

THE REVOLUTIONARY DOCTOR IBRAHIM THEMO IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. Albanian, Turkish and Romanian, in the same time. Ibrahim Themo can be presented likewise. He was also a Balkan revolutionary, no matter his native country or the countries where he used to live. He was one of the „Young Tuks” leaders, who, through his entire activity served the interests of the three countries and his all three peoples: Albania, Turkey and Romania.

In this article, we put under debate his activity in Romania, where he remarked himself not only as a fighter from here, in Turkey and Albania’s advantage, but also for the Muslim minority and the majority of Romanians in Dobruja, first as a senator in Romania’s Parliament, and as an ophtalmologist.

This way, first we studied the biographical notebookd coming from his brother-in-law, the colonel in the Romanian army, Ahmet Mencşi, refering to Ibrahim Themo, rough copies of a volume which was not published; the Museum of National History and Archaeology Constanța, holds in its patrimony these documents, included in the Collection „dr. Ibrahim Themo”, as far as we know the only „Themo archive” preserved in Romania.

Keywords: Ibrahim Themo, Macedonia, Albanian, Turkish and Romanian, „Young Turks”.

Some personalities’ names have no borders. Their activity develops in almost entire world, for the interest of their country and people, generally, to the people benefit. Ibrahim Themo can be included in this category: native Albanian, Turkish by education and training, and Romanian by adoption. From this point of view, we can consider him as a Balkan native. However, through his entire activity he worked in the advantage of all his three countries and peoples: Albania, Turkey and Romania.

In this article, we put under debate his activity in Romania, his adoption country, where he worked both as an ophtalmologist, as well as Turkish and Albanian revolutionary on Romanian land, wherefrom he coordinated the movement „Young Turks”, which he founded togehter with others.

We have used for this subject mostly his biography written by his brother-in-law, colonel Ahmet Mencşi, in a lined notebook including 74 pages, a rough copy of a possible volume, with corrections and completions, in blue ink. We have also used another rough copy of the bibliography, from a 25 pages notebook without

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covers. Both documents are included in the „Collection dr. I. Themo” in the Museum of National History and Archaeology Constanța.¹

Ibrahim Ethem – the real name of doctor Ibrahim Themo – was born in March 1865, in Struga, south of Macedonia, in a family of Albanians who came from Mati, Albania². After graduating the Medicine Military Highschool in Istanbul, he followed the Faculty of Military Medicine „Gühane” in Istanbul in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, where he remarked himself for his revolutionary activity against the political regime and he was one of the founders of the organization Young Turks³. After graduation (1892), he used to work in the hospital Haydarpaşa in Istanbul⁴. He was arrested for times for his ideas and activity against the regime.⁵ Ibrahim Ethem founded the revolutionary organization „Union and Progress”. This way, he got in touch with the Aromanian students in Istanbul, with whom he cooperated during his entire revolutionary activity. In the framework of the struggle for the autonomy of the Romanian Church and the liberation from the tutelage of the Greek Patriarchy in Istanbul, Ibrahim Ethem and the members of his organization hid the priest Haralambie Balamaci, who was member of the Romanian committee, from the Greeks’ fury.⁶

As he was involved in the liberation movement of the „Young Turks” in the Ottoman Empire and feeling the danger of some reprisals, in 1895, Ibrahim Ethem in 1895, Ibrahim Ethem found shelter in Constanța.

Thus, we appeal to Ibrahim Themo’s biography written by his brother-in-law, Ahmet Menci, wherefrom we cite a lot, as we present this biography as a document, as well:

„ ...he also decided to leave the country, finding shelter in one of the Balkan countries, wherefrom he could continue his activity and had freely correspondence both with his fellows of ideas from Turkey and Europe. Finally, he chose Romania, a neighbourhood country and daily in contact with those in Turkey.

In that time, there were in Istanbul existau 7 Aromaniaan students from Rumelia, with whom hebecame friends, and two of them joined the organization,

¹ The text is written with blue ink and the corrections with a pencil, many times with a blunt end. There is the specific handwriting of an old man. Maybe, for this reason, I could not understand some of the words and I mention them by (?).

