

MemoScapes

Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies

Vol. 2 / No. 2 / May 2018

ISSN: 2558-8567



**Constructing the Social
(and Individual) World:
Myth, Memory,
and Identity**

Published by CSMI

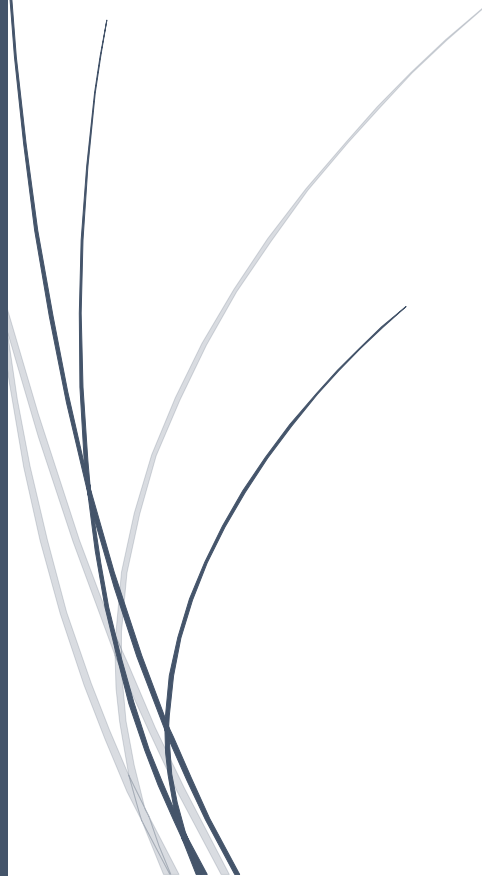
www.studii-memoriale.ro





5/1/2018

MemoScapes.
Romanian Journal
of Memory and
Identity Studies



Constructing the Social
(and Individual) World:
Myth, Memory, Identity
Issue 2, No. 2

Editor's Introduction

The notion of 'myth' covers a wide array of meanings and interpretations. A sociologist, an anthropologist, a historian, a political scientist, etc. define and understand this concept in very different ways. Even within the boundaries of the same discipline, definitions vary from one scholar to another.

Myth, in a narrow sense, represents a discursive mode with explicative role, which defines the fundamental semiological axes of a given mythology¹. In a broader sense, the myth may be considered to be an imaginary construct which attempts to distil the essence of cosmic and social phenomena depending on the values of a community, with the aim of ensuring a certain degree of cohesion within that particular group. It offers individuals and society at large direct access to an interpretative system and a behavioural model².

Myths can be defined as discursive practices closely connected to the identity and memory of a community. Myth may be the result of the perpetual tug-of-war between remembrance and oblivion, and its purpose is generally that of emphasizing the shared values of a community. One defining character of myth is its ability to cut through the ages while accumulating new meanings, transforming and evolving depending on times, situations or places.

Myths represent a key component of the social imaginary and are often invoked – and created – in the process of elaborating an explanatory scheme of national history. Myth has a powerful simplifying role and is

modulated by a drive to manufacture ideological unity. It may play an important part in legitimising new political regimes and delegitimizing old ones.

Myth is a fictional construct, such as a narrative or an idea, which puts forth social and historical explanations that serve the needs of the community by building social consensus³. The crucial point of this definition is that myths are fundamentally rooted in values shared broadly across society. It follows from this that myth is not simply a matter of truth or falsity. Rather, myths define the aspirations and projects of a community and can offer a basis for social mobilisation.

In our long journey through history, myths have always been with us. They flourished in ancient Greece as works of fiction being later contrasted with *logos* by the Christians. The Enlightenment seemed to spell myth's doom. But even relegated to 'untruth' status, myth remained important in the debates that shaped the ideals of critical thinking and rationalism.

Myths entered a new life once scientific anthropology was set on firm grounds. Claude Lévi-Strauss defined myth as universal – something that can be grasped by people across the world⁴. Mircea Eliade described myth as narrating an event that took place at the beginning of historical time that might explain how a significant element of the world – an island, a plant species, a human custom, or an institution – came into being through the agency of supernatural entities⁵. Eliade insisted that each time a

¹ Dubois (1998), 28.

² Boia (1998), 40-41.

³ Boia (1998), 39.

⁴ Lévi-Strauss (1958), 232.

⁵ Eliade (1963), 15.

myth is told, the sacred time of the events narrated in the myth is, in a sense, brought back to life⁶. The act of narrating the myth and thereby ritually re-enacting it has the effect of suspending historical time and enabling the individual to transcend time and space⁷.

Myths occupied a well-defined place in the life of traditional societies, as anthropologists have shown. By contrast, modern societies have banished mythical thought as a matter of principle, but proved unable to do away with myths completely. Cornelius Castoriadis pointed out that no society can survive without symbolic constructs that can give meaning to its social life. For Castoriadis, Western society, modern and postmodern, seems to exhibit to an even greater degree the work of the social imaginary, at once instituted and instituting (that is to say, itself structured by existing historical factors while at the same time structuring the emergence of novel practices and ideas)⁸. Even in the guise of ideological and nationalist narratives, myths preserve their status as fundamental beliefs that can confer meaning upon the imagined destiny of the community.

Scholars have found that the myths of our contemporary world are not fundamentally different from the myths of traditional societies. Their content is equally fluid, their contours are similarly ambiguous, and they display the same openness to different cultural influences⁹. As an integral part of the social imaginary, political, national, and identity myths give access to a system of interpretation and a

model of social conduct¹⁰. They build creatively on a narrative core so as to meet the demands for making sense of the world, and buttressing social identities¹¹. They provide communities and individuals with interpretive schemes for making sense of their microcosm¹².

Among the roles filled by myths in modern and postmodern society a few are worth highlighting: as tools for self-definition and identity transfer, as agents of social cohesion, as vehicles for the transmission of cultural and ideological values, and as legitimizing narratives for various political movements and regimes¹³.

Myths truly come to life when they are rooted in a shared collective memory. This shared memory of historical events and characters might even be viewed as a precondition for the successful transmission and implantation of myths. This living memory of places, characters, and events plays the key role in the genesis, diffusion, and persistence of myths. Doubtless political and cultural myths are imagined constructs, but they start (in most cases) from real historical facts which are reworked and fed into a discourse aimed at building social cohesion.

Political and national myths are closely tied to the processes of historical remembrance and historical amnesia, which are vital in the life of any community¹⁴.

The articles collected in the current issue of *MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of*

⁶ Eliade (1994), 70-71.

⁷ Eliade (1963), 18.

⁸ Castoriadis (1975), 174-248.

⁹ Girardet (1997), 6.

¹⁰ Boia (1998), 40-41.

¹¹ Bottici, Challand (2013), 91.

¹² Boia (1998).

¹³ Schöpflin (1997), 22-26.

¹⁴ Nora (1984), XV-XXIV.

Memory and Identity Studies, provide a fresh perspective on various topics related to myth, memory and identity. The majority of these essays investigate the construction, cultural significance, and socio-political functions of an array of European political and cultural myths in the last century.

These contributions analyse the complex process whereby myths became part of the cultural memory of a society, as well as the role of myths in the political and social life of the region. They focus on a number of case studies illustrating the problematic interplay between memory and myths in creating national/local identities. They show that myths were often instrumental in the vast projects of social and political mobilisation as well as in transmitting new ideas and in changing dominant paradigms.

The articles gathered in this issue emphasize the heuristic value of myths, as well as their importance in constructing and deconstructing broad historical, cultural, social or narrative paradigms. They have an immediate contribution to the understanding of the imaginary universe in which communities, societies, nations and even individuals operate at different times and in different cultural areas.

References:

- Bottici, Ch., B. Challand. 2013. *Imagining Europe. Myth, Memory, Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dubois, Cl. G. 1998. 'Introduction; II. Les modes de classification des mythes', in J. Thomas (ed.). 1998. *Introduction aux méthodologies de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Ellipses.
- Lévi-Strauss, Cl. 1958. *Anthropologie structurale*. Paris : Plon.
- Castoriadis, C. 1975. *L'institution imaginaire de la société*. Paris: Seuil.
- Schöpflin, G. 1997. 'The functions of myths and a taxonomy of myths', in G. Hosking, G. Schöpflin (eds.). 1997. *Myths and Nationhood*. New York, London : Routledge.
- Boia, L. 1998. *Pour une histoire de l'imaginaire*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Eliade, M. 1963. *Aspects du mythe*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Eliade, M. 1994. *Imagini și simboluri* (Images and Symbols). Bucharest: Humanitas.
- Nora, P. 1984. *Les lieux de memoire*. Paris: Gallimard, vol. 1.
- Girardet, R. 1997. *Mituri și mitologii politice* (Myths and Political Mythologies). Iași: Institutul European.

CLAUDIA-FLORENTINA DOBRE

Claudia-Florentina Dobre has a Ph.D. in History from Laval University, Québec. She is the director of the Centre for Memory and Identity Studies (CSMI) and an associate researcher at 'Nicolae Iorga' History Institute of Bucharest. Most recent publications: Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Cristian-Emilian Ghiță (eds.). 2017. *Quest for a Suitable Past: Myth and Memory in Eastern and Central Europe*. Budapest-New York: CEU Press; Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Valeriu Antonovici (eds.). 2016. *Prezentul comunismului: memorie culturală și abordări istoriografice* (Communism into Present: Cultural Memory and Historiographical Approaches). Oradea: Ratio et Revelatio.

LUCIAN BOIA

Oldness, Unity and Continuity: Romanian Historical Mythology

Abstract:

Contemporary Romania is unitary, as the patriots who brought about the Unions of 1859 and 1918 desired. This was the result of a historical process of gradual rapprochement of the various components of the Romanian people and the creation of a common culture, based on a language which is clearly unitary, the Romanian language. Post-communist Romania inherited to a large extent the national-communist ideology. 'Oldness', 'unity', and 'continuity', this historiographic triptych which had become the dogma of Communist times seems to have grown deep roots, both among professional historians and among the wider public. This mythology of historical unity and continuity was and still is an obstacle to historical research, often distorting it.

Keywords: Oldness, Unity, Continuity, Romanian Historical Mythology, Historians, Historical Figures

Introduction: The Creation of Greater Romania

In the early 20th century, two great projects stood before Romanian society: on the one hand, the modernisation of the country, whose development was still noticeably behind that of Western nations, and on the other, the unification of the Romanian nation, by bringing together all Romanians in one state. In its 1914 borders, Romania covered less than half of the territory where Romanians were the majority. Bessarabia – the eastern half of Moldova – had been annexed by Russia in 1812. Earlier still, in 1775, the Habsburg Empire had annexed northern Moldova, which would thereafter be called Bukovina. As for Transylvania, it and its neighbouring regions (Banat, Crişana, and Maramureş)

had been a part of the Hungarian kingdom since around 1000; later, they were incorporated into the Habsburg Empire and, eventually, after the dualist compromise in 1867, into the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

The start of World War I in 1914 focused the attention of the Romanian political class and public opinion on finding the best solution for bringing the foreign-ruled provinces within the borders of Romania. King Carol I (1866-1914) wanted the country to immediately enter the war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, not only due to his German origin (as member of the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen dynasty), but also due to his conviction that it was in Romania's interest to remain an ally of the Central Powers. Despite the great prestige he had earned in 48 years of glorious reign, he was opposed by most politicians, who supported neutrality; shortly after, the

King died and was followed by his brother's son, Ferdinand (1914-1927).

From 1914 to 1916, Romania remained neutral. However, being neutral seemed not to be a permanent option. On the one side, the 'Germanophiles' warned against the Russian danger and considered that, by fighting against Russia and alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary, Romanians could retrieve Bessarabia. The 'Ententophiles' were more numerous and more influential. They relied on the sympathy of public opinion towards France (for a long time, Romanians were Europe's most Francophile nation!) and promised to obtain Transylvania and Bukovina if their side won – which meant, from all points of view, a lot more than Bessarabia. The Government led by Ion I.C. (Ionel) Brătianu (1864-1927), one of Romania's most remarkable statesmen, pushed events in this latter direction. Romania signed a treaty with the Allies, securing very advantageous territorial clauses, and, on the 27th of August 1916, declared war against Austria-Hungary.

The 1916 campaign ended in disaster. Romania couldn't stand against the combined German and Austro-Hungarian attack on the Carpathian front and the Bulgarian offensive (also supported by Germany) along the Danube and in Dobruja. The entire southern part of the country, including Bucharest, was occupied, and the military, the Government, the royal family and many other Romanians found refuge in Moldova. Reorganised with the help of a French military mission, the Romanian army, also supported (without great enthusiasm) by its Russian ally, succeeded the performance of holding out on the Moldovan front throughout 1917.

The Russian Revolution, the anarchy which took over the country, and its eventual withdrawal from the war left the Romanian front undefended. The Romanians were forced to sign a separate peace of their own, in May 1918, under extremely dire conditions: Romania would lose Dobruja and (to Austria-Hungary) almost the entire arc of the Carpathian Mountains. However, Russia's defeat and the dissolution of its empire freed Bessarabia, which was united with Romania in March 1918. Also, a few months later, the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary, apart from striking the separate peace treaty null, allowed Romania to bring the other two provinces, Transylvania and Bukovina, within its borders. One might say that Romania lost the war, but won the peace – won it twice, in fact, both against Russia and against Austria-Hungary. It was a stunning stroke of historical luck which opened up a future – as far as the national project was concerned – beyond the most optimistic expectations.

Thus, the pre-war 'Lesser Romania' became, at the end of the war, 'Greater Romania'. The country more than doubled its territory and surface area. The former Kingdom of 1914 covered 137.000 sq km, while Greater Romania had 295.000 sq km. According to the 1912 census, the country's population at the time exceeded seven million by only a little; by 1930, the number had reached eighteen million. Greater Romania could be considered the complete fulfilment of the national project, as it practically covered the entire territory inhabited by a Romanian majority and, in places, even exceeded it: In southern Dobruja, known as the Cadrilater – annexed by Romania from Bulgaria in 1913, after the Second Balkan War – Romanians were a

minority by far; the same is true of northern Bukovina and southern Bessarabia, as well as of eastern Transylvania (the very core of Greater Romania), where the Hungarian Székelys were the majority in several counties. What is certain is that, with the almost complete unification of the Romanian nation, an important percentage of minorities had also come within the borders of Greater Romania. In Transylvania (as well as Banat, Crișana, and Maramureș), in 1930, Romanians constituted almost 58% of the population, Hungarians – over 24%, and Germans – almost 10%. In Bukovina, Romanians made up 44.5% of the population, Ukrainians – 27.7%, Jews – 10.8%, and Germans – almost 10%. In Bessarabia, 56.2% of inhabitants were Romanian, 12.3% – Russian, 11% – Ukrainian, 7.2% – Jews...

On a countrywide average, Romanians made up 71.9% of the population, and minorities (probably the most varied range of minorities in all of Europe) accounted for 28.1%. The territorial losses suffered after World War II (Southern Dobruja, taken back by Bulgaria in 1940, and most importantly Bessarabia and the northern half of Bukovina, annexed by the U.S.S.R.) reduced the country's territory from 295.000 sq km to 238.000 sq km; most of Bessarabia is now, after the fall of the Soviet empire, the Republic of Moldova. The minority population was also reduced, first by the loss of said territories, then by the extermination of a great number of Jews during the war and, during the following Communist regime, by massive emigration, particularly in the case of Jews and Germans.

Currently, ethnic Romanians make up about 90% of the country's population.¹⁵

Historical Symbols: The Past as a Foreshadowing of the Future

Though Romania, formed in 1859 through the unification of two principalities – Țara Românească and Moldova, later joined by Dobruja, in 1878, and Transylvania, Bukovina and Bessarabia in 1918 –, is a relatively young state, the Romanian historical consciousness sees the contours of the future Greater Romania sketched as early as the Antiquity.

Greater Romania had first and foremost an ethnic justification, as Romanians were the majority population in most of the territories which constituted – then and now – the Romanian state. Nevertheless, Romanians felt the need, in the spirit of the national ideology of the 19th century, to consolidate their 'natural right' with the aid of the 'historical right', which carried equal weight.¹⁶ In other words, even if 'Romania' did not exist before 1859, the historical Romanian space was considered to have existed since Antiquity. Over two thousand years ago, ancient Dacia was thought to cover the exact same space as Greater Romania. The Dacians are considered to be the ancestors of Romanians, who left Romania as inheritance to their Romanian descendants.

It is therefore no wonder that around the middle of the 19th century, when Romania did not yet exist, Dacia appears very often in the national discourse of

¹⁵ Boia (2016).

¹⁶ For the mythological dimension of Romanian history, see Boia (1997) (2001) (2017).

Romanian patriots, for example in the titles of important periodicals, such as *Dacia literară* (Literary Dacia), edited in Iași by Mihail Kogălniceanu in 1840, or *Magazin istoric pentru Dacia* (Historical Magazine for Dacia), edited in Bucharest by August Treboniu Laurian and Nicolae Bălcescu between 1845 and 1848. The simple utterance of the word ‘Dacia’ summarised an entire national programme, which urged all Romanians living on the territory of ancient Dacia to unite.

Foreshadowing the unified Romania, Dacia itself had to appear as a unified territory, which in point of fact it had never been and could not have been: rather, it was a space populated by tribes, not a national state! The two tribes which occupied the current territory of Romania and about whom we have some information were the Dacians, centred in Transylvania, and the Getae, who lived along the Danube and in Dobrogea. With his claim that the Dacians and the Getae spoke the same language, the famous ancient geographer Strabo lent a hand to the national Romanian mythology. As they spoke the same language, they must have been the same people. Moreover, their geographical position is clearly established – from the Dniester to the Tisa, the exact same extent as Greater Romania.

Even Vasile Pârvan, who was certainly a first-class historian and an extremely influential personality, allowed himself to fall into the trap of identifying Dacia with Greater Romania. In his view, the Geto-Dacians were “a nation of peasants: settled, steadfast, obedient and respectful of their god, plagued by their neighbours with endless wars and pillage; turned wild themselves by their lawless acts, they were

nevertheless jolly and jesting in times of peace, angry and cruel only in war; normally endowed with common sense and always returning to their ancient optimistic belief in gods and humans”¹⁷.

How did Pârvan know all this? It is, evidently, a projection on the Dacians of an idealised image of the Romanian peasant! Pârvan continues: “Dacia was a great kingdom, with a perfectly homogenous ethnic base, with secular historical traditions, with a well-defined social and economic structure, with an advanced culture influenced at first by Celtic forms and then, two centuries prior to Trajan, by the Roman civilisation. Here, there were not simply a certain number of barbarian tribes with a greater or lesser population occupying a vast territory and lacking any sort of political or national cohesion, but rather a self-conscious nation.”¹⁸

I believe no further comment is necessary. Dacia, a national state?! The anachronism is obvious.

Alongside Dacia, the second great symbol, of Romanian unity and continuity is Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) who ruled Wallachia between 1593 and 1601. Having conquered Transylvania (in 1599) and Moldavia (in 1600), he unified – albeit for a very short time – almost the whole of the Romanian territory, or rather leaves us with the impression that he may have unified it. Sometime around the middle of the 19th century, the Wallachian ruler became the symbolic figure of national unity. Nicolae Bălcescu’s book, *Istoria românilor sub Mihai Vodă Viteazul* (The History of Romanians under Prince Michael the Brave) was written between 1847 and 1852. It was left unfinished upon the author’s death, was

¹⁷ Pârvan (1926), 173.

¹⁸ Pârvan (1972), 150-151.

published in 1878 and reprinted in numerous editions, being probably the most widely read Romanian history book. It refers explicitly to the national significance of the actions of the protagonist, who allegedly had wanted to create "a state spanning the whole of the Romanian land". This, despite the fact that Transylvania was a Hungarian rather than a Romanian state (the ruling elite was Hungarian, while Romanian peasants, although in all likelihood the majority population, mattered little in the context of that age). Moldova was not Romanian either, in the sense that it had its own identity, separate from Wallachia: the inhabitants called themselves Moldovans rather than Romanians. Therefore, at the time, Mihai Viteazul couldn't possibly envisage a Greater Romania. Nevertheless, he became posthumously, in the historical-political imaginary of Romanians, an essential symbol of the fight for unity. In other words, the prince did not create Greater Romania in 1600, but contributed posthumously to its creation in 1859 and 1918, through the force of the imaginary.

When history became professionalised, at the end of the 19th century and during the interwar period, national interpretations became far more nuanced. Even the most fiercely nationalistic historians had to concede that during the Middle Ages there could be no manifestations of an awareness of national unity among Romanians. In so far as Mihai Viteazul was concerned, during the interwar years, even school manuals admit the lack of a national unity programme. Some historians, such as Petre P. Panaitescu were clear about this; others, such as Nicolae Iorga and Constantin C. Giurescu, embraced a

more nuanced approach, but even they refrained from identifying a national idea. This is what Nicolae Iorga wrote about the relation that Mihai Viteazul had with Transylvania: "He saw that this too was a Romanian state, with villages inhabited by Romanians, even without having clearly in mind, as we do today, the idea of national unity, for which that age was not fully prepared. He thought he could rule as prince over the Romanian villages here, just like he ruled over the Romanian villages back in his own principality." He had this to say about the Moldovans: "The conquest of Moldova happened quickly, but we must not imagine that the Moldovans were in any sense happy about it. At the time, as we well know, each country was accustomed to living in accordance with its own customs, having its own ancient dynasty... Thus, many of Ieremia Movilă's subjects regarded the arrival of Mihai, not as that of a braver, more capable and more glorious Romanian ruler, meaning to accomplish national unity within the borders of the same political entity, but rather as that of a foreign invader, ambitious and restless, who troubled the countries in his vicinity."¹⁹ (It is, however, extraordinary how much energy was spent to explain, in the most roundabout fashion, that the inhabitants of Moldova identified as Moldovans and not as Romanians!).

C.C. Giurescu's nationalism cannot be questioned either. Nevertheless, in his well-known synthesis *Istoria Românilor* (The History of Romanians), the Romanian principalities were dealt with separately and they are not covered equally. Thus, for the period between the 15th and the 16th centuries, Moldova receives 48% of the total number of pages, Wallachia 41%, while

¹⁹ Iorga (1993) (1935), 290-292, 294.

Transylvania only 11%. Why so little about Transylvania? Obviously, the reason (even though not explicitly stated) is that the history of this province is not strictly speaking Romanian, but rather is shared between Romanians and Hungarians.

Nor did Ioan Lupaş, probably the most important Transylvanian historian of the interwar period, believe in the unity of the Romanian space since time immemorial. In his opinion, unity was a steady process, each age taking one step further. As for the year 1600, his conclusion was perfectly clear: "In 1600, when the three Romanian principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania came to be ruled together by Mihai Viteazul, it was the very lack of a common sense of identity that made this Romanian rule so short-lived."²⁰

Romanian Past according to Communists

In its first phase, 'internationalist' and anti-national, the Communist regime attempted to eliminate completely the traditional interpretations of Romanian history. Up until communism, the most important historical factor was deemed to be the nation; as soon as communism took over, that factor became the 'class struggle'. The tone was set by the famous manual edited by Mihail Roller, first published in 1947, entitled *Istoria României* (The History of Romania (up until that point, historians preferred the phrase *The History of Romanians*) while subsequent editions (the last one was in 1957) bore the title *Istoria R.P.R.* (The History of R.P.R.) (The

abbreviation stood for Romanian People's Republic, the new communist name of the country). Searching for any Romanian motivation in Mihai Viteazul's actions was completely out of the question. Everything was explained through class struggle and relations with neighbouring powers, most importantly the Habsburgs: "Mihai Viteazul has been used by the Habsburg Empire to conquer Transylvania for the Austrians. The voivode [Romanian: 'prince' or 'ruler'] Mihai has become the governor of this province, and was considered the representative of Emperor Rudolf II, who deemed Transylvania an Austrian province."²¹ Therefore, the prince who succeeded in uniting the principalities had allegedly not fought for Romanians, but rather for the Austrians.

Even more curious is the fact that in Roller's vision even the Union of 1859 (the founding moment of Romania) has no national dimension. The interpretation goes again along the lines of class struggle: "The idea of uniting Moldavia and Wallachia in a single state emerged at the same time as capitalism, which needed a well-organised state, with a larger internal market. The developing Romanian bourgeoisie was seeing its interests threatened by the Turkish yoke... The highest ranking nobles were against the union, as they occupied the top positions in the state apparatus and feared that, after the union, these positions would be taken by the bourgeois. Following the Union," the manual continues, "it was only the bourgeois elements and the commercial nobility who profited, and not the large popular masses."²²

²⁰ Lupaş (1937), 43.

²¹ Roller (1952), 230.

²² Roller (1952), 367.

As for the creation of Greater Romania in 1918, it was framed strictly in the context of Romania's participation in an 'imperialist' war. The union with Bessarabia was described under the title 'The imperialist intervention against the socialist revolution in Russia', while Transylvania and the symbolic day of December 1st were integrated in a subchapter entitled 'The counter-revolutionary intervention in Hungary'²³.

The communist regime in Romania had two phases which in certain ways are nothing alike. The virulent anti-nationalism of the first phase was followed by a rehabilitation of the nation and national culture, ending in extreme nationalism, every bit as excessive as the nationalism espoused by the extreme right Legion in the interwar period. This shift from 'internationalism' to 'nationalism' can be observed everywhere in the communist world but the range of expressions, from one extreme to the other, as encountered in Romania is something quite unique in communist countries (at least in Europe).

Roller's posthumous destiny is, in a sense, ironic. He wanted to terminate Romanian nationalism once and forever, but he only succeeded in exacerbating it. His radical and absurd anti-nationalism could only be annihilated by an equally radical and absurd nationalism!

Delighted to be rid of Roller and his theories, Romanians received all the more easily the brand of nationalism peddled by the Ceaușescu regime, considering it a sort of normality, without realising that it was just as deceitful and manipulative as history had been in Roller's interpretation. Moreover, this national-communist interpretation had

the advantage of borrowing a lot from pre-communist history. As it were, Romanians were taught to find their country anew. And, anyway, it is far more agreeable to feel proud of one's past (even at the cost of considerable distortions) than seeing it in an unfavourable light.

From about 1958 until the end of 1989, nationalism grew incessantly. Initially, interpretations were more prudent and appeared to be no more than a natural recovery of the national past. Thus on January 24th 1959, the Union of the Principalities – or, more precisely, a century since the momentous creation of Romania through the union in a single state of Moldavia and Wallachia – was celebrated for the first time during the communist regime. At this time, the interpretation of the event no longer had a restrictive connotation: the union was no longer seen as the self-serving act of the bourgeoisie, but rather as an act of will of the entire nation.

When Nicolae Ceaușescu took over the power (in 1965), nationalist interpretations amplified and became more strident with each passing year. It was no longer deemed sufficient that the Romanian space had united in recent history, it had to be portrayed as having been united forever, since the origins. And it could not have united in any sort of fashion – the fusion had to be such that not even the slightest regional particularity was tolerated. It is obvious that this absolute unification defines a manipulative strategy, but which eventually proved efficient and durable. At stake was not the past but rather the present. Allegedly, Romanians had always been united under their great leaders. Therefore, they had to be even more so in the

²³ Roller (1952), 525-529.

communist present, around the Party and particularly around the 'beloved leader', Ceaușescu (from a certain moment onwards, also around the dictator's wife, Elena Ceaușescu).

This is the rationale behind the great pomp which marked the 2050th anniversary since the foundation of the 'unitary and centralised' Dacian state, under the leadership of Burebista, celebrated in 1980. From the beginning, the timeframe is laughable: what sort of a milestone is 2050 years?! Besides, there is no concrete information which might have allowed us to pinpoint the year when the Dacian state was created. Nevertheless, Ceaușescu needed Burebista, as the Dacian king symbolised the beginning of a historical process that the communist dictator allegedly brought to completion.

A historian who specialised in the study of Dacians painted an interesting portrait of Burebista, seen a leader who was "animated by the burning desire to uplift his nation. It was to the nation that he dedicated his entire activity, both internally and externally, throughout his life."²⁴ In order to make any sense of this phrase, one should read 'Ceaușescu' instead of Burebista!

The age of Ceaușescu was, in a sense, also the golden age of Dacian studies. Under the patronage of Ilie Ceaușescu, the dictator's brother, who was a general and also a historian, a number of party-affiliated historians attempted to paint the Dacians as the only ancestors of Romanians. One of them even suggested changing the name of the country from Romania to Dacia! Romanians thus became a sort of Dacians and Dacians a sort of Romanians, making the unity and continuity of Romanian history

shine brightly. Professional historians remained, nevertheless within the limits of the traditional view of ethnogenesis, which stated that Romanians emerged from the coalescence of autochthonous Dacians and Roman colonists settled in Dacia after its conquest by the emperor Trajan.

