

**NATIONAL COLLEGE BARBU STIRBEI
CALARASI, ROMANIA**

**C A L A R A S I –
A W I N D O W T O T H E D A N U B E**

- Physical Geography & Economic Geography -

Expanding boundaries - COMENIUS 1 Project

C A L A R A S I - A W I N D O W T O T H E D A N U B E

A publication produced at Barbu Stirbei College Calarasi, Romania as a result of a COMENIUS 1 Project 2003-2006.

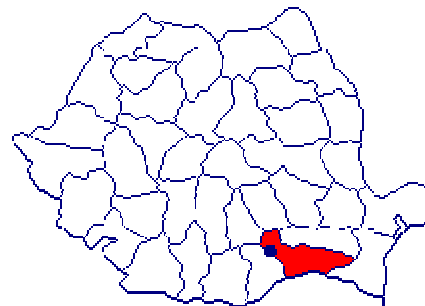
Partner schools:

- * Ewelme CE Primary School, Ewelme, United Kingdom
- * Szkoła Podstawowa Nr 21, Bialystok, Poland
- * Barbu Stirbei College, Calarasi, Romania

1. POSITION



Calarasi County is situated in the south-east of Romania, at the intersection of the 44° 20' lat N parallel with the 27° long E meridian, in the Muntenia Plain. It has Ialomita County in the north, Bulgaria in the south, Constanta county in the north and Giurgiu and Ilfov Counties in the west.



It has an area of 5088 km² (2,1% from the territory of Romania), on the 28 place from all the counties in Romania. Calarasi County is part of the South Muntenia Region together with other eight counties: Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova, Dambovita, Teleorman, Arges and Ilfov. This region has a direct connection with Bucharest, the capital of Romania. It is a region of development with great plans for future.



CALARASI, the capital city of Calarasi county lies in the south-eastern part of Romania and of the Romanian Plain on the left bank of Borcea, an arm of the Danube, near the frontier with Bulgaria. It is situated along Calarasi Lake, about 100 km east-south-east of Bucharest.

2. THE RELIEF



Due to its location in the south-eastern part of the Romanian Plain the relief is dominated by plains and river meadows, the only irregularities being some valleys and hillocks but they are rather the outcome of man's intervention. From the point of view of major forms of relief one may find: the Southern Baragan Plain, the Danube Meadow, from Cascioarele to Calarasi and the Borcea Marsh, from Calarasi to the Fetesti-Cernavoda railway line. These being, by and large, the major forms of relief it would be worth mentioning the fact that the areas between rivers – fields – are well individualized and characterized by flat lands with altitudes varying between 25 and 50 m from the meadows and marshes, the newest forms of relief made by the alluvial deposits of the Danube and the Borcea, which do not exceed 5-10m from the sea level.

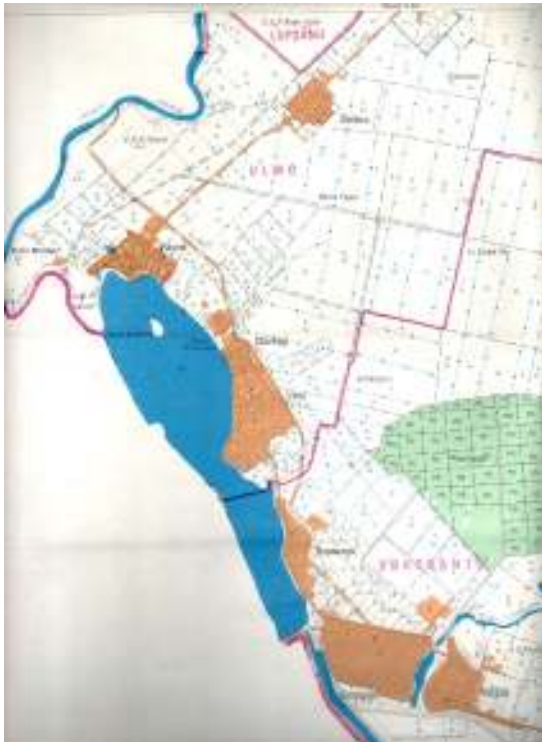
The general aspect of the Borcea Marsh is interesting, with numerous channels, high banks closing up large central hollows divided into smaller coves.

