

MUSLIM VILLAGES IN DOBRUJA, ROMANIA: KANLIÇUKUR (GRĂNICERU) AND DOKUZ SOFU (GRĂDINA)

Nilghiun, Ismail¹

Abstract:

The 19th-century Ottoman-Russian wars had many consequences for the territories administered by the Ottoman state in the Balkans. At the end of the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, a new state was created, Romania, to which was annexed Dobruja, a region between the Danube and the Black Sea and so Dobruja's land entered the borders of the Romanian state. The area of Dobruja played an important role in the administrative-territorial organization of the Ottoman state.

This study aims to provide a short presentation on Muslim population and villages' situation, in Dobruja, Romania with a special emphasis on villages situated in Constanța county.

The study argues that in time many Muslim villages, under the effect of changes in political environment, education and day-to-day life were depopulated, and in time, some of them were totally destroyed.

Also, the study discusses the influence of political and social changes during communist regime on the ethnic minority of Crimean Tatars of Dobruja, Romania.

This study is based on documentation acquired on individual activity and unpublished documents. Some documents are part of the heritage of the Direcția Județeană Constanța a Arhivelor Naționale (National Archives County Departments of Constanța), newspapers of time owned by Constanța County Library „Ioan Roman” and today's newspapers by online sources.

Key words: Muslim villages, Muslim population, territorial organization, depopulated villages, Crimean Tatars of Dobruja.

Cod JEL: A12

1. Introduction

It is a great pleasure for me to write this study dedicated to Muslim villages of Dobruja, as I am a native Crimean Tatar borne in Dobruja, Romania.

This study is elaborated from the perspective of a native Crimean Tatar. After the Crimean Wars (1853-1856), my great-grandfather, *Hacı İzzet İsmail* together with his family left their native home, Kerci, Crimea and settled down in Dobruja. I always feel honored to study, write and talk on issues concerning the Crimean Tatars of Dobruja, focusing above all on their history and day-to-day life, as I am the fourth generation of a Crimean Tatar family born in Dobruja, Romania.

Limiting conditions of research led me to a study based on personal documentation, *Photo Gallery*, which I acquired from field research based on individual activity. For changes in administrative-territorial organization, political system and community's social life I relied on newspapers of time owned by the Constanța County Library „Ioan Roman” and documents with *Direcția Județeană Constanța a Arhivelor Naționale*, *DJCAN* (National Archives County Departments of Constanța), but also on today's newspapers, such as *Ziarul de Constanța*.

1.1 Short History of the Crimean Tatars of Dobruja

To limit this part about war refugees, we refer here to those who left Crimea, settled in today's Romania, but some of them left Romania, as there were many political and social changes.

The enormous influx of the Ottoman subjects, mostly Muslims, who had been living in Crimea, now subject to the Russian occupation, had to flee towards the Ottoman lands under unbearable conditions. This study is dedicated only to those Muslim refugees who came in during the end of the Crimean War, 1853-1856 and shortly thereafter, around 1870, and to Muslim population displaced by the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, as they found

¹ Ph.D. The Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Giresun University, Turkey, e-mail: nilgunismail2014@gmail.com

themselves again on the battlefield, and had to leave Dobruja, as they found themselves in a newly created state, Romania. (Ismail, 2017: 65).

The Crimean Tatar refugees, who settled in the Ottoman territory of Dobruja, found most of the social and economic landscape already structured and defined. At the end of the 19th century, the existing Muslim and Christian communities as well as the institutions of the Ottoman government imposed their versions of reality on the communities in Dobruja.

There are communities of Crimean Tatars not only in Romania, but also in Bulgaria, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and United States, and they are united in their emotional understanding of their homeland - the Crimean Peninsula.

1.2. Domain literature

There are some studies dedicated to Crimean Tatars of Dobrodja: Müstecip Ülküsal's work, *Dobruca ve Türkler* (Dobruja and Turks), published in 1966, Mehmet Ali Ekrem's work, *Din istoria turcilor dobrogeni* (From the history of the Dobrogean Turks), published in 1997 and Nilghiun Ismail's work *Balkan Turkes The Crimean Tatars of Dobruja*. These works provide information about Crimean Tatars of Dobruja, but less information about Muslim villages, destroyed Crimean Tatars schools, Mosques and voiceless people. This research focuses on destroyed Muslim villages and grass root people rather than on general image of the community.

