

Abstract

The paper entitled “The Romanian education south of the Danube during the 19th century” aims to approach synthetically the different aspects linked to the evolution of the educational system in the province of Dobrogea (meaning the region right of the Danube all the way to the Black Sea, which also includes the region named “Cadrilater” or the southern Dobrogea) taking into consideration the historical context and the way in which the political regime, the ethnic structure and the social and cultural life of the inhabitants created the proper conditions for the birth, for the development and for the evolution of a Romanian educational system (also for the nationalities and the ethnic communities living, in different proportions, in this space).

The importance of this subject is not only a regional and a local one, but also national, considering that an articulated paper analyzing several aspects of the history of the education in Dobrogea, especially for the period in which the region was under the Ottoman rule, has not been written yet. The reason is a documentary one, as the data about Romanian schools before 1878 in this region, is missing. However, some information can be gathered from the papers issued after the union with Romania when the Romanian educational system in Dobrogea began to develop, when schools were built in cities and in villages and when teachers were brought in from all the Romanian territories. There are also small monographies dedicated to life in Dobrogea, as is that of Apostol Culea, which offers important details about the history of the educational system in Dobrogea, as well as the two monographic studies on the same subject, belonging to Vasile Helgiu (both authors were teachers, the latter was also an educational auditor - author’s note).

We must take into consideration the national impact of such an initiative which organically completes the studies dedicated to the Romanian education, bringing to the attention of the researchers and of the public the image of the education in Dobrogea during the 19th century.

The first chapter of the study consists of a synthetic approach of various themes linked to the evolution of the Romanian education in Dobrogea during the first half of the 19th century. As for the history of the Romanian education in Dobrogea under the Ottoman rule, which had a policy of relative tolerance towards other religions, policy that expressed itself by a lack of intervention rather than by a specific forbidding or by a strict regulation of some

specific situations, it is linked to the evolution of the Romanian population which, being majoritarian (but sometimes not enough and with a weaker social, political and cultural structure) struggled to keep its national character. The Romanians south of the Danube made efforts to survive and were in a constant need of an “infusion” of Romanian literature and of messengers of Romanian cultural spirit from north of the Danube, a territory often generic called “Motherland”, evidence of a strong consciousness of unity among the Romanian population.

The Romanian population in Dobrogea, even during the Turkish occupation and especially after the year 1878 and what it represented, behaved as an important component of the Romanian culture and civilization. This feeling of unity was noticed by the colonel Marin Ionescu-Dobrogianu, author of the monumental study “Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea”, who, like all the Romanian scholars and like those travelling through Dobrogea, especially during the 19th century, showed the historic and linguistic unity of the Romanians from Dobrogea with those from the Romanian Old Kingdom and from Transylvania¹. In 1905, when this book saw the light of the print, Dobrogea had already been part of Romania for less than three decades, but had achieved an important progress, both economical as well as cultural, and had become an integrated part of Romania.

All through the history of the Romanian people there is a noticeable strong connection between the educational system and the Church. Ever since the first days of Christianity on Romanian territory, children were taught in churches and monasteries, using church books as primary text books. This was the case for Dobrogea also, as for the 18th century and the first half of the next one, there were records of Romanian language education systems.

It can be easily noticed that not only most of the teachers came from North of the Danube, but also, they were priests. They could not prepare to become teachers in Dobrogea, as there were no schools in Dobrogea with a higher level than elementary, especially pedagogical schools that could prepare teachers. This was not about an interdiction from the Ottoman authorities that regulated only the building of churches and monasteries, but more of a financial and organizational problem.

¹ Luminița Stelian, *Marin Ionescu-Dobrogianu (1866-1938), personalitate plurivalentă a dobrogenisticii românești*, Editura Muntenia, Constanța, 2014, p. 217

This situation was discussed especially in monographic studies about Dobrogea starting with 1878, among the most important being those by Marin Ionescu-Dobrogianu, “Dobrogea în pragul veacului al XX-lea” și “Tomis-Constanța” as well as the one published in 1928, on the anniversary of 50 years since Dobrogea was reunited with Romania, entitled “Dobrogea: Cinzeci de ani de viață românească” (This was published as a supplement of the magazine „Analele Dobrogei” and in almost 800 pages gathered great valuable studies on the most important fields of the social, political and cultural life in Dobrogea. Ioan Georgescu, school auditor of the 10th region Constantza, wrote about the evolution of the educational system).

Romanian schools in Dobrogea during the Ottoman rule are mentioned briefly in geographical monographies as well as in works dedicated to education, written by teachers such as Apostol D. Culea, Vasile Helgiu and others.

