

*Categoria A*

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## **The roadside inns (*khāns*) in Ottoman Dobrudja**

**Keywords:** Dobrudja, inns/khāns, Ottoman period, trade routes, archaeological remains.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Dobrogea, hanuri, epocă otomană, rute comerciale, vestigii arheologice.

**Ключевые слова:** Добруджа, ханы, Османская эпоха, торговые пути, археологические находки.

*Aurel Mototolea, Simina Margareta Stanc, Andreea Andrei*

### **The roadside inns (*khāns*) in Ottoman Dobrudja**

Dobrudja is located at the crossroad of commercial roads and was always the transit area for the trade road that linked the Mediterranean to the Baltic area, as well as a terminus point for the commercial routes in central Europe. This, together with the implementation of traditions of the Muslim world, led to the appearance in the important centers of the province of a specific element: the inns. They acquire specific features, according to the oriental tradition. Written sources of that time certify the existence of inns in Dobrudjan cities but also in other small localities. In rare cases, this information is confirmed by archaeological findings. The given paper presents the steps in the emergence of these inns, their spatial distribution, the factors that led to the development but also to the involution of their activity. The general characteristics of this kind of public establishment in the Muslim world and the degree to which they were preserved in the case of Dobrudjan inns are also described. The more appropriate term for Dobrudja is that of “inn” (*Khān*) and not caravanserai, a well-known term in the Islamic world. The connection of Dobrudja with the Balkan commercial routes is an interesting element.

*Aurel Mototolea, Simina Margareta Stanc, Andreea Andrei*

### **Hanurile (*khāns*) in Dobrogea otomană**

Dobrogea este situată la intersecția drumurilor comerciale și a fost întotdeauna zonă de tranzit pe drumul comercial care a legat Mediterana de zona Baltică, precum și un punct terminus pentru rutele comerciale din Europa Centrală. Acest fapt, împreună cu punerea în aplicare a tradițiilor lumii musulmane, a dus la apariția în centrele importante ale provinciei a unui element specific: hanurile. Ele dobândesc caracteristici specifice, conform tradiției orientale. Surse scrise din acea vreme atestă existența hanurilor în orașele dobrogene, dar și în alte localități mici. În cazuri rare aceste informații sunt confirmate de descoperirile arheologice. Lucrarea de față prezintă etapele apariției acestor hanuri, distribuția lor spațială, factorii care au dus la dezvoltarea, dar și la involuția activității lor. Sunt prezentate, de asemenea, caracteristicile generale ale acestui tip de instituție în lumea musulmană și gradul în care acestea au fost păstrate în cazul hanurilor din Dobrogea. Termenul mai potrivit pentru Dobrogea este acela de „han” (*Khān*) și nu caravanserai, un termen binecunoscut în lumea islamică. Un element interesant este legătura Dobrogei cu rutele comerciale balcanice.

*Аурел Мототоля, Сими́на Маргарета Станк, Андре́я Андре́й*

### **Гостиницы (*ханы*) в Османской Добрудже**

Добруджа расположена на пересечении торговых путей и всегда была транзитной зоной на торговом пути, соединяющем Средиземное море с Балтийским регионом, а также конечной остановкой для торговых путей из Центральной Европе. Этот факт, наряду с навязыванием традиций мусульманского мира, привел к появлению в важных центрах провинции специфического элемента: гостиницы. В соответствии с восточными традициями они приобретают определенные характеристики. Письменные источники того времени свидетельствуют о существовании гостиниц в Добрудже, а так же и в других небольших городах. В редких случаях эта информация подтверждается археологическими открытиями. В настоящей статье представлены этапы появления этих гостиниц, их пространственное распределение, факторы, которые привели к их развитию, но также и к упадку их деятельности. Представлены также общие характеристики этого типа учреждений в мусульманском мире и степень, в которой они были сохранены в Добрудже. Более подходящим термином для Добруджи является «хан» (*Khān*), а не караван-сарай, термин, хорошо известный в исламском мире. Интересным элементом является связь Добруджи с торговыми путями на Балканах.

### **Caravans, commercial roads and roadside inns**

In recent years, the study of the functional binominal caravan-roadside inn, as well as of the commercial routes associated with them, has in-

creased [Del, Tavernari, Boutros 2010, 419; Palombini, Tavernari 2016, 637], but the area of research was focused on the Asian corridor of the Silk Road. However, the territory where the historical development of this phenomenon can be noticed is huge,

covering parts of Europe and Russia, North Africa, Near East and Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent and China. Except for China, the phenomenon in all other territories listed above coincides with the historical expansion of Islam.

Especially associated with Islamic culture, caravans and roadside inns (in the broad sense of stopping and hosting places for commercial caravans) have, in fact, much broader backgrounds, the commodity trade of caravans being attested since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (Egypt - *Aswan*, Mesopotamia - *Kültepe*, the Hittite Empire) [Staubli 2013, 1 and 5] and the biblical period (Genesis 37.25) [Staubli 2013, 4].

The phenomenon of caravans and roadside inns represented, for more than a millennium, a major aspect of civilization, witnessing the intensity and diversity of trade and cultural exchanges [Del, Tavernari, 2009, 97], being connected to the expansion of Islam and of land trade and covering the period between the 8th century AD and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [Staubli 2013, 7].

The causes that led to this phenomenon were, to a high degree, practical, since “travelling in medieval times was difficult, dangerous and slow”, but it was necessary for the exchange of goods and religious pilgrimage [Önge 2007, 51]. As a result, the establishment of caravans initially provided an answer for two basic needs: a high level of demand of goods that needed to be transported over long distances and the vastness of a poorly populated territory that was crossed by trade routes. Over time, they started following a pre-established route with fixed stops, where people from the caravans could find water, food and places to rest, sheltered against robber’s incursions. So, in time, roadside inns appeared at almost every stopping place and offered: accommodation for people, stables for animals, protection, food, water and the possibility of commercial transactions.

The term *caravanserai* (roadside inn) comes from the Persian language, pahlavi dialect (*kārwānsarā*, کارسن‌اوراک), being a composite term which became customary for Islamic stopovers in all European languages, composed of *kārwān* (caravan, having as initial meaning „the one that protects trade”) [Thareani-Sussely 2007, 123], and *sarā* (palace or building with a closed courtyard), later adopted into the Arabic vocabulary and spread through the Arabic channel in the

Islamic world. It refers to a roadside inn, where travelers could rest and recover from the day's journey. Over time, the term was replaced by inn, also derived from the Persian language *khān* (خان) („house”), with the original meaning of urban roadside inn of small dimensions, similar to the road caravanserai<sup>1</sup>.

Over time, many roadside inns have been built along the traditional trade, mail and military routes, on the way to the maritime ports or to traditional cult centers. In relation to the positioning towards human settlements, there are distinguished urban roadside inns, located inside or at one of the entrances into the city and road caravanserais, established in remote locations, away from settlements, on the way of main trade routes [Thareani-Sussely 2007, 124].