2. Administrative Changes in the Newly Created Romania

In the last years of the Ottoman administration, in-between 1873-1874, the southern area of Dobruja included Mangalia (Romanian spelling), which was the administrative center of the *kaza* (*kaza* is an historically administrative division used in the Ottoman State translated as "district", or "juridical district") with the same name. Mangalia, together with 36 settlements, villages and hamlets with a majority of Muslim population - Ottoman Turks, Crimean Tartars was included in the *sancak* (an administrative unit of the Ottoman State) of Varna. The district had a very low density of housing.

In 1875, a change in the territorial-administrative organization of the Ottoman State happened, and Mangalia, along with most of its kazas were integrated into *Köstence* (Constanța - Romanian spelling) *kaza*, which belonged to Tulcea (Romanian spelling) *sancak*.

Romanian documents show that on March the 9th 1880, with the transition to the newly created Romania, was adopted *Constituția Dobrogei. Legea organică din 9 Martie 1880* (The Constitution of Dobrogea. Organic Law of March 9, 1880)¹. Until 1926, *Mangalia* consisted of 11 rural communities, including *Karaomer*, *Kanlıçukur*, *Davulköy* (Turkish spelling).

2.1. Dobruja and its special administrative regime after 1878

The purpose of this part of my study is to underline historical and political events that influenced social changes happened in modern Romania's society and economic and social indicator which impacted changes in the minority's structure, beginning with villages' names up to their clothing, education and ending with family's structure.

At the end of the 19th century, the southern area of Dobruja was an agricultural area with villages and hamlets under the territorial-administrative organization of *Köstence* (Turkish spelling) town. The area was unpopulated due to natural conditions but also due to many military events. Majority of villages were established and re-established by colonization with different Turkic peoples - Circassian, Crimean *muhaçir* (Turkish word for war refugees), Gagauz, Bulgarians,

1 Biblioteca Municipală Constanța, "Ioan Roman" (County Library of Constanța „Ioan Roman”) *Constituția Dobrogei. Legea organică din 9 Martie 1880. Legea funciară din 3 Aprilie 1882. Populațiunea Dobrogei. Listele electorale. Proprietatea rurală. Comisiunea parlamentară. Nu trebuie constituantă. Colegiul unic*, Tipografia „Dor P. Cucu”, București.

especially after 1811. Many of those village hearths were settled on older, ruined or depopulated villages as a result of the frequent Ottoman-Russian wars (Ismail, 2017:13).

History states that on November 10, 1878, in the Council of Ministers, chaired by King Carol I, new rules and orders for Dobruja's annexation were set. On November 12, 1878, as a result of the Romanian diplomatic efforts, the Russian government announced the Romanian government that it accepted the surrender of Dobruja's administration in accordance with the provisions of the Berlin Treaty.

In March 1880, the Law for the organization of Dobruja, which established the administrative integration of Dobruja to Romania under a special regime, was adopted and it replaced the Regulation of September 1878. The rules for the division and administrative organization of Dobruja broadly corresponded to *sancak* (Ottoman administrative organization) of *Tulcea* (Romanian spelling) during the last years of Ottoman rule. Initially, three counties were chosen, but in the end, there were only two counties *Tulcea* and *Constanța* (Romanian spelling). Constanța, as county included the territory of the third non-valid county. The military events of 1916-1918 caused the disappearance of some villages as *Casimcea*, *Haidarchioi*, *Alibechioi*, *Başpunar*, *Polucci*, *Caciamac*, *Mangeapunar* (Romanian spelling).

For Romanian side, the entire area was a kind of promise land. The whole area absorbed a large, Romanian population. Thus, a paradox came up: the old Muslim settlements were transformed into Romanian settlements, but they still had a Turkish toponymy. They kept their old name, the one they had when they came under the Romanian administration.

Villages' names were totally of Turkic origin. In order to eliminate this inconvenience, until 1925, proposals were made to change settlements' toponymy, so that the new names to be in line with the new ethnic reality in the territory.

