



ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION OF GORJ COUNTY DURING THE RULE OF A.I. CUZA

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Abstract:

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LANDS AND PLAQUES AT THE LEVEL OF GORJ COUNTY, SINCE THEIR APPEARANCE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XVIIIITH CENTURY, WAS IN A PERMANENT DYNAMIC, THE APPEARANCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF SOME OF THEM RENDERING AN EXCELLENT RADIOGRAPHY OF THE PERIOD BECAUSE IT CAN BE SEEN WHAT WAS THE EXACT TERRITORY OF GORJ COUNTY AND WHAT TRANSFORMATIONS OCCURRED. THE SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH A FORM OF TERRITORY MANAGEMENT, THE DUTIES OF THE RULERS, BUT ALSO THE EVOLUTION TOWARDS A MODERN AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION.

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CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF *PLASI* AND *PLAIURI*¹

For the first time, according to some statistics in 1727, Gorj County was divided into 4 *plasi* (Romanian pronunciation: [*'plasa*], plural *plasi* [*'pləʃi*]) - a territorial division unit ranking below county and above commune): Plasa de Sus, Plasa de Mijloc, Plasa de Margine and Plasa de Jos². At that time, Oltenia was under Austrian occupation. Each of these *plasi* was headed by an ispravnic, who later became pretor and since 1864 was named subprefect.

The ispravnic was headed by a vornic, who represented the Central Administration in Oltenia from 1718 to 1739, when the region was under Austrian occupation. During this period, Oltenia underwent for the first time a social and tax reform, and the duties of the vornic were to administer the county according to the orders received. Each ispravnic has three overseers subordinated to him, whose main duty was to implement the orders.

¹ The article contains information provided in the author's PhD thesis: *Establishment of the Gorj County Council, 1864–1868*.

² See *Conscriptio districtus Syl Superioris*, in Dinica Ciobotea and Nicolae Lolescu, *Obstea Pestisani din Gorj (Pestisani Community in Gorj)*, Craiova, Universitaria-Craiova Publishing House, 2017, p. 85-98.



The first vornic of the county was the Boyar Matei Brailoiu, and the first ispravnic were the following boyars: Matei Glogoveanu, Barbu Rioseanu, Matei Balacescu and Constantin Alboiu. They were appointed on 15 October 1718.

The administrative-territorial division of Gorj, according to the statistic in 1727, which gives us information about the ispravnic of the *plasi* at that time and the number of families in the *plasi*³, was as follows:

No.	Name of <i>Plasa</i>	Full name of the ispravnic	Number of villages and estates	Number of families	Number of cattle
1.	Plasa de Sus	Mihai Saulescu	51	1326	3646
2.	Plasa de Mijloc	Vladut Tetoianul	34	705	1610
3.	Plasa de Margine	Milco Sainoiul	34	1083	2213
4.	Plasa de Jos	Matei Balacescu	58	1638	3415
Total			177	4.752	10.884

The next statistic researched, i.e. in 1789⁴, showed that the territorial division of Gorj underwent major changes, with eight (8) *plasi* and one (1) *plai*. The *plai* appeared for the first time as a subdivision of the county in the mountain area.

No.	Name of <i>Plasa/Plai</i>	Number of villages
1.	Plasa Novaciloru (Novaci)	14
2.	Plaiul Vilcanulu ⁵ (Vilcan)	22
3.	Plasa Turceniloru (Turceni)	27
4.	Plasa Ziulu de Susu (Jiul de Sus)	25
5.	Plasa Ziulu de Josu (Jiul de Jos)	18
6.	Plasa Tzilortului de Susu (Gilortul de Sus)	24
7.	Plasa Tzilortului de Josu (Gilortul de Jos)	25
8.	Plasa Hamrezi de Susu (Amaradia de Sus)	20
9.	Plasa Hamrezi de Josu (Amaradia de Jos)	18
Total		193

In 1815, a new statistic⁶ showed that Plasa Turceni disappeared, being divided into two new *plasi*: Tismana de Sus and Tismana de Jos, and Plasa Novaci became a *plai*:

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Nicolae Lazaru, Descrierea Valahiei cuprinzând situațiunea ei, felul cârmuirii, veniturile și cheltuielile anuale, înșirarea județelor și a satelor din ele..., București, f. ed., 1789, pp. 133 – 135. (*Description of Wallachia including its status, the way it is governed, the annual revenues and expenses, a list of the counties and the villages...*, Bucharest, f. ed., 1789, p. 133 – 135).

⁵ Other historical sources refer to it as: Vulcan sau Valcan.