3. THE HIDROGRAPHY



The hydrographic network is tributary to the river Danube. At Chiciu (eight kilometers upstream of Calarasi) the Danube divides itself into two arms: Borcea on the left and the old Danube on the right, separating Calarasi county from Constanta county. There is only one direct link between the two arms which enclose the Borcea marsh, named the Bala arm, which plays an important role as regards the flows of the two arms.

There is also a natural lake named Calarasi (656 hectares).



4. THE CLIMATE

The climate falls completely in the continental temperate sector. It is characterised by hot summers with rather poor rainfalls, and relatively cold winters, often marked by strong snowstorms but also by frequent warmer periods which affects the snow layer.

The annual average temperature is 11.3 C at Calarasi. The all-times high recorded so far reached at +41.5 C at Calarasi on 10 August 1957. The all-times low was recorded at Calarasi: -38.5 C all country level recorded at Bod (Brasov County), on 25 January 1948.

The precipitation records average values as homogenous as the temperatures, ranging between 500-540 mm, but in drought years they drop below 400mm. Most of the rainfalls are recorded between 15 April and 15 October when there are frequent thunderstorms. Very good quality drinking water was tapped by drilling, such as the deposits in the radius of Calarasi municipality (with a discharge of around 43 l/sec).

The predominant winds in this area are those blowing from north and north-east, just as those from south and south-west, better known being Crivatul (the North Wind), Austrul (the South-Western Wind) and Baltaretul (the Marsh Wind). The highest average annual speed is recorded at Calarasi from the north

5. THE SOIL

The main type of soil is black earth proper with loess deposits. In consideration of the highly productive character of this soil, steps have been taken in recent years to lower the phreatic layer and drain the meadow and marsh areas. The favourable soil and weather conditions explain the predominantly agrarian character of this area.

6. THE WILD VEGETATION



The specific flora belongs to the steppe and meadow zone, strongly altered by man's action. There are several types of trees like oaks, maples and acacia between farm lands and secondary steppe meadows greatly changed by man. Thistle, corn cockle, motherwort grow on these meadows.

The azonal vegetation is characterised by riverside meadows with willows and poplars, and mixed foliage forests of oak, ash and elm trees alternating with meadows and farm land under crops. Adding to all this there is the hygroscopic and hydrophilic vegetation of the Danube swamps and Calarasi Lake.

7. THE WILDLIFE



Adjusted to the environment conditions, the wildlife is well represented by rodents, birds and insects. For game, one can find rabbits, roebucks, wild boars, foxes, polecats, bison, weasels and among birds pheasants, quails, partridges, wild ducks and geese, bald coots, moor hens.

The species of fish populates the waters of the lakes and of the marches are all known and have always been an attraction to locals. We mention the carp and the perch while the waters of the Danube and the Borcea abound in sheatfish, sturgeons and Danube mackerel.

8. THE POPULATION

The population of the town counts 73.881 residents in the 1 of July 2005. Calarasi has a commune, Modelu and a village, Tonea.



Calarasi County has two towns: Calarasi, its residence and Oltenita, and three little cities, Budesti, Fundulea and Lehliu Gara, 49 communes and 160 villages. The population of the county is 317652 inhabitants, 156130 males and 161522 females, 124149 in towns, 193503 in the villages.

As for the active people, there are 110000 persons, 100400 employed, 9600 out of work and 100614 pensioners.

9. THE HISTORY



The territory of the Calarasi County is one of the most important segments of the Lower Danube zone, for certain ages, a nucleus and a center of formation and spreading of several civilizations.

The extraordinary habitat conditions (water, forest, raw material sources, food) favored the population as early as the upper Palaeolithic-the Aurignacian age.

It was in the advanced Neolithic and Aeneolithic ages that this land actually become a heart of history and civilization. That period, Calarasi was an area where several civilization

got into touch, among the most advanced in the world for the 5th and 4th millennia BC. Material cultures like Hamangia, Boian or Gumelnita knew quite outstanding development in these parts. The lavish and unparalleled spiritual life of those populations, expressed especially in anthropomorphic, zoomorphic statuettes or the dummies of sanctuaries and shrines-genuine masterpieces of the world prehistoric art, determined their study in great universities of the world.



Prehistoric civilizations like Boian, Gumelnita, Coslogeni (Bronze Age) have specific Calarasi names. Researches in the famous archaeological reserve at Gradistea-Coslogeni demonstrate the very advanced metal-working knowledge of the population from this area, which, most probably, had an important role in the conquest of the famous city of Troy, as the archaeological digs show.