The central government, local government or private initiatives contributed to the construction, maintenance and exploitation of roadside inns, in most cases the existence of roadside inns represented a source of income, prosperity and, in a symbolic way, power<sup>2</sup>.

There is an initial typical way of construction of roadside inns: a rectangular or square enclosure, with protective walls and chambers arranged around a single-gate interior courtyard (unique access from the southeast), but the variations in size and shape of its architecture being quite frequent [Thareani-Sussely 2007, 126]. Generally, in their first stage of development, roadside inns have a simple and robust architecture, mostly rectangular. In time, there are differences between urban roadside inns, that outside had a series of small shops lined up to the street along the two sides and caravanserais located outside the urban area, where we may also notice other buildings and halls such as the water deposit, a guard room, located close to the access gate, a surveillance room and surveillance towers [Ancuța 2017, online, 5].

Once the urbanization process increases, differences, which are mostly functional (the constructive manner followed for a long time the traditional precepts), occur also in the category of urban roadside inns. These are divided into:

1. It should be noted that in 1574, at Istanbul, the distinction between *caravanserai* and *inn* is still in use, according to the Polish traveler Maciej Strykowski, see Călători 1970, 449.

2. For example, Anatolian Seljuk caravanserais existed as the result of sultans’ interest in commercial activities, which were directly related to the state’s economic status, see Önge 2007, 63.



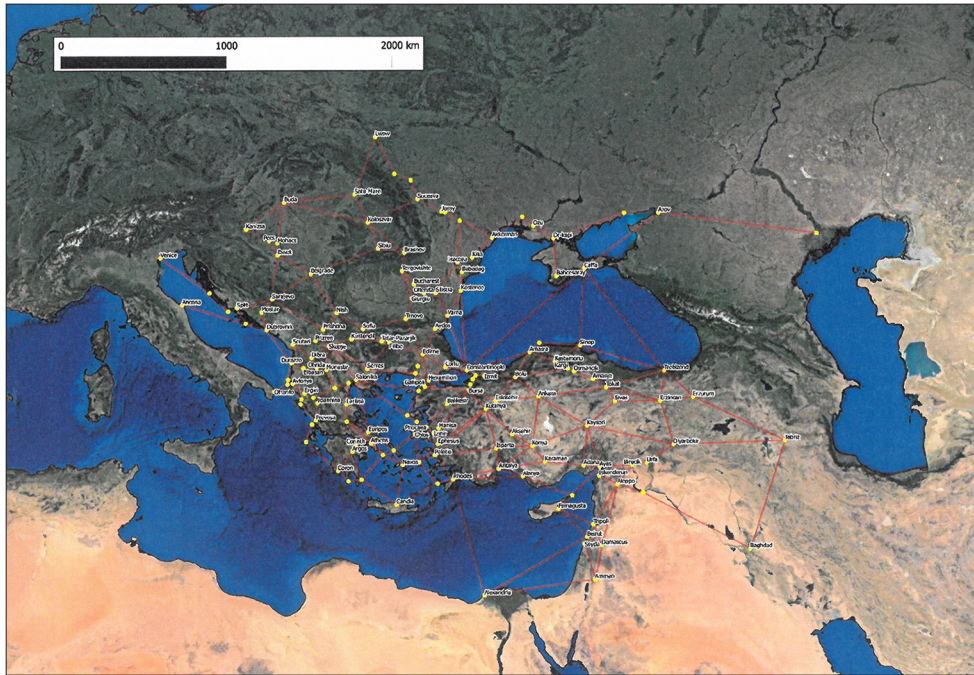


Fig. 1. A map of the localities and commercial routes (*apud* Preiser-Kapeller 2014, 6).

a) inns located at the city entrance (in order to receive caravans of pack animals and loaded carts and to direct them to the fairs and markets of the cities; they provided accommodation and protection structures, but they also played the role of filter and control)

b) inns located inside the settlements (in the city center goods are traded – jewels, silks, perfumes etc.) [Ancuța 2017, online, 7)

Together with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in territories from Asia, Africa and Europe, a great importance is given to trade routes and especially to the trans-continental traffic axes connecting İstanbul with the Oriental centers (Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus) and Balkan<sup>3</sup> centers (Sofia, Belgrade, Edirne). In this context, the inns undergo a new period of development, the old ones being renovated and new ones built; the inn becomes an important, indispensable presence of the Ottoman Imperial trading routes system [Ancuța 2017, online, 6).

### Dobruđjan inns in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries

The safety of Balkan commercial routes brought by the Ottomans to the conquered ter-

ritories or those under their influence led to an expansion of Balkan trade traffic, linked to the European and Asian traffic (fig. 1).

In the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is an increase of Balkan trade and of the transit trade on the north-south axis, as a result of “closing” the Straits; this increase should be understood, however, within the limits of the importance that the roads in the area of the Danube mouth had in the great traffic of goods at that time (fig. 2).

Being an omnipresent and yet distinctive element of Islamic civilization, the caravanserai could not be missed in Dobruđja. All the more since this *eyâlet* was located on important commercial axes [Gemil 1991, 204; Călători 2011, 66]. Dobruđjan centers are final destinations and markets for three large trade routes of the time that were heading towards the Black Sea: “Moldavian road”, “the road of Brașov” or North-Pontic trade routes [Popescu 2013, 184].

The influx of traders and merchants demanded and justified the emergence of stopovers in the main markets of the province or on the Dobruđjan road network.

Nevertheless, although the Ottoman territory, the outlying position of Dobruđja in the Empire, the gradual loss of importance within the military and economic imperial system, along with the exit of the Black Sea basin from the

3. In this context, it should be mentioned that Ottoman offensive in Europe followed the course of the “Balkan Route”, used since Roman antiquity, which linked Constantinople to Belgrade through Adrianople, see Gemil, 1991, 197.

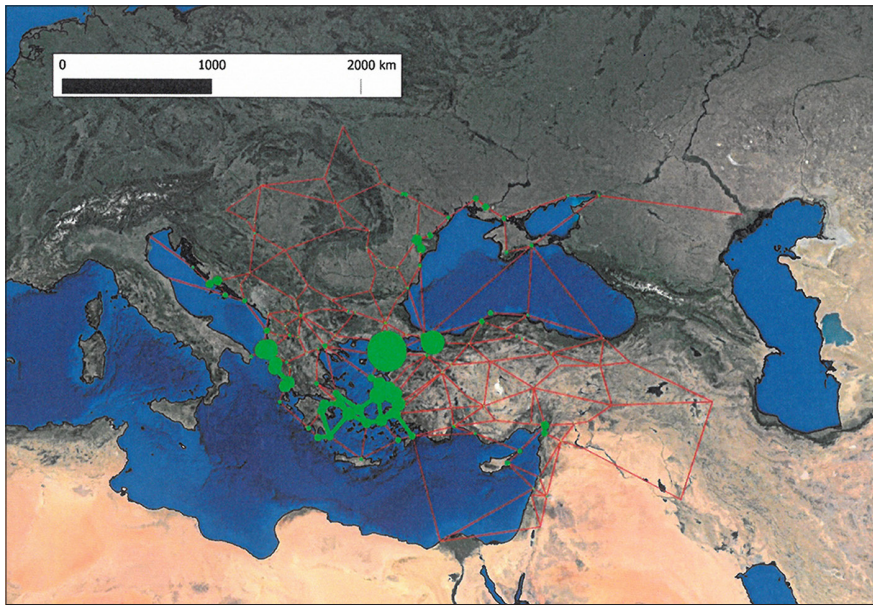


Fig. 2. Commercial nodes with intense activity (*apud* Preiser-Kapeller 2014, 7).