⁶ See D. Fotino, Istoria vechii Dacii, acum Transilvania, Țara Românească și Moldova, Tomul C, Viena, f. ed., 1819, p. 283 (*History of Old Dacia, Present-Day Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia*, Volume C, f. ed., 1819, p. 283).



No.	Name of <i>Plasa/Plai</i>	Number of villages
1.	Plaiul Novaciloru (Novaci)	16
2.	Plaiul Vîlcanulu (Vîlcan)	34
3.	Plasa Tismeni de Susu (Tismana de Sus)	21
4.	Plasa Tismeni de Josu (Tismana de Jos)	14
5.	Plasa Ziulu de Susu (Jiul de Sus)	24
6.	Plasa Ziulu de Josu (Jiul de Jos)	19
7.	Plasa Tzilortului de Susu (Gilortul de Sus)	24
8.	Plasa Tzilortului de Josu (Gilortul de Jos)	25
9.	Plasa Hamrezi de Susu (Amaradiei de Sus)	22
10.	Plasa Hamrezi de Josu (Amaradiei de Jos)	25
Total		224

The public census of Wallachia in 1831⁷ showed that there were still ten (10) administrative subdivisions, eight (8) *plasi* and two (2) *plaiuri* in Gorj County, their names being unchanged.

No.	Name of <i>Plasa/Plai</i>	Number of villages	Number of families	Number of young workers
1.	Plaiul Novaci	27	2885	500
2.	Plaiul Vîlcan	37	3519	550
3.	Plasa Tismana de Sus	22	1713	339
4.	Plasa Tismana de Jos	16	1911	317
5.	Plasa Jiul de Sus	23	1834	276
6.	Plasa Jiul de Jos	26	2243	434
7.	Plasa Gilortul de Sus	26	2540	343
8.	Plasa Gilortul de Jos	28	2671	530
9.	Plasa Amaradia de Sus	25	2654	467
10.	Plasa Amaradia de Jos	28	4153	616
Total		258	26123	4372

By adopting the Organic Regulation on 1 July 1831, it was decided that the number of *plasi* should be reduced. Thus, in Wallachia, a commission was set up to work on the reorganisation of the counties from 1831 to 1844.

In Gorj, statistics in 1840 showed that the number of old *plasi* had been reduced by half and the *plai* remained the same, namely two⁸.

The heads of the counties were given the title of governors (in Romanian language: "*carluitori*"), being appointed for a period of three years by the ruler, from two candidates proposed by the Administrative Council. The Governor had only administrative duties, and in order to carry out his work he had a chancellery composed of a chancellor (in Romanian language: "*sames*") or head of chancellery, a Governor assistant and two writers.

⁷ See Ion Donat, Ion Patroiu, Dinica Ciubotea, *Catagrafia obștească a Țării Românești din 1831*, Craiova, Editura Helios, 1999, pp. 17 – 28 (*The Public Census of the Wallachia in 1831*, Helios Publishing House, 1999, p. 17-28).

⁸ See *Almanach de la Court et de L'Etat de la Principaute de Valachie pour l'annee 1840*, Bucharest, f. ed., 1840, p. 22 – 221.



The administrators of *plasi* and *plaiuri* were given the title of sub-governors, also elected for three years. The proposals for these ones were made by the county governor together with the proprietary boyars of the county amongst themselves. The proposals were submitted to the Administrative Council of the country, then submitted to the ruler to elect the sub-governors. Their duties were to protect the villagers from trouble, to ensure order and to carry out the orders coming from the county or country administration.

It should be noted that Targu Jiu was not part of any *plasi* or *plai*.

No.	Name of <i>Plasa/Plai</i>	Number of villages
1.	Plaiul Novaci	26
2.	Plaiul Vilcan	38
3.	Plasa Tismana	41
4.	Plasa Jiul	42
5.	Plasa Gilortul	53
6.	Plasa Amaradia	48
Total		248

After the completion of the action of rounding up the counties, on 18 May 1845, the Administrative Council informed the county governors that a list of villages in the middle of the *plasi* and *plaiuri* had been drawn up in order for *taht* (seats, residences) of the sub-governors to be established. The governors were asked to find landowners with whom they could come to an agreement for the establishment of these *tahturi*. Thus, for the first time the Plasa Ocolu appeared and Plasa Tismana disappeared, and Targu Jiul was listed as a town belonging to the new Plasa Ocolu.

ORGANISATION OF *PLASI* AND *PLAIURI* IN GORJ COUNTY DURING THE PERIOD OF CUZA

In 1861, the Statistical Office published a list of the localities⁹ in each county and how they were assigned to the *plasi* and *plaiuri*.

