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**THE ROMANATI COUNTY UNDER THE EFFECT OF THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL CHANGES DURING  
1938 -1940**

**JUDEȚUL ROMANAȚI SUB EFECTUL MODIFICĂRILOR  
ADMINISTRATIV-TERITORIALE DIN ANII 1938-1940**

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**Abstract:** Romanati was one of the oldest Romanian counties. According to documents, it is dated, as county of Walachia, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (1496). During the administrative reform in 1938, it was included, together with Dolj, Gorj, Olt, Mehedinti and Valcea Counties, in the Olt Countryside. In this paper, I have presented the main modifications introduced by The Administrative Law in 1938 and the instructions sent by the Ministry of the Internal Affairs to Royal Residents placed to rule the countries, concerning the allotment of territorial circumscriptions of communes, and the modifications happened between 1938-1940 regarding the situation of the townships and communes that composed the Romanati County.

**Key words:** Administrative Law, Region, county, plasa, commune, village

**Cuvinte cheie:** lege administrativă, Ținut, județ, plasă, comună, sat

The coup d'état given on the night of 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of February 1938 led to the instauration of the personal regime of Carol the 2<sup>nd</sup> and, implicitly, to the end of tradition of the democratic regime which was functioning in Romania over seven decades. This political change was reflected, shortly after, also at the administrative level. The new regime enacted on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 1938 the reform by which it was realized a new territorial-administrative division of the country and which established the attributions held by the local administrative bodies.

**The main modifications introduced by the Administrative Law in 1938.** Beside the old territorial circumscriptions of the local administration, the commune, *plasa* (small administrative unit) and county, the Administrative Law from 1938 introduced a new element, *the land/ region*. At the country level there were established ten such administrative-territorial units, namely: Olt (with the residential town in Craiova), Bucegi (Bucharest), Mării (Constanța), Dunării de Jos (Galați), Nistru (Chișinău), Prut (Iași), Suceava (Cernăuți), Mureș (Alba Iulia), Someș (Cluj) and Timiș (Timișoara) (Fig. 1).

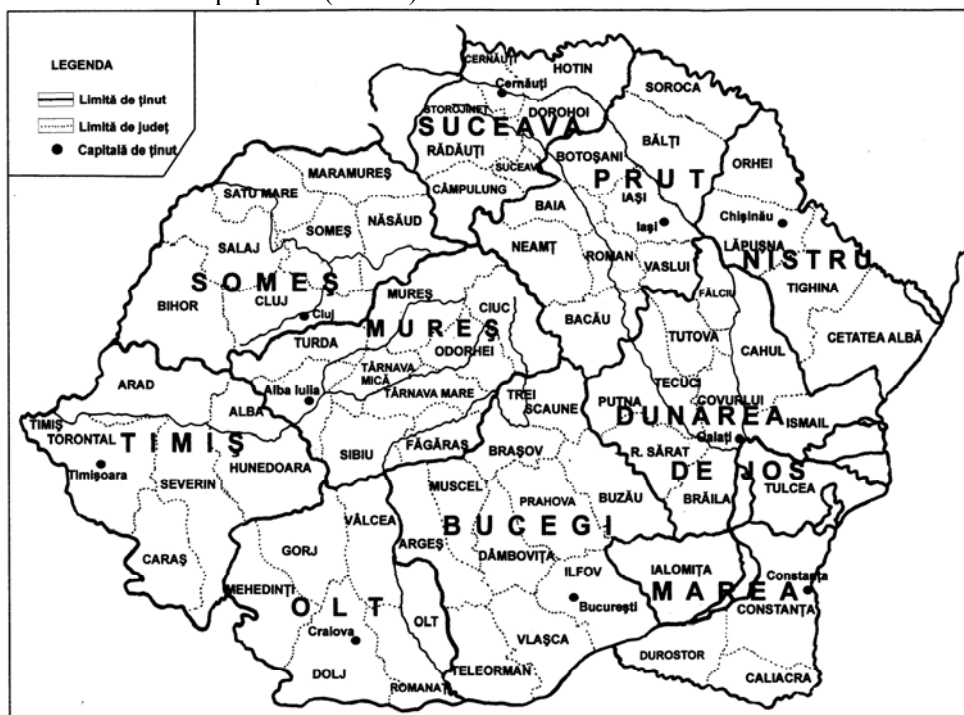
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The region and the commune had legal status, representing the local interests of the central power, exercising, in the same time, also attributions of general administrations. The *plasa* and the county were considered circumscriptions of control and decentralization of the general administration (art. 1).

