

## THE INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION OF OLTENIA DURING 1878-1914

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**Abstract.** *The state gaining independence in 1877, gave a powerful impetus to the country's economic and social development, the economy entering a sustained process of modernization. The independence meant, first of all, full output Romania from Turkish customs influence, the possibility of concluding customs and trade agreements with other countries, and led to economic policy designed to promote industrial development.*

*If, by the sixth decade of the nineteenth century, the domestic industry dominated the whole production process of the country, in the period now under review it is relatively restrained, but does not disappear, continuing to exist especially in rural mountain and hill regions.*

*Mechanized industry, which appeared in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century and was represented by mills, tanneries and so on, slowly develops in our country, with a delay of 50-100 years to the rest of Europe. In the period 1860-1886 there are created the premises for its development, through the acquisition of national sovereignty, institutionalization of a modern market economy, creation of infrastructure, establishment of national currency in 1867, and the creation of the modern banking system.*

*In Oltenia the most developed industrial branches were those of the light industry: food, textile, leather, and those producing raw materials, oil and forestry. Industry in this region has always been closely linked to the development of agriculture, based on the abundant agricultural raw materials. Most industrial establishments were from the processing of agricultural products, which gave the characteristic feature of Oltenia industry. Although the industrial development was uneven and influenced by material factors, which gave it the agricultural feature, the industrial establishments increased continuously in Oltenia and the mechanized industry accelerated its development together with the evolution of the Romanian economy.*

**Keywords:** *Oltenia, industry, industrial establishments, mechanised industry, modernization process.*

The state gaining independence in 1877, gave a powerful impetus to the country's economic and social development, the economy entering a sustained process of modernization. The independence meant, first of all, full output Romania from Turkish customs influence, the possibility of concluding customs and trade agreements with other countries, and led to economic policy designed to promote industrial development.

If, by the sixth decade of the nineteenth century, the domestic industry dominated the whole production process of the country, in the period now under review it is relatively restrained, but does not disappear, continuing to exist especially in rural mountain and hill regions. Regarding the craft industry, it continued to be until the late nineteenth century the main form of the industrial production, undergoing, however, a restructuring and adaptation process, so in 1914 provided about 30% of the country's industrial production, being situated after the large mechanized industry. The situation is different regarding the manufacturing industry, which will not continue to exist in the new industrial system, because a part of the manufacturing workshops, being equipped with machinery and mechanical driving force, is converted into factories, and the other part with specific manual processes will disappear.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Axenciuc, *Introducere în istoria economică a României – Epoca Modernă*, Editura Fundației „România de Măine”, București, 1997, p. 130-135.

Mechanized industry, which appeared in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century and was represented by mills, tanneries and so on, slowly developed in our country, with a delay of 50-100 years to the rest of Europe. In the period 1860-1886 there were created the premises for its development, through the acquisition of national sovereignty, institutionalization of a modern market economy, creation of infrastructure, establishment of national currency in 1867 and the creation of the modern banking system which followed the establishment of the National Bank of Romania, in 1880. After 1886, free trade policy ends and begins the era of the industrial protectionism, which is the period when the mechanized industry takes off and places itself in the economic life of the country.<sup>2</sup>

In Oltenia the most developed industrial branches were those of the light industry: food, textile, leather and those producing raw materials, oil and forestry. Industry in this region was always closely linked to the development of agriculture, based on the abundant agricultural raw materials. Most industrial establishments were from the processing of agricultural products, which gave the characteristic feature of Oltenia industry.

