

The Germans in Dobrudscha (Part 4)

The book listed below, containing 248 pages of information, is being translated chapter by chapter and posted as each chapter is completed. Part 1 gives you a summary of each of the 15 chapters in the “Contents” section. The words in the [square brackets] are those of the translator and are not found in the original text.

Translator: Allen E. Konrad
30 January, 2017

The Germans in Dobrudscha

**along with a contribution
to the history of the German
migration in Eastern Europe**

**by
Paul Traeger**

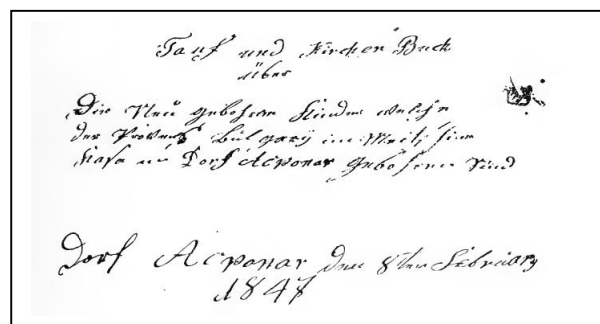
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4.

First Period of German Immigration into Dobrudscha until the Crimean War

As mentioned, the first German settlement in Dobrudscha was in the Turkish village of **Akpunar** in 1842, at least the first one that amounted to something and lasted for a longer time. I came to know from various sources that the first to arrive in Akpunar stayed for six years. They had belonged to a group of families who had stopped over in Macin the previous winter. Either immediately, or shortly thereafter, some of them migrated further south and took up residences in Dekelia near Harsova. They stayed here for a number of years. They seem to have then moved to the later established northern colonies, especially to Kataloi, where I came across an inhabitant list repeatedly specifying Dekelia as the place of birth, and even with the birth year of 1853. Today, there are no Germans in Dekelia, only one still living in Harsova in 1917.

The small German community in Akpunar received a stronger increase in population from Jacobsonsthal in 1848, the above mentioned settlement near Braila. Among them was a man, of certain historical importance for the Dobrudscha Germans, father Adam Kühn. I will get back to him in greater detail. In the home of one of his grandsons, I was shown his old Bible where, on the cover page and following pages, he had, with good old custom and paternal style, entered the years of the births and deaths of his children. This gave valuable, reliable information about his own migration and the families moving with him. Until June of 1842, 6 children were born to him, where the village, as a matter of course, was not indicated. These births had occurred while he was still in his Bessarabia residence of Tarutino. The Kühn emigration from there seems to have first taken place after the summer of 1842. In November of 1844, a son of his died on the Danube, in the village of "Bordoschan." The next entry is: "My daughter Wilhelmina was born 18 October, 1845, on Thursday morning at 6:00, under the sign of Scorpion, at Breila, in the village of Jacobsonsthal." Here he had, according to a church document, carried out an emergency baptism on 21 February, 1846. In the autumn of this year, we find him in Akpunar. As he previously had been the leader of his traveling companions, so he is now here their "Mayor" (*Schulze*). Whereas in other colonies, during the first years, hardly any thought was given to it, he showed concern immediately, with a spirited mind, for order and administration. He put forward a document that surely is the first by Germans in Dobrudscha in the German



language: "Baptism Book and Church Book of the Newborn Children born in the village of Acpuonar, in the Bulgarian Province, in the Mertschiner Kasa. Village Acponar the 8th of February, 1847."

However, the list already starts on 1 September, 1846 with that of a boy. Up to 4 July, 1848, 15 children were born. Then, a notation is made between the lines: "Admadza on the 9th of October, 1848." In the intervening months, it so happened that all German farmers left Akpunar, which brought to an end forever this settlement. "They could no longer put up with living together with the Turks," an old woman, who had lived as a young girl in Akpunar and taken part in the exodus, told me.

As these Bessarabian Lutheran (*evangelischen*) colonists, after their entrance into Dobrudscha, moved toward the south of Macin, others moved, either at the same time or a little later, toward the east by following the Danube River. Their first stop-over took place between Isaccea and Tulcea, in the village of Koschla, which I found out later when colonists from Kataloi indicated it as their place of birth. A place name with this spelling cannot be found on any map today; however, it might be that it was a description of the site of Casla, which is not far from Tulcea.



The "German Street" in Tulcea

It was about that time that the first major immigration of Germans headed to **Tulcea**. It was through Konrad Stumpf that I was still able to find a document authenticating the year of the withdrawal from Russia. It is a testimony issued by the mayor's office of the Speyer Colony in the Beresan District, which certifies that colonist Jakob Stumpf, "since his settlement in this colony as from 1809 until 27 April, 1842, has up to his departure conducted himself in an honest, well behaved and satisfactory manner, standing in compliance with the regulation of the government, so much so that, because of his blameless and irreproachable behavior, one would take sufficient pleasure to gladly have him remain longer as a colonist and fellow citizen in the midst of our community."

To be sure, scattered Germans were already able earlier to work as a craftsman and as laborers and employees at the Maritime and Danube Commission in these important, busy Danube ports, which already at that time exhibited the most mixed population of all Dobrudscha places. Currently, no less than nine different confessions have magnificent churches here. The first

German-Russian colonists who came to Tulcea as a closed group, all being Catholic Swabians, the greater part of whom went immediately farther eastward and founded the Malcoci Colony. The Catholics made up the majority of the Germans in Tulcea, the number of which has grown rapidly in the following period.



German Catholic School and Church in Tulcea

The long, broad street, where they lived together, was simply called “German Street” and has kept this name until today, although it is now officially called Strada Mircea Voda and has largely lost its German population. In it lies the pretty, built in 1872, German Catholic Church with the schoolhouse and rectory. Frenchman C. Allard estimated that the total number of Germans in Tulcea and the surrounding area in 1856 to about 100 families.¹ When Wilhelm Hamm came to Tulcea in the summer of 1858, he could get off at a German Guest House. It was operated by a Tyrolean, who was married to a Transylvanian Saxon. However, the “German Mahala” certainly did not evoke any lasting patriotic impression. The homes of the Germans were single-storey, constructed of mud-block, reed-covered huts with possibly small windows, but, thanks to their diligence, all went well in their farming.² According to Hamm, they were mainly Swabian and Bavarian. With more research, he would discover that these “Swabians” came mostly from Alsace and the Rhine-Palatinate. The oldest, an over 80-year-old German woman in Tulcea, who had lived here since her childhood, was born in the colony of “Alsace” in the Kherson *Gouvernement*. Jakob Stumpf, referred to in the above mentioned document and imparted by Konrad Keller in the Settlers Directory of Speyer Colony 1839 and 1840, is listed as farm #108. Niederselz, Alsace is given as his homeland, and his wife as a daughter of Johann Schardt, Leimersheim, Rhine-Palatinate.³ In 1916, the Catholic parish consisted of 51 families with 222 souls. Over the years, the original German base with names like Schiller,⁴ Strasser,

¹ Souvenirs d’ Orient. La Bulgarie orientale. Paris 1864. S. 105.

² Südöstliche Steppen und Städte. Frankfurt a. M. 1862. S. 48.

³ Die deutschen Kolonien in Südrussland, II. Band. S. 139.

⁴ Or “Schüler,” as Keller wrote it for a family in the Karlsruhe Colony that had come out of Mörlheim in the Rhine Palatinate. According to Keller, there were families by the name Fix in the Sulz Colony who came from Albersweiler (Rhine Palatinate); Schröder in the Speyer Colony from Bietigheim in Baden; Frank in the Speyer and Landau Colonies from Kapsweyer (Rhine Palatinate).

Stumpf, Flaum, Fix, Kreil, Streile, Weidemann, Brandt, Zehrer, Anker, Schröder, Frank, Backer, Matzke, Frohn, Martin, Staub, Hennenvogel ended up including parishioners of Slavic or mixed parentage.

