly, through the striking decrease in the number of minority language schools by applying the quotas for minimum numbers of pupils; and thirdly, by promoting the use of Romanian as the language of the majority and the one essential for social mobility, even for the minorities. Related to the educational aspect, within the context of the industrialization policy of the system, the 1973 Education Law made technical training the priority of the education system. However, very few technical manuals were translated into other languages and so, ethnic Hungarian and ethnic

^m *Ibidem*, p. 1]

⁴⁷⁴ Nicolae

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Bucharest, M 4.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. IS ăescu, *Romania on the Way of Building up the Multilaterally Developed Socialist Society*, Vol. eridiane, 1972, p. 190. 90.

German parents were forced to send their children to Romanian language schools if they wanted them to receive a technical education. Minority language instruction at the university level was discouraged as well and kept extremely limited.⁴²⁶

In the year 1957-8, there were 4.082 students attending Hungarian language institutions of higher education and 1.000 to 1.500 Hungarian students at Romanian language institutions out of an undergraduate population of 51.094. Hungarian students thus represented 10% of all students. In 1974-5, this percentage had fallen to 5.7 (6.188 Hungarian students out of a total of 108.750). In the county of Cluj, where the Hungarians made up 26% of population (1966 census), there were 174 Romanian language classes and 9 Hungarian ones (one in agriculture, the rest in engineering fields). By implementing the 1973 Education Law, two-thirds of schools were devoted to technical faculties and only one-third to the humanities.⁴²⁷

During the 1970s, many Hungarians were arrested for anti-regime protests driven by their resentment over the erosion of provision for education in their native tongue. Some even died in mysterious circumstances. Lajos Kuthy, a Hungarian teacher from Braşov, was found shot dead in a forest near the city in 1976. Before his death, he had collected signatures for a petition seeking the setting up of Hungarian classes in the Braşov region. Jeno Szikzal, another teacher from Braşov, was picked up by the *Securitate* in the spring of 1977 and accused of persuading Hungarians to send their children to schools with Hungarian sections rather than to purely Romanian ones. He was beaten during interrogation and, on his release from custody, committed suicide.⁴²⁸

Parallel with the nationalist policies in education, the regime appointed a Romanian director to the Hungarian State Theatre in Tirgu Mureş, who did not speak Hungarian. Again Târgu Mureş and Sovata which were largely Hungarian populated towns had non-Hungarian-speaking Romanian mayors. The bilingual Hungarian-Romanian signs erected in Covasna in 1971 were removed. Hungarian officials in factories were being replaced with Romanians who did not know Hungarian.⁴²⁹

The Hungarian minority was seriously affected by Ceauşescu's campaign of village redevelopment or 'systématisation' too. Originally outlined in 1972, the plan was given a fresh impetus by the Romanian president in March 1988 when he proposed that the number of villages be reduced by more than half, from 13.000 to 5-6.000 by the year 2000. The displaced

⁴²⁶ Steven D. Roper, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-56.

⁴²⁷ George Schöpflin, Hugh Poulton, *Romania's Ethnic Hungarians*, London, Minority Rights Group, 1990, p. 13.

⁴²⁸ Dennis Deletant, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

⁴²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 128.

inhabitants would be re-housed in 558 'agro-industrial' towns. Although the programme was not specifically aimed at Hungarian villages and indeed most of the redevelopment took place in villages around Bucharest, the plan was bound to have a disproportionate effect upon the Hungarian minority because of the large number of small settlements in the predominantly Hungarian counties of Harghita and Covasna which were targetted for 'phasing out'. In the county of Mureș, 44% of whose population was Hungarian, 250 settlements out of 480 faced an uncertain future due to this redevelopment policy. These settlements contained nearly 150 churches and 30 historical monuments. Almost half of the churches were Roman Catholic, Reformed or Unitarian and some 60 were Romanian Orthodox. As the officials pointed out, the systematisation plan equally affected Hungarian, Romanian and Saxon settlements.⁴³⁰

Ceaușescu's policies in industrialization, educational and cultural spheres culminated in emigration of large minorities to their mainlands. Romanian Institute for Research on National Identities in Cluj estimates that 120.000 Hungarians emigrated to Hungary between 1977-1992. 97.500 of this figure left Romania between 1987 and 1991 most probably due to the village redevelopment policy.⁴³¹ In addition to that, almost 200.000 Germans emigrated from Romania between 1967 and 1989 although Ceaușescu himself spoke out against German emigration stressing that there would never be any agreement or understanding with anyone on the removal of the population of German or any other nationality.⁴³²

It is important to underline that during the communist regime, the Muslim Turkish-Tatar community in Romania witnessed, as well as the entire population of the country and along with other existing minorities, the consequences of a totalitarian regime that carefully supervised and censored any form of religious manifestation and freedom of each individual. The surveillance of the Muslim community and political censorship continued until December 1989. Actually, the communist regime censored all the religion-related realities of the country throughout its forty-five year reign. It created an artificial loyalty and obedience to the regime as the cults and churches in Romania wanted to ensure their physical and institutional survival in the context of an atheistic and incapable regime to respect the fundamental rights of the people⁴⁸³

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Csata Istvan, *Evolution of the Hungarian Population In Romania-Results and Methodological* ■[Napoca, Institutul Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2008, p. 43. ant, op.cit., p. 117.

Tănașe, "Comunitatea musulmana turco-tatara din Romania. Dificultăți de exprimare identitară: perioada comunistă ("The Turkish-Tatar Muslim Community in Romania. Difficulties of Identity-sion in the Communist Period)", Adriana Cupcea (ed.), *Turcii și Tătarii din Dobrogea (Turks and Tatars in Dobruja)*, Institutul Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, Cluj-Napoca, 2015, pp.

Ceauşescu, the last ruler of the communist regime in Romania, sowed the seeds for the 1989 revolution and had a tragic end as a consequence of his persecution of ethnic minorities, failed economic policies, and inability to establish any real legitimacy.



Chapter VII] The Place of the Turkish Community in the Turkish-Romanian Relations

8.1. Estab
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Under after the 1989 Revolution in Romania

ishment of the Representative Organizations of the Turkish-Tatar

the communist regime all minorities were oppressed in one way or another for almost 50 years. As elaborated in the previous chapter, existing privileges of Hungarians and Germans like having schools, newspapers and publishing in mother tongue in the 1950s were taken away cne by one. Hungarian minority claimed that the etatist governmental system abolished inherently autonomous Hungarian economic and cultural institutions within a very brief period of time between 1944 and 1953, and terminated the activities of organizations standing outside the structures of the party state or communist ideology.⁴³³ Likewise, Turkish schools, associations, newspapers and magazines were closed down as well. Most of the religious and cultural activities were not allowed.⁴³⁴ Turkish and Tatar children were obliged to attend the Romanian schools making them forget their mother tongue. In the last years of Ceausescu' s regime even Turkish traditional music and folkloric dances were not aired on radio and tv.