The new law was defining the region as “an administrative unit, with economical, cultural and social attributions”, and its administration was consigned to the regal resident and to his council (art. 55).

The regal resident was the government representative in the region and its administrator (art. 62), holding wide powers. Basically, his main attributions were the following: the exact application of the governmental decisions, to ensure the public order, to control and direct the entire public, administrative, economic and social activity in the region that he was ruling (art. 63). His mandate was granted for a period of six years, and the appointment was done by the king, pursuant to the internal minister’s proposal (art. 56).



Organizarea teritorial-administrativă a României - 1938

Fig nr. 1

(Adapted after the „Official Gazette”, I<sup>st</sup> part, no 187 from the 14<sup>th</sup> of august 1938)

According to the official speech, the county was considered a “parasitical institution”, which supports its services on the account of the state, “as town management, it represents no use anymore”. As a result, the county was dissolved as legal status, still remaining an administrative circumscription of control. According to article 99, “the prefect is the hierarchic chief of all outside clerks of the Ministry of Interior from the county”, being responsible for all administration

in his area of territorial and institutional competency. In his county he was the representative of the Government and of the Ministry of Interior, being assigned by royal decree. The prefect was replaced by a praetor from the county in the case the former was missing (art. 97). He had at his disposal a common room made up of a chief of the department and a certain number of clerks, depending on the needs (art. 102). The law did not foresee anymore the existence of the county councils, and they practically disappeared, as institutions of the county administration.

The new administrative law was replacing the principle of eligibility for the mayors with the one by which they were assigned by the central power for a period of 6 years (art. 10, 13). The mayor was the chief of the central administration and the president of the council of the commune (art. 15). In the rural and urban settlements (municipalities, residential towns and non residential towns) there was also going to act a mayor helper, and in the municipalities (in the residential towns of the regions and in the cities with a population over 50,000 inhabitants) two or more mayor helpers (art. 19).

Every *plasa*, administrative and control subdivision was managed by a praetor, assigned by ministerial decision (art. 104). The praetor was the Government representative and he chief of police inside the *plasa*, being responsible for the prevention of infringements and for the maintenance of public order and safety. He was helped by a notary, for the works regarding the common room, and several clerks (art. 105).

In every rural commune there was acting a notary, assigned by the royal resident of the region. He was, according to the law, the agent of the government in the rural commune (art. 110).

**Instructions regarding the division of territorial circumscriptions of the communes.** According to art. 194 from the administrative law, the new territorial division of the communes was going to be performed in two months after the law was promulgated. In this respect, the prefects, helped by the praetors, had to examine the status of the incomes of the rural communes, to consult the community unions and to establish the villages which had the right to a deputy. There were mentioned the exiting suburban communes.

In this context, the order of the Ministry of Interior, no 32914/1938 for the Regions and the order no 640 from the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1938 of the Region to the county praefects contained instructions regarding the new division.

Any group of houses (hamlets, group of houses, colony, settlements, isolated houses etc.) must have been incorporated to a village nearby. After the delimitation of the villages, they had to be grouped into communes, because only the commune was, according to article 1 from the administrative law, a territorial administrative circumscription.

It was recommended that for each rural commune located in the plain and hill region to be established a minimum budget of 100,000 lei per year, and for those located in the mountainous region, 60,000 lei. By this action, they wanted to dissolve the communes which did not have a proper administrative status, because they lacked the budgetary means.