At any rate, the story of the formation of the Romanian people starts to omit the Slavic element, which had been given exceptional importance in Roller's time, for obvious political reasons, having to do with the friendship towards the Soviet Union (beyond any sort of mythology, the Slavic component was fairly important, both in the formation of the Romanian language and in medieval Romanian culture).

The great test of Romanian unity and continuity was in the context of the 'dark millennium', the huge historical void stretching from the Roman withdrawal from Dacia, towards the end of the 3rd century AD, and the creation of the first Romanian political entities around the middle of the 13th century. As information is totally insufficient, this leaves place for any sort of scenario regarding the formation of the Romanian language and the Romanian people, as well as their historical trajectory.

The communist regime had historians and particularly archaeologists working hard to demonstrate Romanian continuity also during the dark millennium. This was in opposition with the migratory theory, which found much support among Hungarians and which postulated that Romanians had their origin some place outside their current territory. However, ethnic continuity was not considered sufficient, and they also needed to demonstrate political continuity, which tied

²⁴ Crișan (1977), 495.

Dacia to Roman Dacia and to medieval Romanian states.

The political manifesto of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) of 1975 opens with a substantial historical excursus (which was meant to demonstrate that the PCR had inherited and integrated the entire political history of the country). In it, the authors used an astonishing term to bind together Romanians throughout the 'dark millennium'. Following the Roman withdrawal, Romanians allegedly continued to live in a 'disorganised state'. A 'disorganised state'! The phrase is striking, given that, by definition, the state presupposes organisation; a disorganised state is simply a non-existent state.

After 1980, during the last decade of communism, the discourse about national unity (always centred on the 'dear leader') reached peaks that are hard to imagine in a reasonably normal society. Amidst rapidly deteriorating living conditions, what could the regime offer people apart from a substantial serving of nationalism? Nationalism was supposed to mitigate both the cold and the hunger.

The unitary treatment of the whole Romanian past was the mantra of the day. Regional history was sacrificed on the altar of unity – the historical regions were completely disregarded. At most, there were in use phrases such as 'Romanians in the South-West of the country', instead of 'Romanians from Banat'. When in Budapest a book appeared about the history of Transylvania, written obviously from a Hungarian perspective, Romanian historians could not react, because in Romanian historiography Transylvania did not exist (any longer)! The only thing that existed was Romania!

Even for the Middle Ages, there was an attempt at re-baptising the three principalities: Wallachia became 'The Romanian Principality of Wallachia', Moldova was called 'The Romanian Principality of Moldova', and Transylvania was, obviously, 'The Romanian Principality of Transylvania'. The peak of ridicule was reached when this forced unification reached the weather forecast as well. Suddenly, it stopped raining in Moldova or snowing in Transylvania. Rain and snow now fell over the North, South, East or West, as the cardinal directions replaced the names of regions.

Post-communist Historical Mythology

Post-communist Romania inherited to a large extent the national-communist ideology. 'Oldness', 'unity', and 'continuity', this historiographic triptych which had become the dogma of Communist times seems to have grown deep roots, both among professional historians and among the wider public. It is worth noticing that lately, the 'Dacian-centric' view has expanded to such a degree that to some it has become a national religion. According to this view of things, every European people and culture originates on the territory of modern Romania, in pre-historic Dacia.

The vitality of the mythological triptych was recently demonstrated when the US Ambassador in Chişinău declared that the Republic of Moldova has its own identity because, at least from a certain moment onwards, its history differed from that of Romania. How could the Republic of Moldova, i.e. Bessarabia, have its own history, when it is well known (didn't the Communists teach us so?) that there is only

one Romanian history. Only a handful of intellectuals dared side with the American Ambassador. As a matter of fact, the diplomat was entirely correct. The South of Bessarabia was annexed by the Ottoman Empire as early as the 15th-16th centuries and there, Romanians became a minority. Then, in 1812, the whole of Bessarabia was annexed by the Empire of the Tsars. In 1856, the southern part was handed back to Moldova and became a part of Romania but was occupied again by the Russians in 1878. In 1918, taking advantage of the breaking up of the Tsarist Empire, Bessarabia reunited with the Kingdom of Romania. In 1940, it was annexed again by Russia, which had become in the meantime the Soviet Union. It would gain independence in 1991, when the USSR collapsed.

It is important to clarify that the Republic of Moldova we see today is not identical to historical Bessarabia, but identical with the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic, as determined following the annexation of 1940, when the North and the South were handed to Ukraine and it received in compensation a sliver of land beyond the river Dniester (Transnistria).

It is plainly clear that, with the exception of the interwar period, Bessarabia had a completely different history than the principality of Moldova, from which it had been separated in 1812, and after 1859, a different history from Romania. Separated from the Romanian space, it remained until 1918 outside the space where the Romanian nation formed. On the contrary, it suffered

Russian colonisation and, in general, a process of Russification.

In the imaginary of many Romanians, 'Bessarabia is Romania' (a graffito which may be seen written on many walls), in reality Bessarabia is not Romania. It is a country which has a lot in common with Romania – first and foremost the Romanian language – , but which at the same time exhibits many differences (a substantial Russian influence in culture). According to polls, less than a quarter of the population of Bessarabia desires to unify with Romania. This is, after all, the result of two centuries of separate history²⁵.

Also, the other regions which make up Romania had different histories, starting even with Wallachia and Moldavia, the principalities around which the modern Romanian state was created. From our modern perspective, Stephen the Great was a Romanian voivode. However, from his own perspective, he was a Moldavian. There existed, up until the 19th century, a Moldavian identity (and, obviously, a Wallachian one as well). In the 17th century, the two greatest Moldavian chroniclers, Grigore Ureche and Miron Costin, knew full well that Romanians had a common origin and all spoke the same language, but, as Moldavians, they never speak about 'the Romanian language' or 'Romanians', but rather about the 'Moldavian language' and the 'nation of the Moldavians'.

The history of Transylvania was even more radically different. It was a province where the majority of the population was Romanian, but the ruling elite was

²⁵ The most recent poll, from 2017, indicates that only 24% of the population favours union with Romania:

https://deschide.md/ro/stiri/politic/12145/SO_NDAJ-LRP-IMAS--UNIREA-%C8%99i-

[NATO-c%C3%A2%C8%99tig%C4%83-teren-%C3%AEEn-Republica-Moldova.htm](https://www.nato.int/docu/press/2017/p170312.htm),
retrieved November 2017.

Hungarian. Unlike Wallachia and Moldavia, Ardeal was a multi-ethnic territory, with three main ethnicities: Romanians, Hungarians and Germans. As a Principality, it was part of Hungary for four centuries and when Hungary disappeared from the map, becoming an Ottoman province, the autonomous princes of Transylvania considered themselves the continuators of the Crown of Saint Stephen.

Finally, Dobrogea had a completely different history and, with the exception of a period during the rule of Mircea cel Bătrân (1368-1418), was never part of a Romanian state before 1878. It belonged to the Byzantine Empire and later to the Ottoman Empire. In 1878, Romanians were a minority in Dobrogea, far fewer than Turks and Tatars.

It is plain to see that Romanians do not have, as mythology would have it, a unitary history, but obviously an evolution from fragmentation towards unity. This is not an obstacle for many Romanian historians (and many Romanians in general) to fly in the face of evidence and claim the unitary character of the Romanian history. Contemporary Romania is, indeed, unitary, as the patriots who brought about the Unions of 1859 and 1918 desired. This was the result of a historical process of gradual rapprochement of the various components of the Romanian people and the creation of a common culture, based on a language which is clearly unitary, the Romanian language.

References:

Boia, L. 1997/2017. *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească*. Bucharest: Humanitas; English version *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*. 2001. Budapest-New-York: CEU Press.

Boia, L. 2016. *Wie Rumänien rumänisch wurde*. Berlin: Frank und Timme.

Crișan, I. H. 1977. *Burebista și epoca sa* (Burebista and his epoch). 2nd edition. Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică.

Iorga, N. 1993/1935. *Istoria românilor pentru poporul românesc* (The History of Romanians for Romanian People). Vol. 1. Bucharest: Minerva.

Lupaș, I. 1937. *Istoria unirii românilor* (The History of the unity of Romanians). Bucharest: Fundația culturală regală Principele Carol.

Pârvan, V. 1972. *Dacia*. 5th edition. Bucharest: Editura Științifică.

Pârvan, V. 1926. *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei* (Getika. A proto-history of Dacia). Bucharest: Romanian Academy Series.

Roller, M. 1952. *Istoria R.P.R.* (History of the Romania's People Republic). Bucharest: Editura de stat didactică și pedagogică.

Lucian Boia is the author of numerous works, published in France and Romania (translated in numerous languages), devoted in particular to the history of ideas and imagination. In Romania, his works have had a resounding success, especially *Istorie și mit în conștiința românească* (History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness) (1997/2017), which offers Romanians a completely new look at their history, and *De ce e România altfel?* (Why is Romania different?) (2012), a historical analysis of the Romanian specificity.

CÉCILE D'ALBIS

Le mythe de Grenade et les fêtes civico-religieuses (xvi^e-xviii^e siècles)**Abstract**

Granada, conquered by the Catholic Kings Isabella and Ferdinand in 1492, constructed an image of itself as the 'mythical city'. To anchor itself within the Hispanic kingdoms, establish the autochthony of its new inhabitants, and finally organize its relations to the modern State, the city gradually developed crossed narratives, in which the oral character challenges the intellectual speech. To understand the background and the weft of these narratives during the Early-Modern times, we analyse the main elements which compose the 'myth' of Granada over time.

Keywords: Granada, urban myth, civic-religious celebrations, martyrdom, autochthony

Grenade, tout comme Venise ou encore Alexandrie, pour prendre des exemples méditerranéens, est ce que l'on appelle communément une « ville mythique ». La spécificité des villes mythiques réside peut-être en ce que, en les arpentant, on ne peut s'empêcher d'avoir la vision troublée par des télescopages entre l'imaginaire des lieux, le présent et une vision globale et stéréotypée des événements passés. Quelques décennies après la chute de Constantinople aux mains des Ottomans en 1453, la conquête de Grenade par les Rois Catholiques Isabelle et Ferdinand en 1492 représenta en effet un véritable tournant symbolique et épistémologique dans l'histoire européenne. Grenade témoigne de la présence et de la défaite d'un Islam conquérant et baroque dans les limites de l'Europe, dans un autrefois qui nous semble d'un autre monde. Elle atteste aussi de l'existence et de l'achèvement d'un pénible conflit intérieur qui a contribué à construire l'Europe et la Méditerranée telles que nous les connaissons.

Mon propos en évoquant cette perception extérieure et construite de « ville mythique » à propos de Grenade est justement de situer et de définir les éléments de cette construction et de tenter d'en comprendre la chronologie, les motivations politiques, en examinant de l'intérieur la manière dont la ville vit avec le poids de sa légende. La succession des célébrations civico-religieuses, étudiées sur les trois siècles des temps dits modernes, les récits locaux, où les célébrations tiennent un rôle majeur, ou les traces iconographiques et architecturales nous offrent autant de lectures locales sur la manière dont la ville s'est appropriée et a pu faire vivre et évoluer cette mémoire dans un contexte en évolution. Ces expressions, forcément officielles et orientées, se confrontent dans l'espace toujours vivant qu'est la fête, où elles sont réinterprétées. Une telle analyse nous montre aussi que Grenade, comme les autres villes hispaniques modernes, cherche avant tout à se conformer au même grand schéma politique et mémoriel, qui fonde l'unité idéologique des royaumes hispaniques à l'époque moderne.

Je commencerai par expliquer pourquoi il me semble utile d'avoir recours au terme de mythe dans ce contexte, afin d'approcher l'histoire de la ville et son appropriation locale sur la longue durée et pourquoi les fêtes civico-religieuses constituent une source particulièrement riche pour entreprendre l'étude des mythes collectifs urbains à l'époque moderne. Je m'arrêterai ensuite sur les principaux éléments qui constituent le mythe de Grenade depuis 1492 jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle, en insistant sur les points de rupture et d'évolution du récit collectif provoqués par les crises et les bouleversements politiques et sociétaux²⁶.

Les fêtes civico-religieuses et le mythe urbain à l'époque moderne

Dans les territoires hispaniques de l'époque moderne, la vie urbaine s'organise largement autour des célébrations. Parmi elles, les fêtes organisées par les autorités locales, civiles et ecclésiastiques s'adressent à la population à la fois en tant que Civitas (communauté des citoyens) et Ecclesia (assemblée des fidèles). Les fêtes civico-religieuses déploient la fierté et la conscience de l'appartenance civique, les liens de la communauté avec la *communitas* élargie du royaume et avec l'éternité idéalisée de son ordre social et politique²⁷. Elles se prolongent dans les préoccupations des autorités, les conflits juridiques de préséance, les

chroniques festives et les histoires locales. Ces célébrations faites de processions, de fonctions liturgiques et rituelles ou encore de jeux allégoriques, mettent en scène et confirment les légendes locales, qui soutiennent elles-mêmes les privilèges de la ville confrontée à l'intrusion grandissante de l'administration et des symboles royaux²⁸. L'étude des célébrations, qui entrecroise les sources et cherche à décrypter les motivations des acteurs, le sens du spectacle, tel qu'il peut échapper à l'instrumentalisation politique immédiate, nous offre de nombreux renseignements sur l'organisation de la vie urbaine, mais aussi sur les raisons et la manière dont la communauté choisit de se mettre en scène pour elle-même et pour le monde extérieur²⁹. Lorsque l'on entreprend l'étude de ces sources festives sur une longue période, il est possible en effet d'isoler des thèmes récurrents et des références symboliques transmis de génération en génération. On constate qu'autour de thèmes centraux, qui constituent un noyau dur qui demeure à peu près inchangé au cours du temps, le récit dans son ensemble évolue en fonction du contexte, et se trouve particulièrement influencé par les grandes ruptures historiques. Certains thèmes disparaissent, d'autres trouvent une vitalité nouvelle, actualisant ainsi un système toujours vivant et créateur.

Pour comprendre et replacer les discours urbains qui transparaissent à travers les célébrations, l'emploi du terme de

²⁶ Cet article a été initialement publié dans *Myth Making and Myth Breaking in History and the Humanities*. Proceedings of the Conference Held at the University of Bucharest, 6-8 October 2011, edited by Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Ionuț Epurescu-Pascovici, Cristian Emilian Ghiță.

²⁷ Grimes (1976); Kempers (1994), 89-136. Sur les liens identitaires entre les villes et le royaume à la fin du Moyen-Âge, voir Rucquoi (2003), 145-166.

²⁸ Althoff (2003). Pour un état des lieux des débats, voir Moeglin (2007), 393-406.

²⁹ Voir Boureau (2006), 25-34.

mythe a plusieurs avantages dans le cadre souvent flou des nombreuses études qui touchent à la mémoire et à l'identité collectives³⁰. Alors qu'ils élevaient d'autres types de narration, le discours historique en particulier, au statut de seul discours crédible, les Grecs rejetèrent le mythos, le discours traditionnel et oral, en tant qu'interprétation valide de la société. Les ethnologues perçurent assez vite toutefois l'intérêt interprétatif des mythes. Mais cet intérêt ne s'est pas appliqué à la culture chrétienne occidentale avant les années 1970 et 1980³¹. Ce n'est donc que tardivement que le mythe s'est trouvé réintroduit dans les sciences sociales, plus seulement pour comprendre les récits collectifs de civilisations lointaines ou de légendes folkloriques dites populaires. Aujourd'hui, l'analyse du mythe comme un phénomène historique, autrement dit un phénomène évolutif, que l'on peut étudier en tant que tel³², cherche à déconstruire l'impasse dans laquelle nous place le présupposé grec, pour tenter de comprendre comment la mémoire fabrique la tradition, la préserve et la transforme en l'acte de transmission, en fonction de l'évolution du système social. Les travaux sur la construction des mémoires, la transmission symbolique, les rituels ou les idéologies ont permis de développer l'emploi du terme de mythe et d'enrichir son horizon³³.

Du point de vue historique, le mythe est donc lié aux évolutions politiques et sociales. Vu qu'il constitue un comportement de communication, il a un lien spécifique avec la fête qui l'exprime et le transforme. La dimension locale y est aussi fondamentale et des contraintes extérieures pèsent autant sur l'un que sur l'autre³⁴. Les fêtes de la Renaissance et de l'âge baroque font appel à des images sacrées, se réfèrent à une antiquité idéalisée et réactivent un fonds de valeurs partagées. À travers l'étude des fêtes d'une ville moderne, on peut aisément voir se formuler et se déconstruire, pour mieux se reconstruire, un mythe qui articule les questions de pouvoir, d'identification et de représentation de la ville.

C'est dans ce sens que le terme de mythe, employé dans un contexte urbain renaissant pour saisir un cadre idéologique fondé sur des images et des références issues de l'Antiquité, a été employé par les historiens et historiens de l'art anglo-saxons depuis les années 1960. Ces chercheurs s'emparaient là d'un terme qui désignait un imaginaire spécifique : lorsque les Britanniques en voyage en Italie au XIX^e siècle parlent du mythe de Florence ou de Venise, ils font référence à un héritage idéalisé, qui transforme leur propre manière d'être Anglais³⁵. Par la suite, la notion de mythe, reprise dans un sens anthropologique, sert à déterminer

³⁰ Sur les problèmes posés par l'interprétation des « lieux de mémoire », les identités collectives et les débats théoriques actuels, voir Pakier (2010) ; François (2010).

³¹ Sur la généalogie du mythe en Occident, voir en particulier Veyne (1983) ; Schmitt (2001).

³² Cardaillac (2001) 107-131 ; Girardet (1986).

³³ Ces dernières années, les travaux qui insistent dans la lignée de la sociologie

pragmatique sur l'action et la prise en compte du rôle des acteurs ont accentué cette perspective. Voir Breviglieri (2009). Sur la question de l'adéquation rythmique entre l'expression discursive de l'action et l'événement historique, voir Koselleck (1989), 308-325.

³⁴ Détienne (1981). Coulomb (2008).

³⁵ Del Vento, Tabet (2006).

l'idéologie et les représentations qui permettaient de comprendre l'architecture, les soubresauts politiques ou les célébrations de villes de la Renaissance, d'abord parce que ces villes se comprenaient elles-mêmes en rapport avec la mythologie antique³⁶.

Le terme de mythe implique donc l'idée d'un discours spécifique sur le passé, c'est une sorte de « lieu de mémoire » en lui-même, qui se transmet et affecte le présent. Autre atout de ce cadre d'analyse, le mythe conserve encore malgré tout le sens généralement admis de « faux discours », ce qui comporte l'avantage de permettre à l'historien de garder une certaine distance par rapport à son objet et à en questionner le sens politique et social à l'intérieur de la communauté envisagée. Enfin, le mythe, ce « discours sans auteur », contient également l'idée d'inconscient, d'incontrôlable, et par là aussi d'émotion et de normativité supérieure, qui sont également des dimensions importantes à considérer dans l'analyse des discours partagés.

Comme les autres villes hispaniques conquises avant elle au cours de la grande geste médiévale de reprise des territoires anciennement wisigoths, Grenade hérite d'un ensemble de références associées à la guerre de conquête.

Le mythe royal

Les Rois Catholiques Isabelle et Ferdinand entrent à Grenade le 6 janvier 1492. Au bout de dix ans de guerre, le dernier bastion musulman de la péninsule hispanique disparaissait pour toujours.

C'était la fin de la grande geste de restauration héroïque de l'Espagne antique, qui avait duré des siècles. L'événement, réalisation d'anciennes prédictions, fut célébré à travers toute l'Europe comme le signe annonciateur de la Parousie, la victoire finale de la foi chrétienne dans le monde et le retour du Christ. Quelques mois plus tard, le succès de l'expédition de Christophe Colomb au nom des Rois Catholiques confirmait l'exceptionnelle faveur divine accordée à l'Espagne, chargée de la mission d'unifier le monde sous la bannière de la foi chrétienne.

Grenade devint naturellement la capitale symbolique de ce projet idéologique dont les rois d'Espagne firent le fondement de leur nouveau pouvoir européen. Cette situation motiva un grand nombre de projets institutionnels, dévotionnels et artistiques prestigieux dans la ville conquise. Les traités de tolérance conclus pour obtenir la reddition pacifique de Grenade, les Capitulations, empêchaient a priori les nouveaux colons de s'approprier la plus grande partie de la ville musulmane³⁷, mais Grenade se trouva pourtant parsemée de signes chrétiens et royaux, depuis la plus haute tour de la forteresse de l'Alhambra jusqu'aux portes de la ville. Grenade était la ville promise, la nouvelle Jérusalem à partir de laquelle les rois allaient conquérir le reste des anciennes colonies romaines de Méditerranée, puis anéantir la menace ottomane et reconquérir les lieux saints. Surtout, Isabelle et Ferdinand décidèrent d'être enterrés dans une chapelle construite à côté de la grande mosquée de la ville transformée en cathédrale. À partir des

³⁶ Sur les modèles antiques des mythes urbains et le lien entre fête, mémoire et identité locale à la Renaissance, voir Trexler (1991 [1980]) ; Muir (1981) ; Fenlon (2007).

³⁷ Quesada (1993).

années 1510, les corps des rois victorieux tinrent la fonction de saints fondateurs et de reliques au pouvoir médiateur au cœur de la ville où s'enracinent le christianisme et le pouvoir castillan.

L'empereur Charles Quint développa encore la position de Grenade à l'intérieur d'un empire dilaté à la dimension européenne. Il transforma en particulier la chapelle personnelle des Rois Catholiques en un panthéon destiné à abriter les membres de la nouvelle dynastie des Habsbourg. Il se situait ainsi dans une geste à la fois patriotique et universelle, confirmait la grâce qui était donnée à l'Espagne et à sa lignée, et soulignait l'importance du rôle accordé à Grenade dans le cadre idéologique de la monarchie. Jusqu'au milieu du XVI^e siècle, les arrivées successives de corps royaux à Grenade et les célébrations funèbres scellèrent l'alliance de la nouvelle communauté avec ses rois³⁸.

Comment ce rôle unique pouvait-il s'accorder avec la réalité ? La conquête de Grenade avait semblé effacer d'un coup toute l'histoire des sept siècles passés, opérer une boucle miraculeuse du temps sur lui-même, la victoire des Rois oblitérant la défaite du roi Rodrigue face aux envahisseurs Maures³⁹. Mais ce retour aux origines était aussi un tournant. En effet, puisque 1492 ouvrait une nouvelle époque d'attentes et de valeurs, elle clôturait définitivement la précédente. Et cela avait deux conséquences majeures.

Tout d'abord, le sens symbolique large de l'événement ne pouvait voiler très longtemps la réalité complexe dont la ville avait héritée après la conquête. La cohabitation pacifique entre les colons

chrétiens, de plus en plus nombreux, et les autochtones musulmans restés à Grenade se révéla rapidement conflictuelle. Au tout début du XVI^e siècle, à la suite d'une révolte, les Capitulations furent abrogées et les Mudéjares forcés d'accepter les termes d'une conversion qui ne leur offrait qu'un statut social inférieur, celui de « Nouveaux-chrétiens », ou Morisques⁴⁰.

La seconde conséquence était que la conquête ne pouvait suffire pour jouer le rôle de récit fondateur, nécessaire pour construire une marque identitaire forte pour la nouvelle ville hispanique et ancrer ses habitants dans une filiation collective. Alors que le critère de noblesse devenait essentiel pour défendre les villes contre l'intrusion croissante de l'administration royale, la prise de Grenade était en elle-même un événement trop récent pour qualifier la noblesse de la ville, principalement fournie par l'antiquité de l'histoire.

Par ailleurs, les nouveaux habitants de Grenade ne pouvaient continuer longtemps à s'identifier en priorité au groupe restreint des glorieux conquistadors, car cela soulignait le fait qu'ils étaient des nouveaux venus et finalement des occupants illégitimes. Suivant la tradition médiévale, la guerre contre les Musulmans était une guerre juste, pour la « restauration de l'Espagne » et les nouveaux arrivants étaient donc naturellement les premiers habitants légitimes du territoire. Mais la coexistence des communautés sur le mode médiéval, alors que s'affirmaient de plus en plus les notions d'appartenance confessionnelle et ethnique de la première modernité, imposait une redéfinition de la tradition. En d'autres mots, il était nécessaire pour les colons

³⁸ D'Albis (2009), 247-266.

³⁹ Milhou (1999).

⁴⁰ Sur la coexistence des communautés et le destin des Morisques, je renvoie aux travaux de Vincent et Cardaillac (1977).

chrétiens de fonder leur autochtonie⁴¹, de s'affirmer comme les premiers habitants d'un territoire déjà occupé par d'autres, d'accorder leur histoire à celle des autres Castillans.

Le mythe martyrial et la quête des origines

Le martyr, dans de multiples composantes et traditions héritées de la période médiévale, joua un rôle capital dans l'enracinement d'une autochtonie dans la Grenade moderne. De nombreux récits de martyrs circulaient déjà à Grenade depuis la période médiévale. À une époque où les villes se peuplent de nouveaux lieux de sociabilité, de marques symboliques et sacrées, où les fêtes rassemblent les habitants dans une communauté élargie, les légendes locales ou importées contribuèrent à établir une géographie sacrée dans la ville récemment christianisée au début du XVI^e siècle⁴².

Dans le même temps, dans le contexte des affrontements directs qui opposent l'empire de Charles Quint aux ambitions d'expansion ottomanes en Méditerranée et des guerres de religion en Europe, le martyr redevint une figure d'actualité. Les reliques antiques venues des catacombes romaines envahirent l'Europe catholique. La peur d'une nouvelle inversion de l'histoire, soutenue par les prophéties, marque profondément le royaume de Grenade soumis aux opérations de piraterie venues de l'autre côté de la Méditerranée et incapable de régler la cohabitation de plus en plus tendue entre les communautés. Les

autorités s'inquiétèrent de plus en plus de ce royaume périphérique, mal intégré, où vivent nombre d'anciens Musulmans, considérés comme de possibles traîtres. Dès le milieu du XVI^e siècle, Grenade n'incarnait plus la promesse optimiste d'un monde uni prochainement sous la bannière de la croix, mais une mixité religieuse et ethnique désormais suspecte et méprisée. De Nouvelle Jérusalem, Grenade était devenue une Nouvelle Babylone⁴³.

Le fils de l'empereur Charles Quint, Philippe II, le plus puissant souverain ouest-Européen de la seconde moitié du siècle, fait le choix d'une politique de rationalisation et d'unification politique et religieuse volontariste de ses royaumes. Avec l'avancée de la Réforme, le souverain est confronté aux désirs d'indépendance des marges issus des héritages médiévaux. Dans ce cadre, la question morisque de Grenade, perçue comme une véritable menace géostratégique, devient un objectif prioritaire⁴⁴.

En 1568, poussés à bout par les vexations et les interdits dont ils sont l'objet de la part de la majorité chrétienne, les Morisques de Grenade se soulèvent. Pour le pouvoir royal, cette révolte est l'occasion de mettre fin à une situation de mixité devenue intolérable dans une Europe où les États reflètent de plus en plus une unité culturelle et religieuse. Il en résulte une guerre civile violente et traumatique, qui tente de résoudre les questionnements identitaires complexes de ce territoire colonial. À l'issue de leur inévitable défaite, en 1570, des dizaines de milliers de morisques sont expulsés dans des conditions terribles du

⁴¹ Pour reprendre le titre de l'article de Détienne, (2001), 105-110.

⁴² Harris (2002), 517-543.

⁴³ Sur l'imaginaire babylonien de la ville, voir Jacquemier (1999).

⁴⁴ Torricabras (2001).

royaume de Grenade⁴⁵. Quelques années plus tard, le roi prend la décision de retirer les corps des Habsbourg qui avaient été enterrés à Grenade pour les installer dans un nouveau panthéon situé au cœur de la Castille, à l'Escorial.

Cette double disparition traumatique, celle de la population et de la culture indigène d'une part, celle des corps royaux d'autre part, entraîna une réorientation forcée de la mémoire et de l'identité locale sur lesquelles s'était forgée la première société grenadine.

Alors que les certitudes de la Renaissance s'éloignaient et que le Concile de Trente rationalisait et renforçait la position catholique, le mythe grenadin prit une tonalité loyaliste et hiérarchique qui tentait de retrouver le lien perdu entre la ville, son passé, son environnement hispanique et ses rois.