² Agi-Amet Gemal, *Dicționarul personalităților turco-tătare din Romania*, Ed. Metafora, Constanța, 1999, p. 304.

³ Tahsin Gemil, *Asociația din Romania a „Junilor Turkishi”*, in „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie «A.D. Xenopol»”, Iași, VII, 1970, p. 173- 195; Themo., *op. cit.*, 1939.

⁴ Ibrahim Themo, *İttihat Ve Terakki*, Medgidia, 1939.

⁵ The Museum of National History and Archaeology Constanța, The Storehouse of Contemporary-Modern-Middle Age History Ibrahim Themo collection (further on, MINAC, Themo collection), inv. 6338.

⁶ Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*

too. When he met them, he presented them his situation and asked them to help him run away. They promised him formally that they would help him. After that, he went to his friend Regeb Lakteş, where he left his documents and military uniform, he dressed as a civilian, and told him that he would receive something by the foreign post office in Istanbul and then he went to the Aromanian students who saw their relatives to the Romanian ship «Meteor» accosted in high seas, in front of the port „Şirehegi”, he got on the ship without any passport and without being seen by the Turkish policeman who was watching the ship. When, the ship went out Bosphorus, he went to a secure place, at the second class, where he had a ticket.

The ship was caught that night by a terrible storm in the Black Sea, so he arrived that night after a delay of few hours. On the ship, as he had an agreement with a sailor, he changed his Turkish cap with the sailor's peaked cap and helped by the sailor he got off the land. This way, the distinguished patriot could reach Romania's glorious land, on November 1st, 1885, at dawn. From that moment, Romania was his adoptive country, towards which he was faithful and thankful until the last minute of his life.

We must not forget that Themo, when leaving his country, he assumed the high mission to continue the fight until the victory. However, here, he did not forget the difficulties of his country enchained in slavery. Wherever he went, he had with him his country and his people's sufferings. As a consequence, in the following pages. We are going to see how he could achieve the difficult task he had assumed, without any turning away from it.

In the night when he arrived and got off in Constanța port, there was a terrible blizzard and a severe cold. As no trains were circulating because of the snow, he stayed in Constanța for three days. Then, he went to Bucharest. Here, having addresses given by his friends who helped him to escape, he presented to Dr. Nicolae Naciu, who was the partisan of the Ottoman State in that time. That was a good man and he helped him both to... he settled in a boarding high school led by him, as Themo did not have any money. Mr. Naciu, who was a philanthropist and who helped all the emigrants who appealed to him, showed him a special consideration and supported him a lot by giving him money.. (...)

In his memories, Themo said that Naciu used to be a good friend of the Turks, so every time, they spoke about them he used to say: «Oh, this Istanbul leaders, who trust the Patriarchy from Phanar! Since they came to Moldavia and Wallachia, the Phanariote rulers, sent by them and raised with the idea of Phanariote propaganda, besides they troubled Romanians, they also disturbed Turkey's political interests. The Phanar, that nest of intrigues still does an open propaganda against Turkey, by exploiting the Christians' faith». (...)

Finally, Themo after attending for a year the lectures given by professor Manolescu, a famous Romanian doctor, specialized in eye diseases, in order to

complete his ophthalmological training and learn the Romanian language; then, he needed the equivalence of his diploma by the direction of the sanitary service, by exam, he presented his application to the ministry of internal affairs, where he went with Mr. Naciu. However, Mr. Felix, who was the general director of the sanitary service, when reading the application, he gave it back saying: «This gentleman is Turkish. Until now, he has not received any Turkish doctor.» Mr. Naciu, getting closer to his ear, said: «I think that in science, especially medicine, there is no religion or nationality. I do not understand why you refuse a Muslim, as long as you receive hundreds of foreigners?». That time the newspapers in Bucharest used to write in a worried manner about the Armenians' attack upon the Ottoman bank.