It therefore develops primarily milling industry, Craiova, Calafat, Băilești, Turnu Severin being the most important centers of this industry. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century the largest mills in Oltenia, with a high production capacity were: „M. Weiss et Fii”, established in 1884, „Isac I. Beligrădeanu”-1879, „Moise Mendel”-1852, „Barbu Drugă”-1876, „B. Pomerantz et Fiu”-1861, „Carol Rauterstrach”-1887, all these in Craiova; „Molt și Rădulescu”, „D. Dracopol”, in Calafat; „Prințul B. A. Știrbey”, in Băilești; „Căp. Avramescu Al.”, „Andrei Ghelciu”, in Râmnicu Vâlcea; „Terese V. Schwartz”, in Drobeta Turnu Severin. There were a total of 1,247 mills which operated with steam engines, gas or water power, some of them such as those of Craiova, Calafat and Turnu Severin exporting about 50% of their annual production.<sup>3</sup> In the food industry, breweries, alcohol and spirits industry remarkable progress was made as well. Leather industry is diversifying and expanding its production, the number of tanneries growing more and more. Among them, the following had the highest production: the Eskenazy tannery, which worked in the late nineteenth century with 65 workers, having also attached a clothing workshop, the tannery at Bucovăț, founded in 1882, both in Craiova; the tanneries „Răsoiu și Comșa”, founded in 1889 and „La opinca națională”, in Târgu-Jiu; the leather factory „Frații Hanciu Moritz et Selendath” (1896), and the tanneries „N.I. Șimian”, „N. Șteflea”, „Frații Kleinrath”, „Oprea I. Șimian”, all set up in 1886 in Râmnicu Vâlcea.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the textile industry, it was pretty weak, the most important establishment being the fustian factory „P. Birman și Fiu” in Craiova, followed by the rough homespun factories „Iohan

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 137. Also see Victor Axenciuc, Ioan Tiberian, *Premise economice ale formării statului național unitar român*, Editura Academiei, București, 1979, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Osiac, *Dezvoltarea industrial-comercială a Olteniei în epoca modernă*, Editura Universitaria, Craiova, 1997, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 39.

Fleischer" (1902), „Iohan Gașpar" (1878), „Nae Predescu" (1902) and the „Oltenia" cloth factory (1914) that, otherwise, was one of the most important industrial establishments in Oltenia founded during this period, and having 200 workers - all in Craiova.<sup>5</sup>

Other industries also developed both by increasing the number of industrial establishments and in terms of production, as regards the wood industry, with its forestry and processing branches, and building materials industry: bricks, tiles, hydraulic lime, plaster etc., this being due to the abundance of raw materials and urban development of the region. The main building materials factories were: the brick factory „P. Andreescu" (1898), Craiova, the lime and gypsum factory „Marocneanu și Gârlișteanu" (1901), from Gura Văii, Mehedinți, the tile factory „Mihai Pătru și Ion Vasilescu" (1903), in Ciupercenii Vechi, Dolj, the brick, tiles and tiled stoves factory in Cernele, Dolj (1912), the company of the production and consumption cooperative „Oltețu" in Zătreni, Vâlcea, and the lime factory „Runcu" (1908), Gorj. Regarding the wood industry, almost all the shares in Lotru Valley were seized by the „I. Gutmann and Comp." firm, which will become, in 1901, the Snonymous society for Exploitation of Forests „Lotru". Among the most important wood processing enterprises in Oltenia, there were: the Arpad Konrad workshop (1906), the Anton Bulfinschi and Gheorghe Ionescu workshops, both in Craiova and the mechanical carpentry workshop of M. Spech (1907), in Vâlcea.<sup>6</sup>

In Oltenia the mining industry was less developed and had a low production. The coal industry, for example, was limited to Mehedinți and Gorj counties, and the coal extracted was used mainly for the railways and not in the processing industry. During this period, there was, in Vâlcea County, a gold mine, and in 1908-1909 was established a mining society that systematically exploited gold in the Lotru mountains.<sup>7</sup>

The largest metallurgical enterprise in Oltenia continued to be, at this time, the shipbuilding yard from Drobeta Turnu Severin. In addition to this, other major metallurgical enterprises were: Gustav Wolf, Craiova (1884, specialized in iron construction), Carol Blozel, Turnu Severin (1886, iron construction), Eitel Dietrich, Râmnicu Vâlcea (1893, agricultural machineries, foundry), Adolf Weidmann, Craiova (1895, agricultural machineries), Richard Graepel, Craiova (1901, agricultural machineries, foundry), P. Andreescu et Sons, Bucovăț, Dolj (1911, iron bellows), Felix Weidmann, Craiova (1912, mechanical workshop) etc.<sup>8</sup> As we can see, most of the metallurgical enterprises were specialized in agricultural machine building, according to the agricultural nature of the region,

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup> *Dicționarul istoric al localităților din județul Vâlcea*, vol. I, *Orașele*, coord. Dinică Ciobotea, Cezar Avram, Editura Sitech, Craiova, 2009, p. 209 (we shall further refer as *Dicționarul istoric...*)

<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Osiac, *op.cit.*, p. 37, Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Zarzără, *Istoria Întreprinderii de Mașini Agricole și Tractoare din Craiova 1878-2008*, Editura Sitech, Craiova, 2009, p. 31.

but under these conditions, most of them produced quite a few equipment, that did not cover the needs of a major agricultural area, or of the country and export.