Les découvertes du Sacromonte

Près de vingt ans après l'expulsion des Morisques, entre 1588 et 1596, on découvre des reliques sur une colline proche de la ville, rapidement nommée le Sacromonte (le mont saint)⁴⁶. Des textes qui les accompagnent révèlent opportunément qu'il s'agit des restes d'un arabe, Cecilio, converti au christianisme par Jésus et envoyé par Saint Paul avec ses compagnons pour évangéliser l'Occident. Ces faux, pensés et réalisés en réalité par un groupe de morisques lettrés qui souhaitaient conserver la mémoire de la communauté disparue, ont un succès inattendu et paradoxal. Au

tourant du siècle, Cecilio était en effet un parfait candidat pour se transformer en un saint patron : venu d'Orient pour devenir évêque en Occident, il réunissait les canons de sainteté anciens et nouveaux, le merveilleux et l'autorité rationnelle confortée par l'Église. C'était également un saint syncrétique, colonial, qui réconciliait implicitement deux religions et deux mondes antagonistes, sous le patronage de la Vierge et de Saint Jean.

En 1595, San Cecilio devient patron de la ville par consensus populaire. Et Grenade obtient le titre de siège apostolique trois ans plus tard. La promotion du culte de San Cecilio et son intégration rapide dans les chroniques locales qui se développent au début du XVII^e siècle sous l'égide des autorités locales enthousiastes, établirent la réalité des inventions de reliques comme une nouvelle version de l'histoire.

En effet, l'éclairage nouveau qu'offraient les découvertes sur le passé permettait de reformuler l'histoire de la ville, jusque-là obscure et principalement axée autour de la rupture engendrée par la conquête et la christianisation. Suivant la trame commune fournie par les chroniques médiévales, cette correction faisait de Grenade une ville fondamentalement chrétienne, évangélisée depuis l'antiquité, et non plus une ville d'origine musulmane, naturellement suspecte à cause de sa fondation récente et de sa diversité ethnique. Cette poursuite collective d'un passé glorieux est à la fois le reflet et le cadre de la recherche frénétique d'ancêtres « convenables » qui touche l'ensemble des Espagnols, confrontés à la diffusion rapide

⁴⁵ Peña, Vincent (1986).

⁴⁶ Il existe une importante bibliographie sur ce cas fascinant. Voir en particulier Manuel Aguilera, García-Arenal (2006). Sur les

élaborations historiques granadines, voir Harris (2007). Sur l'importance des reliques dans différents contextes historiques et géographiques, voir Boutry, Fabre (2009).

des statuts de pureté de sang et, plus largement, à l'assimilation de l'appartenance idéologique et de l'identité religieuse et ethnique.

Le mythe prend forme grâce au télescopage d'événements anciens et récents, du martyr et de la conquête, pris ensemble sous un halo de providence divine. Pour la population qui processionne au mont saint, le rapprochement se fait en effet tout naturellement entre martyrs anciens et modernes, entre leurs bourreaux romains et maures. La notion rénovée de martyr réunit les thèmes de la conquête, du conflit de la croisade et celle de l'unité religieuse. La victimisation, qui correspond également aux thèmes valorisés par la Contre-réforme, s'accompagne de l'héroïsation des ancêtres, ce qui permet en retour une perception glorieuse de la ville, fondée justement sur ce qui était auparavant considéré comme dégradant. Par ce récit, Grenade cesse d'être stigmatisée et fait évoluer son image. Elle n'est plus le reflet figé d'une conquête passée et le rappel de l'existence des Morisques rebelles. Elle devient la première terre chrétienne d'Europe et le modèle de la normalisation religieuse et politique du XVII^e siècle. La découverte des reliques dévoile ainsi l'imaginaire urbain de la ville en transformation : la ville médiévale, avec ses bâtiments exotiques, ses inscriptions étranges, est éclaircie, idéalisée, sanctifiée⁴⁷. Par ailleurs, les découvertes libèrent Grenade de l'attache exclusive à ses rois en lui créant un passé. Grâce à elles, la ville apprend que son histoire n'a pas commencé avec la conquête, mais bien avant, et que cette histoire est glorieuse.

Ainsi, bien que le phénomène du Sacromonte soit quelque chose d'éphémère, largement remis en cause pour son invraisemblance dès la fin du siècle et condamné comme hérétique par la papauté à la fin du siècle suivant, bien que le culte de San Cecilio n'ait jamais bénéficié d'une importante ferveur populaire⁴⁸, son incorporation au mythe de Grenade en fait la clef de la compréhension de l'identification civique grenadine ultérieure. Cette incorporation se produit moins dans les histoires officielles, qui retracent la généalogie de Grenade en employant les découvertes comme preuves scripturaires, suivant une conception moderne de l'interprétation sacrée (comme dans l'œuvre illustrée du chanoine Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiastica, principios y progressos de la ciudad, y religion catolica de Granada, 1637*⁴⁹) qu'à travers la répétition et l'amalgame des thèmes dans les célébrations et les trajets processionnels et le développement des dévotions mariales, qui favorisent la transmission orale et les rapprochements sans cesse actualisés.

Les Vierges grenadines et l'adaptation du mythe au XVII^e siècle

La Vierge et la croix, qui figurent sur les bannières des vainqueurs et représentent les Rois Catholiques, mandataires de Dieu pour réaliser cette conquête en son nom, occupent une place fondamentale dans la Grenade d'après 1492. Après le départ des Rois, une véritable manufacture est mise en place pour fabriquer des statues mariales destinées à peupler les nouvelles églises du

⁴⁷ Albaladejo (2007).

⁴⁸ Sur le culte de San Cecilio, voir Medina (2001).

⁴⁹ Voir Escobar (2004) 705-726.

royaume⁵⁰. C'est l'une de ces statues, placée dans la première cathédrale de Grenade, qui devient dans les années 1560 la première patronne de la ville, sous le nom de Vierge de la Antigua.

Après le Concile de Trente, les dévotions mariales deviennent la principale source à la fois de renouveau religieux et d'homogénéisation confessionnelle dans le monde hispanique. Les images se multiplient et se renouvellent. Elles offrent des modèles sociaux, imposent une hiérarchie et un modèle religieux de dévotion, fondé sur la valeur supérieure de la noblesse, où la monarchie et l'Église se renforcent mutuellement. Puis, lorsque l'issue de la guerre de Trente Ans semble marquer la défaite de l'ancien idéal d'empire universel de l'Espagne, dans un contexte de récession économique et de calamités publiques, les Vierges de douleur, qui expriment un tragique intériorisé et contenu, servent à évoquer un pouvoir royal sacrificiel pour un pays de plus en plus conscient de son déclin. Elles justifient la survie de l'idéologie espagnole, mais donnent aussi un sens glorieux à son destin dramatique⁵¹.

À Grenade, une Vierge des douleurs devient la nouvelle patronne de la ville, officieusement dès le début du XVII^e siècle, puis officiellement à la fin du siècle, à travers plusieurs célébrations spectaculaires et des miracles qui imposent son pouvoir salvateur. Las Angustias bénéficiait en effet de plusieurs atouts : il ne s'agissait pas, contrairement à la première patronne, la Antigua, d'une reine aristocratique majestueuse et neutre, qui incarne la civitas,

la communauté civique. C'était au contraire une figure exemplaire et héroïque. Ce qui implique qu'elle réalise des exploits (des miracles), en particulier à l'occasion des rogations, supplications collectives de plus en plus fréquentes au XVII^e siècle et qui mêlent indistinctement causes patriotiques et locales. Enfin, l'image était apparue miraculeusement, elle était donc autochtone, tout en manifestant par sa légende un lien originel aux rois et à la conquête⁵². Las Angustias triomphe donc en intégrant les principales composantes du mythe de Grenade : la conquête, le martyr, l'autochtonie (en d'autres mots : victoire, ancienneté et noblesse).

Parallèlement, une Vierge souveraine vient à la fois dominer et réunir l'ensemble des dévotions mariales. L'Immaculée Conception, Vierge triomphale et standardisante, dont le culte est soutenu par la monarchie, offre un modèle à la fois patriotique et universel qui se diffuse avec un succès inégalé au début du XVII^e siècle⁵³. Tenant le rôle de témoin et de gage d'orthodoxie dans les livres qui accompagnaient les reliques découvertes à Grenade, elle jouait déjà un rôle fondamental dans les découvertes du Sacromonte. Icône royale et invincible, l'Immaculée Conception se tient depuis le début du XVII^e siècle sur une colonne à l'entrée de la ville, devant la porte où entrèrent les Rois Catholiques dans la ville en 1492 et les autres rois après eux. Cette Vierge manifeste la continuité de l'idéologie de la conquête universelle personnifiée par Grenade, en particulier dans les fêtes célébrées à l'occasion des victoires ou des défaites de l'armée royale. À

⁵⁰ À propos de cette étonnante pratique manufacturière, voir Pereda (2007).

⁵¹ Elliott (1977), 41-61. Et sur l'importance des signes surnaturels et des prophéties dans

l'Espagne du XVII^e siècle : Carrasco, Bégrand (2004).

⁵² López-Guadalupe Muñoz (1996).

⁵³ Bernal (2006), 79-113. Cortés Peña (2001).

travers une série de miracles, de sacrilèges et de célébrations spectaculaires soutenues par les autorités en conflit les unes contre les autres⁵⁴, elle devient une sorte de totem qui permet à la ville de faire perdurer le mythe dans un cadre hispanique par ailleurs défaitiste.

Conclusions

Au XVIII^e siècle, le mythe achève de mettre en place une reconstruction du passé sous la forme d'un ensemble de récits et d'images récurrents. Il se fonde sur un triple paradoxe identitaire : tout en affirmant être les descendants des conquérants de Grenade, les Grenadins sont des autochtones. Ils descendent à la fois des habitants de la ville antique (Illibéris) et des martyrs du Sacromonte, véritables ancêtres sacrés. Ils peuvent donc se proclamer à la fois autochtones (ils étaient là avant les Maures), purifiés de l'islam par la mort des martyrs-ancêtres et conquérants de l'ennemi Musulman.

Ce récit mythique fait de multiples embranchements et de généalogies entrecroisées, parfois avortées, reflète les grandes ruptures historiques que la ville a connues, en particulier dans le dernier tiers du XVI^e siècle. Après la guerre et l'expulsion traumatique de la population et de la culture des Morisques ; après le départ des corps royaux, qui force à la redéfinition de la raison d'être de la ville des Rois Catholiques, symbole de l'achèvement de la conquête ; lorsque Grenade, appauvrie et diminuée, se trouve reléguée aux frontières de l'empire hispanique, la ville fait d'étonnantes découvertes qui la replacent au-devant de la scène et au cœur des préoccupations

politiques et religieuses de son temps. Cet événement pousse les nouvelles générations de Grenadins à combler le fossé entre le passé et le présent, faisant ainsi évoluer le récit collectif.

Le mythe de Grenade ainsi développé la singularise dans le paysage hispanique. Mais il sert surtout à insérer la ville dans un environnement hispanique fortement marqué par un idéal d'unicité et d'uniformité. Dans son récit communautaire, Grenade se veut à la fois unique et ordinaire, la plus ancienne ville chrétienne de l'Europe occidentale et la dernière conquise. Par ailleurs, célébrations, miracles, dévotions communes sont les lieux où ce récit commun se met en scène et se diversifie progressivement avec le temps. Les jeux de la propagande, la réception divergente de la population, la complexité esthétique croissante des célébrations transforment aussi la perception et le sens du mythe urbain.

Entre particularité et effort incessant pour tendre vers une normalité idéale, aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles les Grenadins ne cessent de rechercher un équilibre qui les préserve des difficultés contemporaines et conforte le rôle que la ville ne cesse de vouloir assumer dans le concert des royaumes hispaniques. Le mythe de Grenade est donc un outil pour comprendre l'évolution des royaumes hispaniques dans leur ensemble. Et le modèle du mythe, ce récit à multiples voix, peut nous aider à saisir les modalités de l'intégration des villes européennes dans leur cadre étatique et l'évolution de la représentation de l'identité urbaine en Europe au cours de l'époque moderne.

⁵⁴ Serrano (2002).

Références :

- Aguilera, M. B., García-Arenal (eds.). 2006. *Los plomos del Sacromonte. Invención y tesoro*. Valence, Grenade, Saragosse : Universités.
- Althoff, G. 2003. *Die Macht der Rituale*. Darmstadt : Primus Verlag.
- Albaladejo, P. 2007. *Materia de España, cultura política e identidad en la España Moderna*. Madrid: Marcial Pons.
- Bégrand, P., 2004. 'Signes et châtiments, monstres et merveilles: stratégies discursives dans les "relaciones de milagros"', in *Espagne au XVII^e siècle*. Besançon : Presses universitaires franc-comtoises.
- Bernal, G. J., J. 2006. 'Imagen y palabra: el misterio de la Inmaculada y las solemnidades festivas en Andalucía (siglo XVII)', in R. M. Recio, M. Peña Díaz (eds.). 2006. *Poder y cultura festiva en la Andalucía moderna*. Cordoue: Universidad de Cordoba, p. 79-113.
- Boureau, A. 2006. 'How Christian was the Sacralization of Monarchy in Western Europe (Twelfth-Fifteenth Centuries)?', in J. Deploige, G. Deneckere (eds.). 2006. *Mystifying the Monarch. Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p. 25-34.
- Boutry, Ph., P. A. Fabre, D. Julia (eds.) 2009. *Reliques modernes. Cultes et usages chrétiens des corps saints des réformes aux révolutions*. Vol. 1-2. Paris : Editions de l'EHESS.
- Breviglieri, M. (ed.) 2009. *Compétences critiques et sens de la critique*. Paris : Economica.
- Cardaillac, L., B. Vincent (1977). *Morisques et Chrétiens, un affrontement polémique*. Paris : Klincksiek.
- Catedra, M. 1997. *Un santo para una ciudad. Ensayo de antropología urbana*. Barcelone : Ariel.
- Cortés Peña, A. L., B. Vincent, 1986. *Historia de Granada, la época moderna*. Grenade : Don Quijote.
- Cortés Peña, A. L. 2001. *Religión y política durante el Antiguo Régimen*. Grenade : Universidad de Granada.
- Coulomb, Cl. 2008. 'Les rituels dans les histoires des villes publiées en France entre les années 1650 et 1780', in G. Bertrand, Il. Taddei (eds.). 2008. *Le destin des rituels. Faire corps dans l'espace urbain, Italie-France-Allemagne. Il destino dei rituali « faire corps » nello spazio urbano, Italia-Francia-Germania*. Rome : École Française de Rome, p. 281-300.
- D'Albis, C. 2009. 'Sacralización real y nacimiento de una ciudad simbólica: los traslados de cuerpos reales a Granada, 1504-1549', *Chronica nova: Revista de historia moderna de la Universidad de Granada* 35 (2009), p. 247-266.
- Del Vento, Ch., X. Tabet (eds.). 2006. *Le Mythe de Venise au XIX^e siècle. Débats historiographiques et représentations littéraires. Actes du colloque de Caen (19-20 novembre 2004)*. Caen : Presses Universitaires de Caen.
- Détienne, M. 2001. 'L'art de fonder l'autochtonie', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 69 (2001), p. 105-110.
- Détienne, M. 1981. *L'invention de la mythologie*. Paris : Gallimard.
- Elliott, J. H. 1977. 'Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth Century Spain', *Past and Present* 74 (1977), p. 41-61.
- Escobar, J. C. 2004. 'Granada en la historiografía religiosa seicentista: la Historia Eclesiástica de Bermúdez de Pedraza (1639)', in M. Barrios Aguilera, Á. Galán Sánchez (eds.). 2004. *La historia del reino de Granada a debate : viejos y nuevos temas*

: *perspectivas de estudio*. Grenade: Editorial Actas, p. 705-726.

Fenlon, I. 2007. *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Girardet, R. 1986. *Mythes et mythologies politiques*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Grimes, R., 1976. *Symbol and Conquest: Public Ritual and Drama in Santa Fe, New Mexico*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Harris, K. A. 2007. *From Muslim to Christian Granada: inventing a city's past in early modern Spain*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Harris, K. A. 2002. 'The Sacromonte and the Geography of the Sacred in Early Modern Granada', *Al-Qantara* XXIII/2 (2002), p. 517-543.

Jacquemier, M. 1999. *L'âge d'or du mythe de Babel, 1480-1600: de la conscience de l'altérité à la naissance de la modernité*. Mont-de-Marsan: Eds interuniversitaires.

Kempers, B. 1994. 'Icons, Altarpieces, and Civic Ritual in Siena Cathedral, 1100-1530', in B. A. Hanawalt, K. L. Reyerson (eds.). 1994. *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*. University of Minnesota Press, p. 89-136.

Koselleck, R. 1989. 'Social history and conceptual history', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* II/3 (1989), p. 308-325.

Ladero Quesada, M. A. (ed.) 1993. *La incorporación de Granada a la corona de Castilla*. Grenade : Diputación de Granada.

Lopez-Guadalupe Muñoz, M., L., J. José. 1996. *Nuestra Señora de las Angustias y su hermandad en la época moderna*. Grenade : Ed. Comares.

Medina, F. M. 2001. *San Cecilio y San Gregorio: patronos de Granada*. Grenade: Editorial Comares.

Milhou, Al. 1999. *Pouvoir royal et absolutisme dans l'Espagne du XVI^e siècle*. Toulouse : Presses Universitaires du Mirail.

Moeglin, J.-M. 2007. '« Performative turn », « communication politique » et rituels au Moyen Âge'. À propos de deux ouvrages récents', *Le Moyen Age* 2 (2007), p. 393-406.

Muir, E. 1981. *Ritual in Renaissance Venice*. Princeton : Princeton University Press.

Pakier, M. (ed.) 2010. *A European memory? : Contested histories and politics of remembrance*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Pereda, F. 2007. *La imágenes de la discordia. Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del 400*. Madrid : Marcial Pons.

Pulido Serrano, J. I., *Injurias a Cristo. Religión, política y antijudaísmo en el siglo XVII*. Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá de Henares.

Puschner, U., E. François. (eds.) 2010. *Erinnerungstage : Wendepunkte der Geschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*. Munich: Beck.

Rucquoi, A. 2003. 'Les villes d'Espagne : de l'histoire à la généalogie', in H. Brand, P. Monnet, M. Staub (eds.). 2003. *Memoria, communitas, civitas. Mémoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Age*. Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, p. 145-166.

Schmitt, J.-Cl. 2001. *Le corps, les rites, les rêves, le temps. Essais d'anthropologie médiévale*. Paris : Gallimard.

Torricabras, I. F. 2001. *Philippe II et la Contre-Réforme, l'Église espagnole à l'heure du Concile de Trente*. Paris : Publisud.

Trexler, E. 1991 (1980). *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*. Ithaca-Londres: Cornell University Press.

Veyne, P. 1983. *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes ? Essai sur l'imagination constituante*. Paris : Seuil.

Cécile d'Albis got her Ph.D. in history from Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and the University of Granada (Spain). She was a Max Weber fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, between 2010 and 2011, and got a Fernand Braudel fellowship at *Institut für Europäische Geschichte* (Mainz) in 2012. She has published *Richelieu. L'essor d'un nouvel équilibre européen* at Armand Colin, in 2012. Cécile d'Albis now lives in Strasburg and teaches history and geography.

LAURENT CAROZZA, ALBANE BURENS

Le Déluge, les savants et la mer Noire : une nouvelle mythologie scientifique ?

Abstract:

Noah's Flood is a narrative structure that has cross ages and civilizations. It is above all a deterministic posture in our perception of the relationship between societies and their environment. We attempt in this paper to examine the universal character of the Flood myth, and how some scientists call upon this mythological structure to justify or dress up their studies. Consequently, we try to observe the causal links established by some researchers between the history of climate and societies, to explain the origin of the Noah's Flood. We seek to understand how scientific discourse was built around the research dedicated to the incarnation of the place, and how today the use of Earth Sciences to unravel the true of the fake is carried out. Furthermore, it is particularly interesting to pore over the links between archaeologists - historians of materiality - and environmental scientists. In this article, we will briefly present our investigations conducted on the populating of the Black Sea coastline during recent Prehistory, and the way we evidenced a landscape (more than 7000 years old), nowadays largely submerged by the floodplain of the Danube delta. Those works have led us to many questions about the existence of a flood in the Black Sea.

Keywords: Myth, Flood, Black Sea, Archaeology, Neolithic period

«L'histoire du déluge étant la chose la plus miraculeuse dont on ait jamais entendu parler, il serait insensé de l'expliquer : ce sont de ces mystères que l'on croit par la foi ; et la foi consiste à croire ce que la raison ne croit pas»

Voltaire (Dictionnaire philosophique, art. Inondations)

Le déluge : du mythe babylonien au dérèglement climatique

Il est de multiples récits du Déluge, ce mythe originel de la re-création du monde et de la renaissance de l'humanité après la punition divine. Mais ce récit est-il pour autant universel ? Il constitue une structure narrative qui traverse les âges et les

civilisations. La punition des hommes et de l'ensemble de la création par la puissance divine en réponse aux fautes commises, et l'engloutissement de l'humanité sous les flots, se retrouvent dans de multiples aires culturelles, et non pas dans les seules

religions monothéistes. Si les sociétés occidentales ont fréquemment recours aux symboles du déluge biblique – on en tiendra pour preuve l'importante iconographie et filmographie disponible – le déluge est le plus souvent mis en exergue pour signifier et justifier des fins de cycles historiques en lien avec des catastrophes naturelles.

De nombreuses civilisations ont eu recours à cette figure où les éléments déchainés, fruits de l'intervention divine, éprouvent l'humanité pour mieux justifier son sauvetage et sa renaissance. Mais au-delà de la forme du récit, de ses origines, de ses transpositions multiples, le mythe du déluge relève avant tout d'une posture déterministe dans notre perception de la relation qu'entretiennent les sociétés avec leur environnement. L'écho immodéré donné aux tenants d'hypothèses catastrophistes, à l'image des ouvrages emblématiques de Jared Diamond⁵⁵, ne fait qu'entretenir le doute quant aux causes et conséquences des changements sociaux qui se sont produits au cours des derniers millénaires. À grand renfort d'arguments scientifiques, dont il convient parfois d'évaluer la pertinence ou les limites, certains chercheurs se sont engouffrés dans cette faille grande ouverte, quitte à ne plus respecter la distance nécessaire entre les faits et leur interprétation. Dans un monde contemporain, urbain, où la relation à la nature s'est distendue et altérée, les effets et conséquences du changement climatique global induisent parfois de repenser les modèles socio-environnementaux. Dans ce contexte, on peut s'interroger sur la manière dont certains scientifiques font appels à la structure mythologique du déluge pour

justifier ou donner un habillage à leurs travaux. Le mythe du déluge ne serait-il alors, de manière plus ou moins consciente, qu'une enveloppe ou un slogan publicitaire destiné à manipuler nos imaginaires ?

Le déluge, l'archéologue et la mer Noire

Avant d'entrer dans le vif du sujet, il nous a semblé nécessaire de préciser la nature et les motivations de notre démarche. Lorsque, en 2007, nous avons commencé à travailler sur le peuplement du littoral de la mer Noire au cours de la Préhistoire récente – entre 6000 et 4000 ans avant notre ère –, nous étions loin de penser que nos recherches trouveraient un écho au dehors de la communauté des archéologues. Mais la découverte et la fouille d'un établissement chalcolithique situé au cœur de l'actuel du delta du Danube, occupé durant le 5ème millénaire avant notre ère, nous ont conduit à réfléchir au rôle des modifications paléogéographiques qui se sont produites en mer Noire durant l'Holocène, et à leur impact pour les sociétés⁵⁶. La mise en évidence d'un paysage vieux de plus de 7000 ans, aujourd'hui en grande partie submergé par la plaine d'inondation du delta du Danube, nous a valu de nombreuses questions relatives à l'existence d'un déluge en mer Noire et sa datation à la fin du 5ème millénaire avant notre ère. Étant donné nos difficultés à répondre autrement que par une prise de distance par rapport à ce questionnement, nous nous sommes intéressés à l'histoire du mythe du Déluge, et plus particulièrement à la manière dont

⁵⁵ Diamond (2009).

⁵⁶ Carozza *et al.* (2012).

scientifiques et chercheurs abordaient cette question. Notre propos n'est pas d'analyser la structure du mythe, mais plutôt d'observer les liens de causalités établis par d'aucuns entre l'histoire du climat et des sociétés, pour expliquer l'origine du mythe du Déluge. Pour ces chercheurs, le déluge est considéré comme l'expression de la mémoire collective d'un événement cataclysmique exceptionnel, incarné par la submersion de vastes zones littorales à la fin de la période glaciaire.

Précisons notre posture. Il est de multiples manières d'aborder la question du mythe et de son universalité. Fondateur de la psychologie analytique, Carl Gustav Jung⁵⁷ considérait certains archétypes (sortes d'images primordiales) comme le fonds commun de toutes les mythologies, de toutes les cultures, à toutes les époques. L'archétype renvoie à cette tendance des hommes à recourir à une même forme de représentation mentale (mobilisant des formes symboliques variées de par le monde) issue de l'expérience et conditionnée par la structure même du cerveau. Dans cette acception, le mythe mobiliserait ces archétypes unissant un symbole à une émotion, et conditionnant l'imaginaire comme la représentation. Mais son travail de mythologie comparée – tout comme, plus tard, celui de Mircea Eliade – a laissé de côté les récits mythologiques de continents entiers tels l'Afrique, l'Australie ou l'Antarctique.

Dès lors, comment poser comme axiome l'universalité de certains mythes ? Pour Claude Lévi-Strauss⁵⁸, les mythes constituent autant de transformations d'un même récit. Par son approche structuraliste,

il les considère comme un ensemble structuré autour d'unités élémentaires (les mythèmes) et de relations internes et leur attribue une fonction plus symbolique qu'historique. Il s'agit pour lui du récit (fondé sur des éléments du quotidien) de faits non réels, immémoriaux, inscrits dans une dimension collective, et proposant une explication pour les contradictions majeures de l'existence. Il conteste leur caractère archaïque et démontre au contraire leur cohérence structurelle, tout en se donnant pour but de comprendre la mécanique de la transformation du récit, du passage d'une version à l'autre.

Certains historiens de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge, à l'image de Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Jacques Le Goff et Jean-Pierre Vernant, ont accepté les modèles structuralistes et ont appliqué ce modèle à l'histoire des mentalités comme le soulignent Patrick Boucheron et Pierre Kalifa⁵⁹. Mais le préhistorien, prisonnier de la matérialité, est relativement démuné face à cette approche. Si les modèles inspirés des travaux de Maurice Godelier relatifs à la pensée symbolique ont trouvé écho auprès de certains archéologues, la question du mythe est restée sous-jacente. On doit cependant aux spécialistes de l'art pariétal d'avoir emprunté cette voie. Pour Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, la posture relève davantage de l'idée « d'emprunts ou d'un héritage commun »⁶⁰. En s'appuyant sur l'hypothèse d'une « origine unique de l'humanité », il se positionne davantage dans une perspective historique et diffusionniste des mythes.

En ce qui nous concerne, nous faisons nôtre, pour les besoins de cet article, la définition pragmatique que donnent

⁵⁷ Jung (2014).

⁵⁸ Lévi-Strauss (2009).

⁵⁹ Boucheron, Kalifa (2016).

⁶⁰ Le Quellec (2014), D'Huy et al. (2014).

Boucheron et Kalifa du mythe, soit « un récit fictif, mais fondateur, mettant en scène des personnages surhumains dans des temps reculés, voire transcendants »⁶¹.

Le déluge : un mythe universel catastrophiste ?

Le mythe du Déluge trouve écho dans de nombreuses cultures, inscrites dans un vaste cadre spatio-temporel⁶². Cette multitude de récits, qu'ils soient ou non considérés comme des textes sacrés, donne un sens souvent moral à ces crises ou événements hydro-climatiques majeurs, tout particulièrement dans les récits de cataclysmes à valeur universelle, où l'ancrage géographique outrepassa le cadre local et où la puissance divine sanctionne la perversité des hommes par la submersion des terres habitables et la destruction des hommes et des animaux. La précision ou l'approximation des ancrages tant géographiques que chronologiques de ces narrations, fruits d'un lent processus de retranscription puis de consolidation graduelle de récits d'un passé lointain, a conduit nombre de mythographes, archéologues et historiens à poser un cadre géographique précis autour de ces événements.