No.	Name of <i>Plasa/Plai</i>	Number of villages
1.	Plaiul Novaci	28
2.	Plaiul Vilcan	49
3.	Plasa Ocolu	46
4.	Plasa Jiul	44
5.	Plasa Gilortul	45
6.	Plasa Amaradia	47
Total		259

1864 is the year of the great reforms in administration. Counties were given legal personality by law and villages no longer remained administrative bodies. Instead, communes appear, i.e. administrative bodies divided into two categories: urban communes and rural communes. Towns and

⁹ Oficiul Statistic, *Indicele după județe a comunelor orășiane și rurale din Muntenia*, f. ed., București 1861, pp. 22 – 26. Statistical Office, *Index by counties of urban and rural communes in Muntenia*, f. ed., Bucharest, 1861, p. 22-26.



market towns became urban communes, while rural communes consisted of one or more villages and had at least 100 families or 500 inhabitants.

The statistics for Gorj County showed that in 1864, there were "259 localities, 1 town, 3 post offices, 1 telegraph, 17 pickets of infantry soldiers and customs officers in the mountain area, 22 pickets in the rest of the county and 5 monasteries. The area was 569,567 acres of which 429,426 was arable land and 131,228 uncultivable land. There were 20,645 owner properties and 276 leasehold properties. The county had 145,937 inhabitants¹⁰."

Following the application of the provisions of the law on urban and rural communes, the number of localities in Gorj County was reduced significantly. While in 1861 there were 258 villages and one town: Targu Jiul, in 1864 there were only 154 rural communes and one urban commune: Targu Jiu.

Returning to the administrative reorganization of Gorj County, after the establishment of the communes and the application of the Law on the establishment of County Councils, we note that there are still two *plaiuri* and four *plasi*. According to the law, the *plasilile* and *plaiurile* became an intermediate administrative unit between the County Council and the Commune, headed by a Subprefect.

The statistics with the index of communes made in 1864 and published at the beginning of 1865¹¹, indicated the situation of the communes that formed each *plasa* and *plai* of Gorj County, mentioning the number of houses, families and churches in each locality, after the new organization of communes¹²:

No.	Name of <i>Plasi/Plaiuri</i>	Number			
		Communes	Houses	Families	Churches
1.	Plasa Amaradia	25	5.061	4.954	81
2.	Plasa Gilortu	32	6.623	5.794	66
3.	Plasa Jiu	30	5.759	5.741	56
4.	Plaiul Novaci	21	3.635	3.191	53
5.	Plasa Ocolu	25	5.807	5.188	77
6.	Plaiul Valcan	22	5.841	4.924	79
Total	155	32.762	29.762	416

SUBPREFECTS OF *PLASI* AND *PLAIURI* IN GORJ COUNTY ÷ 1859 - 1866

The Subprefects had a supervisory and control role, their activity being executive on the territory of the *plasa* or *plai*. They were the representatives of the Government, whose main purpose was to follow up the implementation of the decisions of the Council and the County Committee, being the ones who transmitted these decisions to the communes. At least twice a year, the Subprefects visited the assigned communes to check the civil status registers and their financial situation. They

¹⁰ Maior Dimitrie Pappasoglu, *Harta Districtului Gorju -1864, dedicată Domniei Sale Zamfiru Pârăianu (The Map of Gorju District – 1864, dedicated to His Lordship Zamfiru Paraianu)*, f. loc., f. ed., 1864, (personal collection).

¹¹ See Ministerul de Interne, Agricultură și Lucrări Publice, *Indicele comunelor României*, București, Imprimeria Statului, 1865, pp. 38 – 41 (*Ministry of the Interior, Agriculture and Public Works, Index of the Romanian Communes, Bucharest, State Printing Office, p. 38-41*).

¹² See Annex No. 6.



would prepare appeals against the electoral lists and forward them to the Prefect, while the conclusions (decisions) of the Commune Councils were sent to the County Standing Committee for approval.

The Prefecture of Gorj District submitted to the Ministry of Interior, the Letter No. 654 of 3 February 1867¹³, communicating the Table with the names of the Prefects, Prefecture Directors, Subprefects and Policemen of Gorj County who succeeded each other in office from January 1857 to the end of 1866, even though until the law of 1864 they were called Subgovernors.

The following is a list of the names of the Subprefects in charge of the four *Plasi* and two *Plaiuri* in Gorj County between 1857 and 1866.

