

REVIEW

***Turkish Cultural Legacy in the Balkans. From Empire to the Republic of Türkiye*, Delia Roxana Cornea, Metin Omer, Emanuel Plopeanu editors, Editura Mega, Cluj Napoca, 2023, 349 p.**

A group of 28 authors, contributing 23 scientific articles, hailing from five countries (Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Poland, and North Macedonia), collaborated on a project involving five institutions. Among these, four are academic, including National Museum of History and Archaeology in Constanța, National Archives of Romania, Constanța County Service, Faculty of History and Political Sciences at "Ovidius" University in Constanța, and Institute for Eco-Museal Research "Gavrilă Simion" in Tulcea. Additionally, a historical community union, specifically Turkish Union in Romania, was also part of this collaborative effort. The outcome of this collaboration is encapsulated within the voluminous pages of a comprehensive work, totaling 349 pages. Notably, the coordination of this ambitious endeavor was entrusted to three seasoned specialists of commendable repute: Delia Roxana Cornea, Metin Omer, and Emanuel Plopeanu.

The value of the volume is underscored by the expansive theme of historical memory (including its heritage), the distinctive approaches of the majority of the published research, and the professional competence of authors from outside Romania (selected by Metin Omer and Delia Roxana Cornea), as well as those originating from the country's most significant academic institutions. The Ottoman and Turkish legacy in Dobrogea is a heritage that has settled and evolved for over half a millennium, necessitating systematic research across all domains. Given the abundance but insufficiency of scholarly achievements concerning this geographical and historical space, the completion and publication of articles, that trace the evolution of the province from the mid-18th century to the present day, can only evoke a sense of complete intellectual satisfaction.

The volume is divided into four thematic chapters: 1) *Ottoman heritage in the Balkans: politics, culture, society, and economy*, 2) *Ottoman heritage in Romania: monuments, culture, commerce, and laws*, 3) *Romanian-Ottoman/Turkish Relations*, 4) *Material, spiritual and documentary heritage*.

The opening contribution is authored by Ovidiu Cristea from the "N. Iorga" Institute of History in Bucharest, of the Romanian Academy, entitled "The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans: Felix Kanitz's Testimony" (pp. 13-27). This entails a systematic analysis of the testimonies published between 1875 and 1882 by the geographer, archaeologist, ethnographer, and painter Felix Kanitz (1829-1904), following his travels in the Southeast European region, particularly in present-day Bulgaria, during the Ottoman and post-Ottoman periods. Among

the prevalent topics in Kanitz's discussions with the local population in Bulgarian territories, albeit not the exclusive one, was the autonomy of the Orthodox Church. This discussion unfolded within the context of a widely held opinion that the Greeks and their secular and ecclesiastical institutions dominated the spiritual landscape south of the Danube.

Ileana Căzan, a prominent scholar in Romanian medieval studies and presently serving as the President of the National Committee for Heraldry, Genealogy, and Sigillography within the Romanian Academy, has authored the study titled "Micropolitics and Microdiplomacy at the Border of the Ottoman Empire with the Austrian Banat: Gifts, Bribe, and Quarantine (1754-1768)" (pp. 29-40). Drawing inspiration, perhaps, from the longstanding notion articulated by N. Iorga regarding the potential to reinterpret overarching historical narratives through the prism of what the scholar aptly termed "small things," Ileana Căzan ingeniously reconstructs a rarely examined administrative apparatus. Her examination revolves around the initiatives and decisions undertaken by the inaugural civilian governor of Banat. Appointed after the Austrian reconquest of the province in 1718, following an extended period of military administration until 1754, this role was assumed by Count Francesco Vilana-Perlas. Confronted with a lack of customary civil structures and established institutions, the governor opted for the reconstruction of civil administration by deftly navigating extensive networks of relationships. Despite their less formal and more personal nature, these networks, as highlighted by Căzan, proved to be remarkably efficacious. In a departure from the conventional trajectory of Romanian historiography, Ileana Căzan introduces the concepts of "micropolitics" and "micro-diplomacy" into scholarly discourse pertaining to the 18th-century Austrian provinces. Importantly, these conceptual frameworks may conceivably be extended to illuminate the dynamics of other historical provinces.

