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Citizenship, Nation-  
and State-Building:  
The Integration of  
Northern Dobrogea  
into Romania,  
1878-1913

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## Introduction

Situated in the northeastern extremity of the Balkan Peninsula, between the lower Danube and the Black Sea, the historical province of Dobrogea has a highly individualized geographical character.<sup>1</sup> The arid steppes in the middle of the province are surrounded by an extensive seacoast in the east, the vast Danube delta in the north, the fertile shores of the Danube in the west, and by the Bulgarian mainland in the south, making up a broad ribbon of land, a kind of “irregular oblong with a waist”<sup>2</sup> (see Map I, page 11). This advantageous geopolitical and commercial location accounts for Dobrogea’s tumultuous history. From fifteenth century, Dobrogea functioned as a borderland of the Ottoman Empire and one of the most advanced Muslim military bastions in Southeastern Europe. Between 1768 and 1878, the province served as a transit corridor and military battlefield in the long series of Russian-Turkish wars. Therefore, Dobrogea carried a specific Ottoman legacy, most evident in its demographics: it had one of the most ethnically diverse populations in Europe, being inhabited by Turks, Tartars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Russians, Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, Jews, Germans, Italians, Albanians, and Arabs.<sup>3</sup> This feature was noted by many travelers and scholars, who referred to the province as “*un bariolage ethnique*,” “an extraordinary mosaic of races,” “a magnificent laboratory of comparative ethnography,” “an Orient in miniature, with all its amalgam of peoples,” or “an ethnic Babylon.”<sup>4</sup> After 1878, Dobrogea moved abruptly from the multicultural imperial heritage to the homogenizing order of the nation-state. By a decision of the Berlin Treaty (July 1878), the province was divided between Romania, which acquired the larger Northern Dobrogea (15,536 km<sup>2</sup>, alternatively named Old Dobrogea), and Bulgaria, which incorporated the smaller Southern Dobrogea (7,609 km<sup>2</sup>, alternatively named New Dobrogea or the Quadrilateral). Dobrogea then became the object of an acute Romanian-Bulgarian territorial conflict: both states engaged in assiduous and competing processes of national expansion and border-making in the province.<sup>5</sup>

This essay focuses on the integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, which is celebrated in Romanian historiography as the second stage in the creation of a national and unitary Romanian state, after the 1859 union of Wallachia and Moldova.<sup>6</sup> From this perspective, the mechanisms of assimilation used in Dobrogea by Romanian political elites prefigured the more complex and arduous process of administrative integration and cultural homogenization that took place in interwar Greater Romania. Nevertheless, while the process of national consolidation in Greater Romania has been recently subject to comprehensive research from nonteleological theoretical perspectives, the case of Dobrogea’s assimilation into Romania has received only limited attention.<sup>7</sup> In spite of the

individualized character of the province, modern histories of Romania usually fail to distinguish Dobrogea from the Old Kingdom. In addition, written at a time when historiography played an important role in the process of nation-building in Central and Southeastern Europe, the majority of Romanian and Bulgarian historical works about Dobrogea have focused almost unilaterally on the “validity” of their countries’ rights to the province. Thus, while producing an essentially primordialist and parochialist historiographic discourse, they have left unexplored important aspects of Northern Dobrogea’s assimilation into Romania, or of Southern Dobrogea’s assimilation into Bulgaria.<sup>8</sup>

I will argue that in order to foster the national and economic incorporation of the multi-ethnic province of Northern Dobrogea, Romanian political elites designed a threefold mechanism composed of ethnic colonization, cultural homogenization, and economic modernization. The most important stimulus behind the annexation of Dobrogea was economic: due to its strategic geographical location, the province was regarded as a vital commercial outlet of Romania, granting it access to the sea and facilitating its elevation into the Western economy, from periphery to semi periphery. Demographically, Northern Dobrogea served as an “Internal America” for Romania, a dynamic frontier zone of new settlements for expanding the national economy and ethnic boundaries.<sup>9</sup> From an institutional point of view, the mechanism of assimilation had citizenship legislation at its core: despite its formal incorporation into Romania, Northern Dobrogea was subject to a separate administrative organization between 1878 and 1913. Under this status, the inhabitants of Dobrogea enjoyed a local type of citizenship, which denied them political participation and the right to acquire properties outside the province. The integration of the multiethnic province of Dobrogea resembled thus the model of “internal colonialism”: its organization was characterized by administrative distinctiveness and excessive centralization supported by claims of cultural superiority of the core region, by intense ethnic colonization, and by uneven regional economic development tailored to the needs of the metropolis.<sup>10</sup>

My analysis focuses on the mechanisms of assimilation implemented in Dobrogea by Romanian political elites. After a discussion of the theory and methodology of citizenship studies, I investigate the formation of the Romanian national discourse about Dobrogea and the manner in which Romanian political elites approached the organization of the province. I then examine the post-1878 administrative organization of Dobrogea. I pay special attention to Romanian citizenship legislation in the period 1866–1879 and its impact on shaping citizenship and property legislation in Dobrogea after 1878. The fourth section highlights the effects of this legislation on the province’s ethnic assimilation

into Romania, using primarily the example of the Transylvanian shepherd immigrants to Dobrogea, the *mocani*. It also explores the association between national consolidation and economic modernization in Dobrogea. In the fifth section I consider the relationship between Bucharest's excessive administrative centralization and regionalist tendencies in Northern Dobrogea, adding to the legal-formal analysis of citizenship a view from "below" that introduces Dobrogeans as distinctive social actors and explores their own views of citizenship participation in the province, their strategies of emancipation, and their relationship to the Romanian political elites and national ideology. The final section focuses on the political emancipation of Dobrogeans and looks at the impact of this event on the sociopolitical life of the province. In the conclusion, some specific characteristics of the process of nation- and state-building in the province are highlighted, in an attempt to add the complementary case study of Northern Dobrogea's pre-World War I assimilation into Romania to the process of administrative integration and cultural homogenization in interwar Greater Romania.

Chronologically, the study covers thirty-five years (1878–1913) and encompasses the main stages of Northern Dobrogea's assimilation into Romania, namely the administrative organization (1880), the regulation of the property regime (1882), the introduction of the capitalist economy in the province and finally, the gradual process of granting political rights to Dobrogeans (1908–1913). The essay ends with the Second Balkan War (1913), after which, by the Treaty of Bucharest, Romania annexed Southern Dobrogea from Bulgaria. This event had a strong sociopolitical and demographic impact on the province, inaugurating a new stage of Dobrogea's integration into Romania, which deserves separate treatment.

### **Citizenship: Theory and Methodology**

This study is organized around the key issue of citizenship, a focus stimulated by renewed academic interest in citizenship among political scientists, historians, anthropologists, and sociologists.<sup>11</sup> My general objectives are: (1) to fill the gap between general theoretical works on citizenship and their application to historical research on Central and Southeastern Europe; (2) to provide a comprehensive overview of the institution of citizenship in Romania and how it was used to foster national integration and ethnic assimilation in Northern Dobrogea, 1878–1913; and (3) to connect the study of citizenship with issues of social change, construction of group identity, and mechanisms of nation- and state-building.

A comprehensive study of citizenship poses great theoretical and methodological challenges: How to provide a universally accepted scholarly definition of citizenship? How to merge into a comprehensive methodological model the formal-legal aspect of citizenship with issues of sociopolitical change? How to apply creatively Western analytical concepts to the study of citizenship in Central and Southeastern Europe, without either sacrificing the local specificity, or falling into the trap of essentializing the difference between the historical experiences of these regions?

First and foremost, no standard definition of citizenship has gained unanimous scholarly acceptance. Theoretically, the concept of citizenship can be used to refer to a wide range of things, such as a political and legal status encompassing specific rights and obligations, a modern institution, or a moral-civic ideal. In regard to political practice, we can distinguish four main traditions of citizenship: communitarian, civic-republican, neoliberal, and social-liberal.<sup>12</sup> Each of these visions conveys rival definitions of citizenship, none of which can be accepted as its true meaning. Citizenship can be therefore categorized as an “essentially contested concept” whose meaning is never stable but changes as a function of wider sociopolitical phenomena in society.<sup>13</sup>

In coping with these theoretical problems, I employ Charles Tilly’s relational definition of citizenship. In his view, citizenship is concomitantly (1) *a category* that designates “a set of actors—citizens—distinguished by their shared privileged position vis-à-vis some particular state;” (2) *a tie* that designates “an enforceable mutual relation between an actor and state agents;” (3) *a role* that includes “all of an actor’s relations to others that depend on the actor’s relation to a particular state;” and (4) *an identity* that refers “to the experience and public representation of category, tie or role.”<sup>14</sup> This instrumental definition of citizenship regards the state not as a unitary and indivisible actor, but as a set of specialized and even divergent agencies, and traces the impact of citizenship on various social categories, roles, and identities. The definition accounts thus for a multitude of actors, relations, and domains pertaining to citizenship and redirects the research focus from the formal-legal aspect of citizenship to issues of “state practices and state-citizen interactions.”<sup>15</sup> Consequently, instead of a universal and pre-given status, citizenship is viewed as a continuous series of transactions, “a set of mutual, contested claims between agents of states and members of socially constructed categories: gender, races, nationality and other.”<sup>16</sup> On this basis, one can distinguish between multiple and hierarchical forms of citizenship, the function of actors’ specific social position and the kind of tie to the state they are

involved in. Citizenship thus appears not as simply a formal-legal status that regulates belonging to a political community, but as a dynamic concept organically linked with issues of social and political transformation.

Addressing the second challenge—the relationship between citizenship and issues of sociopolitical change—I add to Tilly’s relational definition of citizenship recent neo-Weberian approaches to the sociology of group formation, represented in this work mainly by Rogers W. Brubaker’s view of citizenship as an instrument of “domestic closure.” Generally, scholarly analyses of nation-states and nationalism have focused rather unilaterally on community solidarity based on language and common descent, an approach that neglects the fact that ethnic groups also constitute interest groups.<sup>17</sup> In contrast, Max Weber’s sociology of group formation considered ethnicity as essentially a political phenomenon, produced during an intensive competition for livelihood. In order to analyze the relationship between group formation and material interests, Weber conceptualized two major forms of social relationships: open and closed. He also highlighted the way in which the state uses citizenship as an effective instrument of social closure, by establishing “a legal order that limits competition through formal monopolies” and transforming the body of citizens into a “legally privileged group” on the basis of legislative rules which can take the form of a written constitution.<sup>18</sup> As a typical closed social relationship, citizenship has an underlying inclusion/exclusion dimension, and this makes our world one of “bounded and exclusive citizenries.”<sup>19</sup> Building on Weber’s conceptualization of open/closed social relationships, Brubaker identified the following major forms of closure embedded in citizenship status: territorial closure, regulated at interstate level; and domestic closure, which is an internal affair of the state.<sup>20</sup> Territorial closure relates mainly to border jurisdiction. Domestic closure, however, encompasses multiple variables. They range from the “routine” or “taken for granted” closure of electoral participation, conscription, and naturalization, to more specific state policies regulating security, political, or even material interests of diverse sociopolitical groups. On this basis, Brubaker concluded: “Citizenship is thus both an instrument and an object of closure.”<sup>21</sup>

In applying Brubaker’s neo-Weberian theoretical framework to the study of Romanian citizenship, I acknowledge that practices of social closure are quasi universal, but they rely as much on the “institutional logic” of the nation-state as on the specific sociopolitical contexts and policies of various countries. I therefore regard Romanian citizenship as an original syncretism between universal citizenship rules and local sociopolitical conditions. To analyze the fusion between local and global trends in the making of citizenship in Romania, I combine data and methods used in intellectual, social, and institutional history, following

Reinhart Kosellek's methodological treatment of the connection between conceptual and social history.<sup>22</sup> Kosellek highlighted the complex dialectic of "persistence, change, and novelty" among various "layers" of meanings of historical concepts, distinguishing thus between past and present understandings. He also pointed out that, as carriers of the sociopolitical context, historical concepts have a heuristic analytical utility that can "provide knowledge which is not obtainable from empirical study."<sup>23</sup> This is all the more true for legal concepts embedded in constitutions and laws—the main primary sources used in this paper—since they convey not only accepted notions about private and public spheres, and political representation, but they express, in an idealized way, the desired organization of the national "imagined community."<sup>24</sup> Therefore, as Robert Hayden pertinently pointed out, constitutions are key texts of national ideology, since they construct "mechanisms of turning nationalist ideologies into social practices."<sup>25</sup>

Last but not least, I explore local variances of political culture and citizenship participation, most manifest in the historical differences among the provinces of Moldova, Wallachia, and Dobrogea that constituted the Kingdom of Romania (1881–1918). My research is in line with recent theoretical works on the "deconstruction" of the nation-state, which look at its linguistic, territorial, and ethnic composition and stress diversity rather than unity—by focusing on local history and the history of regionalism. In the case of Romania, the process of nation- and state-building was quite complex. Greater Romania (1918–1940) came into being as an aggregate of different historical provinces: the principalities of Moldova and Wallachia (unified in 1859), the former Ottoman province of Dobrogea (annexed in 1878), the province of Bessarabia (occupied by Russia 1812–1918), and territories that were part of Austria-Hungary, such as Transylvania, Maramureş, the Partium, the Banat, and Bukovina. As in other states in Central and Southeastern Europe, such as Greece and Serbia before World War I, or Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in the interwar period, the union of heterogeneous provinces occasioned an arduous process of elite bargaining, administrative unification, and a thrust for cultural homogenization that can be fruitfully approached in terms of the relationship between center and periphery.

In this context, the pre-1918 integration of Dobrogea can be seen as an important addition to the studies of the process of nation- and state-building in Romania. It features certain general processes of integration that would be repeated—in different historical conditions—on a much larger scale in Greater Romania, but also has original characteristics, deriving mostly from Dobrogea's legacy of being a multiple borderland. In analyzing the socioeconomic and



political context of Dobrogea as a frontier zone and its patterns of integration into Romania, I have compared it with Peter Sahlins' analysis of the making of the *French-Spanish* border in the Pyrenees, which challenged the prevailing theoretical claim that "modern nations were built from political centers outward and imposed upon marginal groups or peripheral regions in the process of cultural and institutional 'assimilation.'"<sup>26</sup> Asserting that the understating of the phenomenon of nation- and state-building as "a one-way process" treats local communities as passive objects and denies their active role in "shaping their own national identities," Sahlins argued for a reconceptualization of the relationship between center and periphery as "two-way processes," mutually informed by national political events and by local social relations in borderlands.<sup>27</sup> To this end, he highlighted the analytical usefulness of the concept of multiple identities for the historical analysis of multiple borderlands and pointed out the prevailing "oppositional model" of constructing identity in border regions, seen as "privileged sites for the articulation of national distinctions." Together with features common to frontier regions, Dobrogea exhibits characteristics that relate to its imperial Ottoman legacy, particularly in its demographic and religious composition and its military organization, in the timing and sociopolitical context of the construction of nation-states in Southeastern Europe, and in its political position and economic role within Romania.

## **Internal Orientalism: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania**

### **An Ottoman Imperial Legacy: Dobrogea, the Land and the People**

Under Ottoman rule, Dobrogea functioned as an imperial borderland, a zone of contact and convergence among multinational empires, as part of a larger Russian-Ottoman and Ottoman-Habsburg frontier belt ranging from the Caucasus to Southern Bessarabia and the Balkan border areas.<sup>28</sup> The province was occupied by the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century and was subject to intense military colonization by Turks and Tartars from South Crimea and Asia Minor, which transformed the province into an Islamic area. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the province was demographically linked with a larger territory, absorbing numerous Romanian peasants from the Wallachian plains, Bulgarian peasants from the Balkan Mountains and Southern Bessarabia, Cossacks from the Dnieper delta, Old Believers from central Russia, and German colonists from southern Russia. Consequently, Dobrogea acquired a highly complex ethnic composition: the Danube delta was populated by Slavonic

fishermen; the cities were largely inhabited by Italian, Jewish, Greek, and Armenian merchants; the north was dominated by Bulgarians; the center and south by Turks and Tartars; while the right bank of the Danube was inhabited by Romanians.

Military events further increased this ethnic diversity. Dobrogea was an important part of the Ottoman military system, which defended the access to Constantinople, controlled the Romanian lands, and allowed communication with Crimean Tartars. Due to its strategic importance, the province served as a constant military battlefield during the recurrent Russian-Turkish wars (1768–1878). This situation provoked anarchy in the administration and great fluctuations in Dobrogea's population. As a consequence of the devastating 1828–1829 war, it fell to 40,000 inhabitants, then rose to 100,000 by 1850.<sup>29</sup> After the Crimean War (1853–1856), the province was again repopulated with over 100,000 Tartars from the Crimea and Circassians from Kuban and the Caucasus who were fleeing fearing persecution by Russian authorities. They sought refuge in Dobrogea, where they were assigned military tasks and acted as a privileged Ottoman legal category of border warriors. Finally, the 1877–1878 war provoked a considerable Muslim emigration from the province, estimated at 90,000 people.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the figures regarding the Muslim population differ substantially: some authors estimated 134,662 Muslims and 87,900 Christians in Dobrogea in 1879, while others give only 56,000 Muslims and 54,726 Christians.<sup>31</sup> According to official Romanian sources, in 1879 the three main ethnic groups in the province were Turks and Tartars, numbering 32,033; Romanians, 31,177; and Bulgarians, 28,715, out of a total population of 106,943.<sup>32</sup> Assessing the ethnic configuration of Dobrogea at the time of its annexation by Romania, the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga identified “three Dobrogeas,” three parallel strips of land along the north-south axis of the province: the coast of the Black Sea, which functioned as a commercial outpost; the middle part of the province which served as a boulevard of military communication between Constantinople and Southern Bessarabia; and, finally, the agricultural bank of the Danube, inhabited mostly by Romanians and in permanent contact with the neighboring Wallachian counties.

This diverse ethnic composition of Dobrogea challenged the citizenship and ethnic policies of the Romanian state, many politicians perceiving the province's geo-political location and multiethnic population as a danger to the country's ethnic homogeneity and political stability. The annexation of the province to Romania in 1878 therefore generated a puzzling diplomatic episode, in view of which the British statesman William Gladstone described the province as “a gift ungraciously given and reluctantly received.”<sup>33</sup>

## **From a “Fatal Gift” to an “Ancient Romanian Land:”**

### **Myth-Making in the Romanian Nationalist Discourse About Dobrogea**

Since its first appearance on the diplomatic agenda of the “Eastern Question,” the political fate of Dobrogea has been linked to the delicate territorial question of Southern Bessarabia. Bordering the Danube delta and the Black Sea shores and composed of the three counties of Ismail, Cahul and Bolgrad (see Map I), this strip of land was an integral part of the larger province of Bessarabia, occupied by the Russian Empire in 1812 from the principality of Moldova. In 1856, Southern Bessarabia was returned by Russia to Moldova by the Paris peace treaty that concluded the Crimean War (1856). Subsequently, the province became a central target of Russia’s diplomatic agenda, mostly during the Eastern Crisis of 1875–1878. Its reannexation was meant to restore Russia’s control of the Danube delta and to redeem its prestige lost as a result of the military defeat in the Crimean war. In January 1878 Russia thus officially informed Romania of its intention to regain possession of Southern Bessarabia, suggesting Dobrogea as a possible compensation. The proposal aroused bitter indignation in Bucharest. On January 26, 1878, the Romanian Senate adopted a resolution stating its determination “to reject any estrangement of its land, under any conditions and regardless of any territorial or financial compensation.”<sup>34</sup> While Romania’s diplomatic efforts were exclusively directed toward the preservation of Southern Bessarabia, Dobrogea came to symbolize an onerous bargain, and its refusal meant defending the integrity of the country.

Following the end of the 1877-1878 war, the Peace Treaty of San Stefano concluded between Russia and Turkey on 3 March 1878 stipulated, in its Article XIX, that in exchange for a part of the financial war reparations due to Russia, Turkey cede it the Sandjak of Tulcea and the Danube delta. By the same article, Russia declared that “not wishing . . . to annex this territory and the Delta islands,” it “reserves the right to exchange them for the part of Bessarabia detached from her by the Treaty of 1856.” Once again, Romanian politicians and public opinion, led by Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu, almost unanimously refused to comply. On 9 March 1878, Foreign Minister Mihail Kogălniceanu issued a diplomatic memo that portrayed the acquisition of Dobrogea as “essentially prejudicial for the principalities,” “an embarrassment, a burden, and probably a permanent danger.”<sup>35</sup>

How can one account for the stiff refusal of Romanian politicians to endorse the proposed territorial exchange? Even if Dobrogea was allegedly inferior in its overall economic value, in terms of territory and population the exchange was quite even, with a slight advantage on the side of Dobrogea (see Map I): according to data provided by Leonida Colescu, in 1878 the three counties of Southern

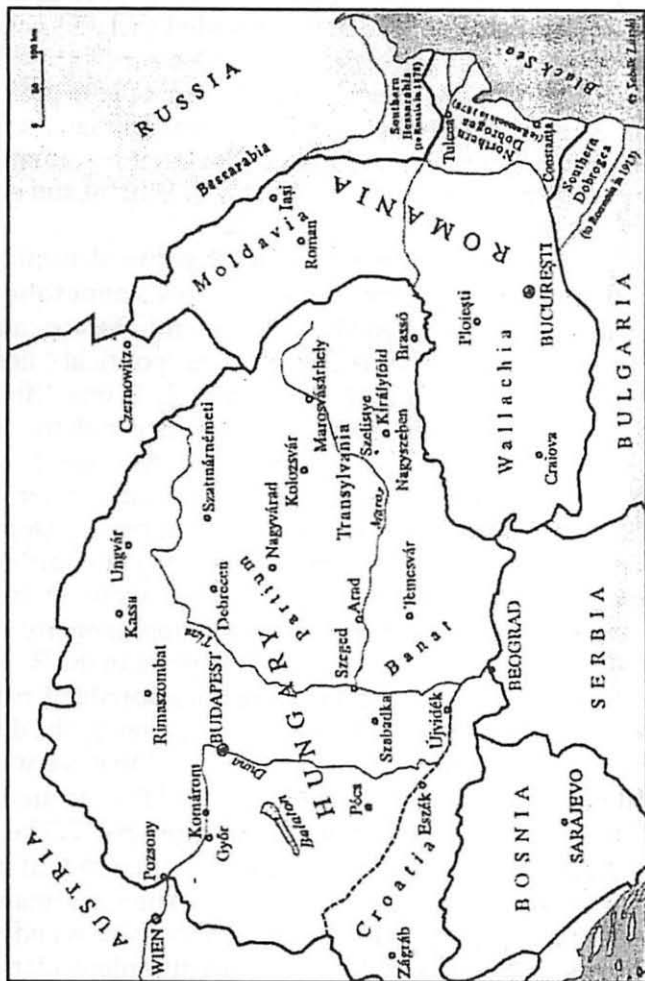
Bessarabia had an area of 8,355 km<sup>2</sup>, with 163,000 inhabitants, while Northern Dobrogea had 15,536 km<sup>2</sup> (out of which 4,964 km<sup>2</sup> water and swamps in the Danube delta) with 169,000 inhabitants.<sup>36</sup> Surely, a paramount reason for Romanians' refusal of the exchange was their commitment to defend the territorial inviolability of their country. Legally, this principle was stipulated in article 2 of the 1866 Constitution, which stated that "the territory of Romania is unalienable. The territory of the state can be changed or modified only by a law enacted by the Parliament." This principle was also endorsed by the Military Convention signed between Russia and Romania on April 4/16, 1877 in the preparation of the Russian-Turkish war. According to article 3, in exchange for the right of transit of the imperial army through Romania's territory, Russia committed itself to maintain and defend the integrity of Romania and to respect the political rights of the Romanian state.