A year later, in 1926, a new territorial-administrative division replaced the last administrative organization of Dobruja. Many villages, within the new territorial-administrative division, adopted Romanian names and they were set in the official use. In 1930, a new administrative-territorial division was issued for *Constanța* County, with only four small towns on its territory¹.

Most villages adopted Romanian names, and gradually, the old Turkish name of villages became an oral tradition and in time only memories.

2.2. Muslim villages of Dobruja in the interwar period

For this part of the study, the influence of indicators such as education, traditions, historical events of the first decades of the 20th century need to be addressed. Our research suggests that in order to understand Crimean Tatars socio-cultural changes we need to take a glance to some social aspects of villages and towns of Dobruja, at the beginning of the 20th century.

Alexandru P. Arbore, in his study *O încercare de reconstituire a trecutului românilor din Dobrogea* (An attempt to reconstruct the past of the Romanians from Dobrogea) published in *Analele Dobrogei*, 1922, vol. II, states: "The detailed study of the toponymy of Dobruja imposes the following conclusions: Among the 738 maps of old Dobruja we find, 3776 toponymies: 367 are names of villages, other 3,409 are names of valleys, hills, mounds, ravines, lakes, rivers, ponds, crosses and isolated fountains, ruins, quarries, etc. According to their origin, there are: 2338 Turk-Tatar names, 1260 Romanian names, 145 Russians, 28 Bulgarians and 6 various"².

1 Păduceanu Sandu Elena, *Plasa Mangaliei*, https://arhivaromaneasca.wordpress.com/arhive/elena-sanda-padureanu-_-plasa-mangaliei/ accessed on 25 August 2020

2 Biblioteca Județeană Constanța „Ioan Roman”, *Analele Dobrogei*, 1922, p.261, Arbore, P., Alexandru, in „*O încercare de reconstituire a trecutului românilor din Dobrogea*” (An attempt to reconstruct the past of the Romanians from Dobrogea), published in *Analele Dobrogei*, The Annals of Dobrogea, „*Studiarea amănunțită a*

Economic life is one of the most complicated aspects of rural life. In the early and mid-twentieth century, the economic status that governed Dobruja's villages brought to the surface a special economic situation that was different from the economic situation in Romania. In the middle of the 20th century all the villages were connected between them by dirty and muddy roads. Villages' economic situation was quite precarious, but during the interwar period agriculture became one of the main occupations of the inhabitants.

3. Social and Economic Aspects in Dobruja's Villages after the Second World War

After the Second World War, life in many Muslim villages inhabited predominantly by Crimean Tartars has changed radically. Everything happened not only according to political rules and laws, but also in agreement with hard-to-understand rules and laws of the Crimean people. In the beginning of the Communist regime in the Muslim villages Dobruja, where the majority population were the Crimean Tatars, brought a special state of mind that was differed from the social spirit of the majority of the population.

Here, in these Muslim villages inhabited by the Crimean Tatars, there still was that state of mind that linked them to their relatives and brothers living in Crimea under the terror of the Stalinist deportation regime.

3.1. Communist Romania and Land Confiscation

The confiscation of land from the Muslim inhabitants and their forced settlement in the collective farms also led to a massive loss of human lives. An overwhelming majority of people after 1950 left their villages, and the largest share of domestic migration, was the rural-urban migration.

The collectivization of lands was a tragic social experiment, which destroyed the Muslim communities. The cultivation of the collectivized land was a desperate means of resolving the acute economic crisis that gripped the entire communist Romanian state during the first decades of the communist regime. The most devastating effect of collectivization was not the demographic loss but an abrupt and violent uprooting of the Muslim community from their culture, as they were anchored in their villages. Collectivization is the final blow by taking away the best from the Crimean Tatars, as today they aren't who they used to be. In the communist worldview, the ownership of land was a "rich" Muslim peasant, and the primary goal of collectivization was in the confiscation of the land owned by the "rich" peasants.

