



Summary :

Small village of farmers in the prefecture of Tulcea, in the region of Dobrudja, Romania. The Greeks settled there following the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-1829. After communism collapsed in Romania in 1989, a Greek community recognised by the Romanian and the Greek governments was founded there.

Other Names

Izvoarele, Regele Ferdinand I, Filimon Sarbu, Nikos Zachariadis, Alibey köy, Alibeichioi, Libichioi

Geographical Location

northwest coast of the Black Sea

Historical Region

Dobrudja (Dobrogea in Romanian)

Administrative Dependence

prefecture of Tulcea

1. Name – Anthropogeography – History

Small Greek-speaking village in prefecture of [Tulcea](#), at the junction of the roads Tulcea-Măcin and Babadag-Isaccea.¹

There are very few sources providing information about the history of the village because Alibeköy was a small rural settlement of very limited economic importance, built far from the cities. It should be noted that the Greek consuls of the region make no mention of the village. The place was initially inhabited by Ottoman subjects, who were granted the Romanian citizenship when the region of Dobrudja (Dobrogea in Romanian) was incorporated into the Romanian Kingdom after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 and the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

The inhabitants were descended from the village of Acdere (Aspru) in the region of [Varna](#) or, according to rather less reliable information, from [Mesimvria](#), Thrace. They allegedly followed the Russian army, which retreated from the Ottoman Empire after the end of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-1829. At first they settled in south Bessarabia, but quite soon, in the autumn of 1830, they moved to Alibeköy. The small settlement, including only 20 families in 1850, comprised mainly Greek-speaking people as well as few Bulgarian-speaking families, which were gradually integrated into the community. The village was relatively isolated and the inhabitants, who used to marry into the village, remained Greek-speaking. Besides, until 1882 the priests were exclusively Greeks from Thrace or from the village, while until the Interwar period the Divine Service was held -at least partly- in Greek.²

The villagers were involved in agriculture and were considered particularly good farmers, while Romanian researchers also underlined their commercial acumen, as the people travelled as far as Tulcea in order to sell their products. On the other hand, the same researchers criticised the old-fashioned habits and prejudice of the villagers as well as their lack of respect for the old, which was rather odd for the region.³

Despite the fact that the villagers have been speaking Greek until today, they have often been considered [Gagauz](#) by the Romanian authorities, as well as by various travellers and scientists.⁴ In the early Interwar period the older villagers called themselves Romaioi or Rumni, while the young called themselves Greeks (Elini, Greci). By contrast, the Romanians of the neighbouring villages called them Greeks or Gagauz, or sometimes Gypsies, perhaps because they were relatively isolated from the other communities of the region.

The name of the village followed the historical development of the area. The settlement was initially named Alibey köy after an



Ottoman official who owned property in the area, while in the Interwar period it took the name of Ferdinand I, the then king of Romania.⁵ In the early Postwar period it was named Nikos Zachariadis in honour of the then secretary general of the Greek Communist Party, and later Filimon Sarbu (Romanian politician of the left), before it was given the name Izvoarele, meaning Springs, in the 1960s.

When the communist regime collapsed in 1989, a Greek community was formed, while Greek teachers and nursery teachers are being sent to teach the Greek language. Many villagers settled in Greece. Moreover, it should be noted that some Greek inhabitants activated in literature and arts.

2. Education – Folk Culture

It is most likely that Alibeköy never had an organised [Greek school](#), as it happened with the other Greek communities of Romania. However, from the mid-19th century onwards, if not earlier, the priests taught at home Greek to some children, usually to those intending to become priests or chanters.⁶

A Romanian primary school was established in 1885, a few years after Dobrudja was incorporated into Romania. It had one male or female teacher, although from the early 20th century onwards the number of teachers increased to 2 or 3. There was also a nursery school. The early Interwar period saw the foundation of a small folkloric, historical-archaeological museum at the school building, while a new, larger building was built to accommodate the primary school. The classes were naturally given in Romanian and attendance was compulsory, as the Greeks of Alibeköy were Romanian citizens. The role of the school, and particularly some of the teachers like N. Bonjug, was of major importance in both spreading the Romanian language and preserving the folk culture of the village.⁷ Many folktales, songs, proverbs and oral traditions of Alibeköy, all in the Greek language, were published by several local literary men in the Latin alphabet.⁸

1. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), p. 273.

2. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 273 -277; Brătescu, C., "Câteva notițe despre "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand (fost Alibeichioi, în jud. Tulcea)", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 269-270.

3. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 278-279.

4. See Brătescu, C., "Câteva notițe despre "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand (fost Alibeichioi, în jud. Tulcea)", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), p. 270

5. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), p. 273.

6. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), p. 277.

7. Bonjug, N., "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 277-278.

8. See Bonjug, N., "Folclor grecesc din satul Regele Ferdinand – Tulcea", *Analele Dobrogei* XI/1-12 (1930), pp. 140-152; Bonjug, N., "De la " Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand, Tulcea", *Analele Dobrogei* XV (1934), pp. 78-86.

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	Brătescu C. , "Câteva notițe despre "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand (fost Alibeichioi, în jud. Tulcea)", <i>Analele Dobrogei</i> , X/1-2, 1929, 268-272
	Bonjug N. , "Note asupra "Grecilor" din satul Regele Ferdinand I", <i>Analele Dobrogei</i> , X/1-2, 1929, 273-289

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Bonjug, N., "Folclor grecesc din satul Regele Ferdinand – Tulcea", *Analele Dobrogei* XI/1-12 (1930), pp. 140-152.

Bonjug, N., "De la "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand, Tulcea", *Analele Dobrogei* XV (1934), pp. 78-86.

Quotations

Song of Alibeköy / Izvoarele

Άσπρο μου περιστέρι

από τον τόπο μου,
μαύρο μου χελιδόνι
από την Αραπιά,
χαμήλωσε τα φτιρά
να γράψω μια γραφή,
να στείλω στη μανούλα μ',
να μη με καρτερεί
και τον γέρον μου ποτές να μη θαρρεί,
να στείλω και την αγάπη μ'
να πάει να παντρευτεί,
Τούρκο να μη μπάρει
και πάει και κολαστεί,
κι να πάρει του διάκου τον υιό,
να πάει να αγιαστεί.

Brătescu, C., "Câteva notițe despre "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand (fost Alibeichioi, în jud. Tulcea)", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 270-271. The untitled song was published in Latin alphabet. It is here transcribed into Greek.

Άσπρο μου περιστέρι
από τον τόπο μου,
μαύρο μου χελιδόνι
από την Αραπιά,
χαμήλωσε τα φτιρά
να γράψω μια γραφή,
να στείλω στη μανούλα μ',
να μη με καρτερεί
και τον γέρον μου ποτές να μη θαρρεί,
να στείλω και την αγάπη μ'
να πάει να παντρευτεί,
Τούρκο να μη μπάρει



και πάει και κολαστεί,
κι να πάρει του διάκου τον υιό,
να πάει να αγιαστεί.

Brătescu, C., "Câteva notițe despre "Grecii" din satul Regele Ferdinand (fost Alibeichioi, în jud. Tulcea)", *Analele Dobrogei* X/1-2 (1929), pp. 270-271. The untitled song was published in Latin alphabet. It is here transcribed into Greek.