Romania's refusal to cede Southern Bessarabia becomes even more understandable in view of the important symbolic value attached to the province in the Romanian national ideology. Southern Bessarabia was regarded as a core territory of Romania and provided, through its access to the Black Sea, a vital commercial outlet for foreign trade. This idea was eloquently spelled out by Prime Minister Brătianu, who, on March 21 /April 2, 1878, declared:

We cannot exist without that small part of Bessarabia. We would be suffocated without that region. Through it, the gates of the world are opening up to us. Without Bessarabia we would be engulfed by Russia, Austria, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Dobrogea doesn't open up any exit for us, and in the lack of direct communication routes, we would be able to communicate with it only through swamps and marshes, or through a round-about journey that we would have to take through the mouth of the Danube. [see Map I] This we could not accept under any circumstances. . . . We cannot oppose material resistance [against Besarabia's loss], this is clear. In spite of this, we will not accept Dobrogea.<sup>37</sup>

Brătianu expressed thus not only Romania's strong attachment to Southern Bessarabia, but also the country's determination to reject unilaterally the annexation of the province of Dobrogea. Following the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano, the Romanian government tried to secure diplomatic support for a favorable reexamination of the stipulations that affected the country.

Assembled in June 1878 in Berlin, the International Congress of Great European Powers considered numerous corrections to the Treaty of San Stefano. Romania's representatives at the congress, Prime Minister Brătianu and Foreign Minister Kogălniceanu pleaded for recognition of Romania's independence, as a reward for its decisive participation to the Russian-Turkish War, and for the



Source: Sebők László, Teleki László Institute, Budapest.

Map I: Romania with Northern Dobrogea (1878-1913). Southern Bessarabia, part of Moldavia/Romania in the period 1856-1878. Southern Dobrogea, annexed by Romania in 1913.

preservation of its territorial integrity, on the basis of the Russian-Romanian military convention of April 4/16, 1877. However, to the disappointment of Romanian politicians and public opinion, article 43 of the Treaty of Berlin stipulated only a conditional recognition of Romanian independence, provided that the country grant citizenship to non-Christian subjects and cede Southern Bessarabia to Russia (art. 45). At the same time, article 46 of the Treaty granted Romania the province of Northern Dobrogea. Compared to the stipulations of the Treaty of San Stefano, the southern portion of the province was enlarged with “the territory situated in the South of Dobrogea” on a line that started east of the city of Silistra and ended at the Black Sea south of Mangalia.<sup>38</sup>

The decisions of the Berlin Congress stirred a great political turmoil in Romania and opened a second phase of resistance to Dobrogea’s annexation by dividing Romanian politicians between “pro-Dobrogeans and anti-Dobrogeans.”<sup>39</sup> Considering that resistance to the European decision would be “political suicide,” the most important political leaders, such as Prince Carol I, Prime Minister Brătianu and Foreign Minister Kogălniceanu, favored compliance with the treaty and the annexation of Dobrogea.<sup>40</sup> Others, such as Dimitrie A. Sturdza, Nicolae Dimancea and Petre P. Carp, continued to oppose annexation. Under their influence, on June 28, 1878, forty-six members in the Chamber of Deputies signed a resolution rejecting the annexation of Dobrogea under any circumstances, considering it “detrimental to Romania’s interest.”<sup>41</sup> In their view, Dobrogea was “a fatal gift,” whose acquisition would disturb the Latin homogeneity of the Romanian people, embroil Romania in Russia’s geopolitical plans in the Balkans, affect the diplomatic relations with Bulgaria, and require unreasonable financial sacrifices. Their message to the public opinion, as summarized later by the deputy Nicolae D. Ionescu, was straightforward: let us tell the world “that we wish to remain a compact nation that we do not wish to extend beyond the Danube, that we do not give anything, and we do not accept anything in return.”<sup>42</sup> The anti-Dobrogean parliamentary resistance was accompanied by a strident press campaign. Opponents of annexation employed an impressive range of arguments, characterizing the province as “a marshy country, where yellow fever is endemic” and portraying its population as “an assemblage of most turbulent elements, gathered there from all over the world,” predicting that it would prove “the ruin of our finance.”<sup>43</sup>

The decisive political confrontation between pro and anti-Dobrogea politicians occurred during an extraordinary session of the Parliament that met on September 28–30, 1878, in order to determine Romania’s official position regarding the decisions of the Berlin Congress. During tense parliamentary debates, Kogălniceanu and Brătianu used all their rhetorical skills to convince

the Parliament to accept the annexation. In two memorable speeches, Kogălniceanu highlighted the economic and geopolitical advantages of a land with “an immense seacoast and three harbors” and recommended that the deputies invest in “expanding the harbors for developing the wealth of Dobrogea.”<sup>44</sup> Most important, as a trained historian, Kogălniceanu crystallized the nationalist discourse about Dobrogea, stressing Romania’s historical rights to the province, setting the nationalist priorities of the administration—“the only works that we will do in Dobrogea will be schools and roads,”—and downplaying the potential danger of Bulgarian resentments.<sup>45</sup> In sharp contrast to his early position on the issue, Prime Minister Brătianu endorsed Kogălniceanu’s campaign. In an eloquent speech, he underlined the geopolitical and economic advantages of annexation, rejected unequivocally Bulgaria’s historical rights to the province, and urged parliamentarians to overcome their fears and to trust Romania’s ability to assimilate Dobrogea: “You fear that we will not be able to Romanianize a province that was previously in our possession? You want to reject a land between the sea and the greatest river in Europe? But other nations would look at it as a hungry man looks at fresh caviar. Every people tends naturally to possess as much sea as it can, and you are refusing it? . . . Do you want us today . . . to suffocate, and to lose the sea and the mouth of the Danube?”<sup>46</sup> Under this determined leadership, the Senate approved the annexation of Dobrogea on September 28 (48 votes against 8), followed by the Chamber of Deputies on September 30 (87 votes against 27).<sup>47</sup> In addition, the Parliament authorized the government to administer Dobrogea through *ad hoc* governmental regulations until a future assembly would determine its legal organization.

The favorable vote in Parliament was an indication that, in a short period of time, Romanian national discourse about the annexation of Dobrogea had undergone a spectacular transformation, epitomized by Brătianu’s switch from stiff opposition to enthusiastic support. At the time of the Treaty of San Stefano, Dobrogea was to many politicians a foreign province, the symbol of an “onerous bargain,” or a “geopolitical embarrassment.” Gradually, in face of the irrevocable decision of the Berlin Congress, the province began to be valued as Romania’s reward for its blood sacrifice in the 1877–1878 Russian-Turkish war and as compensation for the distressing loss of Southern Bessarabia to Russia. Nicolae Iorga, a catalyst of Romanian national ideology, was to later suggestively synthesize this view by pointing out that Dobrogea was thus “doubly dear to Romanians” since “it was paid for twice”: “the first time with blood, and the second time with land.”<sup>48</sup> Consequently, the transfer of administrative institutions and personnel from Southern Bessarabia to Dobrogea was meant to assert a symbolic continuity between the two regions. By the end of the parliamentary debates over the Treaty of Berlin, Dobrogea was regarded almost unanimously

as an ancient Romanian land and an integral part of the Romania's national heritage. This process of myth-making was initiated by the historian-politician Mihail Kogălniceanu, who argued that "Dobrogea is not a Bulgarian land; in every corner . . . we find traces of our Romanian ancestors."<sup>49</sup> He pointed to Wallachia's temporary possession of Dobrogea at the beginning of the fifteenth century and the many ethnic Romanians in the province. Later, the thesis that Dobrogea was an ancient Romanian land which returned to the "mother country" took roots in Romanian historiography, becoming an integral component of the national ideology, and dominating all subsequent Romanian historical works on Dobrogea.

### **Internal Orientalism: Romania's "Civilizing" Mission in Dobrogea**

On the diplomatic stage, the annexation of Dobrogea by Romania was intimately linked to the Danubian policy put forward by the great powers at the Congress of Berlin. As part of its general political reorganization of Southeastern Europe, the Congress of Berlin paid special attention to the neutral status of the Danube, regarded as a milestone in the new political architecture in the region. To this end, the Congress devised a package of measures meant to compensate for Russia's reacquisition of Southern Bessarabia, and to preserve the neutrality of the river as implemented by the 1856 Treaty of Paris. Due to its geographical location, Romania seemed ideally positioned to serve as a buffer state among great powers in the region and to prevent a unilateral domination of the river. The Treaty of Berlin therefore granted Romania possession over Dobrogea and the Danube delta, giving it strategic control over the maritime Danube. Romania became the center of "the Danubian Question" and a main actor in maintaining political equilibrium in Southeastern Europe.

The integration of Dobrogea into Romania thus fostered a critical reassessment of the country's political role in the Balkans. Romanian political elites were keen to speculate on the important role their country acquired in the maintenance of political equilibrium in Southeastern Europe and in sheltering Western political and commercial interests in the region. They pointed out the direct link between Romania's possession of Dobrogea and the country's new geopolitical role. In the words of Prime Minister Brătianu,

"Dobrogea was imposed on us by Europe. You all refused it, we protested and did not want to accept it but it was imposed on us due to the European interest in the mouth of the Danube. Gentlemen, Europe doesn't make gifts to any nation unless it is in direct European interest. . . . Europe gave us Dobrogea since it saw that we are a strong nation, distinguished and full of vigor, having



our own national character, different from all nations in the Orient. It gave us the province since it is in Europe's interest that the mouth of the Danube is in the hands of a people who can assure the liberty of the Danube."<sup>50</sup>

In the same vein, while crystallizing the Romanian nationalist discourse about Dobrogea, Kogălniceanu connected the annexation of the province to Romania's European and civilizing vocation: Dobrogea was "a land given [us] by Europe and [one] which sets us in contact with Western Europe."<sup>51</sup> In his view, Romania's control over Dobrogea and the Danube delta was the country's main asset in becoming a western (anti-Russian) military bastion, a guarantor of political stability in eastern Europe and an essential link in the commercial transit between Occident and the Orient. The "insignificant" province of Dobrogea thus generated a major geopolitical reassessment of Romania, a fact that accounts for the paramount paradox of its integration process: one would expect that the annexation of the province consolidated Romania's Balkan component, yet Romanian national ideology proclaimed that the integration of Dobrogea strengthened Romania's links to the west. This idea was to be eloquently expressed by Prime Minister Ion. I. C. Brătianu almost three decades after the annexation of Dobrogea: "We are not a Balkan state, neither politically nor geographically. Fortunately, we have overcome long time ago the convulsions which are still experienced by our neighbors from the Balkan Peninsula; and geographically, we have a distinct position, which symbolizes the uniqueness of our situation: we are at the mouth of the Danube, *but mandated here by the Occident.*"<sup>52</sup>

In the long run, this perspective generated an internal, "metonymic Orientalism."<sup>53</sup> Dobrogea was stigmatized as a backward, uncivilized part of the Orient—and it was Romania's noble "European mission" to introduce high culture in the province, so as to extend the boundaries of the west in the Balkans.<sup>54</sup> This self-legitimizing narrative was used to justify the program of cultural assimilation, economic modernization and administrative colonization implemented in Dobrogea. As Luca Ionescu, a prefect in Dobrogea, emphatically stated in 1904:

"We have come here to resume the thread of Romanian life, to rejoin our brothers, who have been severed from the bosom of the motherland. . . . But, at the same time, we have come here to bring the torch of civilization to all the peoples of this province, even to those who, during so many centuries, reigned over our sons by force and constraint. . . . No more political clubs, no more secret committees, no more collections of funds, no more articles in foreign newspapers, no more open or concealed attempts to disturb public order or to foster here or elsewhere agitation against us."<sup>55</sup>

The text highlights the strong association between nationalism based on historical rights, modernization, and strong bureaucratic control in the organization of Dobrogea. It also implies a certain fear of Romanian political elites in regard to the multiethnic population of Dobrogea: for many politicians, the province was a *refugium peccatorum* of a rebellious population, a *terra incognita* of geopolitical complications, and a “Pandora’s box,” of acute nationalist conflicts with “hostile surrounding elements.”<sup>56</sup>

### **The Politics of Annexation: Economic Competition Among Regional Elites Over Dobrogea’s Organization**

The prospective organization of Dobrogea occasioned passionate polemics between the leading Romanian political factions, the Liberals and the Conservatives.<sup>57</sup> The arguments were intimately linked to the political rivalry between regional elites and their competing sociopolitical interests. The ruling Liberal party (1876–1888) designed a separate administrative regime in the province, which was to give the government a free hand in implementing a gradual program of socioeconomic, political, and ethnic assimilation. By contrast, the Conservative opposition pleaded for an immediate extension of all constitutional rights to Dobrogea. The controversy took place in the Parliament and the press. On August 21, 1878, the official Liberal newspaper, *Românul* (The Romanian), wrote that “the Opposition is asking now for the convocation of an extraordinary session of the Parliament in order to introduce Dobrogea immediately and without any transition into the constitutional life of the country. Certain that, at present, no government would succeed in implementing our Constitution in Dobrogea, the Opposition intends in fact to transform the issue [of Dobrogea] into an anti-governmental political tool.”<sup>58</sup>

A prominent spokesman for the Conservative view was the poet Mihai Eminescu, one of the vice-editors at the Conservative newspaper *Timpu* (The Time).<sup>59</sup> In his view, although Romania’s historical rights to Dobrogea were indisputable when compared to the territorial claims of neighboring countries, they faded away in the face of Dobrogea’s inhabitants, “the true owners of the province.” He pleaded for a plebiscite that would allow Dobrogea’s populace to determine the conditions for a personal union with Romania and envisioned an autonomous confessional organization of the province, whereby each ethnic group would govern itself in its own language, through representatives elected from its own ranks. His central argument was that, after five hundred years of Ottoman domination, Dobrogea was no longer “Transdanubian Romania,” but a foreign country.<sup>60</sup> Eminescu’s argument provoked a vigorous reaction from *Românul*, which proclaimed the existence of a “Transdanubian Romania” that desired

complete assimilation with Romania. On this basis, the Liberals pleaded for an administrative system directed from Bucharest and for the extension of communication and educational systems in Dobrogea. At the heart of the debate was the government's program of major economic investments in Dobrogea, such as the construction of a harbor in Constanța, a network of railways, and a bridge over the Danube. *Românul* argued that: "for financing them, it would be necessary to allocate not only the income of the province, which for many years will have to be dedicated to local improvements, but also a certain sum from Romania's own budget, since the entire country will benefit from these investments."<sup>61</sup> Eminescu denounced this program as an administrative colonization of Dobrogea, which, "through the pretext of 'civilizing' it, would provide bureaucratic privileges to the Liberal clientele," and would give the government "a free hand for spending millions."<sup>62</sup> On the Conservative side, Eminescu became a constant critic of the Liberal administration in Dobrogea, which he accused of being "recruited from Romania's greediest and hungriest."<sup>63</sup> However, while a majority of the Conservatives advocated an immediate extension of Romania's Constitution into the province as a sufficient guarantee against Dobrogea's becoming a "colony of the Liberals," Eminescu took a specific stance on the issue, pleading for a multicultural and ultimately dissimilationist political order in Dobrogea.

In the long run, the controversy between Liberals and Conservatives over the administrative organization of Dobrogea was linked—besides the more immediate political interests or economic clientelism—to a broader confrontation over Romania's economic future.<sup>64</sup> Representing preponderantly the political interests of middle and great landowners, the Conservatives favored the arguments of agrarian economists such as Nicolae Suțu and Alexandru D. Moruzi, who advocated the development of agriculture as practiced on large estates, favoring trade in cattle and cereals. Although they did not necessarily oppose industrialization, agrarianists saw it as complementary and subordinate to the needs of agriculture; they therefore rejected plans for economic protectionism. The Liberals, alerted by the great fluctuation of cereal prices on the international market and eager to diversify Romania's economy, preferred the arguments of industrial economists such as Dionisie Pop Marțian and Petre S. Aurelian, who regarded the creation of a national industry as vital to Romania's long-term development. Furthermore, if prior to the 1870s Romanian economists almost unanimously favored free trade, starting with the seventies and eighties industrialists were under the growing influence of the German economist Friederich List and favored a policy of economic protectionism and sheltered industrialization.

With Romania's independence, the ruling Liberal party could embark on a policy of active state intervention in the economy. During 1881–1889, the Liberal government led by Ion C. Brătianu implemented a comprehensive program of sheltered industrialization. This included a protectionist regime of border tariffs (1886); the creation of an institutional and legislative framework for the development of industry, such as the adoption of a new Commercial Code after the Italian model (1886); laws for the encouragement of industry (1887); active measures meant to promote investment of local capital and state participation in fostering economic growth and construction of a modern communication system. Given the strategic commercial location of Dobrogea, the plan for massive state economic investments in the province was an important component of the Liberals' policy of sheltered industrialization and figured predominantly on their economic agenda.

The political debates over Dobrogea's organization thus exposed an underlying paradox of Romanian politics: Conservatives were attached to free trade and favored a regime of political rights and liberties in Dobrogea, while Liberals favored protectionism, state intervention in the economy, and a separate and highly centralized administrative regime in Dobrogea. This situation highlights the fact that the political positions of various elite groupings in pre-1918 Romania defied conventional ideological labels. The different visions of the Liberals and Conservatives over Dobrogea can be better explained for by considering additional social or territorial variables, such as competition among regional elites in Moldova and Wallachia. Thus, since his election as a dual prince of the United Principalities in 1859, Alexandru Ioan Cuza faced the dilemma of having to choose his political allies among rival Liberal and Conservatives political factions and to assure a fair distribution of power between the still regionally segregated Moldovan and Wallachian elites. Especially important for the political stability of Cuza's regime was his attitude toward the Wallachian Liberals, grouped around C. A. Rosetti and Ion C. Brătianu. This faction had been very active in the domestic and international unionist movement, acquired considerable political prestige and influence, and was eager to participate in the organization of the new state. After unsuccessful attempts to secure unconditional political support from Wallachian Liberals, Cuza decided to base his political regime on the fragile grouping of Moldovan democrat-liberals, among whom the most prominent leader was Mihail Kogălniceanu. Since this support proved insufficient to secure a stable political authority, on May 2, 1864 Cuza staged a *coup d'état* that suppressed political opposition and conferred on him the necessary power for implementing a comprehensive program of reforms.<sup>65</sup> After Prince Cuza's forced abdication on February 11, 1866, the Wallachian Liberals led by Brătianu and

Rosetti managed to dominate Romania's political life and to control important economic institutions. Their political following in Moldova remained, however, rather weak and unstable. In the period that followed the adoption of the 1866 Constitution, Wallachian Liberals allied temporarily with the anti-Jewish Independent Liberal Faction, led by the Moldovan politician Nicolae D. Ionescu, an alliance that accounted for the anti-Jewish turn in the domestic policy of the Wallachian Liberals. Later, the official establishment of the Liberal party in 1875 was based on an agreement between the Wallachians and the group of Moldovan liberal democrats led by Mihail Kogălniceanu, generically known as the "Coalition of the Mazar Pasha." Although from a political point of view the coalition proved useful, it did little to improve the Liberals' following in Moldova. The great Moldovan landowners, who extracted their revenues mainly from large scale agriculture, favored free trade and opposed the Liberals' policy of protectionism and state intervention in the economy. Protectionism also affected Moldovan small landowners (possessing up to 100 hectares), who were primarily cattle breeders and supported a free trade policy that enabled them to export cattle to Austria-Hungary. As a result, they constituted a potential basis for an anti-Liberal political mobilization in Moldova.<sup>66</sup>

Eminescu's offensive against the Liberals' plans therefore expressed the frustrations of the Conservative Moldovan elites, who were gradually losing ground in the political and socioeconomical competition with the Wallachian-dominated Liberal party. Apparently, the territorial exchange between Southern Bessarabia and Dobrogea was detrimental to the economic development and political position of Moldova. Southern Bessarabia was part of Moldova, providing it direct access to the sea. In contrast, Dobrogea could be seen as a territorial prolongation of Wallachia, which "corrected" the eccentric geographic position of the new national capital, Bucharest, and could easily function as its direct commercial outlet. Moldovans feared that the development of a new Black Sea port would ruin Galați, Moldova's leading Danubian harbor, further contributing to the decline of the province. Moldovan politicians also worried that the Liberal program of massive economic investments in Dobrogea would occur at the expense of resources allocated to regional development in Moldova. These concerns were put forward by the Moldovan deputy Iepureanu in December 1878, who claimed that the proposed railway link between Dobrogea and the national system was a neglect of Moldova's interests. In response, Prime Minister Brătianu had to give formal guarantees that he "did not forget Moldova's interests," and that "through this railway the sea will open to Moldova, as well," mostly "during the winter when Moldova is able to export its agricultural products only to Austria."<sup>67</sup> To further appease Moldovan deputies, Brătianu also pointed

out Mihail Kogălniceanu's concern for Moldova's well-being, since he was the most prominent Moldovan politician in the Liberal party at the time.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, by 1883, Kogălniceanu himself denounced the Wallachian domination of key administrative and economic institutions, such as the Romanian National Bank and the Romanian Railway Company, and he deplored the marginal position of Moldova's elites.<sup>69</sup> With Kogălniceanu's death in 1891, the Moldovan branch in the Liberal party gradually disappeared, being slowly replaced by new political alliances with the emerging Moldovan populist movement of Constantin Stere.<sup>70</sup> As a result, although formally within the Liberal party, Vasile Kogălniceanu—Mihail's son—carried only a marginal political influence. It was thus not by chance that in 1906, dissatisfied with the traditional political parties, he became a spokesman for the small landowners and cattle breeders of Moldova, and initiated an anti-Liberal political campaign. Significantly, in his fight against the Liberal policy of sheltered industrialization, Vasile Kogălniceanu was later to develop a regional political movement in Dobrogea, as well.<sup>71</sup> Since its annexation, Dobrogea thus became a battleground of political confrontation between dominant factions of the Romanian political life.

### **Internal Colonialism: The Administrative Organization of Northern Dobrogea**

Romania took over the administration of Northern Dobrogea from Russia on November 14, 1878. The entry of the Romanian army was soon followed by a multitude of administrators, geographers, anthropologists, and economists, who studied the province and devised plans of economic organization. In order to implement its developmental strategy, the ruling Liberal party (1876–1888) designed a separate administrative regime for the province, which occurred in three main stages: “the regulamentary period” (1878–1880), when the province was ruled by *ad hoc* governmental regulations; a second period (1880–1908), when it was administered on the basis of a separate law issued by Parliament; c) and a third phase (1908–1913), when Dobrogea's legislation was gradually merged with that of Romania. The following section focuses on two main aspects of this regime, namely citizenship and property legislation.

#### **From Symbolic Inclusion to Administrative Exclusion: Citizenship Legislation**

In a proclamation issued in Romanian, Bulgarian, and Turkish on November 14, 1878, Prince Carol I pledged to Dobrogeans that “You now belong to a state governed only by laws debated and approved by the nation. Your life, your honor,

and your prosperity—the saint and most cherished goods of mankind—are under the protection of the Constitution.” He also promised Muslim inhabitants that “justice in Romania does not discriminate according to religion or ethnic origin. Your religious faith and your family will be protected in a similar way to that of Christians.”<sup>72</sup> In spite of these royal assurances, the organization of Dobrogea was characterized by a peculiar combination of symbolic inclusion but administrative exclusion, most evident in regard to the citizenship status of its inhabitants.

