

***INSULA ȘERPILOR LA MIJLOCUL SECOLULUI AL XIX-LEA***

***SNAKE ISLAND AT THE MIDDLE OF THE XIX-TH CENTURY***

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The Greek sailors, who ventured into the Euxine Sea in the VII<sup>th</sup> century BC, discovered, on the Western shore of the “unfriendly” sea, near the mouths of the Danube, a stony island, not too high, which served as shelter and natural beacon for their ships. The Greek highly appreciated this island, almost unique in the Black Sea, and built here a temple dedicated to the most beloved hero of the Antiquity, the son of the goddess Thetis – Achilles.

At the middle of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, after having been visited by a number of sailors from different nations, the captain of the British frigate “Medina”, Thomas Spratt, an intelligent, cultivated and enterprising man, studied this solitary, rocky island, filled with marble and ceramic fragments, testimonies of the ancient Greek civilisation, and made an exceptional description of this piece of land, separated from Northern Dobruja, to which it belongs by its geomorphologic structure.

The Snake Island (Fido Nissi), measuring approximately one sea mile in perimeter, inhabited, and an important navigation and strategic point of the Black Sea, was described in 1856 by Captain Thomas Spratt, in a memoir addressed to the British Royal Admiralty and to the diplomatic authorities of the Foreign Office. We present this memoir as an annex to our article.