3.2. Social and Economic Changes in Muslim Villages in Communist Romania

Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in social, cultural and economic changes in family's life. Changes in family's life are part of the society's transition from rural to urban, industrial one. However, these changes have a serious effect on family's structure. External indicators such as economy, social structure, political relations, their dynamics and interactions have a great influence on family's life. As a consequence, families internal conflicts mirror the optical social macrostructure conflicts such as marital conflicts, which are the result of the allocation of resources, division of labor and power of male-female inequality. This theory provides the raw model to explain the major social consequences of family transitions. Political, social, cultural and economic changes that happened in Romanian's society in the last decades influenced changes in family's structure. In the meantime, there were many changes in social structure as the society became more tolerant to

toponimiei Dobrogei impune următoarele concluzii: Găsim în cele 738 hărți ale vechii Dobrogei, 3776 topice: 367 sunt nume de sate, alte 3.409 sunt nume de văi, coline, ridicături, râpi, lacuri, riuri, bălți, cruci și fântâni izolate, ruine, cariere, etc. După originea lor se găsesc: 2338 nume turco-tătare, 1260 românești, 145 rusești, 28 bulgărești și 6 diverse”

diversity of cultural models and to the ethnic communities. Among indicators that influence family changes are¹:

a. Education Although compulsory education has a long tradition in Romania (second half of the 19th century) simple statistical analysis on illiteracy and education show there is a gap between men and women.

b. Industrialization - This is important by its distribution of employment and it matters by its nature, the use of female working force, the suitable geographical environment for the family and its branches. In Romania, massive industrialization after 1950 used two kind of labor force: the rural population and women.

c. Urbanization - This indicator measures the very different social realities, the level of industrialization, level of education, trade and means of communications.

d. Social migration - The large shares of domestic migration, after 1950 was the rural-urban migration. The massive rural-urban domestic migration has implications over family structures and rural demographic, behavioral and cultural patterns of the entire population. Industrialization generated massive social migration.

Urbanization forged traditions and personal behaviour in the cities, people experienced far greater impetus to integrate and adapt to the urban, Romanian culture. Urbanization was traumatic but it also brought unprecedented opportunities for education and social advancement. All major towns in Dobruja were Romanian-dominated and Romanianized. Crimean Tatars do not speak Romanian language, so it was impossible for many Crimean Tatars from villages to find any jobs in the spheres of trade, industrial enterprises and government offices.

4. Some orientations on Muslim villages: *Kanlıçukur* (Grăniceru) and *Dokuz Sofu* (Grădina)

4.1. A few facts on the village of *Kanlıçukur* (Grăniceru)

The Muslim village of *Kanlıçukur* (Grăniceru) was situated in southern Dobruja to five kms distance south to *Kara Omer* (Romanian translation is Negru-Vodă).

The Muslim village *Kanlıçukur* was a part of the administrative changes in Dobruja, integrating into the changes that took place in the economic and social sphere in southern Dobrogea. *Kanlıçukur* village was established in 1830² by war refugees coming from Crimea. The refugees settled in the village of *Kanlıçukur* were hard-working people dedicated to land and agriculture. Some of them had to leave the village's hearth after the Ottoman-russian War of 1877 as a result of the atrocities committed by the Russian army, but also of the injustices to which they were subjected by the Romanian authorities (Ismail, 2017: 136).

According to the 1926 documents adopted for the administrative organization of Dobruja, the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea, *Constanța* County included the small town of Mangalia, which consisted of 39 settlements in general medium and small villages and hamlets. Until 1926, Mangalia had 11 rural settlements, including *Caraomer* with *Canlicicur* and *Dauluchioi* (Romanian spelling).

As part of the integration with the Romanian administration, in accordance with the financial possibilities of the villages and the taxpayer's contributions, there were built a village hall. *Caraomer* (Romanian spelling) was organized as a single rural settlement. *Canlicicur* (Romanian spelling) and *Dauluchioi* (Romanian spelling), renamed *Darabani* and *Grăniceru* were detached from *Caraomer* to form a rural settlement residing at *Darabani* (Miu, Dae, 2007:39).