This essay does not examine in detail Romania’s citizenship policy. Nonetheless, in order to understand the way in which this policy shaped the legislative integration of Dobrogea, the following paragraphs briefly present the main features of Romanian citizenship legislation.<sup>73</sup> Romanian citizenship was established in 1859–1862 through the political and administrative union between Moldova and Wallachia. In the next period, favored by the consolidation of Romania’s national institutions, Romanian citizenship crystallized, acquiring its own set of administrative practices, corpus of laws, and legal terminology, based on a heterogeneous combination of the 1865 Civil Code, the 1866 Constitution, and the jurisprudence. According to the 1865 Civil Code (largely influenced by the Napoleonic Code) and the 1866 Constitution (modeled on the 1831 Belgian Constitution), Romania was organized as an “ethnic democracy,” and its legislation favored the sociopolitical and economic interests of the dominant nationality. This was accomplished in several ways. First, Romanian citizenship was automatically ascribed to a child born from the marriage of a Romanian man, on the basis of the *jus sanguinis* principle. The rule of *jus soli* had no bearing on ascribing Romanian citizenship at birth, but was employed as a criterium of naturalization of Christian residents born in the country, at the time of their adulthood (article 8). In addition, the Constitution pursued an active ethnic policy. Article 3 stipulated that “Romanian territory cannot be colonized with foreign population,” while article 9 read that “an [ethnic] Romanian from any state, regardless of his place of birth, upon renouncing his foreign subjection, can immediately acquire political rights, by a vote of the Parliament.” Last but not least, in Romania citizenship accounted for an extensive range of privileges, granting access to political rights, land tenure, and positions in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. Romanian citizenship legislation was thus utilized as an active instrument of “social closure” in order to regulate access to political participation, land ownership, and state resources.<sup>74</sup>

The annexation of Dobrogea challenged this policy in several respects. First, it generated a new category of Romanian citizens, *by annexation*. The legislation of the country did not contain any specific provisions or guidelines regarding

the annexation of territories or the citizenship status of their inhabitants. Neither did the emerging international law provide clear codes of conduct in this situation. Second, and most importantly, the multi-religious character of Dobrogea challenged the legal association between access to Romanian citizenship and affiliation with Christian religion. This association was a direct consequence of the peculiar international status of Moldova and Wallachia, which were placed until 1878 under Ottoman suzerainty. According to the tradition of the treaties completed between the Ottoman Empire and the principalities, Muslims were not allowed to settle in Moldova and Wallachia, to proselytize, or to build mosques on their territory.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, starting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, attempts at legislative codification in the principalities developed the stipulations against non-Christians into a fully fledged legal order that differentiated between Christians and non-Christians, denying the latter significant civil and political rights. This legal order was adopted by the 1858 Convention of Paris, which regulated the internal and international status of Moldova and Wallachia and served as their constitution from 1858 to 1864. In article 44, the convention granted political rights only to Christian citizens, followed by a non-binding promise for a future emancipation of non-Christians. This stipulation was interpreted by Romanian politicians as a diplomatic recognition of the legal doctrine of the “Christian state.”

The secularization of political life that started under the rule of prince Cuza (1859–1866) challenged the established association between religion and nationality. The 1865 Romanian Civil Code admitted—in article 16—a *conditional* naturalization of non-Christians, after a naturalization period of ten years, provided that their naturalization was approved by the prince and the parliament. In less than a year, however, the 1866 Constitution reversed this more liberal policy. It abrogated article 16 and denied access of non-Christian foreigners to Romanian citizenship: “Only foreigners of Christian rite can acquire naturalization” (art. 7).

The situation changed yet again, at least from a legal standpoint, just one year after the annexation of Dobrogea. The Treaty of Berlin declared that, in order to have its independence recognized by the Great European Powers, Romania had to grant “civil and political rights” and to “admit in public service, functions and honors” all its subjects, “irrespective of their religious belief or confession”; to guarantee the liberty of practice and organization of religious cults to all its inhabitants; and to treat equally all foreign citizens in Romania “regardless of their religion” (art. 44). Although not stated explicitly, the impetus behind these provisions was European concern over legal discrimination against



Jews and the need to regularize the status of Muslims in Romania. If implemented, these requirements would have terminated the legal order of the Christian state that functioned in the principalities under Ottoman suzerainty.

But Romanian political elites successfully avoided a strict application of the Treaty of Berlin. After acute and passionate public debates and complicated parliamentary procedures, in 1879 the Constitution was finally amended to comply with the Treaty of Berlin. Article 7, which had excluded non-Christians from naturalization, was revised as follows: "In Romania, the difference of religious belief and confession can prevent neither the accession to civil and political rights, nor the exercise of these rights." This was, however, only an apparent liberalization: instead of a *collective* emancipation, the amendment offered non-Christians residents only *individual* access to naturalization, in restrictive conditions.

While the Romanian Parliament was arduously trying to deny access to Romanian citizenship from non-Christians, the acquisition of Dobrogea threatened in fact to render its efforts meaningless by granting citizenship to numerous Muslim Turks and Tartars. Nevertheless, during the parliamentary debates it soon became obvious that Romanian politicians were not concerned with the Dobrogean Muslim population. According to the deputy Nicolae Blaremburg, to exclude them from Romanian citizenship meant to "commit an outrageous injustice."<sup>76</sup> Romanian nationalists focused instead on the exclusion of Jews from citizenship and utilized religion only as a tool for preventing their political emancipation. However, since the European intervention in favor of Jews' emancipation and the annexation of Dobrogea were decided by the same Treaty of Berlin, adversaries of Dobrogea's annexation linked the two actions, portraying them as an overt and concerted aggression against Romania's citizenship policy. During the debates over the Jewish question, Blaremburg warned the government that "Dobrogea should not serve as a place for the citizenship baptism of the Jews from the left bank of the Danube [from Romania proper] who would voluntarily go through the purgatory of Dobrogea only to facilitate their inclusion into the mass, and by this way into the Romanian *polis*; in that case, all our precautions [against the emancipation of Jews] would be practically eluded and would become illusory."<sup>77</sup> Romanian politicians thus searched for a legal solution which would attenuate the political and demographic impact of Dobrogea's annexation and would mediate the potential contradictions between the access to Romanian citizenship of its multiethnic population and the concomitant exclusion of Jews from collective emancipation.

In March 1880, after almost two years of direct governmental administration of Dobrogea, the Parliament finally adopted the Law Concerning Dobrogea's Administrative Organization, with the primary aim of assimilating the province.<sup>78</sup> Article 3 read that "all the inhabitants of Dobrogea, who, on April 11, 1877, were Ottoman citizens, have become Romanian citizens."<sup>79</sup> Article 5 stipulated that "the inhabitants of Dobrogea who have become Romanian citizens are equal before the law, enjoy all civic rights, and can be appointed in public functions, regardless of their origin or religion," while article 6 extended to the inhabitants of Dobrogea numerous civic rights provided by the Constitution. The law also guaranteed free education, liberty of conscience and religious belief, and stipulated the military recruitment of Dobrogeans into the Romanian army. In this way, the 1880 law implemented a modern bourgeois-democratic type of citizenship in Dobrogea, providing for equality before the law and guaranteeing certain civil rights and liberties.

Although Dobrogea was formally incorporated into Romania, the 1880 law was conceived as a "Dobrogean Constitution" and formed the basis of a separate, exceptional administrative regime in the province. This meant that, although nominally Romanian citizens, the Dobrogeans had no political rights: article 4 stipulated that "a special law will determine the conditions under which Dobrogeans will be able to exercise their political rights and buy real estate in Romania proper. Another law will stipulate their representation in the Romanian Parliament."<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, civil liberties were potentially restricted by article 6, which read that "the government, through a decree by the Council of Ministers, can forbid every demonstration that is dangerous to public order." Laws on the political emancipation of Dobrogeans announced in article 4 were passed gradually only in 1908–1913. From 1878 to 1908, the inhabitants of Dobrogea thus enjoyed only a local type of citizenship. They were denied political representation in Parliament and the right to enroll in political parties; instead, once a year, two representatives of the province would raise issues of specific Dobrogean interest to the prince. In addition, once they crossed the Danube into Romania, they were treated as virtual foreigners and were denied the right to participate in politics or to acquire real estate. In the words of the French traveler André Bellesort, the Dobrogeans were placed in a situation "at least as extraordinary as the nature of their country. . . . While they are Romanian citizens in Dobrogea, outside the province, they are neither Romanians nor citizens, and do not belong to any known category."<sup>81</sup>

What was the aim of this separate administrative regime? According to one of its main authors, Mihail Kogălniceanu, at the time minister of the interior (July 11, 1879–April 16, 1880), it was conceived as a temporary measure meant

to rebuild, repopulate, and reorganize the province, which had been ruined by the devastating 1877–1878 war. Kogălniceanu also emphasized that, since Dobrogea had been shaped by a radically different sociopolitical system prior to 1878, the former Ottoman province needed a transitional period before being fully integrated into Romania. During this time, the new authorities were to gradually introduce Romania's property system and political institutions into the province and accustom inhabitants to the material situation and political culture of Romania proper. Considered from the perspective of these declared aims, however, the 1880 law went not only far beyond, but even against its original scope, since it subjected Dobrogea to a heavily centralized political regime that "quarantined" its inhabitants into a kind of territorial enclave, cut some of their already acquired rights, and denied them any meaningful political participation. The illiberal stipulations of the 1880 law therefore met significant opposition in Parliament. During the debates, the deputy Pantazi Ghica considered that the law "gives material life, but totally refuses public life to Dobrogea," concluding that it "treats the Dobrogeans as a herd of slaves."<sup>82</sup> Kogălniceanu could counter this criticism and win Parliament's approval for his bill only by stressing its national priorities: "This law is made for nothing else but for Dobrogea to become part of Romania, and its inhabitants to slowly assimilate and to become Romanians."<sup>83</sup>

What did Kogălniceanu mean by assimilation? Judging from his overall political activity, he was a liberal democrat.<sup>84</sup> As a prominent leader of the 1848 revolution in Moldova, he stood for the political emancipation of the lower classes, religious tolerance toward non-Orthodox Christians, and the abolition of Gypsy slavery. He was also a nationalist politician, a determined advocate for the political union of all ethnic Romanians and a promoter of their national rights, even when these conflicted with the rights of other ethnic groups. One can thus detect an underlying tension between liberalism and nationalism in Kogălniceanu's political vision. This tension became evident in his view on the "assimilation" of Dobrogea put forward during the parliamentary debates over the adoption of the law regulating the administrative organization of Dobrogea. On the one hand, he backed a liberal organization of the province which would observe the cultural autonomy of all ethnic groups, mostly regarding their educational and religious rights. However, he also wished to implement a "Romanian political order" in Dobrogea, which would introduce the institutions of the Romanian nation-state and favor the political and economic domination of ethnic Romanians. These objectives set limits to the degree of cultural autonomy allowed to ethnic groups in the province: Kogălniceanu defended the right of ethnic minorities to education in their own language, provided that they study Romanian as well; to practice their own religion, provided that

they accept the jurisdiction of Romanian civil laws; and to enjoy a minimum standard of civil rights and liberties, except for cases in which this endangered the “public order.”

The means chosen to implement the “Romanian order” in Dobrogea further highlighted the tension between liberalism and nationalism in Kogălniceanu’s conception of assimilation. First, he believed that the success of “Romanization” depended on creating a separate administrative regime that would permit a transitional period of assimilation: “We want this province to be overwhelmingly [*eminamente*] Romanian, but assimilation requires a labor period, an epoch of transition; it takes work to assimilate. If we were to give this province all the liberties that are currently available in Romania, then there will not occur any assimilation.”<sup>85</sup> Second, this separate organization was to give the Romanian administration the main tools for implementing a gradual program of assimilation, having as its main elements the centralization of administrative power, the denial of political rights to Dobrogeans, and the expansion of Romanian educational and religious systems in the province. The core of the separate organization of Dobrogea was thus the extensive administrative powers given to the Romanian authorities in the province, mainly in multiethnic areas where Romanians were in the minority. According to Kogălniceanu, “The prefect . . . has to stimulate the assimilation of the inhabitants, and Dobrogean Romanians must ultimately be admitted even to Parliament. Therefore allow the prefect to introduce these Romanian elements in the community council. If you decide that he does not have this right, then in both Tulcea and Constanța, where the majority of the inhabitants are Greeks, as well as in areas where the majority are Bulgarians, Romanians would not be represented.”<sup>86</sup> He therefore urged the Romanian deputies “to make national laws, before making liberal ones” and “to invest local authority with extensive powers” for assimilating Dobrogea.<sup>87</sup> It thus became obvious that in the confrontation between nationalism and liberalism the former prevailed: the rights of ethnic minorities were acceptable providing that—and to the extent to which—they were not challenging Romanian political interests. One can thus better understand Romanian administrative policy in the province, which proved tolerant to those ethnic groups that did not develop strong nationalist movements, such as the Turks and Tartars, but was considerably harsher with groups that reached a higher level of nationalist mobilization, such as Bulgarians, or challenged the economical domination of Romanians, such as Greeks, Jews, and Armenians.

Ultimately, Kogălniceanu's passionate arguments succeeded in shaping much of the content of the law that governed the province for the next thirty-five years. He also set the priorities for the administration of Dobrogea, among which the regulation of property and the implementation of a comprehensive policy of ethnic colonization figured predominantly.

### Property Legislation

One of the most pressing tasks of the Romanian administration following the annexation was the transformation of the Ottoman hierarchical type of property into capitalist property, prior to granting Dobrogeans full citizenship rights. This process occasioned massive reallocation of ownership among ethnic groups in Northern Dobrogea and resulted ultimately in the transfer of the landed property in the province to ethnic Romanians. Under the close supervision of the Romanian state, the transfer proceeded as follows: (1) the acquisition by the Romanian state of the property rights held by the Ottoman state in Dobrogea; (2) the appropriation by the Romanian state of land owned by Dobrogeans; (3) the opening up of virgin lands for cultivation by ethnic Romanian colonists; and (4) the distribution to Romanians of the lands of all Dobrogeans who emigrated from the province. In this way, the Romanian state established a virtual monopoly on land circulation in Dobrogea, which assured the gradual transfer of ownership to ethnic Romanians.

The Ottoman state had established five juridical categories of landed property: (1) *mülk*, denoting private property in villages and cities; (2) *mirië*—the most common form of property in Dobrogea—designating rural property outside localities granted to individuals by the state, in exchange for an annual tithe (the right to use the land was attested by an official document called *tapu*); (3) *vakf*, property belonging to religious institutions; (4) *metrukë*, public property such as squares, roads, communal places, and so on; and (5) *mevat*, unexploited land, represented in Dobrogea mainly by the Danube delta. Of these, only *mülk* was comparable to full private ownership; the other four types of land were nominally owned by the Ottoman state. Consequently, they had to be reconciled juridically with article 23 of the Constitution of Romania that defined private property as “sacred and inviolable.” Due to its complex character, the legal transfer of property occurred gradually from 1878 to 1882. While studying the Ottoman property system and preparing the new legislation, Romanian authorities preserved the Ottoman laws in effect until April 11, 1877.<sup>88</sup>

In the first phase, the 1880 law stipulated the succession of the Romanian state to “all the rights and attributions the Ottoman government had had on immobile property in Dobrogea” (art. 11). Second, a regulation issued on June 5, 1880,

established an administrative commission to verify all Ottoman property documents (*tapu*) and replace them with new Romanian ones.<sup>89</sup> Upon completion, property ownership was finally regulated on April 3, 1882, by the Law Concerning Immovable Property in Dobrogea. This law aimed at transforming conditional ownership, *miriè*, into full capitalist ownership. To become full owners, peasants had to redeem the annual tithe previously paid to the Ottoman state, as the nominal owner of the land (art. 11). The value of this financial compensation was established at one-third of the total price of the plot, payable in installments to the Romanian state. In June 1884, a new regulation gave peasants the option to redeem their tithe by giving up one-third of their land.<sup>90</sup> The regulation stipulated also that the Dobrogeans “who have not paid all their installments in three years lose to the state their right to the land, as well as their previous payments.”<sup>91</sup> Finally, the 1910 Interpretative Law further extended the state’s power to dispossess “through administrative means and without any warning or juridical assistance, any holder who did not fulfill his financial obligations toward the state.”<sup>92</sup> In the period 1882-1912, the Romanian state appropriated about eighty-eight thousand hectares of land from the Dobrogeans who failed to redeem their tithes, thus expanding the amount of state land available for ethnic colonization.<sup>93</sup>

### **Economic Utilitarianism Versus Ethnic Assimilation: Strategies of Colonization**

The second major aim of the 1882 law was the colonization of Dobrogea, seen as an imperative necessity in an age when “economic progress depends on the number of hands employed.”<sup>94</sup> While the population of the province was about one hundred thousand in 1878, the geographer M. D. Ionescu believed that Dobrogea could easily feed nine hundred thousand inhabitants.<sup>95</sup> Colonization was particularly complex, however, and occasioned numerous legal and political controversies. Together with Romanian landlords’ fears of major labor drains from Romania proper into Dobrogea, debates on colonization were dominated by the contradiction between inclusive strategies motivated by economic imperatives, on the one hand, and projects for exclusive Romanian ethnic colonization, driven by nationalistic concerns, on the other hand.

At first (1878–1882), Romanian authorities lacked a coherent colonization strategy. Confronting the massive depopulation of the province, they were very permissive in regard to foreign colonists: the Minister of the Interior Kogălniceanu recalled that in addition to the partial repatriation of Muslim war refugees, “we initially allowed everybody to settle in Dobrogea. We welcomed, settled, and gave money” to Turkish immigrants from Turkey or even Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to Bulgarians and Germans from Bessarabia.<sup>96</sup> Another substantial category

of colonists consisted of ethnic Romanians from abroad, who, encouraged by Kogălniceanu, began to flow into the province as early as 1879. Later, two colonization strategies crystallized. One, represented by such politicians as Ion Ionescu de la Brad, was driven by economics and held that Dobrogea should be open to all immigrants, irrespective of nationality. The other, represented by Kogălniceanu, and the first prefect of Constanța, Remus Opreanu, advocated massive colonization by Romanians. The controversies thus revolved around the source of the necessary human input. By and large, participants in these debates distinguished four major categories of colonists: (1) Romanian citizens from Romania proper; (2) ethnic Romanians from abroad; (3) "Latin" immigrants, such as Italian, French, or Spanish people; and (4) non-"Latin" foreign colonists. The participation of each category in the colonization process generated numerous economic, national, or juridical arguments.

The participation of Romanian citizens, although the most acceptable in national terms and most facile from a juridical point of view, was energetically opposed by great landlords in Romania proper, who feared a labor drain at a time when they needed agricultural workers the most. Consequently, the only viable solution seemed to be the appeal to foreign colonists. However, the participation of foreigners proved to be a particularly difficult legal question: article 3 of the 1866 Constitution of Romania expressly forbade the colonization of Romanian territory with foreign people (*de gintă streină*), and denied foreign citizens the right to acquire landed property in Romania. In view of these legal barriers, M. D. Ionescu proposed a solution. Acknowledging that colonization with Romanians from the "mother country" would deprive Romania of a valuable labor force, Ionescu recommended turning to Romanians from "other parts of Dacia, Romanians from Macedonia"—and most significantly—"Latin elements, such as, for example, Italians, an industrious and hard-working people who would easily assimilate with Romanians."<sup>97</sup> This proposal was based on an innovative interpretation of the 1866 Constitution. In forbidding colonization of Romanian territory with foreign people, article 3 used the phrase "*gintă streină*," a formula that literally meant "alien race, line, or breed." In Romanian public discourse, the word *gintă* did not take on an ethnic meaning, but referred to large cultural groups—such as Slavic, Germanic, or Latin peoples—and circulated most often in relation to "the Latin breed" (*gintă latină*) of which Romanians considered themselves an integral part.<sup>98</sup> Ionescu argued that colonization of Dobrogea with "Latin" would be acceptable from economic, national, and legal points of view. Nevertheless, the immigration of other categories of foreigners remained controversial. The number of German farmers emigrating from Russia to Dobrogea,

for example, increased from 3,030 in 1880, to 8,751 in 1900. While Ionescu praised their contribution to Dobrogea's economic development, I. I. Nacian considered them a national danger to the province.<sup>99</sup>

The most acceptable external contingent were ethnic Romanians from the neighboring historical provinces of Transylvania, the Banat, and Bessarabia, or from the Balkans. Yet their colonization was also controversial. Although the 1866 Constitution favored the naturalization of ethnic Romanians from abroad without a naturalization stage, article 9 obliged them to obtain a formal "recognition" of their citizenship from Parliament in order to exercise their political rights. The legal situation of ethnic Romanian colonists coming from Austria-Hungary led to a diplomatic controversy. In order to limit emigration, Austro-Hungarian authorities demanded that the Romanian government extradite Transylvanian Romanians who immigrated to Dobrogea without imperial authorization. Due to intense Austrian-Hungarian diplomatic pressure, in January 1882 Romania expelled 450 ethnic Romanian immigrants from the Banat. This action caused tense political debates in Romania. In defense of the Banatians, Kogălniceanu initiated a motion of support and intensified his appeal for Dobrogea's colonization. Prime Minister Brătianu justified the expulsion by the fact that, since the Banatians came unannounced and during the winter, the "government was unable to help them."<sup>100</sup>

These on-going juridical controversies postponed the adoption of a legal framework for colonization. As a result, the 1880 Constitution of Dobrogea granted the right to acquire property in the province only to Ottoman subjects who had resided there by April 11, 1877, and were legally Ottoman subjects, and to Romanian citizens who emigrated from Romania proper. The access of colonists to property was to be regulated by "a future law on agricultural colonization of the state's estates" (art. 13). Since in the next two break years Parliament failed to pass a colonization law, the numerous colonists who immigrated between 1878 and 1882 were placed in an ambiguous juridical status.

Ultimately, the 1882 Law Concerning Real Estate Property in Dobrogea provided the government with the necessary legal framework. First, it reconfirmed the Romanian state's ownership of the former properties of the Ottoman government, including forests, mines, lakes, and so forth, and of the lands of emigrants who failed to return to the province until 1883 (art. 16). The Romanian state thus became the largest proprietor in the province, gaining one million hectares of potentially arable land. Second, the Romanian state reserved its right to divide the land in plots of three to ten hectares, preferably in new localities, and to sell it, under favorable conditions, to colonists (arts. 25–26). Third, colonization was to remain the exclusive monopoly of the state: "Nobody has the right to bring and



settle families of farmers on their land without the consent of the Council of Ministers, the only one to decide, within the limits of the Constitution, the conditions under which such families can settle” (art. 31).

The 1882 law functioned as a powerful instrument of national closure: in order to nationalize Dobrogea’s soil, the law connected landownership with citizenship: “Only Romanians can acquire immovable property” (art. 2). Under this generic label (Romanians), the law distinguished several categories of citizens: (1) the former subjects of the Ottoman Empire—*re’aya*—who had been residing in the province as of April 11, 1877; (2) Romanian citizens from Romania proper who were encouraged to settle in Dobrogea. They would retain their Romanian citizenship, but would *de facto* lose the exercise of their political rights, given the lack of political life in the province; and (3) ethnic Romanians from neighboring countries. The law also regulated the legal situation of the numerous immigrants to the province during 1878–1882: “The cultivators settled in Dobrogea at the moment of this law’s promulgation are considered Romanians and have the same rights [to acquire property].”

The 1882 property law underwent successive modifications in 1884, 1885, 1889, 1893, and was finally supplemented with the Interpretative Law of April 10, 1910. These modifications highlighted the specific interests of the state in the colonization process. (1) First, they assured a constant source of income for the state budget. Hence, article 45 of the 1889 Law on State Estates allowed the state “to annul the sale contract and to dispossess any buyer, without any warning or legal action,” who failed to pay two consecutive land installments to the state;<sup>101</sup> (2) Second, they guaranteed the colonization of Dobrogea by ethnic Romanians. To this end, the state conditioned any acquisition of land on permanent settlement in Dobrogea, virtually tying Dobrogea’s colonists to the land (*glebae adstrictus*). The Interpretative Law of 1910 allowed the state “to annul any sale contract without warning, delay, or trial, and to administratively deprive” all colonists who “did not settle in Dobrogea or, who, although settled there, did not remain permanently at their new plots.”<sup>102</sup> Finally, the Romanian state established a virtual monopoly on land circulation in Dobrogea. The law of March 1909 enabled the state to buy 1,012 hectares of land from Dobrogean Russians who chose to emigrate to Siberia. The 1910 Interpretative Law granted the state the right to cancel any land transaction between a colonist and a third party that was not supervised by the Romanian state.<sup>103</sup>

Overall, during the period 1889–1912, the state confiscated 127,483 hectares of land from native Dobrogeans who failed to redeem their tithes, and from colonists who failed to pay their land installments or to relocate into the province. In 1889–1914, 82,127 hectares of this land were redistributed to ethnic Romanian

colonists, in order to strengthen the Romanian character of the province.<sup>104</sup> Romanian authorities devoted special attention to the settlement of the southern part of Dobrogea, at the border with Bulgaria. This colonization project was considered especially important because—unlike other parts of the country—in that region the border did not correspond to any natural frontier. This situation was considered “unsafe” by Romanian authorities. Ever since the annexation of Dobrogea, Mihail Kogălniceanu and local prefects, such as Remus Oprescu, harbored plans to colonize the southern border region. In spite of their concerted efforts, such plans would materialize only later. During 1903–1916, Romanian authorities settled in Dobrogea veterans who fought in the War of Independence (1877–1878), granting them about fifty thousand hectares of land, mainly in areas near the southern border.<sup>105</sup> In addition, laws from 1888, 1906, 1908, 1912, and 1913 granted land to newly recruited subofficers, either in plots of seven hectares in the interior of Dobrogea or of twenty hectares on the frontier.<sup>106</sup> By and large, this colonization experiment proved unsuccessful, attracting much public criticism.