Le récit biblique du Déluge, que les exégètes s'accorderaient à faire remonter au I^{er} millénaire (l'exégèse biblique traditionnelle faisant remonter Adam aux alentours de l'an 5000 et le Déluge à minima un millénaire plus tard), trouve des correspondances dans maints fonds culturels, dont le plus ancien, antérieur à la

tradition hébraïque, serait la tradition mythique mésopotamienne, largement diffusée dans le Proche-Orient dès le milieu du III^e millénaire, par le biais de récits gravés en écriture cunéiforme sur des tablettes d'argile⁶³. La série la plus complète mais aussi la plus récente de ces tablettes, trouvée dans les fouilles de la bibliothèque du roi Assurbanipal à Ninive, daterait des 8^e-7^e siècles av. J.-C. ; elle met en scène le célèbre Gilgamesh, descendant d'Ut-Napishtim, homologue de Noé. Dans cette tradition mésopotamienne, le récit du Déluge est évoqué au sein de plusieurs écrits, notamment dans une version sumérienne datée du III^e millénaire, une version babylonienne ancienne qui daterait du début du II^e millénaire et une version assyro-babylonienne du I^{er} millénaire. D'autres récits, moins détaillés, relèvent de ce même fonds. Le mythe du déluge est repris dans d'abondants textes grecs⁶⁴ (Ve s. av. J.-C.) et latins. Mais sa portée véritablement universelle devient tangible à la lecture de récits issus notamment des traditions et mythologies iraniennes, hindoues, chinoises, scandinaves ou encore amérindiennes...

Mythographes, archéologues et chercheurs ont ainsi cherché à confronter les divers récits d'un Déluge retranscrit tantôt sous la forme d'un cataclysme à portée universelle, tantôt sous la forme d'événements locaux, d'abord sans les ancrer dans un contexte environnemental.

Le livre de la Genèse a livré, au fil des chapitres 6, 7 et 8, le récit détaillé du Déluge. Le Dictionnaire de la Bible présente le Déluge comme le châtement divin des crimes et de la perversité des hommes mais aussi comme le moyen de préserver et de

⁶¹ Boucheron, Kalifa (2016).

⁶² Lenormant (1837-1883).

⁶³ Babelon (1891).

⁶⁴ Grimal (1969).

reconstituer une nouvelle humanité dans la vraie foi et les bonnes mœurs⁶⁵. Au vu de la malice des hommes, Yahvé supprime de la surface de la terre tous les êtres qu'il a créés, des humains aux animaux. Seul le déluge pouvait éradiquer l'expansion de cette violence en submergeant la surface de la Terre sous des eaux purificatrices, éradiquant du fait même les hommes et l'ensemble de la création. Seul Noé trouve grâce à ses yeux ; il sera chargé, au retrait des eaux (après 40 jours et 40 nuits de pluie), de repeupler le monde. Le courroux de Yahvé semble non seulement provoqué par la violence des hommes et des animaux qui commencent à s'entredévorer après que les fils d'Elohim (veilleurs / anges) prirent femmes chez les hommes, mais également par le fait que son esprit ne pourrait rester inaltéré dans des êtres faits de chair⁶⁶.

La version coranique se distingue de celle de l'Ancien Testament par ce qu'elle fait référence à un événement local, sans portée universelle, impliquant la seule communauté du Prophète Noé⁶⁷.

Dans la tradition mésopotamienne, les multiples récits et poèmes mettent en scène différents acteurs du Déluge : d'Ut-Napishtim, comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné ci-dessus, à un Noé sumérien, nommé Ziusidu, évoqué dans un texte remontant au III^e millénaire ...⁶⁸. Les principales versions du récit s'entrecroisent et présentent maints parallèles avec les récits bibliques : le châtiment des Dieux, lassés par le tumulte et la sauvagerie des hommes ; l'annonce du péril à un homme, dans le but

que cet élu sauve l'humanité par la mise à l'abri de quelques proches et de couples d'animaux à l'intérieur d'une embarcation, une arche, capable de résister au déchaînement des éléments.

La mythologie grecque relate elle aussi plusieurs épisodes cataclysmiques. Le plus ancien, sans doute le moins connu, correspond au Déluge du roi Ogygès, fondateur de Thèbes⁶⁹. Le plus fameux d'entre eux, provoqué par Zeus et présenté comme le dernier des déluges, est celui dit de Deucalion (ibid.). Il laisse deux survivants : Deucalion et Pyrrha, à l'origine d'une nouvelle race humaine⁷⁰ ... Ce mythe s'inscrit dans la lignée des traditions mésopotamiennes relatées dans l'Épopée de Gilgamesh (texte rédigé autour des XVIII^e-XVII^e s. av. J.-C.) et de celle d'Atrahasis (récit compilant les mythes mésopotamiens, daté aux environs du XVIII^e s. av. J.-C.). La légende du déluge de Deucalion (parfois présenté comme prince crétois de l'âge du Bronze) sera évoquée à de multiples reprises, notamment par Strabon, Aristote, Ovide⁷¹ et sera même associée au raz-de-marée occasionné par l'éruption volcanique du Santorin et, par Platon, au mythe de la disparition de l'Atlantide⁷² (Le Timée et le Critias rédigés au cours du IV^e s. av. J.-C.). Au I^{er} siècle av. J.-C., Diodore de Sicile évoque lui aussi ce mythe, ainsi que le débordement du Pont Euxin (lac de la mer Noire) dans la mer grecque, suite au déversement des eaux des nombreux fleuves et rivières qui s'y écoulent⁷³.

⁶⁵ Vigouroux (1912), Dhorme (1986).

⁶⁶ Parrot (1952).

⁶⁷ Coran, LXXIX: 11-12.

⁶⁸ Babelon (1891), Couteneau (1952), Parrot (1946 et 1953).

⁶⁹ Babelon (1891).

⁷⁰ Pindare, Les odes Olympiques, IX (157-158).

⁷¹ Ovide, Robert (2001).

⁷² Platon, Brisson (2008).

⁷³ Diodore de Sicile, Livre V.

On retrouve encore des évocations d'un déluge universel dans les traditions iraniennes, notamment dans le récit du mythe de la création du zoroastrisme (religion monothéiste de l'Iran ancien) au travers du Bundahishn, ou de l'Avesta, texte sacré retranscrivant un mythe ancien relatant un épisode de catastrophe climatique (mauvais hivers porteurs d'un froid féroce et mortel) et faisant référence à un homme juste, Yima, qui, alerté du danger par le dieu Ahura Mazda, put sauver du désastre un certain nombre d'hommes, d'animaux et de végétaux.

Le fonds culturel hindouiste comporte lui aussi des références au Déluge, notamment dans le Veda (texte sacré hindouiste issu d'une longue tradition orale transmise de brahmane à brahmane, daté autour du XVe siècle av. J.C.), qui met en scène le premier homme Manu sauvé par le premier avatar de Vischnou, Matsya⁷⁴. D'autres références sont mentionnées dans des textes sanskrits extraits de l'épopée Mahabharata, datant des derniers siècles avant notre ère (la Bhagavadgita et l'Anugita).

En Chine, des évocations de crues ou de hautes eaux n'ayant ni valeur punitive ni dimension universelle ont été consignées, notamment dans Le « Shiji », (ouvrage de 130 volumes relatant l'histoire de la Chine depuis l'époque mythique de l'Empereur Jaune, rédigé par l'historien Sima Qian et achevé par son fils), tout comme dans le « Shanhai Jing » (recueil de légendes de l'Antiquité chinoise, dont la version essentielle relève de la dynastie Han) ou encore dans le Huainan Zi (ensemble de 21 chapitres rédigés au IIe siècle av. J.-C.)⁷⁵.

Henri Maspero quant à lui souligne, dans les légendes remontant à la Haute Antiquité, les mentions de récits cosmogoniques mettant en scène un déluge ayant nécessité la construction de digues et le creusement de canaux censés assécher les marais. Selon certains mythes, le monde aurait été recouvert d'eau ; le Seigneur d'En Haut aurait mandé un premier puis un second héros dans le but d'aménager la terre et d'enseigner l'agriculture aux hommes.

L'ancienne civilisation mésoaméricaine Maya ne fait pas exception et renvoie au Déluge (notamment sous la forme d'une pluie de feu suivie par une pluie de ténèbre et par la révolte des végétaux, animaux et objets domestiques) dans un texte sacré, de tradition précolombienne, rédigé à l'époque coloniale⁷⁶ (le Popol Vuh). Cette cosmogonie maya renvoie elle aussi à la punition des hommes de bois (deuxième des trois races d'hommes) en raison de leur impiété, de leur paresse, frivolité et vanité. Ces derniers périrent ou se transformèrent en singes.

La cosmogonie scandinave, à l'origine d'un système religieux polythéiste ayant présidé à la christianisation, remonte au Haut Moyen-Âge. Elle fait elle aussi état d'un Déluge engendré par le sang d'Ymir (fondateur de la race des Jötnar occis par Odin, exaspéré par sa brutalité). Les flots de sang tuèrent les géants, à l'exception du petit-fils de Ymir et de sa femme, qui repeuplèrent la Terre⁷⁷.

Peu d'auteurs mentionnent un mythe du Déluge sur les continents africain et australien. J.-P. Lebeuf⁷⁸ relaie, chez le peuple Kotoko d'Afrique Centrale, l'existence d'une légende, s'originant de

⁷⁴ Varenne (2003).

⁷⁵ Mathieu (1989).

⁷⁶ Raynaud (2000).

⁷⁷ Boyer (2012), Guelpa (2009).

⁷⁸ Lebeuf (1976), 98.

l'islam et relayée par le Coran, faisant allusion à un patriarche réputé être un géant, émergeant des eaux du Déluge. Avec l'assèchement de la Terre, vint le temps pour lui de faire sortir les hommes et les animaux de l'arche et de les faire se disperser en direction du Nord et de l'Est. D'autres mentions de l'Arche de Salut existent, notamment chez les peuples Dogon, Bambara et Bozo ; mais nulle mention n'est faite d'un quelconque déluge.

La cosmogonie du peuple aborigène fait elle aussi allusion à un Déluge à l'origine de la destruction d'un monde « d'avant », provoquée par un serpent géant qui, en se jetant dans la mer, aurait provoqué d'importantes inondations⁷⁹.

Comme on peut le voir dans la plupart de ces récits, le Déluge constitue, dans nombre de cultures, ce que Joannès, en référence aux récits babyloniens, qualifiait de « point d'origine historicisé de l'humanité »⁸⁰. Il marque le passage d'un temps antédiluvien (sorte de période de cohabitation entre humains et êtres hybrides ou monstrueux) à un temps postdiluvien, où les hommes s'inscrivent dans l'histoire et où « il ne leur reste plus qu'à vivre et écrire une histoire dont ils soient pleinement responsables »⁸¹.

Quand les scientifiques rencontrent le mythe : ou l'incarnation du lieu

Le large essaimage des récits relatifs au mythe du Déluge sous-tend, du moins en apparence, le caractère « universel » de celui-ci. Comme de nombreux mythes, ce dernier trouve sa source dans le passé,

antérieurement à l'apparition de l'écriture, ce qui a permis le foisonnement des transpositions dans la sphère du religieux. Lucian Boia a bien montré que le déluge, constitué en récit universel historicisé, était une construction destinée, dans le jeu subtil des relations avec les avancées scientifiques, à légitimer la véracité du discours biblique⁸². Le même auteur signale, à juste titre, que le développement des connaissances tend à restreindre l'espace disponible pour expliquer la survenue d'un cataclysme universel. Ceci explique peut-être pourquoi, aujourd'hui, seule l'origine du déluge biblique, telle que transcrite dans la Genèse, semble donner lieu à discussions.

Au cours du siècle des Lumières, philosophes et intellectuels – aspirant à dépasser l'obscurantisme et à promouvoir la science et les connaissances – nourrissent pourtant un débat passionné entre tenants du caractère naturel et tenants du caractère miraculeux du Déluge biblique. Dans son analyse de la place accordée aux mythes des origines par les scientifiques du XVIIIe siècle, M.S. Seguin s'efforce « de comprendre pourquoi, au moment où les sciences semblent avoir réussi à se libérer de l'emprise théologique, l'imaginaire mythique resurgit avec force, comme s'il était indissociable de la nature humaine elle-même »⁸³.

Dans *L'homme face au climat*, Lucian Boia, citant Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, montre qu'avec le siècle des Lumières, au moment où la sécularisation des esprits conduit à délaisser la thèse biblique, naît l'idée d'un déluge sans Dieu, recentrant ainsi le propos sur l'événement ; soit le cataclysme comme vecteur de rupture. Dès

⁷⁹ Muecke (2002).

⁸⁰ Joannès (2016).

⁸¹ Joannès (2016).

⁸² Boia (2004).

⁸³ Seguin (2001), 17.

lors, à l'image du préhistorien Bouchers de Perthes, un lien indéfectible va se tisser entre le mythe et les avancées scientifiques.

Avec l'émergence de la « Théorie de la Terre » apparaissent les premières explications scientifiques du Déluge, et des auteurs comme Thomas Brunet⁸⁴, William Whiston⁸⁵ ou John Woodward – qui rompt définitivement avec le cartésianisme⁸⁶ – vont marquer leur époque. Mais c'est Leibniz qui minimise le rôle du Déluge et préfigure la géologie moderne. À sa suite, les adeptes du rationalisme (laïques) tels Fontenelle puis Benoit de Maillet ou Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger, défendront, avec l'aval de l'Académie des Sciences, la posture actualiste face aux rationalistes chrétiens qui, en instrumentalisant la science, glisseront vers une conception naturaliste du Déluge alors que certains iront même jusqu'à avancer l'hypothèse d'un Déluge restreint dans une perspective polygéniste. C'est probablement à Buffon que l'on devra d'affranchir le discours scientifique de toutes spéculations diluvionnistes.

Dans les faits, il importe de voir comment les discours scientifiques se sont construits autour de la recherche de l'incarnation du lieu, et la manière dont s'opère aujourd'hui le recours aux sciences dites « dures » pour démêler le vrai du faux. Ici encore, Lucian Boia a montré le rôle moteur joué, jusqu'au début du XIX^{ème} siècle, par les savants et les naturalistes pour maintenir le Déluge dans l'histoire universelle⁸⁷.

Dans ce processus, il est particulièrement intéressant d'observer les liens qu'ont entretenus les archéologues –

historiens de la matérialité – avec les spécialistes des sciences de l'environnement. Si l'archéologie moderne a rapidement abandonné des postures visant à établir la véracité des mythes, les relations des géosciences avec l'histoire des civilisations sont plus complexes. Tel Indiana Jones découvrant l'arche de Noé sur le mont Ararat, certains spécialistes des géosciences de l'environnement sortent de leur domaine de compétence et ambitionnent de dissocier le « vrai » du « faux », opérant de la sorte un retour depuis les faits scientifiques vers le récit mythologique. Cette posture n'est toutefois pas propre au mythe du déluge et aux seules géosciences ; comme le souligne Jean-Paul Demoule, « les mythes qui font rêver les savants sont aussi tenaces que ceux dont se bercent les ignorants. Mais ils sont nettement plus dangereux »⁸⁸.

Archéologie du mythe du Déluge

Leonard Woolley, archéologue britannique qui a fouillé entre 1919 et 1934 la cité antique de Ur, située dans l'actuel Irak, est probablement le premier à avoir tissé un lien direct entre données archéologiques, géomorphologiques et le récit du Déluge pour expliquer la crise qui a touché la cité antique. Lors de ses fouilles, Woolley identifie une couche argileuse qu'il interprète comme une phase d'inondation massive, et juge, en s'appuyant sur des données ponctuelles, que cet événement pourrait constituer un cataclysme. Dans sa publication de 1929, Woolley établit un lien direct entre cet événement, dont il évalue la

⁸⁴ Telluris Tehoria scara, Londres (1684).

⁸⁵ A New Theory of the Earth (1696).

⁸⁶ Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth (1695).

⁸⁷ Boia (2004), 147.

⁸⁸ Demoule (2014).

portée à « 400 miles long and 100 miles wide ; but for the occupants of the valley that was the whole world », et le livre de la Genèse. En établissant ce lien de causalité entre un changement environnemental et une crise sociale, Woolley s'expose davantage, en déclarant dans les médias anglo-américains que « nous avons découvert les traces du Déluge... ». Cette transgression n'est pas anodine, car elle marque, pour la première fois peut-être, l'instrumentalisation du mythe et le recours aux médias pour sensibiliser le grand public, dans la perspective non avouée de pérenniser les moyens alloués à sa mission. Au début des années 1930, les opérations de terrain se poursuivirent à Ur avec l'intervention de Max Mallowan - assistant de Woolley jusqu'au début des années 30 et anecdotiquement second époux de Agatha Christie. Mallowan va multiplier dans la région les fouilles pour réfuter les datations proposées par Woolley ; mais il ne contestera pas les hypothèses catastrophistes de ce dernier. En révoquant le caractère exceptionnel de la crise hydro-sédimentaire mise en avant par Woolley, Mallowan va proposer de dater de la fin du 3^{ème} millénaire avant notre ère un autre événement, jugé par lui de plus grande envergure.

Cet exemple illustre bien la manière dont certains scientifiques, dont on pourrait penser que les travaux suffisent à justifier l'ampleur des résultats obtenus, ont éprouvé le besoin de donner, par le biais de faits matériels, une incarnation historique au récit mythologique. En proposant de lier les deux phénomènes, l'idée d'un lien inextricable entre changements climatiques et crises

sociales s'est imposée, pour justifier l'effondrement des sociétés de la fin troisième millénaire avant notre ère en Mésopotamie. Si le débat est aujourd'hui dégagé du récit mythologique, pour se centrer sur la question de la relation entre changement climatique et crise sociale⁸⁹, il n'en demeure pas moins que les modèles déterministes réapparaissent fréquemment. Ainsi, les recherches réalisées par Harvey Weiss⁹⁰ sur le tell Leilan en Syrie ont-elles permis à ce chercheur de devenir un leader des hypothèses du rôle majeur tenu par les crises climatiques dans l'histoire des civilisations. Dégagé de la lecture du mythe qui ne ferait qu'obscurcir son discours, il incarne pleinement le rôle de la démarche archéo-environnementale, qui vise à rencontrer sciences sociales et géosciences de l'environnement, mais dans une perspective qui reste toujours catastrophiste.

Le géologue et la mer

Vu qu'il suppose la submersion d'une partie des terres, les géologues marins se sont particulièrement intéressés au mythe du Déluge et ont tenté de trouver, au travers des événements hydro-climatiques, un lien entre récit et faits. On doit à William Ryan d'avoir ouvert ce dossier et suscité nombre de travaux sur la question de la connexion entre la Méditerranée et la mer Noire. Entre 1960 et 1970, Ryan participe à deux campagnes de recherches en mer, dans le Bosphore et en Méditerranée. Il pressent que cette région a connu des modifications paléogéographiques majeures, et va intensifier ses travaux en mer Noire aux côtés de Walter Pitman, après la publication de l'article de

⁸⁹ Kuzucuoglu, Marro (2007).

⁹⁰ Weiss (2000).

Ross, Degen, Mac Ilvaine 1970⁹¹, qui décrivent la transition entre les phases lacustres et marines de la mer Noire, au moment de sa reconnexion possible avec la Méditerranée, soit au début de l'Holocène. Cette découverte engendre une intensification des travaux de recherche et l'organisation des missions océanographiques dans le but de préciser la nature et la chronologie de cet événement géologique majeur.

Dans le sillage de Ryan et Pitman, André et Denise Capart vont mener une recherche engagée et hybride – entre approche scientifique et convictions – dont le but non dissimulé est de donner un cadre spatio-temporel à l'existence d'un déluge en mer Noire. À l'appui de données scientifiques et témoignant d'une grande érudition, l'ouvrage publié en 1986, intitulé *L'homme et les déluges*, aboutit à la conclusion que le mythe du Déluge s'origine dans les conséquences de l'élévation mondiale du niveau des océans et à son caractère catastrophiste en mer Noire, suite à la reconnexion entre la Méditerranée et la mer Noire. Les auteurs interrogent différentes sources – archéologie, géologie, paléoclimatologie... – les foisonnent, se contredisent. La démarche souffre d'imprécision. Mais l'intérêt de cet ouvrage est de livrer, sans tabou, une revue des hypothèses, travail que ne feront pas Ryan et Pitman lorsqu'ils publieront en 2000 *Noah's flood*⁹².

Les deux chercheurs américains centrent leur propos sur la question de la reconnexion, par l'intermédiaire de la mer de Marmara et du Bosphore, de la mer Noire avec la Méditerranée à une période qu'ils

datent du 6ème millénaire avant notre ère. Si les auteurs sont tous les deux des scientifiques, spécialistes en géologie marine, et conduisent des recherches publiées dans des revues académiques, la structure de l'ouvrage publié en 1998 s'éloigne largement de ce que l'on attend d'un tel exercice, puisqu'il prend la forme d'un recueil de nouvelles ou d'un journal de bord. Bien que non archéologues, ces derniers vont, à grand renfort de données archéologiques, donner un cadre social au grand cataclysme et à la submersion d'une partie du littoral de la mer Noire par les eaux salées de la Méditerranée. Ryan et Pitman élaborent un scénario fondé sur l'analyse de données scientifiques – considérées comme solides au moment de leur publication – qui conduit inexorablement à l'hypothèse que le processus bien réel de reconnexion entre la mer Noire et la Méditerranée constituerait la source unique du mythe du déluge biblique. Les auteurs estiment que la remontée catastrophique du niveau marin se serait produite il y a 8 400 ans. Par le Bosphore, les eaux de la Méditerranée se seraient déversées en Mer Noire, élevant celle-ci de 100 mètres en 33 ans. On notera la précision de l'affirmation. Ils opèrent alors, selon une posture propre à certains chercheurs anglo-américains, un rapprochement entre l'hypothèse scientifique et son interprétation, en l'occurrence le mythe du Déluge, mythe universel, qu'ils interprètent comme évocation d'une inondation exceptionnelle ayant provoqué des migrations humaines. Poussées à quitter les rives de la mer Noire, les populations néolithiques auraient alors entrepris de grandes migrations, à l'origine de la

⁹¹ Ross *et al.* (1970), 163-165.

⁹² Ryan et Pitman (2000).

diffusion du récit dans de multiples directions et de sa retranscription au moment de l'apparition des premières écritures.

L'ouvrage va, dans un premier temps, être accueilli avec enthousiasme tant dans une partie de la sphère scientifique qu'auprès du grand public, et certains y verront la preuve « scientifique » de l'existence du déluge.

À compter de la fin des années 90, nous assistons, sur le terrain scientifique et médiatique, à une intensification des recherches et des débats. Les hypothèses de Ryan et Pitman vont bénéficier des recherches menées par Gilles Lericolais lors de la campagne en mer franco-roumaine « Blason », campagne à laquelle participe Ryan en 1998. La cartographie des fonds marins, dressée par l'équipe, ne permet pas de déceler de paléo-rivages, fait qui est jugé concordant avec les hypothèses d'une submersion rapide de la plateforme continentale au début de l'Holocène. Cette épopée va faire l'objet d'une couverture médiatique importante, comme en témoignent les nombreuses coupures de presse aux titres éloquentes : Dix mille ans sous les mers ; la fertilité du Déluge ; Plumbing Black Sea for Proof of the Deluge ; il voit le Déluge dans une carotte...⁹³. Si le bien fondé de la démarche de l'équipe coordonnée par Gilles Lericolais ne peut pas être remis en cause, comme en témoignent les publications parues dans des revues scientifiques réputées, le mythe du Déluge semble quant à lui mis en scène pour augmenter l'audience du grand public.

En 1999, une nouvelle campagne en mer va être menée par R. Balard, au large du

port turc de Sinop⁹⁴. Les données recueillies par cette équipe montrent bien la succession entre un plan d'eau douce, lacustre, auquel succède un sédiment caractéristique des milieux marins. Les auteurs proposent de dater cette transition en années radiocarbone calibrées, dans l'intervalle compris entre 7460 et 6820 BP (Before Present). Ces auteurs, largement ouverts aux théories « pro déluge » de Ryan et Pitman, vont adopter une posture des plus originales pour justifier le caractère catastrophiste de cette transition. Arguant d'une communication personnelle avec F. Hiebert (dont on ignore la fonction et la nature de l'expertise), les auteurs interprètent l'absence de données archéologiques relatives au peuplement de la zone, jusqu'à une période très récente, comme le fruit de l'inscription du cataclysme du Déluge dans l'inconscient collectif, et la peur d'occuper la région durant des millénaires (jusqu'à 5500 av. J.-C.).

Les auteurs envisagent également que les changements environnementaux engendrés par l'inondation n'auraient pas permis aux sociétés néolithiques de s'adapter aux nouvelles conditions. Malgré la faiblesse de l'argumentation, les hypothèses catastrophistes en lien avec le déluge vont soulever un énorme intérêt, tant auprès du grand public que de la communauté scientifique. La médiatisation s'intensifie dans les médias : la BBC (1996), *New Scientist* (1997, 2003), le *New York Times*⁹⁵ (Wilford 1999, 2001), le *Washington Post* (1999, 2000), *Der Spiegel* (2000), *National Geographic* (2001), le *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (2003)... vont donner une visibilité aux hypothèses catastrophistes.

⁹³ <http://annuaire.ifremer.fr/cv/16316/#top>, (Accessed December 2017).

⁹⁴ Balard *et al.* (2000).

⁹⁵ Wilford (1999, 2001).

Au vu des résultats obtenus, et pour répondre aux questionnements chronologiques, une autre campagne en mer fut réalisée en 2004 dans le cadre du programme européen ASSEMBLAGE coordonné par Gilles Lericolais, avec l'appui du navire d'exploration océanographique Marion Dufresne. L'intérêt de ces recherches de grande qualité est d'avoir contribué à préciser le calage chronologique et à caractériser le processus de la transgression marine en mer Noire. Ces auteurs placent le niveau de la mer Noire, au moment où s'opère la reconnexion, aux alentours de - 80/100 mètres sous le niveau marin actuel. Si l'on devait retenir cette proposition, une grande partie de la plateforme continentale aurait été découverte au début du Néolithique, notamment au large de la Bulgarie et de Roumanie, dans la zone de l'actuel delta du Danube. Les premiers colons néolithiques, dans l'hypothèse encore non avérée où la région aurait été « néolithisée » précocement, auraient été impactés par le phénomène de submersion. En l'absence de données archéologiques, les données chrono-sédimentaires ne permettent pas de présumer de la « rapidité » du phénomène ni de son caractère catastrophique pour les sociétés de la Préhistoire récente.

Dans le même temps, les opposants aux thèses catastrophistes vont se réunir autour de Valentina Yanko-Hombach – chercheuse d'origine ukrainienne, travaillant au Canada – et se saisir des arguments des partisans de la submersion rapide en mer Noire pour développer des

modèles alternatifs. Au début des années 2000, de nombreux articles sont publiés pour réfuter l'hypothèse du flooding. Ces publications scientifiques témoignent de la densité du débat scientifique⁹⁶. Mais le débat peut déborder du cadre scientifique si l'on s'en tient aux déclarations de W. Ryan lorsqu'il retranscrit⁹⁷ une déclaration de Yanko-Hombach lors d'une présentation orale à l'occasion de la réunion annuelle de la Geological Society of America à Seattle en 2003 : « Il est impossible qu'un tel événement ait pu échapper à des décennies de recherche soviétique ».

On doit à Valentina Yanko-Hombach d'avoir mobilisé la communauté scientifique. La publication, en 2007, d'un ouvrage de synthèse *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate, and Human Settlement*⁹⁸ dresse une revue des hypothèses et des données disponibles. L'intérêt de cet ouvrage est d'utiliser les données archéologiques pour évaluer le bien fondé historique de l'impact réel ou fictif d'un tel événement pour les sociétés de la Préhistoire récente⁹⁹.

C'est avec adresse que Douglas Bailey a su porter le débat dans le champ des sciences humaines et montrer que les données archéologiques ne pouvaient pas être manipulées sans précautions. Si Bailey admet que les changements paléo-environnementaux jouent un rôle dans l'histoire des communautés humaines du début de l'Holocène, il rappelle avec justesse qu'il est inutile de faire appel à des événements catastrophistes pour expliquer la diffusion du processus de néolithisation.

⁹⁶ Aksu *et al.* (2002a, b), Hiscott et Aksu (2002), Hiscott *et al.* (2002), Yanko-Hombach *et al.* (2002), Chepalyga *et al.* (2003), Kaplin et Selivanov (2004).

⁹⁷ Ryan (2007).

⁹⁸ Yanko-Hombach (2007), Yanko-Hombach *et al.* (2007).

⁹⁹ Dolukhanov (2007), Anthony (2007), Bailey (2007).