Hakan Kirimli, from Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, presents the study "The Material Traces of the Geray Dynasty in Contemporary Bulgaria" (pp. 41-51), supplemented with extensive and eloquently captured photographs (pp. 52-61). Kirimli delves into a facet hitherto unknown to the Romanian audience: the genealogical and personal evolution of the ruling Geray Dynasty of the Crimean Khanate within the Ottoman Balkans, particularly in present-day Bulgaria. Unfortunately, these material traces have largely vanished in contemporary times, rendering Kirimli's investigation even more exciting, with the potential for further academic expansion and the publication of new findings. While these analyses do not directly concern historical Romanian provinces, they significantly contribute to a better understanding of the settlement, development, and migration patterns of the historical Crimean Tatar communities in and out of Dobrogea.

Dragi Gjorgiev, from the National Institute of History in Skopje (North Macedonia), has published a case study with a genealogical and historically representative focus on the Ottoman period in the Balkan region, titled "The

Islam and the Christian Elite in the Balkans After the Ottoman Conquest: The Case of the Ohrizade Family" (pp. 63-71). Cultural, confessional, and intellectual transformations specific to the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans for over half a millennium have shaped the reality described by Gjorgiev concerning the Ohrizade family, of Christian origin. Gjorgiev discusses memorial sites associated with this family, such as the "St. Pantelimon" Church in Ohrid, transformed from the 15th century into a mosque, later demolished, and reconstructed in 2002 as another church dedicated to St. Clement and Pantelimon.

An article dedicated to a lesser-known aspect of 19th-century Dobrogean history is authored by Nikolay Todorov from the Regional Museum of History in Silistra, Bulgaria. The contribution, titled "Peasants and Çiftliks in Dobrudja in the XIXth Century According to Data from the Temettuat Registers" (pp. 73-84), offers a thoroughly documented study. Todorov explicates the institutional evolution of the provincial economy following the liberalization of trade in agricultural products, a consequence of the wars and treaties concluded between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the 1820s-1830s. The modern, commercial transformation of agricultural properties in many European regions of the Ottoman Empire facilitated their institutional integration into major European trade routes. This phenomenon, as outlined by Todorov, became discernible in the Danube region (encompassing Dobrogea) during the 1860s-1870s, extending until the onset of the new Russo-Ottoman War in 1877-1878.

Silvana Rachieru, affiliated with the Turkish Studies Center at the University of Bucharest, contributes to the volume with a composition detailing her experiences following visits to Ottoman heritage sites, particularly in Dobrogea. The work is titled "Ottoman Heritage in Romania: The Diary of a Long and Challenging Journey Towards Visibility" (pp. 87-96).

The author is succeeded by one of the most robust studies in this volume, characterized by impeccable clarity and structure, providing an analysis of the Romanian space grappling, in this field, with a highly naive and at times ridiculously exotic approach. Serkan Kiliç, from the Faculty of Architecture at Akdeniz University in Ankara, Turkey, contributes the article "An Evaluation on Ottoman Architectural Monuments in Romania" (pp. 97-111; photographic material, pp. 112-117). Kiliç presents a necessary examination of the Ottoman heritage in Dobrogea and Romania, focusing on one of the most significant layers of historical heritage and places of memory: the buildings, both religious and secular, built by the Ottomans and preserved to this day. As Kiliç notes without contradicting arguments, most of these structures find themselves in a shameful and unacceptable state of degradation, destruction, and alteration, under the indifference of authorities and local communities. Kiliç estimates that approximately 347 such monuments were built by the Ottomans north of the Danube (including Dobrogea) until after World War I, but emphasizes that only 74 have survived (p. 107), all in a state of neglect and disrepair. The author

acknowledges that the earliest surviving Ottoman construction is the spectacular Esmahan Sultan Mosque in Mangalia, and the latest could be the mosque in the village of Ciucurova (Tulcea county), erected in 1922, a few months before the demise of the Empire (p. 107). This study is arguably the most relevant one published so far in the Romanian scientific space concerning Ottoman architectural heritage in Dobrogea (specifically) and Muntenia, and it would be a fortunate case if this study were to be continued and expanded.