Lutheran Germans seem to have gradually found their way in later through individual immigration. They were engaged mostly in modest sedentary professions so that their number was subject to large fluctuations. On September 13, 1857, they came together as a congregation which, in the following year, affiliated itself with Atmagea. It numbered over 60 souls at the founding. In 1863, L. Viscovich sites the total number of Germans in Tulcea at 400. In 1868, there were 12 Lutheran families, and a list from 1872 numbers them at 18 with 44 souls. Among them were 3 blacksmiths, 3 shoemakers, 2 bakers, and one each wheelwright, wagoner, master mason, butcher, potter, decorator, and the rest employees and laborers at the Danube Commission, but not a single farmer. As far as can be determined, these were from Poland, Poznań, the Rhine Province, Saxony-Reuß, Austria, Switzerland, and 2 families were from Württemberg. Toward the end of the century, the Lutheran congregation dissolved itself, partly due to migration, partly by joining up with the Baptists. The cohesion was very relaxed in the 1860s when a Methodist missionary of German descent called Flockern, from Odessa, settled in Tulcea and built 2 well constructed houses with yard and gym equipment (*Turngerät*), and also put up a school in which the language for instruction for the upper classes was German.⁵ Before the outbreak of the war, the number of Germans in Tulcea numbered somewhere around 270 to 280 souls. In the days of my stay, beginning in June of 1917, the city was evacuated of its civilian population, and it is assumed that some of the Germans did not return.

The founders of the oldest of the still existing German settlements, **Malcoci Colony**, also came by way of Tulcea. It is located 6 to 7 kilometers [3.7 to 4.3 miles] further east on the 50-meter [98 feet] high limestone terraces, bordering the marshy area of the St. George Tributary, several kilometers distant from the watercourse. The road from Tulcea is about the middle of the main street of the village, which moves along the bottom of a long, narrow valley cut, which is shaped by fairly steep ascending heights. Running parallel to the lower road is a second, slightly higher one.

The first 20 to 25 German families arrived here in 1843. They came from the Catholic colonies of the Kherson *Gouvernement*, from Josephsthal, Mannheim, Elsaß, Landau, Katharinenthal, “all together from 10 different villages.” They had left them 2 years earlier because the land was scarce there and only half of the Germans were in possession of their own. Their way had led them through Bessarabia and Moldavia to Focsani and, from there through Wallachia up to Calarisi. In the vicinity of this town, they had settled in a village called Dschuroi (?) and stayed there for one and a half years. Then they moved on again and reached Dobrudscha by way of Galatz. Through heavy and exceptional labor, they had to fight for the place of their settlement. All of it was forest and everyone had to first root out and clear in order to gain ground for house, yard, and field. But everything that they were able to cultivate belonged to them at no cost or restrictions. At the same time, the sale of the lumber gave them the means for a livelihood in that difficult time.

⁵ K.F. Peters, Reisebriefe eines deutschen Naturforschers aus der Dobrudscha. II. Abt. Österreich. Revue. Wien 1866. S. 234.

They were “pure Swabian.” In reality, most came from Alsace, some from Baden and the Palatinate. A peculiar custom is still reminiscent today of their Alsace homeland: when speaking their first and last name, they often use the French form. Georg is called Georges, Karl Ludwig is called Charles Louis. Other than that, there is nothing French in their “Schwäbisch.”

In the first four years, the farmers were left to themselves in the solitude of their forest. On November 1, 1847, the first church register was set up and, for the first time, a list of inhabitants was drawn up. The book goes up to 1816. The entries are in the Latin language with Italian sections and headings. As short as these to the point, sober entries concerning baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths are, they, in many respects, still impart, through the vagueness and generality of the personal information, the corrupted name forms and other things, are an insight into the conditions under which the German farmers lived at that time, and into their spiritual condition. After years of hard physical labor and hardly anything else as material interests, they finally again received spiritual shepherds. But these were men of foreign people, who did not understand their language, first Italians, then a Frenchman. With few exceptions, it appears that the colonists papers and certificates were no longer available to them. Pastors obviously wrote down their incomprehensible names only after hearing it spoken and thereby gave them a wide variety of spellings, so that they were often hard to recognize and became apparent only by later entries. The name Baumstark appears as Bamsctargh, Baumstergk, Baumstak; Angkart later became Anker. We read Klaaen (Klein), Baidaman (Weidemann), Scmit, Screders, Vook (Fock), and with particular difficulties Haispelader became Aspelader, Aspelaidler, or Aschbeleider. The location of the German home disappeared for the farmers, or, at the very least, they only referred back to Russia. As place of origin (*locus originis*), Russia is specified in most cases; frequently *Alsatia* or *Francia*. A person by the name of Udalrichus Waibl came from Bavaria, and an Anton Führer from Hindelang in Bavaria. Württemberg is missing completely. Only very occasionally is a certain location specified. A colonist by the name of Teuchscheerer was born in Mannheim (*Colonia Russia*) and then was a blacksmith in Belgrad, Bessarabia. As for nationality, most of them listed Ottoman, probably due to the fact that they were now living on Turkish soil and other certain documents were missing. However, a smaller number are listed under *jurisdiction gallica*. They apparently still had the French certificates from their Alsatian homeland. I've been told in the villages that some families had French passports upon arrival. The Bavarian family Waibl was under Austrian protection.

The first *Catalogo dello stato dell'anime esistenti in Malkoc 1847, 1. novembre* lists 28 families with 134 souls. It lists the following names: Heret (Ehret), Kunzler, Mak (Mach, Mack), Hittl, Baumstergk (Baumstark), Anghat (Ankert), Hek (Heck), Kres (Gres, Greß), Riffl (Riffel), Kooset (Kost), Hoffart, Klaaen (Klain, Klein), Prendel, Frank, Kiffer (Kiefer), Baidaman (Weidemann), Drescher, Kokert (Gugert), Vook, Scmit (Schmidt), Bruker (Brucker), Haispelader. The book does not contain a list of inhabitants for the following years. However, we recognize from the other entries how the village had gradually grown up until 1861 through a fresh influx. Besides the old family names, new ones come to light: Bahner, Screder (Schroeder), Brand, Krieger, Führer, Martin, Weiß, Sießler (Schüßler), Türk, Mehle (Melle), Keim, Geiß. Tuchserer (Tuchscheerer), Hink, Waibl and others; also one from Poland, Bukalovski (Bobolovski)

Also from settler entries in the first list of souls in Malcoci, Keller's register indicates various settlers as still Russian colonists. So in Landau Colony, Michael and Anton Greß from Reimersweil in Alsace; Heinrich Greß with his wife Katharina, born Stein from Klimbach in Alsace; and Matthias Greß with his wife Klara, born Baumstark from Quien (?) in Baden. Furthermore, Martin Kiefer from Schweighofen in Rhine-Palatinate with wife Elisabeth from Offenbach. In Speyer Colony: Johanna Appenleiter from Birckenhördt in Rhine-Palatinate with wife Johanna, born Heck from Elchesheim in Baden. In Sulz Colony: Johannes Brucker from Offenbach with wife Margarethe; Joseph Schmidt from Röschoog in Alsace with wife Barbara born Brucker from Offenbach. In Karlsruhe Colony: Andreas Drescher from Freiburg with wife Theresia, born Milius from Walburg in Alsace. Most of the other colonists are not identified with Russian villages, but can be traced by their family name and their origin. Some of them are represented in various Russian colonies and came from various German towns. This reveals how at one time entire family clans often decided on a common emigration from their German distribution area. Families by the name of Martin were in the Landau and Speyer Colonies, who came from Kandel in Rhine-Palatinate; in the Karlsruhe Colony from Rußdorf (Rhine-Palatinate) and the Kandel Colony; and in the Rastatt Colony from Sulz in Alsace and Oberosterbach (Rhine-Palatinate). Of the Klein family, a branch of them in the Karlsruhe Colony came from Rülzheim (Rhine-Palatinate.), in Katharinenthal from Elsenz and Kirchhard in Baden; in the Rastatt Colony from Bergzabern (Rhine-Palatinate.) and Langenbrücken in Baden. The Heck family had settled in the colonies of Speyer, Karlsruhe und München. Back in Germany, they were at home in Dörnbach (Rhine-Palatinate) and in Bietigheim and Lohrbach in Baden. The Weiß family in the colonies of Landau, Sulz and Rastatt came from Waldhambach in Alsace, Aschbach in the Palatinate and Neumarkt in Bavaria. There were Geiß families in the colonies of Speyer and Karlsruhe who came from Wanzenau in Alsace and Rohrbach in Baden. Others to also identify: in Speyer Colony, Ehret from Salmbach, Alsace, Frank from Kapsweyer (Rhine-Palatinate.), Schroeder from Bietigheim in Baden. In the Karlsruhe Colony, Gugert from Lorch in Hesse.

The marriages show that these families almost exclusively married among themselves. Only in very few cases did the young woman have a native name, but still a German, and it is significant that the bride was always a "Lutheran." The fellow had taken her from a neighboring Lutheran colony, Kataloi or Atmagea. There was decency and morality in the villages. Only once is an illegitimate birth indicated.