### **“The California of the Romanians”: Ethnic Colonization, Land Nationalization, and Economic Incorporation of Northern Dobrogea**

Romanian political elites implemented in Dobrogea a modernizing nationalist project, meant to confirm Romania’s integration into the West and to confer a legitimizing and progressive character to the assimilation process. At the same time Dobrogea was mastered by bureaucratic nationalism. The result was a three-pronged strategy of ethnic assimilation, economic modernization, and cultural homogenization, which combined attempts at sheltered industrialization with a campaign for national consolidation. Built on restrictive citizenship legislation, this strategy facilitated the integration of Northern Dobrogea with Romania at the following levels: (1) colonization by ethnic Romanians; (2) nationalization of landed property; (3) cultural homogenization; (4) establishment of a highly centralized political regime, which promoted the interests of the Bucharest-based political elites and weakened regional political resistance; and, finally (5) the exclusion of Dobrogea’s non-Romanian economic elites from political rights. The following section explores these assimilation strategies.

## The Frontier Economy: Ethnic Colonization

Prior to its 1878 annexation, Dobrogea's frontier economy attracted a pan-Romanian immigration, the province thus entering "within the radius of Romanian expansion."<sup>107</sup> In 1859, while writing a report on the development of agriculture in Dobrogea for the Ottoman authorities, the Romanian agronomy engineer Ion Ionescu de la Brad was impressed with the economic opportunities offered by the province, portraying it as a potential "California of the Romanians."<sup>108</sup> Ionescu's vision was fulfilled by the integration of Dobrogea into Romania's expanding economy after 1878, when the province functioned as an "internal America," a dynamic frontier zone of advancing agricultural settlements. The adoption of the 1880 law stirred a massive Romanian colonization, which occurred in several waves: 1884–1891, 1893–1897, 1904–1907, and 1912–1914.<sup>109</sup> As a result, Dobrogea became "a Dacia in miniature" or "a mosaic of Romanian races":<sup>110</sup> together with autochthonous Romanians in Dobrogea, several other categories of Romanians settled in the province, originating from Transylvania (such as the *Mocani*), the Banat (*BănăŃeni*), Wallachia (*Cojani*), Moldova and Bessarabia (*Moldoveni*), and various Balkan regions (Vlachs from Pind and the Timoc Valley, called *Aromâni* or *ŃinŃari*). This immigration had profound social consequences for Romanian society, releasing social pressure for land in Romania proper and creating new social identities and political loyalties in the province. Dobrogea became a melting pot of regional differences and a laboratory for fostering Romanian national identity.

Indigenous Romanians in Dobrogea were called *Dicieni*, *Români Vechi* (Old Romanians), or *Turcomani* (Turks).<sup>111</sup> They were largely concentrated along the Danube shore and practiced mainly agriculture. In the second half of the nineteenth century there occurred a national awakening among Dobrogean Romanians, a fact that, together with their participation in local administration, facilitated the integration of Dobrogea with Romania.<sup>112</sup> The most numerous Romanian immigrants came mainly from the neighboring Wallachian counties of IalomiŃa, Buzău, and Brăila. Peasants in the principalities traditionally practiced extensive farming, favored by the availability of land and low population density. This model of frontier agriculture was challenged by the 1829 integration of the principalities into the capitalist world market, which shifted local agriculture from stockbreeding to cereal cultivation and intensive labor exploitation.<sup>113</sup> The opening up of new lands for agriculture coincided with a demographic explosion, so that the Principalities moved from low population density to relative overpopulation after the turn of the century. The phenomenon was more salient in the plains regions, where the population grew by 77 percent between 1859 and 1899.<sup>114</sup> The 1864 land reform aggravated land scarcity: although it emancipated

the peasants and granted them full ownership over their plots, by the second generation the reform resulted in land fragmentation. The average family plot shrank from 4.6 hectares in 1864 to 3.4 in 1896 and 3.2 in 1905.<sup>115</sup> The result was strong social pressure on land resources. In this context, Dobrogea functioned as a frontier zone for releasing social tensions, without altering the agricultural system. Already in early 1880, Mihail Kogălniceanu announced that he was receiving numerous requests for land in Dobrogea from all parts of Romania, and he urged the Council of Ministers to provide legislative means for such settlements.<sup>116</sup> The immigration pressure was especially high in the areas neighboring Dobrogea, the fast-growing counties of Brăila and Ialomița in the Bărăgan steppes.<sup>117</sup> Worried about potential labor shortages in these counties, large landowners demanded administrative measures to prevent peasants' immigration into Dobrogea.<sup>118</sup> In response, the prefect of Ialomița admitted that because of lack of land "we would not be able to prevent them [the peasants] from emigrating to a foreign country, how can we prevent their immigration to Dobrogea?"<sup>119</sup>

### **"Nationalism from Below": The Mocani Colonization**

In its efforts to assimilate Dobrogea, the Romanian government found useful allies among Romanian shepherds from Transylvanian pastoral centers on the border with Wallachia, such as "Tinutul Sibiului," "Tara Bîrsei" and "Trei Scaune."<sup>120</sup> They were generically called *Mocani* (shepherds).<sup>121</sup> These shepherds specialized in a specific kind of long distance, seasonal migration: after spending the spring and summer in the Transylvanian mountains, in early autumn they moved to the Wallachian plains in search of pastures. Due to its large pastures, mild winter climate, and the permissive attitude of the Ottoman authorities, Dobrogea became the *Mocani*'s main destination, especially between 1830 and 1854, when they acquired an important role in the economy of the province.<sup>122</sup>

The Transylvanian shepherds were citizens of the Habsburg Empire. On principalities' and Ottoman territory, their status was regulated by the terms of the *capitulations* negotiated between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. As foreign Christian subjects (*sudiji*), the *Mocani* enjoyed important privileges in Dobrogea, such as tax exemptions, and diplomatic protection of the Habsburg consulates in Bucharest and Galați, and vice-consulates in Rusciuc, Hirșova and Varna.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, the *Mocani* were interested in preserving their privileged status. The Habsburg authorities also wished to preserve their state-citizenship, since the taxes paid by shepherds were a significant source of revenue. To this end, they issued the *Mocani* traveling documents valid for only six months to a year, which forced them to return periodically to their homes in Transylvania.<sup>124</sup> However, in practice, the *Mocani* status suffered important modifications. During

· their seasonal migration to Wallachia and Dobrogea, many Transylvanian shepherds acquired land, married natives, and engaged in sedentary activities, such as farming.<sup>125</sup> In such cases, the Romanian or Ottoman authorities considered them naturalized and subjected them to regular taxation. Thus, they acquired *de facto* an ambiguous juridical status, between Ottoman and Habsburg subjects. Around 1850, the agronomy engineer Ionescu de la Brad distinguished three different juridical categories of Dobrogea's inhabitants in relation to the Ottoman authorities: the autochthonous Dobrogeans, who were Ottoman subjects—*re'aya*; foreign subjects, called *suditi*; and “the wandering *Mocani*” (*mocănimea pribeagă*).<sup>126</sup> Significantly, Ionescu de la Brad appreciated the *Mocani* status as an intermediary one between the *suditi* and the *re'aya*. The Transylvanian shepherd, he wrote, was “neither *re'aya*, because in that case he would pay only *haraci* and *beilic*, and obey only the Turks; nor *suditi*, because in that case he would pay only *patenta*—one *leu* for every sheep. The poor shepherd pays all taxes and is ripped off by all crows.”<sup>127</sup> Ionescu de la Brad considered that Habsburg representatives were present in Dobrogea “more to squeeze the *Mocani* than to fulfill their duty” of diplomatic protection. In reaction, the *Mocani* “abandoned their *suditi* status and, marrying Romanian women, became *re'aya*, settled in villages and paid taxes only to the Ottoman authorities.”<sup>128</sup>

The pastoral economy of the *Mocani* suffered a radical decline from 1855 to 1878 and almost ceased with the annexation of Northern Dobrogea to Romania. The unfavorable changes in border taxation stipulated by the 1855 Convention between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, the development of agriculture and the colonization of Dobrogea with Crimean Tartars and the 1866 decision of the Ottoman authorities to condition the presence of the Transylvanian shepherds in Dobrogea on their abandoning Austrian citizenship and becoming *re'aya* (Ottoman subjects) all contributed to this outcome. However, most of the *Mocani* remained in Dobrogea and adapted easily to sedentary life.<sup>129</sup> They converted their capital into a combination of trade, cattle-raising, and agriculture, and manage to dominate the economic life in the province. The *Mocani* represented an important part of Dobrogea's population, estimated by some authors at over 5,000 in 1878, and at 8,515 in 1904.<sup>130</sup> At approximately the same time (1879–1880), the total number of ethnic Romanians from Transylvania immigrating to Dobrogea was estimated at 25,000, or half of the total Romanian population in the province.<sup>131</sup> A more reliable estimate of the number of Transylvanian Romanian in Dobrogea is provided by the statistics regarding the granting of political rights. Thus, in 1909, 4,032 ethnic Romanians from Transylvania filed requests for political rights in Dobrogea: 1,091 in Tulcea and 2,941 in Constanța.<sup>132</sup> Since

these statistics accounted only for the head of the household, the number of Transylvanians in Dobrogea can be estimated at about 5,455 in Tulcea and 14,505 in Constanța, thus a total of 19,910.<sup>133</sup>

As a former national minority in Transylvania, the *Mocani* brought to Dobrogea their experience of nation-building in a strained, multiethnic environment. This assured them a leading role in Dobrogea's Romanization, widely acknowledged in Romania's national ideology—which praised their role in populating Dobrogea, in spreading the Romanian language and culture, in nationalizing landed property and in developing the economy of the province. A lack of detailed statistics makes it difficult to reconstruct in detail the socioeconomic role of the *Mocani* in Dobrogea. However, based on field surveys, numerous researchers concluded that, after 1878, the *Mocani* were among the major landowners in Dobrogea, often possessing large estates of five hundred to one thousand hectares.<sup>134</sup> Most importantly, the *Mocani* dominated much of the rural, and part of the urban, trade in Dobrogea.<sup>135</sup> They also penetrated financial institutions, gaining control over important village and urban banks, such as the Society of Romanian Merchants and Industrialists, Banca Romană in Tulcea and Banca de Scont in Constanța, founded in 1899 and alternatively known as Banca Mocanilor.<sup>136</sup> By contrast, the *Mocani* were less active in industry, which was dominated by large foreign and domestic capital, and were weakly represented in the local administration, which was largely monopolized by political elites from the Old Kingdom.

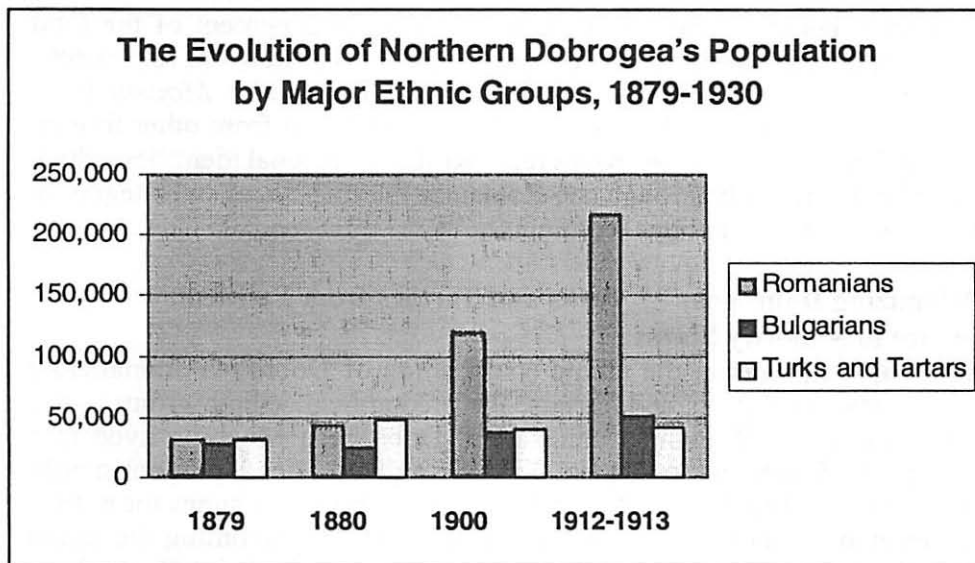
### **Ethnic Colonization and Land Nationalization**

State-sponsored ethnic colonization of Dobrogea led to a dramatic increase in the population of the province: from approximately 100,000 inhabitants in 1878 to 261,490 in 1900 and 368,189 in 1912. The population density rose from 9.4/km<sup>2</sup> in 1880, to 16.7/km<sup>2</sup> in 1900, and 23.6/km<sup>2</sup> in 1912.<sup>137</sup> Apart from the natural growth, this spectacular population boost was due to immigration: in only fifteen years (1884–1899), the population of Dobrogea grew by 49 percent, while Romania as a whole reached a similar demographic rate (54 percent in forty years (1859–1899)).<sup>138</sup>

Northern Dobrogea remained an ethnic mosaic: the 1912 census indicated seventeen ethnic groups in the province, among them Romanians (216,425 or 56.9 percent of the total population), Bulgarians (51,149 or 13.4 percent) Turks and Tartars (41,442 or 10.8 percent), Russians (35,849 or 9.4 percent), Greeks (10,000 or 2.6 percent), Germans (7,697 or 2 percent), Jews, (4,573 or 1.2 percent) Gypsies (3,263 or 0.9 percent), Armenians (3,194 or 0.8 percent), Italians (1,928 or 0.5 percent), Serbs, Albanians, and Hungarians, and others, out of a total

population of 368,189.<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, ethnic colonization substantially altered the relationship of the three major ethnic groups in the province, as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1:



Source: M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea* (Bucharest: I. V. Socecu, 1904), 654-55, for 1879-1900; and Sabin Manuilă, "La population du Dobroudja," in *La Dobroudja Roumaine* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1938), 456-57 and 462, for 1912.

The Romanian population skyrocketed from 31,177 in 1879 to 43,671 in 1880, 119,562 in 1900, and to 216,425 in 1912. The other major ethnic groups in the province experienced great fluctuations. The Bulgarian population initially decreased from 28,715 in 1879, to 24,915 in 1880 (due to emigration to Bulgaria), then increased to 38,038 by 1900 and to 51,148 by 1913. The number of Turks and Tartars increased in the first period from 32,033 in 1879 to 48,100 in 1880 (due to their partial repatriation after the war), only to decrease again to 40,504 by 1900 and to slightly increase to 41,442 by 1913.<sup>140</sup>

Thus, in only twenty-four years the ratio of ethnic Romanians in Northern Dobrogea grew from a relative to an absolute majority (from 36.3 percent in 1880 to 52.5 percent in 1905); it reached 56.9 percent in 1912 and 64.4 percent in 1930. The territorial distribution of Romanians changed as well, since they infiltrated areas previously compactly inhabited by Turks and Tartars or Bulgarians, especially in the north, around Tulcea, Mahmudia, and Babadag; and in the south, at the border with Bulgaria. The Romanian population in Dobrogea was very heterogeneous, being composed of native *Dicieni* (24.2 percent of the total Romanian population), Wallachian *Cojani* (39.5 percent) Moldovans (8 percent), Bessarabians (5.6 percent), *Banatians* from the Banat and *Mocani* from Transylvania (21.8 percent), Bukovinans (0.1 percent), and from other foreign countries (0.8 percent).<sup>141</sup> These groups retained strong regional identities, which disappeared only gradually through pan-Romanian intermarriages and integration into the wider Romanian national community.<sup>142</sup>

### **“De-Islamizing Dobrogea:”<sup>143</sup> Turks and Tartars from Political Dominance to Minority Status**

The major changes in the ethnic composition of Dobrogea dramatically affected the status of Turks and Tartars, the predominant ethnic group in the province prior to the Romanian annexation. Dobrogean Muslims lived in a proportion of 85 percent in the countryside and practiced predominantly agriculture or stockbreeding.<sup>144</sup> At the time of the Romanian annexation, they did not develop a nationalist movement of their own. Overcoming the initial shock of their incorporation into a Christian state, Turkish intellectuals in Dobrogea pleaded subsequently for a rapid integration of Muslims into Romanian society. Consequently, Romanian political leaders did not consider Muslims a danger in Dobrogea, appreciating rather their “docility” and “loyalty.” The 1880 law granted important minority rights to Muslims: it provided state salaries for the Muslim personnel of mosques (art. 17), instituted a state-sponsored Muslim seminar in Babadag (art. 21), established separate civil and juridical institutions for Muslims, and provided for their conscription in separate regiments with traditional Muslim uniforms and food customs (art. 68). The legislation also provided a grace period of three years for the return of war emigrants to their properties in Dobrogea, although a majority of them never returned. As for the Muslims who remained in Dobrogea, many of them could not adapt to the structure of a Christian nation-state. Tied to the Ottoman military and sociopolitical system, they preferred emigration. As a result, compared to other ethnic groups in Dobrogea, the number of Turks and Tartars dropped from first place prior to 1878, to second place by 1880, (being overcome by the number of



Romanians), and to third by 1902 (when Bulgarians outnumbered them). This evolution is confirmed by statistics on land ownership by ethnic groups between 1882 and 1905, shown in figure 2.

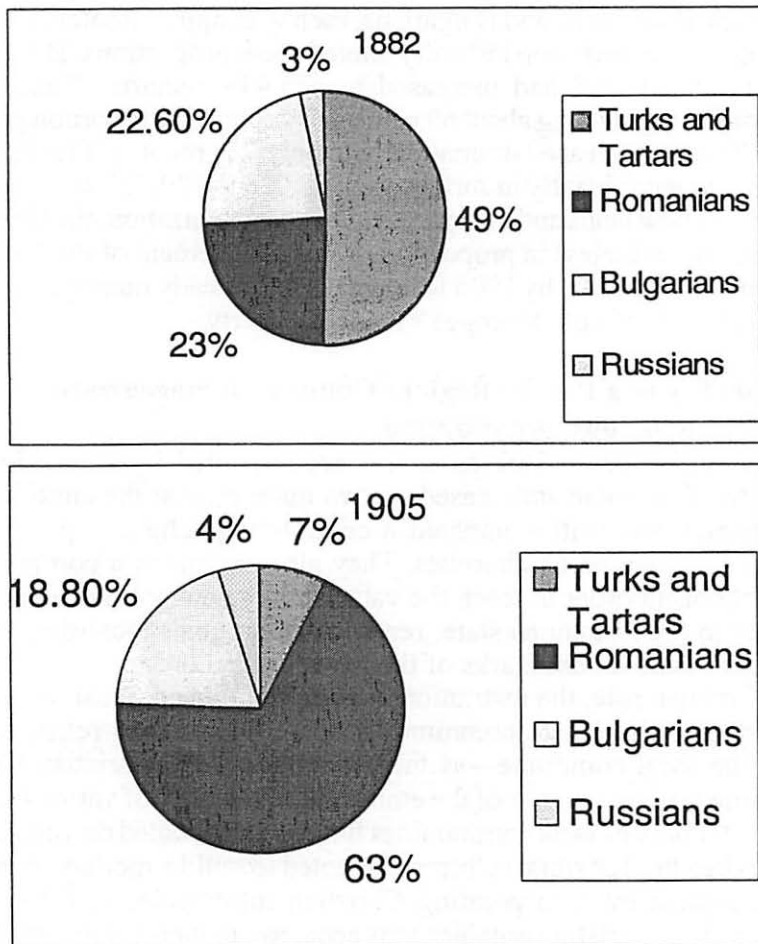
In 1882, ownership of the 175,075 hectares of arable land was proportionally divided among ethnic groups. The Turks and Tartars held almost 50 percent of the land, followed by Romanians and Bulgarians, each with approximately 23 percent of the total land.<sup>145</sup> Colonization radically altered these proportions. By 1905, the amount of cultivated land had increased to 685,449 hectares. Significantly, Romanians dominated, owning about 63 percent. By contrast, the portion possessed by Turks and Tartars decreased dramatically to only 7 percent, while that owned by Bulgarians rose significantly in surface from 38,038 to 129,231 hectares. Given the exploitation of new lands and the process of ethnic colonization, the Bulgarians' share decreased nevertheless in proportion to about 19 percent of the total arable land in the province.<sup>146</sup> Thus, by 1905 Romanians had already managed to acquire approximately two-thirds of Dobrogea's landed property.

### **Politics of Identity in a Border Region: Cultural Homogenization, Education, and Religious Organization**

Ethnic assimilation in Dobrogea was accompanied by a broad cultural offensive by the Romanian state based on two main pillars: the church and the school. Romanian authorities pursued a centralizing religious policy in the province and built numerous churches. They also organized a comprehensive network of schools in order to teach the values of the new political order and to induce loyalty to the Romanian state, renamed Dobrogea's localities, and built historical monuments as landmarks of the new political order.

Under Ottoman rule, the institution of *millet* conferred fiscal, educational, and confessional autonomy to communities according to their religion. Under this system, the local commune—as the basic unit of the Christian Orthodox *millet*—became the main carrier of the ethnocultural identity of various Christian groups. The autonomy of local communities further consolidated during the period 1839–1878, when the Tanzimat reforms attempted to build a modern, centralized bureaucratic system by incorporating Christian intermediaries into the state administration. Lay Christian notables thus acquired an increasing authority and influence over the local population and the ecclesiastical leadership. In the long run, this policy contributed paradoxically to the failure of centralization in the Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationalist ideologies. In Dobrogea, the national awakening of the Romanians, Greeks, and Bulgarians was linked to the struggle for control over the power and wealth of the Orthodox Church. During the 1870s, the newly established Bulgarian Exarchate challenged the authority of the Greek

Figure 2: Land Ownership in Northern Dobrogea by Ethnic Group, 1882 and 1905.



Source: Calculated after data provided by M. Stanciu and V. Ciorbea, "Aspecte ale problemei agrare în Dobrogea la sfârșitul sec. XIX și începutul sec. XX," in *Anuarul Institutului "A.D. Xenopol" (Iași) no. 17 (1980): 415.*

Ecumenical Patriarch in Dobrogea, mostly by trying to attract under its jurisdiction the Romanian Orthodox population.<sup>147</sup> After 1878, Romanian political elites acknowledged the important role played by the church in the process of national awakening in Dobrogea. In spite of strong opposition from Bulgarian clerics, the 1880 law on administrative organization subjected local Orthodox churches to the jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Church (which became autocephalous from 1885), and integrated them into the Diocese of the Lower Danube.

An important pillar of Romanian administration in the province was the school system. In Romania proper, primary schools became the main vehicle for promoting national identity, especially after the establishment of a national and state-sponsored system of education in 1864.<sup>148</sup> During the 1860s and 1870s, official historical textbooks constructed and dispersed a model of national identity that has gained a long-lasting hegemony in Romanian political culture.<sup>149</sup> After 1878, the national educational system was extended to Dobrogea as well, playing an important role in the redefinition of the collective memory of the Dobrogeans. Primary schools contributed to the process of cultural homogenization by overcoming the local parochialism and segregation that characterized communitarian life in the province.

Until 1878, Dobrogea had a network of Romanian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Russian confessional schools supported by local communes. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Transylvanian monk Nifon Bălăşescu organized—with the support of Ottoman authorities—a network of Romanian schools in Tulcea county. After annexation, the 1880 law provided for state-sponsored primary education. It also permitted local schools to use minority languages, provided that they teach courses in Romanian as well. In the next period, supported by the central administration, the network of Romanian state schools in Dobrogea grew spectacularly, while that of confessional schools declined.

