

Aurel-Daniel Stănică, Constantin Nicolae, Mihai Anatolii Ciobanu, *Plans and prospects of Hârșova Fortress in Foreign Archives*, Editura Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2021, 109 p., Biblioteca Istro-Pontica, Seria Patrimonium 10 (in Romanian and English)

Aurel-Daniel Stănică¹, Constantin Nicolae², Mihai Anatolii Ciobanu³ present us, in the pages of the work mentioned above, an important contribution in the field of cartographic sources related to Dobrogea, during the Ottoman period. The origin of this approach can be found in the identification, by Mihai Anatolii Ciobanu, at the State Military-Historical Archive of Russia in Moscow and at the National Library "V.I. Vernadski" from Kyiv (previously in the Collection of Maps and Plans of the Museum of the Imperial Society of History and Antiquities in Odesa), of a number of 19 plans and prospectuses of the Hârșova fortress covering the period 1772-1828, the period in which the fortress and the settlement were caught in the succession of Russian-Turkish wars, the fortress suffering destruction and restoration as well as the Russian occupation and the return to the Ottoman Empire.

The importance, for historians and archaeologists, but also for the public wishing to deepen aspects related to the history of Dobrogea, is beyond doubt, for two reasons. First of all, they add to an extremely small number of foreign sources about Dobrogea, which were published in Romania⁴. Secondly, the cartographic documents presented in this volume illustrate the Ottoman era of the fortress, the latter being, in Romanian historiography, associated almost exclusively with the Roman and Byzantine periods ("Carsium fortress") although, throughout the century XX, numerous travelers and specialists drew attention to the fact that the visible ruins on the banks of the Danube are, in fact, Ottoman. Moreover, the

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⁴ *Dobrogea între medieval și modern 1406-1918*, album elaborated by Virgil Coman, Carmen Dobrotă, Claudiu Turcitu, Editura ExPonto, Constanța, 2008, 209 p. (include photos of the Ottoman, Romanian and European documents, explained in Romanian, French, English and German languages); *Dobrogea în izvoare cartografice otomane (sec. XVI-XIX)/Osmanlı Kartografya Kaynaklarında Dobruca (XVI.-XIX.yy)*, edited by Virgil Coman, prefaced by Ali Bozçalışkan, transliteration from Turkish-Ottoman language by Ahmet Yenikale, Editura Etnologică, București, 2015, 103 p. (including Ottoman and European maps of the province).

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approach under our attention is not accidental. Aurel-Daniel Stănică permanently followed the revaluation of the edifices with a defense role erected during the Ottoman domination of Dobrogea, along the Danube, most of them in a state of advanced degradation or already covered by the soil (which implied the use of techniques modern geodesical methods, which complemented previous archaeological research)⁵. For his part, Constantin Nicolae emphasized, in the archaeological campaigns organized in Hârșova, the identification and highlighting of the Ottoman constructive elements in the evolution of the fortress and the settlement.

The work has a special structure, coming from the authors' desire to provide as many explanations as possible related to the context of the cartographic sources and the constructive details provided by them. A first part – *Hârșova during the Ottoman administration* (p. 10-15) – presents a history of the settlement and its importance and is followed by a second part – *the Ottoman Citadel. Documentary information and archaeological data* (p. 16-23), presenting, synthetically, the state of documentation and archaeological research, up to now. This part will be developed, under the title *Hârșova's fortress-archeological file*, between pages 69 and 83, with details about the current situation of the archaeological site, correlated with the details provided in the plans and prospectuses published for the first time. Also, between pages 59-68, the Russo-Turkish wars of 1768-1774, 1806-1812, 1828-1829 are presented, with an emphasis on the sources that indicate military operations on or in the area of the Hârșova fortress.