1 Stoica-Constantin, Ana, *Fundamente teoretice ale conflictului*, pag. 4, http://www.psih.uaic.ro/~aconstantin/romana/docs/Fundamente_teoretice_ale_conflictului_Curs_ID_ASC.pdf, accessed on 26 December 2017

2 Călugăreanu, I., *Îndreptar cu privire la satele desființate în perioada 1968-2000 ca urmare a dezafectării prin depopulare* (Guide to villages destroyed between 1968 and 2000 as a result of decommissioning by depopulation), în *Monitorul Oficial al Județului Constanța*, nr.3/2000, publicat de Consiliul Județean Constanța, pag. 30



Photo no. 1

Kanlıçukur village in 1960-1965, (personal archive)



Photo no. 2

Kanlıçukur village in 2015, (personal archive)

In between 1985-1989, our village *Kanlıçukur*, was destroyed, and 2 (two) out of 3 (three) cemeteries were converted into agricultural land including the cemetery where my great grandfather, *Hacı İzzet İsmail* was buried. Today, our great-grand father, *Hacı İzzet İsmail* has no grave, as the cemetery was transformed in agricultural land (İsmail 2015: 492).

Even though many of the Muslim villages were destroyed and turned into agricultural land, as was the case with our village, *Kanlıçukur*, they remained on the map, as can be seen in the image below. I mention that the map in the image is displayed on the wall of *Negru-Vodă* City Hall. I got the map's shot with the consent of the department's staff. Today, in the 21st century, many Muslim villages do no longer exist.



Photo 3 - 2019, July, *Grăniceru* village mentioned on Constanța county's map, personal archive



Photo 4 – 2019, July, *Grăniceru* village, personal archive

4.2. Some aspects on the village of *Dokuz Sofu* (Grădina)

Here we have another example, the village of *Dokuz Sofu* (Grădina), which was once also a Muslim village.

The village *Dokuz Sofu*, as the name of the village says, it seems to have been founded by very religious people - *sofu*, in Turkish language means religious person. Probably, the village was founded by 9 religious families coming from Crimea. In 1929, with the new administrative law¹, with the change of settlements' toponymy in Dobruja, *Dokuz Sofu* was renamed *Grădina*.

¹ Legea nr. 167/1929 pentru organizarea administrațiunii locale (Law no. 167/1929 for the organization of the local administration) published in Monitorul Oficial nr.170 / 3 august 1929, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gezdiobuge/legea-nr-167-1929-pentru-organizarea-administratiunii-locale?pid=37665662#p-37665662>, accessed on 09.09.2020

From the newspaper *Ziua de Constanța*¹ we got some information about the village *Dokuz Sofu* (*Grădina*). The newspaper states that the village “Founded by the Turks, who gave it the name *Tocsof* (*Grădina* in Romanian translation) is mentioned with several local toponyms in Turkish documents, in maps of the Russian-Turkish wars, but also in the notes of foreign travelers to Dobruja, from the 17th century (where toponyms such as “*Tarak-Sofu*”, “*Sufi*” or “*Sofu*” appear). Thus, in the *defterdar* of 1584 we find the toponym “*Sofular*” - *nahia* Hârșova (Romanian spelling), on a Russian map from 1828 - 1829 it appears as “*Topsopalocioiu*”, in Ion Ionescu de la Brad, in 1850, it appears as “*Toksofi*”, and in the *tapis* (*tapu* Turkish) issued between 1864 and 1877, it appears as “*Toksofi*” - *Kaza Babadag* (Romanian spelling)².

As noticed on the newspaper *Ziua de Constanța* the village *Dokuz Sofu* is an old Turkish village, founded before the arrival of Crimean Tatars refugees mentioned even by Ion Ionescu de la Brad in his works.

The same newspaper states “The current hearth of the village *Grădina* existed since the 16th century, but its development began with the colonization of the village with the Crimean Tatars between 1858 and 1860. At the beginning of the 20th century, the village belonged to Tulcea county and was inhabited by Bulgarians, Turks, Tartars, but also by Romanians, as we found out from the Great Geographical Dictionary of Romania: “*Tocsof*, village, in Tulcea county, pl. Istrului, the hamlet of residence of *Tocsof* commune, located in the Southern area of the plateau and of the commune, on both banks of the *Tocsof* brook, at the meeting place of the *Taşli-Culac* and *Cuiu-Culac* valleys. It has an area of 1200 hectares, with a population composed of Bulgarians, Turks, Tatars and Romanians³”.