In spite of its strong national connotations, the Romanian educational offensive in Dobrogea was nevertheless largely inconsistent, progressing in waves marked by either material difficulties or personal initiatives of Dobrogean prefects such as Remus Opreanu and Scarlat Vârnab in Constanța, or Luca Ionescu and Constantin Atanasiu in Tulcea. The teaching staff was insufficient, being initially recruited among Moldavian teachers from Southern Bessarabia, who, by a stipulation of the Treaty of Berlin, had to evacuate the province together with the Romanian administration.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, while the network of primary schools expanded considerably, Dobrogea still lacked institutions for secondary or higher education. Established in 1883, the Romanian Gymnasium in Tulcea encountered such financial problems that in 1891–1892 the director had to despondently report that Romanian parents were sending their children to the Bulgarian Gymnasium in Tulcea or the Russian Gymnasium in Ismail.<sup>151</sup>

A major improvement in Dobrogea's educational system was due to the efforts of Spiru Haret, the Liberal minister of education, 1897-1910, as part of a wider sociopolitical program promoted by the Liberal Party that aimed at a cultural emancipation and capitalist transformation of rural areas. Haret made several visits to the province and contributed directly to the organization of the school system.<sup>152</sup> Due to his efforts, the level of literacy in Dobrogea rose from 24.8 percent of the total population in 1899, to 45.2 percent in 1912, thus a significant growth of 20.4 percent in thirteen years.<sup>153</sup> This rate was not only much above the national average of 39.3 percent, but also superior to any other historical province of Romania considered separately, namely 39.1 percent in Moldova, 41.2 percent in Muntenia, and 33.5 percent in Oltenia.<sup>154</sup> These figures confirm the important role assigned to education in Dobrogea, either as a way of fostering assimilation and national integration, or as a way of preserving the cultural identity of ethnic groups in the province. A more detailed analysis reveals a further important aspect: the high rate of literacy was due mostly to the level of education among women, which was significantly higher than in any other province of Romania. In 1912, 32.2 percent of Dobrogean women could read and write, as compared to 25.1 percent of women in Moldova, 24.7 percent in Muntenia, and only 14.5 percent in Oltenia.<sup>155</sup> At the same time, the rate of literacy among men was relatively equal in all provinces of Romania, with 57.1 percent of the total male population in Muntenia, 56.5 percent in Dobrogea, 52.7 percent in Moldova, and 52.2 percent in Oltenia.<sup>156</sup> This discrepancy can be explained by the greater number of women enrolled in primary education in the province, since they were a target group of Romanian cultural policies. In 1912, for example, 7,999 boys and 3,641 girls graduated from primary school in Dobrogea, representing of 6.4 boys and 3.1 girls for every 100 inhabitants. In the other provinces, the numerical disproportion between boys and girls graduating from primary school in 1912 was much higher, with 9,000 girls for 62,082 boys in Oltenia, 19,010 girls for 97,149 boys in Muntenia, and 17,610 girls for 64,812 boys in Moldova.<sup>157</sup> The rate of girl graduates per 100 inhabitants in these provinces was only 1.5 in Oltenia, 1.6 in Muntenia, and 2.2 in Moldova, compared to 3.1 in Dobrogea.

The evolution of education in Dobrogea thus exhibited numerous regional characteristics. The educational laws adopted by Parliament were subject to ample discussions in Dobrogea, where educators requested many amendments in accord with local conditions.<sup>158</sup> In 1898, during the debates over the law promoted by Haret, educators in Dobrogea—animated by their local leader Ion Bănescu—requested separate textbooks, which would reflect the specific history of the

province and its multiethnic population, and pleaded for an extension of multinational primary education so that minority children could master both native and official languages.

In summary, after 1878 the Romanian state conducted a broad cultural offensive in Dobrogea focused mainly on education, a field with strong nationalist connotations in a multiethnic environment. According to statistics, the educational program of the Romanian state was largely successful in fostering literacy and national assimilation. Nevertheless, as in many other fields, Dobrogea remained a highly individualized province within Romania in educational patterns as well.

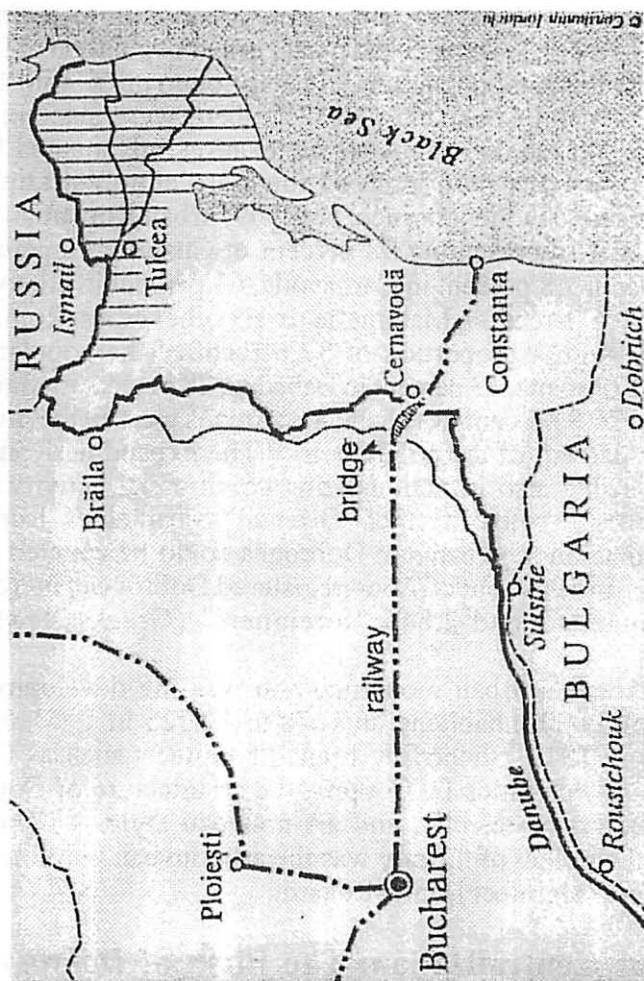
### **Nationalism and Modernization: The Economic Incorporation of Northern Dobrogea into Romania**

The cultural homogenization of Dobrogea was accompanied by economic modernization. After 1878, Romanian political elites implemented in Dobrogea a policy of modernization meant to incorporate the province into the expanding national economy and to hasten Romania's integration into the Western world economy.<sup>159</sup> In doing so, Romanian political leaders were influenced by the protectionist arguments put forward by the "father" of the national economy, Friederich List, who emphasized the role of the sea in fostering economic development. The most important advocate of Romania's maritime trade was the Liberal economist Petre S. Aurelian. As the main artisan of the economic policy of the Liberal party, and prime minister from December 1896 to April 1897, Aurelian pointed out the organic link between the evolution of industry and the development of a comprehensive system of naval transportation: "the manufacturing industry is the basis for naval transport; the more manufactures we produce, the more maritime commerce will grow."<sup>160</sup> Maritime transportation was especially important for Romania, since the economy of the country depended heavily on exports of grain, wood, oil, and other raw materials to the West. Aurelian pleaded, therefore, for major investments that would link Dobrogea with Romania through a system of railway and naval communication, create a major seaport at the Black Sea at Constanța to serve as a commercial outlet for Romania's exports, and assemble a commercial maritime fleet. Ion C. Brătianu, the leader of the Liberal party, was an enthusiastic supporter of Aurelian's economic program. He stated: "The seaport of Constanța is the lung of Romania, the mouth through which the country is breathing. Constanța will also become the fortress of Romania's defense; through it we will have contact with the whole world, and we will secure the most important communication route for our trade. . . . We will spend 16, 20, or 25

more millions, as much as it takes to build the necessary seaport and bridge over the Danube, but this will be the best proof that we are a powerful nation and that on us depends the future of the entire Orient.”<sup>161</sup>

The economic incorporation of Dobrogea into Romania was thus an important part of the Liberal campaign for sheltered industrialization and coincided with an increased role played by the state in stimulating economic development. As a result, the province benefited from exceptional material investments, concentrated preponderantly in communications. Lacking regular naval transportation and bridges over the Danube, the province was initially quasi-isolated from Romania. The situation was especially difficult during the winter, when the Danube froze and navigation had to be suspended. In October 1882, Romania bought the Constanța-Cernavodă railway (the only existing railway in Dobrogea at the time) from the English company Danube and Black Sea Railway Ltd., owned by John Trevor Barkley, for 16 million gold francs; invested an additional 35 million *lei* in a major bridge over the Danube at Cernavodă; and completed a railway line between Cernavod and Fetești in order to link the Constanța-Cernavodă line to the national railway system, via Fetești-Bucharest (see Map II). Designed by Angel Saligny and inaugurated in 1895—after ten years of intense work—the “grandiose” iron bridge “King Carol” was the longest in Europe and the second longest in the world at that time. It was celebrated by public opinion as an emblem of Romania’s technological achievements and as the symbol of Dobrogea’s union with “the mother country.”<sup>162</sup> It had a pivotal role in commercial traffic between the capital and the sea, shortening the travel time by about seven hours. The bridge was also instrumental in the colonization of Dobrogea, facilitating the immigration of approximately seventy thousand people. Finally, it was designed as the “shortest link” between Asia Minor and Western Europe: Constanța did become the terminus of the Orient Express, the place where Western travelers embarked for Asia Minor.<sup>163</sup> (See Map II).

Most importantly, in October 1896 Romania began construction of a major harbor that would shift Romanian exports from land to the Black Sea. Unlike the Danubian ports of Galați and Brăila, the new Black Sea harbor was not placed under the international supervision of the European Commission of the Danube, being therefore regarded as a symbol of Romania’s economic independence. Soon, the harbor at Constanța became a major part of the Romanian national economy and “the lung of Romania”: the total volume of exports by sea grew from 89,400 tonnes in 1889 to 1.5 million tonnes in 1913, or one third of Romania’s exports.<sup>164</sup> The port provided both an important connection between Central Europe and the Middle East and a strategic commercial route between Constanța and Rotterdam.



Map II

Source: © Constantin Iordachi

Map II: The Railway line Bucharest-Constanța, and the Bridge "King Carol I" over the Danube.

## **Urbanization and Ethnic Assimilation**

Urbanization also made important progress in the province. Under Ottoman rule, Dobrogea had fourteen cities, largely dominated by merchant colonies of Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. After 1878, state-sponsored urbanization altered this ethnic composition. In 1912, Dobrogea had a total urban population of 94,915 inhabitants (25.7 percent of its total population). In addition to the administrative centers of Tulcea (22,262) and Constanța (31,576), there were also six other towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants. After annexation, advantaged by the new political order, Romanians monopolized the state administration and increased their urban presence in the province. By 1909, urban Romanians were the majority in seven cities, representing 98 percent in Cuzgun, 92 percent in Ostrov, 66 percent in Măcin, 68 percent in Cernavodă, 61 percent in Hîrșova, 51 percent in Isaccea, and 50.6 percent in Mahmudia. In six other cities, Romanians held a relative majority, with a proportion of 37 percent of the population in Medgidia, 34 percent in Constanța, 33 percent in Babadag, 28 percent in Mangalia, 27 percent in Chilia, and 26.8 percent in Tulcea. Romanians were in the minority only in Sulina, with 17 percent of the population.<sup>165</sup> The expanding Romanian urban bourgeoisie succeeded also in nationalizing commercial activity in the province, while the economic role of former “Oriental” urban elites decreased. If in 1878 “the few Romanian merchants in Dobrogea could be counted on the fingers of a single hand,” in 1909, out of 7,664 registered Dobrogean merchants, there were 4,815 Romanians and 2,849 “foreigners” (Greeks, Jews, and Armenians).<sup>166</sup>

Testifying to Dobrogea’s urban modernization was the development of Constanța: it grew from 5,000 inhabitants in 1878 to 12,725 in 1900 and to a modern city of 31,000 in 1912. Shaped by French architects such as Charles Pienchot, Jules Siquot, or Pelopidos D. Couppa, the architecture of Constanța was dominated by neoclassic, eclectic, and art nouveau styles.<sup>167</sup> The most impressive architectural emblem of the city was the art nouveau building of the Casino, built by the French architect Daniel Renard.

## **Regionalism Versus Centralization: The Birth of *Dobrogenism***

A central component of the exceptional administrative regime in Dobrogea was the restrictive system of local administration. The province labored under a heavily centralized bureaucratic apparatus. Representatives to local institutions were elected on a narrow basis and were deprived of effective powers. The administration was thus monopolized by appointed bureaucrats who escaped



the control of locally elected institutions but were tightly controlled from Bucharest. This situation favored corruption and abuses against the local population and colonists, generating a regional political discourse against excessive centralization, generically named *Dobrogenism*.

Apparently, the 1880 law on local administration in Dobrogea was shaped by the 1864 Communal Law applied in Romania. Dobrogea was divided in two counties, each controlled by a prefect, and subdivided into *ocoale* (subdepartments) led by subprefects. The *ocoale* were further divided into urban and rural communes, led by mayors assisted by community councils (arts. 25–26). In Romania, the main local representatives of the government, namely the prefects, subprefects and mayors, were responsible to elected departmental, rural, and urban community councils. The latter administered the local communities, voted on community budgets, and supervised public instruction and social assistance. This system provided for strong government control over local administration, but also allowed a certain autonomy to the councils, and establishing however precariously, a balance of power between elected and appointed officials. By contrast, in Dobrogea the 1880 law stipulated that “no decision of the departmental council can be implemented without the prefect’s approval” (art. 43). Second, the main representative of local interests, the mayor, was not elected by community councilors, but appointed by the prefect in rural communities, and by the Ministry of the Interior in urban communities, and could be easily removed. Third, unlike in Romania proper, in Dobrogea some members of the community councils were appointed by the prefect, while the others were elected on the basis of a restrictive franchise. In localities with a mixed ethnic population, the prefect also determined the number of councilors each ethnic group could elect. Finally, local administrators had juridical immunity: the prefects, subprefects, policemen, and mayors could not be sued without prior authorization from the Council of Ministers (art. 35).

As noted previously, the main author of the separate administrative organization of Dobrogea, Mihail Kogălniceanu, portrayed it as a transitory regime meant to protect the province from the arduous fights that characterized political life in Romania, and to prepare Dobrogeans for participation in the political life of the country. Needless to say, Kogălniceanu’s optimistic prognosis about the duration and effects of the exceptional regime was not fulfilled. The lack of political life was no protection against political partisanship. Instead, the administration was unstable and highly politicized: between 1878 and 1915, there were twenty-one prefects in Constanța and twenty-five in Tulcea.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, because of heavy centralization, Dobrogea’s administration was not shaped by local political debates, but followed the acrimonious political confrontations in Bucharest. Moreover, the

1880 law invested the bureaucracy in Dobrogea with full control over the local population. To make things worse, the majority of these bureaucrats were recruited from outside Dobrogea, and they regarded the transfer to the remote province as a profitable but severe administrative ostracism.<sup>169</sup> It became soon obvious that centrally appointed bureaucrats often used their extensive powers for promoting partisan economic interests. Abuses were especially common among petty functionaries, such as tax collectors and land inspectors. Thus, the 1889 Law on State Estates invested state inspectors with wide administrative powers for dispossessing of land any colonist who had not paid for his plot. Based on an abusive interpretation of the law, in 1905 alone, state inspectors confiscated 51,000 hectares of private land. Faced with innumerable complaints, the Ministry of Domains had to return 19,000 hectares of land, proved to have been illegally confiscated.<sup>170</sup>

### **Regionalism as “Romanianism”: Economic Competition and Ethnic Closure**

The attitude of the Bucharest dominated administration in Dobrogea placed it in conflict with an emerging local elite composed of great landowners, an emerging urban bourgeoisie, and persons engaged in liberal professions. This new Dobrogean elite was largely the product of Romanian rule. However, while benefiting from new economic opportunities, their lack of political rights prevented them from making a decisive political impact on the province. Hindered in their efforts to consolidate their local position, Dobrogean elites developed a regional discourse of resistance against centralization and administrative colonization, called *Dobrogenism*. Under the slogan “Dobrogea for the Dobrogeans,” launched by Constantin Sarry, the director of the local newspaper *Dobrogea jună* (The Young Dobrogea), Dobrogenism aimed at correcting the discrepancy between the prominent socioeconomic role of Dobrogean elites and their powerless political position. The main target of Dobrogenism thus became the separate administrative organization of the province, which denied Dobrogeans the right to political participation and parliamentary representation. The following analysis distinguishes two distinct and competing regional discourses in Dobrogea, generically named “Romanianism” and “autochthonism.”

Initially, the Dobrogeans’ campaign for political rights occurred mainly in the media, taking the form of *memoirs* addressed to political leaders, asking for local autonomy, political participation, and stimuli for regional developments. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, while Dobrogean elites further consolidated, they attempted to promote their specific sociopolitical interests by taking control of community councils. This campaign was stronger in Constanța,

where the intense process of ethnic colonization and economic investment generated a dynamic Romanian middle social stratum. Grouped mainly around the newspaper *Constanța* (1891–1905)—defined as “an exclusive organ of the Dobrogean interests”—local Romanian elites in Constanța demanded an expansion of the franchise and a consolidation of the power of community councils. Attempts to extend the power and electoral basis of representative institutions in Dobrogea met, however, the strong resistance of centrally appointed bureaucrats. Local elections became open confrontations between the administration, represented by the prefect, and local elites.

In order to weaken local political resistance that threatened to limit their powers, Dobrogean prefects invoked legal incompatibilities for discontinuing voting rights in local elections to active strata of the electorate, namely to low-rank state employees coming from Romania proper, such as functionaries, merchants, magistrates, and professors, as well as to immigrants settled in the province after April 11, 1877, such as the *Mocani*. In doing so, the prefects relied on the ambiguous legal status of the colonists, who—under the 1882 law—were given an intermediary juridical status, between foreigners and full citizens. Initially, based on a liberal interpretation of article 2 of the 1882 law, which gave colonists who settled in Dobrogea between April 11, 1877, and April 3, 1882, the right to acquire land in the province, Romanian courts granted them the right to participate in local elections, a right that they exercised for the next ten years (1882-1892). According to the interpretation put forward later by the Dobrogean prefects, this decision contradicted the 1866 Constitution of Romania, which asserted that only Romanian citizens or foreigners naturalized in Romania could acquire land in the country and exercise political rights. Consequently, in two successive decisions of December 28, 1889, and January 28, 1892, the prefect of Constanța ordered administrators of the *ocoale* to erase from electoral lists “all those who immigrated to Dobrogea after April 11, 1877, and who are not Romanian citizens but possess foreign passports.”<sup>171</sup> Their decision was justified by the fact that “the vast majority of the inhabitants settled in Dobrogea after 11 April 1877, not only did not prove their renunciation of foreign citizenship, but they also invoke it in order to escape the duties of Romanian citizenship, such as military conscription.”<sup>172</sup>

The decisions stirred caustic complaints in Dobrogea. The owner and editor of the newspaper *Constanța*, Petre Grigorescu, reacted virulently: “Together with the inequity of the electoral threshold, another anomaly, a genuine monstrosity differentiates us from Romanians in the mother country: merchants, industrialists, functionaries, and professors lose their citizenship rights in Dobrogea, and, as soon as they choose to live in this land of the pest, in this Siberia of Romania,

the authorities from the other side [of the Danube] do not accept them back into the *polis*.”<sup>173</sup> Confronted with the refusal of the prefect to re-enfranchise these categories of Dobrogeans, local opinion leaders ultimately appealed to central authorities for mediation, arguing that “at the center has to be the heart of Romanian feelings; we on the periphery are expecting support and guidance from it.”<sup>174</sup>

Initially, the campaign against appointed officials in the province seemed to stir some echoes at the center. In a report on the electoral rights of the *Mocani* submitted to the Council of Ministers in 1894, the Minister of the Interior Lascăr Catargiu admitted that the prefects’ decision “generated a great number of complaints, mostly from Romanian *Mocani* from Transylvania and the Banat, who settled in Dobrogea in the period 1877–1882 and acquired land from the state according to the law of April 3, 1882.” Catargiu also pointed out that the decision was illegal: according to the Romanian Communal Law (which was partially applied in Dobrogea, as well—see the 1880 law, art. 36, paragraph 2), the administration had no right to compile or revise electoral lists, because this was the prerogative of local community councils, assisted by the courts. Nonetheless, in his own report, Catargiu required the *Mocani* to obtain individual naturalization in order to vote. Based on this negative recommendation, the Romanian government reinforced the prefects’ decision, asserting that colonists in Dobrogea could participate in local elections only provided that, within one year, they renounced their foreign citizenship and claimed naturalization from the Parliament, as provided by article 9 of the Constitution.<sup>175</sup>

During these conflicts, one can thus identify two visions of citizenship rights and political participation in Dobrogea: one promoted by local prefects who pleaded for a narrow franchise which would give them a free hand in mastering local affairs; and another represented mainly by Romanian socioeconomic elites based in the province who, acting as self-appointed spokesmen of the Dobrogeans, attempted to enlarge the electoral basis of community councils in order to limit the power of the bureaucracy and promote their specific sociopolitical interests. In backing their positions, both sides employed a wide range of economic, legal, and political arguments. First, Dobrogean prefects justified the centralized administrative regime in Dobrogea by the distinctive ethnic and socioeconomic structure of the province. In the words of the prefect of Constanța, Scarlat Vârnav: “Although Dobrogea is in the immediate vicinity of the mother country, it is nevertheless very distinct from the rest of the country. The heterogeneous elements who inhabit the province, even the Romanians, have been brought up in other traditions and mores, so that everything differs here from what can be seen, from what exists in Romania.”<sup>176</sup>

They further claimed that, in its effort to assimilate the heterogeneous population of Dobrogea, the administration faced an alleged Bulgarian, joint Bulgarian-Greek, or even a generalized “Slavic (Russian and Bulgarian) danger,” and needed wide power for maintaining order. Consequently, the prefects asked for extensive administrative autonomy, not only in their relations to elected local councils, but in their relations to central authorities as well. According to Vârnava, “The administrative system followed until now—that of solving all problems in Bucharest—has not fulfilled and could not fulfill this task [to assimilate Dobrogea].”<sup>177</sup> Their campaign proved successful. Due to the prefects’ concerted lobbying, in 1894 the law establishing the “county delegation” as an elected institution at county level was not to be applied in Dobrogea, where its attributions were transferred to the prefects.

In their turn, in order to undermine the legitimacy of the prefects, regionalists also appealed to the national ideology, portraying themselves as the true bearers of Romanian national interest and arguing that the prefects’ administrative abuses hindered the consolidation of ethnic Romanians in the province. In the words of Grigorescu, “under the current administration of Dobrogea, the foreigner thrives, while the Romanian is forced to immigrate.”<sup>178</sup> Regionalists thus accused the prefects of deliberately favoring foreigners to the detriment of Romanian sociopolitical elites, arguing that “the City Hall of Constanța had become a factory of Romanian citizens,” with the result that “in twelve years they attracted here [in Dobrogea] a great number of foreigners from the Orient, who have become in majority Romanian citizens, against the stipulations of our Constitution.” Instead of challenging Romania’s restrictive citizenship legislation, regionalists thus tried to utilize it for promoting their own interests. Under the slogan “Românismul și prosperitatea economică a provinciei,” (Romanianism and the economic prosperity of the province), the newspaper *Constanța*—one of the main voices of Romanian regionalists at that time—linked the economic development of the province to the process of Romanization and presented them as interrelated and inseparable processes. This campaign had pragmatic economic motivations: the newspaper militated for the establishment of a new district for Romanian colonists in Constanța, and asked for numerous economic privileges for the local Romanian bourgeoisie. In their attempt to dominate the economic life of the province, regionalists pleaded for a policy of social closure, starting a virulent campaign against the immigration of foreigners.