world's great trade route, with the movement of its center of gravity to Atlantic, after the era of great geographic discoveries, has made the “culture of caravanserai” not so well developed in this region as compared to Asian areas or, closer, to the Balkan network of inns. The relatively small size of the province also contributes to this – in most cases the trade caravans cover the distance from north to south in four days.

In the present paper, we will analyze the evolution of caravanserais/inns in the Dobrudjan area, meaning Romanian Dobrudja, which includes the territories of the present counties of Tulcea and Constanța, but with proper references to centers or areas that are currently in Bulgaria (Bazargic/Dobrici, Musabei/Krasen) or Ukraine (Ismail), when the situation requires it. The sources of information on the situation of the respective historical periods are literary (accounts, reports, official documents) or archaeological. Considering what we have stated in the previous paragraph, we would prefer to use the general term of “inn” instead of “caravanserai”, considering that it is more appropriate to use it for the Dobrudjan area.

\*\*\*

Ottomans have conquered the Dobrudjan area in different stages between the sultanates of Mehmed I (1413-1421) [Popescu 2013, 41] and Bayezid II (1481-1512) [Alexandrescu-Dersca *Bulgaru* 1971, 268: Bayezid II is the one who gave territorial coherence of the Ottoman rule in Dobrudja], while the

organization and administration of the province began, however, during the sultanate of Süleyman Kanuni (1520-1566). For the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, most of the written and cartographic sources suggest a demarcation of the province close to the current concept<sup>4</sup>, i.e. from the north of Bazargic to the Danube Delta, the southern limit being located on the Silistra-Mangalia line. On the east-west axis, is the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea.

After the Ottoman conquest and administrative organization, the province of Dobrudja simultaneously fulfilled two roles:

a) Commercial and agricultural *hinterland* role for the imperial capital, noticeable especially during the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is a junction of a series of land trade routes in this area, especially the trade route Istanbul – Baltic area, which intersects with the circum-Pontic trade route;

b) Advanced military bastion, necessary to keep under control the Romanian Principalities,

4. Passing Bazargic, Rafael Leszczynski noted: “...here begins the land of Dobrudja”, and travelling back, the same traveler says: after Bazargic, “around Provadia I have entered the Bulgarian country”, see Călători 1983, 183. Francisc Gościecki (1712): from Bazargic “after a day of rest, we left Dobrudja and entered Bulgaria, towards Coslugea, and from there we left for the city of Provadia”, *ibid*, 538. According to Popescu 2013, 58, coming from the south, travelers from the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries mention Dobrudja as being the maritime land from the “end of the Bulgarian country”, and for the traveler coming from the north, from Poland and Moldavia, after crossing the Danube at Măcin, was the entry point in Dobrudja. According to Evliyâ Çelebi, Dobruca vilâyet stretched “from the city of Tulcea” to the “menzil of the flourishing city Bazargic”.



the Tatars from the Crimea, Poland, and the circum-Pontic commercial route.

At the same time, the province begins an integration process into the various aspects of Ottoman life (economic, demographic, military, cultural). The evolution of Dobrudja is strictly connected to the trade flows and the social and economic evolution of the Ottoman Empire. As in the rest of the Empire, the epoch of the great viziers Köprülü and the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century mark the climax of the Ottoman administration and civilization in Dobrudja, when new institutions were introduced, a constructive activity took place and an incipient urban life emerges. Last but not least, this evolution must be seen in a general Balkan context. Here, in the Balkans, beginning with the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, cities have expanded, new neighborhoods (*mahalle*) appeared grouped around mosques. The configuration fortress (*hisar*) – market (*çarsi*), surrounded by caravanserais (*han*) – is almost omnipresent and life pulsates around the mosque, which is accompanied by *medrese*, charitable organizations (*imarathane*), public baths (*hammam*) and institutions of medical care; where the roads crossing the locality intersect, administrative institutions and the water fountain are erected (*çeşme*) [Mototolea 2016, 172]. This urban life is the result of favorable economic processes, and the inns have a well-established role in this whole. All the more so as it is possible to respect an urban tradition of Islamic origin, older in the region, but undocumented archaeological with certainty. Thus, prior to the Ottoman rule, it is not excluded that the Tartars implemented the Seljuk model of urban architecture, with cult buildings (Muslim) inside the cities and caravanserai on trade routes. In 1333, Ibn Battûta mentioned a border point with caravanserai at Baba Saltuk-Babadag [Battûta 1982, 197], which has existed since late 13th century [Kiel 2000, 265].

It should be noted, however, that these settlements (inns) are not found only in the urban environment. Dobrudja offers us numerous examples of inns and stopping places located outside the urban centers and the consecrated fairs, more specifically, in rural areas. These occur mainly in the 18th century and an explanation could be the economic decay of large centers, but also the change of trade routes, together with the general development of some rural areas. The relative safety that the villages had provided in comparison with the city during

the long-standing Russian-Turkish military conflicts in Dobrudja should not be overlooked.

We present the localities where the inns that functioned in Dobrudja during the 16th-18th centuries are attested documentary and/or archaeologically, together with their constructive characteristics, following their arrangement on main communication, commercial and military routes: maritime, central and Danubian line.

## A. Urban, quasi-urban centers, markets

### a) Maritime route

**a.1) Mankalya/Mangalia.** In the Middle Ages and the Ottoman period, Mangalia appears frequently in charts and maps. Like many other flourishing centers of antiquity, the city lost importance, becoming in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries only a port scaffolding, with the main role of collecting and transporting the agricultural products of the Dobrudjan province to the capital of the empire [Călători 1976, 380, 381]. The city is explicitly mentioned as Ottoman possession and with the name of Mangalia by the the Ragusan Paolo Giorgi in 1595, but more important information is provided to us since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, primarily by Evlyîâ Çelebi who, during his second and third journeys in Dobrudja [Mehmed 1965, 1098 note 10], passes also through this city, making a series of notes. In respect to the strong commercial feature of the city, he records the nearly 300 stores in the port and other parts of the city, but also the existence of three inns, mentioning that “*The best building is the serdar’s inn*” [Călători 1976, 381].