A series of scientific and publicistic studies, discussing the problem of the organizing of the educational system in Dobrogea was published starting from 1918 not only in Dobrogea, but also in Bucharest, studies written by famous personalities of the Romanian culture such as Nicolae Iorga, Ioan N. Roman, Petru Vulcan, Stan Greavu-Dunăre, Ioan Georgescu, Teodor Mateescu and others.

Important information on the situation of schools in the Romanian settlements from Dobrogea can be found also in the reports of the prefect offices from Constantza and Tulcea that, even though they were elaborated between the 19th and the 20th centuries, also contain brief mentions to the situation prior to the year of 1877.

The lack of documentation or the fact that it was rather scarce did not represent an obstacle for the approach that was the reenactment of some events linked to the evolution of the education in Dobrogea before the year of 1878, education that was not organized nor supported by the government, not by the Ottoman one, for sure, but that evolved through the implication of the Romanian population from Dobrogea, but also of that across the Danube, who always kept in touch with their Romanian brothers.

As a proof of the antiquity of the education in Dobrogea, one can mention that, on one of the sides of a sarcophagus discovered in Mangalia (the ancient Dorian settlement of Callatis), there is the representation, in basso-relievo, of a teacher teaching his student a lesson. Although there are not many facts about the educational system of the Getic-Dacian people, one can only assume that the children of the nobility were sent to school in the Greek

cities, because there were tight relationships between those and the indigenous population, going beyond the level of some simple economical exchanges².

One can only suppose that there were not any schools during the late Roman age and the Roman Byzantine age, especially in the proximity of the worship places, but both the Western and the Eastern Middle Age show us that the literacy was the privilege of those elected, the members of the clergy and the government employees. Part of the Byzantine Empire, a border province with a defensive role, Thema Paristrion it is very likely to have had schools in the proximity of the consecrated religious centers.

After several centuries of Ottoman rule (Dobrogea being surrendered to the High Porte by Mircea cel Bătrân at the end of his ruling, sometime between 1416 and 1418), following the Russo-Turkish war between 1877-1878, Dobrogea is reunited with Romania which is forced to give up to Russia (as war reparations rather than a territorial exchange imposed by international treaties) the three counties from Southern Basarabia (Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail). Still in this period, Romania is granted national independence, an important stage in the process of creating the national united Romanian state, process completed in 1918, on the 1st of December.

Petru Vulcan, a well-known author from Dobrogea, famous for his cultural activities and his patriotic and national thinking, said about the Romanians from Dobrogea that they maintained their national character during the entire Ottoman rule. Petru Vulcan notices a growth of the Romanian population during the 19th century, by internal source (a natural growth of the population), but also by the settlement of small or large groups of population arrived from West of the Danube: “Christians are coming back to live on the hills and by the sea, all around the Razim lake and in the Danube Delta”. Among these people, the author mentions “the shepherds from Ardeal” that arrived in Dobrogea for trading reasons³.

The foreign travelers that visited this region talk about a vast geographical space, described by the lack of vegetation, by a monotonous landscape and by the shortage of water. The settlements are small, Constantza “Kustendje is just a fishing village”, Balchik is a port

² Maria Bărbulescu, *Viața rurală în Dobrogea română (sec I – III p. Chr.)*, Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie Constanța, Constanța, 2001, p. 31.

³ Petru Vulcan, Mihai Mădărescu, *Istoricul orașului Constanța*, Tipografia „Aurora” Ilie M. Grigoriu, Constanța, 1911, p. 39.

slightly bigger, Tulcea is the largest city of this region inhabited by numerous ethnic populations, of different religions and speaking different languages⁴.

During the Ottoman rule, the Romanians from Dobrogea considered the school and the church the institutions responsible for keeping the community united and for serving the interests of the entire nation. That is why the church and the school played the most important role in spreading the Romanian culture, in the resistance and the affirmation of the Romanian culture and in the maintaining of the national consciousness in Dobrogea⁵. The cultural life of the Romanians from Dobrogea followed the evolution of that of the Romanians living north of the Danube, being similar but not identical, with differences in the folkloristic culture, in the traditions and the clothes, with small differences set by the socio-political conditions.

This ancient Romanian territory, cradle of culture and civilization many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, gave birth to the Romanian people, as a synthesis of the eastern Roman population and the ancient Thracian tribes of the Getic-Dacian. The Mother-Church, especially in Dobrogea, remained the living witness of the uninterrupted Christian belief and apostolic tradition. The Church and the clergy “remain the real keepers of the words of Jesus Christ’s Gospel, words that were first spoken in the first days of the Eastern Europe, right in the first century of Christianity”⁶.