Worse than that, many Muslim intellectuals or educated people were put into jail or executed in the Stalinist era due to their allegedly involvement in illegal activities on the way of the Crimean independence or Turkish union under the Soviets' pressure. For instance, the leading Tatai nationalist Necip Hacı Fazıl and his friends were declared traitors for their activities. He was soon arrested by the security forces in 1948 and his dead body was given back to his falmily five days later. Many were sentenced to 5-20 year imprisonments. One of them was Tu rkish language teacher in Mangalia, Mehmet Vani, who was kept in prison for five years between 1952 and 1957.⁴³⁵ The Turkish-Tatar minority, this divide in fact is a product of the communist regime, was put into an assimilation process. The ones who desired

⁴⁸⁴ Mihaly Zolta^n Popular Union and Minority L Colorado Atlantii
⁴⁸⁵ Osman Horul Türkleri (A Sır^L Balkan Türkleri Asam Yayinevi
⁴⁸⁶ Mehmet H.¹

Nagy,' 'Representing National Minority Interests in the Shadow of the Red Flag. The Hungarian çf Romania as an Agency of Interest Advocacy, 1944-1953", Attila Gabor Hunyadi (ed.), *State i Transylvania, 1918-1989, Studies on the History of the Hungarian Community, Hungary, ic Research and Publications, Inc, 2012, p. 320.*
ita, "Kuzey ve Batı Türklüğünün Kesişme Noktasmda Küçük Bir Türk Topluluğu: Romanya ;1 Turkish Community at the Conjunction of Northern and Western Turkism: Romanian Turks)", *Balkanlardaki Türk Varlığı (Balkan Turks and the Turkish Presence in the Balkans), Ankara, 2003, p. 156.*
/ani Yurtsever, *Dobruca'nın Dawuşı (Rise of Dobruja), op.cit., pp. 242-243.*

to leave for Turkey were not given permission or deterred by heavy financial costs.⁴³⁶ The regime did not abolish *Mufliate* or locally established Religious Committees, but, the official atheist policy gradually weakened the authority of these institutions on the Muslim community as the young generation developed a reservation towards practising their religion in their everyday lives.⁴³⁷

The fall of the communist regime in December 1989, because of the popular protest, did not lead an immediate opening of political power to civil society forces in the country. Ion Iliescu's National Salvation Front (NSF), the political party that was regarded among the second echelon of the regime and had been split from Ceaușescu, organised itself quickly, and took over the state administration effectively preventing the disintegration of political control.⁴³⁸ However, the new democratic era was promising for the minorities, including Turkish and Tatar communities, to rediscover their identity-specific values and symbols. In other words, they captured a historic chance to re-own their cultural and religious codes, which was granted to them by the new constitutional adopted in 1991.

The new Romanian Constitution stipulates that Romania is the common and indivisible homeland of all its citizens regardless of race, ethnic origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, political allegiance, wealth, or social origin (Article 4, para. 2) Furthermore, with the Article 6 under the title of "the Right to Identity", the state recognizes and guarantees for members of the national minorities the right to preserve, develop, and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity. The protective measures taken by the state to preserve, develop, and express the identity of the members of the national minorities shall be in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination in relation to the other Romanian citizens. While the constitution asserts that the language of instruction, on all levels, is the Romania language (Article 32 para.2), it also ensures in the following third paragraph that the right of members of ethnic minorities to learn their mother tongue and the right to be

⁴³⁶ Giray Saynur Bozkurt, "Geçmişten Günümüze Romanya'da Türk Varlığı (Turkish Presence in Romania from Past to Today), *Karadeniz Araştırmaları (Black Sea Studies)*, Vol. 5, No. 17, Spring 2008, p. 13. See also, Müstecip Ülküsal, "Balkan Yarımadası'ndaki Türkler (Turks in the Balkan Peninsula)", *Emel*, No. 72, September-October 1972, p. 4. Mariana Cojoc, "Anul 1953 in istoria tatarilor dobrogeni (Year 1953 in the History of the Tatar Dobruja)", M. Cojoc (ed.), *Tatarii in istoria romanilor (Tatars in Romanian History)*, Constanta, Muntenia, 2004, p. 161-282. Valentin Ciorbea, Laura Stancu, Amet Aledin (eds.), *Tatarii În Izvoare Archivistice Romanești Vol 1 (The Tatars In Roman Archivist Sources Vol I)*, Constanta, Ex Ponto, 2011.

⁴³⁷ Adriana Cupcea, "Dobruja's Muslim Community: From the Medgidia Muslim Seminary to the Medgidia Kemal Atatürk National College", Cupcea, Adriana, Marin Manuela, Omer Metin, (eds). *The Muslim Seminary of Medgidia-Documents and Memory*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2016, p. 214.

⁴³⁸ Graeme Gill, *Democracy and Post-Communism: Political Change in the Post-Communist World*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 66.

taught in this language are guaranteed; the means of exercising these rights are established by law. On top of that, Article 29 under the headline of "Freedom of Conscience" declares that all religions are free and organized in accordance with their own statutes, under the terms defined by the law and adds that the religious sects are autonomous in relation to the state and

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Having the strong constitutional support behind them, the Turkish and Tatar communities were accepted officially as two distinct ethnic minorities, and were treated at the same level with other 16 national minorities. They immediately started to reconstruct and restore their cultural, religious and educational institutions and heritage. As stated earlier, the communist regime tried its best to deepen the minor differences between the two groups using the terminology of Turks and Tatars instead of just Turks. This classification was in contradiction with the conventional jargon used in the past since all Muslim groups were used to be called as Turks. The regime targeted to destroy the cohesiveness and unity of members of an ethnic group whose religion, culture and language are the same, and thus to eliminate a possible threat to its totalitarian rule even though they were the most loyal minority to the Romanian state.

Against this background, the Turks and Tatars of Dobruja yet came up with the idea of creating a single ethnic institution which would represent a united Muslim minority. In early 1990, they managed to establish it under the name of the Turkish Muslim of Romania Democratic Union (*Uniunea Demócrata Turca Musulmana din România or UDTMR*). Its main community, purpose was to make sure that they were granted national minority status as a single ethnic

e. the Turkish national minority, though seven out of ten members of the constituent group were Tatar origin. The two communities were deemed two groups sharing the same ethnicity known as the Turks and Tatars. The decision to bring them together under one name and a single organization was determined by historical and cultural reasons, e.g. shared belonging to Islam and having Turkic origins and linguistic affinities between the two groups. The Tatar language was described as a dialect of the Turkish language.⁴³⁹

The stated goal of the Union was two-fold in terms of ethnic and religious. In line with this, the immediate preoccupations were to reorganize Turkish-language education, the religion, to reopen the mosques closed during communism and the Medgidia Muslim Seminary. The reopening of the seminary was prerequisite for the revitalization of the Muslim

:ea, Turk, Tatar, or Turko-Tatar. *Challenges to the Identities of Dobruja Turks and Tatars in S/n*, op.cit., p. 41.

clergy, of the Muslim community's religious life and an important step towards reviving Turkish-language education.

Beyond the understanding of being a single community, this first umbrella organization for the Muslim community did not include "Tatar" word on purpose because it sought for the material and moral support from the Turkish state; the mother-state of the Turkish ethnic group and protective state as seen by the Tatar ethnic group, but also from other Muslim states in the Arab world, namely from *ummah* or the international Muslim community. Tatars accepted unreservedly the umbrella name of Turk to refer to the Romanian Turko-Tatar population. UDTMR had however a short life. In early 1990, it split into two organizations: the Turkish Ethnic Minority Union of Romania (*Uniunea Minoritatii Etnice Turce din Romania* or *UMETR*), later renamed the Democratic Turkish Union of Romania (*Uniunea Democrata Turca din Romania* or *UDTR*), and the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars of Romania (*Uniunea Democrata a Tatarilor Turco-Musulmani din Romania* or *UDTTMR*).⁴⁴⁰

Despite frequent calls for unity among the Turks and Tatars, a conflict related to the appointment of *Mufti* arose between the communities in a very short period of time and caused the first break up. Iacub Mehmet, the veteran Tatar *Mufti* for more than four decades, was representing the old communist era, and was quickly dismissed from his post following the revolution. As a natural end of Tatars' more focus and interest in the religious sphere, Tatars were traditionally occupying the post of the *Mufti* in the past. In parallel, most of *imams* were too Tatar origin. In the new democratic era, some Turks claimed that the post of *Muftiate* should be given to them to balance the influence of the Tatars in the religious hierarchy. Eventually Mustafa Ali Mehmet, a Turkish graduate of the Seminary in Medgidia, was proposed as a candidate to the post of *Mufti*. Unsurprisingly, this move met with a harsh reaction by the Tatar *imams* triggering their rapid announcement of the appointment of Ibrahim Ablachim, a Tatar origin *imam* as the new *Mufti*. Hence, the first joint organization of the two communities came to end.⁴⁴¹

In due course, Turkey intervened in the conflict and sent an Islamic delegation to Romania to mediate between the two communities. In the presence of this delegation the Islamic Council (*Şura-i Islam*) appointed an ethnic Tatar, Negeat Osman, as the new *Mufti*,