Alexandra Brutaru, a doctoral candidate at Ovidius University in Constanța, contributes with the study "Influences of the Ottoman Chancellery Style on the Documents Issued in the Chancelleries of Wallachia and Moldavia in the 17th and 18th Centuries" (pp. 119-133, photographic material pp. 134-137). Laurențiu Radu and Corina Radu-Iorguș from the Callatis Archaeology Museum in Mangalia present the article "Ottoman Heritage From Mangalia" (pp. 139-143). Aurel Mototolea, Andreea Andrei, and Simina Stanc from the National Museum of History and Archaeology in Constanța and "Al. I. Cuza" University in Iași delve into "Commercial Relations in Dobrogea in the 19th Century. Case Study: Tophane Type Pipes" (including a catalog) (pp. 145-159, photographic material pp. 161-162). Constantin Cheramidoglu, representing the Historical Sciences Society of Romania, Constanța branch, explores "Tipping in Romanian Society From the End of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the Next" (pp. 163-174). Together, these scholars bring lesser-known aspects of important domains of Ottoman memory, including administrative and daily life, into the scientific discussion within the Romanian historical heritage.

Another notable study in the volume, complementing others previously published by the late local specialists (Virgil Coman and Doina Păuleanu), is authored by Delia Roxana Cornea from the National Museum of History and Archaeology in Constanța. The study is titled "Contributions to the Knowledge of the History of an Islamic Monument: The Construction and Repair of the Carol I Mosque in Constanța in the Light of Documents and Newspapers of the Time" (pp. 175-193). Fortunately and necessary, Cornea sheds light on significant archival sources to reconstruct, as faithfully and uniquely as possible, one of the fundamental stages in the appreciation of modern relations between Romania and the Ottoman Empire. The focus is on the construction of Romania's most important Muslim place of worship, the Carol I Mosque in Constanța, under the high patronage of King Carol I, as a symbol of appreciation for Ottoman memory in the province. Delia Roxana Cornea provides Romanian historiography with written documents and highly valuable photographic material to assess both the royal initiative and the importance of this edifice for Constanța's identity. Cornea's contribution brings scientific consistency to a province's history so often neglected: places of memory. It would be commendable to continue this effort, highlighted dramatically by the author in 2021 through the publication of

an exceptional monograph dedicated to the royal residences in Dobrogea (in Constanța, Mamaia, and Balchik).

One of the preeminent scholarly voices in the contemporary study of the history of Turkish and Tatar communities in Dobrogea, as well as Romanian-Turkish relations in the 20th century, Metin Omer, affiliated with the Black Sea Studies Institute at the "Ovidius" University of Constanta, has contributed a notable study entitled "An Ottoman Juridical Heritage in Romania: The Role and Functioning of the Qadiates" (pp. 195-208). Omer has astutely recognized and capitalized upon this unique opportunity, specifically the examination of modern Ottoman institutional mechanisms in European provinces like Dobrogea. This strategic utilization, which distinguishes the author within the Romanian academic context, proves pivotal for the paradigmatic shift within Romanian historiography—from a positivist, documentary-centric approach to one characterized by an analytical exploration of imperial administration in border provinces and the intricate dynamics of local structures. The assimilation and adaptation of these institutions, inclusive of legal frameworks, after Dobrogea's integration into Romania in 1878, facilitated a harmonious incorporation marked by nuanced complexities that were more context-specific than broadly applicable. The operationalization of the Mohammedan courts of justice in 1916 (p. 203) denoted the culmination of an institutional evolution spanning almost four decades (commencing in 1878). This trajectory, culminating after the Union of 1918 and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, intricately interlinks with Mustafa Kemal's reforms aimed at the secularization of society and the state. The innovative elucidation of the functioning of Mohammedan institutions within the territory of modern Romania initiates a groundbreaking chapter in Romanian historiography, particularly concerning the historical communities in Dobrogea.