Subprefects of Plaiul Novaci:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Teodor Marculescu	1 January 1857 – 21 January 1857
2.	Ion Vladimirescu	21 January 1857 – 29 November 1857
3.	Ion V. Mongescu	29 November 1857 – 15 October 1859
4.	Mihai Uricescu	15 October 1859 – 8 July 1861
5.	Tache Dragoescu	8 July 1861 – 8 October 1861
6.	Grigore Mongescu	8 October 1861 – 5 March 1862
7.	Costica Paraianu	5 March 1862 – 12 September 1862
8.	Mihai Uricescu	12 September 1862 – 9 March 1864
9.	Tache Dragoescu	9 March 1864 – 23 December 1865
10.	Mihai Uricescu	23 December 1865 – until the end of 1866

Subprefects of Plaiul Vulcanu:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Tache Stefanescu	1 January 1857 – 23 July 1857
2.	Ion V. Mongescu	23 July 1857 – 29 November 1857
3.	Ion Balteanu	29 November 1857 – 15 October 1859
4.	Tache Dragoescu	15 October 1859 – 8 July 1861
5.	Ion Zatreanu	8 July 1861 – 5 March 1862
6.	Costica Bengliu	5 March 1862 – 11 July 1864
7.	Nae Saulescu	11 July 1864 – 15 September 1865
8.	Cornelie Balacescu	15 September 1865 – 23 December 1865
9.	George Rovinaru	23 December 1865 – until the end of 1866

Subprefects of Plasa Ocolul:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Ion Zamfir Brosteanu	1 January 1857 – 23 July 1857
2.	Tache Stefanescu	23 July 1857 – 29 April 1858
3.	Grig. Saftoiu	29 April 1858 – 2 May 1859
4.	Alecu Maldarescu	2 May 1859 – 2 March 1860
5.	Cost. Coltescu	2 March 1860 – 17 December 1860
6.	Alecu Notara	17 December 1860 – 27 March 1861
7.	Zamfir Balteanu	27 March 1861 – 9 May 1864
8.	Alecu Uricescu	9 May 1864 – 23 December 1865
9.	Cornelie Balacescu	23 December 1865 – 30 March 1866
10.	Constantin Coltescu	30 March 1866 – 1 September 1866
11.	Ion Constantinescu	1 September 1866 – until the end of 1866

Subprefects of Plasa Jiu:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Alecu I. Brosteanu	1 January 1857 – 6 June 1859

¹³ Arhivele Naționale ale României, Fond Ministerul de Interne – Divizia Administrativă, dosar nr. 318/1866, *Numirile prefecților 1857-1866*, f. 99. (*The National Archives of Romania, Proceeding on the merits Ministry of the Interior – Administrative Division, File No. 318/1866, Appointment of the Prefects 1857-1866, f. 99*)



2.	Constantin Gardescu	6 June 1859 – 20 August 1860
3.	Zamfir Balteanu	20 August 1860 – 8 March 1861
4.	Ion Zatreanu	8 March 1861 – 8 July 1861
5.	Mihai Uricescu	8 July 1861 – 12 October 1861
6.	Ahil Crasnaru	12 October 1861 – 9 May 1984
7.	Zamfir Balteanu	9 May 1864 – until the end of 1866

Subprefects of Plasa Amaradia:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Alecu Maldarascu	1 January 1857 – 2 May 1859
2.	Constantin Coltescu	2 May 1859 – 2 March 1860
3.	Nicolae Olanescu	2 March 1860 – 3 September 1860
4.	Alecu Notara	3 September 1860 – 17 December 1860
5.	Constantin Coltescu	17 December 1860 – 12 October 1861
6.	Ionita Busuioceanu	12 October 1861 – 12 September 1862
7.	Ion Vladimirescu	12 September 1862 – until the end of 1866

Subprefects of Plasa Gilortul:

No.	Last name and first name	Period
1.	Ion Balteanu	1 January 1857 – 29 November 1857
2.	Ion Vladimirescu	29 November 1857 – 15 October 1859
3.	Zamfir Balteanu	15 October 1859 – 22 October 1860
4.	Grigore Mongescu	22 October 1860 – 12 October 1861
5.	Mihail Uricescu	12 October 1861 – 5 March 1862
6.	Ghita Urdareanu	5 March 1862 – 17 April 1862
7.	Parvu Camarasescu	17 April 1862 – 4 January 1863
8.	Tache Dragoescu	4 January 1863 – 9 May 1864
9.	Constantin Coltescu	9 May 1864 – 15 September 1865
10.	Nae Saulescu	15 September 1865 – until the end of 1866

In the absence of some judges, the Subprefects have received since 1867 prerogatives as justices of the peace in civil and criminal cases¹⁴.

¹⁴ See Manuel Guțan, *Istoria administrației publice locale în statul român modern*, București, Editura All Beck, 2005, p. 96. (Manuel Gutan, *History of Local Public Administration in the Modern Romanian State*, Bucharest, All Beck Publishing House, 2005, p. 96)



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