The place where the Romanian Christianity began, inhabited by Romanians ever since the dawn of the Christian era, Scythia Minor, as this province the sea is mentioned over the centuries of the late Roman period and the Byzantine era, it was a “pillar” of the Christian faith and culture, a territory in which the Diocese of Tomis played a very important role⁷. Over the centuries, Dobrogea was the living place of some leaders of the Church that took education to a level similar to that of the Byzantium or even to that of the centers of western Christianity, the Christian way of life kept on existing uninterrupted, overcame the difficulties of the everyday life, survived and became even stronger after the barbarian

⁴ Romulus Seișanu, *Dobrogea, Gurile Dunării și Insula Șerpilor. Studiu monografic. Studii și documente*, Editura ziarului „Universul”, București, 1928, p. 178

⁵ Robert Stănciugel, Liliana Monica Bălașa, *Dobrogea în secolele VII-XIX. Evoluție istorică*, Editura D. C. Promotions, București, 2005, p. 214.

⁶ Lucian Florea, Arhiepiscop al Tomisului, *Aspecte din viața și cultura bisericăescă dobrogeană*, în Stoica Lascu (coord.), Constantin Vitanos (coord.), *Colegiul Pedagogic „Constantin Brătescu”. Valori ale civilizației românești în Dobrogea*, s. n., Constanța, 1993, p. 187.

⁷ Nechita Runcan, *Rolul mitropoliei Tomisului în apărarea credinței ortodoxe*, în Nechita Runcan, *Studii de teologie istorică și patristică*, vol. III, Editura Europolis, Constanța, 2008, pp. 291-305.

invasions, just like a “steady ship” in the middle of the heaviest storms. Through its varied activity “The Diocese of Tomis stands as one of the most important moments, not only from the history of the ancient Romanian Christianity, but also from the history of our ancestral culture”⁸.

The connections of the Metropolitan Church of Tomis with the Christians from all the territories inhabited by Romanians are very well documented and point out its precise role in maintaining the backbone of the Christian character of the Romanian people. The people of Dobrogea, no matter the era or the rule they were under, have always fought to keep their national identity. The Romanian national identity of the inhabitants from this province by the sea remained the same over the centuries and resisted to the foreign invaders. The school and the church, both acting through their devoted members, often priests and teachers, made possible the re-birth of Dobrogea after the year of 1878.

According to Nechita Runcan’s idea, “each christian is able to know and learn the secrets of suffering, the secrets of his redemption”⁹, one can understand why every person must learn, why every person needs to be familiarized since childhood with the existence of God. This is the way how it can be explained not only the need of education starting with the youngest age, but also the importance of the connection between learning and getting to know Christ. Christ Himself best expressed this idea through his famous saying: “Let the children come to me!”. He calls on the children to learn because the purpose of the School and of the Church is that of bringing the children and the young close to Christ, to the source of His teachings¹⁰.

In order to achieve the purpose of making the children get to know our Savior Jesus Christ, schools were founded next to churches, with priests being the first teachers, priests that were the first people to spread the Romanian spirit on every region inhabited by Romanians, so in Dobrogea as well. One can only agree with the opinion expressed by the author cited above, about the strong connection between the two institutions of moral and spiritual education, with the Family completing this essential trio in the evolution of the Romanian civilization¹¹. The priests and the teachers, together with the parents, are important

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 305.

⁹ Nechita Runcan, *Cuvinte de învățătură creștină*, Editura Europolis, Constanța, 1996, p. 13.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

educational elements, and the success of the educational process is as big as the first two institutions take advantage of the support of the state¹².

Lucian, Archbishop of Tomis, praised the important role of the Church in developing the Romanian culture, saying that the Church is responsible for many “cultural gifts”. The church is associated with the light of the knowledge and the way of the redemption. The members of the clergy, often being devoted to culture, also, are responsible for the first written works and “established the first schools using the first church books and gospels, founding the first printing presses where the first learning books in Romanian saw the light of the day”¹³

The Romanian population from Dobrogea were very aware, long before 1878, that the church and the school represented the major institutions around which the Romanian community must stay united and by learning the language and the culture, the people of Dobrogea “could serve the best interest of the region as well as of the whole country”¹⁴. That is why the Romanian school in Dobrogea, together with the church, represented the most important instruments of spreading the Romanian culture and keeping the national consciousness alive all around Dobrogea¹⁵.

The first schools were established, during the first days of Romanian education, around churches with cantors, priests and monks being the first teachers. C. Teodorescu, who wrote a study dedicated to the Romanian educational system under the Ottoman rule, published in 1897, says that the fact that Chiriță Domuscin Drăstorean, from Silistra, was a cantor at the Radu-Vodă monastery from Bucharest, this being a proof of how the Romanian school in Dobrogea began to exist. It is possible that the cantor studied in schools south of the Danube¹⁶.