De la même manière, le recours aux modèles déterministes, en établissant des liens de causalités entre changements sociaux et environnementaux, constitue une impasse. Bailey renchérit en proposant de changer d'échelle, et en observant que, si les modifications paléo-géographiques survenues en mer Noire ont eu des conséquences pour les communautés néolithiques, l'impact de ces changements demeure ponctuel au vu des échelles dans lesquelles sont inscrits les processus socio-culturels.

Si cet ouvrage ne tranche pas sur les différentes hypothèses, il montre clairement l'opposition entre les tenants de la remontée rapide du niveau marin et ceux d'une oscillation du niveau de la mer Noire. Mais d'autres chercheurs adoptent une posture plus réservée, minorant l'ampleur du phénomène. Ainsi, pour Liviu Giosan et ses collaborateurs¹⁰⁰, le niveau de la mer Noire, avant sa reconnexion avec la Méditerranée, n'aurait été inférieur que de 30 m au niveau marin actuel, au lieu des 80-100 m proposés par d'autres chercheurs. Giosan et ses collaborateurs proposent de minimiser l'impact de la submersion de la plateforme continentale, dont la surface serait réduite, mais également de reconsidérer la chronologie du phénomène. En se calant sur les courbes de remontées globales du niveau des océans et de données issues de carottages, Giosan propose de dater le début de la remontée du niveau marin vers 7400 BC. Le processus se serait produit de manière lente et progressive, à l'instar du reste de la Méditerranée.

Les données archéologiques tirées des fouilles que nous conduisons dans le

delta du Danube vont dans ce sens. L'étude de la formation et de l'abandon du tell chalcolithique de Taraschina, à Maliuc, occupé durant le 5^{ème} millénaire avant notre ère¹⁰¹, indique que, sous l'actuel delta du Danube, se trouve un paysage néolithique submergé. L'élévation du niveau marin, au début de l'Holocène, va provoquer des changements environnementaux majeurs, avec la formation de vastes zones humides, la modification du tracé des cours d'eau et du trait de côte. Mais ces changements se produisent à une échelle de temps longue au regard de la vie des sociétés humaines, ils s'étalent sur une durée que l'on peut évaluer de deux à trois siècles. Cette durée est, théoriquement, suffisamment longue pour permettre aux sociétés de s'adapter, de développer des modèles économiques alternatifs, de modifier leur mode de vie et leur économie. Dans le cas qui nous intéresse, la communauté agropastorale de Taraschina a tenté de pérenniser son modèle jusqu'à ce que le milieu ne lui permette plus d'exercer ses activités agricoles, et la contraigne à quitter la zone. Elle aurait tout aussi bien pu choisir de s'adapter aux nouvelles contraintes environnementales et développer une économie davantage centrée sur l'exploitation des ressources halieutiques. Pourquoi n'y a-t-il pas eu d'adaptation ? En choisissant d'abandonner son territoire, et en maintenant son mode de vie, la communauté semble avoir opéré un choix culturel, visant à privilégier la pérennisation de son système socio-culturel au détriment d'innovations et d'adaptations aux nouvelles contraintes environnementales.

¹⁰⁰ Giosan *et al.* (2006 ; 2009).

¹⁰¹ Carozza *et al.* (2012 ; 2013).

Dans ce processus, les changements environnementaux ne constituent qu'un facteur aggravant, devant l'incapacité des élites sociales à identifier les causes des modifications environnementales, trop impliquées dans le jeu de la reproduction d'un système social fortement hiérarchisé. Tout porte à croire que la rigidité d'un système social très codifié occupe une place tout aussi importante que celle communément attribuée aux forçages environnementaux pour expliquer les causes des ruptures qui se sont produites à l'échelle des Balkans, à la fin du 5^{ème} millénaire avant notre ère.

Les travaux sur les liens des sociétés passées avec leur environnement trouvent aujourd'hui un écho favorable, tant nos sociétés contemporaines sont confrontées à des changements globaux. En construisant des liens entre passé et avenir, nous participons à l'émergence d'un nouvel imaginaire.

Du Déluge au changement climatique global : une nouvelle mythologie scientifique

Il n'est point besoin de rappeler que les mythes modernes jouent un rôle extrêmement important dans le fonctionnement des sociétés ? Si le mythe du Déluge traverse les siècles, les millénaires et les civilisations, nos sociétés contemporaines ne sauraient s'extraire de cette construction. À la différence près, que, si nombre de ces récits originels ont été retranscrits sous la forme de textes sacrés, considérés comme les canons des religions monothéistes, les

mythes contemporains sont essentiellement scientifiques, et étroitement liés à la question du changement climatique global. Si les recherches menées sur le changement climatique débouchent irrévocablement sur la conclusion que l'humanité exerce une telle pression sur son environnement qu'elle en modifie le fonctionnement, ce constat implique un changement de paradigme. Les mythes modernes ne mettent plus en scène de punition divine châtiant la vilenie des hommes, mais au contraire une humanité sanctionnée par les conséquences de ses propres erreurs.

Si, depuis « L'hiver ou le Déluge » de Nicols Poussin en passant par Gustave Doré ou la célèbre « Scène du Déluge » de Théodore Géricault, l'art pictural nous livre une interprétation réaliste du mythe, l'imaginaire contemporain, de par la diversité des supports de création disponibles, le met en scène et le réinterprète à l'image d'une fin du monde inachevée. Le Déluge exerce un extraordinaire pouvoir de fascination sur le cinéma contemporain¹⁰². Certaines interprétations sont l'œuvre de réalisateurs intensément captivés par le récit mythique, à l'image du réalisateur américain Darren Aronofsky dont le film « Noé », sorti en 2014, met en scène un Noé charismatique incarné par l'acteur Russell Crowe.

Le film de Darren Aronofsky s'inscrit dans une trame narrative réaliste, d'un monde déliquescents, où Noé et sa famille reçoivent la mission de sauver le Monde. Dans le film d'animation « La prophétie des grenouilles », le réalisateur Jacques-Rémy Giret transpose le déluge dans un monde enfantin, où les grenouilles, incarnations de la figure du scientifique, prédisent quarante

¹⁰² Notre propos n'est pas ici de traiter de l'ensemble des films qui abordent ce sujet, et

on pourra citer pour exemple *The bible... in the beginning* de John Huston sorti en 1966.

jours de précipitations. Le salut viendra d'une chambre à air et de pommes de terre qui assureront la survie des animaux réfugiés dans une arche improvisée.

D'autres réalisateurs ont donné libre cours à leur imagination, et livré une image personnelle de la déferlante ; on renvoie ici à la scène de la lame géante qui provoqua la destruction de New York dans le film « Déluge » de F. Feist, sorti en 1933.

Le cinéma, comme vecteur de l'imaginaire contemporain, a abondamment utilisé le lien unissant le scientifique au cataclysme, comme clé du suspens. Dans le film « 2012 » de Roland Emmerich, sorti en 2009, le héros n'est autre qu'un scientifique qui, malgré ses erreurs dans l'établissement du calendrier du cataclysme, incarne un Noé moderne, à la morale infaillible. Au-delà de l'anecdote, dans un contexte où la culture scientifique se fait idéologie, force est de s'interroger sur le rôle des médias comme vecteurs de transmission de l'information scientifique¹⁰³, alors même que l'on sait combien l'imaginaire des chercheurs détermine, comme l'a montré Holton¹⁰⁴, leur représentation de l'objet étudié. Le recours répété à la figure du Déluge, comme dans le film-documentaire « Before the Flood » de Fisher Stevens¹⁰⁵, sorti en 2016, participe de cette idée que le changement climatique global s'inscrit dans un registre punitif, et que le progrès scientifique en constitue l'unique issue.

¹⁰³ Wolton (1990).

¹⁰⁴ Holton (1981).

¹⁰⁵ « Nous avons pour ambition de reprendre le flambeau d'Al Gore. La situation s'est aggravée depuis 'Une Vérité qui Dérange'. Lors des élections présidentielles de 2012 le changement climatique n'a jamais été mis sur la table. Nous avons donc décidé de faire un

Références:

Anthony, D.W. 2007. 'Pontic-Caspian Mesolithic and Early Neolithic societies at the time of the Black Sea flood: a small audience and small effects', in V. Yanko-Hombach et al. (eds.). 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 515-536.

Aksu, A.E., Hiscott, R.N., Mudie, P.J., Rochon, A., Kaminski, M.A., Abrajano, T., Yasar., D. 2002 (a). 'Persistent Holocene outflow from the Black Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean contradicts Noah's Flood hypothesis' *GSA Today* 12 /5 (2002), p. 4-10.

Aksu A.E., Hiscott, R.N. Yasar, D. Isler, F.I. Marsh S. 2002. (b) 'Seismic stratigraphy of Late Quaternary deposits from the southwestern Black Sea shelf: evidence for non-catastrophic variations in sea-level during the last 10000 years' *Marine Geology* 190 (2002), p. 61-94.

Babelon, E., 'La tradition phrygienne du déluge' *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 23 (1891), p. 174-183.

Bailey, D., 2007. 'Holocene changes in the level of the black sea: consequences at a human scale', in V. Yanko-Hombach et al. (eds.), 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 515-536.

Ballard, R. D., Coleman, D. F., Rosenberg, G.D., 'Further evidence of abrupt

film pour sensibiliser le grand public aux impacts déjà bien réels du phénomène, et à sa rapidité. ... »

<http://alternatives.blog.lemonde.fr/2016/10/16/avant-le-deluge-leonardo-di-caprio-cherche-a-mobiliser-les-foules-contre-le-changement-climatique/> (Accessed November 2017).

Holocene drowning of the Black Sea shelf' *Marine Geology* 170 (2000), p. 253-261.

Boia, L. 2004. *L'homme face au climat*. Paris : Les Belles Lettres.

Boucheron, P., D. Kalifa. 2016. *Les historiens croient-ils aux mythes*. Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne.

Boyer, R. 2012. *Mythes et religions scandinaves*. Paris : Rive neuve éditions.

Capart, A., Capart, D. 1986. *L'homme et les déluges*. Bruxelles : ed. Hayez, la longue vue.

Carozza, J.-M., Carozza, L., C. Micu, F. Mihail, 'Landscape change and archaeological settlements in the lower Danube valley and delta from Early Neolithic to Chalcolithic time. IGCP 521: Caspian-Black Sea-Mediterranean Corridors during the last 30 ka: sea level change and human adaptive strategies', *Selected Papers, Quaternary International* 261 (2012), p. 21-31.

Carozza, J.-M., L. Carozza, C. Micu, M. Danu, V. Radu, G. Opreanu, C. Haita, 'Après le Déluge : évolution géomorphologique du delta du Danube après la reconnexion Mer Noire / Méditerranée et ses implications sur le peuplement énéolithique' *Quaternaire* 24/4 (2013), p. 503-512.

Chepalyga, A. L., V. Yanko-Hombach, 'The Late Quaternary history of the Black Sea and Eurasian basins: a critical overview of the Flood hypotheses', in Program Abstracts of the International Conference "The Black Sea Flood: Archaeological and Geological Evidence" (18-20 October 2003, Columbia University, New York), 2003, p. 10-11.

Coran, LXXIX : 11-12

Couteneau, G., 1952. *Le déluge babylonien*. Paris: Payot.

Dalfes, H. N., Kukla, G. Weiss, H. (eds.). 2013. *Third Millennium BC Climate*

Change and Old World Collapse. NATO ASI Series, Global Environmental Change, vol. 49. Berlin : Springer.

Dhorme, E. 1986. *La Bible, L'ancien Testament I*. Paris : Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade.

Demoule, J.-P., 2014. *Mais où sont passés les Indo-Européens ? Le mythe d'origine de l'Occident*. Paris : Le Seuil, collection science humaines, La librairie du XXIème siècle.

D'Huy, J., Le Quellec, J.-L. 2014. 'Comment reconstruire la préhistoire des mythes ? Applications d'outils phylogénétiques à une tradition orale', in P. Charbonnat, M. Ben Hamed, G. Lecointre. 2014. *Apparenter la pensée ? Saisir l'évolution et la phylogénie des concepts savants*. Paris : Editions Matériologiques, p. 145-186.

Diamond, J., 2009, *Effondrement. Comment les sociétés décident de leur disparition ou de leur survie*. Paris : Gallimard.

Diodore de Sicile, *Livre V*, 47.

Demoule, J.-P., 'La préhistoire et ses mythes'. *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 37/ 5-6, Le document : Éléments critiques (1982), p. 741-759.

Dolukhanov, P., Shilik, K. 2007. 'Environment, sea-level changes, and human migrations in the northern Pontic area during late Pleistocene and Holocene times', in V. Yanko-Hombach et al. (eds.). 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 515-536.

Genèse 7, 1-12.

Giosan, L., Donnely, J.P., Constantinescu, S., Filip, F., Ovejanu, I., Vespremeanu-Stroe, A., Vespremeanu, E., Duller, G.A.T., 'Young Danube delta documents stable Black Sea level since the middle Holocene: morphodynamic,

paleogeographic, and archaeological implications' *Geology* 34/9 (2006), p. 757-760.

Giosan, L., Filip, F., Constantinescu, S., 'Was the Black Sea catastrophically flooded in the early Holocene?' *Quaternary Science Reviews* 28/1-2 (2009), p.1-6.

Grimal, P. 1969. *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine*. Paris: Presses universitaires.

Guelpa, P. 2009. *Dieux & mythes nordiques*, Septentrion.

Hiscott, R.N., Aksu, A.E., 'Late Quaternary history of the Marmara Sea and Black Sea from high-resolution seismic and gravity-core studies' *Marine Geology* 190/1-2 (2002), p. 261-282.

Hiscott R.N., Aksu A.E., Yaşar, D., Kaminski, M.A., Mudie, P.J., Kostylev, V.E., Mac Donald, J.C., İşler, F.I., Lord, A.R., 'Deltas south of the Bosphorus Strait record persistent Black Sea outflow to the Marmara Sea since ~10 ka' *Marine Geology* 190/1-2 (2002), p. 95-118.

Holton, G. 1981. *L'imagination scientifique*. Paris : Gallimard.

Joannes, F., 2016. 'Le Déluge universel est-il le débit de l'histoire ?', in D. Kalifa (ed.) 2016. *Les historiens croient-ils aux mythes ?* Paris : Publications de la Sorbonne, p. 65-77.

Jung, C. G., 2014, *Métamorphoses de l'âme et ses symboles*, Le livre de poche.

Kaplin, P.A., Selivanov, A.O., 'Lateglacial and Holocene sea level changes in semi-enclosed seas of North Eurasia: examples from the contrasting Black and White Seas'. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 209/1-4 (2004), p. 19-36.

Kuzucuoglu, C., Marro, C. (ed.). 2007. *Sociétés humaines et changement climatique à la fin du troisième millénaire : une crise a-t-elle eu lieu en Haute Mésopotamie ?* Actes du colloque

de Lyon, 5-8 déc. 2005. *Varia Anatolica* XIX. Paris : De Boccard.

Labat, R., Caquot, A., 1970. *Les religions du Proche Orient asiatique*. Paris : Fayard-Denoël.

Lebeuf, J.-P., 1976. *Études Kotoko*. Paris : Mouton.

Lenormant, F., 1837-1883. *Les origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible*. Tomes I and II.

Lericolais, G., Popescu, I., Guichard, F., Popescu, S., Manolakakis, L., 2007. 'Water-level fluctuations in the Black Sea since the Last Glacial Maximum', in V. Yanko-Hombach et al. (eds.). 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 515-536.

Le Quellec, J.-L., 'Existe t-il des mythes universels ? Entretien avec Nicolas Journet', in *Les grands mythes. Origine, Histoire* (2014). Éditions Sciences Humaines, p. 9-14.

Levy-Strauss, C. 2009. *Mythologiques*. Paris : Plon.

Mathieu, R. 1989. *Anthologie des mythes et légendes de la Chine ancienne*. Paris : Gallimard.

Muecke, S. et coll. 2002. *Les Aborigènes d'Australie*. Paris : Gallimard.

Ovide, (D. Robert traduction). 2001. *Les métamorphoses*. Paris : Actes Sud, collection Thésaurus.

Parrot, A. 1946/1953. *Manuel d'archéologie mésopotamienne*. vol. 1-2. Paris : Albin Michel.

Parrot, A., *Déluge et arche de Noé*. *Cahiers D'Archéologie Biblique* 1 (1952), Neuchâtel.

Pindare. 1922-1930. *Les odes Olympiques*, IX-157-158, traduction A. Puech, Paris : Les Belles Lettres.

Platon, Brisson, L. (traducteur). 2008. *Critias, Platon, Œuvres complètes*, Flammarion.

Platon, Brisson, L. (traducteur). 2008. *Le Timée, Platon, Œuvres complètes*, Flammarion.

Raynaud, G. 2000. *Le Popol Vuh : Les dieux, les héros et les hommes de l'ancien Guatemala d'après le livre du conseil*, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Jean Maisonneuve, coll. « Classiques d'Amérique et d'Orient ».

Ross, D., Degen, E., Mac Ilvaine, J., 'Black sea sedimentary' *History, Science* 170/3954 (1970), p. 163-165.

Ryan, W., 2007. 'Status of the Black Sea flood hypothesis', in V. Yanko-Hombach et al. (eds.). 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 515-536.

Ryan, W., Pitman, W. 2000. *Noah's Flood: The new scientific discoveries about the event that changed history*, Simon & Schuster.

Ryan, W., Pitman, W. C., Major, C.O., 'An Abrupt drowning in the Black Sea', *Marine Geology* 138/1-2 (1997), p. 119-126.

Seguin, M.S. 2001. *Science et religion dans la pensée française du XVIIIe siècle : le mythe du Déluge universel*. Paris : Honoré Champion.

Varenne, J. 2003. *Le Véda*, éd. Planète, Les Deux Océans.

Vigouroux, F. (dir.). 1912. *Dictionnaire de la Bible*. Paris : Letouzey et Ané, t. 2, p. 1343-1344.

Weiss, H. 2000. 'Beyond the Younger Dryas: Collapse as Adaptation to Abrupt Climate Change in Ancient West Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean', in G. Bawden and R. M. Reycraft (eds.). 2000. *Environmental Disaster and the Archaeology of Human Response*. Albuquerque: Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, p. 63-74.

Weiss, H., Courty, M.-A., Wetterstrom, W., Guichard, F., Senior, L. Meadow, R., Curnow, A., 'The Genesis and Collapse of North Mesopotamian Civilization' *Science* 291 (1993), p. 995-2008.

Wolton, D. 1990. *L'éloge du grand public*. Paris: Flammarion.

Woolley, C. L. 1929. *Ur of the Chaldees: A Record of Seven Years of Excavation*. London: Ernest Benn Limited.

Yanko-Hombach, V., 2007. 'Controversy over Noah's Flood in the Black Sea: geological and foraminiferal evidence from the shelf', in Yanko-Hombach, V., Gilbert, A. S., Panin, N. and Dolukhanov, P. (eds). 2007. *The Black Sea Flood Question: Changes in Coastline, Climate and Human Settlement*. Dordrecht: Springer, p. 149-203.

Laurent Carozza est chargé de recherche au CNRS, membre de l'UMR 5602 Géographie de l'Environnement. Archéologue de formation, il a soutenu sa thèse de doctorat à l'EHESS en 1997, au sein de l'Ecole Doctorale « Anthropologie Sociale et Historique de l'Europe ». Il travaille sur les relations société, climat, environnement dans des terrains aussi diversifiés que la méditerranée occidentale, le Maghreb, l'Amérique du sud. Il dirige actuellement la mission archéologique franco-roumaine « Archéologie delta du Danube » du Ministère Français de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères.

Albane Burens est ingénieur de recherche au CNRS, membre de l'UMR 5602 Géographie de l'Environnement à Toulouse. Archéologue et topographe, elle est responsable de la plateforme 3D de GEODE. Ses thématiques de recherche sont orientées vers les interactions sociétés/environnements, l'adaptabilité des sociétés anciennes aux changements sociaux et environnementaux et la technologie céramique. Elle est membre de la mission archéologique « Archéologie delta du Danube ».

LEONARDO GREGORATTI

Fighting a Dying Enemy: The Struggle between Rome and the Parthians

Abstract

From the mid-first century BC, when Crassus's legions suffered a disastrous defeat on the open steppes of northern Mesopotamia, until the early decades of the third century AD, Rome's expansionist goals in the East were fiercely opposed by the Parthians. What is now known about the history and structure of the Parthian kingdom is mainly based on the incomplete and largely stereotyped accounts given by Roman and Greek writers of the Imperial Era. Influenced by the attitude of the Classical Greek writers towards the Persians and by the needs of the Imperial propaganda, they depicted the Arsacid Empire as a weak opponent, lacking strong leadership and permanently on the brink of collapse as a consequence of internal struggle. Many modern scholars began to question this perspective. Modern research attempts to abandon the description that Roman writers offered – that of a weak Oriental empire – trying to set aside the myths and prejudices which the Europeans shared concerning great kingdoms of the Near East in every period.

Keywords: Parthian Kingdom, Achaemenids, Rome, Ottoman Empire, Greek historiography, Roman propaganda

According to Sir George Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, it was Nicholas I, Tsar of Russia in 1853, in the run up to the Crimean War, who first spoke about the Ottoman Empire utilizing the well-known expression 'sick man of Europe'. More precisely the Russian emperor referring to the Sublime Porte, which was increasingly falling under the financial control of the European powers and had lost territory in a series of disastrous wars, stated: 'It is a sick man, a very sick

man, a man who has fallen into a state of decrepitude'¹⁰⁶.

Four centuries after the fall of Constantinople, the Turkish 'hordes' no longer represented a threat for the European countries. By that time, the fierce and dreadful warrior who had previously fought at Mohács and Vienna, the gates of Western world, and had threatened to conquer all of Christian Europe, had come to be perceived as a weak and indolent old man, slowly progressing towards the inevitable end¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ In a letter from Sir George Hamilton Seymour to Lord John Russell: Temperley (1936), 272. Source: Parliamentary Papers. Accounts and Papers: Thirty-Six Volumes: Eastern Papers, V. Session 31 January-12 August 1854, Vol. LXXI (1854), doc. 1, p. 2. The actual use of the expression 'sick man' by the Russian monarch is still

disputed. What is certain, nevertheless, is that the reference to Europe appears to have been added later and may very well have been a journalistic misquotation. The first appearance of the phrase as such is in the *New York Times* (12 May 1860).

¹⁰⁷ Cirakman (2002).

This idea of a once powerful oriental empire now depicted as sick and dying was not at all new among Western writers and historians. In the view of most Western observers, the empire built by the Ottoman Turks on the ruins of the Eastern Roman Empire had shared, since its inception, most of the characteristics (or *topoi*, if one is to use literary terminology) which Europeans had ascribed in the course of history to any Oriental state: the vastness of its domains, the exotic luxury, the flaunted opulence, the despotism, the intrinsic weakness, the extreme instability of its monarchs (and of any form of central authority, for that matter), the intermingling of private and public life in the secret chambers of the harem, where intrigue, seduction and murder constituted natural means of political action.

Exploring the origins of this characterization based on sheer prejudice and applied to any large kingdom in western Asia, takes us back in time to the work of none other than the 'Father of History', Herodotus, who in his *Historiai* describes to a Greek audience the history, the culture, the customs, and the administrative structure of the neighbouring kingdom of Persia, ruled by the powerful Achaemenids, the first serious threat to Greek cities coming from the East, in other words the 'other' par excellence.

Discussing the Greek historians' approach to the Achaemenid state, Arnaldo Momigliano wrote: "There was no effort to see what kept the empire together behind the administrative façade"¹⁰⁸. Thus, from the very beginnings of Western historiography,

within the framework of Greek historical investigation, there arose a series of tales, legends, and pseudo-historical episodes, some patently fictitious¹⁰⁹. These narrations dealt mainly with the exercise of power, the role of the king and the relationship between the sovereign and his court, and were fundamental in developing the Western 'mythos' of the Oriental Empire: a stereotype which, due to the scarcity of local sources or, more often, due to ignorance concerning the Oriental world, survived until at least the nineteenth century.

Even though many of the accounts Herodotus records had no historical foundation¹¹⁰, they were used by later authors to prove the superiority of the Greek world in comparison to the Oriental one, particularly underlining the fact that the democratic solution – the most original contribution to world politics made by the Hellenic culture – was the best and most successful form of government, standing in stark contrast with the despotism of the Eastern monarchs¹¹¹.

In this regard, it is significant how the Greek historians represented or, indeed, imagined the way in which the king made his political decisions and in particular the role of women within the Persian court. As early as the reign of Xerxes¹¹² (spurred, no doubt, by his unsuccessful attempt to conquer Greece), Hellenic historiographers began to consider the Achaemenid court as weakened by luxury and wealth. Persian policy and royal decisions were, in the eyes of the Greeks, strongly influenced by palace intrigues¹¹³. According to Herodotus, for example, the political influence of Queen

¹⁰⁸ Momigliano (1979). 150.

¹⁰⁹ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993), 22.

¹¹⁰ Snodgrass (1980), 168.

¹¹¹ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993), 32-33.

¹¹² Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1989).

¹¹³ Amestris: Hdt. 9.110-112; Ctesias, *FGrH* 688 F 14 (36, 39, 42-43); F 15 (51, 54-55); Deinon

Atossa¹¹⁴ on her husband, the Great King Darius, was so strong that she was able to induce him to make war on the Greeks, because she wanted to have Attic, Argive, and Corinthian maidservants¹¹⁵.

In Herodotus, the desire for power of the Persian queens was linked to the stereotypical idea which the Greeks had about Oriental despotism. Those women could be strong because the kings, their husbands and sons, were weak. Herodotus' so called 'harem tales', i.e. episodes of court life featuring merciless queens as protagonists, suggested to the Hellenic reader that a state where women wielded such influence on the kings could not be a properly ruled state¹¹⁶. The Persians described by Herodotus and Ctesias (a Greek physician who lived and worked at the Great King's court)¹¹⁷ were decadent because they let their women have a voice in political affairs. A state ruled by women instead of men, the Greeks reasoned, could not be a healthy state. This was the main symptom of the decaying condition in which the Achaemenid Empire found itself: a state once powerful, feared and healthy, was now weak and diseased.

It would be going too far to ascribe to Herodotus the intentional invention of this

sort of 'decadent portrait' of the Persian Empire. Nonetheless, the historical information and in particular the references to luxury, pomp, alcoholism, polygamy, and court conflicts contained in his work were predominantly used by later writers to depict the Persians as a society in full decay, who lost the austerity and the strength they had when Cyrus had founded the empire¹¹⁸. For Plato, the balance between royal power and slavery on the one hand and freedom on the other, which had been preserved by Cyrus, had been gradually lost under his successors¹¹⁹. The princes of the Persian court had been educated in luxury and indolence since Xerxes' time, that is to say, since the women of the court had assumed responsibility for educating the future leaders¹²⁰.

According to Xenophon, a problem of education was also the basis of the alleged military decadence of the Persians during the 4th century BC¹²¹. The Achaemenids were no longer able to plan a military campaign without employing Greek mercenaries¹²². Preferring to live in the luxury and opulence typical of the 'Medes'¹²³ they gave up training as warriors through hunting and physical exercises¹²⁴, resulting in their military inferiority, a topic picked up again

FGrH 690 F 15b; D1 105; Plut., *Art.*, 14.10; 16.1; 17.1; 19.2-3; 23.1.

¹¹⁴ Hdt., 7.69.2; Hdt., 7.3.2; Schmitt, Atossa, (1987), p. 13-14; Tourraix (1976), 377-380; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993), 25.

¹¹⁵ Hdt., 3.134.1; Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993), 24-25; Brosius (1996), 107.

¹¹⁶ Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1993), 22.

¹¹⁷ Ctesias, *FGrH* 688 F 15 (48-50); Auburger (1993), 263-267; Brosius (1996), 100-112; Lenfant, (1996), 348-80.

¹¹⁸ Bichler and Rollinger (2000), 223-227 and 269-277; Bichler and Rollinger (2000), 87-90; Bichler and Rollinger (2002); Rollinger (2004).

¹¹⁹ Plato, *Leges*, 3.693c – 697e.

¹²⁰ Plato, *Leges*, 3.697c – 698a; Briant (1989), 33-34.

¹²¹ An idea already present in Herodotus, for example in 5.49-50, where Persian military weakness is put in direct relation with their legendary wealth; Briant (1989), 38.

¹²² Xen., *Cyr.*, 8.8. 22; 24-27; Briant (1989), 35.

¹²³ Xen., *Cyr.*, 8.8. 15.