The oltenian industry in the last decades of the nineteenth century is surprised by the statistics compiled in 1885, which sought to centralize the major industrial establishments in Dolj county to the „project relative to the encouragement of the national industry”. At the request of the Dolj county prefect to prepare a statement of the local industries, most responses were negative, except the Amaradia-Ocolu locality, where there were two spirits plants, the town of Calafat, where there were mentioned a brewery and a soda water factory, and of Craiova, where there were 48 factories and industrial establishments including: 6 manufacturers of candles, 8 tanneries, 3 factories of rough homespun, 9 shoemakers, two tailors, 3 furriers, 3 sculptors of monuments, two manufacturers of plows, a woodstove tower, a blacksmith shop and a carpenter, two mechanical workshops, two blacksmiths, two upholsterers, two millers.<sup>9</sup> A few years later, in 1892, another statistic of „all factories and workshops” in the county listed in Craiova only 22 industrial establishments, while in Calafat were recorded 61 (10 factories with 2-15 workers per day, none with machines, 20 workshops with 2-5 workers a day, 31 individual craftsmen with 1-3 workers per day).<sup>10</sup> Hence the different perception of police chiefs, who were responsible for preparing these situations, about what it was, at the time, a factory or a workshop. The 22 industrial establishments in Craiova were: the steam mills Așer Eschenasy, Moise A. Mendel et Fiu, Isac B. Iosif et Fiu, Pepi B. Pomerantz; the mechanical workshops producing and repairing agricultural machinery of Gustav Burkhardt, Iosif Lachman; Acsentie Pilca, Anton Bulfinschi and Franz Ecseler’s carriage workshops; Grigori Siroși’s blacksmith shop; Dimitri Ghizdăvescu’s knitwear factory; Tănăsache Teodorescu’s linen factory; Carol Eniștea’s tile factory; Aron M. Lillu and „Societatea Viitorului” rope factories; Ioan Popp’s carpentry and furniture shop; the rough homespun factories „Societatea Deșteptarea” and Johan Gașpar; the printing workshops Ralian Samitca, Filip Lazăr, David Benvenisti and Nicolae Macavei<sup>11</sup>.

Therefore, the industrial development in this region has been uneven and influenced primarily by material factors, such as raw materials and energy generators, which led to the development of consumer goods manufacturing industry, the food industry occupying the dominant position: mills occupied the largest share within the industrial establishments. If, in 1878, Craiova’s industry was still in the manufacturing stage, characterized by the large number of workshops, in which there worked mostly foreign artisans, the local elements representing only a small percentage, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the local economy registered visible changes and the trend to form a national

<sup>9</sup> Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Dolj (The County Administration of the National Archives from Dolj), fund *Prefectura Județului Dolj*, Serviciul Administrativ, file 142/1885, f. 9, 13, 25-26 (we shall refer further as SJAN).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, file 105/1892, f. 56, 107-110.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

industry was evident. Craiova continued to be an important agricultural, commercial and industrial urban center, but the separation from the agriculture was not finished, and therefore large areas continued to be used for gardening, cereals, vineyards, orchards and grazing.

However, Craiova industry recorded a number of achievements and we will continue to focus on a few: in 1882 it is established a tannery and a brick factory in addition to the Bucovăț Prison<sup>12</sup>; in 1887 Ștefan Constantinescu, the headmaster of the vocational school, set up a rope factory, then moved to the city<sup>13</sup>; in the same year it was put into operation the first knitwear factory, equipped with 12 knitting machines and a staff of 24 employees, their products (sweaters, socks, gloves etc.) being marketed in Craiova, Calafat and Caracal<sup>14</sup>; in 1894 it was founded the Richard Graepel agricultural machinery factory and warehouse, the tanning factory, equipped with a steam machine, built by the Kepik brothers, the Adolf Waidmann mechanical factory with departments of turning, blacksmithing and carpentry, created in 1895, the Power plant, called into operation in 1896 and representing the largest foreign capital investment, the Refrigerator and Ice factory in 1901, the first chocolate factory in Oltenia „Toppescu and Comp.”, in 1907, the bread factory „S.C. Traiul”, opened in 1909, the systematic mill Șt. Barbu Drugă<sup>15</sup> etc.