The main avatars of Romanian regionalism turned against the “Oriental” merchants immigrating to Dobrogea. From 1880 to 1900, attracted by Dobrogea’s economic development, the number of Greeks increased from 6,481 to 9,105, of Armenians from 971 to 2,347, and of Jews from 3,147 to 3,415. Practicing almost

exclusively trade, these groups acquired considerable economic influence and thus became the main targets of the regionalists, who called them “parasites,” “Bloodsuckers of the Orient,” “plagues in the body of the province,” and “people without a country.”<sup>179</sup> The regionalists thus reproduced the pervasive “Orientalist” ideology employed by Romanian political elites in the province, portraying themselves as the bearers of progress. While the mercantile and cosmopolitan Ottoman economic elites were seen as regressive and vicious. Romanian regionalists turned against other leading economic groups as well: due to their economic dynamism, German colonists emigrating from Russia were perceived as potential competitors. *Constanța* carried out a strong media campaign against their citizenship rights in Dobrogea: “Every Dobrogean knows that the Germans sent here are only manual workers, craftsmen, servants, the worst kinds; and we, without asking if they have any material means . . . have given 40 to 50 hectares of land to people who have not even a cow in their household, and are in addition the worst citizens. Let’s encourage their emigration to Bulgaria; let them go and drop any hope for Romanian citizenship.”<sup>180</sup>

The cause of *Romanianism* thus served two purposes for regionalists in Dobrogea. On the one hand, it provided them a weapon for criticizing the “absolutist and anti-Romanian habits of the administration.”<sup>181</sup> On the other hand, it offered local elites an effective tool of “closure” against potential competitors to their socioeconomic domination. But this attitude placed regionalists in a delicate position between the centralizing attitude of the prefects and the resentment of ethnic groups in the province. In an attempt to prevent political isolation and to appease the alienation of native Dobrogeans, Grigorescu explained the abstruse logic of the regionalist policy of “selective” social closure: “when we speak of foreigners . . . we do not mean the [ethnically diverse] autochthonous population of Dobrogea, whose rights we often supported and defended together with the rights of Romanians, but we mean all kinds of parasites who invaded Constanța to the detriment of Romanianism and of the indigenous population. They formed numerous villages and monopolized the trade of the province, shamelessly exploiting the rural population.”<sup>182</sup> This peculiar dichotomy of exclusion/inclusion in the regionalist discourse ultimately weakened its basis and compromised its political impact. But it also suggested a potential alliance between Romanian socioeconomic elites and native ethnic minorities in Dobrogea, a trend that would develop in the next period.

## From “Romanianism” to “Autochthonism”: Attempts at Interethnic Collaboration

In spite of its limited political success, the regionalist campaign in Dobrogea further consolidated after the turn of the century, when leaders tried to forge more inclusive local political alliances and to promote their cause in the press and public opinion. The campaign for political rights entered a new phase of political activism, that of public meetings of local notables and intellectuals. Gradually, the fight against the prefects generated a nucleus of tenacious local leaders, who grouped in 1903–1904 around the combative regionalist newspaper *Farul* (The Lighthouse). A prominent figure of this heterogeneous local interest group was Ioan N. Roman, a jurist and publicist from a Transylvanian family of *Mocani*, who in 1898 settled in Dobrogea and became subsequently a member of the Constanța Departmental Council (1903).<sup>183</sup> In a political pamphlet titled *Dobrogea și drepturile politice ale locuitor ei* (Dobrogea and the Political Rights of its Inhabitants) (1905), Roman constructed an articulated regionalist program. First, he presented utilitarian cost-benefit arguments: according to his calculations, in twenty-seven years of Romanian rule, Dobrogea contributed 137 million *lei* to the state budget, but benefited “too little” from investment of public utility from the center. He demanded that Dobrogea should have “its own budget, utilized exclusively for its own cultural and economic improvements.” Second, he demanded an administrative reorganization of the two counties more appropriate to regional needs. Third, he requested incentives for regional economic development, such as the construction of a railway between Tulcea and Constanța.<sup>184</sup> Roman directed his main attack against the Bucharest-dominated local bureaucracy, considered responsible for prolonging Dobrogea’s separate administration: “All the good-for-nothings of society, all the lawbreakers, all those who had a legal problem and could not get rich there, all the wrongdoers who had to distance themselves from their just abandoned penitentiaries—all rushed into Dobrogea, into this Siberia of Romania, for them the Promised Land, where they found a more profitable place the greedier they were. They cheated everyone without any shame.”<sup>185</sup>

The heterogeneous character of the regionalist discourse nevertheless hindered the campaign for political rights. Dobrogean elites were segregated according to their ethnic, socioeconomic, and territorial provenience. Describing the regionalist campaign in Dobrogea, the Moldovan politician Vasile Kogălniceanu charged that “it was not a continuous, methodical, and systematic fight. . . . The rural population did not take part in this campaign, and the national minorities even less so. Only the intellectual strata of Dobrogean Romanians were interested in the issue, as well as the Romanians settled there. They edited newspapers, authored books and brochures, composed delegations for protests and militated for

emancipation.”<sup>186</sup> Moreover, the two leading trends of Romanian regionalism in Dobrogea, represented by *Constanța* and *Farul*, often engaged in personal polemics over the legitimacy or representative character of their respective publications, accusing each other of secret collaboration with the prefects.

To overcome a potential crisis of legitimacy of *Dobrogenism*, Ioan N. Roman repeatedly attempted to mobilize the local population in public demonstrations for political rights. Failing to secure their support, Roman accused them of “Oriental indifferentism.” Instead, he pleaded for an alliance with ethnic minorities in the province, arguing that “the voice of native Dobrogeans has to be heard and taken into account.”<sup>187</sup> Gradually, this strategy led to the emergence of a more inclusive “autochthonist” regionalist discourse claiming political rights for native Dobrogeans. A main representative of this position was Constantin D. Benderli. In his pamphlet *Un Dobrogean de baștin despre Dobrogea* [An Autochthonous Dobrogean Speaking About Dobrogea], Benderli attempted to give a voice to “true Dobrogeans . . . born in Dobrogea from native parents, and a former *re’aja* under the Turkish rule.”<sup>188</sup> He attacked the ambiguous legal status of Dobrogeans, who were denied property and political rights in Romania proper: “The Dobrogean loses his Romanian citizenship once he steps on the left bank of the Danube [in Romania proper]. Remaining thus without any nationality, can he demand his naturalization? How? Under what conditions? . . . Can the Dobrogean obtain the recognition of his nationality, as Transylvanian Romanians? . . . We are not foreigners, since we cannot demand naturalization. What are we then, we who fulfill all the tasks of a citizen but do not enjoy even the rights given to a newly arrived foreigner?”<sup>189</sup>

In order to further expose the legal inequality of Dobrogeans, Benderli built a comparison between their subordinated citizenship status and the civil and political equality of Moldovans and Wallachians in Romania proper. He also compared the former Ottoman administration with the Romanian rule, concluding that the legal inferiority of Dobrogeans was a situation which “our parents did not experience under the Ottoman rule.”<sup>190</sup> Finally, citing examples of colonial legislation applied by France in Algeria and Indochina, Benderli also denounced “the state of inferiority” of Dobrogeans in Romania as compared to the citizenship status of Algerians and Asians in France. On this basis, he demanded a revision of the legal status of Dobrogeans, according to two major principles: either (1) the implementation of the internationally accepted practice according to which the inhabitants of an annexed province become *en bloc* citizens of the respective country; or (2) the implementation of Romanian citizenship legislation, which allowed the *individual* naturalization of ethnic Romanians in Dobrogea, under article 9 of the Constitution.<sup>191</sup>



The political agenda set by Roman and Benderli could forge a coalition between Bulgarian and Turkish elites and the dynamic Romanian economic elites and intellectuals to protest administrative abuses in the province.<sup>192</sup> Gradually, this large interethnic coalition led to a reinterpretation of the concept of Dobrogea's Romanianization, from the exclusivist program of "Romanianism" to a civic understanding of nationalism under the banner of "autochthonsim." For the proponents of "Romanianism," Dobrogea's integration into Romania meant first and foremost the economic and political domination of ethnic Romanians in the province and the cultural assimilation of ethnic minorities. In contrast, in the view of Christian Racovsky, a prominent socialist leader of Bulgarian origin and a member of the Constanța Departmental Council, "the Romanianization of Dobrogea" meant that "all Dobrogeans, regardless of their nationality, would consider themselves Romanians in the political understanding of the word, while preserving their race and religion, and having the right to develop freely, according to their customs and traditions, and renouncing any idea of secession."<sup>193</sup> Autochthonism provided an efficient basis for local interethnic collaboration: when Racovsky was expelled from Dobrogea in 1907 due to his socialist activism, Roman—himself previously a socialist—mobilized the council in Racovsky's defense.<sup>194</sup> This broad local alliance enabled Roman to argue convincingly that "the exceptional regime dissatisfies everybody, natives and settlers, which means the definitive condemnation of the system."<sup>195</sup> Gathered around an "autochthonist" political platform, numerous Dobrogean departmental delegations lobbied the king and the Parliament for full political rights in 1899, 1902, and most importantly, on November 14, 1903—on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dobrogea's annexation.<sup>196</sup>

In summary, in legitimizing their distinctive political interests, regionalists in Dobrogea exploited the individualized historical character of the province by emphasizing its strategic role as the border of the country and the gateway for the Romanian trade, as the link between Orient and the Occident, and as the meeting point of Romanians from various historical provinces. Nonetheless, the regionalist discourse in Dobrogea was not a "resistant" but an "accommodating one," being ultimately in line with Romanian national ideology.<sup>197</sup> Roman's fight against the exceptional administrative regime was based on the argument that "Dobrogea is a Romanianized province," with a reliable and loyal population, which deserves participation in the political life of the country.<sup>198</sup> In other words, Romanian regionalists were willing to play the role of local, secondary elites of the Romanian order in Dobrogea. They portrayed the separate exceptional regime

of Northern Dobrogea as a gross political mistake of Romanian political elites, which alienated their potential allies at the local level, thus undermining the Romanian nationalist cause in the province.

### **“Political Rights without Liberties”: Dilemmas of Citizenship in Northern Dobrogea, 1908–1913**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the issue of Dobrogeans’ political emancipation gradually gained momentum on the Romanian political agenda. The economic development of the province and its increasing integration into Romania’s internal market, as well as the campaign of emancipation conducted by the Dobrogean socioeconomic elites all recommended a reconsideration of the separate administrative organization. Nevertheless, in spite of the increasing “visibility” of the province in Romania’s sociopolitical life, the cause of emancipation advanced at a very slow pace at the national level. This was due to the fact that, since the local newspapers and journals were distributed only locally and appeared rather sporadically, they had virtually no impact on public opinion in Bucharest. More importantly, as long as Dobrogeans were not represented in the Romanian Parliament, they were in no position to negotiate any favorable political deal with competing factions of the political establishment. As a result, in spite of promises of emancipation put forward in 1880 by Romanian politicians, the 1884 revision of the Constitution did not grant political rights to Dobrogeans. In fact, while affirming the 1881 proclamation of the kingdom and reforming the electoral system, the 1884 constitutional amendments deepened—rather than lessened—the ambiguity of the province’s legal status. The Constitution declared Dobrogea an integral part of Romania by stipulating that “the Kingdom of Romania, with its counties from the right bank of the Danube [Dobrogea] constitutes an indivisible state” (art. 1). At the same time, the new amendments confirmed Dobrogea’s separate administrative status, prolonging it *sine die*. according to article 13, “the stipulations of this Constitution can be applied only *through special laws*, in the part of Romania beyond the Danube.” In the next period, the issue of Dobrogeans’ political rights was rarely addressed at national level, being successively utilized by the Liberal and the Conservative parties as an antigovernmental propaganda tool. Although in 1878 the Conservative party loudly opposed the administration imposed on Dobrogea by the ruling Liberals, once in power (1888–1895), Conservatives proved unwilling to change its status.

This political demagoguery alienated regionalist elites in Dobrogea. The cause of Dobrogenism was therefore championed by antiestablishment political movements, such as the progressive-conservative political fraction led by Vasile Kogălniceanu. As an advocate of the specific interests of the Moldovan medium and small landowners, he opposed the projects of sheltered industrialization promoted by the Wallachian-dominated Liberal party.<sup>199</sup> While serving as administrator in Dobrogea under several Conservative governments, Kogălniceanu realized the great potential for creating a strong regional political base, where he could build on the political legacy of his father, Mihail, a proponent of Dobrogea's annexation and ethnic colonization. Consequently, Vasile Kogălniceanu became a catalyst for Dobrogeans' campaign for political rights, by advocating their cause in Parliament, authoring brochures and political pamphlets, and organizing public meetings of support.<sup>200</sup> The most active political ally of Dobrogenism at the national level was the socialist movement. As part of its radical criticism of the Romanian sociopolitical system, and before its temporary dissolution at the turn of the century, the Romanian Social-Democrat Workers' party was quick to adopt the issue of Dobrogean political rights in its political program, during its fifth and sixth congresses (1898, 1899). Able to combine radical socialist issues with local political alliances, the socialist movement developed a strong organizational network in Dobrogea, and contributed to the development of the Dobrogean regionalist discourse. By and large, however, the political emancipation of Dobrogeans could count on few allies among politicians and in public opinion, a fact that accounts for the specific timing and form of Dobrogea's full integration into Romania.

The first major political discussion over the administrative status of the province occurred in 1905, when a new Conservative government appointed a commission to study the access of Dobrogeans to political rights. This decision was motivated in part by domestic concerns, triggered by the intensified political campaign conducted by regionalist leaders in Dobrogea and by the previous electoral promises of the Conservatives, who—while in opposition—had pledged the political emancipation of Dobrogeans. Most of the reasons behind this prospective reform were nevertheless geopolitical. After 1878, Serbia and Bulgaria granted full constitutional rights to the inhabitants of their newly acquired territories. By contrast, Dobrogea's separate administrative regime exhibited an "embarrassing" similarity to the administrative status of Bosnia-Herzegovina, occupied in 1878 by Austria-Hungary and organized as a distinct province under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance. Several Dobrogean prefects referred to Bosnia-Herzegovina's separate administrative status within the empire as a model to be followed by the Romanian administration in Dobrogea. However, in the

view of many Romanian politicians, the comparison was incompatible with Dobrogea's symbolic association to the Romanian nation-state, as claimed by national ideology. Further alarmed by the escalation of political tension in the Balkans, Romanian politicians expressed concern that Dobrogea's separate administrative status could fuel Bulgaria's *irredenta* policy. Titu Maiorescu, the leader of the Conservative party, had warned in a 1903 article entitled "The Question of Dobrogea," that "we have to stop this temporary situation which has characterized the administration of Dobrogea until now. . . . Faced with the threatening situation in the Balkans . . . Romania has to respond peacefully with the definitive and constitutional incorporation of 'the counties from the right bank of the Danube' [Dobrogea] into the 'Indivisible state.'"<sup>201</sup>

In its report, the Commission denounced the discretionary powers of the central administration in Dobrogea and urged a fast and unconditional political emancipation of Dobrogeans. In spite of this unequivocal recommendation, the process of emancipation proceeded slowly. The political debates continued to be dominated by confrontations between those politicians who, animated by geopolitical concerns, regarded the full administrative integration of Dobrogea into Romania as a way of consolidating the country's political position in the Balkans, and other politicians who, animated by a militant cultural nationalism, argued for a reinforced political control over the province. Therefore, it was only on November 15, 1908—at the thirtieth anniversary of the annexation—that King Carol I made an official commitment to Dobrogea's political emancipation. In his message delivered at the opening session of Parliament, Carol proclaimed that, after thirty years of "grandiose and fruitful works," "the time has come to extend our constitutional regime in Constanța and Tulcea counties."<sup>202</sup>

The king's message was approved by a majority of politicians. In heated press and parliamentary debates, the main political parties of the country, the Conservatives, the National Liberals, and the Conservative Democrats, underlined the necessity of the reform and claimed credit for initiating it. Thus, while the Conservative politician Titu Maiorescu and the Conservative Democrat Take Ionescu disputed the "paternity" of this political initiative, the ruling Liberal party boasted that they would implement it. Nevertheless, the emancipation of Dobrogea was in fact far from enjoying full political support. The main opponent of the reform was the historian and politician Nicolae Iorga, the spokesman for Romanian cultural nationalism after the turn of the century.<sup>203</sup> Commenting on the king's message, Iorga said that it contained "things which are given without being requested, and things which are not given, although they are requested."<sup>204</sup> Granting political rights to Dobrogeans was for Iorga among those undesired things, no

more than a “little gift,” or a “beautiful new toy,” meant to divert attention from two major and pressing political issues of the moment, namely the peasant question and the redirection of Romania’s foreign policy. Consequently, Iorga questioned the opportunity of the reform, pointing out that it would be “a great mistake” to disregard nationalist priorities in the province and to grant political rights to Dobrogeans under the pressure of international events.

Iorga’s opposition to the reform stemmed from his harsh assessment of the success of Romanian administration in the province. In 1905, after a trip to Dobrogea, Iorga had concluded that “the appearance of Dobrogea is still very cosmopolitan, and the Romanian work of colonization is far from being completed.”<sup>205</sup> Asserting that “no other conquered territory has been so badly administered,” Iorga criticized the inefficiency and the corruption of the provincial government. He deplored especially the limited success of the program of ethnic Romanian colonization and the insufficient attention given to cultural assimilation that resulted, in his view, in the economic and cultural dominance of ethnic minorities in the province: “we sent the scum [*pleava*] of the administration to Dobrogea and allowed Bulgarians to acquire the overwhelming property rights that they have at the moment.” In Iorga’s view, since Romania’s restrictive electoral system was to favor the rich non-Romanian Dobrogeans, granting political rights to Dobrogeans would deprive the administration of an important tool of assimilation, thus undermining the national interest: “What would be the nationality of the voters in College I in Dobrogea? Most often, they would be foreigners. And, while today these people can be watched, can be punished when they conspire, in the future it will be possible to neither *surveiller* nor punish them, when they have acquired the political influence attached to the voters of College I, when three political parties would depend on the will of a rich Greek or Bulgarian and would beg for their votes.”<sup>206</sup>

Consequently, Iorga opposed the granting of political rights to Dobrogeans as premature, advocating instead an intensified program of ethnic colonization and cultural homogenization that would build “a steady border of hearts of motivated Romanian peasants” along the border with Bulgaria. Ultimately, convinced that the king’s official commitment made the political emancipation of Dobrogeans “virtually unavoidable,” Iorga proposed “at least” a merger between the future electoral constituencies in Dobrogea and those in the neighboring Romanian-dominated counties of Brăila or Ialomița to form a single electoral college, thus diluting the political influence of non-Romanian economic elites in Dobrogea and minimizing their impact on the political life of the nation.

Iorga's nationalist campaign shaped the attitude of Romanian political elites concerning Dobrogeans' political rights. Invoking the principle according to which "the Constitution grants political rights only to Romanians," Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu reiterated his determination to apply the citizenship legislation "in the same spirit on both sides of the Danube."<sup>207</sup> In other words, Romanian political elites were unwilling to grant to non-Romanians in Dobrogea those political rights which were refused to them in Romania proper. Consequently, on April 19, 1909, a first law on Dobrogeans' citizenship, initiated by a Liberal government, granted full political rights: (1) to Ottoman citizens who resided in the province before April 11, 1877, and to their descendants (art. 3, point A); and (2) to "Romanians from every state, regardless their place of birth, owners of *rural properties* in Constanța and Tulcea counties," and their descendants, providing that they renounce their previous citizenship (art. 3, point B).<sup>208</sup> The law thus admitted full citizenship to all foreign ethnic Romanian rural colonists, as well as former Ottoman subjects (*re'aja*). Nonetheless, in line with restrictive Romanian citizenship laws, it excluded from political rights *all* post-1877 nonethnic Romanian immigrants, either in the countryside or urban areas. The law also excluded foreign Romanians with only urban properties and those without property. In addition, the procedure for obtaining political rights resembled that of naturalization: Dobrogea's inhabitants had to file a request that included their birth certificate, proof of military service, and residence and property documents. These files were reviewed by central commissions composed of local prefects and appointed magistrates.

These stipulations provoked incendiary reactions among Romanian elites in Dobrogea. In a virulent political pamphlet, Vasile Kogălniceanu characterized the 1909 law as "a brutal, antiliberal and antidemocratic" decision "which violates already acquired rights, deteriorates, instead of improving, the situation of tens of thousands of people" and "generates genuine chaos in Dobrogea."<sup>209</sup> The most controversial stipulation of the law was the exclusion of urban Romanians. Due to their intense lobbying, a new law of April 14, 1910, removed *rural* properties as a precondition for full citizenship, granting instead political rights to all rural and urban ethnic Romanians who were "owners of *immobile property* in Constanța or Tulcea counties and domiciled there when the law was promulgated."<sup>210</sup> The terms remained highly restrictive, however, and could not appease public opinion in Dobrogea. Following a preliminary meeting of Dobrogeans leaders in Hîrșova, a provincial delegation led by Constantin Sarry met the king on September 14, 1911, and lobbied for a more inclusive citizenship law. As a result, on March 3, 1912, a Conservative government led by Petre P. Carp issued yet another citizenship law for Dobrogea.

Compared to previous ones, the 1912 law was more inclusive, granting political rights: (1) to former Ottoman subjects (*re'aya*) who were residing in Dobrogea on April 11, 1877; and to Turks and Tartars who had emigrated from Dobrogea after the 1877–1878 war, but had returned at least two years before the promulgation of the law; (2) to all categories of ethnic Romanians, namely *autochthonous* Romanians (the former Ottoman subjects, or *re'aya*), Romanian colonists who owned *rural or urban property* in the province, and Romanians *without property* who had settled there when the law was promulgated; and finally (3) to foreign colonists who acquired *rural* property in Dobrogea.<sup>211</sup> Nevertheless, in a dissimilationist spirit, the law still preserved the principle of ethnic closure for urban colonists, excluding from political rights nonethnic Romanians domiciled in urban areas, namely the large numbers of Jewish, Armenian, and Greek merchants who “infiltrated” Dobrogea after 1877. Citizenship legislation in Dobrogea was thus conceived as the last important step in “the work of national importance” conducted by Romanian authorities in the province. According to Ioan Georgescu, the citizenship commissions “favored in every possible way the Romanian element,” especially Transylvanian Romanians.<sup>212</sup>

After thirty-five years of being “second-class” citizens, Dobrogeans were finally granted the right to participate in the nation’s political life. Given Romania’s restrictive electoral system, however, the effects of the law were quite limited. According to the first electoral statistics, in 1912 there were only 12,872 “full citizens” in Dobrogea, namely 5,435 direct voters in Constanța, and 7,437 direct voters in Tulcea, out of a total population of 368,189.<sup>213</sup> In addition, as compared to the other historical provinces that composed Romania at the time, Dobrogea remained largely underrepresented in political life: Dobrogeans elected only four parliamentary representatives in Constanța county and four in Tulcea county, thus a total of eight Dobrogean deputies for the entire province. In comparison, Moldova elected seventy-nine deputies, while the Wallachian provinces of Muntenia and Oltenia elected seventy-five and twenty-nine deputies, respectively.<sup>214</sup> The political underrepresentation of Dobrogeans becomes even more evident when one considers that one deputy represented 1,859 votes in Tulcea County and 1,359 in Constanța County, an average of 1,609 voters *per* deputy in the province. At the same time, there was one deputy for only 526 voters in Oltenia, one deputy for 566 voters in Muntenia, and one deputy for 307 voters in Moldova.<sup>215</sup> No wonder that the province of Dobrogea remained marginal in the political life of Romania. Dobrogeans gained a voice in the Parliament, but their representatives were compelled to look for political alliances in order to promote their specific interests.

### **From Colony to Periphery: The Normalization of Political Life**

As discussed in the previous section, local Romanian elites ultimately succeeded in shaping the citizenship legislation as it applied to Dobrogea. Their political emancipation normalized political life in the province and appeased regionalist tendencies. The most dynamic local interest groups, such as the wealthy *Mocani* landowners grouped around Luca Oancea, the urban bourgeoisie in Constanța grouped around Virgil Andronescu, and intellectuals led by Ioan N. Roman, enrolled overwhelmingly in the Liberal party. Specific products of the Liberal socioeconomic policy in the province, Romanian elites in Dobrogea proved eager to integrate into the ruling class and take full advantage of the opportunities offered by Romanian rule. Bucharest politicians were, however, quite reluctant to fully renounce their administrative control: political emancipation did not abolish the extra constitutional administrative structure of the province, the two coexisting in a syncretism characterized by Vasile Kogălniceanu as “political rights without liberties.” In his view, since the prefects retained full control over local administration, Dobrogea became “a small factory for producing deputies and senators . . . an electoral machinery at the disposal of the prefect.”<sup>216</sup> As a result, the first parliamentary elections in the province, held in November 1912, were won by centrally nominated candidates of the ruling Conservative party. The governmental majority in Dobrogea was, however, lower than the national average, an indication of the strong electoral base of the Dobrogean elites.