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

⁴⁴¹ Tasin Gemil, "Iniintarea Uniunii Democrate a Tatarilor Turco-Musulmani din Romania (The Origins of the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars in Romania)", Tasin Gemil, Nagy Pienaru (eds.), *Moştenirea istorică a tatarilor* (The historical legacy of the Tartars), Vol. II, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei Române, 2012, p. 354.

while, in the summer of 1990, the position of chief advisor of *the Muftiate* was filled by a leader of the opposing Turkish party.⁴⁴²

After this incident, though some ethnic Turks manifested their wish to create their own organization and a sphere of influence independent of Tatars, most of the Tatar leaders continued to voice to maintain the unity of Turks and Tatars under the umbrella name of the Turkish ethnic minority made up of Turks and Turko-Tatars, the latter being used in this context to refer to the Tatar ethnic group.⁴⁴³ The arguments put forward were their shared belonging to the Turkic world Islam, their shared history and not least the phenomenon of mixed marriages, all of them emphasized as similarities that would place the Turks and Tatars within the same community, with one single body representing them officially. The unity of two communities was *sine qua non* condition for enabling Turkish and Tatar ethnic and linguistic identity. All this indicated that Tatar elite positioned itself within Turkey's sphere of influence in their discourse.⁴⁴⁴

There was also a political dimension to the conflict between the two organizations. Although only UDTTMR participated in the first post-1990 Parliamentary elections, the two minorities had each their own deputy seat in the first post-communist legislature.⁴⁴⁵ Namely, Tasin Gemil was elected a deputy representing UDTTMR and upon repeated requests by UMETR, the Validation Committee of the Chamber of Deputies also considered Amet Hoge's candidacy. After it made it clear that there was a problem with the ethnic name of one of the two organizations, since the law did not allow that one national minority be represented by more than one deputy, UDTTMR leaders added that the ethnonym Tatar to their name. As a result, as of July 1990, they were officially known as the Democratic Union of Tatar Turkish Muslims of Romania (UDTTMR). Finally, in July 1990, the Validation Committee voted the validation of both deputies: Tasin Gemil as representative of the Tatar Turkish Muslims and Amet Hoge as representative of the Turkish Ethnic Minority.⁴⁴⁶

After the 1990 split, since UDTR and UDTTMR were the only two organizations granted official status by the Romanian Government, which had the right to appoint a representative to the Parliament, they took up the role of representative organizations of the two communities. They could get financial resources from the state to preserve and develop

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁴⁵ Karadeniz, Y.

⁴⁴⁶ Adriana Cupcea, Year I, Iss. No. 2, May 1990, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Kader Özlent, Bursa, ea, op.cit., pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴⁸ Özlent, Bursa, Türkiye'nin Balkan Türkleri Politikası (1991-2014) (Turkey's Balkan Turks Policy (1991-2014), Dora Baş, İstanbul-Yayın Dağıtım Ltd. Şti, 2016, pp. 328-329.

⁴⁴⁹ Adriana Cupcea, op.cit., p. 42.

the minority, to identify cultural activities and support their education. The two unions are therefore the main access way for Romanian Turks and Tatars to policies meant to protect them. Nevertheless, overlapping identities of Turks and Tatars survived the split. UDTR defines itself as an organization of ethnic Turkish Romanian citizens, however, UDTTMR uses different inconsistent terms Turk, Tatar and Turko-Tatar in its official papers. The Tatar identity discourse fluctuates between the broad Turkish aspect and their distinct ethnicity, which further shows the Tatar identity is currently under construction. UDTTMR name includes the term Turkish Muslim and it is not a label but an acknowledgement of this aspect of their identity, i.e. Tatars belong to the Tatar Turkish Muslim category.⁴⁴⁷

8.2. Turkey's Relations with the Turkish-Tatar communities in Dobruja in the aftermath of the Communist Era

The communist regime in Romania instigated a long break in bilateral relations with Turkey. Romania under the Soviet's clout was in the opposite camp with Turkey, which already became a flank member of NATO in 1952. This cold war blocking was reflected naturally to the lives of the Turkish community of Romania. They were neglected culturally, socially and economically under the pressure of socialist policies and programmes, and always suspected of collaborating with the external powers by the regime. They were even left without any educational institution by the closure of the Medgidia Muslim Seminary in 1967. However, in the post-revolution period the Muslim community found an opportunity to revive their ethnic and religious values. At this point, Turkey played an important role by supporting the minority in various ways without neglecting good relations with the Romanian governments.

Turkey's interest in the Muslim minority in Romania overlapped with its new active policy which was inaugurated following the fall of the iron curtain in 1991. The end of the cold war and the demise of the Soviet Union opened new channels for Turkey to reach his long forgotten ancestors, mainly in the Central Asia and the Caucasus regions, but also in the Balkans. Turkish decision makers reached a conclusion that Turkey's former strategic value in the West has substantially decreased. The newly born republics in the former Soviet Union created a potential sphere of influence. For these emerging independent nations, Turkey could be a model with its democratic and secular identity and its developing free-market economy.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

This role as a model country was encouraged by Turkey's Western allies with the expectation that Turkey's influence would limit the roles of Russia and Iran in the region.⁴⁴⁸

Pan-Turkist and religious-nationalist groups in Turkey started to campaign for advocating bloc of Turkish nations under Turkey's leadership, which eventually would bring Turkish primacy among Muslim nations. Mainstream Turkish politicians quickly grasped the opportunity to paint a bright picture of a new Turkish world stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the Chinese wall with Turkey at its centre, and the late Turkish President Turgut Ozal further claimed that the 21st century would be the Turkish century.⁴⁴⁹ This led also Turkey to pursue a foreign policy of tightening relations with the former Ottoman territories in its near abroad. It meant to protect the cultural, religious heritage and the *Hanafi* religious practice in the Balkans. This new foreign policy was called Neo-Ottomanism in the West, even though Turkish politicians never used this term as it negatively associates with imperialism. This was just a process whereby Turkey's geopolitical imaginary and the new opportunities in the global political system allowed the people of the region to reconcile with their history and geography.⁴⁵⁰

Within the scope and aims of its new foreign policy stated above, Turkey had a particular interest in the Muslim minority in Dobruja though its population decreased significantly since 1878. As of 1992, 29.533 Turks and 24.649 Tatars lived in Romania amounting 54.182 which meant 0.2% of the total Romanian population.⁴⁵¹ The latest census conducted in 2011 showed these figures even more diminished. According to this survey (28.226 Turks) and 20.464 Tatars live in Romania totaling 48.690 people.⁴⁵² No matter how many Turks and Tatars lived in Dobruja or Romania, Turkey considered them as a historical legacy to be preserved and promoted in line with its reopening policy to the surrounding region.

& Pinar Akpınar, "The Relations Between Turkey and the Caucasus", *Perceptions of International Affairs*, Iss. Autumn 2011, pp. 53-68.

Kara, Turgut Özal ve Türk Dünyası- Türkiye-Türk Cumhuriyetleri İlişkileri 1983-1993 (Turgut World-Relations between Turkey and Turkic Republics), Istanbul, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık,

"Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey", *Perceptions of International Affairs*, Vol. XVI, 5-25.

Bozkurt, *op.cit.*, p. 9. See also, Robert Stanciugel, Liliana Monica Balaşa. "Crimean Tatars in Romania in Secolele VII-XIX. Evolutie istorica", Bucureşti, Editura DC Promotions, 2005. "Aspects of Spiritual Life of the Turkish-Tatar Community in Dobrudja (1913-5) (with two Turks and Tatars in Romania according to censuses from 1889 to 2011)", *op.cit.*, p. 809.

It should also be noted that Turkey did not and still does not differentiate between Turks and Tatars, in extending its help and assistance in a wide-range spectrum. Whether they are Turkish or Tatar, the Muslims of Dobruja enjoy the help of the Republic of Turkey, being seen

⁵⁰⁰ **Bülent Aran**
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⁵⁰¹ **Abdulahap K Özal and Turkish 2012, p. 179.**

⁵⁰² **İbrahim Kali i, Nr. 3, 2011, pp. 5**

⁵⁰³ **Giray Saynur**

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⁵⁰⁴ **Stoica Laser, appendices: the**



as part of the Turkish diaspora abroad and perceived in need for support. As far as the Tatars are concerned, Turkey takes into consideration of having common origin, belonging to the Turkish peoples' family. Its spiritual and material support to them remains uninterrupted.