Florin Anghel, from the Faculty of History and Political Sciences at "Ovidius" University of Constanta, in his study "Last Ottoman Days in Sandjak of Tulcea: Geopolitics and Propaganda Between the Wars at the End of the Danube and Russo-Ottoman Barter of Dobrogea (1856-1878)" (pp. 211-234), has unveiled the ideological, propagandistic, and diplomatic conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the period 1856-1877 in Dobrogea and the capital of the Tulcea sandjak. Between 1856 and 1877, Anghel asserts, a veritable Cold War (*avant la lettre*) unfolded in Tulcea and Dobrogea between Ottomans and Russians, drawing the involvement of other European powers, notably France and Great Britain. Russia strategically and propagandistically advanced the theory of the "empty space," depicting Dobrogea as a "wild" region devoid of resources and future, advocating for the reintegration of South Bessarabia within its borders. This materialized through the Treaty of Berlin (1878), where a Russo-Ottoman territorial barter occurred: Russia regained what it had lost in 1856,

while Romania, victorious over the Ottoman Empire, integrated Dobrogea within its boundaries.

In her study, "An Unusual Episode of Romanian-Turkish Diplomacy: The Flight of Sabiha Gökçen to Bucharest in 1938" (pp. 235-245), Daniela Popescu from the Faculty of History at the University of Bucharest, specializing in contemporary relations between Romania and Turkey, presents a unique episode in Mustafa Kemal's foreign policy at the end of the 1930s. This aviation journey of amity undertaken by the Republic of Ankara, encompassing Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria in June 1938, aimed to function as a diplomatic overture, reaffirming Turkey's overarching objectives within the Balkan geopolitical landscape.

Another milestone in the volume is authored by three esteemed experts in the Crimean Tatar communities: Filiz Tutku Aydın Bezikoğlu (Department of Political Science and Administration, University of Social Sciences, Ankara, Turkey), Metin Omer (Black Sea Studies Institute, "Ovidius" University of Constanța), and Edige Burak Atmaca (Department of History, University of Warsaw, Poland), in their study "The Emergence and Development of the Crimean Tatar National Movement in Dobruja in the Interwar Period" (pp. 247-263). The three authors delve into the phenomenon of reconstructing the Tatar national movement in Dobrogea and the new Republic of Turkey after World War I, within the context of migrations from the Crimean Peninsula. The Bolshevik rise to power and the establishment of the Soviet Union (1922) accelerated the dispersion of the community, reinforcing efforts to regroup in Romania and later in the Republic of Turkey. Opportunities presented by the new authorities in Ankara encouraged the emigration of Crimean Tatars from Romania, spurred by the Romanian authorities' inability to ensure real equality of opportunities and civil rights in line with constitutional and legal promises. A fundamental aspect highlighted by the three authors, deserving extensive exploration in the future, including comparisons with other societies in the region in the 1920s-1930s, is the development of secular identity consciousness among Crimean Tatar communities. This evolution towards a secular separation from religious institutions facilitated a smooth integration into the republican society of Turkey after collective emigrations from Romania in the 1930s.

George Daniel Ungureanu, from the National Military Archives of Romania - "General Grigore Constandache" Archive in Pitești, with the study "Romanian Military Perceptions of Türkiye in the Early Years of Cold War (1945-1947)" (pp. 265-286), and Iulia-Alexandra Oprea, from the University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences, and Technology "George Emil Palade" in Târgu Mureș, with the study "Turkey's Engagement in South Eastern Europe: Changing Religious Actors, Policies and Identity" (pp. 287-300), endeavored to outline intriguing perspectives concerning key periods of the last century of Romanian-Turkish interactions and the political landscape of Turkey, particularly focusing on the immediate post-World War II period and the subsequent decades

characterized by the ascendancy of the AKP political faction led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The final chapter of the volume represents, to a significant extent, a well-deserved scientific reward, highly reassuring in terms of presenting and institutionally exploiting the cultural and social Ottoman memory in Dobrogea. This endeavor is undertaken by researchers and specialists who are extremely passionate and ambitious, originating from an academic institution of exceptional relevance for Dobrogea: the Eco-Museum Research Institute "Gavrilă Simion" in Tulcea.