From the newspaper lines it is obviously the village was founded by Turks in the 16th century and in the second half of the 19th century populated with refugees from Crimea. At this point, the newspaper proves a great ambiguity in the presentation and leaves room for comments and questions. Although it mentions that the village was founded by the Turks since the 16th century, it states that the village was colonized in the 19th century. From its lines we understand that the village, although mentioned in the documents with the Ottoman archive (*tapu*, which means property titles – in our case, probably agricultural lands), experienced a development in the 19th century, with the arrival of the Crimean Tatars refugees. But there is a gap from the 16th century to the 19th century, what happened with the village during this long three centuries? Was the village populated by Romanians or Turks? or was it depopulated? There is no information in the newspaper about village’s population between 1584 and 1858.

Here is a picture⁴ with old Muslim gravestones in *Dokuz Sofu*, (*Grădina*) village. Many

¹ <https://www.ziuaconstanta.ro/stiri/invitati/preoti-si-biserici-la-sat-parohia-gradina-judetul-constanta-galerie-foto-704705.html>, accessed on 26 octomber 2020

² <https://www.ziuaconstanta.ro/stiri/invitati/preoti-si-biserici-la-sat-parohia-gradina-judetul-constanta-galerie-foto-704705.html>, “Înființat de turci, care i-au dat numele *Tocsof* (trad. grădină), satul este menționat cu mai multe toponime locale în documentele turcești, în hărți ale războaielor ruso-turce, dar și în notele unor călători străini în Dobrogea, din secolul al XVII-lea (unde apar toponime precum „*Tarak-Sofu*”, „*Sufi*” sau „*Sofu*”). Astfel, în defterul din 1584 găsim toponimul „*Sofular*” – *nahia* (plasa) Hârșova, pe harta rusă din 1828 – 1829 apare „*Topsopalocioiu*”, la Ion Ionescu de la Brad, în 1850, apare „*Toksofi*”, iar în tapiurile emise între 1864 și 1877, apare „*Toksofi*” – *Kaza Babadag*.”

³ *Ibidem*, “Pe actuala vatră a satului *Grădina* a existat locuire încă din secolul al XVI-lea, dar dezvoltarea lui a început odată cu colonizarea satului cu tătari din Crimeea, între anii 1858 și 1860.

La începutul secolului XX, satul aparținea de județul Tulcea și era locuit de bulgari, turci, tătari, dar și de români, după cum aflăm din Marele Dicționar Geografic al României: „*Tocsof*, sat, în jud. Tulcea, pl. Istrului, cătunul de reședință al comunei *Tocsof*, așezat în partea de S a plășei și a comunei, pe ambele maluri ale pârului *Tocsof*, la locul de întâlnire al văilor *Taşli-Culac* și *Cuiu-Culac*. Are o întindere de 1200 de hectare, cu o populație compusă din Bulgari, Turci, Tătari și Români”.

⁴ I kindly thank you to Professor Ph.d. Sedat Akkurt to let me access his personal archive with *Grădina* village.

of the gravestones are older than 200 years. The small tombstones are proof that the Muslim population has been present in the current hearth of the village for more than 200 years.



Photo 5 Grădina village's Muslim cemetery with old graves.

Each one of that small stones means a grave (Sedat Akkurt's personal archive).

The newspaper continues giving us details about the second half of the 19th century on the village *Dokuz Sofu* when it was renamed *Grădina*.

“According to the museographer Ioana Tömpe, from the Museum of Popular Art Constanța, in the second half of the 19th century Tocsof commune had in its administration six hamlets: *Chirislic*, Romanian spelling (Turkish - *Kirişlik*) (today *Cheia*), *Culeli*, Romanian spelling (Turkish – *Kuleli*) (former *Colelia* village), *Râmnicu de Sus*, *Râmnicu de Jos*, *Moara Cocoanei* and *Podul lui Hogeia Ahmet* and was incorporated together with other hamlets of the *Babadag* plasa, to *Tulcea* county. In the year when Romania entered into the First World War, 1916, the village of *Tocsof* had an area of 186 hectares and a population composed of Tartars - 606, Bulgarians - 250, Romanians - 185 and Armenians - 12. Until the beginning of the Second World War Worldwide, the Tartars left the village entirely, and the Bulgarians also left, following the surrender of the Cadrilater and the exchange of population in 1940¹”.