Virtually no immigration took place after the 1860s. The colony grew only through natural reproduction. Since the first inhabitants list, the number of families increased some six-fold, but hardly half a dozen new names had been added. After a course of 2 generations, in 1906, the church register listed 135 families and 784 souls. The last church tax register counted 182 families, so that there were around 1,000 Germans in the village before the outbreak of the war.

The soil of the colony was good. The people mainly grew wheat and oats, pursued animal breeding, and also planted vineyards which provided a very good wine. In 1864, Karl Peters⁶ also testified that the village had good cultivation, and remained undisturbed by the Crimean War. A person would have made good progress if it had not been that very soon the shortage of

⁶ Grundlinien zur Geographie, S. 54.

land made itself felt. Shortly after the seizure of Dobrudscha, the Romanians undertook a new distribution. Each 30-year-old family father received 10 ha [24.7 acres]. The others and the sons born later remained excluded from private ownership. Today, about 80 families are landless or have only their courtyard. They either rented indefinite portions or also worked for wages. Under these circumstances, quite a few families migrated, some, about 20, to Canada and Dakota, some to the younger Catholic colonies in Dobrudscha. Before the war, many had adopted the plan to return to the old homeland of Germany, and had already undertaken steps to leave. In my presence, the greater part of the farmers hoped for that after the peace.

The village street of Malcoci did not present the generally held image of a uniform system of farms and homes like we mostly encounter them in the later settlements. The walls, which separated the yard from the road and gave you a straight beautiful line, were missing. They also lacked the row of high old trees. There were 144 German yards, some inhabited by several families. About 15 years ago, the Romanian Government had also settled veterans here from the Russian-Turkish War; 11 families, as well as 3 Russians, lived off by themselves. To a large extent, the houses still have reed roofs. Still, this village in which things had not gone especially well, gave a clean and orderly impression. It also had something that was strictly frowned upon in almost all other German colonies, a stately inn and also a coffee house. The stone church, with a long and high nave, slender steeple in a somewhat taller position, was badly damaged by shelling in the war. Three shells passed through the walls and the roof and the inside was laid waste. Part of the vaulted ceiling with the chandelier crashed down and the altars were overturned. The Romanians dragged off (*weggeschleppt*) the German pastor as a hostage. The old German school, a simple reed-roofed house, was taken out of service through a new Romania. So long as the Turks were in charge of the country, the community had its German school, even if it might not have ranked very high in its performances. In older times, people from the village did their own teaching; later, German teachers were also hired. When teaching in the Romanian language was imposed in 1899, a still tolerable separation took place at first: the school was in German in the morning and Romanian in the afternoon. Since 1900, there has been only one Romanian teacher who never did understand German. German children would have grown up without any instruction in their mother tongue if the pastor had not taught an hour of German daily in the vestibule of the church.



German Church in Malcoci

The next oldest of the existing colonies is Atmagea, established in August and September of 1848 by farmers, who until then, were located in Akpunar. It is located 10 km [6.2 miles] southwest of Akpunar, about 24 km [14.9 miles] west of Babadag, approximately 250 meters [820 feet] high in the middle of the forested mountains in the valley flow of the Slava River. Here a place to settle down was pointed out to the newcomers when, with this objective, they turned to the *Kaimakam* [a deputy in the service of the Ottoman Empire] of Babadag, because they heard that he wanted German settlers. This person was a Greek who had studied in Berlin and learned to appreciate this valued German efficiency. The settlement land was a place of scenic beauty, surrounded all around by narrow outcropping protective heights, which in the west overlooked the broad back of the “Goldberg.” A quite considerable stream rushes out from it through the valley bottom and finds its way to the spacious village square with the church, from which the streets extend from all sides with their laid out farmyards. Everything was still covered with dense forest when the German farmers arrived. Only an old shepherd lived there, who had dug a well for himself. And yet Atmagea stands on ancient cultural ground.



Atmagea with the Goldberg and Cemetery

My first walk through the village to the cemetery was especially surprising to me. In the ground turned up by the excavation of the graves, and also in the adjacent field, I noticed the numerous small pot shards which were certainly of Roman origin. Upon further investigation, I learned that “that all of Atmagea is located on ancient cemeteries.” Almost in every part of the village, when digging, one comes upon ancient cultural remains and skeletons. Many large and small pots, including the huge storage vessels, which were particularly popular in Wallachia and Dobrudscha, were found; unfortunately, always broken and discarded. Also ancient coins; what was shown to me was almost all Roman imperial money.⁷ It was obviously a significant Roman settlement which has remained unknown up till now.⁷ And the findings proved that it had existed for a long time through the stormy centuries of the first millennium. A farmer even brought me Byzantine coins, together with silver rings, which he had found during the excavation of a cellar in his yard. It appears that the old inhabited place only disappeared during the middle ages and its traces were gradually completely overgrown with forest.

⁷ Also Jakob Weiß, in his book: *Die Dobrudscha im Altertum* (Sarajevo 1911), the most complete compilation of the Roman stations and settlements there, is not aware of any being in this area.

At first, there were only 4 families that came from Akpunar: Ludwig Kalk, Jakob Dörmann, Christian and Georg Kraus. The German colony in the little Turkish Akpunar gradually increased in size by some 35 families who came from Jacobsonsthal and also through other migrations. It was also a very distinguished breed of people that were established with Atmagea. Adam Kühn's baptism register shows that from September, 1846 until December, 1849, children were born to 27 different families. An additional 6 family names are listed for male and female baptisms. Of the above mentioned, the following names appear: Adam, Schielke, Kant, Martin, Fechner, Kühn, Rode, Sperr, Kirchhöbel, Berkholz, Hinz, Brandenburger, Blumhagen, Fahndrich, Beglau, Schmidt, Look, Ruf, Liebelt, Markus, Krüger, Schweitz, Pied, Priëß (Prinß). In addition, under the maiden names of the mothers are more which, in later lists show up again under the farmers of Atmagea, are the families that were already there at that time: Rust (Rost), Bruniski, and Berndt.

The parents of the children were mostly young couples who were already born in Russia from 1816 to 1827. It is then assumed that it was probably mostly elderly sons who migrated because they had been excluded from the paternal estate. As far as it can be determined, there were still three who were born (*das Licht der Welt erblickt*) in Germany, including Father Kühn, who was born in December of 1807, in Deichholländer near Gnesen. The tribal homeland for most of them was West Prussia and Posen. Then there were mentions made of Poland, Pomerania, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, the Provinces of Brandenburg and Saxony, Berlin, and, in one case, also Württemberg. Probably in no other village of Dobrudscha has the native dialect remained so well spoken and uncorrupted as the flat (*breite*), somewhat sing-songish (*singende*) Platt in Atmagea. The important name of Kant is known in West Prussia, which from the very beginning is represented through several families. Karl Peters, who came through Atmagea in 1864, indicated as area of origin Brandenburg Marsh (*Mark*) and also Hannover Highland (*Seestland*). Furthermore, he also made the observation at the time that many no longer knew where their grandparents or great-grandparents had come from.⁸ It was exclusively Lutheran families, and that the community, as the mayor assured me with pride, until the present time, has seen to it that no strange element came into the village. The church ledger from 1849 lists the marriages. The third entry is the Russian groom belonging to the Molokan sect, and there is this entry in the church book which remarks: "After a promise by the bridegroom and his father, the children of this marriage will be Lutheran."

The oldest woman who had experienced it told me that the first years were a very dreary time. Hard work and much sacrifice. First they lived in reed huts, then in sod houses (*bordee*), as they are still now used in great number in Dobrudscha, where the living room was either completely or just half in the ground and only a protective roof above the floor. To gain arable land, the forest had to be cleared. The colonists burned charcoal and brought it over the hills (*die Berge*) to the Danube town of Pecineage, 6 to 7 hours away, to trade it for flour at that place. The exploitation of forests has remained their main employment for many years, which subsequently made it endurable when they supplied the posts for the construction of the dam in Sulina. Karl Peters repeatedly showed his indignation yet in 1864⁹ about the terrible forest devastation of German farmers and the "sad manner of wood usage which must lead to the extinction of the

⁸ Reisebriefe eines deutschen Naturforschers, Oesterr. Revue, 1866. Heft 8, S. 234.

⁹ Grundlinien, S. 27 und 54.

large forests of the old mountain if boundaries are not established to the devastation of the irrational market.”¹⁰ In fact, there is forest now available only on one side of the village.