On the other hand, in today's world the Crimean and Dobrujan Tatars still regard Turkey as their motherland (*Ata Yurt*) and sacred land (*Ak Toprak*) since Turkey undertook the role of protector of all Tatars living in any part of the world morally, culturally, spiritually, politically, diplomatically and as much as possible economically.⁴⁵³ As a matter of fact, they think that the identities of the two communities are same. Islamic religion, similar cultural habits, inherent intent on combating ethnic assimilation on a foreign land justifies the sense of affiliation to a single identity that some of the Tatars subscribe to. From such a perspective, marriages between the Turks and the Tatars are not categorized as mixed families. Furthermore, a common Turkish-Tatar identity is deeply internalized by millions of Tatars immigrated to Turkey.⁴⁵⁴ The faith of Islam in defining the Tatars and Turks of Dobruja is one of the most important bridges to Turkey. While Romania is seen as the homeland, Turkey plays the role of the Protecting State.⁴⁵⁵

However, there is another prevailing view among some Dobrujan Tatars that there is a fine distinction between the Turks and Tatars. In their opinion, even though Tatars are known and labeled as Turks or Crimean Tatar-Turks by Turkey, they have a different identity emanating from their roots from Crimea, not from Anatolia. This group claims that even though most Tatar families send their children to Turkish courses rather than Tatar language courses in Dobruja, they still live in their separate neighbourhood.⁴⁵⁶ This suggestion of creating a different identity for the Tatars is understandable in the sense that it expresses a legitimate fear of assimilation for not having an independent national state in Crimea. Tasin Gemil considers that the population of the Tatars must be higher than the one registered in the 2011 census as 20-25% of them declared themselves as Turk instead of Tatar. This is the natural result of the fear that was created by the oppression of the Russians over Tatars in their homeland, Crimea for ages.⁴⁵⁷ Whereas, this line of thinking carries inconsistencies embodied in itself as there are no clear specific features separating Turks and Tatars, except their birth places. Tatars are regarded as a branch of larger Turkish family, and during their

⁴⁵³ Tasin Gemil, "Probleme identitare actuale la tatarii dobrogeni (Current Identity Problems for Tatars in Dobruja)", *Sinteza*, No. 24, January 2016, p. 82.

⁴⁵⁴ Sinziana Preda, "Turcia: imagini ale moștenirii culturale (Turkey: Images of Cultural Heritage)", Adriana Cupcea (ed.), *Turcii și tatarii din Dobrogea (Turks and Tatars in Dobruja)*, Cluj-Napoca, Institutul Pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minoritatilor Nationale, 2015, p. 317.

⁴⁵⁵ Nureddin ibram, *Musulmani din Romania*, Constanta, Golden, 2007, p. 163.

⁴⁵⁶ Tasin Gemil, *op.cit.*, p. 86.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 82.

long journey in history either they sided with the Turks against enemies or sheltered in the Turkish lands while escaping the

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genocidal attacks of the Russians. When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, most Tatars again sought the political support of Turkey. Regardless of the nature of the political regimes that have succeeded in both Romania and Turkey, the latter has always given support to the "lost sons" without discriminating between Tatars and Turks. As always in the past, but in fewer numbers during the communist regime, they were welcomed as migrants with open arms in Turkey.⁴⁵⁸ The communist regime prevented the development of the identity of the national minorities in Romania, beginning from the ones with smaller size. Tatars had a special situation because they could not refer to a national state of origin. To its credit, Turkey assumed the task of filling the space by taking the Tatars under her protection and treating them as their own compatriots, the preservation of the national identity of the Crimean Tatars, primarily those living in Romania, is due to largely this assumed role of protection of Turkey says Gemil pointing at the dilemma or confusion of identity that some Tatars live through.⁴⁵⁹

It is undeniable fact that the Turks and Tatars intermingled with each other through ages and Turkey as a mother or protector state treated them on equal foot. After the democratic forces came to power in Romania, both communities in Dobruja looked for Turkey's help in reconstructing their minority rights. This search of the roots of their identity coincided with the Turkey's new visionary foreign policy objectives in which all Turkish origin people in the Balkans, Central Asia or Caucasus regions would be supported in every possible means. This convergence of needs and means brought about Turkey's increasing involvement in the revival of religious, cultural and educational lives of the Turkish-Tatar communities in Romania.

Before dwelling into the details of the Turkish assistance to the Dobrujan Muslims, it is worth mentioning that Romanian authorities cooperated with Turkey in good intent by facilitating the works of the Turkish representatives or institutions. One of the many reasons behind this collaboration was that Romania needed Turkey's political support to consolidate its new democratic regime. Secondly, its economy was starving for foreign investors, and the closest country that could send its business people to Romania in a very short time happened

⁴⁵⁸ Sinziana Prida, *op.cit.*, pp. 316-317.

⁴⁵⁹ Sinziana Ionescu, "Fascinanta istorie a turcilor și tatarilor din Romania: de la stapanii Dobrogei otomane la supușii unei țări ortodoxe (The fascinating history of the Turks and Tartars in Romania: from the Ottoman Dobruja masters to the subjects of an Orthodox country)", <http://adevarul.ro/locale/constantia/fascinanta-istorie-turcilor-tatarilor-romania/stapanii-dobrogee-otomane-supusii-tarii-ortodoxe-154df44f2448e03c0fd9a10ee/index.html>, 14 February 2015

to be Turkey. In addition, the most importantly, Turkey had historical, cultural and religious



affinity with the Muslim minority living in Dobruja, who tried to reorganize and assert themselves as one of the national minorities. The Turkish model with its moderate and secular features was more fitting to the Muslim minority as a continuation of its historical evolution. It was preferable to the neo-conservative Islam steady grew in the world and tried to penetrate into the Balkan countries under the strong support of Saudi Arabia and some other Arab countries. Turkey tried to fight against their influence and protect the *Hanafi Sunni Islam* also known as the Ottoman Islam specific to the former Ottoman-administered Balkan territories.⁴⁶⁰ The *imams*, trained in Arab countries, had absorbed the neo-conservative mostly *Salafi* teachings and the austere way of life promoted by the doctrine, which had very little in common with the *Hanafi* Ottoman tradition as it had survived in Dobruja, in the secular context of the Romanian communist regime.⁴⁶¹

As a result, some new forms and practices of worship emerged in Dobruja, which came into conflict with the existing religious practices and in general with the local religious Islamic identity as it had developed under the impact of the communist regime. In this context, the reopening of the Seminary in Medgidia expressed the Muslim community's need to adapt to the latest developments.⁴⁶² The Muslim community leaders emphasized the importance of reopening the Muslim Seminary in the context of emerging radical Islamist movements. The seminary would train *hodjas* locally, thus ensuring the continuation of the local religious tradition and providing a means to fight radical doctrines coming from the Arab Muslim World.

However, the most urgent problem for the community was the shortage and the ageing of the Muslim clergy at the beginning of the 1990s. Since the seminary was closed in 1967, it did not graduate any *imams* for almost 40 years. Due to the lack of *imams*, Friday and *Bayram* prayers, and basic religious rituals such as circumcisions and funerals could not be performed in rural areas, and even remote mosques were shut down for not having an *imam*. The problem of the shortage of *imams* presented a risk for the very future of the Muslim community.

8.3. The Turkish Support to the Dobrujan Muslim Minority in the Field of Education

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Adriana Cupcea, "Dobruja's Muslim Community: From the Medgidia Muslim Seminary to the Medgidia Kemal Ataturk National College", *op.cit.*, 2016, p. 228.

⁴⁶¹ Kerem Oktem, *New Islamic Actors after Wahhabi Intermezzo: Turkey's return to the Muslim Balkans*, European Studies Centre Oxford, University of Oxford, 2010, p. 19.