Among the criteria concerning the grouping of the villages into communes there were also the communications means up to the house of the commune, the existence of fixed or mobile bridges across the rivers, the local topography, the convergence of the interests of inhabitants etc.

The villages found at a distance bigger than 3 km away from the residential village had the right to a deputy, charged to resolute the inhabitants' current administrative needs.

In order to establish the residential house for each commune there had to be taken into consideration several aspects. Therefore, the resident village should be, as much as possible, located in the center of the villages composing the commune. It should have been the most important village, as number of inhabitants or as economical importance. It was preferred to have a majority of Romanians. The resident village should have had its own place for the mayor house and fiscal perception, as well as a school, church, police post, court house, cooperatives, community center etc.

**The Romanați county.** It was one of the oldest counties of the Țara Românească. This administrative unit of Romania had as residential town Caracal. It neighbored in the west the Dolj county, in the north the Vâlcea county, in the east with Olt county, in south-east with Teleorman county and Bulgaria in the south.

According to the administrative law from 1938, the Romanați county was included, together with Dolj, Gorj, Olt and Vâlcea county, as a component part of The Olt Region, the residential town of which was Craiova municipality (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Geographical position of Romanați county within Olt Region (1938)

At the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1938, the Romanați county has a total surface of 3,560

km<sup>2</sup>, being one of the smallest counties in the region (Dolj – 6,538 km<sup>2</sup>; Mehedinți – 5,320 km<sup>2</sup>, Gorj – 4,579 km<sup>2</sup>, Vâlcea – 4,031 km<sup>2</sup>, Olt – 2,863 km<sup>2</sup>). In exchange, in what concerns the number of inhabitants (298.432), it was on the third place (after Dolj county – 653.800 inhabitants and Mehedinți county – 532.000 inhabitants). It had the biggest density of the population on a square km (84), compared to the other five counties.

Until 1938, the county was made up of an urban commune, as residential town; two urban communes, non residential towns and 133 communes, made up of 251 villages.

According to the new administrative division, the Romanați county was made up of an urban commune – the residential town of the county, Caracal (Caracăl); two urban communes, non residential towns – Balș (made up of the following localities: Corbeni, Gorgonașu, Măinești, Româna and Vartina) and Corabia; 101 rural communes, made up of 251 villages (Fig. 3).