Traces of the mentioned inns are, however, not visible today, being destroyed over time because of various reasons, mainly military.

**a.2) Köstence/Constanța.** During the Ottoman period, the city which was reduced to the status of a port scaffolding [Popescu 2013, 69], will remain, nevertheless, connected to the economic circuit of the province; in the 16<sup>th</sup> century is an embarkment place for cereals stored in Brăila port<sup>5</sup>. Around mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, during the second journey through Dobrudja (1652), Evlyîâ Çelebi said about Constanța that it is a modest market place (*Köstence kasabasına*), with “*about 150 houses ...*

5. Popescu 2013, 185: the grains reach, on the Danube, with skiffs (*sayka*), all the way to Hârşova and from here are transported by wagons to Constanța, the final destination being Istanbul.

only one mahala and there is a simple, but useful mosque near the scaffolding. There are also: an inn, 40-50 barns, which looks similar to the inns located near the scaffolding and a few shops; there are no other buildings” [Călători 1976, 385].

As in the case of Mangalia, traces of the mentioned buildings are not however visible today, being destroyed over time and the modern city completely overlaps the old Ottoman site.

**a.3) Qaraharmanlıq/Karaharman**<sup>6</sup>. Is an important port scaffolding situated on the west-Pontic shore. Its location on the southernmost branch of the Danube, functional at that time, at its point where it flows into the sea, allowed the maritime traffic to junction with the Danubian one<sup>7</sup>. Maritime traffic here and the importance of the scaffolding in the management and maintenance at high level of the *zahire* circuit towards Istanbul, but also the real danger of the Kazakhs’ attack, according to Evlyiâ Çelebi’s writings, led the Sultan to order the construction of a fortress at Karaharman<sup>8</sup>. Towards mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, with its security guaranteed by the fortress and the corresponding garrison, Karaharman would develop.

According to the accounts, it had approximately 300 houses, “70-80 inns of merchants, full of all kinds of merchandise” [Călători 1976, 387] and a mosque not far from the harbor, used by the civilian population.

Of course, the number of inns seems to be exaggerated, but not impossible, at least for a determined period, given the constructive manner of the Dobrudjan inns of this period, much different from that of the traditional caravanserai and closer to that of a simple house, as well as the intense commercial activity of the epoch, which ensured an increased traffic of people and goods.

There are no archaeological vestiges of the

mentioned inns; the old fort is covered entirely by the modern building of the “Rare Metal Enterprise”, and the adjacent area is forbidden for archaeological research.

#### **b) Central route**

**b.1) Karasu/Medgidia.** This market town developed as a stage station on the communications route between southern and northern Dobrudja, at the crossing point over the easily flooded Karasu valley, the main role being due to its geographical position, its location on one of the two important communication nodes of Dobrudja (the second one being *Pazarçık*), the road that passed through Karasu being mainly a merchants route [Popescu 2013, 180]. At the same time, the road on which Karasu is positioned has also an important military role, the locality being in charge for the trans-Dobrudjan road (*şahrak*) coming from Edirne to the regions of northern maritime Danube [Brătescu 1928, 225; Popescu 2013, 90-91]. A true account of the situation of the locality in its epoch (half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) is provided to us by the passionate traveler Evlyiâ Çelebi, who had passed through the locality in 1652. Thus, the market town had at least “1000 simple or two-storied houses, covered with gutter tiles and shingle”, a “small, but useful” mosque, an inn, seven schools, a “dark” public bath and a few dozens of shops [Călători 1976, 396].

We must notice the mentioning of only one inn, given that Karasu market town is located on a main channel of communication in Dobrudja, the shortest road to Moldavia and Poland; perhaps an explanation would be the mainly military importance of the road, even though the documents of the time attest the importance of the settlement as commercial node.

**b.2) Isterâbad/Ester.** Documentary attested for the first time in an Ottoman financial register (*cizye*) from 1502, in the *kazâ* of Hârşova (*kariye-i Ester tabic Hırsova*), in 1538 the locality appears as a military station, which means that the Ester of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was located on a military road (having the obligation to make provisions for a walking military stage/*nüzül*) [Popescu 2013, 149; Călători 1968, 383].

Relevant information is provided to us by the same Evlyiâ Çelebi, who passes through this locality in November 1652, on his way back to Istanbul [Mehmed 1965, 1098, notes 10, 11]. The

6. It was identified as being the old port known as *Çianavarda*, *Zanavarda*, according to Mateescu 1971, 306; the name would translate into “Black city”, possible explanations in Iosipescu 2008, 119 and Mateescu 1971, 307-308.

7. Karaharman was connected to the rest of Dobrudja by routes leading to Constanța, Babadag or other important centers of the province, but which were not connected to the main route of the province, that came from the Balkan road and passed through Bazargic–Karasu and Babadag, until it stopped at Isaceea fort, according to Mateescu 1971, 310-311.

8. The Sultan’s decision seems to be subsequent to a new raid of the Cossacks against Karaharman, as it would result from the rapport of the envoy of Flemish General States, ambassador Cornelius Haga (August 8th 1626), see Iosipescu, 2013, 113.

city (*kasaba*), now called *Asterâbad*, had 1500 “beautiful houses”, “inns (...) and about 200 shops”, a nursing home (*imaristan*), as well as numerous churches. Subsequent accounts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, no longer explicitly mention the existence of inns.

Ester represents a fortunate case, together with Babadag, when literary information is documented on the ground by archaeological research, even in part. Successive campaigns of archaeological research, started in 1980 and conducted with interruptions between 1980-2001 [Custurea 1983, 545-550], concerned both the urban settlement itself and the necropolis in its west. In the settlement, houses and a church [Custurea 1997, 32-33] were identified, while in the necropolis several dozens of tombs were researched, all of them Christian, where various coins [Custurea 2013, 81-104] and ornaments [Mototolea 2015-2016, 315-356] were found. During the excavation campaign of 1986, a survey conducted in the northeast of the settlement led to the discovery of a large complex (39,50x18,40 m), consisting of a single room (fig. 3), whose constructive manner [Călători 1973, 483-484; Călători 1970, 427, note 70] leads to the conclusion that it is a caravanserai [Custurea 1997, 33] maybe in connection to one of those mentioned by Evlyiâ Çelebi (fig. 4). The construction is located east of the settlement, in an area with a low-density habitation, on the road connecting the sea shore (*Vadu/Karaharman*) and the current lagoon complex Razelm-Sinoe.

**b.3) Babadağ/Babadag.** The favorable geographic location<sup>9</sup>, the possibility of junction of the Ottoman armies on their way to the enemy countries (*dar-ul-harb*) or the crossroad of commercial channels<sup>10</sup> make the town of Babadag the capital of the Dobrudja *eyelet* [Vasiliu 1996, 195], which will lead to an increased number of information about it.