The first Geta chieftain in these parts whose name history has preserved was Dromichaetes. He built a big tribal union in the plains of Muntenia. History records Dromichaetes' fights and victories against Lisymachus (29 BC)-a former general of Alexander the Great. The Macedonian Empire took the place of the Roman Empire. The first to get into touch with the Romans were the Danubian Getae.

The waves of the migratory populations did not shun these lands either. Archaeological diggings at Calarasi prove the continuity of the human habitation in these parts. The local people withdrew from the way of the invaders to the deep, old woods. A demographic concentration occurred in the early period of the Middle Ages.

The pre-feudal and feudal era was marked by the Roman-Byzantine and Byzantine culture emanated by the cities built by the Danube, and from among them we have to mention here the extraordinary contribution of the Byzantine city Vicina, built on the Pacuiul lui Soare isle, situated at 9 km from Calarasi. The capital of a north region of the Danube, Vicina would become also a very powerful political, commercial and spiritual center in the 10th-13th centuries, a real turntable of all Europe. In the 12th century, Vicina was the center of a Danubian pre-statal formation that occupied, in broad line, also the territory of the present-day

Calarasi County. The first metropolitan of Walachia was Iachint of Vicina! The ruins of that famous metropolitan city are to be found less than 20 km south-east of Calarasi.

The first written document which can be considered as the certificate of the current Calarasi municipality is dated 1 June 1541. By it, Prince Radu Paisie declined nobleman Borcea's ownership of village Craceni-the current Magureni district. As many as 457 years of written history have passed since. In time; the documents became even more frequent.

Being a frontier land, on the Moscow-Iasi-Silistra-Istanbul line, these lands were often witnesses to anti-Ottoman wars fought both by Romanians and by Russians.

Mircea the Old (who mastered also Darstor), Vlad the Impaler, Radu of Afumati, Michael the Brave are only a few of the standard-bearers of the anti-Ottoman battles, who led their armies also through this land.

The frequent Russian-Turkish wars (1769-1774, 1787, 1806-1812, 1828-1836, 1848-1849, 1853-1854 and 1877-1878) left deep traces in the history of these parts. The alternating, Russian and Ottoman victories brought negative consequences for the native population.

Time went on.

People kept farming, fishing, and growing animals.



Lichiresti, a settlement born in immemorial times, on the site of the current downtown in Calarasi, was mentioned in a deed for the first time in 1630 by Prince Leon Tomsa Voda.

In 1669 it became a frontier station of Walachia, with the setting up of a small army of mounted troops ("calarasi"), by Prince Constantin Brancoveanu.

The name of Calarasi instead of Lichiresti is mentioned for the first time in an Austrian map dating from 1791.

Since April 1833 (when it counted only 866 inhabitants) till April 1952, Calarasi was the seat of Ialomita county, being promoted a town. Since September 1852 the town was named after the liberating prince, Stirbei, and by that name it went until around 1881.



The major events of the Romanian people's life were consequential also for the people in this land: the bourgeois-democratic Revolution of 1848, the Union of the Principalities in 1859, the Independence proclaimed in 1877, and the Great Union of 1918, the two world wars.



There were however also local events that history minutely recorded:1837- the building of the first school in Calarasi,1875-the first publication issued in this part of the country,1880-the beginning of the Bucharest –Fetesti and Ciulnita-Calarasi railways,1887-the construction of the current townhall,1895-the construction of the current Prefect's Office.

10. THE ECONOMY

The economy of Calarasi County is in full process of restructuring and privatization which leads to the emergence of more trading companies with full private capital.

1. Agriculture

Agriculture represents 3,6% of all-country production. Two figures are telling of the agricultural specific of Calarasi County: two thirds of the residents live in rural localities, holding 60% of the count's farmland. Among them, there are some who were townspeople not long ago, and who were given land after 1989. The landed fund has a total area of 508785 hectares with an agricultural area of 426780 (415779 hectares of arable land, 5310 ha of grazing field, 134 ha of hayfield, 5246 ha of vineyard and 311 ha of orchard)



There are cultivated many kinds of plants: wheat, rye, two-row barley, barley, oat, corn, beans, peas, sun-flower, soya, sugar beet, potatoes, tomatoes, onion, cabbage, melon and water melon, lucerne, especially on private properties..

2 Industries

Industrial production is varied and it relies both on traditional activities-processing of the local farm produce, and on activities assimilated in recent years: staple fibre and paper, building materials, textile ready made. The main industrial products are: concrete prefabs, furniture, staple fiber, paper, ready-mades, meat and meat preparation, milk and dairy, sugar, preserves.