The director: «Mr. Naciu, haven't you read in the newspapers about the Turkish barbarian act after the attack upon the Ottoman bank in Galați, when hundreds of Armenians were massacred? I cannot accept a Turkish doctor to work in our country!» Naciu: «Yes, You can accept, Mr Director! At my turn, I regret to say I did not expect such an answer from you who are an educated man and have a high position. Please, tell me, what would we do if the Muslims in Dobruja revolt against our state? You know very well that, last week, our government asked the firemen to disperse the revolted people against the conservative party, who, thanks God, were Romanians? So, I cannot understand how correct would be to refuse a man of science for the reason he is a Muslim, mostly because he ran from the Turkish politics, he founded a shelter in Romania, thinking honestly that he would serve the Muslim population in Dobruja.» When hearing these words, the director gave up his ideas, and he sent the application of the examining committee. After two months, doctor Themo gave an exam and he got the approval to work as a doctor in Romania.⁷

As a consequence, doctor Ibrahim Themo, who fearlessly showed his position against the Sultan, in the most difficult years of the absolutist terror, when everyone was very scared, and he acted as one of the most skillful people who organized the movement and spread propaganda, fighting continuously and energetically for the benefit of his country and people, calling all the intellectuals and workers, as well as all the patriots to unity and resolute fight against the absolutist domination, after he got the right to work and being sure of a free life away from any danger, he began to think at his fellows in ideas and work, he was looking for them, he found them and began to write to them. From that moment, he increased his political activity he did not abandon even for a moment.

He sent his first letter to his friend Regeb Lakteş, where he left his clothes and uniform. This devoted young man, keeping his word, as soon as he received

⁷ In two years, Erhem became a Romanian citizen. Cf. Jeran Unver Nasrattinoglu, *Ibrahim Themo și Atatürk*, in „Istoria comunității Albaniane din România”, vol. 1, Buc., 2002, p. 156. The article was taken over in „Anuarul Albanezul 40. Supliment al revistei „Albanezul”, 1995, p. 24-27.

the first letter from Themo, he gave this letter to his trusted friends, establishing a connection between Themo with Istanbul. So, that from now on, he had enough time to concentrate all his ardent spirit not only upon his sacred ideal which had to be fulfilled at any price, and for which he did not spare any effort or material and moral sacrifice until he managed to achieve it.

His friend of ideas began to write to him regularly, and getting him up-to-date with the events in Turkey and he hurried to answer rapidly with every ship who left Constanța. He received from there heart-breaking news which did harm to him and poisoned his heart. They communicated him that, after he left, the leaders arrested many people from the faculty and civilian schools for officers of all arms, poets, journalists, civilian clerks, workers, students from the seminary, some of the church leaders and stuffed them in the barracks from Cișla in Pera, where they were subjected to a harsh interrogatory in front of the martial court, especially set for them. After the judgement, there were exiled to Tripolitania, with the ship Şeref, under the direct watch of Mustafa Paşa, seventy eight people of these sacrificed friends. In the same time, friends and fellows of ideas as Abdullah Gevdet, İshak Şukuti and others were banished on different islands. He had his heart broken and he began to help both financially and from moral point of view (?) and he managed to help him to flee to Egypt, and in 1898, (?) to move to Paris. Şukuti worked a lot from all points of view, writing articles to the newspapers which were published in Egypt, Paris, London, Geneva, Bruxelles and Italy.

Thinking that now he must spend time doing nothing abroad, and that it was necessary to increase his activity, he began to search for all who could help him.

First, he discovered his fellow of ideas, Şefik Bey, former director at a newspaper, who took part at first meeting at the villa of the Albanian Aluş, who was Ottoman in Giurgiu. In a severe cold day, he went to him. Though he was an official, Şefik Bey, received him with great pleasure and offered him hospitality for three days. They discussed about the association. Themo told him that since he established closed connections with Istanbul, he did not want to spend his time anymore doing nothing and he wanted to send a manifest, as soon as possible. Şefik accepted and he wrote immediately a brochure with the title „movement”⁸. In Romania, as there were no Turkish newspaper, he went to Bulgaria, at Rusciuc, where there was published the newspaper Tuna, meaning „The Danube”. So, he crossed over the Danube with a boat in that severe cold, exposing himself to drown and he reached to the typography of the above mentioned newspaper. He was surprised to see there his former colleague Mustafa Regîp, who worked at (?) printing. Regîp, seeing him, he was troubled and he expressed his astonishment and joy, saying: «Oh, your majesty». But Themo, pretending that he did not know