According to the newspaper, after 1916 the village was depopulated, and the entire Muslim population left the village. The reasons why the Bulgarians left the village are given, the exchange of population in 1940, but nothing is said about the reasons why the Muslim population left the village, as there was no exchange of Turks and Romanians.

And finally, we reach the year 1931, with the new law of administration, about which the newspaper claims: “In 1931 the Turkish name of the village was changed to *Grădina*. Also, this year, the village receives the status of commune, which also included the village of *Cheia*. From 1919 until 1931, the village was subordinated to the communes of *Pantelimonul de Sus* and *Pantelimonul de Jos*. In 2002, *Grădina* had a population of 843 inhabitants and 294 households²”. Again, nothing about Muslim people. From my personal field research, it came out that there are only a few Crimean Tatars families in *Grădina*³.

¹ Ibidem, “Potrivit muzeografului Ioana Tömpe, de la Muzeul de Artă Populară Constanța, în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea comuna Tocsof avea în administrare șase cătune: *Chirislic* (azi *Cheia*), *Culeli* (fostul sat *Colelia*), *Râmnicu de Sus*, *Râmnicu de Jos*, *Moara Cocoanei* și *Podul lui Hogeia Ahmet* și era incorporată împreună cu alte cătune plasei *Babadag* din județul Tulcea. În anul intrării României în Primul Război Mondial, 1916, satul Tocsof avea o suprafață de 186 de hectare și o populație compusă din tătari – 606, bulgari – 250, români – 185 și armeni – 12. Până la începutul celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, tătarii au părăsit în întregime satul, iar bulgarii au plecat, și ei, în urma cedării Cadrilaterului și a schimbului de populație din anul 1940.”

² Ibidem, “În anul 1931 numele turcesc al satului este schimbat în *Grădina*. Tot în acest an, satul primește statutul de comună, din care mai făcea parte satul *Cheia*. Din anul 1919 și până în anul 1931, satul a fost subordonat comunelor *Pantelimonul de Sus* și *Pantelimonul de Jos*. În anul 2002 localitatea *Grădina* avea o populație de 843 de locuitori și 294 de gospodării”.

³ Interview with Sedat Akkurt, Turkish citizen, of Crimean Tatar origin. His great grand father, from the village of *Dokuz Sofu* (*Grădina*) left the village in 1910.

The former Muslim village, *Dokuz Sofu*, today has a restored church¹, but nothing is said about the worship place for Muslims.



Photo 6. *Grădina* village's mosque with its new minaret.
The right side building is the mosque (Sedat Akkurt's personal archive).

5. Concluding Remarks

With this study I provided an overview of a less studied subject, the Muslim villages of Dobruja, Romania. My intention was to inform and express my own opinions on this subject. Throughout my work I have focused especially on the changes made by the Romanian government in terms of legislative and institutional reforms, as well as the structural changes within the Muslim population that took place after 1878. The social and economic changes that took place in Romania after 1878 were influenced by profound changes in the structure of the Crimean Tatar community that led to dramatic changes in Muslim villages.

In conclusion, by this study - I show the connection between the ethnic minority of Crimean Tatars with their long and rich history in Dobruja. Over the years, changes in their daily lives led to their identity transformation, but also to the depopulation of villages and even to the total destroy of the villages.

In present days, I consider that it is important to reconsider our understanding about refugee and migration process, to understand the forms of historical mobility and the incorporation of the communities that arose following the change of borders. Today, we live in a very different world and face challenges in a shifted Southeastern Europe.