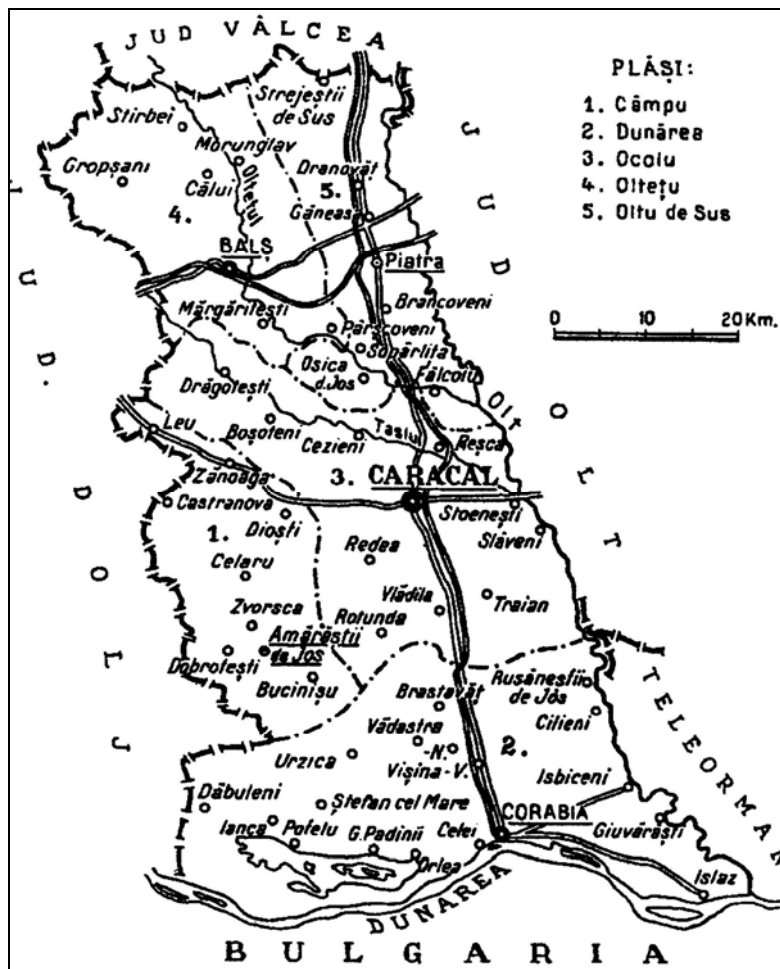


Fig. 3 Romanați county – territorial and administrative organization in 1938

The difference between the existent communes before and after the appliance of the administrative law was due to the dissolution of 32 rural communes, and the villages composing these communes entered in the composition of another communes. The territorial modifications, introduced by the new division of the communes in the Romanați county are listed in the table 1.

Table 1

Territorial-administrative modifications in the Romanați county (1938)

Crt. no	The rural commune(s) dissolute	The rural commune it merged with	The new name of the rural commune	The residential village
1.	Amărăștii de Sus and Zvorsca	General Dragalina	General Dragalina	Zvorsca
2.	Arcești	Pleșoiu	Pleșoiu	Pleșoiu
3.	Bechetul	Bobicești	Bobicești	Bobicești
4.	Călinești	Vulpeni	Vulpeni	Vulpeni
5.	Ciocănești and Radomiru	Dioști	Dioști	Dioști
6.	Cioroiu	Fălcoiu	Fălcoiu	Fălcoiu
7.	Crușovu	Brastovățu	Brastovățu	Brastovățu
8.	Doba	Colibașu	Colibașu	Colibașu
9.	Dobrotești and Prapuru	Amărăștii de Jos	Amărăștii de Jos	Amărăștii de Jos
10.	Enoșești	Piatra	Piatra	Piatra
11.	Felșteneoaga	Găneasa	Găneasa	Găneasa
12.	Hotaru	Grojdibodu	Grojdibodu	Grojdibodu
13.	Hotărani	Reșca	Reșca	Reșca
14.	Jieni	Rusăneștii de Jos	Rusăneștii de Jos	Rusăneștii de Jos
15.	Marotinu de Jos, Marotinu de Sus and Soreni	Celaru	Celaru	Celaru
16.	Mărgăritești	Voineasa	Voineasa	Mărgăritești
17.	Morunglavu	Morunești	Morunești	Morunglavu
18.	Obârșia Nouă	Obârșia Veche	Obârșia Veche	Obârșia Veche
19.	Olari	Pârșcoveni	Pârșcoveni	Pârșcoveni
20.	Plăviceni	Scărișoara	Scărișoara	Scărișoara
21.	Slăveni	Gostavățu	Gostavățu	Gostavățu
22.	Străjeștii de Sus	Străjeștii de Jos	Străjeștii de Jos	Străjeștii de Jos
23.	Studina	Studinița	Studinița	Studinița
24.	Tia Mare	Potlogeni	Potlogeni	Potlogeni
25.	Tărțălău	Boșoteni	Boșoteni	Boșoteni
26.	Ungureni	Băleasa	Băleasa	Băleasa
27.	Viișoara	Drăgotești	Drăgotești	Drăgotești

Source: The Department of Dolj county of the National Archives, Found of Royal Residence of the Olt Region, Registers, file 327/1938-1940, p. 119.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1939, pursuant the order of the Ministry of Interior, the Department of State Administration, no 3981, in each county was created a new *plaşa*, beside the ones already existent, with a smaller circumscription, with the town residence in the capital of the county, and as titulars the former sub-praefects who became prime-praetors.