Nevertheless, political emancipation bore immediate fruits, since it stirred a domino effect of emancipation in other spheres. The extraconstitutional administrative regime in Dobrogea could not last much longer: in 1913, it was completely abolished, after a series of laws concerning the judicial system (March 1909, modified 1911, 1912, 1913) and local administration (January 1913) finally homogenized Dobrogea’s legislation with that of Romania proper. The province of Dobrogea thus became fully integrated in Romania: the constitution of the country, its legislation and national institutions were extended to Dobrogea, while Dobrogeans enjoyed the same citizenship rights and obligations as the other Romanian citizens. The dismantling of the centralized system of local administration freed Dobrogeans from the control of central bureaucrats and administrators and removed the last obstacle to the political preeminence of regionalist leaders in the province. Consequently, in the next parliamentary elections (1914), Dobrogean regionalists were elected to Parliament as representatives of the National Liberal party. Ioan N. Roman, spokesman for



regionalism in Dobrogea, became mayor of Constanța (1910), vice-president of the local organization of the Liberal party (1910-1914), a deputy (1914–1922), and later a senator (1922–1931) in the Parliament.

Significantly, Dobrogeans' participation in political life did not totally eliminate regionalist resistance to Bucharest centralization, which was transferred within political parties. The strong political organization of the National Liberal party in Constanța was dominated by the conflict between "governmental Liberals," nominated by the center and recruited from former prefects and high bureaucrats in the province, and Dobrogean local leaders. In 1910, the central Liberal leadership failed to impose the authority of its candidate, Scarlat Vârnav, and had to accept the dominance of the great landowner Luca Oancea, who was supported by the cohesive interest group of Liberal *Mocani*.<sup>217</sup> Only in 1914, a Bucharest-appointed representative, Constantin Mumuianu, could claim leadership of the Constanța county organization by exploiting local differences between *Mocani* landowners, on the one hand, and urban bourgeoisie and intellectual strata, on the other.<sup>218</sup> Dissatisfied with this political outcome, many Dobrogean leaders defected from the Liberal party. The most important of them was the venerable leader of regionalism in the province, Ioan N. Roman. Alienated by the policy of centralization promoted by the Bucharest-based leadership of the Liberal party, Roman dissociated himself temporarily from the central leadership and ran in the 1919 elections as an independent "dissident" Liberal. Another regionalist leader in Dobrogea, Constantin Sarry, followed an even more radical path. Dissatisfied with the Dobrogean policy of the Liberal party, Sarry attempted to emancipate Dobrogeanism from the influence of traditional parties and to revive it within a National-Dobrogean party.

## Conclusions

In this essay I propose a comprehensive analysis of the process of national integration in Northern Dobrogea, 1878–1913. I pay attention to the creation of bonds between citizens through cultural integration and homogenization, but I also add to this process the juridical-political study of citizenship and the history of immigration and naturalization, issues largely neglected in the historiography on Romania. This concluding section evaluates the impact of the integration of Dobrogea into Romania on the country's citizenship legislation and national ideology.

Dobrogea was integrated into Romania at a particularly formative political period. Starting with 1878, the country experienced a new stage in the institutionalization of an independent nation-state, marked by the achievement

of state sovereignty in 1879, the proclamation of the kingdom in 1881, and the subsequent process of institutional reorganization. These events were accompanied by great political turmoil, a significant territorial loss (Southern Bessarabia), the sociopolitical upheaval stirred by mass conscription and the country's military participation in the 1877–1878 Russian-Turkish War and, last but not least, by the European diplomatic intervention in favor of the political emancipation of Jews in Romania.

The peculiar timing of Dobrogea's integration into Romania had important consequences for shaping the patterns of that process. Dobrogea was the first major test of Romania's national institutions and power of assimilation, a feature that explains the importance given by Romanian political elites to administrative centralization and cultural homogenization in the province. I argue that the post-1878 administrative organization of Dobrogea exhibited an underlying contradiction between Romania's economic interests and its ethno-national definition of citizenship. On the one hand, at a time of intense European colonial and economic expansion, Romanian political elites regarded possession of the Danube delta and the Dobrogean shore of the Black Sea as essential for the country's economic development and its geopolitical role in the Balkans. On the other hand, the ethnic and religious diversity of Dobrogea challenged Romania's ethnic and religious policies. In solving this contradiction, Romanian politicians instituted in Dobrogea a separate administrative organization under which Dobrogeans were granted only a local type of citizenship. In certain respects, this regime shared numerous features of Romanian citizenship legislation, among which the most important were the restricted access to Romanian state citizenship, the legal differentiation between citizens and noncitizens, and the link between citizenship and the exercise of certain sociopolitical rights. Dobrogea introduced nevertheless several innovations in Romania's legislation, among which the most important were the institution of colonization and the strong emphasis on educational and religious policies that fostered cultural homogenization. The result was the building of a threefold mechanism composed of ethnic colonization, cultural homogenization, and economic modernization. Finally, the end of the separate administrative regime in Northern Dobrogea in 1913 indicated that the effort to assimilate the province had been successful: in only thirty-five years (1878–1913) Dobrogea was nationalized by a growing Romanian ethnic majority. In addition, massive economic investments developed the province into "the most shining jewel in king Carol's crown" and an indispensable component of Romania's national economy.<sup>219</sup> The successful integration was celebrated by Romanian political elites as evidence of Romania's civilizing power. As one of the prefects in Dobrogea expressed it: "What has been achieved in this time is a remarkable

work of civilization, which other peoples could not fulfill—in their colonies—in a period even four times longer. It is neither presumption nor egoistic to appreciate that we have made, out of a mixture of races, a people. The ethnic conglomerate that we found upon our settlement here has been melted down by the heat of our patriotic ideal.”<sup>220</sup>

The assimilation of Northern Dobrogea therefore acquired a specific significance in Romanian national ideology. “The wonderful work of civilization” accomplished in the province was seen by Romanian political elites as a confirmation that Romania had become part of the West, having a civilizing role in the Orient. The province served concomitantly as a new economic, territorial, ethnic, and maritime frontier for Romania. The process of ethnic colonization, cultural homogenization, and market nationalization can be therefore regarded as part of a more general process of internal and external colonial expansion in Europe. It confirms, as Katherine Verdery pointed out, that ethnicity and ethnic borders are the creation and not the driving cause of nation building.<sup>221</sup>

### **National Integration in Greater Romania: The Assimilation of Dobrogea in Comparative Perspective**

The *antebellum* assimilation of Dobrogea anticipated the politics of unification that occurred at the level of Greater Romania in the interwar period. After World War I, Romania achieved its maximal national objectives: the incorporation of the historical provinces of Transylvania, the Banat, and Bukovina from Austria-Hungary, and of Bessarabia from Russia, unified all ethnic Romanians into a single state, almost doubling the country’s size and population and considerably strengthening its economic potential. In spite of this success, many of the challenges faced by the Romanian administration in Dobrogea in the prewar period were extended—and even amplified—after 1918 in Greater Romania. The new state came into existence as a joint result of Romania’s military action and the fight for self-determination of Romanian elites in the historical provinces of Transylvania, the Banat, Bukovina, and Bessarabia. The political union of these provinces enjoyed a large pan-Romanian consensus built on previous cultural and political relations. Nevertheless, since the newly united provinces had been shaped by radically different political regimes, their incorporation transformed Greater Romania into a veritable mosaic of regional identities, fragmented political cultures, and different legal and administrative systems. Moreover, although largely dominated by ethnic Romanians, the ratio of national minorities in Greater Romania grew substantially from 8 percent in 1913 to 26 percent in 1923, among which 8.4 percent were Hungarians, 4.3 percent Germans, 5 percent Jews, 3.3 percent Russians, 3.3 Ruthenians, 1.5 percent Bulgarians, and 1 percent Turks and Tartars,

and so on.<sup>222</sup> In addition, many ethnic groups, such as Jews, Hungarians, and Germans were “high-status minorities”: given preference by the former imperial order, they dominated in urban areas, the liberal professions, and the state bureaucracy.<sup>223</sup>

Romanian political elites were thus facing the difficult challenge of fostering administrative integration, legislative unification, and cultural homogenization in the unified country.<sup>224</sup> By and large, one can identify two competing views on national integration: One, promoted mostly by regional political elites in the newly united territories, argued that Greater Romania was a radically new state that had to establish its sociopolitical organization through negotiations among the political elites from all the historical regions. The other, promoted by political elites from Bucharest, claimed a state continuity between the Old Kingdom and Greater Romania and advocated therefore the extension of Romania’s pre-World War I laws and institutions into the new provinces. The political terminology employed by the proponents of these competing perspectives on national unification was also different: while regional political elites spoke of “unification,” political elites of the Old Kingdom spoke of “integration,” or “legislative extension.”<sup>225</sup> After a short period of political upheaval, the latter view on national integration prevailed: The National Liberal party of the Old Kingdom dominated the political life in Greater Romania in its first decade, being able to impose its view on the process of administrative and legislative integration.

This essay suggests that the successful experiment of Northern Dobrogea’s *antebellum* assimilation influenced the manner in which Romanian political elites approached the post-1918 process of national integration in Greater Romania. It encouraged them to think in terms of the “mother country” and “annexed provinces” and to test related mechanisms for fostering institutional integration and cultural homogenization within Greater Romania, among which the most important were the centralization of the administration and the strengthening of national connotations attached to religious and educational policies. The lessons learned in Dobrogea proved nevertheless to be in many ways misleading. Related policies of integration tried in the Quadrilateral, Transylvania, the Banat, Bukovina, and Bessarabia after 1918, enjoyed only limited success.<sup>226</sup> Instead, the slow pace of nationalizing the state provoked frustrations and bitterness among the Romanian ethnic majority, triggering a nationalist reaction, which found its most radical expression in a powerful right-wing political movement.<sup>227</sup> I argue that the more rapid pace of assimilation of Northern Dobrogea was patterned by specific characteristics of the process of nation- and state-building in the province, highlighted in this essay:

During Ottoman rule, Dobrogea was a road, a military and commercial corridor of transit. As a frontier zone at the border of the Ottoman world economy, the province attracted innumerable immigrants from Transylvania, Wallachia, the Bulgarian plains, and Southern Bessarabia, eager to escape military service or feudal obligations. Although providing substantial fiscal and political advantages to Muslims, the Ottoman state did not engage in policies of cultural homogenization, proving rather tolerant to Dobrogea's ethnic and cultural diversity. The *millet* system provided for confessional autonomy of major ethnic groups, while the Tanzimat reforms favored the emergence of a category of Christian intermediaries, many of them of Romanian ethnic origin, who penetrated the administration of the province. The Ottoman social system also prevented the consolidation of a local Muslim hereditary aristocracy, a characteristic aggravated in Dobrogea by the complete collapse of the Ottoman administration and the massive Muslim emigration caused by the 1877–1878 war. In addition, ethnic groups in Dobrogea were very heterogeneous, predominantly rural, and with a low level of nationalist mobilization; among them, only Bulgarians developed a significant national movement. After the annexation of the province by Romania in 1878, local Dobrogean elites could mount only a minimal resistance to Bucharest's centralization policies because: (1) they were in a relatively weak socioeconomic position; (2) a majority were newcomers from other Romanian provinces, they could claim a limited political legitimacy; and (3) they were deprived of political rights, a fact that prevented them from having a significant political impact in the province. Dobrogean elites became a significant regional political factor only after their sociopolitical consolidation at the turn of the century. Finally, Dobrogea was traditionally an underpopulated area, a fact aggravated by the devastating effects of the 1877–78 war. Due to the Ottoman system of landownership, a significant part of Dobrogea's land had belonged to the state. Upon annexation, this land became the property of the Romanian state, which utilized it for implementing an ample ethnic colonization in the province. Dobrogea thus became "the California of the Romanians," a dynamic frontier of advancing ethnic settlements.

These characteristics eased the capturing of the administrative machinery in Northern Dobrogea by Romanian political elites after 1878, since in the process they did not have to remove "high-status" minorities from their privileged social and economic positions (as happened later in Bukovina or Transylvania with the Austrian and Hungarian bureaucracies); they could create new political institutions which could be monopolized from the beginning by the dominant nationality. Furthermore, ethnic homogenization and the sustained economic development of Northern Dobrogea legitimized Romanian rule, leading gradually

to the full administrative integration of the province into Romania. By the end of the period, Dobrogea was unanimously acknowledged as an indispensable component of the national economy and symbolically adopted to the national heritage. The rapid pre-war integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania thus compared favorably with the more arduous post-1918 process of administrative integration in Greater Romania. Did the assimilation of the entire province of Dobrogea (including the Quadrilateral) in the interwar period differ from the case of other provinces of Greater Romania? Paradoxically, the assimilation of Northern Dobrogea became a victim of its own success. In 1913, during the Second Balkan War, Romania invoked geo-political imperatives and annexed Southern Dobrogea from Bulgaria, made up of the counties of Durostor and Caliacra. Romanian media celebrated the annexation of Southern Dobrogea as the reunification of the historic province of Dobrogea. However, it soon became obvious that, since Southern Dobrogea had been subject to an intense process of Bulgarian nation- and state-building, at that time there were already two Dobrogeas. Romanians represented only 20.8 percent of the total population in Southern Dobrogea, as compared to 38.3 percent Bulgarians and 33.75 percent Turks and Tartars.

In order to assimilate the newly annexed territory, the 1914 Law for the Organization of New Dobrogea implemented the separate administrative regime that had just been abandoned in Northern Dobrogea in the Quadrilateral. The multiethnic composition of the newly annexed territory provoked, nevertheless, a general stalemate of the assimilation policy in the province: the ratio of the Romanian population decreased from an absolute majority in Northern Dobrogea (64.4 percent) to only a relative majority in the entire Dobrogea (44.2 percent).<sup>228</sup> More important, Romania's annexation of Southern Dobrogea changed the dialectic of the Romanian-Bulgarian diplomatic relationship, triggering Bulgaria's retaliation during World War I. The intense 1916-1917 military confrontations between Romania and the central powers in Dobrogea caused massive material loss and reversed the ethnic policies promoted by the Romanian state. Ultimately, after temporarily losing Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria, and Northern Dobrogea to a condominium of the central powers, the final military victory of the Entente secured the return of the Romanian administration in Dobrogea in December 1918, a situation legally sanctioned on November 27, 1918, by the Treaty of Neuilly signed by Bulgaria and the victorious great powers. In the interwar period, Romania yet again embarked on the arduous task of assimilating Dobrogea, this time with a special emphasis on its newly annexed southern part.

## Notes

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1. The name of the province is spelled differently in various languages: la Dobroudja in French, the Dobrodgea or Dobruja in English, Dobrudzha in Bulgarian, and der Dobrudscha in German. In this paper I use the Romanian form of Dobrogea. The term originates either from the name of a local medieval leader, Dobrotiș, from a combination of the Slavic word *dobr* (good) and the Tartar word *Boudjak*, or according to M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, from the name given to the province by Arab geographers after the name of the Proto-Bulgars settled in the province (Dhu Bruġan). See Alexandrescu-Dersca, *L'Origine du nom de la Dobroudja* (Bucharest: Edition de L'Academie RPR, 1958).
2. Florence Farmborough, *Dobruja, Drab Land of Desolation and Promise* (London, 1924), 1652.
3. A comprehensive account of the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans is offered by Maria Todorova in "The Balkans, Realia: Qu'est-ce qu'il y a de hors-texte?" in *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 161–83. Todorova initiated a reconceptualization of the Ottoman legacy as the foundation of a new theoretical approach to the Balkans.
4. Emmanuel de Martonne, *La Dobroudja* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1918), 78; Eugène Pittard, *Roumanie, Valachie, Moldavie, Dobroudja* (Paris: Bossard, 1917), 278, 279; Mihai Eminescu, "Anexarea Dobrogei," in *Opere* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1989), 10:97; and Dumitru Șandru, *Mocanii in Dobrogea* (Bucharest: Institutul de Istorie Națională, 1946), 7.
5. In this respect, Dobrogea exhibits remarkable similarities with Cerdanya, the borderland between Spain and France. See Peter Sahllins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993).

6. See Alexandru Rădulescu and Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria românilor dintre Dunăre și Mare. Dobrogea* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1979), 284, translated in English as *A Concise History of Dobruja* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1984); revised as *Istoria Dobrogei* (Constanța: Editura Ex Ponto, 1998); Ion Bitoleanu and Gheoghe Dumitrașcu, "Românii din Dobrogea și manifestări ale conștiinței lor naționale la începutul epocii moderne" *Studii: Revista de Istorie* (Bucharest) 29, no. 6 (1967): 885; M. Stanciu and V. Ciorbea, "Aspecte ale problemei agrare în Dobrogea la sfârșitul sec. XIX și începutul sec. XX," *Anuarul Institutului "A.D. Xenopol"* (Iași) no. 17 (1980): 405.
7. See Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 1995).
8. For the central role played by historiography in the process of nation-state building in East-Central Europe, see R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Historian as a Political Force in Central Europe* (London: University of London, 1922).
9. I employ here the metaphor used by Fernand Braudel for describing the process of territorial and demographic expansion of Western Europe, in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
10. Following Michel Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London: Routledge, 1975), I use here an enlarged definition of the concept of "internal colonialism" in order to denote a unilateral pattern of authority and allocation of resources between metropolis and periphery that characterized not exclusively the organization of European colonies in Latin America, Africa, or Asia, but developments within European states as well. For a critical application of the concept of internal colonialism to the case of Dobrogea's integration into Romania, see Constantin Iordachi, "Internal Colonialism: The Expansion of Romania's Frontier in Northern Dobrogea," in Helga Schultz and Uwe Müller, eds., *National Borders and Economic Disintegration in Modern East Central Europe* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag Arno Spitz GmbH, 2002), 77–105.
11. From the vast scholarly production on citizenship in the last decade, I mention selectively works by: Michael Mann, "Ruling Class Strategies and Citizenship," *Sociology* 21 (1988): 339–54; Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Rogers W. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992); and Charles Tilly, ed., *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). See also collections of articles in Bryan S. Turner and Peter Hamilton, eds., *Citizenship: Critical Concepts* (London: Routledge, 1994), vols. 1–2; and in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorising Citizenship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
12. See typologies by Herman R. van Gunsteren, "Four Conceptions of Citizenship," in Bart van Steenbergem, ed., *The Condition of Citizenship* (London: Sage, 1994), 26–48; and Cf. Rian Voet, *Feminism and Citizenship* (London: Sage, 1998).
13. W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," in Max Black, ed., *The Importance of Language* (Paramus, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962), 121–46.



14. Tilly, "Citizenship, Identity and Social History," 8.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, 9.
17. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), vols. 1–2. For neo-Weberian approaches to ethnicity and immigration, see Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970); and Abner Cohen, "Variables in Ethnicity," in Charles F. Keyes, ed., *Ethnic Change* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 306–31.
18. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1:343.
19. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 5.
20. See Brubaker, "Citizenship as Social Closure," in *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 21–34.
21. Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 23.
22. See Reinhart Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 73–92; also Melvin Richter, "Reconstructing the History of Political Languages: Pocock, Skinner, and the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," *History and Theory* no. 1 (1990): 38–69. For a concrete historical application of Koselleck's theoretical view see his *Critique and Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), and especially *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution: allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1967).
23. Koselleck, "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," 84.
24. See Robert M. Hayden, "Constitutional Nationalism in the Former Yugoslav Republics," *Slavic Review* 51 (Winter 1992): 655.
25. Robert M. Hayden, "Imagined Communities and Real Victims: Self-determination and Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia," *American Ethnologist* 23 (1996): 785.
26. Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain*, "Introduction," 7.
27. *Ibid.*, 8.
28. See Todorova, *Imagining The Balkans*, 141.
29. *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 613.
30. *Ibid.*

31. See Abdolonyme Ubicini, "La Dobroudja et le Delta du Danube," *Revue géographique* (1879): 246; respectively, A. Lorenz, "Diefenbach," in *Völkerkunde Osteuropas* (Darmstadt, 1880) 1: 18, quoted in *Dobrogea, cincizeci de ani de viața românească* (Bucharest: Cultura națională, 1928), 224–25.
32. *Statistica din România* (Bucharest: 1879), 3. Statistics for Dobrogea are very contested, given their strong political connotations. Most often, they tell more about nationalist aims than about reality on the ground. While Romanian official statistics asserted a numerical dominance of native Romanians over Bulgarians in Dobrogea even prior to the colonization with ethnic Romanians, Bulgarian works have always estimated a Bulgarian majority population. A study of the abundant but competing data about Dobrogea reveals the strong connection between the development of statistics as a discipline and the process of nation-state building in the region. To this, for the period following the end of the 1877-1878 war, one should add the lack of a general census of population in Dobrogea and the intense emigration movements from the province. As a result, even official statistics provided conflicting data. Compare, for example, the above mentioned data with those supplied below by Leonida Colescu.
33. William Gladstone, "The Friends and Foes of Russia," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. S. (Jan. 1879): 168-192, quoted in Nicholas Constantinesco, *Romania on the European Stage, 1875–1880: The Quest for National Sovereignty and Independence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 150.
34. Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, 5 vols. Edited by Dan Simionescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1974-89); Vol. 4: *Oratorie II* (1864-1878). ed. Georgeta Penelea, Part I (1864-68) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977); Part II (1868-1870) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1980); Part III (1870-74) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1982). Part IV (1874-78) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1978); Vol. 5: *Oratorie III* (1878-91), ed. G. Penelea, pt. 1 (1878-80) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1984); Part II (1881-83) (Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 1986); Part III (1884-86) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1989). Vol. 4, *Oratorie II*, pt. 4 (1874-1878), 529.
35. "Memoriu în cheștiunea Basarabiei," February 25 /March 9, 1878, in Kogălniceanu, *Opere* vol. 4, *Oratorie II*, pt 4 (1874-1878), 578-9.
36. Leonida Colescu, *Analiza recensământul general al populației României dela 1899* (Bucharest: Institutul Central de Statistică, 1944), 9.
37. Interview with Prime Minister Brătianu, *Deutsche Zeitung* (Vienna), March 21/ April 2, 1878, reprinted in *Steaua României* (Bucharest), March 25, 1878. See PENCHIKOV Kos' o, Sheko Popov, and Petur Todorov, *Izvori za istoriata na Dobrudzha, 1878–1919* (Sofia: Izd-vo na Bulgarskata akademiia na naukite, 1992), 21.
38. The text of the treaty is reproduced in *Independenta Romaniei*, vol. 1, *Documente și presa vremii* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1977).
39. Ion C. Brătianu, *Acte și cuvântări* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1930–1941). Ed. Constantin C. Giurescu, et al., 8 vols. Vol. 1, pt. 2 (1869–76), ed. by George Marinescu and Constantin Grecescu; Vol 3. (1877–78), ed. by C.C. Giurescu; Vol. 4 (1878–1879), ed. by N.

Georgescu-Tistu; Vol. 5 (1879–80), ed. by G. Marinescu and C. Grecescu. Vol. 4 (1st May 1878–30 April 1879): 260.

40. Brătianu, “Moțiunea Senatului asupra Tratatului de la Berlin” in *Acte și cuvântări*, vol. 4: 103.

41. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 4, pt. 4, 322.

42. Nicolae D. Ionescu, Speech in the Chamber of Deputy, published in *Monitorul Oficial al României*, September 30/October 12, 1878, 5516.

43. See the editorial from *Steaua României*, June 23, 1878, a sample of the virulent pamphlets against the annexation of Dobrogea. For a comprehensive summary of the anti-annexation arguments, see Nicolae Locusteanu’s brochure, *Dobrogea* (Bucharest, 1878).

44. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 4, *Oratorie II* (1864–1878), pt. 4 (1874–1878), 621.

45. *Ibid.*, 621. For the link between the historical vision of Kogălniceanu and his activity as a foreign minister, see Barbara Jelavich, “Mihail Kogălniceanu: Historian as Foreign Minister, 1876–78,” in Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak, eds., *Historians as Nation-Builders: Central and Southeast Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 87–105; see also Catherine Durandin, “La Russie, La Roumanie et les Nouvelles Frontières dans les Balkans: Les Cas de la Dobroudgea,” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 20 no. 1 (Jan.–March 1979): 61–77.