Since late 15<sup>th</sup> century, sultan Bayezid II, on his way back to Adrianopole, passes through the city, near the tomb of the dervish Sarı Saltık, Ev-

9. Located near the crossing ford from Isaccea, but in connection also with the maritime trade route, through the lake network nearby.

10. i.e. “Turkish road” that connected, through Dobrudja, Istanbul with North-Danubian regions, it forked at Babadag on its way to Tulcea and to Isaccea, according to Popescu 2013, 180.

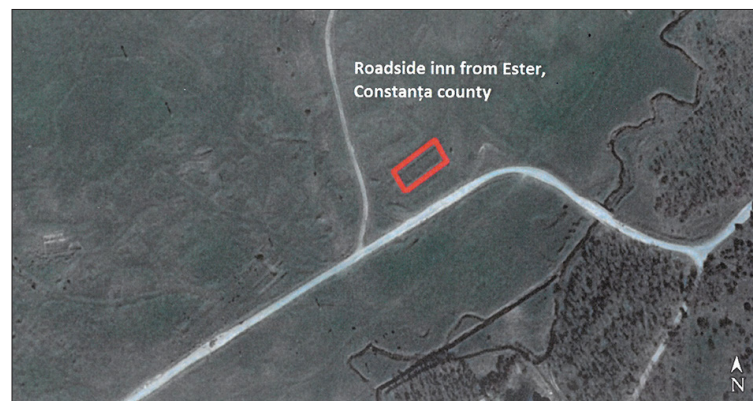


Fig. 3. The location of the inn from Ester.

liyâ Çelebi being the one who gives details of the event in his writings; so, the sultan – surnamed the “Saint”, *Bâyezid-i Veli*, due to his piety – will decide to dedicate the city of Babadag to the saint dervish, making it a *vaqf* [Mehmed 1965, 1109]; this act was accompanied by the construction, near the saint’s tomb, of a mausoleum<sup>11</sup> and of a mosque [Vasiliu 1996, 202], as well as of an imaret, an inn, a medrese and a bath [Călători 1976, 352]. This is the earliest explicit mentioning of an inn’s construction during the Ottoman period of Dobrudja.

At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, during the sultanate of Mehmet III, the army general Ali *Gazı Paşa* founded the mosque that bears his name; its construction is finished prior to 1618-1619 (when his last will is dated). His tomb, located nearby, was built in the *Hegira* year of 1029 (1621).

Archaeological excavations carried out in the courtyard of the mosque between 1994-1996 partially uncovered the vestiges of an inn with monumental entrance and large interior courtyard (fig. 5); the construction is located in front of the mosque and the tomb and functioned until 1771, afterwards being completely destroyed during the Russian-Turkish wars that were carried out in this territory [Vasiliu 1996, 208].

The inn is an edifice of appreciable size, whose walls measure 30 m east-west and 20 m from north to south. The large walls have foundations of 0,60-0,80 m deep due to the sloping ground where they were erected, made of quarry stone bound with mortar and having in its compo-

11. Which will become a place of pilgrimage, being visited by all the sultans passing through Babadag (quite numerous, given the frequent military expeditions against Moldavia, Poland or Russia).





Fig. 4. Halt in a caravanserai (apud Călători 1976, fig.61).

sition a lot of sea sand, while the elevation of the large walls of 1,00-1,20 m wide is still preserved at a height that varies between 0,60 and 1,35 m and it is made in the technique of stonework with *emplecton* [Vasiliu 1996, 205]. The edifice had two stages of use, which differ from one another by the construction techniques used. During the first stage, there is a wide area of 4,50-5,00 m, that was probably used for habitation, for practicing certain crafts or for various commercial activities [Vasiliu 1996, 206]. During the second stage, the monumental edifice had an interior courtyard, paved with small and medium sized stones, a courtyard that was protected by a roof made of planks and gutter tiles, sustained on wooden poles.

For the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Evliyâ Çelebi records “eight inns”, mentioning that “All merchants, during Summer and Winter, stay in these inns” [Călători 1976, 392].

The last literary record of the inns in Babadag dates from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was made by the Turkish chronicler Ahmed Vasıf effendi in 1769: “Also, it has both beautiful inns and markets” [Vasiliu 1996, 202].

### c) Danubian route

c.1) *Hırsova/Hârşova*. Although favorably located at the end of a commercial road, in front of the mouth of the Ialomița river,

where it flows into the Danube, we do not have direct information about the city of Hârşova at the beginning of the Ottoman rule, but the *kazâ* of Hârşova is mentioned in a *defter* number 37 from 908 H. (1502-1503) [Popescu 2013, 70, note 212]. An important role of the city is that of a transit node for the trans-Dobruđjan trade; at least for the 16<sup>th</sup> century it is documentary attested another route for shipping to Istanbul the grains deposited in the port of Brăila: on the Danube, using skiffs (*sayka*), to Hârşova and, from there, with wagons to Constanța [Popescu 2013, 185].

For the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the information about Hârşova is more plentiful, due to the increasing importance of this city, both from the military – key element in the Danubian defensive system pictured by the Ottomans - and economic points

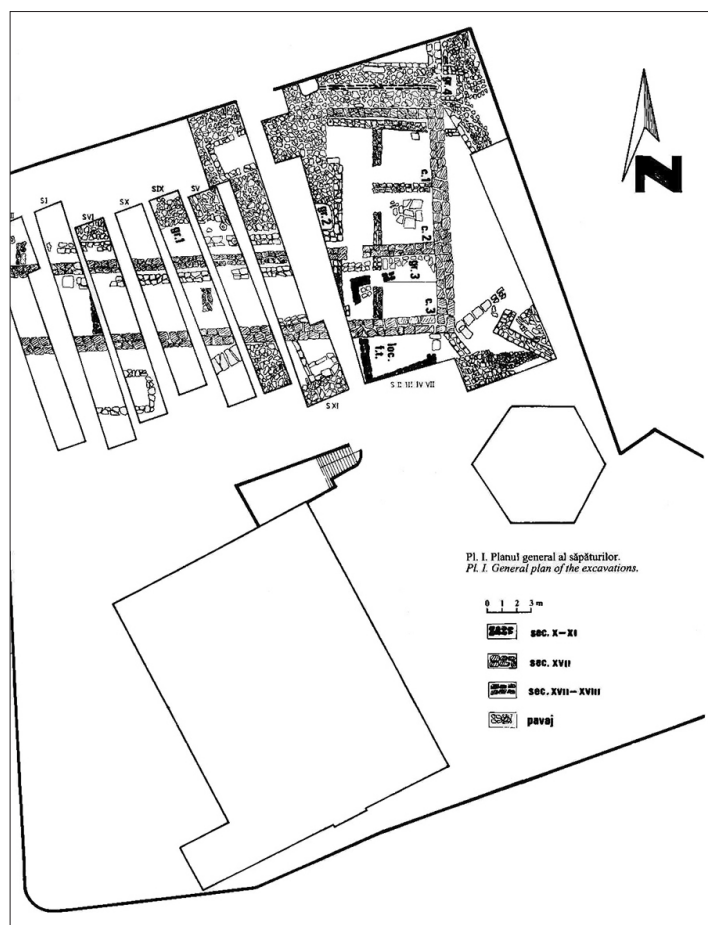


Fig. 5. Plan of the archaeologically researched inn (apud Vasiliu 1996, 217, pl.1).