The printing industry has experienced a great development in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Craiova being one of the main printing centers of the country. In a statistic from 1885 there were registered four printing establishments: „Ignat and Ralian Samitca” typography which enjoyed, like other industrial establishments, the benefits of the law in 1887, having 80 workers in 1897 and gaining a good reputation for the quality of their work; „Filip Lazăr” typography which operated since 1874 and which changed its name over the existence in the Romanian Typography (1884), Filip Lazăr et Comp. Typography (1893), Lazăr Typography (1901); „Frații Benvenisti” typography established in 1876 which became in 1890 „Frații Benvenisti” publisher and bookstore (it continued to function until 1929); „Asociații Români” typography, established in 1884 (it became „N. I. Macavei” typography)<sup>16</sup>.

The building materials industry has also grown because of the existence of raw materials, on the one hand, but also because of the works made to modernize the city. The main establishments of this type were „P. Andreescu” (1898) and „Cernele”, specialized in producing bricks, tiles and tiled stoves<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> SJAN Dolj, fund *Prefectura Județului Dolj*, file 15/1882, f. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, file 112/1887, f. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Luchian Deaconu, Otilia Gherghe, *Craiova de la 1878 la 1900*, Editura Sitech, Craiova, 2009, p. 296.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 303-304. Also see Luchian Deaconu, *Craiova 1898-1916. Saltul la urbanismul modern*, Editura Sitech, Craiova, 2001, p. 228.

<sup>16</sup> SJAN Dolj, fund *Prefectura Județului Dolj*, file 142/1885, f. 4,5. Also see Gheorghe Pârnuță, Nicolae Andrei, *Istoria cărții, presei și tiparului din Oltenia*, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Editura Oltenia, Craiova, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> *Istoria Craiovei*, Editura Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1977, p. 77.

The industrial and commercial development of the city led to the appearance of the first banking units in the late nineteenth century: in 1881 it began operating Craiova branch of the National Bank of Romania, and in 1897 it was established Banca Comercială (the Commercial Bank), which will open agencies in Corabia, Caracal, Turnu Severin, Drăgășani, Balș, Bechet<sup>18</sup>.

Regarding the metallurgical industry in Craiova there were, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, many enterprises of agricultural machinery such as: Clayton & Shuttleworth workshop (1877), Eugeniu Bechles (1898), M.I. Panijel (1893), W. Stadecker (1893), Mihail Nasta (1878), Richard Graepel (1893), Gustav Wolf (1884), Adolf Weidmann (1895), P. Andreescu et Fii (1911) and Felix Waidmann (1912)<sup>19</sup>.

One of the oldest metallurgical enterprises in Craiova was that of Mihail Nasta, opened in 1878 as a coal store, blacksmith and agricultural machinery and continued with a repair and manufactured agricultural machinery shop. In 1893 he became associated with Richard Graepel, and in 1896 the latter took over the entire company under his name, henceforth called the „factory and warehouse for agricultural and industrial machinery, iron and brass foundry”. Richard Graepel factory continued to grow, so that in the years 1914-1915, produced or marketed over 88 categories of locomobile, threshing, sawmill, harrows, sewing machines, plows, pumps, mowers, lathes, drill, presses, etc., after 1912 also becoming the Royal Court provider<sup>20</sup>.

During this period, the Burkhardt branch of the Clayton company annually produced about 15-20 farm machinery, they provided in Bucharest, Ploiesti, Pitesti, Slatina, Turnu Magurele, Zimnicea, Tecuci, etc. They also provided replacement parts and components to the Lemartine plant in Bucharest, the coal mine in Targu Jiu, the A.B. Sabetay factory in Drobeta or locally to the printing workshops, mills and large enterprises such as Graepel, F. Weidman, P. Andreescu etc. Remarkably, however, it was the fact that, among the enterprises in Craiova, it figured, as the only exporting firm, in 1904<sup>21</sup>.