As in Malcoci, each was allowed to take as much land as he wanted and was able to work. Moreover, he received a title (“*Tapu*=*Zettel*”) from the Turkish Government.¹¹ These were also recognized in the new regulation of basic ownership issued by the Romanian Government. In return for it, the owner received full Romanian title. This new regulation played out like this: each family was to have 10 hectares [24.7 acres] of land at the very least. Whoever had only 1 hectare [2.47 acres] of *Tapu* land got an additional 9 hectares [22.2 acres]; whoever had more than 10 hectares during Turkish times, was allowed to keep them. Over the course of time, these standards were also frequently applied in Atmagea so that, today, many families have only 1, 3 or 4 hectares and even around 14 have no land at all. They leased government land for which, toward the end, they had to pay 25 Lei per hectare.

It deserves to be highlighted that solitary, labor-intensive forest life of the first years did not lead to the overgrowing of what the farmers had left for themselves. More so than in others, a certain good spirit, a lively sense of order and common sense prevailed among the older settlers in Atmagea right from the start. Developing and maintaining this healthy spirit and orderly conditions was in no small part due to the already more than once mentioned Adam Kühn, whom his community called “Father” and who, still today, has a unique popularity by that name with all the Germans in Dobruška. He was a farmer just like the others, but apparently surpassed his village comrades by talent and character, a personality of leadership talent. As a seven year old boy, he and his parents had left their German home village near Gnesen and had migrated to Bessarabia. As a thirty-five year old man, he, his wife and 5 children moved again, this time from Tarutino. He searched here and there to gain a foothold in Wallachia and finally led his wandering companions to a Turkish village in Dobruška. He became their mayor here, took care of the emergency baptisms, and ensured their proper registration and confirmation. He then served his community in Atmagea in capacities that would be like two lifetimes, primarily as an advisor and as a willing acknowledged leader. He provided for them in their needs that which under the pressure of the stuff of daily concerns was hardly experienced by everyone. He insisted that young people not grow up without school and pushed for a pastor and that a church be built. From the meager documents, and even more from the stories of the people, one sees and feels his wise and energetic work everywhere. A strong sense of family expresses itself from the importance in his listing the birth and death of his children in the Bible. A deep devotion to religion connected itself in him with a philosophical inclination to comprehend the deeper things and their general importance. When the colonists, as we shall see, thought again about moving on and their pastor cautioned them to think it over carefully and tried to hold them back, he understood the futility of this endeavor with this observation: “Pastor, when once the German person has migrated, he has no rest any longer.” And with a smiling face, he declared: “We Germans are like this: If we have bread, then we want a breakfast roll.”¹² Bernhard Schwarz portrays the eighty year old as a very fresh and mischievous old warrior (*Recke*).¹³ And

¹⁰ Reisebriefe, S. 235 ff.

¹¹ *Tapu senedi* or simply *tapu*, according to an earlier feudal system, was the official certificate of right to existing real estate. Vgl. Zenker, Jules Theodore, *Dict. Turc=Arabe-Persan*, t. I. Leipzig 1866 und Radloff, W., *Versuch eines Wörterbuchs der Türk=Dialekte*. 3. Bd. St. Petersburg 1905.

¹² Mayer, S. 351.

¹³ *Vom deutschen Exil*, S. 88.

at 94, he was “still a youthful old man in body and spirit.”¹⁴ When he died a few years later, he left behind a large, branched out offspring. Even in this respect, father Kühn could serve as a role model and pattern of a German man of the people. From 1829 to 1856, he fathered 11 children, and we will get back to that, how from one strong tribe, German branches reached out over the whole of Dobrudscha, to America, and also back to the Prussian homeland.

Is it worth remembering a simple peasant leader of Dobrudscha in such detail? Of a people we consider as great and efficient are not only those who have a farther reaching sphere of activity or have moved into the full light of approving literature, those who nourish self-confidence, leave pride and educate to emulation, but also many who were leading only a humble section of our populace and established a enduring place in our memory. This is true of Adam Kühn and the German farmers in Dobrudscha, and so he deserves a small memorial (*Denkmal*) here.

On this occasion, there is also a second man to consider who played a significant role in the history of the old German settlements in Dobrudscha. He was a native of Magdeburg, a former Prussian officer, the honorable Colonel Ritter von Malinowsky in Tulcea. He came to Turkey as a Prussian instructor, he had achieved great honor particularly in the fortification system in Rumelia and Asia Minor and was then appointed as Deputy of the Gate by the Danube Regulatory. A somewhat popular, gray-blond man with good German blood flowing in his veins, as W. Hamm wrote about him, he immediately took on the Turkish uniform and the Fez. A man with diverse interests, whom Karl Peters remembered as a collector of beetles (*Coleopterensammlers*), and decorated because of his high intellectual and character traits. A large number of letters and reports written in his own hand can be found in the church documents in Atmagea which prove how warm-heartedly and tirelessly this officer was concerned about and worked for the mental and physical advancement of the German farmers in Dobrudscha. Their advisor and representing their interests with the Turkish authorities as well as with Prussian diplomacy and church matters in Constantinople, Galatz and Berlin.

School was held already in Akpunar. One learned to read good, but not to write is what the smart, spirit-fresh old folks told me. The teacher was one of the colonists. It was like that also in Atmagea until the beginning of the 1870s. Malinowsky reported to the Gustav Adolf Society in 1857, “A teacher, son of a teacher, but at the same time a farmer, teaches the children in a makeshift manner reading, writing and arithmetic.” The position of schoolmaster was certainly not an enviable living, and being taken on by a colonist presupposed a certain idealism. In 1863, the teacher in Atmagea received 2 measures of grain from each farm annually and 3 *Piasters* [ca. 6 pence British sterling] per child during the school year. With 40 farms, his income amounted to about 1,000 *Piasters*. Colonist August Kant was a longtime teacher “who stood out as a role model in the community.”¹⁵ It was only in 1873 that the community received its first teacher who was educated in Germany in the Rauhen House in Horn near Hamburg. After the transfer of Dobrudscha into Romanian possession, the same was repeated also in Atmagea as in all of the colonies. The Romanian Government sought as much as possible to suppress the German instruction, and also forced a Romanian teacher upon the pure German communities. The farmers in Atmagea let their personal indignation be felt about this and rejected every dealing

¹⁴ Meyer, S. 340.

¹⁵ Pfarrerbericht vom 18. June 1871.

with him in a gruff manner.¹⁶ To begin with, two afternoon lessons in German were still allowed, in addition to one hour daily. In the time before the war, it was limited to 2 hours daily, in the morning the bigger children and an hour in the afternoon for the small ones. However, what was no less dangerous for the preservation of the German character of the youth was the establishment, on the part of the government, of a pre-school in which the children from the age of 5 were enrolled and, of course, were taught exclusively in Romanian. Here they learned Romanian poems earlier than German singing, and so it happens that today, now and again, you can hear a flax hair tot singing a song in Romanian.

Atmagea received their own pastor already in May of 1849. He came from the Bessarabia colony of Rohrbach, where he had worked for 24 years, but had to already give up his position [in Atmagea] after 3 years because he had attracted the displeasure of the *Kaimakam* [governor of a provincial district] of Babadag. The absence of a caretaker of souls had deeply troubled the community. Finally, they directed their request to Colonel von Malinowsky that he obtain a pastor for them, without any idea of how he would be able to go about helping them. But their confidence was not disappointed. Malinowsky wrote to the Gustav Adolf Society on 8 September, 1857, and depicted the anxious concern of the farmers with impressive passion that they were heading for degeneration and would be alienated from Christianity if their spiritual need was not attended to. The letter indicated their number to be 50 families and 8 non-residents (*Insassen*), about 250 souls. In establishing the annual financial contribution for the requested pastor, 57 names are listed, first on top is Adam Kühn. The material difficulties that stood before them were resolved in that they would join themselves to the newly established congregation in Tulcea, which was part of the German Lutherans who at that time had turned up in various other places in the north of Dobrukscha. Malinowsky reported that there should be 6 families in Ciucurova and 4 in Macin. There was also a Lutheran congregation in Ismail, which, on 22 April, 1858, resolved to look into becoming a branch of Atmagea. In August of 1858, a pastor was sent out by the Berlin Church Council, who, by coincidence, also had the name of Kühn.



