

## **THE CONTRIBUTION OF DÂMBOVIȚA COUNTY TO THE ROMANIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1877-1878)**

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*Abstract: The support and effective contribution of the Dâmbovița County population to securing Romania's state independence during the Russo-Romanian-Turkish War in the Balkans manifested in diverse forms, both prior to and, more critically, throughout the conflict's progression and the Romanian army's military campaign south of the Danube, on Bulgarian territory. Specifically, the populace of Târgoviște played a decisive role, engaging in various actions that facilitated the collection of funds for essential weapon procurement, the provision of clothing and food for the Romanian army, and the offering of aid to the families of soldiers deployed to the front. This assistance included agricultural labor and ensuring livelihoods, covering the costs of transporting supplies to the Balkan front, guaranteeing fodder for cavalry, providing medical care to the wounded in specially established hospitals at Fonderie and Dealu Monastery, and supporting the Red Cross in quartering and caring for Turkish prisoners.*

*Keywords: Dâmbovița County, Independence War (1877-1878), requisition, subscription, escort, purchase, offerings.*

In the context of the impending conflict with Turkey in late March and early April 1877, coupled with the severe economic hardships faced by Romania over the preceding three years, it became unequivocally clear that, should Romania participate in a war alongside Russia against the Ottoman Empire, the financial burden of equipping, provisioning, and transporting the Romanian army would largely fall upon the populace, in addition to state efforts.<sup>1</sup>

As is well-documented, following the conclusion of the Romanian - Russian Convention on 4/16 April 1877, the Romanian government permitted the transit of the Russian army through Romania towards the Balkan theater of operations, thereby effectively committing itself to military engagement and entering a state of war with the Ottoman Empire on 29 April 1877.<sup>2</sup>

In response to the deteriorating situation in the Balkan Peninsula at the outset of 1877, particularly the looming military conflict between Russia and Turkey, and concurrently with the preparations of the Romanian army for a potential intervention aimed at achieving independence through armed participation, Dâmbovița's political circles demonstrated keen interest. Consequently, as early as 3 March 1877, the Prefecture of Dâmbovița County compiled

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<sup>1</sup> Cornel Mărculescu, *Some Aspects Regarding the Contribution of Dâmbovița County to the Gaining of Romania's State Independence (1877–1878)*, in vol. *The Romanian War of Independence (1877–1878) – 140 years / Războiul de Independență (1877–1878) – 140 de ani*, Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House, Târgoviște, 2017, p. 159 (Despite the financial hardships and the shortcomings observed in the equipping and supplying of the troops, the Romanian army was able to be put on a war footing in a relatively short time thanks to the funds allocated by the government, the military requisitions made in villages and towns, and especially due to the contribution of the entire population of Romania).

<sup>2</sup> Cornel Mărculescu, *The International Context and the Contribution of Dâmbovița County to the Gaining of Romania's State Independence (1877–1878)*, in *Valachica* no. 23 (2010), Târgoviște, 2010, p. 131. (As is known, the Romanian army was not prepared for war, the lack of weapons being well-known. Also in Dâmbovița County, following the appeal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mihail Kogălniceanu, a committee was thus established to raise funds in order to purchase Peabody rifles for equipping the army) (Radu Gioglovan, Constantin Năstase, *The Participation of Dâmbovița County in the Romanian People's Struggle for Freedom and Independence (1877–1878)*, in *Valachica*, no. 9 (1977), Târgoviște, 1977, p. 17–18; *Collection of Documents Regarding the Contribution of the Popular Masses from Dâmbovița County to the Struggle for the National Independence of the Homeland*, Târgoviște, 1977, p. 34 – hereinafter cited as *Collection of Documents*).

recruitment lists of all able-bodied young men. These individuals were subsequently regimented into the Dâmbovița Battalion of the 7th Dorobanți Regiment, the 3rd Line Regiment, and the 4th Călărași Regiment (1st Battalion, 2nd Company Târgoviște) <sup>3</sup>, receiving various combat assignments within the reserve army. <sup>4</sup>

It bears noting that from 12 April 1877, Russia was formally at war with the Ottoman Empire, which necessitated an intensification of efforts across the entire Romanian nation to support a potential large-scale military campaign, far more extensive than merely facilitating Russian transit across the Danube. Under these circumstances, mirroring the contributions of other counties <sup>5</sup>, Dâmbovița County decisively supported the acquisition of Romania's state independence (1877-1878) through substantial material and human endeavors. April 1877 commenced in Dâmbovița County with the initiation of various actions by local authorities and citizens aimed at sustaining the war effort. For instance, to provision the Romanian army with bread, measures were undertaken in Târgoviște to construct ovens capable of producing 10,000 loaves of bread daily. <sup>6</sup>