The industrial establishments Clayton and Richard Graepel met also the conditions of the industrial encouragement laws in 1887 and 1912, receiving advantages since 1906 and the benefits were to expire in 1921<sup>22</sup>.

Another great industrial enterprise in Craiova was the Ing.C. Brătășeanu foundry, founded in 1910<sup>23</sup> and together with Clayton & Shuttleworth (Burkhardt) and Richard Graepel they started their

<sup>18</sup> Luchian Deaconu, Otilia Gherghe, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>19</sup> Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Zarzără, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Graepel, *Craiova. Catalog general*, Ediția 1914-1915, Editura Samitca, Craiova, f.a. Apud Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Zarzără, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Zarzără, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Emanoil Barbu, Dinică Ciobotea, Ion Zarzără, *Istoria Camerei de Comerț și Industrie „Oltenia”*, Editura Camerei de Comerț și Industrie „Oltenia”, Craiova, 2000, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup> SJAN Dolj, fund *Brătășeanu*, file 1/1910, f. 1,2.

activity in the 1877-1910 time segment, which coincided with the creation of the national industry and the formation and consolidation of an industry in Craiova. Another major urban center of Oltenia was Turnu Severin, and this was mainly due to the existence of the shipyard. The development of the port activities and of the repair workshop led to the continuous expansion of the port, the number of vessels entering there increasing continuously. The shipyard came under Romanian administration on July 15, 1893, when it was bought by the Romanian State Monopoly from the DDSG Austrian society, year 1900 being also crucial for the modernization of the yard- at the time there it was introduced electricity and electric lighting. In its 25 years of existence, the shipyard reached the highest production level between 1893-1899 and 1908-1910, when it obtained incomes of over 1.5 million lei<sup>24</sup>.

Although in this period, the percentage of the Severin's industry grew, the predominant character of the economy continued to be commercial and handicraft. This emerges from a report submitted to the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Craiova, in 1888, by the Secretary of the Chamber and the collaborator of the Chamber Bulletin: the town was developed but not uniformly, the main area being the center and west part, where the markets, banks and other commercial and industrial units were concentrated<sup>25</sup>.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century due to the need of credit for trade and industry and fitting into the overall economic development of the country, the first banks were established: in 1892 there was established a branch of the National Bank; in 1899 „Banca Mehedințului” (the Mehedinți Bank) was founded; in 1904 „Banca Severinului” (the Severin Bank); Banca Comercială (the Commercial Bank) in 1908; in 1911 Banca Comerțului (the Commerce Bank); Banca Comercianților și Industriașilor (the Bank of Merchants and Industrialists) in 1913 and in 1914 Banca „Dunărea” (the Danube Bank)<sup>26</sup>.

During this period the craft industries and businesses launched in the city, enjoying the benefits of the laws of encouragement, rapidly developed. Since 1856 the city had a brewery, spirits and vinegar factory<sup>27</sup>; Later there were established brick and lime factories, a tile factory<sup>28</sup>, Princes Stirbey's glass factory<sup>29</sup>, alcohol refineries, mills on the Danube, entrepreneurs of sand and gravel quarries, etc. Some of these industrial establishments benefited of modern technical facilities,

<sup>24</sup> Constantin Petrică Dănescu, *Șantierul Naval din Turnu Severin*, vol. I (1851-1950), Editura Prier, Drobeta Turnu Severin, 2004, p. 45-83. Also see Vladimir Osiac, *Șantierul de construcții navale Turnu Severin, important centru al mișcării muncitorești din Oltenia*, in „Historica”, I, Editura Academiei, București, 1970.

<sup>25</sup> „Buletinul Camerei de Comerț și Industrie Circumscripțiunea I Craiova”, year I, 2 februarie 1888, no. 10, p. 7-8.

<sup>26</sup> SJAN Mehedinți, fund *Prefectura Mehedinți*, inv. 94/1924, f. 36-37.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, fund *Tribunalul Mehedinți*, inv. 203/1864.