⁸ It is about the brochure *Haraket (Mişcare)* – where he urges to the fight for changing the sultan Abdul Hamid's regime.

him, made him a sign discreetly to understand that he should be silent. After he met the readctor, he gave him the manifest to study it and asked him to answer in the following day. Then, he went out, making a sign to Ragîp to follow him. Ragîp told him, that the readctors, though, they were living in a rather free country as Bulgaria was at that time, they avoid to raise the Turkish Sultan's susceptibility.

Next day, he said to the redactors who he was, and little by little convinced them to join the association. The redactors asked him to wait until the brochure was published, as they were watched by the Turkish consulate and it was bad to hurry. However, in these days, there were very important events in Turkey. So, Themo was thinking to print as soon as possible the manifest and send it to the destination. Then, Mustafa Ragîp proposed him to take him along, declaring him that he would do everything possible to help him and he would publish the brochure if Themo can put at his disposal a litograph stone with the necessary material. When he came back to Giurgiu, he presented to Şefic Bey the situation in Bulgaria and that he spent the money with which he came, he asked for a small amount to go to Bucharest together with Ragîp and multiply the brochure with the stone. The consul was happy and advised him to go to Mr. Alfred Rustem, prim secretary of the Ottoman Embassy in Bucharest, who were their partisan. And to speak him closely and to ask him to give him the necessary money in order to support the national interest. If Themo could not give back the money, he would give them back to Rustem.

He met Mr. Alfred Rustem by Mr. Zak Levi, a Jewish who was translator from Turkish at the Romanian ministry of external affairs. Receiving 350 lei from him, he bought stone and they litographed 500 brochures (?) and they sent them to be spread in the entire Turkey, by his trusted people who received letters from him through the post offices from (?) Istanbul, Izmir, Salonic and Trebizonda.

These days, the Persian Riza killed the Iran shah. The hero Riza woked in book shop in Istambul, and he met him by Şukiuti and for a long time he helped Themo a lot when he began to work for their association. Themo who received letters from Bucharest about Riza's action, said that in the moment when this hero was hung, he said the following words «When my legs leave the land and my head goes to the skies, I see my country's raise.»

Using the shah assasinate, Themo sent a separate manifest about this event, in order to inspire enthusiasm and activate the Turkish people. At the beginning of this manifest, there can be seen the following line: (...missing).

Later on, he received the news that his trusted man Rageb Lakteş was exiled to Erzerum, where he suffered a lot seven years he spent there. Though, he worked a lot to help him he could not manage.

In spite of all these, he continued to receive regularly letters with very important news. Some of these letters became historical documents, and there could be found 2,000 of them in the decesed house. Before the war between 1916

and 1917 (?.) They were donated to the Albanian Embassy from Bucharest by my deceased sister Nafie Themo, in 1959. Further on, we reproduce some of them, in order to have an opinion about their content: (...missing).

As one can see, from these letters' content, it is obvious that doctor Ibrahim Themo is the main element in the entire young turks movement, and even those against he fought cannot pass over this aspect, either the most envious of his friends, who wanted to put him in a shadow, in order to take his place. Finally, all of them capitulate in front of the huge work of this man who used to be an endless source of energy and skilful features, they recognize his merits and they honour him in a very high way."

The lieutenant-colonel in the Ottoman Marine, Ali Riza Kârâmzade - political refugee in Romania - and Medgidia's mayor, Kemâl Hagi Ahmet, helped him, between 1896 and 1897, to create numerous sections of the movement in Dobruja, and Ibrahim Themo was leading the committee. The committee included not only political refugees from Turkey, but also leaders of the local population, intellectuals and priests.⁹

Ibrahim Themo's personality and actions represented a real threat for the Ottoman regime and sultans' men tried many times to assassinate him. Once, they sent Kadri Bey, under the cover of Consul in Romania, to murder him. However, Ibrahim Themo convinced Kadri Bey „to join” his group and to settle in Romania. After many failures, there were also other manners to convince Themo to give up his fight.