In this regard, on 8 April 1877, the Minister of Interior, I. C. Brătianu, instructed the Dâmbovița Prefecture to implement necessary measures for flour production, with the objective of yielding 30,000 loaves to be supplied to the Romanian army "when requested." <sup>7</sup> Furthermore, all suitable warehouses and cellars were to be requisitioned for storage. In Târgoviște alone, seven warehouses with a storage capacity of 420,000 *ocale* (approx. 538,000 kg) were established <sup>8</sup>. Within this framework, and in a relatively short period, based on Royal Decree no. 789/6 April 1877, the food commission, formed at the Dâmbovița Prefecture's request, successfully activated 10 bread ovens dedicated to supporting the war effort and, by extension, the Romanian army <sup>9</sup>. On 19 April 1877, a group of citizens petitioned the city hall for access to a hall to organize public meetings where measures for national assistance could be deliberated. <sup>10</sup>

Inspired by the gravity of the events, teachers from Târgoviște were among the first to endorse this initiative. Thus, on 30 April 1877, the Văcărescu Gymnasium established a school committee to organize theatrical performances featuring students, subsequently staging the play "Cetatea Neamț." The funds amassed from these performances were then allocated to the army for the front. <sup>11</sup> The unfolding events of late April and early May 1877, as is widely recognized, ultimately led to the proclamation of Romania's state independence. On 2/14 May 1877, Foreign Minister M. Kogălniceanu clarified Romania's new international standing through a circular note addressed to the guarantor powers, asserting that Romania was at war with Turkey and that this war had been declared by the Porte. <sup>12</sup> Subsequently, on 9/21 May, he famously declared, "we are independent, we are a self-reliant nation." <sup>13</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> **Dâmbovița County Service of the National Archives** (hereinafter *D.C.S.N.A.*), *Târgoviște City Hall* collection, file 114/1878, f. 16; **Cornel Mărculescu**, *op. cit.*, p. ???

<sup>4</sup> *Collection of documents...*, p.17.

<sup>5</sup> **Paul D. Popescu**, *Ploiești and Prahova During the Time of Gaining Romania's State Independence (1871–1878)*, Ploiești – Mileniul III Publishing House, Ploiești, 2002; **Gheorghe Dumitrașcu**, *The Epic of Romania's Independence in the Consciousness of the People of Vâlcea*, Almarom Publishing House, Râmnicu Vâlcea, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> *Collection of documents...*, p. 17; **Cornel Mărculescu**, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> *D.C.S.N.A., Târgoviște City Hall*, doc. 101/1877, f. 29.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. 59/1877, f. 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, file 54/1877, f. 35.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, file 59/1877, f. 61.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, file 60/1877, f. 10; **Cornel Mărculescu**, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> **Iulian Oncescu, Ion Stanciu**, *Introduction to the Modern History of the Romanians*, Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House, Târgoviște, 2009, p. 216.

<sup>13</sup> **Alexandru Zub**, *Mihail Kogălniceanu, an Architect of Modern Romania*, 3rd edition, European Institute, Iași, 2005, p. 87.

As Romania prepared for war against the Ottoman Empire, the Dâmbovița County population responded enthusiastically to the government's appeal to support the equipping and provisioning of troops and the procurement of modern armaments essential for military campaigns. In this context, delegates were dispatched to counties to manage the intricate tasks associated with requisitions. In accordance with War Ministry Order no. 4003/1877, Dâmbovița County was specifically instructed to provide full support to the Russian army transiting its territory, including billeting<sup>14</sup>. Citizens in communes were mandated to ensure "lodging and provisions" for the Russian forces.<sup>15</sup>

Under these circumstances, following the proclamation of Romania's state independence on 9/21 May 1877, the inhabitants of Târgoviște, demonstrating considerable initiative, commenced collecting numerous donations for the front through various actions. One such initiative took place at School No. 1 in Târgoviște, resulting in the collection of substantial quantities of livestock, foodstuffs, cereals, and winter clothing<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, a requisition committee meeting held at the Prefecture, presided over by Dâmbovița County Prefect Isaia Lerescu, collected 245 *ocale* (approx. 314 kg) of cheese, designated for transport to Moșia Stolnici, with the state committing to compensate contributors at 80 *bani* per *ocaua*<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, 86 individuals contributed a total of 525 lei through subscription lists at the city hall, with these funds earmarked for the Romanian ambulance service.<sup>18</sup>

Following a request from the Ministry of War for the production of military supplies, six furriers from Târgoviște pledged to produce 300 vests and 300 fur-lined coats for the Romanian army within a short period of two weeks<sup>19</sup>. In the same spirit of solidarity with the Romanian soldier, 37 residents of Târgoviște, alongside the city's Israelite community, offered a variety of items as donations<sup>20</sup>, with the explicit aim of "easing the burden of the Romanian army," as attested by Colonel Theodor C. Văcărescu from Odobești commune, Dâmbovița County, one of the historians of the 1877-1878 war.<sup>21</sup>