Church in Atmagea – a drawing by R. Canisius

The next concern of the community was the construction of a church. There also, Colonel von Malinowsky had to help again. Already in the autumn of 1859, an application for permission for

¹⁶ Vergl. Schwarz, S. 89.

a church building went to the *Bekil* of the Protestants in Constantinople; on 9 August, 1860 came the news from the Prussian Envoy of the Gate, from Goltz, that the church permit was approved by a directive (*Ferman*) of the Sultan. It was issued at the end of July, 1860.¹⁷ This interesting document is also found among the church documents; unfortunately, not carefully preservation and, as a result, in a pretty bad condition.¹⁸ According to the directive, the church should be 24 *Ellen* long [an *Elle* was about 2 feet], 15 *Ellen* wide and 8 *Ellen* high. The contract was arranged with Master Mason Carlotte Dominico in Galatz on 28 May, 1861, calling for the church to be far enough along in the summer so that it could be roofed. The mother colonies in Bessarabia contributed their portion; Beresina gave 25 rubles and 20 kopeck.

So the cherished desire of the community was met and one would think that now they would have been caught up with a new, double pleasure of their village, in which, as Hamm testified, everything was going so good for them. Then, just at this point in time, the above mentioned event occurred: the emigration of nearly all colonists. The external impetus was related to the introduction of the described colonization policy in which, after the Crimean War, Turkey took the offensive and once again put the folks on the Black Sea and the Danube on the move. Information came to the farmers of Atmagea that one could get good land in Moldavia, in the Bulgarian villages which had been abandoned, without obligation to military service; and vast landed property in Crimea because of the Tatars migrating to Dobrudscha. This also meant that the dreaded Circassians would be acquiring places to reside in the neighborhood of Atmagea. Adam Kühn really had it right about the deep inner reason that suddenly motivated the farmers when he said: "Once the German man has migrated for the first time, he no longer has any rest for too long. Malinowsky, the pastor, and also the Prussian Consul to Galatz, Blücher, who had already come to their aid several times and stood with them in great prestige, sought for them to be held back;¹⁹ but to no avail. 3 or 4 families departed. Even my aged female narrator was part of it; her family stayed away only one summer and then came back because the Bulgarians returned to that place [where they had gone]. She mentioned Tripoplo (?) as their stop-over place in Moldavia. Malinowsky already reports in August of 1862, that the farmers of Atmagea returned in full repentance. "They could say that they were lucky that they were able to again return to their own houses. The governor had not yet made other arrangements." He wrote to the Church Council in November that the community had not yet fully returned.

But trials and sufferings, which they had up to now never known, stood before them when they returned to their old village in which they, through hard work and yet without external interference, had moved forward. A period of unrest and very bad experiences began for the colonists. The dreaded Circassians were in fact their neighbors and soon they made themselves felt [to the colonists] in annoying ways.

These people also belonged to the program of the Turkish colonization policy. In the summer of 1864, about 20,000 were accommodated in the *Paschlik* by Tulcea. Partly without permanent residences, they lived mainly by raiding and were the terror of the industrious, established population. They got possession of a village in the continuation of the Slava River Valley, about 10 km [6.2 miles] southeast of Atmagea, which up to today still bears the name of Slava

¹⁷ In the beginning of the month Moharrem 1277. The month Moharrem includes, according to our calculation, the time from July 20 to August 18.

¹⁸ Abgebildet in: Bilder aus der Dobrudscha, S. 152 und bei Mayer mit beigegefügteter deutscher Übersetzung, S. 348-49.

¹⁹ Vergl. Hamm, S. 58.

Chercheza. The two German colonies of Atmagea and Ciucurova were welcome neighbors to them because there was always something to get. These now lived in constant insecurity and were frequently raided and plundered, again and again, which first came to an end when the Russian-Turkish War again expelled the wild bands from Dobrudscha. Lawsuits and complaints with the Turkish authorities did not do any good, or at most, once, for a short time, such as at the end of 1871 and 1872, when the Governor of Tulcea “brought all suspicious rabble into custody and strictly legal men occupied the *Casar* Court of Justice [*Casargericht*] in Babadag.”²⁰ The Circassians themselves considered their robberies as their right. Pastor Hachmeister in Atmagea furnishes an excellent example: “Those Circassians, they are truly a very naive people. They often speak about it. Among other things, they say it is like that also in nature in that one allows the bees to gather for a period of time so that one is certain afterwards of being able to gather something from them. However, it is their neighbors who were the bees and they the masters, who had to take care of the taking away. That really took care of them quite good. Four or six men roam around. Jackets, coats, fur, shoes, axe and hatchet had to be delivered.”

A new disturbance also interrupted the completion of the church construction because of things wandering off by way of the Circassians. They found that they could make good use of the on-site construction material to build a mosque for themselves in their village, and so they forced the farmers to bring it there. In the house of the family of the grandson of Adam Kühn, I found a content rich exercise book in which various mayoral entries of different kinds had been made. There was included in it a huge full 10 page record of a mayoral court entry on 6 August, 1877 confirming :“List of the items stolen in Atmagea (*Atmatscha*) by the Circassians on May 1, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16 and 23 June.” It shows how thoroughly the Caucasian guests cleared out things during their visits. Not a house was overlooked as the 70 victims listed corresponds exactly to the number of the then existing owners, so that the list, at the same time, represents a complete family list. And so it appears that absolutely every possession that belonged to a German farmer was something they delighted in. First and foremost, they obviously headed for horses with harnesses and saddles. If they were able to come up with no less than 297 in the two months, 10 to 14 from each farmer, this meant this was also an end to the considerable wealth of the German economy. Then, there were wagons, guns, tools, equipment, water barrels, flour, and naturally, also ready cash. But what is more, the Circassians made no distinction between what was useful and useless. Everything was possible: furs, coats, boots also pants, vests and hats, women's clothes and children's clothes, shirts, socks, aprons, bedspreads, feather pillows, window curtains, waistbands. It seemed to apply to them literally what the German traveler W. Brenneke, who visited the area from Macin in 1868, said about the Circassians: “Thieves and assassins, the only things they let lay are millstones and red-hot irons.”²¹ The total value of the things stolen was calculated to be 242,431 *Piasters*. It is understandable that such experiences would have shaken the confidence of the colonists on a prosperous way forward, and thus there probably may have been a connection with their resurging new thoughts of migrating in the early part of the 1870s. A pastor's report of 1872 states that: “The wanderlust is back. Some talk about America, which is primarily forefront in Kataloi; others are thinking about a Danube island between the Kilia and Sulina tributary; others again looking for an empty space in — —.”

²⁰ Bericht des Pfarrers Hachmeister vom 29. 7. 72.

²¹ Die Länder an der unieren Donau und Konstantinopel. Reise=Erinnerungen aus dem Herbst 1868. Hannover 1870.

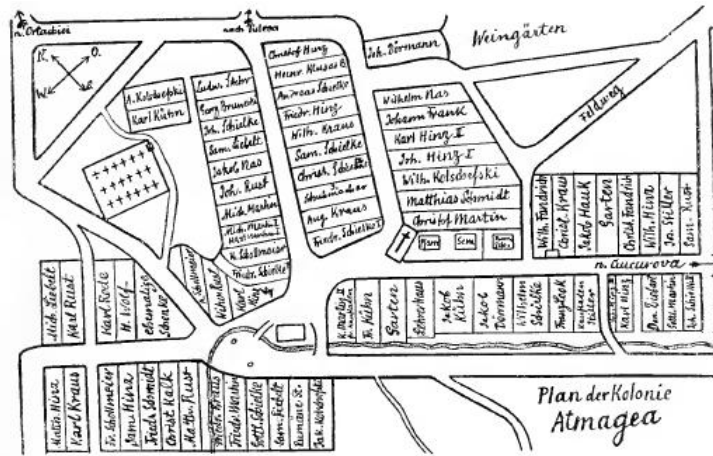
A severe blow hit the village during the Russian-Turkish War by way of a terrible looting which had resulted in a general impoverishment. I will have more to say about that later, about the disappointments and the bitter atmosphere sustained over many years which the new Romanian authority brought upon the colonists. Around the middle of the 1880s, the farmers in Atmagea tried once to present their grievances directly to King Carl so that they might receive some relief from him. They sent a delegation to Bucharest, but were unable to meet with the king and returned without having achieved their purpose. They also searched in vain for participation and assistance from the mighty empires to which the people still belonged by blood and language and faith. Through their pastor, they described to the Imperial legation in Romania the many injustices that happened to them by some officials. Among the documents, there is a decision of the legation, dated 3 December, 1877, which states that "an official intervention in the interests of the colonists could not be granted." They were no longer German nationals. To the plain sense and feeling of the simple farmers, this cold, constitutional correctness was barely possible to understand.