<sup>28</sup> Idem, fund *Primăria orașului Turnu Severin*, file 6/1874, f. 53-54.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, file 1/1877, f. 9-10, 18-21.

among them there were: the Swiss cans factory<sup>30</sup>, the alcohol factory<sup>31</sup>, the Merbeck brewery<sup>32</sup>, the glass and brick factory, etc.

In an industrial statistic appeared in 1911 in the city there were: the Shipyard, the railway workshop and machineries warehouse, the ice plant, the „Traian” brewery, Carol Nemsovici's cement pipes factory and the brick factory, Josif Gradl's candy factory, Miloş Duca's brick factory, Damianoff brothers' tannery factory ( they also founded a leather clothing shop in 1915), five soap factories, three locksmith workshops, three carts workshops and a foundry workshop<sup>33</sup>.

In Oltenia, an agricultural county par excellence was the Romanaţi County. Although the economic concerns of the county residents were geared more to trade, some industrial activity was still present in the urban centers of Caracal and Corabia. After the independence, the number of the industrial establishments in the urban centers mentioned above, increased significantly from the previous period, many were, in particular, shoemaker shops, furriers, tailors, tinsmiths, blacksmith or carpenters.

In 1877, in Caracal was established the mechanical workshop of Josif Caneta, categorized as bronze casting, the statistics from 1887 recording here 14 brandy boilers, a soap boiler, 7 tanneries, 12 brick plants, 4 candle factories, two steam mills, 4 water mills. After a period of ten years the industrial landscape was largely the same. In 1899 there was founded the foundry shop of Nicu Petrovski, the distillery of liqueurs, brandy, rum and fruit syrups of Panait Papahagi and in 1910 the carpentry workshop of Giovanni Gratagliano, which continued to operate until 1950, using an average of 10-15 workers. In 1912, in the town there were two workshops, one aerated water factory, a bakery, a carpentry workshop, two petrol mills and the power plant, which was commissioned with a year earlier<sup>34</sup>.

The data above shows the modest industrial activity of the town and its slow development, features also applying to the urban centre of Corabia, where the specific of the local industry was given by the agricultural area in which the town was settled and therefore the larger development of the milling industry.

In 1883 in Corabia there were two mills powered by steam and two bakeries, in the next five years, adding to the two ovens, a brick factory, located in the city center and a brandy boiler. By 1914 the town failed to grow too much in terms of industry, there being only nine major industrial

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, file 1/1891, f. 141-142.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, file 4/1886, f. 12, file 1/1891, f. 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, file 2/1895, f. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, fund *Camera de Comerţ şi Industrie Turnu Severin*, inv. 1350/1931, f. 4; inv. 1351/1931, f. 53; Idem, fund *Primăria oraşului Turnu Severin*, inv. 3/1905, f. 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> Dana Roxana Dincă, Vera Grigorescu, Sabin Popovici, *Monografia Municipiului Caracal*, 2011, p. 108.



projects namely: two brick and tile factory, a sawmill, three mills, the power plant, a tannery, a candle factory, five bakeries and bread ovens<sup>35</sup>.

Of the industrial establishments that operated in the period considered, the most important were: Ioan Molnar and Ioan Boroș's mill and Cleante Mitraglia's mill, which functioned in 1883; Laios Ciur's mill, installed in the city center in 1893; Anton Ghebert's mill, commissioned in 1899 and that of his brother, Franz Ghebert, founded in 1913; a mill that functioned in the same building as the power plant, operated by the factory engine (their number fluctuated continuously); Nițu Andreescu and Emil Duse's brick and tile factory (it had a 25-hp motor); the gas and mineralized water factories of Ioan Rukini (1901) and Ionescu & M. Zăvăleanu (1911); the mechanical workshops of Lătescu Vasile, C. Teodorescu, Marin Vlăjje or C. Radulescu<sup>36</sup>.

After 1877, Vâlcea County experienced a sustained economic development, as evidenced by the establishment of industrial enterprises, especially in food industries, footwear and wood, present in Râmnicu Vâlcea or by the exploitation of the salt mines from Ocnele Mari, and the forestry and wood processing industries in Brezoi.