The support provided by the Dâmbovița population took on diverse forms and persisted throughout the entire 1877-1878 military campaign. Pursuant to government directives, a military hospital was established in September 1877 at the Army Foundry and the Metropolitan Church (in Târgoviște), with a capacity of 330 beds (230 beds at the Foundry and 100 beds at Dealu Monastery). This hospital was equipped in record time through subscription lists, with Ștefan Mărculescu, Alexandru Penescu, and Ienuță B. Ioan appointed as its administrators<sup>22</sup>. Procopie Gerota served as the general inspector of the Administrative Service for Army Hospitals in various localities.<sup>23</sup>

The hospital utilized the barracks' salons, specifically six rooms in the establishment near the small gate towards the Metropolitan Church, in addition to the large hotel salon. Initially, the hospital was equipped with 100 donated beds, despite possessing a meager inventory for only approximately 50 patients prior to the war<sup>24</sup>. With the assistance of the Târgoviște city hall and

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<sup>14</sup>D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 54/1877, f. 73.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibidem*, file 282/1878, f. 138; Cornel Mărculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup>*Document collection...*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>17</sup>D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file 55/1877, f. 153-154.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibidem*, file 59/1877, f. 8-9.

<sup>19</sup>D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 58; Cornel Mărculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>20</sup>D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file 88/1877, f. 28-29.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibidem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 287/1877, f. 91.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibidem*, file 88/1877, f. 32; *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 67.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibidem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 70.

<sup>24</sup>*Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 88/1877, f. 18.

police, 1,000 sheets, 1,000 shirts, 660 drawers, 100 towels, 50 napkins, 100 pairs of woollen socks, and 50 pairs of slippers were procured<sup>25</sup>. The necessary lumber for constructing the 100 beds was provided by Artillery General Corbătescu<sup>26</sup>. The care of the wounded and sick in the newly established hospital was also made possible through citizen contributions, a fact acknowledged by the Dâmbovița Prefecture, which expressed gratitude to all who, "with generous hearts, contributed to equipping this hospital with bandages, compresses, lint, linen, food, money, wine, brandy, and, finally, with items deemed indispensable for the sustenance of sick and wounded Romanian soldiers."<sup>27</sup> Organizational measures for establishing a second provisional hospital at Dealu Monastery were undertaken as early as June 1877<sup>28</sup>, when an order from the Dâmbovița County Prefecture to the Târgoviște City Police instructed the prompt repair of rooms and the provision of heating stoves.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, at the request of the Military Hospital Administration at Fonderi in Târgoviște, two cooks, Vasile Petrescu and Ștefan Dulgheru<sup>30</sup>, were urgently hired to cater to the needs of the wounded and sick. A daily schedule was established for 28 barbers, grouped into fours each day<sup>31</sup>. Concurrently, the commander of the Cavalry Brigade, also headquartered there, implemented necessary disinfection and cleaning measures to prevent epidemics<sup>32</sup>, again relying on the populace for these operations, with requests for six masons and women with brushes to perform these tasks.<sup>33</sup>

A significant contribution was also made by the local Red Cross Committee, which ensured the hospital's necessities. Notably, Elena Bulandra (mother of actor Tony Bulandra), leveraging her husband's ownership of a city pharmacy, donated substantial quantities of bandages and lint, as well as numerous medications with a 25% discount for the wounded<sup>34</sup>. Among the Dâmbovița women who actively participated in collecting donations and requisitions for the front and army were Zamfira Nae, Bălașa Negoescu, Ioana OGREZEANCA, Marghioala Vlădescu, Ioana Iliescu, Sofia Mărculescu, Eufrosina Damian, Șița Bădulescu, Maria Pîrjolescu, Anica Tănase, and Anica Cuțui.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond the medical services in Târgoviște and the collection of offerings, supportive actions for the Romanian army took place throughout Dâmbovița County. For instance, the village of Greci provided all their carts, loaded with cereals or fodder, to the army<sup>36</sup>. Concurrently, the Viforâta nunnery offered 50 *drahms* of lint for the wounded hospital<sup>37</sup>, and at the initiative of Mrs. Smaranda Lerescu<sup>38</sup>, the Serbian population of Târgoviște donated various quantities of vegetables<sup>39</sup>. Gardeners from Sârbi offered 620 cabbages as an offering for the wounded hospital,

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 32.

<sup>26</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 69; Cornel Mărculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>27</sup> D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 67.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 64.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 148.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 83.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 287/1877, f. 14.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 135.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, file 282/1877, f. 102.

<sup>34</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 88/1877, f. 25.

<sup>35</sup> **Florica Deftu**, *From the Contribution of the People of Dâmbovița to the War of Independence*, in *Valachica* no. 9 (1977), Târgoviște, 1977, p. 52; **D.C.S.N.A.** *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 88/1877, f. 12.