Bibliography

Unpublished documents

Arhivele Naționale România, Direcția județeană Constanța a Arhivelor Naționale, Județul Constanța

Fond Primăria Negru Vodă, dosar Bugetul general al administrației comunale pe anul financiar 1930, comuna Negru Vodă, satul Grăniceru

Documentary works

Biblioteca Municipală "Ioan Roman", Constanța

Analele Dobrogei (The Annals of Dobrogea), 1922

Constituția Dobrogei. Legea organică din 9 Martie 1880. Legea funciară din 3 Aprilie 1882. Populațiunea Dobrogei. Listele electorale. Proprietatea rurală. Comisiunea parlamentară. Nu trebuie constituantă Tipografia „Dor P. Cucu”, București.

¹ *Ibidem*, "Between 1990 and 1994 the church "Sfânta Cuvioasă Parascheva" in the village of Grădina underwent major repairs ("Între anii 1990 și 1994 biserica „Sfânta Cuvioasă Parascheva” din satul Grădina a fost supusă unor reparații capitale”).

Călugăreanu, Ilie, 2000, Îndreptar cu privire la satele desființate în perioada 1968-2000 ca urmare a dezafectării prin depopulare (Guide to villages destroyed between 1968 and 2000 as a result of decommissioning by depopulation), în *Monitorul Oficial al Județului Constanța*, nr. 3/2000, Anexa 3, publicat de Consiliul Județean Constanța, pag. 30.

Legea nr. 167/1929 pentru organizarea administrațiunii locale (Law no. 167/1929 for the organization of the local administration) published in *Monitorul Oficial* nr.170 / 3 august 1929, <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gezdiobuge/legea-nr-167-1929-pentru-organizarea-administratiunii-locale?pid=37665662#p-37665662>, accessed on 19.11.2020

Ziua de Constanța

<https://www.ziuaconstanta.ro/stiri/invitati/preoti-si-biserici-la-sat-parohia-gradina-judetul-constanta-galerie-foto-704705.html> accessed on 21 November 2020

General literature and special books

Doğru, Kozlubel, Halime, 2011, *1844 Nüfus sayımına göre Deliorman ve Dobruca nın demografik, sosyal ve ekonomik durumu*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara.

Fisher, Alan, 1987, *The Crimean Tatars*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, California.

Iordachi, Constantin 2001, "The California of the Romanians": The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878-1913, in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, Edited by: Balázs Trencsényi, Dragoș Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi and Zoltán Kántor, Regio Books (Budapest) Editura Polirom (Iași), pps. 121-153.

Ismail, Nilghiun, 2017a, Historical and Demographic evolution of the Crimean-Tatars ethnic minority of Romania, in *Românii și popoarele balcanice. Cofluyențe istorico-geografice*, coordinated by Nicoleta Ciachir and Elena Toma, Editura Etnologica, București, pp. 244-256.

Ismail, Nilghiun, 2017b, *Balkan Turks The Crimean Tatars of Dobruja*, Prouniversitaria Publishing House, Bucharest.

Ismail, Nilghiun, 2017c, "The national Archives of Romania case study: Constanța County District", published in "Proceedings of Diplomasi ve Dış Politika Araştırmalarında Arşivlerin Rölü, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi", Ankara, Turkey, pp. 435-466.

Karpat, Kemal, 2002, *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History. Selected Articles and Essays*, Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands

Mehmet, Ali, Ekrem, 1994, *Din istoria turcilor dobrogeni*, Editura Kriterion, București.

Miu, Petrică & Dae, Gelu, 2007, *Negru Voda 1878-1950 Contribuții la cunoașterea problemelor economice, sociale și ale vieții politice și culturale*, vol.1, Editura Muntenia, Constanța.

Pădureanu Sandu Elena, *Plasa Mangaliei*, <https://arhivaromaneasca.wordpress.com/arhive/elena-sanda-padureanu-./plasa-mangaliei/> accessed on 25 November 2020

Stoica-Constantin, Ana *Fundamente teoretice ale conflictului*, http://www.psih.uaic.ro/~aconstantin/romana/docs/Fundamente_teoretice_ale_conflictului_Curs_ID_ASC.pdf accessed on 20 November 2020

Ünküsal, Müstecip, 1966, *Dobruca ve Türkler*, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, Seri: III- Sayı: A7, Ankara

Sources of the Photographs

1. personal archive

2. Sedat Akkurt's personal archive

Interview: Sedat Akkurt, Professor Ph.d. YTE, Izmir, born in Turkey