In a less formal manner, they had understood in a praiseworthy manner their relationship to the motherland. Among the papers in the church, I came across a letter with the big, bold signature: Friedrich Wilhelm, Crown Prince. It was written at the Versailles headquarters, 20 November, 1870, and thanked the congregation at Atmagea for the collection they had gathered for the 25 Napoleonic War invalids. And so that means: "It increased the value of this donation in that almost all members of the community had contributed to the donation and thus testifies that their heart in the distance is with them by the use of goods and blood for Germany." It is not the only testimony for the sympathy of the Germans in Atmagea for the events going on in the mother country. In the already mentioned mayor's book, there can also be found a collection of over 30 contributions which had been gathered in the village in June of 1879, as a gift for the golden wedding anniversary of Kaiser Wilhelm.

As for the German character of those from Atmagea, which, to preserve, the farmers had never entirely disregarded from the outset; it also did not change anything with the inserted Romanian influence. It has remained until today a pure German village. As for stranger folks, there are only 2 gypsy families who serve as shepherds in the community, and one Russian, who had married a German girl, but himself became a Lutheran and agreed to let the children be raised as Germans.

It is a tremendously friendly village where one imagines himself transplanted in the German homeland. How it adapted to the heights of the narrow space of the valley, divided into streets and wards as the terrain allowed, in and around the stately farmsteads tall nut trees and fruit trees, appearing as if having been like that for centuries, naturally emerging from small beginnings and grown, not a massive planned colony created by land-seeking farmers. It lacks the strict regularity of the plot system and the exact same form of construction of the residential and business buildings which the younger German villages of Dobrudscha put up so beautifully and marvelously, one would almost like to say, stylized. Not every house is located in the same place on the yard, not every one with the gable end and the same distance to the street. The roofs are still mostly covered with reed. The gable ends are often decorated with two carved horse heads once so loved by the ancestors in the Prussian homeland, in Mecklenburg and Pomerania. Wicker fences alternated with posts and walls. In the middle of the village, on the main square,

visible from all directions, is located the bright church with a smooth wooden roof and square steeple.



Village Plat of Atmagea Colony

Wide steps lead to its entrance and the simple interior. The old Bible on the altar bears the handwritten dedication of Prussian theologian Ernst Hengstenberg, dated Exaudi Sunday, 1858. The Russians, when they occupied the village at the beginning of the war, stole the altar clothes and 5 lamps. Furthermore, the village remained preserved during the World War from heavier damage despite quartering Russians and Romanians, Turks and Bulgarians, one after the other. Of course, as in all German villages, all men who had not fled were dragged off (*weggeschleppt*) from here after the outbreak of the war. In the summer of 1917, 50 are still missing, of whose fate they have heard nothing more. The small, friendly parsonage lies next to the church, joined by the municipality house and the old school. Previously, there was also once a guest house in the village, operated by a Jew. But he soon gave it up and left because the farmers were not drinking. Before the war, there was also a “*Lavke*,” a grocery store.



Street in Atmagea

As the outward appearance of the village to the observer was like that in the German homeland, so also its inhabitants. The universal blond and bright eyed types with oval faces matched that of

the North German origin. And it was a healthy race: A mayor, in drawing up a list of souls, besides the columns for nationality, birth year and birth month, added a further somewhat surprising one: physical defects. He found only 15 of 338 persons to record something. One was asthmatic, another had consumption [lung problems such as tuberculosis], a few had ruptures; otherwise, there were only lameness or stiffness of a foot or arm, hearing loss of the old men and near-sightedness. Also, upon my inquiries, I received the assurance that diseases were almost unknown, even the almost obvious children's diseases. Measles, "*Griseln*," were rare, and even scarlet fever was unheard of earlier; only in 1916 did it show up for the first time on a grand scale. The low altitude of the village like theirs had certainly contributed to these sparkling healthy conditions, but certainly no less also the observance of cleanliness both personal and in the homes, as well as the sensible lifestyle of the farmers.

One sunny Sunday, the people showed up in their festive finery. The girls in bright blouses and blue dresses, and most of the time a black scarf around the head. The guys in black, open jackets, which allowed the multi colored embroidered shirt to be seen, tight black pants tucked into tremendously tall boots, on the head the tall, black fur cap, a Russian acquisition. And probably a very recent but not beautiful fashion is that they have hung on themselves a lot of cheap modern jewelry, even large, dazzling ladies brooches on the cap. In groups, boys and girls head on up the mountains and there sing together "mischievous songs." There is a lot of singing in Atmagea. There is here even a singing club, the only one of its kind in the whole of Dobrudscha where I found a sociable secular alliance. One usually tolerates such as somewhat worldly; less so drunkenness and loose temptation like Inns.



Enclosed Yard in Atmagea

What the colonists had developed up to the time of the change of sovereignty, is indicated in the unique "record concerning land ownership in Atmagea, how many pieces of arable and *Dulim* each farm had in total, how much worked and not worked, good and bad land, how much with and without *Tapy*, how big the farmyards and gardens. Adopted 25 and 26 July, 1878, by regulation and directive of the Russian local authority in Babada." This list entered 63 farms. The number of their field pieces, whose sizes vary a lot, varying between 2 and 48, most had about 25 to 35. The total holdings of the individual *dulim* was between 2 and 418, but 8 farms had less than 100, the majority about 200. Of this, about 4/5 of the land was good. Only a tiny fraction are not worked, significant that, for many, some were without *Tapy*, i.e. without legal title of ownership. Some colonists missed out completely even though they have worked

considerable flat areas. The farmyards varied in size from 2 to 4½ *dulim*²² [ca. 54 meters/178 feet up to 122 meters/401 feet]. The growing of grapes seems to have come later, only 2 farmers had planted vineyards at that time. It brought good results until it was again destroyed by the phylloxera [a microscopic louse or aphid, that lives on and eats roots of grapes] after a number of years. Mainly wheat, corn, oats, and barley were grown in Atmagea. Cattle breeding was of less importance. According to the testimony of the mayors and other farmers, nothing altogether bad happened to them economically. Apparently, as far as pertaining only to the material necessities of life, before the war, life in Atmagea was good and easy; you did not even have to be a farmer. The prices of important foodstuffs were as follows: 3 kilograms [6.6 lbs] bread cost 50 *Bani* [100 bani = 1 *Lei*]; 10 eggs 20 *Bani*; 1 kilogram [2.2 lbs] of the choicest meat 70 *Bani*; a heavy hen 80 *Bani*; a fat pigeon 20 *Bani*; a goose 1.60-2.00 *Lei*; a duck 1.20 *Lei*; a sheep 20 *Lei*; a big, fat pig 50-80 *Lei*; a cow 100-120 *Lei*.

The number of annual deaths was listed as only 6 to 8. The great wealth of children of the families signifies that a very strong birth proliferation must have actually taken place with the unhindered development of a far greater increase of residents. The numbers from various decades, as far as statements were able to come by, furnish an interesting insight into the people movement of the village and their influence due to different outside events and conditions. The marriages in Atmagea also took place almost exclusively between local members. Every now and then a fellow got a girl from Cicucurova, rarely from Kataloi or Cogeaalac. What at the founding amounted to some 35-40 families, grew to 50 farms and 8 non-residents (*Insassen*) by 1857. This increase is explained for the most part by the marriages of the now grown up children of the first comers, requiring only a small influx of fresh arrivals. With the withdrawal to Moldavia, the colony broke up almost completely. In 1863, and also in 1868, there were 45 families. From then on, a rapid increase took place again. At the end of 1872, a list indicates 48 Lutheran families with 269 souls and 11 Baptist; prior to the Russian-Turkish War, in 1876 and the beginning of 1877, there were 70 farms; in 1879, including the imperial German teacher family, 74 farms with 371 souls. 6 names are missing from the ones during the time of the founding; then the family Mehrer from Württemberg, Schollmeier from the Province of Saxony, and Krüger from Pomerania. The soul count increased to 382 in 1887. From then on, it remained approximately the same (1892 = 389). After the new land survey of the Romanian Government, there was the possibility of the colony taking on a further expansion and the proliferation of their property owning families. Natural reproduction was entirely offset in the following decades by the departure to other settlements in Dobrukscha and the emigration to America. In 1917, the colony had 73 families, exactly the same number as in 1879; only the number of soul grew some more to 451.