To resume the discussion about the schools, local historians agree unanimously that the first documented school from Dobrogea is that of Ioan the cantor from Cernavoda. On March the 5th, 1766, Ioan the cantor was hired by Sterie as “biv vel cămăraș la ocne” (a person with a certain noble rank, that was in charge of the food supplies at a salt mine-

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 15.

¹³ Lucian Florea, Arhiepiscop al Tomisului, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹⁴ Filofteia Rotariu, *Rolul școlii normale și al corpului învățătoresc dobrogean în sistemul instrucției școlare din provincia transdanubiană*, în Stoica Lascu (coord.), Constantin Vitanos (coord.), *Colegiul Pedagogic „Constantin Brătescu”*. *Valori ale civilizației românești în Dobrogea*, s. n., Constanța, 1993, pp. 41-42.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 43.

¹⁶ Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria Dobrogei*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 1998, p. 276.

author's note) to teach a little boy from Brasov, the son of Mihai Croitoru. In the autumn of the same year, the school still functioned under the management of the same teacher. Although there are not any records about this school, it is a known fact that Ioan the cantor taught the little boy from Brasov until 1772¹⁷. Also in Cernavoda, around the year 1770, prayer books were translated from Greek into Romanian, a clear evidence that the churchgoers were Romanians¹⁸.

The second oldest school is the school from Turtucaia. The records show that, since 1774, several cantors taught in this school: Rusu Șaru, Mihai the cantor from Oltenia and Gheorghe the cantor from Oltenia¹⁹.

Together with the school from Turtucaia, the school from Silistra represents, prior to the year 1877, a very appreciated cultural center, that many important scholars from Dobrogea wrote about. And not only them, but also those studying the history of culture and education: Ioan N. Roman, Vasile Helgiu, Apostol D. Culea, Nicolae Cartojan, S. Carp and others. Their works, that appeared not by chance between the two World Wars²⁰, showed the importance of the schools from the Cadrilater and the rich cultural life of the Romanians from this region.

This school is mentioned in the records even from the middle of the 19th century when the Romanian school from Silistra was already functioning. Thus, a notebook is being kept, belonging to the cantor Petrică Mihail. On one of the pages the cantor wrote "I was hired to this school to teach the children to read and write in Romanian"²¹. The cantor also kept a record of the amounts of money received for his work, amounts that came from various people, that were most likely merchants people with money such as: Kir Petrache (who gave the cantor several times various amounts, 400 lei, 150 lei and again 50 lei in 1848 when the

¹⁷ Dumitru Șopu, *Școli românești în Dobrogea până la 1878*, în Virgil Coman (coord.), *Dobrogea – model de conviețuire multietnică și multiculturală*, Editura Muntenia, Constanța, 2008, p. 96.

¹⁸ Robert Stănciugel, Liliana Monica Bălașa, *Dobrogea în secolele VII-XIX. Evoluție istorică*, Editura D. C. Promotions, București, 2005, p. 220.

¹⁹ Nistor Bardu, *Învățământul în Dobrogea*, vol. I, mss., s. a., p. 6.

²⁰ În epoca interbelică, Cadrilaterul a fost intens studiat decătre istorici și cărturari care au dat opere de valoare menite a arăta că pământul zonei sudice a Dobrogei este românesc prin istorie, populație și cultură. Evenimentele istorice au întors situația, astfel că acest străvechi pământ românesc a fost pierdut definitiv în vâltoarea celei mai mari conflagrații mondiale. Fiind și astăzi un subiect sensibil, vom aborda problemele legate de Cadrilater numai prin prisma temei propuse, aceea a aprofundării istoriei învățământului dobrogean în epoca modernă.

²¹ Ioan. N. Roman, *Pagini din istoria culturii românești în Dobrogea înainte de 1877*, Institutul de Arte Grafice „Victoria”, Constanța, 1920, p. 11; Articolul este reluat în „Despre Dobrogea și Dobrogeni”, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2008, pp. 16-57.

cantor said that “I went to Bucharest”), Dimo, Stoian Fâncițiu and others²². An interesting observation, deriving from the ethnic structure of this province from south of the Danube, states that, at least judging from how their names sound, the three benefactors of the Romanian school from Silistra are Romanians, all them interested in strengthening the Romanian education in Silistra.

In the same document, the Romanian cantor states that “2000 lei I bargained to serve in school and in church 60 lei a month and the others I should receive it from the school”²³. Three years later, when Ion Ionescu de la Brad passed through Silistra, he found the cantor mentioned above (in Ioan N. Roman’s opinion, the same Bulgarian canton mentioned by the agronomist in the article from 1855 cited above) teaching in a school building, built with the help of the community of Silistra. We learn from the journal kept by Petrică the cantor that he had become a teacher by necessity to support his numerous family (he had seven children). He already had store rented/let and a vineyard that supplied him with a certain income, but that proved not enough²⁴.