<sup>36</sup> **Victor Boștinaru**, *From the Contribution of the Villages of Dâmbovița to the War of Independence*, in *Valachica*, no. 9/1977, Târgoviște, 1977, p. 57.

<sup>37</sup> D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 88/1877, f. 102.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 66.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 126.

and on 11 October 1877, 740 radishes, 20 beets, 700 leeks, 50 kg of onions, and 68 cabbages<sup>40</sup>. Similarly, residents of Văcărești commune donated 50 kg of potatoes and 50 kg of beans.<sup>41</sup>

Based on the documents researched and studied by us at the Dâmbovița County Service of the National Archives, the offerings from Dâmbovița County citizens were remarkably diverse. In addition to those mentioned above, some notable examples include:

- Ioniță B. Ion from Târgoviște donated linen used to sew 105 mattresses for the Military Hospital for the Wounded at Fonderi.<sup>42</sup>
- The family of Zoe and Ion Buzea from Târgoviște sent 150 packs of tobacco with accompanying booklets and 1 kg of lint to the wounded.<sup>43</sup>
- 18 residents from Bela commune offered 42 *coți* (approx. 30 meters) of lint for wounded soldiers.<sup>44</sup>
- Quantities of corn and flour offered as donations were sold at auction, and the proceeds were used for hospitals.<sup>45</sup>
- Residents of Valea Lungă commune offered 8 sheep and 53.5 *coți* of cotton and hemp fabric.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, to support the Military Hospital at Fonderie, several Dâmbovița citizens, attending the weekly market in Târgoviște on 23 September 1877, offered the following items as donations:

- Nicolae Andrei from Țâța: two tubs.
- Dumitru Iosefin from Adâncă: one tub and one small barrel.
- Stan Ion from Bungetu: two mats.
- Ioniță Gheorghe from Drăgăiești: 10 small jars and 10 bowls.
- Ion Popescu from Râul Alb: one *vadră* (approx. 10 liters).
- Ion Stan Moraru from Țâța: four buckets.
- Nicolae Zărnescu from Dragomirești: 10 jars.
- Ioniță Stan from Dragomirești: one chamber pot and three pots.
- Dumitru Cobzaru from Mărcești (Roma origin): 14 wooden spoons.
- Salt sellers from Obor: 44 *ocale* (approx. 56 kg) of salt.<sup>47</sup>

For army provisioning, a "Commission for Horse Requisition" was established in Târgoviște, led by Assistant Mayor Dincă Bucșeneanu<sup>48</sup>, followed by the "Food Requisition Commission," headed by Constantin Bucșeneanu, the Mayor of Târgoviște<sup>49</sup>. Concurrently, the Dâmbovița County Prefecture, to secure the army's meat supply, stipulated that fattening cattle in pastures were not to be alienated, as a quarter of them would soon be requisitioned<sup>50</sup>. Thus, a count conducted in Târgoviște, pursuant to an order issued by the Dâmbovița Prefecture, tallied 225 head of fattening cattle<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 125.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 124.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 75.

<sup>43</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file no. 88/1877, f. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 52.

<sup>46</sup> *Documents Regarding the History of Romania. The War for Independence*, vol. VI, .....Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1954, p. 649.

<sup>47</sup> D.C.S.N.A., Târgoviște City Police collection, file 282/1877, f. 73.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file no. 59/1877, f. 78.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 48-49.

<sup>50</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Police collection, file 282/1877, f. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 4.

By 18 August 1877, the need for horses became critical, prompting the Ministry of Interior to mandate their requisition. This led the specially formed Commission to sort all horses found in Târgoviște <sup>52</sup>, and the Dâmbovița County Prefecture, in an address dated 28 September 1877, declared that further delays could not be tolerated. <sup>53</sup>

For army needs, preserved meat (*pastramă*), beans, cheese, rams, corn, brandy, barley, bran, and hay were also requisitioned. Seven proprietors alone yielded 6,750 kg of *pastramă*. <sup>54</sup> For transport teams, Dâmbovița residents also provided the necessary hay for cattle grazing, as transportation proved to be one of the most challenging logistical aspects<sup>55</sup>. In this regard, to better manage transports, the Dâmbovița County Prefect proposed that requisitioned products be dispatched directly by mayoralities to their destination, aiming to simplify and reduce transportation costs. <sup>56</sup>

To illustrate this aspect, the following table presents the discounted prices for livestock paid by the state, below market rates:

- Pair of oxen, quality I: 235 lei
- Pair of oxen, quality II: 188 lei
- Pair of cows, quality I: 165 lei
- Pair of cows, quality II: 135 lei
- Hay – 1000 kg: 50 lei
- Corn – kilogram: 50 lei<sup>57</sup>

As the documents from the county archives we researched do not contain centralized data on requisitions by commune, it is challenging to track and separate the quantities precisely. Nevertheless, to exemplify the contribution of residents from Potlogi commune, we present the items they surrendered through the Requisition Commission based on receipts between 1877 and 1878:

- Hay: 18,050 kg (846.50 lei)
- Barley: 250 kg (21.87 lei)
- Corn: 1,700 kg (590 lei)

For the transportation of these products from Târgoviște to Ploiești, a sum of 64.80 lei was paid, calculated for 40 km over three days of travel<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, residents of the communes of Bucșani, Bezdead, Găiești, Cornățel, Bilciurești, Tătărani, Speriețeni, Băleni, Țâța, Colibași, and Pietroșița delivered the following requisitions through the Communal Commission to the County Requisition Commission during the war:

- 62 horses, compensated value: 11,990 lei
- 243 *ocale* of bran, compensated value: 193 lei
- 27,680 kg of hay, compensated value: 346.50 lei
- 250 kg of barley, compensated value: 21.84 lei
- 800 kg of corn, compensated value: 90 lei. An additional 294 lei was paid for their transport from Târgoviște to Ploiești. <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 34.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 85.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall*, file no. 59/1877, f. 22-25.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 32.

<sup>56</sup> *Documents Regarding the History of Romania. The War for Independence*, vol. IV, ..... Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1954, p. 396.

<sup>57</sup> D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 59/1877, f. 148-149; 218, 245.

<sup>58</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 59/1877, f. 29-38.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 10-14.

Through the implementation of the Requisition Law, Dâmbovița County was tasked with creating reserve stocks of flour for 30,000 loaves of bread, to be supplied to the Romanian army<sup>60</sup>. All suitable warehouses and cellars were to be requisitioned for storage<sup>61</sup>. Additionally, based on Royal Decree no. 789/6 April 1877, 10 large bread ovens were requisitioned from various proprietors in Târgoviște to ensure timely bread supply for the army.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, to meet army necessities, the Ministry of War requested each county to send four bakers and two butchers for the *manutante* (army subunits responsible for flour storage and bread production) and army trains (convoys of carts supplying frontline troops)<sup>63</sup>. For military supplies, six furriers from Târgoviște pledged to produce 300 vests and 300 fur-lined coats for the Romanian army within two weeks<sup>64</sup>.

To manage requisition tasks, Romanian commissioners were appointed for the General Intendance of the Russian Army, such as Mr. Vrabie, who was to receive "all necessary assistance at his every request."<sup>65</sup> All these responsibilities assigned to Dâmbovița County were outlined in Ministry of War Order no. 4003, which stipulated that full support must be extended to the Russian army traversing this territory<sup>66</sup>. This support included billeting the army, with residents of Dâmbovița County communes even required to provide "lodging and provisions."<sup>67</sup> In this regard, Romanian citizens would receive compensation in Russian currency, as of 28 July 1877, the Russian Empire's currency, the *pol* (ruble), was admitted into circulation with mandatory exchange rate, valued at 20.60 lei.<sup>68</sup>

On 30 April 1877, the Târgoviște City Police deposited the following sum of money from citizen Constantin Negoescu at the Dâmbovița County Prefecture:

- 5 paper pieces, total value: one hundred Turkish *piasters*.
- 1 Russian silver ruble and one new leu, national silver currency.
- 12 Turkish lei, in two large Turkish silver pieces.<sup>69</sup>
- One and a half Russian silver rubles, and one new leu, national silver currency.

Some foodstuffs were sold at auction, at the proposal of the Dâmbovița County Prefecture, with the resulting funds deposited into the State Treasury.<sup>70</sup> Thus, on 8 October 1877, 420 lei were obtained from the sale of 12 *kile* (approx. 15 kg) of corn, offered as a donation, at auction.<sup>71</sup> It is important to note that, by an order of the Ministry of Finance, any sum or money given as an offering to the army was exempted from stamp duty<sup>72</sup>. Thus, the offerings made by certain residents of Dâmbovița County are illustrative, including:

- T. Carabulea from Găiești declared that he was offering his horse, which had been taken by requisition on 16 April 1877.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 26.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 67.

<sup>63</sup> *Documents Regarding the History of Romania. The War for Independence*, vol. V, ..... doc. 259, Bucharest, Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 1954, p. 485.

<sup>64</sup> D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 58.

<sup>65</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 282/1877, f. 8.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*, file 54/1877, f. 73.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*, file 282/1877, f. 138.

<sup>68</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file no. 59/1877, f. 136.

<sup>69</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police collection*, file 287/1877, f. 25.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 97.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 145.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 92.

<sup>73</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall collection*, file 59/1877, f. 174.