Pages 24-57 represent the segment of major interest of the work, more specifically the chapter entitled *Recently discovered cartographic sources (18th-19th centuries)* (p. 24-57, 19 plans and prospectuses, commented by the authors). Some of these will also be reproduced in the Appendices (p. 87-109), but on a larger scale. The 19 plans and prospectuses are: 1. *The Plan of the Hârșova Castle*, 34 x 45 cm, (1773-1774); 2. *Prospectus of Hârșova*, 50 x 68 cm (1773-1774); 3. *Prospectus of the Hârșova fortress, located across the Danube, in Bulgaria, in what condition is it now at his conquest by the Russian army from the Turks, that is, in 1772*, 102 x 38cm; 4. *The plan of the castle from Hârșova showing the rooms indicated by numbers, where the mines*

⁵ See, for example, the project *The lost medieval fortress cartography*, financed by the Romanian Administration of National Cultural Fund and implemented by Pro-Noviodunum Association together with Institute for Eco-Museal Research, Tulcea, the National Museum of History and Archaeology, Constanța, and Faculty of History and Political Science, "Ovidius" University from Constanța. The present volume is published, again, with financing from the Romanian Administration of National Cultural Fund under the project *Land [Map]. Digitising of the landscape*, implemented by the Pro-Noviodunum Association, Institute for Eco-Museal Research, Tulcea, and National Museum of History and Archaeology, Constanța.

are located, and the amount of gunpowder to be placed. Made up on the 1st of July, 1773, 49 x 73cm; 5. The plan of Hârşova Castle with the indication of Vorstadt and the newly made fortifications (aprox. 1773); 6. The plan of the Turkish Assault Attempt on Hârşova and the attack of the detachment of the 1st Moskovsky Infantry Regiment on other fortifications; [the enemy was] met, repulsed and pursued by the Russian army corps under the command of Major General Suvorov, 1773, September 3rd, 23 x 100 cm; 7. The Plan of the redoubt built on the island that is now on the Danube, against the mouth of the river Borşa [Borcea] by order of the General Command. Built on August 3rd, 1773. Construction began on July 30th and was completed on August 2nd; each day [for works] there was 80 people, 37 x 31,5 cm; 8. The plan of the redoubt is also the plan of the Hârşova fortress with the showing of what was done and what was left [to be done] (1773, August 3rd), 34,5 x 43 cm; 9. The plan of the Hârşova Castle showing the project around it, and the new constructions follow in the report (May, 1774), 106x51 cm; 10. The Plan of Hârşova Castle with the showing of the former suburb and the situation of the year 1775, February, 48 x 58 cm; 11. The Plan of Hârşova at the beginning of the 19th century, 90 x 58 cm, wrong dated in 1773; 12. The Plan of the place of the camp near Hârşova (May, 1810); 13. The plan of the positions near Hârşova and Zimniţa; 14. The plan of the Hârşova fortress visually raised. Varna (December 24, 1828), 24 x 23 cm; 15. Plan of the surrounding of Hârşova fortress, 31 x 20 cm; 16. Plan of th Hârşova fortress raised in 1828, 40 x 55 cm; 17. A plan of the South-East part of the fortress, including the old castle (1828), 41 x 50,5 cm; 18. Hirsowa (1828); 19. A plan without title and legend (1829-1830), 19 x 26,5 cm.

The work ends with a bibliographic list, including older and newer studies, relevant to the history of the Hârşova fortress and the adjacent area, many of them signed by Aurel-Daniel Stănică and Constantin Nicolae, two of the signatories of the present work. There are mentioned the most important Romanian historians but, also, historians from Turkey and Bulgaria, and testimonies from the first half of the 19th century.

The relevance of the cartographic sources presented in this work is best captured by the authors themselves: " in the analysis and critical interpretation of the sources published in this paper documents it must be borne in mind that some inconsistencies, and there are enough, have their origin, apparently, in certain mistakes made during the topographic surveys and fortification research. Let's not forget that even the archaeological research is not able, for the time being, to certify all the data regarding the route of the walls, the place and shape of the towers, the gates, the interior architecture, etc., later data being able to confirm or refute the situation shown on Russian plans [...] However, regardless of the value of the critical appraisals of these documents, their importance remains exceptional. They open the long way in the analysis and

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comparison of previously unknown sources, they complete information and bring unique elements in the research of one of the most fascinating historical and archaeological sites in Dobrudja”.

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