The best students from Silistra were sent to secondary schools in Romania (to Bucharest, in 1870, to the Pedagogical School, to the Macedonian-Romanian Institute and to the “Sf. Sava” College)²⁵. The graduates from the Pedagogical School were to return south of the Danube and inaugurate schools there.

Analyzing the data on the schools from Dobrogea presented above, as well as in the case of the school from Zebil (Tulcea county), we learn that the Romanian students and those from the other nationalities were learning in the Romanian schools to read and write, about the Psalms, some mathematics and the canticles. The main problem, at that time, was the lack of textbooks because there were no printing presses in Dobrogea to multiply them, not to mention that there were no book stores to buy the textbooks from (even if it had been possible to buy them from across the Danube). Thus, the cantors used the church books to teach the students to read and write.

The second chapter of this study is dedicated to the evolution of the educational system in Dobrogea during the second half of the 19th century, with emphasis on

²² *Ibidem*, p. 12.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

²⁵ Tudor Mateescu, *Permanența și continuitatea românilor în Dobrogea*, Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului, București, 1979, p. 99.

the educational centers from Silistra, Cernavodă and Tulcea where founders of the educational system from Dobrogea, such as Costache Petrescu, Dimitrie Chirescu and Nifon Bălășescu, made themselves known. The period discussed is marked, but not interrupted by the events of the year 1878 when Dobrogea returns inside the borders of the newly formed Romanian state, when the entire province joins the state's initiative for progress. The initiative took aim at modernizing the state's structure, with education being one of its most important components.

The proclamation addressed to the army by King Carol the 1st on the occasion of the union between Dobrogea and Romania, on November the 14th, 1878, said that the Romanians from Dobrogea are an integrated part of the entire Romanian community and full-rights citizens²⁶.

The re-establishment of the Romanian sovereignty made it possible to legitimate the acts of reorganizing of this Romanian province. The Romanian administration, at the proposal of the great statesman and protector of arts Mihail Kogălniceanu²⁷, who was, at that time, the ministry of interior, proposed several directions to be followed to help develop Dobrogea, such as: the establishment of schools in every settlement in Dobrogea, the expansion of the ways of communication, on land and on water, backing the development of the main cities in the region, Constanța and Tulcea, linking the Cernavodă-Constanța railroad with the national railway network, modernizing the infrastructure of the ports, especially in the Constanța Port.

On March the 9th, 1880 was promulgated "The law for organizing Dobrogea"²⁸, a law similar to the Romanian constitution, with the participation of Remus Opreanu, the Prefect of Constanța, who was a well-known magistrate, former Attorney General at the Appeal Court in Bucharest²⁹. The content of this act was widely appreciated not only in Romania, but also abroad, especially for the open manner in which it dealt with the rights of the national minorities. The same law divided Dobrogea into two counties, Tulcea and Constanța, the borders of which being similar to those in our days. The new

²⁶ Stoica Lascu, *Mărturii de epocă privind istoria Dobrogei*, vol.I (1878-1916), Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța, 1999, pp. 85-86.

²⁷ Traian Brătianu, *Politică și societate în Dobrogea*, Editura Fundației „Andrei Șaguna”, Constanța, 2010, p. 45.

²⁸ La 9 martie 1880, în România a fost adoptată legea pentru organizarea Dobrogei, modificată la 30 martie 1886, care stipula o nouă organizare a acestui teritoriu, reintegrat în granițele țării în urma Războiului de Independență din 1877 – 1878 și a Tratatului de pace de la Berlin (1878). Ținutul dunăreano-pontic a fost împărțit în două județe, Tulcea și Constanța.

²⁹ Adrian Rădulescu, Ion Bitoleanu, *Istoria românilor dintre Dunăre și Mare: Dobrogea*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1979, p. 285.

province was not mentioned in “Constituția României” until 1884, and her inhabitants were deprived of the equal constitutional rights of those of the citizens from the Romanian Kingdom for three decades. The inhabitants of Dobrogea were granted equal legal privileges in 1894, and political rights only through „The law for granting political rights to the citizens from the counties Constanța and Tulcea” from April the 19th / May the 2nd 1909 and also through the laws from April the 15th 1910 and March the 3rd 1912.

“The Constitution of Dobrogea” is the result of the liberal way of thinking of those who created it, Mihail Kogălniceanu and the great jurist Remus Opreanu. The law decentralized Dobrogea and allowed the region to develop rapidly³⁰. This was the setting in which the education in Dobrogea will have evolved.