**Fig. 6.** Inn from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Măcin, Tulcea county.

of view. Important information is provided by Evlyiâ Çelebi who, in the autumn of 1657, on his way back to Istanbul, chooses a route [Mehmed 1965, 1099 note 19] in Dobrudja which includes most of the important localities on the Danube's bank, among which is Hârşova, where he will spend the night. According to his accounts, at that time it was a "fortified and durable" city, which had "3000 steps around it", with "two neighborhoods, with 1600 houses", several mosques, "low bathroom and three inns, a market and a small center" [Călători 1976, 451 and note 321].

Archaeological research that began in the 1990s indicates a fortress area of about 30 ha, during the time of its maximum expansion, naturally considering its great strategic importance. At the same time it certifies the organization of the Ottoman city in the area and, often, with reused materials from the old and powerful Roman-Byzantine city *Carsium* [Nicolae 2016, 49-55]. But, although the traces of the fortress cover a considerable area, the material vestiges of the documented buildings, even of the inns, are not attested – to date.

**c.2) Maçin/Măcin.** The entire economic, social and administrative evolution of Măcin locality during the Ottoman period will be subordinated to its position and the role conferred by the Ottoman authority within the province's trade and defensive system, most written sources certifying the main character of a customs station to tax imports and exports, especially for the river traffic. Defen-

sive and transit location, as well as river communication node with the outlets of the trans-Dobrudjan road, Măcin scaffolding had commercial links also on land both with the "Turkish road" and with the road that went to Silistra along the right bank of the Danube.

Tributary to this statute, the city entered early into the attention of the Ottoman leaders in terms of its military fortification, but also of the administrative adjustment. The military role is evidenced by the presence of strong military garrisons in Măcin, with the customary fortress (*hisar*) in the border towns, this port being a connecting link to the Danube Gulf area and to the

states located north of the river [Şerban, Şerban 1971, 283-291, 287].

In June 1762, the Ragusan Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich, travelling through Dobrudja, notes the existence of an inn in this locality: "... accompanying us to our inn" [Călători 1997, 461], and a few years later (1764) Resmi Ahmed Efendi, passing through this region on his way to Berlin, recalls that "...we arrived at the menzil called Măcin" [Călători 1997, 498].

Today, the mosque and the inn (fig. 6), dated to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reflect a much older historical reality, maybe even from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**c.3) Isakçı/Isaccea.** The historical evolution of Isaccea is strictly connected to its status as a terminal point, for Ottoman Dobrudja, of the commercial and military road linking the north-Danubian and the north-Pontic lands to the capital of the Empire, Istanbul [Popescu 2013, 141-142]. During the Ottoman occupation, the strategic character of the locality is preserved, as a Danube crossing ford, but also the economic role is increased due to the construction of warehouses for the supply of expeditionary armies, but also to its placement on the trans-Balkan route.

An account of May 1651, left by the Russian abbot Arsenie Suhanov, indirectly shows the existence of an inn in this locality, without giving details: "... in the evening we arrived in the city of Isaccea, which is located on the right bank of the Danube, built of white stone, around it is a large market place. There they went on the quite, hiding,



and the inn-keeper did not give us on the hands of the prince and hid us from the tax collectors. Here we have spent the night.” [Călători 1973, 411].

The inn from Isaccea is the only one on the Dobrudjan territory that we have information about its founder; the valuable information is due to the Turkish traveler Evlyiâ Çelebi who, a few years later (1659), tells us that “...the inns, the mosque, the charitable organization, the bath, the market and the bazaar are all beneficence and gifts...” of Hasan Paşa (around 1621) [Călători 1976, 489]. He also provides information on how it was managed: “...their administration passes from father to son. After the descendants of the stipulated ones are dead, it is managed for a rent of 6,000 *guruş*” [Călători 1976, 490].

Unfortunately, archaeological remains of the mentioned buildings are not available (except for the mosque), being destroyed for ever or overlapped by the constructions of the modern locality.

**c.4) Tolçi/Tulcea.** In the Ottoman period, Tulcea benefited from the advantages of its strategic position as a nodal point in the Danube Mouth region. This gave it the advantage of being at the intersection of some communication routes essential for Dobruđja and for the West-Pontic area [Popescu 2013, 174]. This strategic position is also the reason why most commercial caravans, in the Dobrudjan part of the route, will pass through this locality every time [Mehmed 1965, 1099, notes 16, 19, 22 and 23].

Evlyiâ Çelebi presents Tulcea as the locality which looked like in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; after he gives a brief description of the fortress: “strong, solid construction ... elongated square shape, having a circumference of one thousand sixty steps”, he points out that inside the city there is a mosque, another one is in the civilian city, where were also “six hundred houses”: “a small and neat mosque, near the customs”, but also “a solid inn, made of stone and covered with gutter tiles” mentioning also a series of “... small shops, all of them being charitable foundations...” [Călători 1976, 405].

The last account about Tulcea made by Evlyiâ Çelebi in 1667, shows that: “...the entire army made a halt at the inn of Budjaklî Mustafa aga, which is a serai for halt, really built in its place” [Călători 1976, 748]. This piece of information is interesting also from another point of view: we notice already, in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> cen-

tury, that the era of great commercial caravans is gone<sup>12</sup>, the inns becoming, as the author, very inspired, tells us, “serais for halt”.

Archaeological research conducted in various points of Tulcea city, but especially the ones on Hora hill, in the area of ancient Aegyssus [Stănică 2004, 199-206, 199], highlighted habitation from the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, from the Ottoman period of the town. Several items were recovered, fragmentary, mostly pottery. Close to this housing there was a cemetery from the same period, which is not yet archaeologically researched. Unfortunately, the literary documentation of at least one inn is not supported by material remains on the ground.

## B. Rural localities

In 1641, the clerk Petru Bogdan Bakšić makes a surprising statement, given that a decade later Evlyiâ Çelebi attests the presence of inns in all the important localities of Dobruđja: “In all these provinces there are no longer inns on the road ... this is the situation almost all over Turkey” [Călători 1973, 221]. Situated favorably between the quasi-urban centers of Ester and Karasu, “The small town of Caramurat ... a Muslim town of about a thousand houses ... has a mosque covered with shingle and two inns” [Călători 1976, 396], according to Evlyiâ Çelebi. The author also says that “From here, going south, I arrived in the city of Karasu”.

From another stage of his journey through Dobruđja (1656), the same restless Turkish traveler says that from Silistra “we went south, passing through the villages of Coslugea, Cuiugiuc, Receb Kuyusu, Keci Deresi and Cavalcar. These villages are also part of Dobruđja. Each of these villages has 500-600 houses, inns, mosques and rooms for visitors, being flourishing and beautiful villages ...”.