46. I. C. Brătianu, “Moțiunea Senatului” in *Acte și cuvântări*, vol. 4: 103–104.

47. Frederick Kellogg, *The road to Romanian independence* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1995), 234.

48. Nicolae Iorga, in *Adunarea deputatilor. Dezbaterile. Sesiunea ordinar 1908-1909*, 15 November 1908, 39.

49. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 4, pt. 4, 639.

50. Ion C. Brătianu, *Acte și cuvântări*, vol. 4: 144.

51. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 4, pt. 4, p. 618–619.

52. *Discursurile lui Ion I. C. Brătianu* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1932), vol. 2 (December 1903–January 1909): 629–631, my emphasis. Ion. I. C. Brătianu (1864–1927) was the son of Ion C. Brătianu (1821–1891).

53. My usage of the term Orientalism stems from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), a discourse that appropriates the normative categories of progress and modernity for Western Europe and compares it unfavorably to the alleged backwardness and irrationality of the Orient. Recent works identify Orientalist patterns in the center-periphery narrative within individual political units. See Robert Hayden and Milica Bakič-Hayden, “Orientalist Variations on the Theme ‘Balkans’: Symbolic Geographies in Yugoslav Cultural Politics,” *Slavic Review*

51 no. 1 (1992): 1–15; and Milica Bakič-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: the Case of Fomer Yugoslavia” *Slavic Review* (1995) 54: 917–931. For the term “metonymic Orientalism” see Sorin Antohi, “Cioran și stigmatul românesc. Mecanisme identitare și definiții radicale ale etnicității” in *Civitas Imaginalis. Istorie și utopie în cultura română* (Bucharest: Editura Litera, 1994), 234–36, and 283–84.

54. See Alexandre A. C. Sturdza, *La Roumanie moderne comme facteur de la civilisation en Orient* (Paris: Librairie J. Rothschild, 1902).

55. Luca Ionescu, *Județul Tulcea. Dare de seamă prezentată consiliului județean* (Bucharest: Aurora, 1904), 362.

56. Petre P. Carp, “Propunerea de revizuire și chestiunea evreiască,” Speech in the Senate, February 1879, in *Discursuri Parlamentare* (Bucharest: Editura Grai și Suflet & Națională, 2000), 81.

57. In Romania, political factions developed late as permanent and fully structured territorial organizations. The National Liberal party was officially created in 1875, while the Conservative party was established in 1881. For a comprehensive discussion of the inability of the Romanian political system to generate modern political parties, see Cf. Paul E. Michelson, *Romanian Politics, 1859–1871: From Prince Cuza to Prince Carol* (Iași: Center for Romanian Studies, 1998).

58. Quoted in Eminescu, *Opere*, 10: 100–101.

59. *Ibid.*, 7. Eminescu collaborated with *Timpul* from November 1877 to June 1883 and was a redactor-in-chief from February 1880 to December 1881.

60. *Ibid.* “Chestia retrocedării,” 10: 45.

61. *Ibid.*, 10: 46.

62. *Ibid.*, 10: 98.

63. *Ibid.* “Din capul locului,” October 4, 1878, 10: 130.

64. For a comprehensive overview of the competing strategies for economic development in 1866–1918, see Keith Hitchins, “Models of Development,” in *Rumania, 1866–1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 55–89. Unlike other treatments of the period that concentrate exclusively on the passionate intellectual controversies over alternative philosophies of culture, Hitchins adds to them the intense economic debates between “agrarianists” and “industrialists” over free trade versus sheltered industrialization. (See 292–334).

65. For an analysis of the Romanian political life during Cuza’s rule (1859–1866), see Michelson, *Romanian Politics, 1859–1871*; and also Keith Hitchins, *The Romanians, 1774–1866* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

66. Philip Gabriel Eidelberg, “Kogălniceanu and the Moldovan Liberal Party,” in *The Great Romanian Peasant Revolt of 1907: Origins of a Modern Jaquerie* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 156–90.

Commenting on the underrepresentation of their economic interests in Romanian political life, Eidelberg named the Moldovan small landowners “the forgotten men of Romanian society.”

67. Brătianu, *Acte și cuvîntări*, vol. 4, 140.

68. Eidelberg, *The Great Romanian Peasant Revolt*, 155–90.

69. *Ibid.*, 157–58.

70. *Ibid.*, 158.

71. See Eidelberg, “Vasile Kogălniceanu, Spokesman for the Moldovan Small Landlords: Ideological Roots of the 1907 Revolt,” in *The Great Romanian Peasant Revolt*, 155–90.

72. Quoted in Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Dobrogea, 1895–1909. Drepturi politice fără libertăți* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socec & Cie, 1910), 34–35.

73. For a comprehensive overview of Romania’s citizenship legislation, see Constantin Iordachi, “The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship: The Emancipation of ‘Non-Citizens’ in Romania, 1866–1918,” *European Review of History* 8 no. 2 (August 2001): 157–86.

74. For an elaboration on this point, see Iordachi, “The Unyielding Boundaries of Citizenship.”

75. See Mihai Maxim, “The Romanian Principalities and the Ottoman Empire,” in Dinu C. Giurescu and Stephen Fischer-Galați, *Romania. A Historic Perspective* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 1998): 112; Mihai Maxim, *Tările Române și Înalta Poartă: cadrul juridic al relațiilor româno-otomane în evul mediu* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993); Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman law of war and peace: the Ottoman Empire and tribute payers* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2000); and Vlad Georgescu, *Political Ideas and the Enlightenment in the Romanian Principalities (1750–1831)* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1971), 142–43.

76. Nicolae Blaremburg, Discourse in the Chamber of Deputies, September 4, 1879, in *Moțiunea nerevizioniștilor în chestiunea israelită* (Bucharest: F. Göbl, 1879), 12.

77. *Ibid.* October 3, 1879, 124.

78. *Legea pentru Organizarea administrativ a Dobrogei*, March 2, 1880. A complementing regulation was issued on June 5, 1880. See Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 267–72, and 292–95.

79. April 11, 1877, was the date on which Romania broke its diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire.

80. Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 268.

81. André Bellessort, *La Roumanie contemporaine* (Paris: Perrin et Cie, 1905), 278.

82. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 5, pt. 1, 311.
83. *Ibid.*, 267-313, 269.
84. For authoritative works on Kogălniceanu's political activity and vision see Alexandru Zub, *Mihail Kogălniceanu, istoric* (Iași: Junimea, 1974); and *Mihail Kogălniceanu: Biobibliografie* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică Română, and Editura militară, 1971).
85. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 5, pt. 1, 268.
86. *Ibid.*, 270.
87. *Ibid.*, 269.
88. See Ioan N. Roman, *Studiu asupra proprietății rurale în Dobrogea* (Constanța: Ovidiu, 1907); also articles by Ioan Roman and Constantin Filipescu in *Dobrogea, cincizeci de ani*, 279-284, and 485-525; and Liviu Marcu, "Réformes agraires et régime de propriété en Dobroudja," *Révue des Etudes Sud-Est Européennes* 22 no. 3 (1984): 267-273.
89. See the Regulation issued on June 5, 1880, in Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol.2: 292-95.
90. "Regulament," arts. 1-2, in Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 467-8.
91. *Ibid.*, 452.
92. Art. 2 of the 1910 Interpretative Law, in Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 452.
93. Toma Ionescu, "Asupra Proprietății și Colonizării în Dobrogea" in *Dobrogea. Cincizeci de ani*, 274.
94. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea* (Bucharest: I. V. Socecu, 1904), 350.
95. *Ibid.*, 929.
96. Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 5, pt. 2, 96-97.
97. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 929.
98. See the popular poem "Ginta noastră" (Our Breed) by Vasile Alecsandri, an author celebrated at the time of the union between Moldova and Wallachia as a national poet. The poem claimed that Romanians belong to the Latin Commonwealth of France, Italy, and Spain.
99. J. J. Nacian, *La Dobroudja économique et sociale* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1886), 105-6; M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 929.
100. In Kogălniceanu, *Opere*, vol. 5, pt. 2, 108.

101. Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 538.
102. *Ibid.*, 453.
103. See art. 3 of the Interpretative Law, modifying article 26 of the 1882 law, in Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 2: 453–4.
104. Toma Ionescu, “Asupra Proprietății și Colonizării în Dobrogea” in *Dobrogea. Cincizeci de ani*, 274.
105. *Ibid.*, 276–77.
106. *Ibid.*
107. Nicolae Iorga, *Droits nationaux et politiques des Roumains dans la Dobroudja* (Bucharest, 1918), 88–9.
108. Ion Ionescu de la Brad, in Victor Slăvescu, *Correspondența dintre Ion Ionescu de la Brad și Ion Ghica, 1848–1874* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1943), 127.
109. Toma Ionescu, “Asupra Proprietății și Colonizării,” 266–67.
110. Ion Ionescu de la Brad, in Slăvescu, *Correspondența*, 134; and Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 81
111. Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 12.
112. Tudor Mateescu, “Contributions to the History of the Local Administration of the Romanians of the Dobrogea during Ottoman rule,” *Anuarul Institutului “A. D. Xenopol”* (Iași) 17 (1980): 609–14.
113. The Russian-Ottoman Convention of Adrianopoles (1829) abolished the Ottoman monopoly over the trade of the Principalities, allowing Romanians to export directly to the West.
114. Daniel Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society: The Creation of a Balkan Colony* (New York: Academic Press, 1976), 134.
115. *Ibid.*, 137.
116. Quoted in Ciorbea and Stanciu, “Aspecte ale problemei agrare,” 414.
117. Chirot, *Social Change in a Peripheral Society*, p. 136.
118. See the inquiry of Vasile Maniu in Parliament, and Kogălniceanu’s answer, in Kogălniceanu *Opere*, vol. 5, pt. 1, 328-9.
119. Ciorbea and Stanciu, *Aspecte ale problemei agrare*, p. 414.

120. See Teodor Mateescu, *Păstoritul mocanilor în teritoriul dintre Dunăre și Mare* (Bucharest, Arhivele Statului, 1986), 71; Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 12–13; and Constantinescu-Mircești, *Păstoritul transhumant și implicația lui în Transilvania și în Țara Românească în secolele XVIII-XLX* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1976), 12, 98–100, and 103.
121. The term *mocan* denotes a shepherd and derives from the word *moaca* which means “a shepherd’s stick.” Originally, *mocani* (pl.) designated only those shepherds from the Transylvanian border districts of *Țara Bîrsei* and *Marginimea Sibiului*. I extend this generic label to all Transylvanian shepherds immigrating in Dobrogea. Other authors used the term only for sheep-owners from Southern Transylvania, excluding even their hired laborers. See Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 13, and Mateescu, *Păstoritul mocanilor*, 5–6.
122. Mateescu, *Păstoritul mocanilor*, 17–63.
123. *Ibid.*, 84, and 117.
124. *Ibid.*, 82–3.
125. Constantinescu-Mircești, *Păstoritul transhumant*, 25–28;
126. Slăvescu, *Corespondența*, 112–3.
127. *Ibid.* *Haraci* and *beilic* were the tax paid by Christian subjects to the Ottoman state. *Patenta* was the taxes paid by *sudiți*.
128. *Ibid.*, 67–68.
129. Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 45; Mateescu, *Păstoritul mocanilor*, 101. Ioan Georgescu recounts the case of Nicolae Tîrcă, the assistant of the Austrian vice-counsellor in Hirșova, and his group of *mocani*, who all renounced their Austrian citizenship for the Ottoman one. See Georgescu, “Românii transilvăneni în Dobrogea” in *Transilvania, Banatul, Crișana și Maramureșul, 1878–1928* (Bucharest: Editura Națională, 1929), vol. 1: 621.
130. Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 110–112; and Ioan N. Roman, “Obstacolul” in *Farul* (4 April 1904) 1 no. 21, p. 1.
131. Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 110–112.
132. See Georgescu, “Românii transilvăneni,” 613, 615.
133. Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 43.
134. See statistics in N. T. Negulescu, *Expunerea situației Județului Constanța pe anii 1916, 1922/3*.
135. Ioan Georgescu provided an extensive list of Dobrogean merchants, in *Analele Dobrogei* (1929) 10: 174.



136. Șandru, *Mocani în Dobrogea*, 79.
137. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 623; for 1912, Sabin Manuilă, "La population du Dobroudja," in *La Dobroudja Roumaine* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1938), 456.
138. Leonida Colescu, *Recensământul general al populațiunii României*, quoted in Ioan N. Roman, *Dobrogea și drepturile politice ale locuitorilor ei* (Constanța: Ovidiu, 1905), 123.
139. Ioan N. Roman "La population de la Dobrogea" *La Dobrogea Roumaine* (Bucharest, 1919), 92.
140. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 654.
141. Percentages derived from the figures provided for 1940 by Șandru, *Mocanii în Dobrogea*, 108.
142. Alexandru Arbore witnessed that, in 1940, Dobrogeans still named each-other as a function of their territorial origin. See "Conversații cu țăranii din Dobrogea," *Analele Dobrogei* 4 (1923): 324–28.
143. Sub-title coined by Gyorgy Lederer, "Islam in Romania," *Central Asian Survey* 15 no. 3–4 (1996): 349–368.
144. M. Ulkusal, *Dobruca ve Türkler* (Ankara: Turk Kulturu Arastirma Enstitusu, 1966), quoted in Mehmet Ali Ekrem, *Din Istoria Turcilor Dobrogeni* (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1994), 95.
145. Figures quoted in Ciorbea and Stanciu, "Aspecte ale problemei agrare," 415.
146. Commenting on the economic situation of Bulgarians in Northern Dobrogea, the Bulgarian historian Zheko Popov acknowledged that "the Bulgarians increased the lands owned by them and some of them even joined in industrial, crafts, and commercial activities." Nevertheless, given the fact that overall the "economic preponderance of Bulgarians in the province" decreased in favor of ethnic Romanians, Popov stated that Romanian rule "has [had] a retarding effect on the economic entrepreneurship of the Bulgarians in North Dobrudza." See Popov, *Bulgarite v Severna Dobrudzha: 1878–1913* (Sofia: Izdatelska Kushta "Ivan Vazov," 1991), 501.
147. The most notable success of this campaign occurred in April 1870, when the large Romanian Orthodox community of Silistra recognized the authority of the Exarchate. However, in the long run, the Bulgarian campaign enjoyed limited success. At the end of Ottoman rule there were 22,753 Dobrogean Romanians under the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch, and only 1,414 under the Bulgarian Exarchate. See Teodor Mateescu, "Les Diocèses Orthodoxes de la Dobroudja sous la domination ottomane," *Balkan Studies* (Athens) 13 no. 2 (1972): 299.
148. On the emergence of a national educational system in Romania in the period 1831–1878, see Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, *Între "bunul creștin" și bravul român. Rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești (1831–1878)* (Iași: Editura A '92, 1999).

149. Cf. Murgescu, *Între "bunul creștin" și bravul român*.
150. See Ioan Georgescu, "Invățământul public în Dobrogea," and N. Negulescu, "Administrația în Dobrogea Veche," in *Dobrogea. Cincizeci de ani de viață românească*, 641–98, and 719–34.
151. Ioan Georgescu, "Invățământul public în Dobrogea," 661.
152. For a comprehensive account of Haret's educational reforms, see Emil Băldescu, *Spiru Haret în știință, filosofie, pedagogie, învățământ* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică, 1972); and Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, 41–47.
153. See *Statistica știutorilor de carte din România, după recensământul din 19 decembrie 1912* (Bucharest: Albert Baer, 1915), xviii.
154. *Ibid.*, 39.
155. *Ibid.*, xviii.
156. *Ibid.*, xx.
157. *Ibid.*, xviii.
158. See *Memoriul profesorilor gimnaziului clasic din Constanța asupra reformei Legii învățământului superior proiectat de Spiru Haret, ministrul cultelor și instrucțiunii publice* (Constanța, 1897).
159. See Petresco-Comnène, "La Dobrogea et la vie économique de la Roumanie," in *La Dobrogea* (Paris: Payot, 1918), 186. Based on broad economic data, Petresco-Comnène puts forward a strong argument in favor of Dobrogea's economic role within Romania.
160. See Petre S. Aurelian, *Opere economice* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1967), 199; "Înființarea unui serviciu național de navigație," *Economia națională* 11 no. 49 (14 December 1887): 1153–1157.
161. Brătianu, *Acte și cuvântări* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1939), 7: 276.
162. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 540.
163. *Ibid.*
164. Rădulescu and Bitoleanu, *Istoria românilor*, 295; see also Valentin Ciorbea, "Preocupări privind modernizarea și transformarea portului Constanța în port național" *Revista Istorică* (Bucharest) 1 no. 11–12 (1990): 1005–13.
165. Petresco-Comnène, *La Dobrogea*, 137.
166. Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Dobrogea, 1895–1909*, 105.

167. See "Constanța: Influența arhitecturii franceze în prima etapă de dezvoltare a orașului modern (1860–1916)" in Stoica Lascu, ed., *Colegiul Pedagogic "Constantin Brătescu." Valori ale civilizației românești în Dobrogea* (Constanța: Colegiul Pedagogic "Constantin Brătescu," 1993), 345–56.
168. N. Negulescu, "Administrația în Dobrogea," in *Dobrogea, cincizeci de ani*, 732.
169. Georgescu "Invățământul Public în Dobrogea," in *Dobrogea, cincizeci de ani*, 651.
170. Vasile Sassu, in *Adunarea Deputaților, Dezbaterile*, 1908–1909, 1540–41.
171. Arhivele Statului București, Fond Președenția Consiliului de Miniștri, File 28/1894, 174, and 174 verso.
172. Arhivele Statului București, Fond Președenția Consiliului de Miniștri, File 28/1894, 34.
173. Grigorescu, *Cestiuni dobrogene, 1891–1904*. 2 vols. (Constanța: Tipografia Nicolaescu, 1910), vol. 1: 78.
174. Grigorescu, *Cestiuni dobrogene*, vol. 1, p. 123.
175. Report by Lascar Catargiu, approved in the meeting of the Council of Ministers, April 12, 1894, 173–175.
176. Scarlat Vârnăv, *Situația generală a județului Constanța la începutul anului 1903* (Constanța: Tipografia Aurora, 1904), 3.
177. Vârnăv, *Situația generală a județului Constanța*, 3.
178. *Ibid.*, 22.
179. M. D. Ionescu, *Dobrogea în pragul*, 346.
180. Grigorescu, "Nu ne trebuiesc nemți în Dobrogea," in *Cestiuni Dobrogene*, vol. 1: 82.
181. Grigorescu, *Cestiuni Dobrogene*, vol. 1: 4.
182. Grigorescu, "Toleranța culpabilă," in *Cestiuni Dobrogene*, vol. 1: 152–53.
183. Stoica Lascu, "Ioan N. Roman (1866–1931)," in *Comunicări de Istorie a Dobrogei* (Constanța: Muzeul de istorie, 1980), 159–86.
184. Roman, *Dobrogea și drepturile*, 88-9.
185. *Ibid.*, 81.

186. Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Dobrogea, 1895–1909*, 210–11.
187. Roman, *Dobrogea și drepturile*, 121.
188. Constantin D. Benderli, *Un Dobrogean de baștină despre Dobrogea* (Bucharest: Tipografia Lăzăreanu, 1903).
189. Benderli, *Un Dobrogean de baștină*, 20–21
190. *Ibid.*, 19.
191. *Ibid.*, 21.
192. See Zheko Popov, “La situation et les luttes des Bulgares en Dobroudja du Nord (1878–1912),” *Bulgarian Historical Review* (Sophia) 1 no. 19 (1991): 20–21.
193. Christian Racovsky, “Chestia Dobrogei. Părerea unui Dobrogean,” in *Farul* (November 9, 1903) 1 no. 4: 2.
194. Christian Racovsky was born in Cotel, Bulgaria. In 1880, his family settled in Dobrogea. Following his non-conformist political activism in the province, Romanian authorities contested his Romanian citizenship and expelled him from Dobrogea in 1907, where he returned only in 1912.
195. Roman, *Dobrogea și drepturile*, 157.
196. Popov, “La situation,” 21; Rădulescu, Bitoleanu, *Istoria românilor*, 298; see also *Farul* 1 (November 1903) no. 4 and 5.
197. On the distinction between “resistant” regional discourses, based on “a claim to nationhood” and “accommodating” regional discourses, based on “variations on a common national theme,” see Celia Applegate, “A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,” *American Historical Review* 104 no. 4 (October 1999): 1179.
198. Roman, *Dobrogea și drepturile*, 157.
199. See Eidelberg, *The Great Romanian Peasant Revolt*, 155–90.
200. See Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Chestiunea Dobrogei înaintea Parlamentului. Cuvînt rostit în Adunarea Deputaților, ședințe din 29 ianuarie 1899* (Bucharest: Socec, 1899); *Drepturile Dobrogeenilor* (Bucharest: Tipografia Munca, 1906); and *Dobrogea, 1895–1909*.
201. “Chestia Dobrogei,” in *Epoca* (Bucharest) 14 no. 260 (November 6, 1903).
202. *Adunarea deputaților. Dezbaterile. Sesiunea ordinară 1908–1909*, November 15, 1908; see also Carol I, *Cuvîntări și scrisori, 1887-1909* (Bucharest: Carol Göbl, 1909), vol. 3: 617.

203. For comprehensive treatments of Iorga's cultural nationalism, see Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga. A Biography* (Iași, The Center for Romanian Studies, 1998); and William Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought of Nicolae Iorga* (Boulder Colo.: East European Quarterly, 1973)
204. *Dezbaterile Adunării deputatilor. Senat*, December 5, 1908, 37.
205. Nicolae Iorga, *România, cum era pînă la 1918* (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1972), 2. vols., vol. 2: 330.
206. Iorga on December 11, 1908 in *Adunarea Deputaților. Dezbaterile, 1908–1909*, 39–40.
207. Iorga, *Adunarea Deputaților. Dezbaterile, 1908–1909*, 105–6.
208. See Constantin Hamangiu, *Codul General al României* (Bucharest: Leon Alcalay, 1910), Vol. 5 (1908–1909), 392.
209. Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Dobrogea, 1895-1909*, 123.
210. Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 6 (1909–1910): 357. Compared to the previous law, the only modification was the removal of the word “rural” from article 3, point B (see above).
211. See Hamangiu, *Codul General*, vol. 4 (1910–1912): 936–38.
212. Georgescu, “Românii transilvăneni,” 614.
213. *Statistica știutorilor de carte din România, LV*; for the total population of Dobrogea, see Roman “La population de la Dobrogea,” 92.
214. *Statistica știutorilor de carte din România, LV*.
215. *Ibid.*
216. Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Dobrogea, 1895–1909*, 307.
217. Stoica Lascu, “Crearea și activitatea organizațiilor județene Constanța ale partidelor politice (1908–1916),” in *Comunicări de istorie a Dobrogei*, vol. 2: 162.
218. Lascu, “Crearea și activitatea organizațiilor județene Constanța,” 162.
219. Constantin N. Sarry, *Regele Carol I, Dobrogea și Dobrogenii* (Constanța: Biblioteca Dobrogei June, 1915), 7.
220. Luca Ionescu, *Județul Tulcea. Dare de seamă*, 4.

221. Cf. Verdery, "Ethnicity, Nationalism and State-making," in Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers (eds), *The Anthropology of Ethnicity. Beyond "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis 1994).
222. Joseph S. Roucek, *Contemporary Roumania and Its Problems* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 187.
223. See Cf. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, mainly "Introduction," 1–28.
224. Cf. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*.
225. See Petre Marcu-Balș, "Autohtonia ordinii juridice (Concepția raționalistă și concepția istorică a codificațiilor)," *Gîndirea* no. 6–7 (1928), republished in Iordan Chimet, ed., *Dreptul la memorie* (Cluj: Dacia, 1992), vol. 3: 142–3.
226. The success of Northern Dobrogea's pre-World War I assimilation to Romania becomes evident when compared to other historical provinces of Greater Romania, such as Bessarabia. As Charles King's analysis pointed out, Bessarabia exhibits the case of a "failed nationalism" that still balances between the Romanian and the Moldovan rival definitions of national identity. See Cf. King, *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).
227. Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania*, "Student Nationalism," 211–96.
228. Manuilă, "La population," 188.