Romania's economical development prior to the year 1878 proved to be a decisive factor in the economical overall progress of Dobrogea, with positive consequences not only on the social-political life in Dobrogea, but also on the cultural one, as well. Not by any chance, the last decade of the 19th century represents also the period during which most of the publications appear, the subjects covered by the press become more and more diverse and important journalists make themselves known such as Ioan N. Roman, Stan Greavu-Dunăre, Constantin Brătescu, Constantin N. Sarry, Ioan Bănescu, Constantin Pariano, Petru Vulcan and others.

The development of the education in Dobrogea after the year 1878 is also the result of the interest manifested by the King Carol the 1st for all the problems that Dobrogea dealt with. The King's slogan, concerning education, was “Education is the very future of the country” and, during his visits in Dobrogea and in the schools of Constanța, he stated that “in Dobrogea and in Constanța especially, there must be the best schools, as the mission of the Romanian education is of vital importance”³¹. Otherwise, in all the schools in Dobrogea, could study the children of all inhabitants who, at April 11th 1877, were citizens of Ottoman origin and who, according to the 3rd article from Dobrogea's Organic Law from 1880, became Romanian citizens.

³⁰ Victor Heinrich Baumann, *Județul Tulcea între anii 1878 – 1918*, în “NordDobrogea Cultural”, Nr. 10 (2016), p. 22.

³¹ *Aniversarea de 25 de ani a Liceului „Mircea cel Bătrân” din Constanța. Anuar pe anul școlar 1921-1922*, Institutul de Arte Grafice și Editura „Constanța”, Constanța, 1923, p. 13 Apud Constantin Vitanos, *Contribuția învățământului la renașterea României de la Mare*, în Simion Tavitian (coord.), *Dobrogea, tărâmul dintre ape*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2005, p. 262.

The education and the culture in Dobrogea during the first decades after the province returned to The Motherland had some important supporters of the general effort to bring the province back to the Old Country and of its cultural uprising through education, besides the ruler and after that King Carol the 1st and Mihail Kogălniceanu, other local and national personalities whose contribution proved decisive such as: Ion C. Brătianu, Ionel Brătianu, Take Ionescu and Spiru Haret (artisans of the laws of education), together with a few devoted and patriotic prefects, very involved in what Dobrogea needed: Remus Opreanu³², Ioan Nenițescu, Luca Ionescu, Scarlat Vârnav³³ and, having a decisive contribution to the organization of the modern educational system in Dobrogea, Ioan Bănescu, former Dobrogea's school auditor for two decades and then mayor of Constanța³⁴.

In the same chapter, I described the evolution of the education in Dobrogea on cycles of study, according to the legislation of that time (primary, secondary and high-school or secondary, pedagogical and vocational) but also talked about the way in which the process of education for ethnic minorities in Dobrogea worked. Also in this chapter I inserted lists with the names of primary and secondary school teachers, as it results from several documents, and specific data about rural and urban schools from Constanța and Tulcea counties.

The third part of the present study deals with the contribution of the shepherds in the development of education in Dobrogea. We cannot understand this process without mentioning the role of the transhumance. Transhumance was not all about economic and social aspects, but also about demographic, cultural and political implications, with great importance in the maintaining of the unity of the Romanian people. Especially for Dobrogea, that was under a foreign rule, the activity of the shepherds had an extremely important role in keeping and developing the economic and spiritual relationships with the Old Kingdom of Romania, as underlined by Nicolae Dragomir³⁵.

³² Virgil Coman, Corina Apostoleanu, *Prefecții județului Constanța*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2011, pp. 10-11

³³ Scarlat Vârnav a fost prefect al județului Constanța în primii ani ai secolului al XX-lea. El s-a remarcat prin continuarea eforturilor predecesorilor în ceea ce privește modernizarea Dobrogei, astfel că, în timpul administrației sale s-au construit 117 școli, două spitale, 42 de biserici și câteva zeci de clădiri de primărie. Au fost inaugurate Palatul Administrativ, Palatul Regal, Palatul Justiției și a fost amenajat bulevardul Elisabeta, apud Virgil Coman, Corina Apostoleanu, *Prefecții județului Constanța*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2011, p. 59.

³⁴ Constantin Vitanos, *Contribuția învățământului la renașterea României de la Mare*, în Simion Tavitian (coord.), *Dobrogea, tărâmul dintre ape*, Editura Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2005, p. 262.

³⁵ Nicolae Dragomir, *Oierii mărgineni și transumanța lor în Dobrogea de Sud*, în „Analele Dobrogei”, An 19 (1938), vol II, p.135.

Between the region of the Carpathian Mountains and that of the Danube appeared a network of roads that encouraged the transportation of people and goods which allowed the crystallization of some connections and “determined impulses the viability of which created the necessity, imposed a notion of permanence”³⁶.