- "Following the order of the Minister of Interior, under number 17844, I invite you to inform Mr. Costache Dragomirescu from Târgoviște that for the cattle offered gratuitously, it has been decided to convey thanks through the Official Monitor." <sup>74</sup>
- Salt sellers from Obor donated 111 *ocale* (approx. 142 kg) of salt, and Constantin Gheorghe from Vulcana, 5 *ocale* (approx. 6 kg) of soap. <sup>75</sup>
- 13 residents of Târgoviște offered 343 *ocale* (approx. 440 kg) of cheese for the army. <sup>76</sup>

A significant local initiative in support of the Romanian war effort was the organization of a committee in Târgoviște for the purchase of arms necessary for the Romanian army. Thus, on 10 September 1877, following a request from the Dâmbovița Prefecture to the Târgoviște city hall<sup>77</sup>, a committee comprising 19-20 individuals, described as "the most enthusiastic and active in defending the grandeur and honor of the Romanian nation," <sup>78</sup> was formed after an appeal by the mayor to Târgoviște citizens. Its purpose was to collect donations for the purchase of weapons for soldiers (the price of one weapon being 60 lei). This committee included Constantin Fussea (president), Răducanu Ioan (vice-president), Ștefan Mărculescu (vice-president), George Bageru (vice-president), Ion Petrescu (secretary), George Garbinu (secretary), Constantin Petrescu (treasurer), Constantin Christescu (President of the Tribunal), Ioan Nicolaescu, Alexandru Penescu, Nicolae Chirculescu, Scarlat Tănăsescu, Constantin Beștelei, Enuță B. Ioan, George Constantinescu, George Ludescu, Constantin Ilescu, Chiriță Rădulescu, and Constantin George Cosma. <sup>79</sup>

To galvanize the citizens of Târgoviște, the Prefect of Dâmbovița County addressed them, stating: "Brother citizens and county residents! The Romanian army is fighting across the Danube for independence... It fights with courage as the Romanian soldier has always fought, and competent foreigners have already recognized its value. Dear county residents, we have no doubt that you will hasten... contributing each in proportion to the means at your disposal, for the purchase of arms... Let us help our soldiers, let us help ourselves." <sup>80</sup>

The initial donations to the committee tasked with collecting funds for the purchase of weapons (Peabody rifles) were made by Târgoviște citizens themselves on 14 September 1877, accumulating a sum of 1,560 lei, sufficient to purchase 26 rifles<sup>81</sup>. Additionally, the Târgoviște Communal Committee offered 6,000 lei from the Forest Fund for the acquisition of Peabody rifles<sup>82</sup>, and on 11 September 1877, 10 citizens subscribed 1,560 francs, a sum needed to purchase 26 weapons <sup>83</sup>. Concurrently, the Prefecture requested the Târgoviște City Police to conduct

<sup>74</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Police collection, file 282/1877, f. 25.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 76.

<sup>76</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file 59/1877, f. 121.

<sup>77</sup> *Document collection...*, p. 34-35.

<sup>78</sup> **D.C.S.N.A., Dâmbovița**, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file 96/1877, f. 17-30; *Collection of Documents...*, pp. 35-36. The Dâmbovița Prefecture received on September 18, 1877, a request from Romania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihail Kogălniceanu, to issue an appeal to the county's inhabitants for collecting donations to purchase Peabody rifles (*Ibidem*, pp. 39-40).

<sup>79</sup> D.C.N.S.A., file no. 97/1877, f. 16-17.

<sup>80</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, dosar nr. 97/1877, f. 28.

<sup>81</sup> *Document collection...*, p. 38. The committee made several appeals in September and October 1877 to the citizens of the city of Târgoviște, the inhabitants of Dâmbovița County, and some institutions to collect donations for the purchase of weapons needed by the Romanian army, compiling subscription lists for this purpose. Thus, 600 lei were collected from the medical staff of the county and city of Târgoviște, 6,000 lei from the city communal council, and 274 lei from the firefighters and police personnel (*Ibidem*, pp. 40-44).

<sup>82</sup> D.C.N.S.A., Târgoviște City Hall collection, file no. 97/1877, f. 24.

<sup>83</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Police collection, file 282/1877, f. 101.

subscriptions for weapon procurement <sup>84</sup>, with the police depositing 274 lei into the account <sup>85</sup>. The county's medical corps similarly contributed 660 francs, necessary for acquiring 11 rifles. <sup>86</sup>

Later, in early 1878, with the Romanian army having incurred heavy losses during the siege of Plevna, in memory of the valiant Captain Valter Mărăcineanu, who had heroically raised his battalion's flag on the Turkish redoubt of Grivița before falling in battle, the residents of Târgoviște subscribed to a commemorative lithographic portrait of him, priced at 1 leu <sup>87</sup>, to support his family. Similarly, to aid the families of Romanian officers killed in action, Lieutenant Papazoglu created a series of paintings that were sent for sale in Dâmbovița County (April 1878), and a portion of the collected sums was donated to families who lost soldiers in the War of Independence. <sup>88</sup>