¹²⁴ Xen., *Cyr.*, 8.8. 8-12; 16-17.

by the Athenian rhetorician Isocrates, a great supporter of pan-Hellenism and a vociferous promoter of the war against the Great King¹²⁵.

It seems clear that the main purpose of Plato, Xenophon and Isocrates was not to provide a reliable historical portrait. Their intentions were, of course, ideological. So their description of the Persian reality was conceived in order to better explain and show their political ideas and their message. For these authors, dealing with Achaemenid policy was a merely a rhetorical device, an instrument they deployed to make more convincing their speeches concerning contemporary Greek policy.

New approaches to Persian history, recuperating local, Oriental sources, helped establish that the Achaemenid Empire was not the 'sick' state described by many Greek writers at any point in the fourth century, not even in 334 BC, when Alexander launched his Oriental expedition.

About five centuries later, another Western power, the Roman Empire, was once again facing a powerful Oriental enemy: the Parthians¹²⁶. In the war against two of Rome's most dangerous enemies, Mithridates, King of Pontus, and his ally Tigranes of Armenia, Pompey the Great occupied Syria (first century BC), thus dealing the *coup de grace* to the Seleucid dynasty, which had been severely weakened when, just a few years previously, the

Armenian king had expelled them from their last Syrian possessions. Rome inherited the Seleucid territory and its enemies as well. These included, beyond the Euphrates, the Parthians, who were forced to abandon their plans of conquering Syria and reaching the Mediterranean coast after Rome's intervention¹²⁷.

In 53 BC, Crassus's legions suffered a disastrous defeat in northern Mesopotamia. From that time until the early decades of the third century AD, Rome's expansionist goals in the East were fiercely opposed by the Parthians. The kingdom of the Parthians was established a few decades after Alexander's death, in central Asia, close to the remotest borders of the Seleucid Empire. Its monarchs were members of the Arsacid dynasty and were able to gain the best advantages from the weakening of the house of Seleucos and the consequent disintegration of that huge Hellenistic state. They managed to spread their control over large territories of Southern Asia. The Parthian heavy cavalry, after overrunning the whole of the Iranian plateau, Babylonia and Mesopotamia, stopped on the Eastern bank of the Euphrates River, which was to remain the Western limit of Arsacid expansion. For more than three centuries, the Euphrates constituted the dividing line between two superpowers struggling for supremacy in western Asia: Rome and Parthia¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ Isocr., *Paneg.*, 4.141; 150-151; 162; 165; 184; *Philipp.*, 5.126; followed by Arr., *Anab.*, 3.22.2-3; Briant (1989), 36-38.

¹²⁶ In general on the history of the Parthian Kingdom: Debevoise (1938); Schippmann (1980); Bivar (1983), 21-99; Dabrowa (1983); Frye (1984); Wolski (1993); Wiesehöfer (1994).

¹²⁷ Plutarh, *Pomp.*, 39.3. In general on the Roman presence in the East, see the

fundamental: Millar (1993); Sartre (2001). Also useful: Ball (2000); Butcher (2003).

¹²⁸ As described by Velleius Paterculus, witness of the meeting on an island in the middle of the river between Gaius Caesar and the Parthian Great King Phraates V (1/2 AD); Velleius Paterculus, 2.101.2-3; Cassius Dio, 55.10.18-19; Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 12.2; Orosius *Adversum Paganos*, 7.3.4; Ziegler (1964), 53-54;

Tacitus, Cassius Dio and Plutarch have dedicated large portions of their works to the narrative of Rome's policy in the East, dealing in detail with the events connected with the difficult cohabitation with the 'barbarians' beyond the Euphrates and with the struggle for supremacy in Western Asia. Due to the general scarcity of Parthian (and, in general, Oriental sources), our knowledge of the Parthian kingdom and its administrative structure depends almost exclusively on the stereotyped accounts drawn up by Roman and Greek writers. Unfortunately, they were interested almost exclusively in the Arsacid provinces closest to the Roman borders and in the historical episodes more closely connected with Rome's policy¹²⁹.

Charlotte Lerouge's recent work, *L'image des Parthes dans le monde gréco-romain* demonstrated that the Roman concept of the Arsacid kingdom and its inhabitants, its organization and culture, is a *réchauffé* utilising several of those same old elements, which had been previously ascribed by Classical Greek historians to their Persian enemies¹³⁰. In this context, the Parthians, much like the Achaemenids five centuries before, were described as a decadent people, addicted to luxury and pleasure.

The fabulous retinues of men, animals and carriages which accompanied General Surena on the field of Carrhae¹³¹ and

Tiridates, the Arsacid prince who travelled from Parthia to Rome in order to be confirmed on the throne of Armenia by Emperor Nero¹³², caught the imagination of the contemporary Romans and found a place in the chronicles of later historians. Recurring references to Arsacid wealth, luxurious banquets and clothing can be also found in the works of Pompeius Trogus¹³³, Tacitus¹³⁴, Philostratus¹³⁵, and Herodian¹³⁶. Other common features attributed to the Parthians were the despotism of their kings¹³⁷, their insatiable sexual appetite¹³⁸, and political instability¹³⁹: all of these elements had already been attributed to the Persian monarchs by Greek writers.

Roman historians were faced with a difficult task: having to provide the Western public with a representation of the only people daring to challenge Rome's supremacy over the whole known world. They found that the best solution was to provide a moral representation of the Parthians using the same stereotypes which the Greeks had conceived and handed down with regard to their enemies. A series of familiar ethnographic *topoi* were picked up and amalgamated in order to create a new artificial model for the Parthian people¹⁴⁰. Nonetheless, such a model proved useful in describing to the Romans this exotic people, capable of building a kingdom which, unlike all the others, Rome was not immediately

Zetzel, (1970), 259-266; Romer, (1974), 171-173; Luther (2010), 103-127.

¹²⁹ For the sources concerning the history of the Parthian Kingdom: Wiesehöfer (1998) and the recent Hack, Jacobs and Weber (2010).

¹³⁰ Lerouge (2007), 349-363.

¹³¹ Plut., *Crass.*, 21.6-9.

¹³² Cassius Dio, 62.1-2.

¹³³ Just., 41.2.4.

¹³⁴ Tac., *Ann.*, 2.57.

¹³⁵ Philostr., *Ap. Tyana*, 1.25; 30; 33-34.

¹³⁶ Herod., 3.4.8; 9.11; 4.10.4; 11.3; 11.6; 15.3; Lerouge (2007), p. 450.

¹³⁷ Just., 41.3.9; Plut., *Luc.*, 21.5-6; Tac., *Ann.*, 12.10.2.

¹³⁸ Just., 41.3.1; Plut., *Crass.*, 21.7; Joseph., *B.Iud.*, 7.247.

¹³⁹ Just., 42.4.1-4; 5.1-2.

¹⁴⁰ Lerouge (2007), 262-267.

able to subjugate, a kingdom which forced the greatest empire of that time to compromise.

Similarly to what happened to the Persians after they failed to conquer Greece, the Parthians also began to be described as a weak and inconstant people, after the defeat the Romans suffered at Carrhae (53 BC), when the leadership of the universal Roman state was forced to admit the existence of something beyond Rome. The needs of imperial propaganda thus imposed an ideal representation of 'the other': the Parthian state could not be allowed to be perceived as a viable political alternative.

The Parthians, the Oriental enemies, were thus for the Roman historians the 'New Persians', heirs of the Achaemenids in the East, while the Roman Empire stood as the defender of the Western culture, much like the Athenians of old.

Unlike the Persian Empire, which experienced a period of economic prosperity just after the Greek wars, at the beginning of the first century AD, the Arsacid Empire reached the peak of a long-lasting condition of social and institutional instability. The Parthian aristocracy succeeded in overriding the King's authority. Monarchs were maintained with the only intent of providing a formal legitimacy for the power gained by one or the other among the aristocratic groups. Parthia was torn by the competition between the two main noble factions: on the

one hand, the Oriental families were always engaged in the struggle against nomadic invaders from Central Asia; on the other hand, the Mesopotamian families were connected with the Greek urban aristocracy and were well-disposed towards a settlement with Rome. Both groups were interested in weakening the crown in order to extend their own power and to consolidate their independence from the king¹⁴¹.

The Roman chroniclers failed to understand the causes of this internal struggle, preferring to adopt a more superficial explanation, based on well-known stereotypes regarding the Oriental barbarians. Tacitus' words concerning the Parthian attitude towards their kings, for example, appear significant in this regard. After the end of the reign of King Phraates (4 AD) some Parthian nobles sent envoys to Rome in order to ask Augustus to send as new king Vonones, one of the Arsacid princes since many years living in Rome (6-8 AD)¹⁴². Tacitus states: "The barbarians received him joyfully, as is usual with new rulers. Soon they felt shame at Parthians having become degenerate, at having sought a king from another realm"¹⁴³. Great King Artabanus II was well aware of this mental attitude of the Parthians toward their rulers. After being overthrown by a coup d'état supported by Roman authorities (35-36 AD)¹⁴⁴, he sought refuge by fleeing to the

¹⁴¹ Wolski (1980), 141; Wolski (1981/1984), 13-21; Boyce (1994), 241-251.

¹⁴² Joseph., *A.Iud.*, 18.46-47; Suet., *Tib.*, 16.1; *Res Gestae* 33; Tac. *Ann.*, 2.1-3; 6.36 and 6.42; Cass. Dio, 40.15.3-4; Debevoise (1938), 151; Kahrstedt (1950), 17-18; Ziegler (1964), 56; Pani (1972), 125; Angeli Bertinelli (1979), 53; Schippmann (1980), 49; Dąbrowa (1983), 44-

45; Frye (1984), 237; Sellwood (1980), typ. 60, 194-195; Wolski (1993), 150.

¹⁴³ Tac., *Ann.*, 2.1-2: *Et accipere barbari laetantes, ut ferme ad nova imperia. mox subiit pudor: degeneravisse Parthos; petitum alio ex orbe regem [...]*.

¹⁴⁴ Tac., *Ann.*, 6.36-37; Schippmann (1980), 52; Bivar (1983), 73-74; Dąbrowa (1983), 90-91;

easternmost provinces of the empire hoping that “the Parthians, who do not hate the ruler who is afar, but are ever ready to betray him who is near at hand, might come to regret their previous deeds”¹⁴⁵. At a later time, Caius Cassius Longinus, governor of Syria, was commissioned to escort the young prince Meherdates (49 AD) to the bank of the Euphrates¹⁴⁶. Having encamped at Zeugma, where the river was most easily fordable, they awaited the arrival of the chief men of Parthia and of Acbarus (Abgar), king of the Arabs. There, the governor “reminded Meherdates that the impulsive enthusiasm of barbarians soon flags from delay or even changes into treachery, and that therefore he should urge on his enterprise”¹⁴⁷. In fact, in the course of the Eastern campaign, Izates king of the Adiabeni and then Abgar of the Arabs deserted with their troops, “*with their countrymen’s characteristic fickleness*”, writes Tacitus, “confirming previous experience, that barbarians prefer to seek a king from Rome rather than to keep him”¹⁴⁸.

Tacitus’ point of view demonstrates that the Roman explanation for the condition of political crisis in Parthia was ascribed to the very nature of the ‘barbarians’. In the absence of a real historical investigation, the temporary weakness of the Arsacids was seen as a natural consequence of their whimsical and inconstant nature. The Parthians were seen to be politically unstable, because they were unfaithful,

treacherous and unable to consolidate a kingdom always on the brink to collapse¹⁴⁹. According to the Romans, the reality could not be different: the Parthian kingdom was weak because the nature of its monarchs and subjects was weak.

Such a short-sighted approach did not allow Western historians to understand the transformations which took place within the Parthian society starting from the second half of the first century AD. Vologaeses I, who ruled from 51 AD, was able to strengthen the Crown’s presence across the land and the trade routes, effectively eliminating the overwhelming influence of the aristocracy¹⁵⁰. By making his two brothers, monarchs in Armenia and in Media Atropatene, associates to the throne, he conferred stability to the top of the state structure, setting the foundation for the success of his rule. From this time on, the royal institution was able to face any situation of international crisis.

Over the course of the following 170 years of almost incessant confrontation, Rome tried several times to cross the boundary of the Euphrates in order to extend its power and influence over Armenia and Mesopotamia and deprive its rival of these strategic areas. Vologaeses was able to defeat the Romans after a long war in Armenia and his successors managed to oppose all military campaigns which the Emperors launched against the heart of the Parthian

Dąbrowa (1989), 317-318; Wolski (1993), 161; Olbrycht (1998), 151-155.

¹⁴⁵ Tac., *Ann.*, 6.36.

¹⁴⁶ Tac., *Ann.*, 12.10-14; Bivar (1983), 76-77; Dąbrowa (1983), 121-122.

¹⁴⁷ Tac., *Ann.*, 12.12: *Cassius [...]monet Meherdaten barbarorum impetus acres cunctatione languescere aut in perfidiam mutari: ita urguere coepta.*

¹⁴⁸ Tac., *Ann.*, 12.14: *levitate gentili, et quia exprimentis cognitum est barbaros malle Roma petere reges quam habere.*

¹⁴⁹ Lerouge (2007), 267-270.

¹⁵⁰ Košelenko (1971), 761-765; Chaumont (1974), 75-81; Keall (1975), 623-624; Chaumont (1976), 124; Frye (1984), 227-228; Dąbrowa (1991), 150-153; Olbrycht (1998), 129-130.

kingdom. Parthia managed to resist the Romans at the maximum of their power without crumbling to pieces.

It seems clear that the long-lived propagandistic myth of the intrinsic weakness of all Oriental empires caused the Romans to underestimate their oriental adversary's capacity for recovery. The same mistakes were repeated many centuries later in the years following the First World War, by European powers eager to share the spoils of an Ottoman empire which had been 'sick' for a long time, but was perhaps too hastily declared dead¹⁵¹.

References :

- Angeli Bertinelli, G. 1979. *Roma e l'Oriente. Strategia, economia, società e cultura nelle relazioni politiche fra Roma, la Giudea e l'Iran*. Problemi e Ricerche di Storia Antica 7. Roma : L'Erma di Bretschneider.
- Auberger, J. 'Ctésias et les femmes', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 19 (1993), p. 253-272.
- Ball, W. 2000. *Rome in the East. The transformation of an empire*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Bichler, R. 2000. *Herodots Welt: Der Aufbau der Historie am Bild der fremden Länder und Völker, ihrer Zivilisation und ihrer Geschichte*, Antike in der Moderne. Berlin: Akademie Verlag.
- Bichler, R., R. Rollinger. 2000. *Herodot: Eine Einführung*. Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York.
- Bichler, R., R. Rollinger, 'Greece VI. The Image of Persia and Persian in Greek Literature', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XI/3 (2002)(<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/greece-v>, retrieved 17.02.2012)
- Bivar David A., 'The Political History of Iran under the Arsacids', in E. Yarshater (ed.). 1983. *The Cambridge History of Iran, The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, III/1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 21-99.
- Boyce, M., 'The sedentary Arsacids' *Iranica Antiqua* 29 (1994), p. 241-251.
- Briant, P., 'Histoire et idéologie: Les Grecs et la 'décadence perse'', in M.-M. Mactoux and E. Geny (eds.). *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque II: Anthropologie et société*. 1989. Paris : Les Belles Lettres, p. 33-47.
- Brosius, M. 1996. *Women in Ancient Persia (539-331 BC)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Butcher, K. 2003. *Roman Syria and the Near East*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum .
- Chaumont, M.-L., 'Études d'histoire parthe III. Les villes fondées par les Vologèses' *Syria* 51 (1974), p. 75-89.
- Chaumont, M.-L., 'L'Arménie entre Rome et l'Iran I. De l'avènement d'Auguste à l'avènement de Dioclétien', in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II, 9, 1. 1976. Berlin-New York: Ed. Temporini, H. & Haase, p. 71-194.

¹⁵¹ This article was initially published in *Myth Making and Myth Breaking in History and the Humanities*. ... edited by Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Ionuț Epurescu-Pascovici, Cristian Emilian Ghiță.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/35911423/2/C-F-Dobre-I-Epurescu-Pascovici-C-E->

Ghiță, C. A. 2018. *Myth-Making-and-Myth-Breaking-in-History-and-the-Humanities*-pdf (accessed on 1st of May 2018)

Cirakman, A. 2002. *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe": European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Ninetenth*. New York-Washington-Bern : Peter Lang.

Dąbrowa, E. 1983. *La politique de l'état parthe à l'égard de Rome – d'Artaban II à Vologèse I (ca 11 – ca 79 de n. è.) et les facteurs qui la conditionnaient*. Kraków : Uniwersytet Jagiellonski.

Dąbrowa, E., 'Les héros de luttes politiques dans l'état parthe dans la première moitié du I^{er} siècle de notre ère' *Iranica Antiqua* 24 (1989), p. 311-322

Dąbrowa, E., 'Die Politik der Arsakiden auf dem Gebiet des südlichen Mesopotamiens und im Becken des Persischen Meerbusens in der zweiten Hälfte des I. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.' *Mesopotamia* XXVI (1991), p. 141-153.

Debevoise, N. C. 1938. *A Political History of Parthia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Frye, R. N. 1984. *The History of Ancient Iran*. München: Beck.

Hackl, U., B. Jacobs, D. Weber 2010. *Quellen zur Geschichte des Partherreiches*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.

Kahrstedt, U. 1950. *Artabanos III. und seine Erben* (Dissertationes Bernenses I 2). Bern: A. Francke.

Keall, E., 'Parthian Nippur and Vologases' Southern Strategy: A Hypothesis', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 95 (1975), p. 620-632.

Košelenko, G. 'La politique commerciale des Arsacides et les villes grecques', in A. Giuffrè (ed.), *Studi in onore di Edoardo Volterra*, I. 1971. Milano : Fac. di Giurisprudenza della Univ. Di Roma, p. 761-765.

Lenfant, D., 'Ctésias et Hérodote ou les réécritures de l'histoire dans la Perse achéménide' *Revue des études grecques* 109 (1996), p. 348-380.

Lerouge, Ch. 2007. *L'image des Parthes dans le monde gréco-romain. Du début du I^{er} siècle av. J.-C. jusqu'à la fin du Haut-Empire romain* (Oriens et Occidens 17). Stuttgart: Steiner.

Luther, A. 'Zum Orientfeldzug des Gaius Caesar', *Gymnasium* 117 (2010), p. 103-127.

Millar, F. 1993. *The Roman Near East (31 BC – AD 337)*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Momigliano, A., 'Persian Empire and the Greek Freedom', in Ryan A. (ed.). *The Idea of Freedom. Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*. 1979. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 139-151.

Olbrycht, M. 'Das Arsakidenreich zwischen der mediterranen Welt und Innerasien, Bemerkungen zur politischen Strategie der Arsakiden von Vologases I. bis zum Herrschaftsantritt des Vologases III. (50-147 n. Chr.)', in E. Dąbrowa (ed.). *Ancient Iran and the Mediterranean World. Proceedings of an international conference in honour of Professor J. Wolski held at the Jagiellonian University, Cracow, in September 1996*. 1998. Kraków : Uniwersytet Jagiellonski, p. 123-159.

Olbrycht, M. 1998. *Parthia et ultiores gentes. Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen dem arsakidischen Iran und den Nomaden der eurasischen Steppen*. München: Quellen und Forschungen zur Antiken Welt.

Pani, M. 1972. *Roma e i re d'Oriente da Augusto a Tiberio (Cappadocia, Armenia, Media Atropatene)*. Bari: Ariatica.

Rollinger R., 'Herodotus', *Encyclopaedia Iranica* XII/3, (2004), p. 254-288,

(<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hero-dotus>, retrieved 17.02.2012).

Romer, F. E. 1974. *G. and L. Caesar in the East*. Thesis (Ph.D.) - Dept. of Classics. Stanford.

Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. 'The Personality of Xerxes, King of Kings', in L. de Meyer, E. Haerinck, (eds.), *Archaeologica iranica et orientalis: Miscellanea in honorem Louis Vanden Berghe*, vol. 1. 1989. Gent: Peeters Presse, p. 549-561.

Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H., 'Exit Atossa: Images of Women in Greek Historiography on Persia', in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds.). 1993. *Women in Antiquity*. London : Routledge, p. 20-33.

Sartre, M. 2001. *D'Alexandre à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique, IV^{ème} siècle av. J.-C. - III^{ème} siècle ap. J.-C.* Paris : Fayard.

Schippmann, K. 1980. *Grundzüge der parthischen Geschichte*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Schmitt, R. 'Atossa', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, III/1, New York, (1987), p. 13-14, (<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/atossa-achaemenid-queen> retrieved 17.02.2012)

Sellwood, D. 1980. *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia*. London: Spink & Son.

Snodgrass, A. 1980. *Archaic Greece, the Age of Experiment*. London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd.

Temperley, H. 1936. *England and the Near East: The Crimea*. London : Longmans Green.

Tourraix, Al. 'La femme et le pouvoir chez Hérodote' *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 2 (1976), p. 369-386.

Wiesehöfer, J. 1994. *Das antike Persien. Von 550 v. Chr. bis 650 n. Chr.* München-Zürich : Albatros.

Wiesehöfer, J. 1998. *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse, Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums. Eutin (27.-30. Juni 1996)*. Stuttgart : Franz Steiner Verlag.

Wolski, J., 'Les sources de l'époque hellénistique et parthe de l'histoire de l'Iran. Difficultés de leur interprétation et problèmes de leur évaluation' *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28 (1980), p. 137-145.

Wolski, J., 'La périodisation de l'époque parthe en Iran' *Folia Orientalia* 22 (1981/1984), p. 13-21.

Wolski, J. 1993. *L'Empire des Arsacides* (Acta Iranica 32). Leuven: Peeters, 1993.

Zetzel, J. E.G., 'New Light on Gaius Caesar's Eastern Campaign'. *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 11 (1970), p. 259-266.

Ziegler, K.-H. 1964. *Die Beziehungen zwischen Rom und dem Partherreich. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Völkerrechts*. Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Leonardo Gregoratti was educated at the Universities of Udine (Italy) and Trier (Germany). He has conducted research in Udine, Trier, Kiel and Bergen. In 2013 he began his collaboration with the Department of Classics and Ancient History of Durham University as IAS Fellow. His research interests include Roman History, the history of Western Asia, in particular the Roman Near East, Palmyra, and the Parthian Kingdom. He collaborated with the archaeological missions conducted by Udine University in Syria and Iraq.

ELITSA STOILOVA

Food, Myths and Authenticity

Abstract

This paper aims at tracing the use of myths in the process of authentication of local food and their promotion by means of food related festivals. To understand the use of food festivals as connected to local identity, this research explores how particular food items have come to signify an authentic foodstuff, and how it has come to represent the taste of a particular place, designated as its homeland. 'Home' is thus interpreted as an imagined place, a place that surfaces by means of discourses made up of geographical indications that imply a process of meaning and myth-making. I am exploring in a critical manner festivals related to food and drinks, in their Bulgarian context. I am questioning the very process of valuation of food and food technologies as genuine for a certain region. Another question that the research intends to answer is how authenticity is powered by mythologized allegations of origin, justifying the connection food-place-traditions.

Keywords: Festivals, Local Food, Bulgaria, Authenticity, Mythologisation

Introduction¹⁵²

This paper is based on a case study of the annual Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts organized in the village of Kurtovo Konare¹⁵³. The festival in question is representative for the study of the strategies for (re)invention of traditions and their use

for regional development. In particular, I will examine how a food product can be constructed as typically local, with unique characteristics, distinguishing it from other similar food products. I will argue that this process of food authentication is powered by re-invented traditions justified through local myth-making. To explore these issues, this article investigates how *Kurtovska Kapia Pepper* and *Kurtovo Konare Pink Tomato*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² The research was funded by the Advanced Academia Programme 2016-2017, launched by the Center for Advanced Studies, Sofia, Bulgaria.

¹⁵³ Kurtovo Konare (in Bulgarian *Куртово Конаре*) is a village in Central-Southern Bulgaria, situated 18 kilometres from the second largest city in Bulgaria, Plovdiv, part of Stamboliiski Municipality. The village dates back to the 18th century (1760). In the late 19th century, it has become an agricultural centre. During the communist era, Kurtovo Konare was at the heart of vegetable

production and canning industry. After the political and economic changes, Kurtovo Konare fought for its survival, as did most of the Bulgarian rural areas.

¹⁵⁴ *Kurtovska Kapia Pepper* and *Kurtovo Konare Pink Tomato* are considered as typical local food by both local population and botanical experts. In 2015, Slow Food included them in the Arc of Taste – declaring the two vegetable breeds as traditional products belonging to the community of Kurtovo Konare, who have preserved the crops and the specific know-how for their breeding over time. See the Slow

came to be perceived as cultural and culinary symbols of Kurtovo Konare village. The analysis focuses on the use of myths in identity and authenticity construction. The article will argue that food traditions, as other collective historical memories, are a reconstruction of the past according to the needs of the present generation¹⁵⁵. The food festival in question is representative of how the successors of cultural heritage engage in a dialogue with the past and use it for local sustainable development. The festival is presented as a new form of public celebration, but also as a means that locals use to re-think and re-create their identity, a process in which the mythologisation of existing historical facts and figures plays a significant role.

To answer to the research questions set above, various sources were used. The in-depth interview was used as a main source of information regarding festival specificities and local representation of authenticity. Organizers of the festivals, local authorities, local producers, and citizens were interviewed. As the creation of a particular image of a product is also part of its authentication, different sources that were connected to the image building were also subjected to an analysis. Audio-visual and digital materials, as well as documentation related to the organization of events and to the promotion and advertisement of the festival (programs, scenarios, press

communicates, and others) offered more context and data.

The article is thematically structured in three parts. The first starts with an introduction of the connection between food, authenticity and collective identity. Myth and myth-making are problematised as significant in the establishment of an emotional bond to a particular locality as home, as a place of authenticity. That theoretical part is followed by a description of the specific local contexts of the food related festivals in Bulgaria. The third part is dedicated to the particular case study of Kurtovo Konare food festival and to the re-invention of tradition and the mythologisation of the past in order to offer a rationale for the authenticity of the local vegetable breeds and to act as justification for the festival.

Food, Place, Authenticity, and Myth-Making

Home and authenticity both refer to a specific place and an emotional bond. Food festivals play a significant role in the establishment of a particular geographic region as the home, as the place of authenticity. Moreover, in the same way as other cultural industries, they produce and commercialise contents which are intangible and cultural in nature¹⁵⁶. Food festivals might be a critical catalyst for local identity

Food Ark of Taste description for both vegetables:

<https://www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/kurtovska-kapia-pepper/> and

<https://www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/kurtovo-konare-pink-tomato/> (Accessed 29 November 2017).

¹⁵⁵ Halbwachs (1992).

¹⁵⁶ See the definition of cultural industries provided by UNESCO. United Nations Organization for Education. 2016. Science and Culture (UNESCO) <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/creativeindustries> (Accessed on 12 January 2018).

formation as reinforcing the cultural confidence of the region, a confidence built on the food authentication, as well as gastronomic knowledge and traditions. By investigating the ways in which the concept of authenticity is constructed, this article wishes to tackle its relationship with taste, place and identity¹⁵⁷. The idea of locality as home, as the place of authenticity is especially tangible in relation to food and taste. The essential role played by homemade and pre-industrial food with their distinctive taste in one's perception of safety, belonging, and rootedness is widely recognized by social scholars¹⁵⁸.

Food, as shaped by culture, ethnicity and geography, plays an important role in the construction of national and local identity. Recent food studies pay particular attention to the phenomenon of food authentication. Pioneers in researching the importance of food in the formation of collective identity, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and sociologist Erik Cohen demonstrated in the 1980s that authenticity is a modern creation. They related authenticity to the modernist concepts of uniqueness and individualism¹⁵⁹. In 1981, Appadurai advanced the idea of food as "a highly condensed social fact" that acts as "a marvellously plastic kind of collective representation"¹⁶⁰.

During the 1990s and well into the 21st century, the relationship between food, identity, and authenticity became a topic of further discussion. Sidney W. Mintz's and Christine M. Du Bois's recent work

dedicated to the anthropology of food reflects on the embodied values of food, which they present as both constructed and constructing. Defending food studies, the authors conclude that research on food has "illuminated broad societal processes such as political-economic value-creation, symbolic value-creation, and the social construction of memory"¹⁶¹. All quoted societal processes of creation of meanings, symbols and politics might be recognised also in the creation of local mythology that serves local community's claims of being the authentic home of a particular food or food technology.