⁴⁶² Adriana Cupcea, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

The first initiative by Turkey as regards to the Muslim community was taken in the field of education in the form of reopening the historical institution in Medgidia. In fact, the Turkish ns were acting in unity on its reopening and already followed the matter through at the official level assisted by the Turkish diplomatic missions. As a



corollary of those efforts, the Ministry of Education and the State Secretary for Religions approved the reopening of the Muslim Theological High School in Medgidia starting with school year 1993-1994.⁴⁶³ Constanta County School District provided the former dorms of the Nicolae Balcescu High School in Medgidia, while the Ministry of Education provided a significant sum of money for the renovation of the building. The seminary was reopened through an Order of the Minister and technically operated as a section of the Nicolae Balcescu High School in Medgidia for two years (1993-1995). The duration of the program was four years and the students were at first enrolled as students of the Nicolae Balcescu High School and then attended classes in the former dorms of the high school.⁴⁶⁴ Those students who had been admitted to other high schools during the 1993 session of exams and wished to attend the Muslim Theological Seminary had to take a new admission exam and, if they failed, they could resume their places in the high-schools that had already admitted them. The Romanian Muslim community was to provide the teachers for specialized disciplines, namely Islamic Theology and Turkish language, by hiring qualified teachers, while Constanta County School District was to appoint teachers for History and Romanian Language and Literature.

In 1955, an official protocol was signed between Turkey and Romania to reopen the seminary. And the name of the school was determined as Teacher and Theological Education High School Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Medgidia as it was later renamed Kemal Atatürk National College because of the Turkish contribution to the reopening of the institution. At the signing ceremony the Turkish Ambassador to Bucharest, Yaman Başkut pointed out that the Turkish and Tatar communities could play an important role in strengthening the Romanian-Turkish relations, emphasizing the importance of maintaining friendly relations with both the host country and the homeland for the preserving of the cultural identity of the two ethnic communities. In his speech, the Romanian signatory to the Protocol, Minister of Education Liviu Maior stated that he had always been an advocate of the their minorities' right to education in mother tongue and that, as a history professor, he wanted that the high school should bear name of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.⁴⁶⁵

it Garlan, *Metodologia cercetării etnopsihologice (Methodology of Ethnopsychological Research)*, 11, p. 285. 8.
 sjeam, "Tatari", Gido Attila (ed.), *Cronologia Minorităților Naționale din România (Chronology Romania)*, Vol. 2, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Institutului Pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților, pp. 223-226.

According to the First Article of the said protocol, the school is defined as the state school for the Turkish and Turkish-Tatar minority in Romania. The Second Article emphasizes the historical role of the Muslim Seminary in Medgidia and it commands the way of education in the new school should be organized to continue the traditions of the old seminary. The Third Article states that the school teaches grades 1 through 12, with grades 1 through 8 taught according to the general *curriculum*, with the possibility of learning in addition Turkish Language and Islam, and grades 9 through 12 taught according to specific theological and teacher education *curricula*, with the teaching carried out in the students' mother tongue, religious courses included. Article Four further adds that the *curriculum* of the theological education will be prepared by *the Muftiate* with the approval of the Ministry of Education and the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs. Article Five includes that the graduates of the school will take the baccalaureate exams upon completing the 12th grade and enjoy all the rights granted to other Romanian high school graduates. In addition to the baccalaureate degree, each graduate of the Theological and Teacher Education programs will receive a professional certification as a Muslim cleric or as a preschool/ primary school teacher in the case of those completing the Teacher Education program. Article Six stipulates that the costs with accommodation, meals, clothes and school supplies for the students will be covered by the Turkish party. The Turkish language and religious textbooks will be provided by the Turks, while the Romanians provide the textbooks for the other lessons which are taught in Romanian. The Romanian authorities will also bear the cost of day-to-day maintenance of the premises and the salaries of the faculty, administrative and maintenance staff. Article Nine conditions that the Turkish party is to furnish the school and to provide the teaching materials at its own expense, with the help of the School District. The Turks will issue documents waiving any financial contribution from the Romanian party, while the latter is to issue documents waiving any customs duty for said furnishings. Article Ten of the Protocol regulates the appointing, salaries and further training of specialized teachers. The Turkish side will provide the teachers of Turkish and religion. These teachers will receive the same salaries as the Romanian teachers with equivalent education and work experience. And Article Eleven allows the Turkish party to name the Assistant Principal of the school among the teachers it sends. His salary will be paid by Turkey.⁴⁶⁶

Reopening of the symbolic educational institution of the Dobrujan Muslims in 1995 with Turkey's contribution constitutes a perfect example of good relations between Turkish

⁴⁶⁶ Adriana Cupcea, Marin Manuela, Omer Metin, (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 519-520.

and Romanian governments. By this joint venture, Romania delivered the right of Turkey to become an active player in reviving the ethnic and religious identity of the Muslim minority.

In the following years, the Turkish assistance to the Kemal Atatürk College in Medgidia gradually increased and diversified. As the school had two major aims of raising Islamic clergy and Turkish language teachers (After Romania joined the EU in 2007, the Romanian authorities put the pre-condition of graduating from a University to become a teacher in line with the EU standards), both branches benefited from the Turkish help in different forms and sizes. Pursuant to a protocol signed in 2006 with the *Muftiate* of Romania, Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) bore the cost of meals of all boarded students who were in theology branch and gave monthly scholarships to them. The same Turkish Institution also provided extra payments to all teachers of the school including the Principal as a small contribution to their salaries. Some graduates were given scholarships to continue their high education in the universities of Turkey in the field of

religious studies. The Religious Affairs Attaché at the Consulate General of Turkey is the contact point of organizing these assistance

The Attaché also organizes a campaign of delivering tons of meat of the sacrificed animals during the Sacrifice Fest (*Kurban Bayramı*) to the boarded students at the school. This is consumed by the school during whole year.⁴⁶⁷

Turkey's support to the Muslim community of Dobruja in the field of education also

of sending teaching materials including textbooks in Turkish. Turkish teachers were taken to the training courses to excel their skills and to increase their experience of teaching either in Romania or Turkey in collaboration with the Romanian authorities. Cognizant of importance of teaching the Turkish language to the minority and taking into consideration the level of demand in this field, Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers were opened in Bucharest and Constanta in 2011. Inauguration of the Turkish cultural centers in Romania facilitated the minority members or any Romanian citizens to have the chance of learning Turkish from the experts sent by Turkey. They teach Turkish not only at their premises attracting many students, but also send their teachers to some schools and universities on the basis of bilateral protocols signed with them. Andrei Țăgălaș University in Constanta is one of the educational institutions which approached the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center to open a Turkish language class at the university in 2014. This cooperation turned into a big success with joint efforts of the related institutions supported by the moral

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.ivedigitimkultur.org/romanya-kemal-ataturk-ulusal-koleji/> (accessed on June 28th, 2019).

encouragement of the Turkish Consulate General in Constanta. The center also signed a cooperation protocol with



Ovidius University in Constanta in 2015, which had already a Turkish Language Department seconded by a teacher by the Turkish state. However, it could not be materialized in due course because of some administrative changes occurred at the university. The Cultural Center in Constanta undertakes some joint projects with the Kemal Atatürk College in Medgidia and the local educational authorities, needless to say including the Turkish and Tatar Associations like organizing competitions in the field of reciting Turkish poems in a best way or holding dance and music shows related to the Turkish culture.⁴⁶⁸

Opening of these centers tantamounts to an important milestone for the teaching of Turkish language in reaching out large public audience and also represents a remarkable achievement for the cultural diplomacy efforts on the Turkish side. Both centers organize many cultural activities ranging from celebrations of important days for both countries including the anniversary of death of the Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu to the introduction of a new book to the Romanian public. They act as a cultural bridge between the two peoples holding joint shows, programmes and activities. All these activities or programmes are supported by the Embassy or Consulate of Turkey in different forms, either by direct participation or moral support or by sharing the financial cost.