The governing authorities also paid particular attention to those wounded in the War of Independence, aiming to support their livelihoods by providing assistance. Thus, a circular from the Ministry of Interior requested Dâmbovița County to provide a list of all wounded individuals "who are no longer able to sustain themselves through their labor." <sup>89</sup>

With the continued support of the population, Romanian soldiers escorting three lots of Turkish prisoners to Târgoviște were to be provided with lodging during their stay in the city, as well as food for both men and horses. For instance, the Squadron arriving in Târgoviște on 19 December 1877 required 600 kg of hay and 480 kg of barley daily, along with 100 loaves of bread to feed 100 soldiers, and the necessary firewood for meal preparation. <sup>90</sup>

For the required hay, Father Ionică was approached, offering 6 cartloads and 4 fathoms of wood, totaling 3,250 kg <sup>91</sup>. Ștefan Petrescu from Târgoviște provided 250 kg of barley, valued at 21.78 lei. Nae Luculescu, also from Târgoviște, offered 1,200 kg of hay, valued at 90 lei, and Gheorghe Ludescu, from Târgoviște, provided 800 kg of hay, valued at 60 lei, totaling a quantity of 5,500 kg of hay, valued at 334.37 lei. <sup>92</sup>

Taking note of the minutes concluded on 5 June 1878, which outlined the supplies for the soldiers who escorted Turkish prisoners to the hospital at Dealu Monastery, the members of the Mixed Commission for the liquidation of requisitions in Dâmbovița County concluded these operations. <sup>93</sup> Furthermore, as indicated in an address from the Târgoviște Garrison Command to the city police, the population also housed wounded soldiers until they were admitted to the Târgoviște hospital. <sup>94</sup> Additionally, the material contribution of the population extended to provisioning the territorial militia army, stationed in various areas of Dâmbovița County, for resolving specific situations. <sup>95</sup>

In the context of caring for the wounded in the military hospitals at Fonderie and Dealu Monastery (near Târgoviște), Prime Minister I. C. Brătianu dispatched a telegram to the

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 107.

<sup>85</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file no. 97/1877, f. 20.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 23.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibidem*, dosar nr. 59/1877, f. 29.

<sup>88</sup> *Culegere de documente...*, p. 46-47; Cornel Mărculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 164-165.

<sup>89</sup> S.J.D.A.N., fond *Poliția orașului Târgoviște*, dosar 287/1877, f. 155.

<sup>90</sup> *Idem*, fond *Poliția orașului Târgoviște*, dosar 282/1877, f. 160.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, dosar 287/1877, f. 76.

<sup>92</sup> *Idem*, fond *Primăria orașului Târgoviște*, dosar nr. 57/1878, f. 19.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 18.

<sup>94</sup> *Idem*, fond *Poliția orașului Târgoviște*, dosar 287/1878, f. 1.

<sup>95</sup> *Idem*, Târgoviște City Hall collection, file no. 59/1878, f. 191.

Dâmbovița Prefecture, commending the citizens of Târgoviște for their endeavors in this regard.<sup>96</sup>

It is worth mentioning that on 18 October 1877, approximately 800 Turkish prisoners<sup>97</sup> also arrived at Dealu Monastery, receiving necessary care alongside Romanian patients at the Fonderie hospital<sup>98</sup>. To ensure humane conditions for the Turkish prisoners, a series of items (donated by Târgoviște residents) were sold at auction, yielding 1,375 lei<sup>99</sup>. On 22 December 1877, the Dâmbovița County Prefecture announced the impending arrival of 60 sick and wounded Turkish individuals, a notification issued to those responsible for reception, accommodation, and treatment<sup>100</sup>. Furthermore, urgent measures were taken to billet Turkish prisoners at the Dealu Monastery Hospital, and Târgoviște citizens donated 800 wooden spoons, 800 earthenware bowls, 1 large hospital tub, 10 large kitchen spoons, 100 brooms, 25 shovels, 50 water cups, 2 meat cleavers<sup>101</sup>, and 5 axes.<sup>102</sup>

Regarding bread provisioning, this operation was executed by baker Andrei Cutny, who was authorized by the Dâmbovița Prefecture to perform this service starting 11 March 1878, for both those at Dealu Monastery Hospital and the wounded at Fonderie.<sup>103</sup> Healthy prisoners were assigned various tasks for different proprietors in Dâmbovița County communes until their repatriation, in accordance with Ministry of Interior Order no. 12155 of July 1878.<sup>104</sup>