Furthermore, a large number of researchers have defined food authentication mostly as a result of diverse economic and technological efforts, and have identified specific characteristics of authentic food, i.e. it must be original, genuine, real, and true¹⁶². It is on these theoretical frameworks that I build my analysis of the relationship between the concept of authenticity and the perception of the local authentic food. The above-mentioned researchers have avoided making such parallels that, I believe, would broaden the understanding of authenticity in connection to place and community.

The examination of how Kurtovo Konare became considered as peppers' and tomatoes' homeland reflects on how values are embodied in place in order to mark it as the authentic home of a specific food. Taste is, after all, connected to a specific place and to technological knowledge. The concept of

¹⁵⁷ That set of issues was also developed in relation to construction of nationalized foods. See Stoilova (2015), 14-35.

¹⁵⁸ Amelia (2011), 221-237; Johnston and Longhurst (2011), 325-331; Schach (2008), 10-21.

¹⁵⁹ Cohen (1988), 371-386; Appadurai (1986), 3-63.

¹⁶⁰ Appadurai (1981), 494.

¹⁶¹ Mintz and. Du Bois (2002), 99.

¹⁶² See Parasecoli (2008), 1-14; Pratt (2007), 53 - 70.

home refers to a specific locality, both as a physical structure and as a symbolic construction. In the context of the connection between authentic products and specific locality, this paper looks at the locality of food as related to homemade, pre-industrial, and genuine. Locality is studied as a place with “its own local culinary customs, established through immemorial customs and steeped in time”¹⁶³. Those claims are often proven by myths and involve a serious effort of myth-making. The deconstruction of the attributed local specificity to pepper and tomatoes from Kurtovo Konare is an attempt at tracing the very invention of the authentic local food based on the mythologisation of food traditions and collective memories.

Studies on the connection between festivals and tourism point out that there is nothing natural about festivals stressing on the explicit and implicit politics of events as well the processes of symbol creations¹⁶⁴. In an anthropological research on tourism myths, Bernadette Quinn argues that ‘the political dimension of community events manifests itself when researchers begin asking which symbols are selected to represent the community? Who (individuals/institutions) chooses the symbols and what interests/values are being promoted?’¹⁶⁵ Bernadette stresses the role festivals play in the construction, distribution and use of culturally defined images and myths that connect the event with a particular place¹⁶⁶.

I am incorporating here the understanding of public mythology that the anthropologist Carol Farber provides in her

study of the community-based festival in Ontario as ‘symbolic representation of the asserted, believed and controlled community identity’, designed and structured by leading members of the community¹⁶⁷. She defines the crucial role mythology played in place interpretation and in community building.

The case study of Kurtovo Konare assesses the role played by food festivals in place re-contextualisation through valorisation of traditional food and technologies. The justification of food authenticity is presented as very connected with the symbolic construction of the locality as the homeland of the local vegetable breeds.

Food Festivals: the Bulgarian Context

Nowadays, Bulgarian food related festivals are very popular and a fast growing form of promotion of local culinary traditions and technological know-how. Since the beginning of the 21st century, several Bulgarian small cities and villages initiated celebrations of rural food products and pre-industrial technologies for food production and agriculture. Different festivals dedicated to what the local community considered as their food heritage were invented. Bulgarian researchers Nikolai Vukov and Miglena Ivanova address the subject as a ‘new boom of region-related labels’¹⁶⁸. In order to popularize and prevent their local foods, more than 40 small towns and villages organize such events all over the country. Some of them have already gain

¹⁶³ Wilk (2009), 189.

¹⁶⁴ Farber (1983), Hall (1992), and Quinn (2003).

¹⁶⁵ Quinn (2013), 331-332.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 333.

¹⁶⁷ Farber (1983), 40

¹⁶⁸ Vukov and Ivanova (2008), 37.

immense importance, becoming a crucial part of the regional cultural calendar. Organized in villages where farmers represent the majority of the population, the festivals celebrate different raw materials such as tomatoes, peppers, plums, potatoes, apricots, watermelons, cabbages, beans, walnuts, pumpkins and others, but also processed food products, claimed to be of local specificity.

The diversity of food related festivals in geographical, cultural, and economic terms offers a richness of case studies, and different strategies for (re)invention of food technologies and their use for sustainable development. Bulgaria is not an exception in that rapid development of locally organized events honouring food authenticity, but rather follows the global patterns. Since the 1970s, food-related events have been growing rapidly worldwide, and did so at an even faster rate over the last decades.

The festivals dedicated to diverse food products are appropriating elements from traditional feasts, combining them with diverse forms of local and national celebration inherited from the socialist regime (such as the *fête* of the village), as well as new and innovative elements of collective celebration and local identity promotion. Their specificity is that they are

simultaneously traditional and innovative in their nature. In a way, as they promote the preservation of local traditions and products in order to guarantee sustainability, they might be considered as anti-global. On the other hand, by attracting alternative, culinary, or rural tourism, they have become part of the globalization processes. The annual Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts organized in the village of Kurtovo Konare is a good example of the interconnection between food, memory, myths and local identity formation.

The Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts in Kurtovo Konare Village

In 2009, the *chitalishe*¹⁶⁹ 'Luben Karavelov' from the small village of Kurtovo Konare began collaborating with the Active Communities for Development Alternatives (AGORA) Platform. Active Communities helped the project through the *Chitalishte* Community Cultural Centers in Bulgaria, supported by America for Bulgaria Foundation¹⁷⁰. The *chitalishe* of Kurtovo Konare hosted several community forums that steered the public discussion towards important local community issues. Local authorities¹⁷¹ and local population identified

¹⁶⁹ The *chitalishte* (In Bulgarian читалище) is a specific cultural phenomenon for Bulgaria. It emerged as a cultural institution in mid-nineteenth century, when Bulgarians were part of the Ottoman Empire. *Chitalishte* played crucial role for the development of Bulgarian national culture and identity and became an important multi-purpose institution in villages and smaller towns. These institutions were local initiatives; they were created and functioned entirely by public donations.

Nowadays, the *chitalishe* fulfils several functions at once, such as a community centre, educational institution for youngsters, library, theatre, and place for development of amateur artistic and folklore groups.

¹⁷⁰ For more information see <http://agora-bg.org/en/project/abf2.html> (Accessed 30 November 2017)

¹⁷¹ The mayor of Kurtovo Konare, Ivan Pirinov, and the secretary of Stamboliiski Municipality, Petya Paldamova, attended the

economic and social development problems of the region and outlined several possible solutions. In the end, everybody agreed on organizing a food festival in Kurtovo Konare village that should celebrate traditional crafts and foods, under the name Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts. The declared aim was to revive and promote the traditional local livelihood. As reported on the AGORA Platform, the festival “laid the ground for joint efforts of local authorities, community, farmers, producers and partners for organizing it as an annual event and to be included in the Stamboliiski Municipality Calendar for promotion of the whole region and tourist attraction”¹⁷².

The Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts proved its sustainability, using the opportunities given by international and European funds for development of the rural areas. Since 2009, the manager of the *chitalishe*, Emilia Shusharova, handled the organisation and day-to-day running of the festival, helped by her team and by many volunteers from the village.

Each year, on the second weekend of September, there is a three-day celebration of the local traditions, know-how and technologies. Even if the rest of the villagers were sceptical at first, as time went by, they started to recognise the event as very important and to proudly connect what they considered as authentic regional products

with the festival, raising Kurtovo Konare’s profile¹⁷³. Moreover, the ideologies behind and the messages sent by the festival have been developed as well. From a touristic attraction that should promote the region and its traditions, the message of the festival veered towards the preservation of the regional biodiversity, and to bio farming. Due to the cooperation with the representatives of Slow Food Bulgaria, the line of sustainable farming has been developed further every year¹⁷⁴.

From its first edition to the present time, the organizers of the festival have not changed significantly the highlights of the programme. Each year, the festival takes place in the main square of the Kurtovo Konare village, in front of the *chitalishte*, where activities for all ages are organized. The festival lasts for three days – from Friday until Sunday. The intention is to offer ‘a celebration for all ages – for those who love singing, dancing, having fun... and eating!’ Food plays a central role, as the festival celebrates pepper, tomatoes, and a traditional Bulgarian homemade product *lutenitsa* (in Bulgarian *лутеница*). *Lutenitsa* is a mixture of mashed boiled tomatoes and roasted red peppers. Thus, it became the logical symbol of the festival and appears on the festival’s logo. Making *lutenitsa* at the end of the summer, when tomatoes and red peppers in Bulgaria are with high yield, is a method of preserving vegetables in canned jars. That is why the festival takes place at the

public discussions, as representatives of local and regional authorities.

¹⁷² Source: AGORA web page, Kurtovo Konare Fest 2010, <http://www.agora-bg.org/en/news.html?newsid=61> (Accessed 28 November 2017).

¹⁷³ Interview with Emilia Shusharova the manager of *chitalishe* “Luben Karavelov 1897”

conducted in June 2016 in Kurtovo Konare Village.

¹⁷⁴ The official web page of the festival offers reach information about its realization through the years. <http://chitalishtekkonare.com/?cat=47> (Accessed 29 November 2017).

beginning of September. The women of Kurtovo Konare claim that there is something very particular in the way they prepare the *lutinitza*, as the red peppers are boiled instead being roasted.

Other key elements of the festival programme are the farmers' market; the bazaar for homemade products and handicraft; the culinary photo and art workshops as well as an open fire cooking. The entertainment of the visitors includes also a line-up of rock, ethnic, folk, and jazz music. Different competitions that kids might attend are an interactive way of learning about local traditions by having fun. In order to raise public awareness of sustainable agriculture and the preservation of local biodiversity, discussions dealing with those issues are also an integral part of the festival's programme.

The Festival and the (Re)-Invention of Traditions

The food tasting and the culinary workshops are the main elements of the festival's programme and they aim to offer an experience of the regional gastronomic practices and technology of *lutenitsa* making. Local identity is represented through the culinary skills of the villagers from Kurtovo Konare, traditions inherited from the previous generations and thus re-connecting the present with the past. Moreover, those practices and knowledge which are considered traditional are transformed into an attraction for visitors. Thus, pre-industrial life and technological and culinary expertise are valued as local heritage, significant enough to be passed on to the future

generations, but also to be shown to and shared with outsiders. The festival of peppers and tomatoes preserves and promotes particular traditions considered by Kurtovo Konare's inhabitants as authentic, connecting traditions to specific territory¹⁷⁵. Besides the different elements of the festival's programme, the organizers, as well as the local community developed different stories that are meant to demonstrate there is a very old connection between local foods, crops, and food technologies on the one hand and the village territory and its population, on the other hand. Those stories tell of the early days of tomato and pepper production in Kurtovo Konare and serve as historical justifications of what is claimed to be a long standing tradition. That authentication of tomatoes and red peppers as typical for Kurtovo Konare food products includes two different processes: the declaration of local traditions and technological expertise, and the process of generating narratives to justify the first. In the case of the Kurtovo Konare Fest, it is not only the existence of specific local crops that gives peppers and tomatoes such a distinguished taste. What is more important is the establishment of a connection between the community, the food product, and the territory.

The first edition of the festival shows clearly how organisers used the historical events in the justification of why Kurtovo Konare should be the right place for a festival celebrating tomatoes and red peppers: "We dedicate this first Festival to Grandpa Alexander from Kurtovo Konare, who was born exactly 150 years ago and who was awarded in 1909 with the Governmental

¹⁷⁵ More on those processes in Tregear (2003), 91-108.

Medal for Merits. Do you know why? Interestingly, he was the one who brought the tomato seeds in Bulgaria and built the first Factory for paprika in Bulgaria in 1894, here in the village of Kurtovo Konare. What else is left for us his successors but to continue his cause? ..."¹⁷⁶

That is how the first festival established not only a clear connection between the product and the locality, but also told the story of a historical figure that turned out to be a local hero. The organizers revived Alexander Dimitrov (1854-1928), also known as 'Grandpa Alexander'. That real historical figure was presented as a local hero who, with courage and entrepreneurship, introduced red peppers and early tomatoes to Kurtovo Konare. According to the organizers, Dimitrov should be remembered as the first Bulgarian who brought the ground red pepper technology from Sziget (Hungary) and the early tomato seed from Constantinople. The historical facts are intertwined with legends telling the story of the 34 year old Alexander who went to Hungary. There, as a real mythical hero, he tricked the Hungarian owner of a dried pepper mill, who had initially refused to reveal the technology of the mild paprika. In order to understand how the mill was functioning, Alexander started to work as a handyman for the same mill owner. The story tells that after two

weeks he became familiar with the technology of dried pepper powder making and went back to Bulgaria. 'Stealing' the know-how was not the only thing he did – he also brought back seeds of Hungarian paprika. In his home village of Kurtovo Konare, he adapted a flour mill to grind dried red peppers. Thus, in 1888, Alexander Dimitrov produced the first dried red pepper powder in Bulgaria. Besides the introduction of that technology in Bulgaria, Alexander Dimitrov started pepper cultivation. Due to Dimitrov's entrepreneurship, Kurtovo Konare became in 1896 the first place in the new country where the cultivation of pepper was introduced¹⁷⁷. Kurtovo Konare villagers also share the memory that he was the one who brought seeds for early tomatoes from Constantinople. The story presents Alexander Dimitrov again as an adventurous and brave trickster. When he visited an agricultural exhibition, he allegedly stole the tomato seeds hiding them in his walking stick. Thereby, at the end of the 19th century, the first production of early tomatoes in Bulgaria started, again in the village of Kurtovo Konare. According to what locals recall, at first they were grown only in home gardens in the village, but later came to be sold commercially. Consequently, there was a variety of pepper and tomatoes that were cultivated by the

¹⁷⁶ AGORA (2009) "KurtovoKonare Fest 2009 was Held", <http://www.agora-bg.org/en/news.html?newsid=40> (Accessed 30 November 2017).

¹⁷⁷ The histories about Aleksander Dimitrov are disseminated by the *chitalishte* and popular newspapers. See Читалище „Любен Каравелов“ (2015), История на фестивала, <http://chitalishtekkonare.com/?cat=63>. (Accessed 12 January 2018). Терзиева (2015),

„Дядо Александърот Куртово Конаревнесъл у нас семето на пипера“ <http://agronovinite.com/dyado-aleksandyr-ot-kurtovo-konare-vnesal-u-nas-semeto-na-pipera-i-domatite/>. (Accessed 12 January 2018); Костова (2015), „Първият килограм червен пиперу нас е смлян в Куртово Конаре“, <http://www.desant.net/show-news/34326>. (Accessed 12 January 2018).

Maritsa Vegetable Crops Research Institute in Plovdiv, which was established in 1930 and was later nationalised, during the communist era. The laboratories of Maritsa had a major contribution in further crop selection and in the registration of two vegetable breeds that were named after the village: *Kurtovska kapia pepper* and *Kurtovo Konare pink tomato*.

Through the stories of the brave Alexander, Kurtovo Konare is presented as a centre of the innovative agriculture, a home of new technologies and local vegetable breeds. The mythologised historical events connected place and traditions, creating authentic local products. The Kurtovo Konare festival demonstrates how food traditions are a reconstruction of the past according to the needs of the present generation. The stories of Grandpa Alexander are an example of the re-invention of traditions. It became part of the collective memories about local food and agrarian traditions. As the food marketing researcher Tregear points out, myths truly come to life when they are rooted in a shared collective memory¹⁷⁸. The stories of Grandpa Alexander, as well as the claim that the villagers have developed a unique technology for *lutenitsa* making functions as a collective memory. This shared memory of historical events is a precondition for the successful transformation of historical events into local myths and their implantation to the Kurtovo Konare festival ideology.

This living memory for Alexander Dimitrov is used to make it clear why the village should celebrate red peppers and tomatoes as local products. The real historical facts are reworked in order to

justify to both locals and outsiders why those agricultural products are important for the region and how locals are connected through the territory with them. The revived memories and history created the hero, but also his successors.

That common remembrance of the traditions is very selective. For instance, the laboratory selection of the crops is not included in the official festival history, nor in the stories narrated by local people. Nevertheless, the crops *Kurtovska kapia pepper* and *Kurtovo Konare pink tomato* were products of additional scientific modification. The local soil and climate combined with the agricultural traditions of the Kurtovo Konare's inhabitants enabled the natural selection of the seeds imported from Sziget and Constantinople in late 19th century. Yet, the laboratory selection several decades later transformed the naturally selected seeds into entirely new crops. The vegetable breeds named after Kurtovo Konare are unique, but not exactly authentic. In order to prove the connection between local people, their territory, traditions, and specific local product, festival organisers selectively used local history and constructed local mythology to serve the claim of authenticity. The festival of red peppers and tomatoes is an example of how food and agrarian traditions, much like other collective memories, are a reconstruction of the past according to the needs of the present generation.

Conclusion

The food festival at Kurtovo Konare is an example of patrimonisation of food products, culinary traditions, and

¹⁷⁸ Tregear (2003), 91-108.

technologies. Organized in a village with a predominant farmer population, the festival celebrates the diversity of tomatoes and peppers, emphasizing the uniqueness of the local crops *Kurtovski Pink Tomato* and *Kurtovska Kapia Pepper*. Through those celebrations, locals define the place where they live as possessing its own local culinary traditions. The mythologisation of the historical past and the creation of a local heroic figure is part of those processes of identity and local food creation. The mythologised figure of Grandpa Alexander generates the social imaginary needed by the population of Kurtovo Konare to recognise their social whole. Thus, the mythologisation plays not only the role of argument why the village should celebrate red peppers and tomatoes, but also plays a particular role in the story of the local community's creation. The recognition of the shared traditions and history established social connection between the inhabitants of Kurtovo Konare. Moreover, it made it so that the local varieties of vegetables are valued in a new way – transforming them from locally named sorts to a symbol of the locality.

References:

- Appadurai, A. 'Gastropolitics in Hindu South Asia' *American Ethnologist* 8 (1981), p. 494-511.
- Appadurai, A. 1986. 'Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value', in A. Appadurai (ed.). 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3-63.
- Cohen, E. 'Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism' *Annals of Tourism Research* 15/3 (1988), p. 371-386.
- Farber, C. 1983. 'High, healthy and happy: Ontario mythology on parade', in F. E. Manning (ed.). 1983. *The Celebration of Society: Perspectives on Contemporary Cultural Performance*. Ohio: Bowling Green Popular, p. 33-49.
- Halbwachs, M. 1992. *On Collective Memory (Heritage of Sociology Series)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, C. M. 1992. *Hallmark Tourist Events: Impacts, Management and Planning*. London: Belhaven Press.
- Johnston, L., Longhurst, R. 'Embodied Geographies of Food, Belonging and Hope in Multicultural Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand' *Geoforum* 43 (2011), p. 325-331.
- Mason, M. Ch., A. Paggiarob, 'Celebrating Local Products: The Role of Food Events' *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* 4 (2009), p. 364-383.
- Mintz, S. W., Du Bois, Ch. M. 'The Anthropology of Food and Eating' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002), p. 99-120.
- Parasecoli, F. 2008. *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture*. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers.
- Pratt, J. 'Food Values: The Local and the Authentic' *Critique of Anthropology* 27 (2007), p. 53-70.
- Quinn, B. 'Symbols, practices and myth-making: -cultural perspectives on the Wexford-Festival Opera' *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space' Place and Environment* 5/3 (2003), p. 329-349.
- Schach, M. H. 2008. *Rootedness and Mobility in International Indigenous Literatures*. Ann Arbor: UMI.
- Science and Culture (UNESCO), (2005)<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santia go/culture/creativeindustries>. (Accessed on 12 January 2018).

Stoilova, E. 'The Bulgarianization of Yoghurt: Connecting Home, Taste, and Authenticity' *Food and Foodways* 1-2 (2015), p. 14-35.

Tregear, A. 'From Stilton to Vimto: using food history to re-think typical products in rural development' *Sociologia Ruralis* 43 (2003), p. 91-108.

Viteri, M. A. 2011. 'Nostalgia, Food and Belonging: Ecuadorians in New York City', in Sarah Albiez, Nelly Castro, Lara Jüssen, Eva Youkhana (eds.). 2011. *Ethnicity; Citizenship and Belonging*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, p. 221-237.

Vukov, N., M. Ivanova. 'Food Labels, Meal Specialties, and Regional Identities: The Case of Bulgaria' *Ethnologia Balkanica* 12 (2008), p. 37-58.

Wilk, R. 2009. 'Difference on the Menu: Neophilia, Neophobia and Globalization', in David Inglis and Debra Gimn (eds.). 2009. *The Globalization of Food*. New York: Berg, p. 185-196.

Elitsa Stoilova is an Assistant Professor at Plovdiv University's Department of Ethnology. Her research interests are in the field of anthropology of food, cultural institutions, anthropology of medicine, and identity studies.

JUSTYNA BUDZIŃSKA, MAŁGORZATA PRACZYK, IZABELA SKÓRZYŃSKA

Performative Motherhood: The Myth of Mother Poland Re-Interpreted by Women Artists in Contemporary Poland

Abstract

In this article, we analyze the artwork of three contemporary Polish artists, Ewa Wójciak, Marta Frej and Cecylia Malik, in order to understand the issue of performative motherhood as depicted in their artwork/performances. The works of art of Polish artists analyzed here touch upon the topic of motherhood in various ways; all of them, however, deal with a myth deeply rooted in Polish culture: the myth of Mother Poland. The performative references of the artists to motherhood reconfigure the traditional comprehension of the roles of mothers, and engage with this myth, not by refusing the role of mother, but by redefining it.

Keywords: Performative motherhood, Myth of Mother Poland, Performance, Memory

My grandmother was a genuine martyr, which in her case, is honestly what she was. My mom was a conscious heroine. And she undoubtedly felt worthy of praise, which boosted her self-esteem.

I made a conscious effort to rehab from martyrdom, but I wasn't completely successful. I held a deeply ingrained conviction that children needed to have a warm, home-cooked dinner. Exhausted after working all week long, I wanted to bravely face the pots and pans, but luckily my sons would say: 'Mom, don't bother! We'll just eat a roll'. Yet I still kept hearing a voice deep inside saying: 'How can you do this? They won't get any dinner?' The truth is that my mom kept to these kinds of old-fashioned routines. I think that such attitudes were formed back in the days when the role of the man was to go out and get killed, or at least allow himself to be sent to Siberia. And the woman was supposed to stay behind with five children and somehow manage to survive. Women developed these strong patterns of behavior, which are being copied today.¹⁷⁹

Anna Giza-Poleszczuk

¹⁷⁹ 'Najpierw autostrady, potem przedszkola' (First Highways, then Pre-Schools), A. Giza-Poleszczuk in conversation with A. Jucewicz, 21.12.2011:

http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokieobcasy/1,96856,10825277,Najpierw_autostrady__potem_przedszkola.html (Accessed 5.10.2017).

Introduction

In this article, we analyze the artwork of three contemporary Polish artists/performers: Ewa Wójciak¹⁸⁰ Marta Frej¹⁸¹ and Cecylia Malik¹⁸², in order to understand the issue of performative motherhood¹⁸³ as depicted in the artwork of these artist women. The three

artists/performers are representatives of Critical Art¹⁸⁴, as well as activists and feminists. Their activism influences their preference for performative forms of artistic activity that are socially engaged/engaging¹⁸⁵, while feminist influences can be seen in aspects of their artistic creation that relate to (but of course,

¹⁸⁰ Ewa Wójciak was born in 1951 in Poznań. A graduate of Adam Mickiewicz University, she is an actress, opposition member and activist. Together with the members of the Theatre of The Eighth Day, she suffered repression for supporting, and later cooperating with the Workers' Defense Committee (KOR) in 1976. Forced into emigration for political reasons in 1985, she returned to Poznań together with the team after 1989. She led the Theatre of The Eighth Day as its director. Politically, artistically, and socially engaged, she co-authors the performances of the Theatre, carries out artistic, social, and discursive projects, is involved in actions to help the marginalized and excluded, and co-authors theatre productions known worldwide, especially in independent, off theatre circles.

¹⁸¹ Marta Frej was born in Częstochowa in 1973. She is a painter, illustrator, cultural animator, and the chair of the Kulturoholizm Foundation. In 2004 she graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź; between 2005 and 2009 she was an assistant of Professor M. Czajkowski in the drawing and painting studio at the Academy. She is active in the Center for Promotion of the Youth in Częstochowa (her hometown), where she organizes, among others, the festival ART.eria.

¹⁸² Cecylia Malik is a Polish artist with an ecological dash, born in Krakow in 1975. Her interest in social activism and ecology, as well as in art first pushed her to undertake artistic education activities. She later graduated from the

Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków (summa cum laude) and from curatorial studies at the Jagiellonian University. She is a laureate of numerous awards and the author of many performances and exhibitions.

¹⁸³ Performative motherhood refers to Judith Butler concept of gender performative identity. Performativeness means here the visibility and audibility (when we talk about the theater or performance) of negotiating gender roles in a public space as well as the effectiveness of these negotiations. Butler (2016), 32-33.

¹⁸⁴ The term 'critical art' appeared in the late 1990s and describes the activities of Polish artists of the 1990s. The movement must not be understood as consisting of direct expressions of criticism. Critical art of the 1990s essentially sought to produce critical descriptions of reality and to comment on contemporary life. It accomplished its critical work by revealing and divulging what is hardly obvious, subcutaneous, unclear, marginalized. This movement in Polish art shared something with trends that developed in USA and Western Europe, including 'postmodern resistance', body art, abject art, etc. <https://culture.pl/en/article/critical-art-selected-issues> (Accessed May 2018)

¹⁸⁵ In this context, engagement is understood as a 'formal promise', 'legal or moral commitment'. Kuligowski (2017), 2. Online version: <http://czaskultura.pl/felietony/pokaz-jak-sie-angazujesz-a-powiem-kim-jestes/> (Accessed 03.10.2017). Mościcki (2007), 16.

not only) motherhood¹⁸⁶. In their choice both of performative forms of artistic activity and of motherhood as a motif, we encounter an attempt to aesthetically, but also socially, work through tensions between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations of contemporary women – daughters, mothers, grandmothers, female friends, etc.¹⁸⁷. These horizons of expectations are determined both by what women remember from their own past experiences, and by experiences that are taken over from their ancestors. They are also shaped by the way they present to themselves and to the others the things that are remembered. The choice of things that are presented and the manner in which they are presented (actualized) by the three women artists is the main concern of the present article.

The Polish mythology of women identifies woman primarily with the myth of Mother Poland. For many contemporary Polish women, this myth bears all the signs of symbolic violence¹⁸⁸; on the other hand, they do not possess an alternative myth that could meet their own horizon(s) of expectations¹⁸⁹. This does not mean, however, that they do not look for such a myth, or that they do not attempt to (de)construct the myth of 'old womanhood', as it was called by Joanna Mizielińska. According to her analysis, however, feminist movements, in deconstructing this 'old womanhood', continue to commit the sin of renunciation¹⁹⁰. In the Polish context, this means that the feminists still exclude from

their activist interests those women who are of lower social status, women from small towns and villages, and those with more conservative worldviews¹⁹¹. This diagnosis is important in order to assess the activities of feminists-artists such as Ewa Wójciak, Marta Frej and Cecylia Malik.

Mother Poland

The myth of Mother Poland is firmly rooted in the Polish national-Christian tradition, where mothers among the gentry (the myth did not refer to burgher women, women workers or peasants) are the heroines of a quotidian life full of devotion, sublime in their heroism and the sacrifice for their sons, and in laying their lives on the altar of motherland. Due to the particular circumstances of the creation of the myth of Mother Poland in the 19th century (the canon indicates Adam Mickiewicz's poem "To Mother Poland" as its source), it was harmonized with, and in time became identified with, another myth – that of Polonia. However, while Polonia, as Mateusz J. Hartwich notices, embodies some sense of activity, Mother Poland is a completely passive figure in the collective imagination, condemned to the verdicts of 'big history', the active subjects and beneficiaries of which are men and the nation¹⁹². The myth of Mother Poland corresponds likewise with the religious cult

¹⁸⁶ Rynkiewicz (2016), 186. See also: Makowska(2012), 180.

¹⁸⁷ Kosseleck (1999), 143-158.

¹⁸⁸ The term 'symbolic violence' is understood here in terms of the theoretical framework proposed by Bourdieu (1998)

¹⁸⁹ Kosseleck (1999).

¹⁹⁰ Mizielińska (2004).

¹⁹¹ Similar to the first-wave and second-wave feminism in the West, which were accused of elitism and reduction of feminist representation to white middle-class women. Keetley, Pettegrew (2005).

¹⁹² Hartwich (2004), 56-62.

of Our Lady of Częstochowa¹⁹³, from where it derives its almost mystical power. From the point of view of Polish women in the 19th century, the myth of Mother Poland made them (though, truth be told, only a select few of them) heroines in the public sphere, a role previously reserved for nuns, queens, princesses and witches¹⁹⁴.