The Ottoman authorities acted not only against Themo himself, but also against his organization. The movement's periodical „Sedai Millet” („The Nation's Voice”) was published in that period, in Bucharest, and, on the 15th of December, 1897, there was opened an anonymous society led by Vasile M. Kogălniceanu, in order to publish this periodical. The publication fought against the absolutism in the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman authorities asked the Romanian government to forbid it. Under these circumstances, the activity of the organization „Young Turks” - including Themo's activity developed in two directions: a legal and an illegal one. From the first point of view, Ibrahim Themo and his followers founded schools in Turkish in the Dobrujan settlements - where they brought teachers with advanced views -, they urged population to send children to school and they mulitated for women emancipation. Illegally, they continued the political activity, spreading publications brought from abroad, giving conferences and bringing new members into the organization.¹⁰

The movement Mişcarea „Junilor Turkishi” was on the decline after 1900, when its leaders, Ahmed Riza and the prince Sabahaddin separated. The Committee in Dobruja and Bulgaria led by Ibrahim Themo continued its activity.

⁹ Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*; Mehmet Ali Ekrem, *Din istoria turcilor dobrogeni*, Bucureşti, 1994, p. 139-140.

¹⁰ Mehmet Ali Ekrem Ekrem, *op. cit.*, p.141-142.

For his actions against the sultan, in 1901, dr. Themo was sentenced to death by a Turkish military court.¹¹

In 1902, Themo resigned from the hospital in Medgidia and left for Paris, for a year, in order to train in medicine practice, but also to get in touch with the members of the organization „Young Turks”.¹² In the same year, he participated in the capital of France, to the first congress of the Ottoman liberals, where he played an important role in organizing the event.¹³

In 1903, when he came back to Romania, dr. Ibrahim Themo was sent to the hospital in Hârșova, town where he settled a school in Turkish language. In the same year, he was moved to Constanța, where, beside the medical activity, he founded together with the Turkish Committee, „*a Turkish secondary school for youngsters' education*”.¹⁴ He was elected vice-president of the Muslim Community.¹⁵ In 1906, he moved to Constanța, where he worked in Anadalchioi district.¹⁶ În același an, Petru Vulcan îl prezenta astfel: „*He is the only Muslim doctor in Constanța county, where he used to be a district doctor for about ten years and he brought real services to the Muslim population, in spite of the fact that this population is fatalist and in case of sickness or epidemic, people do not ask for medical help, and they either they go to the mullah or they resign.*

Doctor Themo managed to determine the Muslim population to come to him in case of need, through a paternal behaviour, as we know that the Muslim women prefer to die than to ask for a Christian doctor.

*Beside the medical support, doctor Themo managed to determine Muslims and Tartars to take hygiene into consideration. Specific features: he is a remarkable nationalist citizen and he dreams but Albania's political emancipation, which he wants to be an empire..., if possible”.*¹⁷

In Constanța, he used to be one of the founders of the Albanian society „Beshkimi” („Unirea”) - in 1906 -, society whose vice-president was for a time, playing an important role at the Congress in Bucharest.¹⁸ Under his influence, the Albanian Community in Dobruja diversified its cultural activity, and the Society

¹¹ *Dicționar de personalități dobrogei*, vol. 1, Ed. Ex Ponto, Constanța, 2004, p. 291.

¹² MINAC, Themo collection, inv. 6338.

¹³ There are two tendencies here: the majority one, having as main representative prince Sabaheddin, who militated for maintaining the connections with the European powers, following the idea that these powers will pressure the sultan to compell him to respect his own Constitution from December 1876 and to give rights to all subjects; the minority tendency was against the relationships with the foreigners and militated for organizing a Turkish party. Cf. Stavro Stendi, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*, 1939.