A particularly crucial role in materially supporting the war effort, alongside the county's citizens, was played by the Dâmbovița County administration, represented by: Isaia Lerescu, Prefect of Dâmbovița County; Constantin Bucșeneanu, Mayor of Târgoviște; Dincă Bucșeneanu, Deputy Mayor of Târgoviște; the sub-prefects of Dâmbovița County's administrative units (*plase*); Vasile Sinescu, Târgoviște City Police Chief; Captain Ion Pandeale, Commander of the 1st Dâmbovița Squadron, 4th Călărași-Militia Regiment, who oversaw security, order, and border defense with Austria-Hungary; Captain Șoimescu Ștefan, Commander of the 1st Central Battalion, 7th Dorobanți Regiment, and head of the Târgoviște garrison; Ion Manolescu, sub-prefect of Ialomița *Plai*, residing in Podurile (Pucioasa) commune; Nicu Sasu, sub-prefect of Dâmbovița *Plai*; Ghiță Nicoară, customs officer at Pietroșița; Iosif Grigorescu, mayor of Pietroșița commune; Oprea Torcică, mayor of Moroieni commune; Nicolae Popescu, mayor of Runcu commune.<sup>105</sup> Another significant material contribution of Dâmbovița County to achieving Romania's state independence was the reception of the following regiments, which actively participated in the Balkan War, into the Princely Seat of Wallachia between 15 February 1878 and 22 August 1878:

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<sup>96</sup>*Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police* collection, file 273/1877, f. 387; **Constantin Nițescu**, *Dealu Monastery and the Nicolae Filipescu Military High School*, Viitorul Petre G. Popescu Printing House, Târgoviște, 1932, p. 34; **Cornel Mărculescu**, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>97</sup> **D.C.S.N.A., Târgoviște City Police** collection, file 282/1877, f. 157. After the fall of Plevna on November 28, 1877, out of approximately 45,000 Turkish soldiers taken prisoner, a number of 127 were sent to the military hospital at Dealu Monastery, as shown by a telegraphic order from the Minister of War to the Dâmbovița Prefecture dated December 4, 1877 (*Ibidem*, f. 149), where they were provided with the appropriate medical care. Among these prisoners, those who died were buried in the Ciocârlan field (Constantin Nițescu, *op. cit.*, p. 34). The burial of the deceased prisoners was conducted individually in the presence of a diplomatic agent who supervised the proper conduct of the religious service (D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Police* collection, file 2/1878, f. 11).

<sup>98</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall* collection, file 110/1877, f. 44.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 13-17.

<sup>100</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police* collection, file 182/1877, f. 159.

<sup>101</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall* collection, file 110/1877, f. 26.

<sup>102</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Police* collection, file 287/1877, f. 20.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 44.

<sup>104</sup> *Idem*, *Târgoviște City Hall* collection, file 110/1877, f. 219.

<sup>105</sup> **Dumitru Stancu**, *The Contribution of Dâmbovița County to the War for Gaining Romania's State Independence (1877–1878)*, Pucioasa, 2004, pp. 192–193.

- 5th Infantry Regiment, with 6 officers and 500 soldiers, arrived 15 February 1878. <sup>106</sup>
- 4th Călărași - Dâmbovița Regiment, with 14 officers, troops, and horses, arrived 2 April 1878. <sup>107</sup>
- 8th Dorobanți Regiment, with 22 officers and 1,100 soldiers, arrived 4 April 1878. <sup>108</sup>
- 3rd Călărași Regiment, arrived 15 April 1878. <sup>109</sup>
- 2nd Artillery Regiment, with 4 officers, 130 soldiers, and 128 horses, arrived 22 April 1878. <sup>110</sup>
- 7th Călărași Regiment, with 2 officers and 480 soldiers, arrived 28 April 1878. <sup>111</sup>
- 7th Dorobanți – Dâmbovița Regiment, arrived 9 May 1878. <sup>112</sup>
- 3rd Line Regiment, with 18 officers and 480 soldiers, arrived 22 August 1878. <sup>113</sup>

The profound gratitude of the regiments for the generous reception they received from the populace is encapsulated in the words of Major Telescu: "Please be so kind as to convey, on behalf of the 3rd Line Regiment, our most fervent thanks to all gentlemen and ladies for the fine hospitality they have been so kind to offer us... as we depart, we shall carry with us a beautiful gratitude, saying to you: long live the citizens of Târgoviște." <sup>114</sup>

Thus, the contribution of the Dâmbovița County population to securing Romania's state independence in 1877-1878 encompassed a series of actions undertaken both before and during the Romanian army's military campaign south of the Danube. This materialized in fundraising for weapon procurement, clothing, and food necessary for the Romanian army (through cultural events), collecting aid for soldiers and supporting the families of those at the front with agricultural labor, transporting provisions to the front, ensuring fodder for horses, caring for wounded military personnel and ensuring the efficient operation of hospitals, assisting the Red Cross <sup>115</sup>, and providing aid and billeting for Turkish prisoners. <sup>116</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> D.C.S.N.A., *Târgoviște City Hall* collection, file 64/1878, f. 90.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 2.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 7.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*, file 59/1878, f. 206.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, file 64/1878, f. 77.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 18.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 68.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*, f.84.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 87.

<sup>115</sup> *Document collection...*, p. 8-10.

<sup>116</sup> Cornel Mărculescu, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

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