One of the main branches developed in Râmnicu Vâlcea was the processing and industrialization of wood, raw material which is found in abundance in the area. Thus in 1889 was born the Hanciu brothers' sawmill, and later „Stangni et Comp.” sawmill, which used improved machines and about 90 workers, and N.C.Vătășescu's factory, which used a number of 45 workers. In 1915 there were 31 sawmills in Vâlcea, fact that demonstrates the extent of this industry in the area.<sup>37</sup> Tannery and footwear represented another important industry in the city. In 1881 the Șimian brothers opened a factory ropes, which also made whips, belts and sandals, using a total of 41 workers. They are expanding their business in 1891, opening a tannery in the town, which, after 1900, increased its production capacity and became the largest industrial enterprise in the county. By 1900 there were five tanneries, some of which were turned into factories with a large production<sup>38</sup>.

Along with the old water mills, which continued to exist, there appeared several more systematic mills as: „Sentinela” mill, founded in 1885 and „Gheltach” mill (1886). During this period, as a result of the industry encouragement law in 1887, there were established approximately 100 tanning, shoemaking, blacksmithing, hats, belts, candles, tiles, bricks workshops and also shops, hotels, inns and restaurants. Among these the most important were the mechanical workshop for the production of agricultural machinery and carpentry, founded by Franz Eitel in 1890 and the company „Proprietatea”, profiled on making bronze objects, created in 1893. In 1899 among the

<sup>35</sup> Florea Bâciu, Ion Vârtejaru, *Monografia orașului Corabia*, 2001, p. 134-139.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>37</sup> Corneliu Tamaș, *Istoria Râmnicului*, Editura „Antim Ivireanul”, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1994, p. 153.

<sup>38</sup> *Dicționarul istoric..*, p. 46.

larger industrial establishments there were: a factory of agricultural machinery and mechanical carpentry, a leather factory, three rope factories, six tanneries, a copper plant, two timber plants, a slaughterhouse, a cooperage shop and seven mills of which two were mechanical<sup>39</sup>.

The commercial and industrial development entailed the establishment of banks: in 1901 it was created a branch of the National Bank and in 1905 began operating Banca Râmnicului (Râmnic Bank) as a stock banking company<sup>40</sup>.

After 1906, gold exploration began in the Lotru Mountains and it was opened „Valea lui Stan” mine from Brezoi, the only gold mine in Romania. But Brezoi village is linked to logging and wood processing industry, which, with the early twentieth century, acquired new dimensions. In 1901 the company „I. Guttman et comp.” turned into „Societatea Anonimă pentru exploatarea de păduri Lotru” (The Anonymous Society for Forests exploitation LOTRU). It built a modern factory in Brezoi with electrical installations and where were operating 12 sawmills, seven circulars and related mechanical workshops. The company grew rapidly and in 1903 four horizontal boilers were installed and another force machine of 450 hp. In 1907 the company had a total of 1344 employees, exporting to Belgium, France, Germany and Austria-Hungary<sup>41</sup>. In the first decade of the twentieth century there were created another two logging companies in Brezoi: one in 1904, the company „Oltul”, the property of N.D.Șimian, Theofil Raux, Al. Maxim and Ștefan Gaillac, and the other in 1909 the forestry company named „Vasilatul”. The latter built a wood factory with six sawmills driven by a power machine of 250 hp, a furniture factory, a mill and two bakeries. In 1914 it will be leased to the Austrian company „Marcus Kislingher”<sup>42</sup>.

Another important industrial objective in Vâlcea was the salt mines from Ocnele Mari, which in 1881 came under the jurisdiction of the State Monopolies. Although the salt from Ocnele Mari occupied, by its superior capitalization, an important place in the economy of the county, the first steam engine brought here dates only from 1894<sup>43</sup>.

Analyzing these data, it appears that, although the industrial development was uneven and influenced by material factors, which gave it the agricultural feature, the number of the industrial establishments increased continuously in Oltenia and the mechanized industry accelerated its development together with the evolution of the Romanian economy.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 46-47.

<sup>40</sup> Corneliu Tamaș, *Istoria Râmnicului...*, p. 154.

<sup>41</sup> Petre Bardășu, Gheorghe Simeanu, *Brezoi-100 de ani de industrie forestieră*, Râmnicu-Vâlcea, 1973, p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> *Dicționarul istoric...*, p. 212-213.

<sup>43</sup> Corneliu Tamaș, *Istoria Ocnelor Mari*, Editura Conphys, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1995, p. 205.

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