¹⁵ MINAC, Themo collection, inv. 6338.

¹⁶ Tănase Bujduveanu, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹⁷ Petru Vulcan, *Albumul național al Dobrogei 1866-1877-1906*, Tipografia Regală, Buc., 1906

¹⁸ Stavro Stendi, *op. cit.*

„Beshkimi” elaborated, in 1910, its own rules.¹⁹ In 1905, The Albanian School „Lumina” was opened and Ibrahim Themo used to be the Council president.²⁰

Under the circumstances of the political conditions in the Ottoman Empire and in the entire world, there was a congress organized by the movement „Young Turks”, between 27-29th December, 1907, with the participation of the Dobrujan delagation led by Ibrahim Themo. He supported the idea of a centralized Empire.²¹

In 1908, he gave a speech at a meeting of the Democrat Conservatory Party led by Tache Ionescu.²² The conclusion is that he was already participating to the political life in Romania.

The „ Young Turks” victory in 1908 increased Ibrahim Themo’s activity. Ahmet Mencşi describes the development of the events:

„ NIAZI BEY’s MARCH”

(...) The national assembly allows to bring to life his principles (Themo n.n.) which pleased him a lot. Themo who had connections with Niazi’s movement was waiting full of hope and worry the news from Albania, as they promised to him that they would wait for him at the Bulgarian’s border to go together to Istanbul, but this did not happen because Niazi rushed his march to (?).

Hardly Themo came from Bulgaria, where he left to meet Niazi Bey and they arrived together in Istanbul, as they established before through their connection individuals. Certainly, he was disappointed, though he was pleased with the great achievement, not knowing for sure if the stranding of the meeting with the Bey, as the consequence of Niazi Bey’s bad intention or to the fact that the events rushed and he arrived too late.

When this news came from Romania, we used to live in Anadalchioii, in my brother in law’s house, where a lot of people came with flags and shouting: Long live Dr. Themo! Long live the man who organized the young people, the revolution and who brought the liberty. Though I was scared, I did not leave him at all, and he was really very nervous so he could not speak.

Finally, he people took him and gave him a ride to Constanța and acclaimed him as the most important man.

(...) In Constanța, he gave a very enthusiastic speech near Ovid’s statue and he was applauded and interrupted all the time because of the ovations; he ended his speech urging to fraternity and teaching that the liberty they gained should not be transformed in anarchy. The, all of them left for the Turkish consulate, where

¹⁹ Gelcu Maksutovici, *Istoria comunității Albaniane din Romania*, Ed. Kriterion, Buc., 1992, ă/55

²⁰ Ismet Dermaku, *Școala libaneză „Lumina” de la Constanța (1905-1912)*, in „Anuarul Albanianul”, Bucharest, nr. 403, 1998.

²¹ Tănase Bujduveanu, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

²² Stoica Lascu, *Crearea și activitatea organizațiilor județene Constanța ale partidelor politice (1908- 1916)*, in „Comunicări de istorie a Dobrogei”, 2, 1983, p. 187.

the consul was scared that they would harm him; but Themo, after he assured him that nothing bad would happen, asked him to give a speech, to which he also answered and then they went to the banquet and I came back home.

Since the day when the constitution was declared, there were coming telegrams for congratulating him, coming from the entire world, and through the telegrams from Istanbul they were calling him to come there as soon as possible...

Next day, he began to prepare himself for leaving to Istanbul. His sister was against this, but she couldn't manage to convince him, so that night he left with the Romanian ship and I heard he was received very well, and after that there was his story in the pages...

After short time, when he came back from there and he found about the Turkish government intervention to the Romanian government to send him for some time there as he was needed a lot his presence.

When, the Romanian government approved this request, we all left for Constantinople. When our ship arrived closed to the port Galata, we saw a crowd of people who were waiting for him and cheered him for a long time."