In the field of education, there are scholarships for both undergraduate and graduate students provided by Presidency for the Turkish Diaspora and Kindred Communities (*Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı*) giving young people access to Turkish universities. These scholarships cover both religious and secular studies such as philology, economics or technical fields. While scholarships were previously being provided within the framework of bilateral agreements signed with other states; especially with the support of the late President Turgut Özal, international student policy of Turkey was systematized for the first time in 1992 and a project titled as "Great Student Project" was initiated. After the establishment of the Institution of the Turkish Diaspora and Kindred Communities in 2010, it has been tasked to implement the program of "Turkey Scholarships".⁴⁶⁹

Turkey scholarships are advertised widely through the Turkish Embassy in Bucharest, the Turkish General Consulate in Constanta, and the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in the country. The graduates of the Kemal Atatürk College -regardless of their specialization- are part of the target group for these scholarships. The benefits are very attractive for students as the scholarship covers tuition fees, accommodation and meals, plus 300 US Dollars per

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Ali Oğuzhan Yüksel, Former Director of the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in Constanta, 20 December 2016.

⁴⁶⁹ <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/en/international-students/turkey-scholarships>.

month and two return tickets from Turkey to their home country per year, one at the beginning of the school year and one at the end. For both students and their families, these benefits seem to be very encouraging to apply for these scholarships.⁴⁷⁰

No matter attractive those scholarships are, the number of applicants from the Muslim minority from Romania is not high as it is expected. The main reason behind this relative failure is the effect of Romania's membership to EU as of 2007. Like most Romanian citizens, the young student⁴⁷¹ of the Turkish-Tatar communities have found much more chance and different options to receive education at the universities of the European countries. It seems much more to have a European degree than a Turkish one for the new generation. The second /ely affecting the university preference in Turkey is related to finding job after graduation. Despite the increase in demand to the Turkish language, most Dunter difficulties to find appropriate jobs for them. This problem is especially lumni of theology students of the Kemal Atatiirk College who continued their bachelor studies at the Turkish universities. These negative elements obviously make the number of applications to the Turkish universities keep at low level.⁴⁷¹

8.4. The T

urkish Support to the Dobrujan Muslim Minority in the Field of Religion

For centuries the religion of Islam has played an important role connecting Turkey to the Turkish-Tjatar communities in the region of Dobruja. Turkey was always responsive to the demands of the Muslim community in this field in order to preserve one of the columns of their cultural identity. Attachment to the religious values was the most important element for the minority to survive during the communist era. As an official institution, the *Muftiate* in Constanta is responsible for organizing and regulating the religious affairs of the Muslims. As elaborated earlier, the Turkish intervention in the field of religion, could be started with its mediation rol e between Turks and Tatars in appointing the new *Mufti* after toppling down of *the Mufti* of i he communist era, Iacub Mehmet in 1991. Turkey's mediation can primarily be attributed to its long respected leading position in the religious affairs along with its deep-rooted histor cal and political past with the region. The Romanian authorities tacitly agreed to the Turkey's re-entrance to this field as it was seen a bulwark against the extreme

⁴⁷⁰ Adriana Cupcea, 'Dobruja's Muslim Community: From the Medgidia Muslim Seminary to the Medgidia Kemal Atatürk National College', *op.cit.*, pp. 238-239.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Muhammet Bülbül, Deputy Principal of Kemal Atatürk National College in Medgidia, 21 December 2016.

interpretations of Islam which tried to penetrate into the Dobruja region. Turkey's secular and moderate understanding of Islam could prevent the Muslim minority of turning into a radical threat to the national security of Romania. Convergence of the interests of the all parties, the Turkish-Tatar minority, Romania and Turkey paved the way of increasing cooperation in the field of religion.

From the institutional perspective, the Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs (*.Diyanet işleri Başkanlığı*) in collaboration with the *Muftiate* was instrumental to deliver considerable assistance to the minority. Based on the protocol dated 2006, the Turkish party would provide financial help for the restoration of Muslim worship places, share its experiences to further train Dobruja clergy, help editing of religious books and booklets, and give religious assistance by sending clergy from Turkey to serve in Dobruja mosques alongside local *imams*.⁴⁷²

To this end, Turkey repaired many mosques in Dobruja starting from the historical ones like Gazi Ali Pasha in Babadağ, Esmahan Sultan in Mangalia and Hunkar in Constanta, Abdulmecid in Medgidia and Abdulaziz mosque in Tulcea starting from the early 1990s. In later stages, Turkey again through the same institution, built totally new mosques upon the demand of the local people and the *Muftiat* such as the one in Calarasi in 2015 or contributed financially to their construction like in Medgidia and Constanta. The carpets and other necessary materials like holy *Quran* were donated to the most of the mosques. In the same vein, 9-10 *imams* were sent to serve specifically in the historical mosques of Dobruja alongside with the local *imams* for 4 to 5 year terms. Especially in *Ramadan* (holy fasting month) months a number of clergies were dispatched to the mosques which had no local *imams*. This practice still continues today and is found helpful for transferring the Turkish experience to the minority *imams* as well as for protecting jointly the Turkish cultural heritage. On the other hand, it should be noted that there exists a certain level of resentment by the local *imams* towards the ones coming from Turkey as they do not want to be seen inferior to them in the eyes of the community. Secondly, the more important reason of this jealousy is caused by the fear of sharing their earnings on the occasions of different religious services with the Turkish *imams*, such as funerals, weddings or circumcision ceremonies. However, such sentiments are taken under control by different ways and means, like in the form of advice by the *Muftiat* at some periodical gatherings with the local *imams*. Furthermore, Turkey contributes an extra 100 US

⁴⁷² Adriana Cupcea, "Dobruja's Muslim Community: From the Medgidia Muslim Seminary to the Medgidia Kemal Atatürk National College", *op.cit.*, p. 238.

Dollars to the Salaries of the local *imams*, whose number is around 60 in 2017.⁵²⁵ This is another

financial support given by the same institution to the Dobrujan Muslims. In example of the mosques, some tombs of important religious personalities like *Sari Saltuk* and addition to *Koyun Baba* in Babadag, *Isaac Baba* in Isaacea and the Muslim cemeteries the were either restored, rehabilitated or taken under protection with fence by the assistance of the Turkish people which was collected in the mosques across Turkey. It is noteworthy that the Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs has a policy of twinning that matches a city in Turkey with another city in the Balkan countries to meet its needs. Within this context, Constanta is chosen as the sister city of Afyonkarahisar located in the West of Turkey. Under this structure, donations or charities of the people living in Afyonkarahisar are dispatched for the needs of Constanta arising in the field of religion.⁵²⁶

8.5. Role of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in Supporting the Dobrujan Turkish-Tatar Communities

With the opening of the Coordination Office of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in Bucharest in 2014, a new powerful actor for delivering assistance of Turkey to the Turkish-Tatar minority in Romania came to the fore. Established in 1992 as a technical aid organization to respond to the restructuring, adaptation and development (needs of the Turkic Republics after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, TIKA enhanced its activities to the Balkans since the beginning of the 2000s catching up with the momentum of new Turkish foreign policy vision.

In close coordination with the Turkish Embassy and the Consulate and based on General in Constanta the needs of the Muslim community in Dobruja, the Coordination Office of TIKA develops a number of projects for the minority in different areas varying from education, religious services, health, sports to sponsoring field trips for the students to Turkey and even bearing the expenditure of organizing some events of the Turkish and Tatar Associations. In this regard, TIKA undertook the rehabilitation of the building and equipping the classrooms of the kindergarten of the Kemal Ataturk College in Medgidia in 2016, later its main building in 2017 with permission of the Ministry of Education of Romania. TIKA's another project covered establishing 20 Turkish language classrooms and equipping them with modern

⁵²⁵ Kader Özle in,
⁵²⁶ Interview *op.cit.*, p. 345.