Malcoci and Atmagea are the most important and most interesting of the older colonies. It is therefore probably in order to describe their development and the prevailing conditions a little more thoroughly. Naturally, in many respects, the following settlements show the same or similar models, and I can deal with them briefly.

At the outbreak of the Crimean War, a new restlessness and commotion arose in the German villages of South Russia, in particular, in Bessarabia. The general roundups had given rise in

²² 1 *Dulim* is a corruption of *dönüm*, which Ami Boue (*Die europäiscje Türkei*, Wein 1889, II Bd., S. 72) also notes as the form *dölem*. A *dölüm* at that time was a square of 40 *pik* to a side. 1 *pik* = 0.68 meters.

them to the fear that, despite their confirmed in writing special right of freedom from military service, they could nevertheless be drafted into the war. This was the reason given most often to Wilhelm Hamm by the emigrants themselves of those years. Again, individual groups pulled out of many villages, and this time they traveled directly to Dobrudscha. But they were not allowed to be able to ever plant their feet in peace in some place. Dobrudscha itself soon became a theater of war. The German farmers were driven back and forth, many eventually returning to Russia. But now their sojourn there was also denied to them. The Russians transported them back to Dobrudscha, where the Turkish Government then, after the peace settlement, willingly agreed to take them and gave them the right to settle wherever they so desired. But the long time of wandering around had sapped them of their funds and they were once again poor just like their parents were when they arrived in Bessarabia.

In those years, they searched in different places to settle down, and there were several smaller German settlements in northern Dobrudscha of which nothing more bears testimony other than the memory of older people or a randomly received documentary note. So, even before the founding of Atmagea, according to an oral report, Germans settled down in the village of **Omurlar**. For another settlement, I find only the French Allard as a witness. He simply calls Hamangea near Ceamurli a “German Colony” (*colonie allemande*).²³ The place seems to have been inhabited either totally or mostly by Germans. It was the southernmost settlement at that time. When Colonel of Malinowsky was looking after the Lutheran Germans, who approached him in 1857 in regard to the founding of a church congregation and the maintenance of a pastor, he mentioned beyond that Kataloi and Ciucurova, Macin with four families, and **Ismail**. Also Germans in **Nalbant** participated in the signing. The Lutheran congregation in Ismail decided on 22 April, 1858, to join Atmagea as a branch, and remained so until the town again fell to Russia in the Russian-Turkish War. It experienced a larger transitory influx of German farmer settlers from Galicia in 1866, to which I will come back later. Otherwise, there were mostly individuals with middle-class occupations. A list of soul from 1872 enumerates only 14: 2 pharmacists, 2 assistant teachers, an engineer, an agent, a watchmaker, a teacher, and a bandmaster. A colorful group from all possible countries: Bavaria, Kingdom of Saxony, Alsace, Switzerland, Transylvania, Austria, and Galicia.

Only two settlements have continued to exist from that time until today: Kataloi and Ciucurova, which arose approximately at the same time, but independently of each other.

Kataloi is located in hilly terrain, 12 km [7.5 miles] south of Babadag, about 1 km [.6 miles] west of the old Constanta to Tulcea military road. After a long time of moving around, the first German immigrants, as mentioned earlier, who had already once come to Dobrudscha and then returned to Russia, settled here in the summer of 1857, maybe even a little earlier. 7 or 8 families, the first one Thomas Lutz, then several families--Seybold and Nitschke. There were already Romanians and Tatars here when the Germans arrived. They laid out their street separately from them. The first documented evidence of them is in the minutes of the founding meeting of the Lutheran congregation in Tulcea, 13 September, 1857. When Wilhelm Hamm visited the settlement in June of 1858, it numbered some 40 colonist families. A couple of French families had established themselves on their street, with whom they lived in lively hostility.

²³ Allard, S. 105.



German Street in Kataloi

The half in earth lodges, with adobe walls jutting out above the ground, at the highest an *Elle* [ca. 2 feet] above the ground, looked no better off than those of the Romanians. Still, Hamm received the assurance in every cottage that things were going well for them; however, they all longed to return to the lost Canaan of Russia. They had been able to take land, wherever and however much they wanted as long as it did not already have owners or belonged to the Crown. They planted corn, potatoes, barley, and rye, had good pasture, horses and magnificent gray (*graue*) cattle. But, on the whole, it was a hard judgment that Hamm made about them: “Dull, apathetic, and demoralized —, which is the impression that this poor layer of my nation made upon me.” Hamm indicates that most of the women came from Württemberg and Baden, one from the jurisdiction of Bietigheim; however, on the part of the men, only a few Germans from the area of Graudenz, the rest all from Hungary and Poland.



German Farm Houses in Kataloi

When the colonists of Jacobsonsthal dispersed after the great flood in 1857, some also migrated to Kataloi. At least, the inventory of the church was brought here, the bell the Gustav Adolph Society had sent, as well as the Bible and the altar chalice. The resurging migration movement of 1861, which we already came to know in Atmagea, also seized the colonists of Kataloi. Before their departure, they handed over their bell to Colonel von Malinowsky, who then

reported in November of 1862 that the congregation, for the most part, was together in one place again and the bell was returned to them.

In that year, the colony again numbered 24 farms. A list of soul shows that Kataloi had become the gathering place for many who up to that time had been individually dispersed colonists in Dobrudscha and elsewhere. Mentioned as from the colonies of Bessarabia, from which the majority had come (Tarutino, Leipzig, Beresina, Teplitz, Brienne, Kulm, Katzbach, Paris), also from Baja in Moldavia, Harsova, Dekelia, Silistria, Macin and Jacobsonsthal. Most colonists were of North German origin. Listed as places of birth are: Krossin and Sonnenburg in Prussia, Kulm and Alexandrowa in Prussian-Poland, Laskowitz in Russian-Poland, Woldach in Mecklenburg, Winterbach and Osterdingen in Württemberg, also Neu-Banovce an the Danube, Budapest and Tzesowitz in Galicia.

In Kataloi, the German farmers clearly lacked a leader such like Adam Kühn. The restless, unbound years of wandering which they had to endure had not continued without bad effect on their character, and the judgment of Hamm is confirmed several times in the aftermath. "The moral conditions in Kataloi are like the earlier days. Brutal things have happened," according to a report of a pastor. Around the mid-1860s, almost the whole congregation went over to the Baptists who, since then, had their headquarters in Dobrudscha with their own pastor. They also claimed and took the existing Lutheran prayer house, with the result that the bell from Jacobsonsthal, "The Wandering Bell," was now brought to Ciucurova. The Lutheran congregation declined until, in 1872, there were 5 families with 21 souls; in 1892 the colony consisted of 56 Lutherans, about 200 Baptists, and 60 that did not belong to any congregation, some had not even been baptized. Also, the German schooling of children suffered greatly under these circumstances. Only in the 1890s did the Lutherans succeed in creating an impressive church out of a simple, reed-covered farmhouse with an attached wooden bell tower. At the time of my stay, it was used however by the Bulgarians as a place for storing grain.

In 1867, the colony received an influx of 7 or 8 families from Galicia, who had previously, as mentioned above, stopped briefly at Ismail. In the 1880s, a large migration of colonists arrived from Volhynia. However, the emigration to America, mainly to North Dakota, from Kataloi, started already earlier, 1884, and took off on an especially large scale. More than half of the German families left the colony again. Only one from the first arrivals is still here. Currently, it has 67 families with 336 souls in about 50 German houses. 37 of them profess to be Baptist. Platt and Swabian folks are mixed, the latter probably in the majority. In addition to these German inhabitants, the village has 40 Romanians, 35 Bulgarians and also 85 Italian families, who settled at the beginning of the 1880s. All nations live apart for each other. There are also some Romanian farmyards on the German street, which is separated from the Romanian and Bulgarian ward by a hill. It is relatively narrow and not so clean and well maintained as is usually the case in the German villages of Dobrudscha. Mud huts are no longer on their sites, but then the farmyards enclosed by railings and their buildings do not reveal the usual embarrassing disorder. About half of the Germans do not have personal real estate. They have resorted mainly to the breeding of pigs, geese and chickens, which products are sold for good prices at the twice weekly market held in Tulcea. There is also a steam mill operated by a German.