In Istanbul, he was proposed to be candidate for the Turkish Parliament. As they fight fellows insisted upon him to remain in Turkey, he came back to Constanța, he resigned from the hospital and also he sold his house in Anadalchioi village - today district in Constanța - and he left together with his family for Istanbul, where he was appointed the head of the city Sanitary Inspectorate, than, director of the Charity Institute.²³ On January, 8th, there was organized a banquet in his honour, in Constanța, on the occasion of his appointment by the Turkish government as a doctor in Pera district.²⁴

As a consequence of the conflicts with the right wing of the government party, Ibrahim Themo, felt like was betrayed, so he resigned from the leadership team of the Charity Institute and the party, and, in 1909, he founded the Ottoman Democratic Party - with a programme to redress Turkey; this party activated in opposition with the „Young Turks” -, which would be united with the Party for Liberty and Solidarity.²⁵ Disgusted by this „war”, Ibrahim Themo came back to Constanța, in January 1911, where he received his former position.²⁶

Ahmet Mencşi tells that Ibrahim Themo, „...in 1912, as a leader of a young Romanian team, he was sent to Constantinople, where he made miracles with the Romanian doctors, to whom, when he left, the Turks gave decorations and golden watch, as a sign of gratitude for the responsible way to make their duty and as beautiful memory.

²³ Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Adrian Ilie, *Valea Kara-Su în perioada secolelor XIV-XIX. Monografie istorică*, Medgidia, 2008, p. 71; „Viitorul Dobrogei”, 1909 A, p. 3.

²⁵ Jeran Unver Nasrattinoglu, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

²⁶ Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*

In 1914, he was also sent to Albania, with a Romanian medical team and he did a lot of services to the wounded people, and mostly to the population who suffered from yellow fever, which brought death to them.

During World War I 1914-1918, he was drafted as a doctor in the area of people coming from Moldavia, where he fought a lot with exanthemum fever, making good to the people in the hospital and also to the population in Moldavia, Dingeni region.”²⁷

In the biography written by Ahmed Mencişi, he said that Ibrahim Themo, „when coming back to the country, he joined the People’s party, which he considered to be democratic. He was elected senator, and on this occasion he gained for the veterinaries the title of doctor, he served this country, by convincing the population in Ada-Kaleh who was still under Turkish domination to request the island’s joining to Romania, and that was done immediately after those inhabitants’ intervention who asked for the Romanian protection.

When he settled in Dobruja and he saw the Muslim population for the first time, he was amazed by the backward state of this population who lived in a much more civilized country than the country where he came from.

He used to say they were so ignorant, savage and fanatic as one cannot imagine. They were stuffed with religious ideas wrongly presented by the mullahs who did not know the Koran content or the religion; Turkish people avoided to get into contact with the Christians or to learn foreign languages, fact considered the worst of the sins. Women did not go to doctors at all, and not even to Christian women doctors, so the newborn children’s mortality.

Women covered totally in order not to be seen but by their husbands and the closest relatives. From cultural point of view, they were near zero and they did not even want to learn as they did not respect education. The population did not trust the educated people who were few and whom they considered unfaithful.

Though the Romanian state opened largely the primary and superior schools for them, they refused to go to attend them.

Only few educated people allowed their children to go to school, where they were trained as well prepared officers. As Themo wanted to bring them on the right path, he was very patient and he did a continuous propaganda, working restless for changing this lamentable condition; in time, he managed to convince them to go to the state schools and he managed to open schools for them in different parts in Dobruja, thus he contributed to the people education, progress and civilization.

The Muslims in Constanţa, though they managed to put on the right path the educational problem by employing good and educated school masters in order to form the large school they had built, had but few school masters and educators in the Romanian schools, and one can say they were almost absent..

²⁷ MINAC, Themo collection, f.n.

Both for completing this lack, and also to train the necessary school masters for Constanța and Tulcea counties, in 1900, he went to Bucharest with a delegation of educated people and he intervened at the minister of Public Education and Cultes, where he gained the approval to move the Muslim Seminary „Gazi Ali Paşa” from Babadag, to Midjidia, which was situated in the centre of Dobruja and had a lot of Musliman population, in the building with eight classrooms and bedrooms, which was raised by the local population donations and which he passed under the state care under the name of „State Muslim Seminary” and he also changed its programme in a programme of educational school.