In these circumstances, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1939, by residential decision, the Romanaţi county was divided in six *plaşe*, which territorial circumscriptions enclosed the following communes:

1. *Plaşa Câmpu*, with the town residence in *Dioşti rural commune*: Apele-Vii, Boşoteni, Castranova, Celaru, Corlăteşti, Dioşti, Drăgotesti, Ghisdăveşti, Golfinu, Grozăveşti, Leu, Popânzăleşti, Preajba de Pădure, Robăneşti, Zănoaga;

2. *Plaşa Dunărea*, with the town residence in *Amărăştii de Jos rural commune*: Amărăştii de Jos, Bucinişu, Celeiu, Dăbuleni, Grojdibod, Gura Padinii, Ianca, Obârşia Veche, Orlea, Potelu, Ştefan cel Mare, Urzica, Vlădastra, Vlădăstriţa, General Dragalina;

3. *Plaşa Ocolu*, with the town residence in *Caracăl*: Băbiciu, Cezieni, Comanca, Deveselu, Drăghiceni, Fărcaşele, Gostavăţu, I. G. Duca, Redea, Reşca, Rotunda, Stoeneşti, Studiniţa, Traian, Vlădila; Caracal – town residence for the county;

4. *Plaşa Olteţu*, with the town residence in *Balş*: Baldovineşti, Băleasa, Bârza, Berbeşti, Bobiceşti, Braneţu, Căluuiu, Câmpeni, Curtişoara, Dobriceni, Găvăneşti, Groşşani, Leoteşti, Moruneşti, Oboga, Pârşoveni, Racoviţa, Ştirbeiu, Voineasa, Vulpeni, Balş – which was not a residence town of the county;

5. *Plaşa Oltul de Sus*, with the residence in the *Piatra commune*: Brâncoveni, Cârlogani, Cepari, Cocorăşti, Colibaşu, Dobrun, Dranovăţu, Fălcoiu, Găneasa, Greci, Izvor, Osica de Jos, Osica de Sus, Piatra, Pleşoiu, Roşieni, Slătioara, Strejeştii de Jos, Şopârliţa;

6. *Plaşa Oltul de Jos*, with the town residence in *Corabia*: Brastavăţu, Cilieni, Doanca, Gârcovu, Giuvărăşti, Grădini, Izbiceni, Izlaz, Moldoveni, Potlogeni, Rusăneştii de Jos, Scărişoara, Seliştioara, Ursa, Vârtopu, Vişina Veche, Vişina Nouă; Corabia – was not a residence town of the county.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1940, while the rest of the counties from the Olt Region (except Mehedinţi county) suffered other territorial modifications (the dissolution the new created *plaşe* in 1939 and the distribution of their communes inside other *plăşi*), the Royal Resident decided that the administrative-territorial division of the Romanaţi county to remain unchanged.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1940, it was issued the decree-law by which the Regions and the Royal Residences were dissolved, the new regime approaching a new administrative reorganization of the county, without making any modifications in what concerns the limits of the Romanaţi county and its *plaşe*.

This county was dissolute on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1950 by the law concerning the administrative-economical division of the Romanian territory (followed by the decrees from 1952 and the administrative law from 1965). The former Romanaţi county, together with the former Dolj county, formed the 16<sup>th</sup> Region of Dolj.

In 1968, the regions and the districts were dissolved, but the new administrative law did not foresee anymore the existence of the Romanași county. Its territory formed the south-east part of the present Dolj county, the central-south part of the present Olt county and a small part of the south-west of the present Teleorman county (Islaz commune).

### **Conclusions**

The administrative-territorial organization of Romania made in 1938 registered the series of measures taken by the king Carol the II<sup>nd</sup> and by his government of “personalities”, led by the patriarch Miron Cristea, measures intended to consolidate the new regime and, in the same time, to eliminate or to let “with no content” the institutions specific to the parliamentary system. Although the main principle of the administrative law was “the deconcentration of the state departments”, the law, by its provisions (especially by the rights granted to the regions and the wide attributions of the royal residents), provided the king and to his government a more efficient control upon the state. The reform from 1938 reduced the number of the communes which could not have their own administrative life due to the insufficient budgetary means.

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