In June 1762, the Ragusan Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich mentions the existence of an inn “in a village called Karaomer” and he also recalls that at Saraiu “the mayor of the village has built another one (house) for travelers” [Călători 1997, 456, 460].

Direct documentary references of the inns in the rural areas are few, while the archaeologi-

12. Although at Istanbul, at the time, (1672) Cornelio Magni from Parma goes to inns and sees how the caravans arrive to the one that was recently constructed by Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed, according to Iorga 1910, 46.

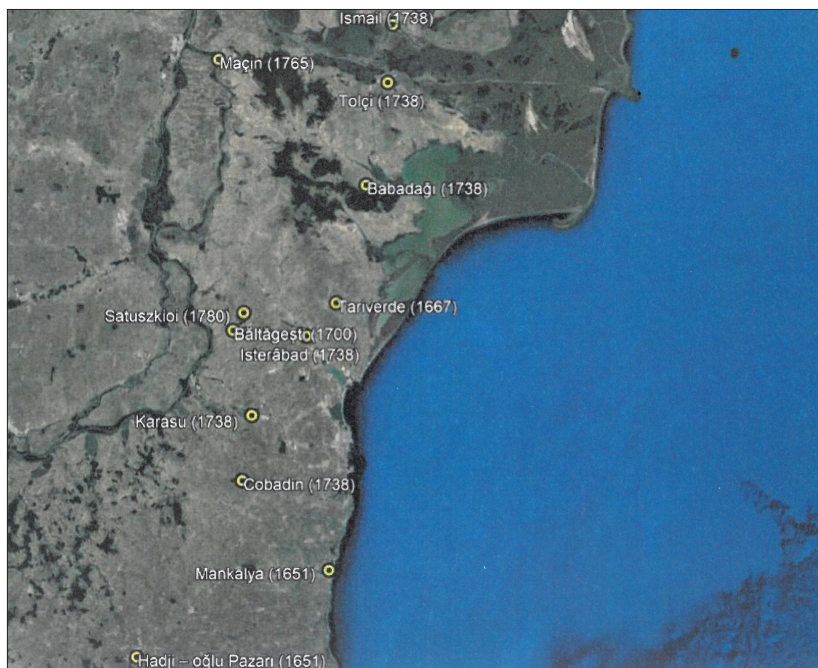


Fig. 7. *Menzil* stations in Dobrudja (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries).

cal discoveries lack entirely. Nevertheless, indirect testimonies outline a comprehensive picture of the situation during the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Due to the notes of the Pole Maciej Strykowski, we find indirectly that, almost a century after the Turkish occupation of Dobrudja, there was a “customary”, “official” road going through this region and connecting Istanbul to the northern countries: Moldavia, Lithuania, Poland: “*At the time we had to travel on an unusual road, through Wallachia, Bulgaria and the rocky Serbia, due to the famine that haunted Moldavia and Turkey in 1574 and 1575, as well as Lithuania in 1570*” [Călători 1970, 449]. We also find out that in 1574 there were inns in Dobrudja “*but due to the great famine from Moldavia and from most Turkish inns, we were forced to use a usual path, continuing our road through Wallachia, Bulgaria, the land of the Tribals to Thracia, through the Balkan mountains...*” [Călători 1970, 455].

In 1737 the Englishman John Bell of Antermony mentions places for halting and eating, without explicitly mentioning that they were inns; we may assume that at least in part, spending the night was made at inns [Călători 1997, 197]. In the same account, we are notified of the post offices/*menzil* stations<sup>13</sup> on the Ismail-Bazargic route, with their localities and distances. As these

13. *Menzil*, *manzil*: halting place or stopping place on the road, especially one associated to *barid*, official postal office.

stations were located in places that could provide shelter and accommodation, we may assume that the rural localities listed (Cobadin and *Ali beg Köy*, the rest not being identified) benefitted of inns as well. Also, in the rural area, *menzil* stations are mentioned at Tariverde [Călători 1976, 749] in 1667, Băltăgești [Panaitescu 1930, 119] in 1700 and *Satusz Köy* [Panaitescu 1930, 239-240] (Crucea) in 1780 (fig. 7).

It is also necessary to take into account the frequent use by travelers of the word *konak* taken, of course, from the local language, which has the meaning of a “pre-fixed housing place”

and “the area crossed between two stops”. With the inherent distortions of translations of original texts or the inappropriate use of the term in respect to the realities on the ground, we nevertheless appreciate the fact that the term is, at least in part, used correctly, for specially arranged halting places known in the epoch [Călători 1997, 460, note 19].

### C. Road network

The route following the coastline was initially used by Ottoman sultans in military campaigns – road of Moldavian campaigns of sultans Mehmed II, in 1476 Bayezid II (1484), conquering Chilia and Süleyman *Kanunı*, in 1538 - but, once it was built the line of fortifications that guards the lagoon complex Razim (Yeni-sale, Babadag) and the Danube on its southernmost arm, Karaharman - Tulcea - Isaccea, the new defensive line allows for the gravity center of communication in Dobrudja to be transferred to the continental road that connected Istanbul, through Adrianople and Bazargic, with Karasu, then, through Babadag and Isaccea, with North-Danubian area (Moldavia towards Poland or towards Russia). This was the main trade route through the province - trans-Dobrudjan central road, while the roads along the Danube, as well as the one along the seashore, were of secondary importance. In fact, it is the road used since antiquity by the imperial armies, whether Roman or Byzantine. We are dealing with



a widespread phenomenon in history, the persistence of traditional movement corridors in a region on indefinite time intervals.

The map of communication nodes, the mapping of documentary and/or archaeologically documented centers with inns in Dobrudja (fig. 8-9) provide compelling proof on the major axes of movement (which basically are the ones known and used for traveling since antiquity), being the so-called *route inertia* [Wilkinson 2014, 73]. Even the inherent changes due to military conflicts, the economic decline of some areas, or natural disasters, occur within the same framework. Secondary trails, used for a while, are revived on this occasion and then fall again into oblivion.

Thus, for Dobrudja, especially in the 18th century, with the beginning of the Russian-Turkish military conflicts, but also before, we find that apparently secondary routes are used to travel.

The *Turkish itinerary* of the diary (*ruzname*), which contains the history of the military campaign of 1538, undertaken by Soliman the Magnificent against Moldavia ruled by Petru Rareș, shows that in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the west-Pontic road was mainly used, the route being Kavarna-Tatlıgea-Sütköiu-Istria-Baghî-Babadag-Cataloi-Isaccea [Călători 1968, 383].