When the Seminary was moved to Midjidia and the new programme with selected teachers was adopted, this religious school progressed step by step training school masters and mullahs in order to meet the population cultural needs in the entire Dobruja. Later on, in this school there were also trained mufties and cadies. In the same time, the Arabian and Persian languages were replaced to a great extent, and later on, there was also replaced the Turkish semitic alphabet with the Latin one and this helped a lot the pupils' progress. Then, the French language was also studied.

As he wanted the population's progress, he worked for 15 years as a teacher of hygiene in this small source of culture, through which he managed that his students spread the hygiene and medical knowledge to the population and to urge them to trust Romanians, as they saved Turks' lives.”²⁸

He also raised a school for the Turkish girls with his own money and with money donated by Romanians. Școala îi purta numele. The school bore his name. As a senator, he intervened to the Ministry of Education and obtained year scholarships in the highschools in the country for some poor Muslim pupils ordinary from the four Dobrujan counties.²⁹

Themo also managed the recognition of the title of doctor for the veterinary surgeons.³⁰

In 1928, Ibrahim Themo was member in the Council of the „urban commune Medgidia”³¹, and, after six years, he used to be one of the members of the County Council of the People's Party, president of the organization in Medgidia.

In 1936, he participated to the Congress of the Medical Balkan Union in Istanbul, representing Romania.³²

Ibrahim Themo founded periodicals, collaborated and supported publications, but he also published books both for education system and with political content. In 1915, he edited *Conducătorul conversațiunei în Românește și*

²⁸ MINAC, Themo collection, f.n.

²⁹ MINAC, Themo collection, inv. 6338; Ibrahim Themo, *op. cit.*

³⁰ MINAC, Themo collection, inv. 6338.

³¹ Aurelia Lăpușan, Ștefan Lăpușan, *op. cit.*, Constanța, 1996, p. 191.

³² Jeran Unver Nasrattinoglu, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

Turçește (Romanian-Turkish Conversation Book) and two volumes of the *Turkish-Romanian Dictionary*. In 1937, he wrote an interesting brochure dedicated to Kemal Atatürk, with the title *Why I care for Atatürk?*³³. He also wrote medical works and numerous other publications, some of them with religious content. In 1939, he wrote in Turkish, *My memories about the foundation of the Association Union and Progress and about my duties in the service of the country and of the national revolution. Medgidia, 1939.*³⁴

He died in 1945 and, according to the letter he left to be opened after his death, he was buried, in „a coffin lined with zinc sheet and covered by the flag of my adoptive country”, in the Muslim cemetery in Medgidia. He was accompanied, according to his wish „by my students whom I loved”. The same letter mentions his wish not to be organized „the ordinary funeral feast; I consider I did a lot of charity when I was alive: I cured people, generally free treatment for the blinds' sight to which I restored their eyesight; I helped the people in need and I protected 23 orphans, who today are doctors, lawyers, officers, schoolmasters, workers etc. Instead of the funeral feast, where the rich people jostle their way to the front and the poor people are looking at them how they eat, I want that, for there days, you give to the needy people in the town, 100 fresh breads and a quarter kilo yellow cheese for each of them, precisely in the bakery”. His wish was fulfilled³⁵ and it reveals a lot about the man who was Ibrahim Themo.

He was Albanian, trained in an Ottomans school, he used to know the European ideas very well; he was Dobrujan by adoption and feeling, and he was not only involved actively and with good results in the political life of the Empire Ottoman and Albania, as well, but he also marked in an important manner the Muslim life, culture and spirituality in Romania, and mostly, in the province recently included into the Country, Dobruja.

³³ Kristia Maksutovici, *Confluente culturale româno/Albaniane*, Ed. Kriterion, Buc., 1995, p. 149.

³⁴ Gelcu Sefedin Maksutovici, *op. cit.*, p. 335- 336.

³⁵ MINAC, Themo collection, f.n. ; Gelcu Sefedin Maksutovici, *op. cit.*, p. 335