Constanta,
23.(

with Aytakin Ak?in, Former Attache for Religious Affairs at the Turkish Consulate General in
5.2015.



teaching materials at different schools in Constanta, Mangalia, Medgidia and their villages. TIKA donated 500 books in the field of mathematics to the library of the Ovidius University in Constanta and established a math laboratory at the same university in 2015. It gave financial assistance to publishing some academic books prepared by prominent scholars of Romania. It established a sport center for an orphanage in Constanta in 2016 with keeping in mind its social responsibilities for the Romanian people as well.⁴⁷³

Among the projects TIKA carried out in Romania, the ones in health sector receive a significant share. In this specific field, it signed a cooperation protocol with the Municipality of Medgidia to renovate and refurbish the city hospital in 2015 with a cost of 1.5 million Euro. It already finished the renovation of the newborn units of the Constanta hospital, and also another hospital in Bucharest in 2017. Equipping the eye unit of the Mangalia hospital with the modern devices in 2016 is another project of TIKA successfully completed in this field.⁴⁷⁴

In essence, TIKA would like to assist to the efforts of conservation of the historical legacy by projects of renovating of old mosques and buildings in Dobruja. It completed feasibility studies of renovation of Hunkar and Isaacea mosques, respectively in Constanta and Isaacea as it helped the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey on an *ad hoc* mission in the mid-1990s in restoring the San Saltuk Tomb in Babadag. The Turkish and Tatar community members always express their gratitude for the TIKA's project of putting the warming system under the carpets of the mosques in 2015, which generally do not have sufficient and efficient warming facilities in the winter season.

TIKA, like Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center and the Presidency of Religious Affairs in coordination with the Turkish diplomatic missions in Romania, aids and assists to the Muslim community as well as the Romanian people.

8.6. Support of the Turkish Businesspeople to the Muslim Community of Romania

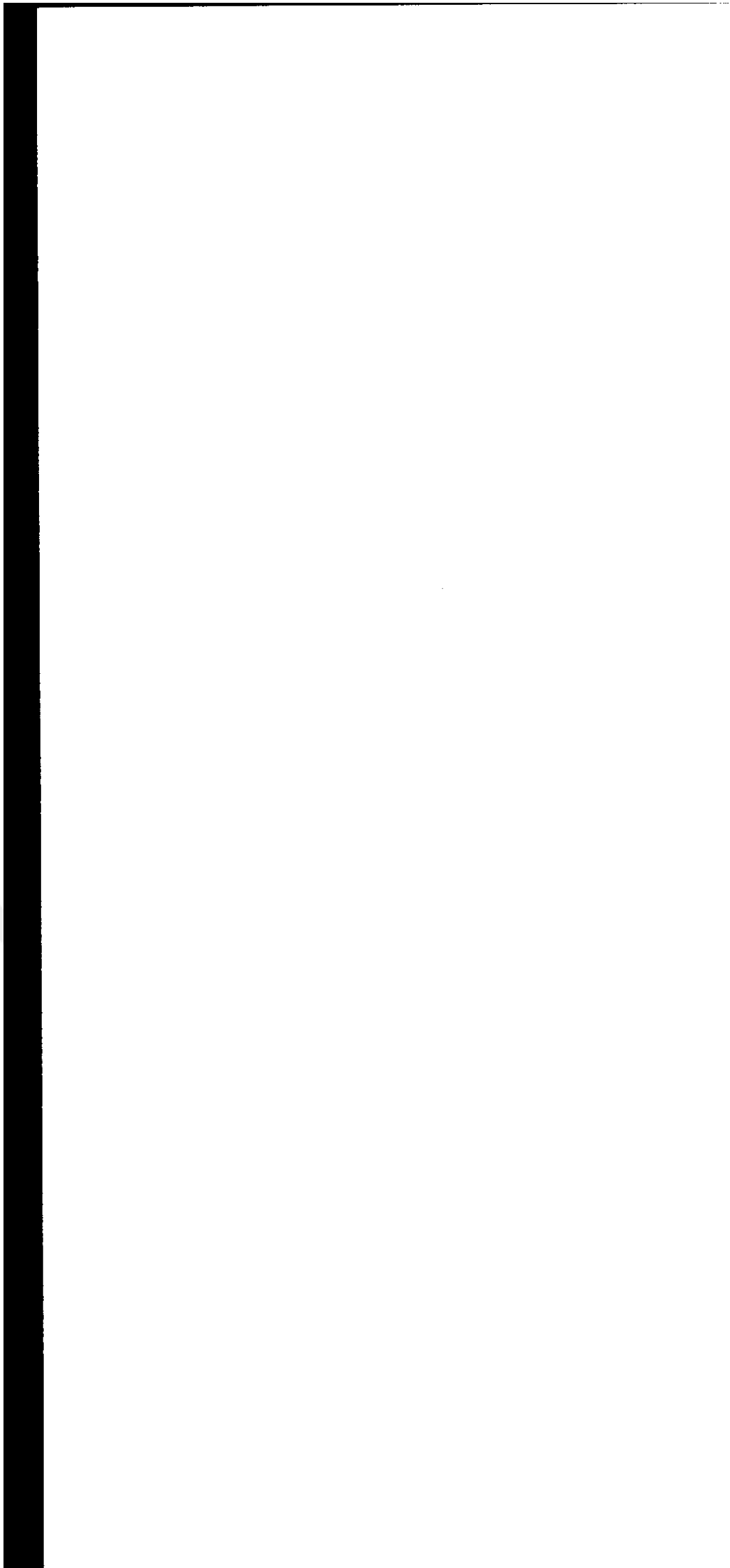
Opened up to the world at the beginning of the 1990s, the Turkish businessmen and entrepreneurs gained an influential place in Romania in a very short time. As a virgin market after the fall of communism, Romania desperately needed foreign capital. Besides, the

⁴⁷³ <http://old.qha.com.ua/tr/roportajlar/tika-nin-romanya-daki-proje-leri/146649/> (accessed June 25th, 2019).

⁵⁴ <https://ziarulamprenta.ro/sanatate/un-nou-echipament-de-ultima-generatie-pentru-spitalul-municipal-medgidia/34868/> (accessed June 25th, 2019).

unemployment rate was on a steep rise with the fast unfolding privatization process in the country. Turkish businessmen flocking into Romania established many companies creating





thousands of jobs| for the Romanian people including the members of the Muslim community. This was a win-win situation for the Turkish and Romanian economies. Since then, the Turkish companies whose number total to almost 11.000 still operate in many manufacturing p fields from restaurants to astic materials to producing flour, and from providing services such as the agricultural production. Even thoiigh their past is not very long in Romania, the Turkish businessmen started to involve in estabjishing social and cultural ties in Turkish-Tatar addition to the economic ones with the co are the mmunities through either their official associations -the most powerful ones Turkish Businessmen Association (TIAD) founded in Bucharest in 1993, and the Dobruja Businessmen Association (DTIAD) established in Constanta in 1999 - or on Turkish their capacities. TIAD having 105 members and DTIAD 56 members in 2018 3st individual important Turkish companies in Romania. There are other small size Turkish represent the m businesls associations and formations in Romania. The most notable one is the Independent Industrialist's and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD) which with or was launched in 2016 in Bucharest having 30 members around in 2018.⁴⁷⁵ It assistanc with should be noted that their activities e to the Turkish-Tatar communities are not the Turkish isolated actions. Either they consult diplomatic missions or inform them duly about their aid and assistance project.