The German traveler Martin Gruneweg mentions in 1582 the intermediary stages of the route *Isaccea-Bazargic*: Cataloi-Caugagia-Ceamurlia de Sus, Ceamurlia de Jos or Baia-Hamangia-Beidaud-Târgușor-Karasu-Adamclisi-Musabei/Krasen (currently in Bulgaria) [Călători 2011, 86-91], but in 1584 and 1586 (on the out journey) the route is no longer respected, and is deviated through Hârșova and Wallachia due to the presence of Turkish troops on the usual road [Călători 2011, 99-100, 110-111].

The English traveler Robert Bargrave mentions the villages *Déftgia* (Defcea-Gherghina), *Băltăgești*, *Dulgheler*, *Hassanlar*, *Iglița* as stages of the route [Călători 1973, 483-484].

In July 1746, the Swedish Paul Jamjouglou tells us of a route that mentions the villages *Cara Agaci*, *Giuvenlia*, *Ali Bey chiöi*, *Omurcio* (Valu lui Traian), and Tariverde, stating that at the time the route through Karasu or Ester was not available “because in this area the inns were destroyed”, which implies that there were inns that had not been destroyed on the Tariverde route [Călători 1997, 328].

In November 1759, the secretary of the embassy Adam Golarowski lists the places where he spent the night, respectively Peceneaga, Saraiu, Straja and *Karasu* [Călători 1997, 422].

A special route is mentioned also by Ragusan Giuseppe Boscovich in his journey of June 1762: *Karaomer* (Negru Vodă) - *Güvenli* (Chirnogeni) - *Mangaci* (Plopeni) - *Boglar* - *Bocmange* - *Biulbiul* - *Karasu* - *Déftgia* (Gherghina) - *Băltăgești* - *Saraiu* - *Dăeni* - *Başpunar* (Fântâna Mare) - *Ieni Köy* (Mihai Bravu) - *Măcin* [Călători 1997, 456-461].

Toma Alexandrovici accounts two routes in 1766, through *Măcin* - *Ieni Köy* - *Daia Köy* (Dăeni), “a small town in ruins” - *Siradzi* - *Karasu* - *Ghivimle* - *Hazerkiuinsy* - *Bazargic*, another route being chosen on the way back, the well-known one, through Ester, Babadag and Tulcea [Panaitescu 1930, 221-222].

Nikolai Vasilievici Reprin crosses the route in May 1776 and notes down: *Bektir Köy* (Cur-

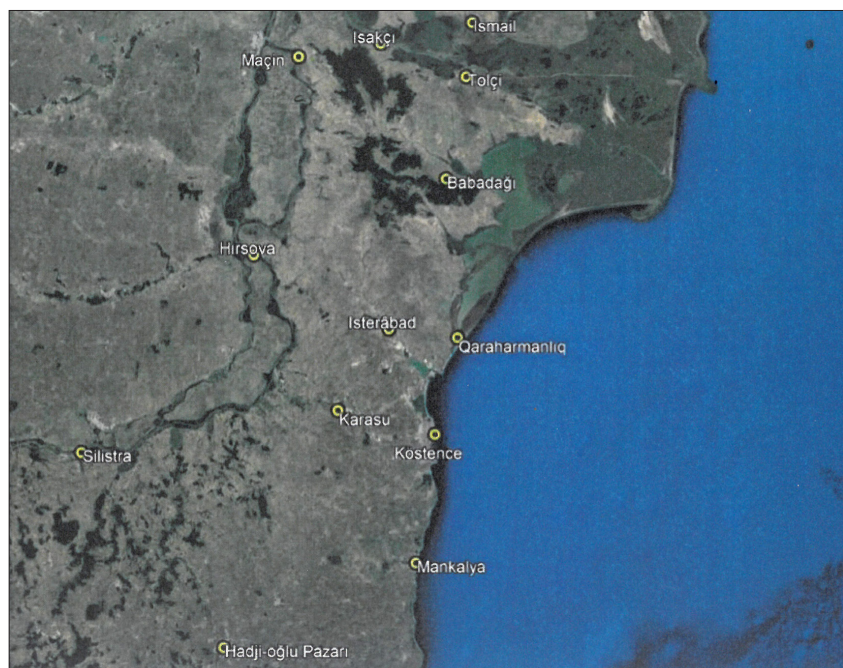


Fig. 8. Inns in market towns and urban centers.



**Fig. 9.** Spatial distribution of inns in Dobruja (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries).

cani) - *Mamut Kuiu*s (Izvoru Mare) - *Celebi Köy* (Mircea Vodă) - *Satış Köy* (Crucea) - Casimcea - Cerna - Măcin [Călători 10, I, 2000, 207].

A few years later (1780), the Pole W. Chrzanowski indicated the following localities on the Babadag - *Bazargic* route: *Hassana* - *Kassyndze* - *Satuszkioi* (Crucea) - *Celebi Köy* (Mircea Vodă), „located on the big lake called *Karasu*” - *Kubadia* - *Kalfa* - *Kioi* - *Casapgi* [Călători 2000, 239-240].

As time goes by, the routes become more diverse, for various reasons: stabilization of the political situation and traffic safety or, on the contrary, the need to avoid conflict zones; the rise of some localities and the decline of others.

### Conclusions

There is a relatively dense network of accommodation and meal places, whether they are called caravanserais, inns, *konak* or guest houses, a network that includes not only large, quasi-urban, well-known centers, but also smaller localities, favorably located on the main travel routes. Without accurate data, however, we do not know how many of them were initiatives of the sultanate or of military and administrative leaders in the region; probably, most of them were individual initiatives for the purpose of individual gain and to provide for their existence.

The lack of archaeological traces makes it impossible to evaluate and classify Dobrudjan inns according to well-defined criteria such as: form, type/influence, building technique, partitioning, adja-

cent functions, architecture which was adapted to climate.

In Dobruja, especially in the first century after the Ottoman conquest, but also in the following, we can not speak of caravanserais/inn as a symbol of power, for lack of data, but rather as an expression of the piety of the benefactors. And here we refer to *Ali Gazi paşa*, with the well-known moment from Babadag, as well as to *Hasan paşa*, the constructor of some public centers at Isaccea. We do not know up to now whether the founding of a caravan-

serai in Dobruja was made by the Sultan's decision although, logically, the construction of *Esma-Han Sultan* mosque from the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Mangalia should have been accompanied by such an action, the locality being considered at the time as the “*Kaaba of wanderers and poor people*” [Călători 1976, 380].

Following this first phase of the study dedicated to the Dobrudjan inns, we tend to believe that, from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and especially in the rural area, the inns in Dobruja were of small size and poorly constructed. This is due both to theoretical causes (the political instability in the region started in this period, which leads to frequent destruction and lack of motivation for solid construction; the lack of a consolidated culture of caravan trade) and practical (the lack of numerous specialized constructors, adaptation to the available building materials). Such an inn from the late period is described by architect G.M. Cantacuzino in the 1930s, an edifice that is in the vicinity of some Roman ruins from which building materials were taken so that in the new construction one could find elements of acanthus leaves and spirals of volutes [Ancuța 2017, online, 17].

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