Ciucurova lies in the Slava River Valley, 7 km [4.4 miles] southeast of Atmagea. It existed as a Russian village before the arrival of the Germans, where even Turks and members of the Caucasus tribe of the Laz, mentioned in the first chapter, had settled. These “*Lahser*” were “a rough people” that the German farmers were very afraid of. Around 1860, even Tatars found their way there. The first German colonists arrived in 1857. By the end this year, according to a report by Colonel von Malinowsky, 6 families had settled there and, in the following year,²⁴ another 24 families from the colony of Jakobsonsthal arrived, having been driven out by the major flooding. Some of them belonged to the group which had left the colonies of Bessarabia with Adam Kühn. There were some family with the same names as in Atmagea. Like that colony, Ciucurova was and is until today totally “platte,” even if later some Swabians came to it. The land allocated to those arriving was also dense forest, and is still today partially covering the surrounding heights with beautiful, dark green deciduous trees. The first heavy work was rooting out and charcoal-burning which seemed so unbearable to the colonists that they decided to leave the place. This is testified to in the following document dated 29 December, 1858:

“Written complaint of the people of Ciucurova
to the Estimable (*Preisichen*) and Royal Consul Blücher: that they are unable to remain in Ciucurova, (1). Because the cattle are almost all gone, (2). Because there are no fields to cultivate. Where a decent piece of land still exists, it is in the hands of the Russians. We never learned to chop down trees or saw lumber by which the people of Ciucurova make their living. If we have to stay in Ciucurova one more year, it will be the end of us. They have already come across another spot by the name of Murijol, an hour below Bestebe. If they do not get that land, there will also be no village at Ciucurova. Everyone will then go on their separate way. Eventually, within a half year, 40-50 families.
So we remain your worthy subjects.”

Besides Colonel von Malinowsky and Consul Blücher, the German immigrants, at that time, had still an influential friend who was actively interested in them. This was the President of the Danube Commission in Galatz, Omer Pasha, who was educated in Vienna and spoke polished German. Consul Blücher had forwarded the complaint of the discontented people at Ciucurova, but with the comment that he did not know where the people could be better placed than at Ciucurova.

“For a year now, things have not gone well with them, punishment for their walking away from Jakobsonsthal. Now, all at once, the journey of these people is torn down; they no longer have any rest until they become completely impoverished and then they will once again become serious and get down to work.”

After this decision, there was nothing else left for them to do but to persevere, and finally, all difficulties were also overcome at this place through German diligence and German toughness. This was also not absent in other respects. In the autumn of 1862, the village was isolated for months due to a forest fire. The neighborhood Circassians gave them a lot of misery. A Swiss

²⁴ Nach dem “Colonisations=Reglement,” das ihnen zur schriftlichen Anerkennung vorgelegt wurde, war es am 15. Haziran 1274, d. i. der 15. Juni 1858.

worked as a teacher from the beginning to the end of the seventh decade, then brothers from the Rauhen House took over the school. In the place of the old wooden prayer house, a beautiful, massive church was put up in 1893, naturally also joined by “the wandering bell” from Jacobsonsthal. Until a few years ago, it continued to call together the parishioners, then it cracked and had to be recast. The interior of the church was devastated by Russians and Turks in the wars, the altar and all the benches burned.

Until 1864, the colony had grown to 35 families with 146 souls. A list from December of 1872 indicates 46 Lutheran families with 234 souls and 3 Baptist families. These are specified as countries of origin: Prussia and West Prussia (Adam Beyer, Kraus, Kählert, Ponto); Mecklenburg-Strelitz (Blumhagen); Pomerania (Ziehl); Province of Brandenburg (Rothe); Württemberg (Seybod, Maier, Nagel); Switzerland (Hoffmann). Subsequently, the Baptists had made further progress; in 1892, there were 107 in addition to 241 Lutherans. Currently, the colony consists of 76 families with 401 souls. Most of the Baptists emigrated. In addition, there were 55 Russian families, 16 Tatar families, 5 Bulgarian families, 4 Romanian families, and a Jewish family that belonged to the village, however, living separately and away from the German Street. Of the Germans, about one-third had, besides the farmyard, only 1-1½ hectares [2.5—3.7 acres] of land. Things for these people did not go so good. Some had leased some land from the State, some became hired laborers. Another third had about 7-10 hectares [17.3—24.7 acres], the others up to 25 hectares [61.8 acres]. The ground is mediocre. Wheat, barley, oats were grown and also many potatoes, which grew well here in the woodlands, in contrast to the steppe country of southern Dobrudscha. Fifty kilograms [110 lbs] received 5 Lei on average. Winegrowing, which earlier amounted to 30 hectares [74.1 acres], suffered because of the phylloxera. Because Ciucurova colonists did a lot of weaving, flax was also grown for domestic use. Cattle breeding was engaged in quite a bit. As long as a person could make use of the surrounding forests for pasture, the farmers kept many sheep. That has subsided since the government cordoned off the forest. Still, some had 80-200 head before the war. Individual farmyards had over 300 chickens. So, if the farmers were unable to amass a fortune, they still had enough, for the most part, to live a comfortable, satisfied life.

The German part of the village consists of a long, not quite straight street which stretches out on the narrow valley bottom between parallel ridges. It is planted with beautiful tall deciduous trees and there are 80 cleanly maintained farmyards on either side of the street.

The first period of German colony formation in Dobrudscha came to an end for Kataloi and Ciucurova. Apart from isolated cases, the emigration from the Russian villages had stopped for almost two decades after the Crimean War.

In this time, a migration started in another old eastern German colony area and, after a detour through Bessarabia, eventually ended up in its last resting place in Dobrudscha. In the summer of 1866, a movement to emigrate arose in Galician German colonies in the area of Lemberg [Lwów] and Stryj, either because the old supposed drive to keep moving was again awakened or, as my chief security man, who as a boy had participated in the move with his parents, offered, because there was no land available there. It was primarily farmers mainly from the following settlements all created under Joseph II: Brigidau, 10 km [6.2 miles] from Stryi, founded in 1782 by Germans from Hesse-Nassau; Neudorf near Drohobycz by Württemberg people; Josefsberg,

north of Stryj, founded in 1784 mostly by folks from the Palatinate; Ugarsberg, founded in 1785 by people from the vicinity of Heidelberg; Falkenstein, founded in 1784 by people from Baden, Württemberg and Rhine-Palatinate; and Padew Colony founded in 1784.²⁵

From these villages, 91 families broke up into three groups, mainly of Hessian descent, mostly people of means. They had received assurances from the Romanian Government that they would be given land in the southern part of Bessarabia, north of the Danube mouths which Russia had ceded to Romania in the Treaty of Paris. They sent ahead three scouts who returned with a report full of hope. About 20 km [12.4 miles] north of Ismail, they had found land on an estate near Karakurt, with many meadows and places for haying. They had immediately bought it and paid the largest portion of the purchase price. The migration was to be a terrible experience for them. Cholera broke out among them and demanded daily offerings; however, upon arrival at Ismail, a new shock awaited them. They were told that the land they had purchased could not be granted to them. They had to be in the country for ten years before they could make a purchase. With negotiating and litigating, time passed until Christmas. About half of the families were carried off by the cholera. Those that were still alive decided to go back. They received information in Jassy that they actually could get the land. However, most of them had lost the courage, and only 21 or 22 families made their way again to Ismail. But a new setback. There was trouble again and they were denied the taking over of the land. By chance, Prince Carol paid them a direct visit. His intervention did not get for them the land near Karakurt, but they were informed of other lands which were at Tuzla [in present day Bosnia and Herzegovina, under Turkish rule 16th to 19th century]. But there they did not find their longed-for peace and an end to their suffering. It was an unhealthy, swampy area. Meanwhile, their funds were also exhausted and so, in despair, they buried their hopes for a new home and scattered in all directions. About eight families crossed over the Danube tributary of Dobrudscha and settled down, as mentioned earlier, in Kataloi. The rest hired themselves out on different estates. According to a report among the documents at Atmagea, from 1869 to 1870, six families “some of them from Galicia” settled in Novitroizki near Kilia. Then, after the Berlin Congress, this part of Bessarabia was turned back on Russia, these folks also migrated to Dobrudscha, where they finally found a home in various colonies: Cogealac, Tariverde, Sarighiol, and so these German farmers found a place to call home and with that the German farmer odyssey reached its conclusion.

In the 1870s, a small German community was able to get started in **Sulina**, at the mouth port of the middle tributary of the Danube. It numbered only six families in 1873; however, has increased significantly with the increasing importance of the city as a trading post. At that time, a further small German colony of ten families with 50 souls had come together in **Achmadia**.

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²⁵ Das Deutschtum: In Galizien. Seine Geschichtliche Entwicklung und gegenwärtige Lage. Lemberg, 1914, S. 74 ff.