Within this framework, from the beginning they continue to have good and close relations with the local people and respond positively to their demands in different areas. Under the guidance of the Turkish Embassy and the Consulate General they focused on allocation of financial resources to the repair of mosques-like recently in Hirsova and Kastel-, historical buildings, monuments, tombs and cemeteries. They built many *minarets* adjacent to mosques. They donated tjeaching and office materials to the Kemal Ataturk College and many other schools in Dobhija like the school in *Baçpınar* (Fantane Mare) village. generous to They always became requests coming from *the Muftiate* and the local people. In the the cost of this sense, they bore ng *if tar* (fasting breaking dinner in *Ramadan* month) havi different collectively organized in or villages. They undertook distribution campaigns of cities food packages to the poor during important religious days and feasts. They even contributed finance to the low salaries of the local *imams*. Their assistance and cooperation still continue, and they see their financial contributions not only mere charity to the needy, but

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with Zeki Uysal, Former President of the Dobruja Turkish Businessmen Association (DTİAD) in Constanta, 15.12.(2016).

also help to the works of the Turkish state which try to support the Muslim minority in every possible way.⁴⁷⁶



⁴⁷⁶ *Ibidem.*

In response to their altruistic actions, all those business associations are invited to the official celebrations of national and religious days of Turkey, as well as to the activities of the Muslim minority. Their representatives deliver speeches in front of the Turkish-Tatar community displaying their moral support to them. For instance, the commemoration event which is organized by the UDTTMR in Constanta on the occasion of the anniversary of the exile of the Crimean Tatar-Turks to the Siberia on 18 May 1944, is broadly participated each year by the leading Turkish businessmen. Needless to mention that they are always at the top of the invitee lists of the official receptions of Turkey and Romania. In sum, they are not only an economic power, but also very strong pushing force for cultural, religious and social activities of the Turks and Tatars in Romania.



Chapter IX Conclusions

As it is emphasized in the introduction part, this study intends to show how the Muslim Seminary in Babadag/Medgidia was instrumental to the Turkish community to maintain their cultural identity, and had played an important role in the Turkish-Romanian relations after Dobruja was integrated into Romania with 1878 Berlin Treaty. In the immediate aftermath of the Ottoman withdrawal from the region, the Turkish and Tatar communities were not accepted as equal citizens with the Romanians until the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. They had to immigrate in pass numbers to the motherland Turkey during the inter-war period due to many and complex reasons which are elaborated in depth in the related chapter. However, the worse would follow in the communist regime era when the Muslim minority heavily suffered from its oppressive and assimilationist policies, which eventually led to big erosion in their cultural identity and loyalty to their belief system. In this context, the closure of the seminary in 1967 signaled a darker period awaiting the Turkish Tatar community. This agonizing period ended with the regime change in Romania in 1989. Following this historic milestone, the presence of the Turkish-Tatar minorities in Romania is regarded as an asset by the Romanian and Turkish governments for improving bilateral relations. It has been registered that they are a part of Turkey's history, and they have right to transfer their genuine ethnic and religious values to the next generations born in Romania.

UDTR and UDTTMR representing officially Turkish and Tatar minorities, and other formations outside of these two organizations are cognizant of the spiritual patrimony of the Turkish culture. They demonstrate this awareness by celebrating the foundation of the Republic of Turkey (29 October), the Children's Day (23 April), Youth and Sport Day (19 May) and the Teachers' Day (24 November) including many others. The conduct of such celebrations is a dating the Turkish cultural heritage, reconfirming a specific ethnic identity. It is maintaining spiritual ties with Turkey, a means of expressing gratitude to the various forms, has supported the Dobrujan Muslim community.⁴⁷⁷ Its memory is especially honored on November 10, which is the anniversary of his passing away in 1938, by jointly conducted commemorative events with the Turkish-Tatar associations, Kemal Atatürk College and the Turkish diplomatic missions. The representatives of the minorities praise his transformative revolutions in Turkey and adoption of the Western

development plan for the Turkish nation, and stress his leading and guiding principles should be heeded as an example by their young generations.⁴⁷⁸

Kemal Atatürk National College in Medgidia by bearing the name of the founder of the Republic of Turkey holds a special place in the bilateral relations of the two countries. As the Muslim Seminary played an unprecedented role in connecting Romania and Turkey after 1878, its reopening under Kemal Atatürk name with a joint effort of the both countries in the wake of the communist era is a strong message of their good cooperation regards to the Muslim minority rather than creating a point of conflict. Moreover, the Turkish-Tatar communities in Dobruja reowned their cultural and historical heritage and symbols while having a progressive outlook embodied in the same college.

The programmes and accordingly the *curriculum* that are being followed at the college indicate the sympathy and openness of the moderate Muslim community to the modernity. Today, in addition to the two original specializations- Islamic Theology and Teacher Education Philology, the College offers a third specialization on the field of Mathematics-Computer Science. All classes are taught in Romanian, with the exception of Islamic Theology classes, which are partially taught in Turkish, namely the specialized topics such as the Study of the *Quran*. Turkish is taught as the mother tongue, from pre-school to high-school, 3 to 4 hours per week. In practice, speaking Turkish language is an advantage on the labor market, and this constitutes one of the reasons why students choose the College for their education. The Islamic Theology program is taught according to a special *curriculum* approved by the Ministry of Education and Research as this is the only school in the country offering this specific program. In addition to the vocational subjects, the students in the Islamic Theology program follow the standard *curriculum* for all Romanian theological high schools and study subjects such as Romanian Language and Literature, History, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Teaching Religion Methodology, etc.⁴⁷⁹

The combination of traditional and modern courses make the college unique in lives of the Turkish-Tatar communities as it did in the past. The increasing number of the students enrolled at the college shows the continuing interest of the community towards its survival. There were just 97 students in 1995 when the school was first inaugurated. This figure doubled in 1996, and reached 341 in 2009. After the kindergarten was incorporated in the school structure in 2010, the figure jumped to 578 right away, and in the education period of 2017-

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 314.

⁴⁷⁹ Adriana Cupcea, *op.cit.*, pp. 234-235.

2018 the total number of students stood at 374.⁴⁸⁰ The graduates from all specializations of the College, after completing 12th grade and earning their baccalaureate degrees, have the same jther Romanian high school graduate meaning that they can apply to any 3s.

rights as any c The Turkish and Tatar minorities in Dobruja resolutely and in a single
 university voice opted for reopening their landmark school in Medgidia because they need
 studi locally educated human resources to raise their siblings with a concious of
 history and culture. It is the most sustainable investment to survive in the long
 run. Ateş Casimceali, one of the former Vice-Presidents of the UDTTMR Summarizes the
 idea as such: "We need to know the ethnogenesis of our people. We, young people, must
 respect our origins. The elders sometimes argue that we do not keep our traditions, which is
 true. We need simultaneously to be modern and take into account our traditions. It is ja
 balance we have to keep carefully.⁴⁸¹

The Muslim minority acknowledges that the Romanian state sponsors their
 representative organizations and the religious body to preserve their cultural and faith based
 values. They afe thankful of being respected by the state and their traditional values, mother
 tongue, culture and Islam religion are tolerated. Professor Metin Omer, a
 Dobrujan and Turkish-Tatar
 laving the course of Tatar History and Civilization at the Ovidius University in
 Constanta maintains that the Romanians did not discriminate against Muslims as happened in
 the other parts of the Balkans, and the Muslims turned out to be good Romanians.⁴⁸² Yet, it is
 obvious that some members of the community are fearful about an indirect assimilation of the
 young due to the living together with the Romanian majority.

In addition to the Romanian financial support and preparing a tolerant legal ground for
 the Muslim minority to preserve their ethnic and cultural identity, the support given by the
 Turkish state is also crucial to their existence. The future of the College in Medgidia, teaching
 of the Turkislj language, conservation of the historical and spiritual heritage largely depends
 on the continuation of the Turkish assistance. Looking into the historical evolution of the
 relations between Turkey and Romania, it is easy to tell that Turkey's interest in the Turkish
 minorities in the Balkans and in the near neighbourhood will continue unabated. The
 combination of the Turkish commitment and the tolerance and cooperation of Romania pulled
 the standard of cultural and social lives of the community to a higher point. This explains
 multi-

⁴⁸⁰ Official figuifes provided by the Administration of the Kemal Atatürk National College in Medgidia.

⁴⁸¹ Sinziana Ion\$scu, *op.cit.*, 14 February 2015.

⁴⁸² *Ibidem.*

culturalism and co-habitation are deeply rooted in the Romanian psyche. In words of Zeki Kuneralp, a diplomat who served in Bucharest under the Ambassador Tannover during the early 1940s, majority of Romanians had moderate views about Turks, and this was observable in their tolerant attitude against the Muslim minority in the country.⁴⁸³ With this ever-living approach Romanian democracy is further consolidated to the extend that it is shown as an exemplary model to the region and even to the world.



⁴⁸³ Zeki Kuneralp, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

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