Iuliana Titov, from the Eco-Museum Research Institute "Gavrilă Simion" in Tulcea, in her study *Observations on the Semiotics of Turkish and Tatar Decorative Textiles Exhibited at Panaghia House From Babadag* (p. 303-309, photographic material p. 310-312), introduces a not only novel but also a theme worthy of continued and in-depth exploration. The Tulcea-based researcher analyzes the semiotics of Turkish and Tatar decorative textiles exhibited in the Panaghia House in Babadag (Tulcea county), explaining not only their chromatic and material value but especially their ritualistic significance as conveyors of messages. The impressive collection of the small museum in Babadag, recently reopened after a spectacular renovation, plays a central role in the study, reinforcing the impression of excellence in heritage preservation, exploitation, and academic research of the treasures available, which can be found in all museum units in Tulcea and Babadag affiliated with the outstanding Tulcea institute. Such small pieces of Ottoman memory are extremely rare, and the opportunity to highlight, promote, preserve, and analyze them is exceptional.

Iuliana Titov's colleague, researcher Alexandru Chiselev from the Eco-Museum Research Institute "Gavrilă Simion" in Tulcea, in the study *Nawrez - A Feast With Identity Value At The Tatars From Dobrudja. (Re)Meaning And Cultural Correspondences* (pp. 313-320), analyzes the ritualistic structure and meanings of the "Nawrez" celebration. The ritualistic and heritage value of the holiday, considering the near-total secularization risks and the dissolution of Tatar communities, is immense. Chiselev's effort, integrally contributing to this volume, deserves further exploration. Mariana Omeniuc and Gabriela Radu, from the Eco-Museum Research Institute "Gavrilă Simion" in Tulcea, in their joint study *The Craft Of Making Decorative Objects From Local Oriental Workshops, Reflected In The Collection Of The Museum Of Art, Tulcea* (p. 321-332), presented some of the most representative decorative objects from various geographical and material civilization areas of the Ottoman Empire. These objects, reconstructed and exhibited, are part of the collections of the excellent Art Museum in Tulcea. The value of these objects is not only intrinsic (craftsmanship, material, artists) but also derived from their origin in recognized centers of oriental art, enhancing the importance of these collections, unique in the Dobrogea region and highly representative in the broader Romanian context.

Doina Anghel's study, from the Central Archives "General Grigore Constandache" in Pitești, Biographical Reconstructions: Romanian Ethnic Turkish Officer Ali Murtaza (pp. 333-243), and Elena Zirnă's study, also from the Central Archives Depot "General Grigore Constandache" in Pitești, Nusuret Ghenghe, A Muslim Officer From Constanța in the Romanian Army (pp. 345-349), present the biographical profiles of two high-ranking Turkish-origin officers (Ali Murtaza and Nusuret Ghenghe), born in Dobrogea, heroes of both World War I and World War II. Given the likelihood that archive deposits—both civil and military—may contain additional testimonies, it is expected that these biographies will be further researched and expanded.

The studies compiled in the volume "Turkish Cultural Legacy in the Balkans: From Empire to the Republic of Türkiye" represent a significant milestone in unveiling exceptional aspects related to the Ottoman (and Turkish) heritage in Dobrogea and other Romanian regions. The volume not only presents these values but also approaches Romania's relations with the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. The professional courage to initiate this discussion within Turkish historiography, particularly, and neighboring Balkan historiographies, along with engaging reputable experts from the country, has brought clarity, substance, and hope to the exploration of these historical facets. This endeavor stands out as one of the most important projects in the recent history of Dobrogea, an institutional and scholarly initiative that deserves to be continued and further developed.

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