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Nicolina Ursu in “Dobruja’s Annals” discusses the Dobruja’s demographic evolution between 1878 – 1916. She outlines Dobruja’s portrayal at the turn of the century. Her article is divided in three parts, according to the chronological order of the historical events. The author begins her study reminding of a crucial and significant moment from the Romanian history: Dobruja had become again a part of Romania. As she implies, it represented the ideal place for anyone interested in starting a life on a new territory.

The author tactfully remarks that Romanians represented only one third of the Dobruja’s population, and this was not enough for bringing its national support in the Romanian state. Further, the author patiently explains the method used by the state’s authorities to encourage people to move to Dobruja: they guaranteed the property observance. As a result, the Ottomans were convinced to come back to Dobruja.

The article is rich and detailed in information, providing interesting data. One example is that in the process of demographic transformation, M. Kogalniceanu played an important role. He strongly believed that uniting around a common national ideal was the most important thing for Dobruja, and in the same time, respecting each ones specific national rights. Also, D. A. Sturza maintained his point of view: only working people were welcomed to establish in Dobruja. From my perspective, I think that this approach was very helpful for the future of Dobruja and I am pleased that the author highlighted this aspect.

Nicolina Ursu underlines that there were certified twelve ethnic minorities in Dobruja, which meant twelve specific languages. She hesitantly admits that the Romanian language was well known be everyone. The author is extremely successful in giving numbers that assert her arguments. According to the demographic situation from 1880, the Dobruja’s population was of 64902 inhabitants. Romanians represented 23 per cent, Turkish 23 per cent, Tartars 35 per cent, Bulgarians 12 per cent, Greeks 4 per cent, Armenians 0’4 per cent, Lippovans 0,5 per cent.

Significantly, the author reveals other transformations: the agrarian law from 1882 stimulated the demographic evolution and the agrarian laws from 1888 and 1903 encouraged the newly married couples to establish here. The high lenders played an important role in the development of this area. They moved in a great number from Transilvania to Dobruja. As a result the Austro-Hungary protested against the lost of the

Transilvanian contributors. Obediently, the Romanian authorities expelled a part of them. This action was strongly criticized by M. Kogalniceanu.

Nicolina Ursu eagerly announces that the demographic growth in rural areas corresponded with similar growth in urban areas. Thus, Constantza had become the Dobruja's metropole.

The first significant census (from 1899) revealed, as the author recognizes, that in Constantza were living 141 056 inhabitants and in Tulcea 123 192. The number of the ethnic minorities was unchanged at the beginning of the XX century, but the Romanian people continued to move here from different parts of Romania, especially from Putna, Tecuci, Tutova, Dolj, Mehedinti, Ramnicu Sarat, Buzau. The number of Dobruja's population doubled, once the Romanian number was growing. It reached 54,7 percent.

The economical development of the Constantza port, the granting of the political rights for Dobruja's inhabitants, the agrarian law contributed to Dobruja's demographic evolution. As the author tries to persuade us, it comes out that all the actions undertaken by the Romanian state, proved to be very helpful in transforming Dobruja from a poor populated area to a lively, colorful territory. Moreover, there were not inter ethnic conflicts in Dobruja. Nicolina Ursu concentrates on the truly fact that the Romanian state guaranteed all the rights, concerning the customs, the religion, and the maternal language, to its inhabitants.

My only reservation about the article is the accuracy of the figures. Some of them are exaggerate. In spite of this, I strongly advise all the students from Constantza to read the article, which is vital for a good perception of the time we live in.