3. Transport and telecommunications



The transport network is made of 243 km of rail, including 151 km electrified, and 1,102 km of public roads in our county. An important highway connects Calarasi and Bucharest, Calarasi and Constanta .

Concomitant with the introduction of the cellular telephony, the transmission system by cable, optic fibre and telephone exchange too, was updated, and so were their relevant facilities. Calarasi has over 33,000 phone users.



The port of Calarasi accommodates goods and passenger river transport.

4. Tourism

The fact that Calarasi town is a riverine one, by the Danube, makes it very attractive from a tourist viewpoint, yet this position is still not taken advantage of enough. The big number of islets of a matchless picturesqueness, the branching of the main courses into arms, create both a natural scenery fit for relaxation and singular conditions for hunting and angling.



Showing to advantage the Danube with wild isles, with the Delta vegetation, animals and birds, of the lakes and ponds teeming with fish, plus game zones in forests of broad-leaved trees, all of these would be tantamount to the development of a sector of sporting tourism, in a unique natural and ecological environment.



There are also special cultural, historical and architectural attractions: Pacuiul lui Soare Isle, the Calarasi Lower Danube Museum, The Prefect's Palace, the Firemen's Barracks, the current headquarters of the National Archives, the Central Park near Borcea river.



Here are some precious natural reservations: the Haralambie Ait, the Ciornuleasa Ait and the Forest Ciornuleasa Reservation.

5. Education

The beginning of education in Calarasi is associated with the name of Stirbei, a dignitary who demanded in 1833 that schools be opened in all counties, and of colonel Grigore Poenaru-the leasholder of the Coltea Monastery-who, in 1837, accomplished that demand at Calarasi

Calarasi town has 17 schools including 6 highschools and Spiru Haret University.

6. Health

The health care network includes a big hospital, 2 polyclinics, 10 dispensaries, 10 chemist's shops, a health care center and 20 private medical units.

11. THE ADMINISTRATION



The administration of the town consists of one local municipal council .The central administration is represented in the county by the Prefect, who runs the county's administrative Commission consisting of the heads of the decentralized bodies in the territory of the ministries and other central bodies.

The Fordoc Institute was set up in 1991 by collaboration between Calarasi County and the French Department Charente Maritime. In 1995 it was acknowledged as a zonal center of personnel development in the domain of local public administration.

12. CULTURE AND ART

Important changes are in store now, in full process of passage to a market economy, of consolidation of a new way of cultural activity. New forms of manifestation come into being, materialized in round table conferences, shows, camps, based on much, very much liberty of expression.



The place of the imposed forms is taken by the artist's personal initiative which is however rooted in a traditional cultural reality. In 1998, Calarasi hosted a "Ion Vlad" camp and symposium, a National Archaeology Congress, a video-film Contest "7 Arts", a Festival of religious choral music, a Folk Dance Festival entitled "Hora Mare" as well as other events of national reverberation.

The cultural activities generally proceed in establishments such as libraries, a cinema hall, a theatre, the museum. An important cultural edifice is under construction in Calarasi municipality.

13. MASS MEDIA

Some newspapers and magazines come out in Calarasi, one daily, "Accent" four weekly, "Curierul", "Jurnalul de Calarasi", "Opinia de sud-est" and "Pamantul", a quarterly, "Dunarea de Jos". The audio/visual media are represented by two private radio stations: "Voces Campi" and "Blue Jeans" both broadcasting from Calarasi municipality and two TV studios belonging to two cable television companies "Astral TV" and "Solpress" also based in Calarasi town.

Expanding boundaries - COMENIUS 1 Project
05-PS-290-CL-UK

Edited by students from 8th grade:

ANA-MARIA IFRIM
ALEXANDRU MARIAN CRISU
EVELINA ARABAGIU
ANDREI MITEA
OANA ELENA TANASE
ALEXANDRU MITULESCU
SIMONA CRISTESCU
GEORGE STAMU
MARIA LUIZA GHIDRASAN
CATALINA GHICU
MIHAELA TINTEA
CRISTINA GHEORGHE
ALEXANDRA LAZAR
MARIA SAULEA
VERONICA VASILE
MEMET PETRISOR

Carmen Marica, Lucia Dumitru

and

Marinela Dincă, *COMENIUS Co-ordinator Project*