The shepherds were those who built roads through “the kingdom of bushes”, opened crossings, dug up fountains and built folds and households, “discovering the value of some deserted, priceless lands” and by establishing new settlements they “colonized an entire region, more beautiful and more thorough than any official colonization”³⁷. They came from rich villages Transylvania, from the region of cities such as Brașov and Sibiu, and, to tell themselves from the local Romanian population, known as „dicieni”, they were named „mocani”³⁸.

Those who stayed in Dobrogea established some prosperous settlements and consolidated the Romanian orthodox character of this region. They did not deal only with raising sheep, but also with agriculture, with crafts (linked to raising sheep) and with commerce. Due to the fact that they crossed vast territories, the Transylvanian shepherds also dealt with the „peddling”, some sort of a door-to-door commerce, that allowed them to transport not only merchandise, but also books and ideas. Those who settled in Dobrogea brought their families with them and established new households, ending up by cropping the fields, that became their main occupation³⁹.

Half a century after Dobrogea was reunited with the Old Kingdom, Apostol D. Culea stated that the shepherds from Transylvania carried in their saddlebags not only “food for the body”, but also “food for the spirit: books; - books brought back from Ardeal or bought from the cities passed by the “road of the sheep” (according to the chronicles of that time). They found comfort in those books in their time of peace. Not once did they perform religious services with priests brought in near the folds; not once did they build up houses for prayer; not once did they teach the lads from the neighboring village using old prayer

³⁶ Sorin Mureșeanu, *Tranhumanță și românism în Dobrogea la jumătatea secolului al XIX-lea*, în „Daima”, An 2, nr. 4-5 (apr 2006), p. 35.

³⁷ Apostol D. Culea, *Cât trebuie să știe oricine despre Dobrogea, Trecutul – Prezentul – Viitorul*, Editura Casei Școalelor, București, 1928, p. 47.

³⁸ Nechita Runcan, *Aspecte din viața creștină dobrogceană de la începuturi pînă în zilele noastre*, în Stoica Lascu (coord.), Constantin Vitanos (coord.), *Colegiul Pedagogic „Constantin Brătescu”. Valori ale civilizației românești în Dobrogea*, s. n., Constanța, 1993, p. 202.

³⁹ Tudor Mateescu, *Păstoritul mocanilor în teritoriul dintre Dunăre și Marea Neagră*, Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului din RSR, București, 1986, p. 4.

books...like they were in some kind of school”⁴⁰. With this words, the teacher from Dobrogea points out that the general public from Dobrogea, all the teachers and all those involved in the local cultural life, understood the role of the shepherds from Ardeal in spreading the Romanian language and faith all through Dobrogea.

The great historian Constantin C. Giurescu profoundly expressed and idea that can be easily adopted, stating that: “the Romanians from Dobrogea nowadays represent a true synthesis of the Romanian ethic element from everywhere”⁴¹. The historian talks about the fact that Romanians from all over the Romanian territories, not only from Transylvania, but also from Oltenia, Banat or Basarabia arrived in Dobrogea, many of them during the transhumance, process that allowed the mobility of people and ideas, and, as proved in time, they were all united by a strong feeling of faith and believing in Romanian values.

Nicolae Iorga shares the same point of view. In 1928 he dedicated one of his works to the Romanian education, in the pages of which, among others, he evoked the contribution of the Romanians from Ardeal to the developing of the national educational system, to that from Dobrogea as well. He detailed the role of the scholars from Ardeal who, after graduating the local schools, took with them over the Carpathians, the enlightenment of the Romanian written culture⁴². According to the great historian, a very important role in this process is attributed to the hieromonk Nifon Bălășescu, whose name is linked to the developing of the religious education in Wallachia first, before crossing the Danube in order to organize the schools in the Northern Dobrogea and those along the Danube in the Ottoman province⁴³.

As a conclusion, the fourth chapter of my paper approaches the problem of the seeming contrast, in our opinion, between the laic and religious education. I used the vision of the teacher Nechita Runcan as a starting point of this discussion, vision that we cannot but totally agree with. In all the epochs, and especially nowadays, we might add, the faith in God is what always inspired people and religion is what kept humanity educated. These reasons justify the presence of religion in the pedagogical systems of the civilized Christian nations, it fits in the educational plans in all the teaching-learning subsystems⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ Apostol D. Culea, *op. cit.*, p. 91

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, Editura Casei Şcoalelor, Bucureşti, 1928, pp. 272-309.

⁴³ Nechita Runcan, *op. cit.*, p.287.

⁴⁴ *Idem*, *Ora de religie în învățământul românesc actual*, în *Studii de teologie istorică și patristică*, vol V, Editura, Vasiliana, Iași, 2011, p. 257.

We consider a valid opinion, that of Michel Quenot, according to which the school nowadays prepares the student from the systematic, individual, moral, intellectual, civic, esthetic and hygienic points of view. Next to these criteria stands, naturally and organically, the religious component. The result is an entity characterized by a complementarity not only instructive, but also formative. The two sides of the educational process cited above should be regarded not in a competitive way, but as an integrating global educational approach, carried on by the teaching staff with professionalism and responsibility⁴⁵.

The religious education is important as it leads the humans towards the supreme goal of their existence, that being the communion with God. Through this communion, the human life gets its meaning and builds itself on the indestructible ground that is our Savior. The moment they are aware of the belief in God (revealed by Our Lord Jesus Christ), humans begin a new life marked by the holiness. This type of education is important from a moral point of view also, because, the contemporary society is dominated by the post-modern trend of considering moral life independent from the Christian religion. Living the religious way reveals the origin of some profound influences, the kind that makes humans act according to the Divine Commandments⁴⁶.

Approaching education in a general way, we can talk about its theological dimension. The theological side of education is influenced by the concept according to which, education, in every stage of its manifestation, is guided, oriented and regulated by a system of acting values (commands, demands, desires, intentions and others) materialized and often expressed by the factors involved in the instructive and educational process. The educational values systems, which turn into goals of the education, do not have a spontaneous, willing character, they are expressions of historical, individual, social and cultural determinations (the maturity and the experience of the teachers, the amplitude and the profoundness of the interests of those educated and many others)⁴⁷.

A history of the education and of the cultural life in Dobrogea during the 19th century cannot be understood without an overview of the political, social and economic life

⁴⁵ Michel Quenot, *Icoana, fereastră spre absolut*, prefată și note de Vasile Răducă, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1993, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Sebastian Șerbu, Monica Opris, Dorin Opris, *Metodica predării religiei*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2000, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Constantin Cucoș, *Pedagogie*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000, p. 42.

and of the evolution of the settlements, whether it is about villages or cities. We believe that founding a school was linked, as is nowadays, to the structure and the necessities of the population. For instance, a school of any kind is not justified in any type of settlement with a reduced population. All the more so that in the 19th century when the everyday life was difficult in a region not suitable for agriculture (as revealed from the reports of many foreign travelers) and the Romanian population, not very vast (but generally the most numerous), struggled to survive.

The clergy, whether Orthodox, Catholic or Greek-Catholic, played an important role in the cultural and moral uprising of the Romanian people, its members were part in the great events that marked our national history. We can evoke the Romanian clergy from Transylvania that played the main role in the movement of cultural and national emancipation from the 18th century, movement known as “Școala ardeleană” but, even more meaningful, taking into consideration the theme of this paper, the many members of the clergy, local or from all the Romanian regions, and especially from Transylvania, that founded schools and lead the Romanian communities from Dobrogea, decisively marking and influencing its cultural evolution. We are mentioning here names of priests and cantors with Romanian education such as Nifon Bălășescu, Dimitrie Chirescu and others.

For a successful religious education, one solution could be represented by the real collaboration between the main three educational factors: the family, the School and the Church, whose message should have one common denominator. Each of the three mentioned above tends to leave to the others the responsibility for the education of the children. The family believes that the school is specialized in educating the children and the main responsible entity for it, the school tends to reduce its role to a strictly informative one, while the parishes find it difficult to communicate with the young. This is the reason why the teacher of religious education could be the thing that brings together the three educational institutions. The social milieu, together with those of the family and of the church, have a decisive influence on the apparition and the evolution of religious sentiments. All those involved in the education of the youth must rediscover the sacramental dimension of the build-up of the character and the personality⁴⁸.

Like the philosopher and man of culture Andrei Marga said, a reform is highly needed in every aspect of our society, a deep reform, for the substance as well, not only for

⁴⁸ Elena Roman, *Educația religioasă în societatea contemporană*, s. n., Iași, 2013, p. 11.

the shape of things (if we take into consideration Titu Maiorescu's theory of the “shapes without substance”), a synchronization of the entire society with the present, with the present situation, a reform that would affect even the most important levels of the society, such as education, legislation and even culture⁴⁹.

The conclusion of the concepts presented above is that religion not only should be part of every stage of the educational process, but also that it must be awarded a consolidated statute among the curriculum, a structure that is still in the middle of a re-organization process. Bringing to the attention the previously expressed reasons in favor of the religious education (the ones formulated by the pedagogue Constantin Cucoş), it is necessary for those involved in the religious education, members of the Clergy, teachers and not last, the family, to come to an agreement and to find a way to educate the children and the youth in a complex, unitary manner, including the important spiritual religious component.

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⁴⁹ Andrei Marga, *Educația în tranziție*, Editura Dacia, Cluj Napoca, 1999, p. 24.

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