Along the years, there have been several attempts to deconstruct this myth. From the famous series of Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński in the interwar period, entitled “Women’s Hell”¹⁹⁵, and Maria Janion’s “Women and the Spirit of Otherness”, to the ever-growing number of contemporary publications, debates, discussions and protests of Polish mothers/feminists who pointed out the inadvertence of the myth of Mother Poland for contemporary women’s identities, who are searching for a new place

for themselves, and for a new symbolic presence in the collective memory¹⁹⁶.

The myth of Mother Poland – shaped as it was by history – was assumed in today Polish public space, especially by conservatives, who supported traditionally oriented school programs for teaching history¹⁹⁷, restrictive abortion laws¹⁹⁸, and earlier retirement age for women to increase the protective potential of the family¹⁹⁹. This myth not only excludes women of lower social status from narratives of the past, it also corresponds poorly with contemporary Polish women, their place in the society, the roles they play in the social, political and cultural life, and their expectations for the future.

Thus, all the attempts to sustain the myth of Mother Poland today, in conditions significantly different from those which

¹⁹³ Tieszen (2007), 220-228. Monczka-Ciechomska (1992), 96. Imbierowicz (2012), 140-153.

¹⁹⁴ Kusiak [Kusiak-Brownstein] (2002), 24-38.

¹⁹⁵ Boy-Żeleński (2013). With a key motif of criminalizing women of low social status charged with having illegal abortions.

¹⁹⁶ Graff (2010), 167. Walczewska (1999). Protests by Polish women began in 2016 to assume an organized form. These included the actions “Let’s Help Women” [ratujmy kobiety.org.pl]; “The Black Protest” [“Czarny Protest”], symbolized in 2016 by the black outfits and umbrellas of the protesters; the “Black Venus Protest”, a continuation of protests against the radicalization of the abortion laws in Poland; furthermore, there were initiatives to maintain the right of families to *in vitro* therapy and to liberalize existing laws in this regard.

¹⁹⁷ See the analysis of the curriculum for general education and the curricula and textbooks in the field of history in Poland: Chmura-Rutkowska, Głowacka – Sobiech, Skórzyńska (2015) and Głowacka-Sobiech, Michalski, Napierała, Skórzyńska (2016), 7-40, <http://gender-podreczniki.amu.edu.pl> (Accessed 01.10.2017).

¹⁹⁸For more on this topic in the context of public debate and women’s protests in Poland see: <http://feminoteka.pl/co-sie-zmieni-jezeli-przeforsowany-zostanie-projekt-ustawy-o-zakazie-aborcji/> (Accessed 02.10.2017).

¹⁹⁹ For example, such an argument was used in an interview by the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Elżbieta Rafalska, supporting a lowering of the retirement age for women to 60: “When we talk about the lowering of the retirement age for women, we talk also about a chance for restoring the protective potential of the family. This may also have an influence on the birth rate – women who can count on the support of their mothers more often make a decision to enlarge the family”. E. Rafalska in a conversation with M. Wójcik, *Rafalska: oburza mnie mówienie, że ktoś łoży na emerytów* [Rafalska: it appalls me when one says he or she contributes for retirees], in “Fakt” 12.09.2017: <http://www.fakt.pl/wydarzenia/polityka/elzbieta-rafalska-oburza-mnie-mowienie-ze-ktos-lozy-na-emerytow/84sk2ts> (Accessed 02.10.2017).

shaped this myth over a century ago, result in a rupture between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations of contemporary Polish women²⁰⁰, inspiring them, especially feminists, to engage in active resistance. This resistance concerns both the domestic sphere and the social, artistic, political and academic life. It aims at deconstructing the myth of Mother Poland through various strategies, among which the performative practices play an important role²⁰¹. These practices are of paramount importance as women-artists have experienced the consequences of

marginalization in the social, political and professional spheres, and do not have their own founding myth, different from the Mother Poland one²⁰².

Women's Memory? Performance!

In 1971, Linda Nochlin wrote an essay provocatively entitled *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* Her article was analyzed in the pages of the online cultural

²⁰⁰ Kosseleck (1999).

²⁰¹ Rynkiewicz (2016), 186-193. The author makes an overview of artistic practices deconstructing the myth of Mother Poland, among which she indicates the project of Anna Baumgart, who, in 2005, carried out in the Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw a project entitled 'Bombowniczką': the figure of a naked pregnant woman in an aggressive pose with a fist. Among women writers and performers, she also indicates Sylwia Chutnik, Manuela Gretkowska, Agnieszka Graff, Grażyna Plebanek and Joanna Woźnicka-Czeczot. All of the artists, aside from their active participation in discussions on contemporary versions of motherhood, also take part in numerous pro-social projects aimed at both women who have children, as well as at those who have not chosen motherhood.

²⁰² The lack of such a myth and the strong presence of the myth of Mother Poland in the collective consciousness of Polish women and men is surprising given that, among the Polish suffragists at the turn of the 19th century, there were many high-profile artists, including the writers Eliza Orzeszkowa, Irena Krzywicka and Maria Konopnicka, painter Olga Boznańska and actress Helena Modrzejewska. Except for Irena Krzywicka and Olga Boznańska, all of these artists function in the Polish collective consciousness as women-patriots, involved into the social projects of Positivism, defending and

promoting Polishness, though rarely as defiant women, ambassadors of the Polish version of the suffrage movement. On the other hand, two research and documentary projects devoted to women in theatre have recently been inaugurated, the first one being realized by Joanna Krakowska. The project is entitled *HyPaTia*– <http://www.hypatia.pl/>. The second project, entitled *Theatre and Feminism – A New Research Perspective in the Polish Theatre Studies* [Teatr i feminizm – nowa perspektywa badawcza w polskiej teatrolologii] is being realized by Agata Chałupnik. These and other research and documentary projects are also important to achieving a more nuanced representation of women and women's communities and initiatives that have undertaken feminist motifs in their work, among them Izabella Gustowska, Izabela Kowalczyk, Katarzyna Kozyra and Julita Wójcik. Polish activists, including the leaders of the women's protest movement in 2016-2017, in turn, benefit from performativity. The journalist and writing activities of Polish women on blogs, in radio stations, and in publications carrying such slogans as 'Long Distance Mother Poland', 'Mother Poland on Vacations' and 'Mother Poland Feminist', should also be included among these subversive practices. See also: Urbańska (2015), dealing with the topic of Polish mothers-migrants.

magazine 'enter the ROOM'²⁰³, together with her argument that the limited presence of women in art is not a result of genius being ascribed solely to male artists, but of the often hidden social mechanisms for preparing women and men for particular social roles. The same mechanisms which deprived women of the possibility of receiving an artistic education, also determined the social, institutional and aesthetic criteria for being an artist. These criteria were formulated in a masculine world of inherited statuses that predestined one to becoming an artisan, artist, entrepreneur, etc. The lack of women-artists in history is therefore less a question of skills and talents, than a historical product of the criteria used to (not) acknowledge them in a masculine artistic culture and social life²⁰⁴.

In this context, it is worth paying attention to contemporary strategies used by women-artists to function on the art market. This very often involves the individual activity of a woman, who operates according to her own rules and systems of values, often beyond the official institutions of culture. This activity is thus often undertaken in the sphere of alternative cultures, where confirmation of women's right to

perform/create art is not related to the need to have a formal education, but is rather part of an individual path for personal development, such as highlighting the values which are eventually reflected in their artistic activity, including those values aimed at achieving equality for women.

Thus, we question if, and to what extent, the social-artistic activity of Polish women performers, of our three case studies, is representative of native art, or, more broadly, of the feminist movement²⁰⁵ as an artistic movement, and of Critical Art? As Katarzyna Zielińska notes: "Talking about women's collective identity or about the identity of the feminist movement, in the light of the ongoing discussions among women feminist theoreticians on the subject, is a particularly difficult problem. In these considerations the subject is described as multidimensional, accidental, and temporary and constructed by various dimensions of identity. Thus, feminism has to 'embrace alternative versions of the subject, the subject understood as ambivalent, processual, and undetermined, always open to a change'. As a result of these discussions, the utopia of a permanent, stable collective has been replaced by an

²⁰³ E. Kwiatkowska, *Linda Nochlin: Dlaczego nie było wielkich artystek?* [Why there were no Great Artists]: <http://www.entertheroom.pl/art-design/7330-linda-nochlin-dlaczego-nie-bylo-wielkich-artystek>, 15.08.2017 (Accessed 17.09.2017).

²⁰⁴ Austin (1990)

²⁰⁵ The feminist art movement took shape in the West in the '70s. However, it appeared in Poland only in the 1990s, but rather as a retrospective of achievements of Polish artists from previous years. I. Kowalczyk mentions Natalia LL, Maria Pinińska-Bereś, Ewa Partum, Krystyna Piotrowska, Izabella Gustowska and Zofia Kulik. This retrospective constituted the real frame for

feminist issues in Polish contemporary art. Izabela Kowalczyk defines it "(...) as an artistic activity committed to women's issues that strives to overcome systems of discrimination and oppression. It is closely related to the ideology of feminism. The main purpose of this art is to show the deconstruction of previous concepts provided to a woman by a patriarchal society and the discourse of art." Kowalczyk, *Wątki feministyczne w sztuce polskiej* [Feminist motifs in Polish art] at: https://repozytorium.amu.edu.pl/bitstream/10593/9546/1/06_Izabela_Kowalczyk_W_TKI%20FEMINISTYCZNE%20W%20Sztuce%20Polskiej_135-152.pdf (Accessed October 2017).

ephemeral community, which emphasizes pluralism, difference and variability”²⁰⁶.

An answer to the above-mentioned problem is, as Zielińska notes, women’s politics of difference (a non-identity politics) and creating a ‘coalition transcending divisions’²⁰⁷. Such a coalition, considering our performers, are community-oriented in character, both in real life and in virtual reality. More and more often, they are characterized by net-based practices, more or less permanent coalitions of women artists, performers, animators, curators and their partners in action (both men and women)²⁰⁸. Performance, especially its contemporary forms, is deeply rooted in daily life and corresponds perfectly with the non-identity politics of women’s Critical Art. This is especially evident when we talk about performance in the context of memory/forgetting of the past. When talking about performance, we refer to collective and direct practices for actualizing the past in the present. It is its role to publicly articulate the identity needs of the community that defines this performance. In this sense, performance, even though it is created at the initiative of the performers, always has a supra-individual, social character. It also has a community-building character, in two ways. Firstly, there are no shows without an actress/actor (we use the broader category of woman performer/man performer), and there is also no show without an audience (co-creators, social actors as active subjects), who, as such, create

a community for the spectacle. Secondly, what pushes the performer (woman or man) to action is always somehow anchored in memory, and this action as such, takes place with an intention to share this memory with others.

The performative community (of the spectacle), ephemeral in nature, might therefore become a community of memory. However, it is not a community in its traditional meaning, but rather – after Jacques Rancière – an ‘ethical community’, for which a sharing of values by the actresses/actors is crucial²⁰⁹. In this sense, the performative community of memory may be interpreted as a pre-political community of being-together²¹⁰, as a ‘coalition transcending divisions’²¹¹ calling for the same respect for various different social actresses/actors.

Ewa Wójciak, Cecylia Malik and Marta Frej case studies

Ewa Wójciak, Cecylia Malik and Marta Frej artistic domain is performance. They undertake artistic actions on the boundary between art (various forms of visual arts, stage art, often combined) and life, between aesthetics and politics²¹². The common denominator of these activities is their critical potential, expressed in a relational approach to the art world and to the social world. In his discussions about the world of the spectacle, Rancière writes that

²⁰⁶ Zielińska (2010), at: <http://ruj.uj.edu.pl/xmlui/handle/item/29910> (Accessed October 2017).

²⁰⁷ Zielińska (2010).

²⁰⁸ Women’s Congress [Kongres Kobiet] is an expression of such net-based practices, <https://www.kongreskobiet.pl>.

²⁰⁹ Rancière (2009), 21.

²¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹¹ Zielińska (2010).

²¹² Skórzyńska. Steiner (2003), 254-276.

there “is an originary and persistent tension between the two great politics of aesthetics: the politics of the becoming-life of art and the politics of the resistant form. The first identifies the forms of aesthetic experience with the forms of another life”, erasing “itself as a separate reality”, while the second one “by contrast, encloses the political promise of aesthetic experience in art’s very separation, in the resistance of its form to every transformation into a form of life.” A relational approach to both the art world and the social world appears within these two positions, neither of which, as Rancière notes, fulfilled the hopes they aroused²¹³. Thus, his conception of a relational approach to art and life assumes that contemporary art “is modest not only as regards its capacity to transform the world, but also as regards claims about the singularity of its objects”; at the same time, they refer to creatively disposing “the objects and images comprise the common world as it is already given, or of creating situations apt to modify our gazes and attitudes with respect to this collective environment. Such micro-situations, which vary only slightly from those of ordinary life (...) aim to create or re-create bonds between individuals, to give rise to new modes of confrontation and participation”²¹⁴.

In the case of our performers, the creative dispositions of the objects and images co-creating the already existing

world aim at both a (de)construction of the myth of Mother Poland and at establishing a new community able to work out an alternative to that myth. At the same time, this work takes place around motherhood, which, subjected to the creative disposition of the performers, appears to us as something new, as ‘performative motherhood’: critical images of women in the role of mothers, a role they do not have to give up, but also one that they do not have to play, and, above all, one in which they do not have to reproduce a heroic version of sanctified suffering.

*Performative Motherhoods: Time of Mothers*²¹⁵

Ewa Wójciak has been a member of Poznań’s Theatre of the Eighth Day (Ósemki) since 1971 when she joined the group as a student of Polish philology²¹⁶. The history of the Theatre, once a student theatre, and later an alternative one, is closely related with the ethos of the ‘68 Generation, mostly via political references to the dramatic events of 1968 in Paris, Prague, and Warsaw, and artistic references to the tradition of the theatre-commune. It is also a great example of the formation on the stage of a new face of polity²¹⁷.

²¹³ Rancière, 44.

²¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁵ The Theatre of the Eighth Day, “The Time of The Mothers”. Realization and performance: The Theatre of the Eighth Day, Script and direction: the members of the Theatre of the Eighth Day, scenography: Jacek Chmaj, music: Arnold Dąbrowski. Premiere in Poznań (“Wolne Tory”, ul. Spichrzowa) 28 June 2006, 24.00.

²¹⁶ Within the theatre-commune system of the Theatre of the Eight Day, women/actresses co-author the plays, both at the stage of writing the script, as well as during the realization of performances. The spectacles, happenings and performative actions of the Theatre have continued to be co-authored works of art, produced by the entire team.

²¹⁷ Raczak (2014), 67-76.

Student theatre in Poland was marked by its relative creative independence, expressed in the choice of often politically dangerous and artistically unconventional topics, aesthetics, work methods and locations for performances, as well as by their audiences. The common denominator in this independence was a social and aesthetic sensitivity, found today in the alternative theatre, which determined its distinct, engaged/engaging presence in both everyday and artistic life. In the case of the Theatre of the Eighth Day, this engaging/engaged presence expressed itself in the choice of a particular work method: collective creation, inspired by real life experiences, collective performance and interaction. The Theatre of the Eighth Day is less a traditional theatre and more a creative community functioning on the border between theatre and everyday life. This borderline position that the creators of 'Ósemki' assumed towards the world of art as well as the social world also determined their political character, which expressed itself in a critical approach to both of these worlds, which intertwined in their theatre-commune²¹⁸. The Theatre of the Eighth Day was one of the few groups in the student theatre movement of the 1970s to attain artistic maturity and find its own unique language and aesthetics; this crystallized into a form of artistic expression that was seen as political by both themselves and others. It is also difficult to deny that the aesthetic and political choices of 'Ósemki' were the result of discussions, at times very heated, conducted not only within the group, but also with its audience. This audience came from universities, clubs of intellectuals, from the alternative theatre

community in Poland and abroad, and, eventually, also from the political and social opposition in the Polish People's Republic. The theatre was not only tied to this opposition, but it also suffered the consequences of its engagement being repressed by the communist authorities, among this repression acts being forced emigration in the 1980s²¹⁹.

An important caesura in the social functions of the alternative theatre in Poland was 1989 and the period that followed, when democratic transformations, at least initially, seemed to leave the theatre without a defined opponent, someone or something that inflicted harm and could inspire topics. The social reality that was only just emerging from the democratic transformations did not seem to need theatrical intervention, especially in terms of those questions alternative theatre had commonly debated in the previous decades, especially the relations between the authorities and their citizens, which now seemed to be on the right path. In turn, the economic and institutional transformations taking place in Poland at that time forced independent artists to look for new organizational, financial and artistic forms for their work, new places for performances, and new audiences.

Many groups joined a growing, popular movement focused on festivals, outdoor spectacles and street actions, a movement which was also connected with the commercialization of their projects. Wójciak recalled that time in a speech at Columbia University: "After the fall of the Berlin wall, when freedom and democracy came to Poland, we often used to be asked at home and abroad if theatre commitment to political and social issues still had any

²¹⁸ Tyszka (2003).

²¹⁹ Tyszka (2007), 403-426.

purpose in the new reality (...) I am not even sure if for a moment I had an illusion and the theatre that I made had only an eschatological perspective ahead of us to portray, and that everyday life from now on would take place without the watchful eye of the artist. So, it lasted only for a short time. Conformism, egocentrism, calculation soon defeated empathy and social sensitivity. (...) Artists who believed that art has a duty towards those left behind, those suffering and weaker, did not have any need for internal emigration. I can still find no justification for abandoning or even changing the approach and beliefs shaped three decades ago that an artist as a creator and as a human being should serve people, illuminate the dark side of existence, and express compassion. (...) We tried to move people by telling them about refugees, about women – the mothers, wives and sisters of men who were dying on the fronts of very often fratricidal wars breaking out in every

corner of the world. We gained a new perspective – the war in the Balkans, the war in Chechnya – these were our wars, this was a part of our world, which we necessarily wanted to understand, and which we could not have left unsaid”²²⁰.

This was the approach of the Theatre of the Eighth Day to the historical events in Poland and Poznań of 1956²²¹. In 1981, when on the wave of the carnival of Solidarity a monument to the victims of June 1956 was unveiled in Poznań, one of the participants in the celebrations was Ewa Wójciak, reciting Zbigniew Herbert’s “Mr. Cogito – The Return”. A similar situation took place in 2006, on the 50th anniversary of the Poznań workers’ revolt, when the Theatre of the Eighth Day prepared a spectacle entitled “Time of Mothers”. The official commemorations in 2006 of the Poznań June 1956 protests were linked to the figure of Romek Strzałkowski²²². As Bogumił Jewsiewicki has noted, celebrations of the

²²⁰ E. Wójciak, *Kiedy i jak trzeba powiedzieć Nie. Historia osobista* (When and How to say no. Personal Story), the text read at the conference “Poland as a Text, Poland as a Spectacle” [“Polskajakotekst, Polskajakospektakl”], December 2010 in Gdańsk and at Columbia University, April 2011 at the conference “Nonconformism and the Protest of the Eastern Block: Guiding Legacy or Passing Memory?”. Online presentation in English: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJo66OSe4_sj (Accessed 11.11.2017) and in Polish: <http://www.hypatia.pl/web/pageFiles/attachments/1816/ewa-wojciak-kiedy-i-jak-trzeba-powiedziec-nie.pdf> (Accessed 02.10.2017).

²²¹ Due to low salaries, poor organizational and work conditions, as well as shortages of consumer goods, workers from Poznań’s factories and other workplaces initiated a protest, in the streets of Poznań. On 28 June 1956, an exhibition-commerce event took place at the

Poznań International Fairgrounds, so that the protests were introduced to the world by numerous journalists from Western Europe attending the event. This did not stop the communist authorities from using force against the protesters, at the expense of the lives of numerous victims, mostly young workers and city inhabitants. For more on Poznań’s June 1956 see:

<http://www.poznan56.pl/wydanie/20151221,w.html#p-29000> (Accessed 02.10.2017).

²²² Romek Strzałkowski was 13 years old at the time of his death. He died from a gunshot wound on ‘Black Thursday’, on 28 June 1956. He was on the street on his way shopping for his mother. “The next day in the morning, the person on duty in the hospital’s reception area did not want to show the body of the child to his father. (...) The father noticed a bloodstain on the body. The trace of the bullet was small, but distinct, on the left side of the shirt. A school ID was lying on the

anniversary of these protests in 2006 made reference to the Western European revolutionary myth²²³. Linking the real figure of Romek Strzałkowski to these events was a clear attempt to incorporate the events in Poznań in 1956 into the Western European paradigm of great social revolutions, of which the beneficiaries, but mostly the victims, were young people, often children, most with plebeian and proletarian backgrounds²²⁴. “Time of Mothers” also matched this revolutionary aspect of the Poznań June, with an accent being placed on the working class and its revolt against the injustice of the authorities. This was due to the choice of the site for the performance. The spectacle took place late in the evening on 28 June 2006, on the fringes of the main anniversary celebrations (held on Adam Mickiewicz Square, a central square and the site of the Monument to the Victims of June 1956), near the working-class district of Wilda, in the vicinity of what was once one of the largest factories in Poznań, the Hipolit Cegielski Factory, on the so-called ‘free tracks’ – a dilapidated post-industrial space sprawling between industrial and empty

chest of the child. (...) Romek died because he raised a white-and-red flag dropped by a wounded tram driver. According to the family and some witnesses, Romek was taken from Kochanowski Street to the building of the Security Office by two men in civilian clothing. The 13-year-old may have died standing with his arms raised in one of the garages of the building of the Security Office. Historians have never managed to confirm this version. For half of a century, the death of Romek Strzałkowski has been surrounded by many myths, which cannot be verified based on documents. Cf. M. Rogoziński, <http://wielkopolskie.naszemiasto.pl/artykul/jak-zginal-romek-strzalkowski-kula-w->

buildings, and the railway and bus stations²²⁵. Here also we encounter the figure of Romek Strzałkowski; however, here he is recalled not through the prism of his innocent sacrifice or as a victim-patriot, but through the sacrifice of his mother, like many other mothers around the world recalled in the spectacle: Argentine women from Plaza de Mayo, mothers of soldiers in Russia, mothers of the victims of the Pinochet regime, Israeli and Palestinian women²²⁶. This was the first impulse for creating the spectacle, Ewa Wójcik explained. A crowd of distraught mothers with photographs of their lost children²²⁷. On his/her way to the spectacle on 28 June 2006, a spectator had to walk past a number of photographs of mothers with children. The first photographs depicted Anna Strzałkowska accompanying her little son Romek when he was taking his first steps²²⁸. “Time of Mothers” appeared as a monumental work of art, an outdoor spectacle using the poetics of street theatre, with all its exaggerations, the dominance of image over word, and its stimulating sensory force, and with a grotesque and

[serce.186577.art.t.id.tm.html](http://www.186577.art.t.id.tm.html) (Accessed 03.10.2017).

²²³ Jewsiewicki (2016), 53-72.

²²⁴ The figure of Romek, an innocent victim of the June 1956 events, appeared as a central character in 2006 in *Oratorium 1956*, composed by Jan A.P. Kaczmarek, a co-founder of the Orchestra of the Eighth Day. This presentation preceded “The Time of The Mothers” and took place at Mickiewicz Square in Poznań.

²²⁵ Kalemba-Kasprzak (2006), 39-40.

²²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²²⁷ Drewniak (2006), 68-69.

²²⁸ One of the author of this article, Izabela Skorzińska (hereafter I.S.) took part in the premiere performance of “The Time of The Mothers” on 28 June 2006.

ironic breaking of the sublime of the topic, and a rhythm built on changing moods and sudden changes in the action. On the narrative layer, the spectacle combined the personal and local – the story of Anna Strzałkowska and her son Romek – with the universal and global – Argentine, Israeli, Palestinian and Russian women stubbornly searching for answers about what happened to their children, showing their faces, and crying for their loss. In this sense, “Time of Mothers” struck at the core of the myth of Mother Poland as a heroic victim²²⁹. The mothers in the ‘Ósemki’ spectacle were neither heroic, nor proud because of the death of their children. Still, the myth was present in the show as an archetypal primeval mother, depicted as an enormous, beautiful, but insensitive machine for giving birth to children.



Fig. 1 “Time of Mothers”. ‘Archetypal primeval mother’. Photo: Przemysław Graf (Archive of the Theatre of the Eighth Day).

Less pathetic and sublime (though nostalgic) were the ordinary mothers in the spectacle who were fulfilling with tenderness their children’s need for warmth, satiety, security and love. These mothers were pushing not strollers, but mini-armoured-cars.



Fig. 2 “Time of Mothers” ‘Strollers as mini-armoured-cars’ (Archive of the Theatre of the Eighth Day).

In the spectacle, the mother’s despair after losing a son was the same, regardless of whether he was a hero or a villain. Also emphasized was the commonness of the evil, regardless of time and place, which gave birth to the future victims of revolutions, revolts, battles and wars. Finally, emphasis was placed on the non-heroic dimension of the suffering of ordinary mothers, because in the spectacle’s final scene, it was these mothers, not the primeval mother, who were cleaning the bloody shirts of their sons, and it is they, not Mother Poland, who were looking down from the posters that bid goodbye to spectators: their faces expressed the lost chance for happiness for their children. Ewa Wójciak wrote of the spectacle: “Women, mothers give birth to life. Their contribution is the miracle of birth, its singularity and uniqueness. The ritually cheerful, magically lyrical and tender

²²⁹ Drewniak (2006).

beginnings of existence are their creation and merit. However, later, they are the ones who suffer the biggest failure – they suffer loss. Life is forcibly taken from their hands. Their one and only leaves, heading into the chaos of the world. Of an unjust and cruel world. They realize that completely unaware of the fact, they gave birth and patiently cared for villains and victims. And, in this way, the metaphysics of birth is juxtaposed with the overwhelming mundanity and anonymity of death. Women, however, protest this loss, the role of parents of cannon fodder, the parents of prophets and heroes. Women want the miracle of normality and continuity (...) Women stand together on the side of life, against loss”²³⁰.

Asked after the premiere of “Time of Mothers” if she would send her children “to the front”, Ewa Wójciak answered without hesitation that the painful experiences of the previous generations make sense only if their successors do not have to fight²³¹.

In this sense, “Time of Mothers” is definitely a women’s manifesto of respect for the mother, expressed in respect for the life of her children. This inversion of the myth of Mother Poland, tying the action between the space of experience and the horizon of expectations, with the accent transferred from the inevitability of sacrifice to the expectation that there will no longer be this sacrifice. This liberation of Mother Poland from the duty of sacrificing her child on the altar of the fatherland came about by making her equal with mothers crying upon the death of their villain-children, by including

her no longer unique life story and suffering into the universe of the tragedy of every mother who lost her children, buried their remains, looked for traces of them, cursed war while refusing to accept the role of a noble victim or a sublime matron, ready to carry on with pride after the evil which was done to her.

In “Time of Mothers”, Mother Poland is crazy with pain, removing bloodstains to make a place for a new life. And to save them.



Fig. 3. “Time of Mothers” ‘Cleaning the bloody shirts of the son’. Photo: Przemysław Graf (Archive the Theatre of the Eighth Day).

²³⁰ Wójciak (2009), 27. Already in 1992, E. Wójciak prepared the monodrama “Requiem”, based on Anna Achmatova’s poetry. To I.S., the spectacle seemed overly pathetic and over-aestheticised, referring to the metaphysical experience of a hurt motherhood. From the perspective of time,

however, it is very important due to the introduction of the motif of mothers – victims onstage standing against any kind of regime (i.e. the Soviet regime).

²³¹ Drewniak (2006), 69.

Mother – Pole – Feminist or rehab from martyrdom

Marta Frej was a winner of the “Eyeglasses of Equality 2015” prize²³² “for her artistic work engaged in the defence of women’s rights and gender equality”²³³. She is also – or maybe first of all – the mother of a teenage son, and the author of memes which critically, at times humorously and at times bitterly, reflect upon and look rebelliously at contemporary Polish women and men²³⁴.

Marta Frej’s memes were firstly seen on the internet, afterwards being exhibited during author’s exhibitions in various galleries, sold on-line printed on various items, or in the pages of *Wysokie Obcasy*²³⁵. They enjoyed great success for several years in the social media²³⁶. While commenting on contemporary Polish society, the artist focuses a lot of attention on the mythical Mother Poland, deconstructing its historically, socially and culturally shaped image. Marta Frej’s memes are an attempt to send us – a society that unthinkingly nurses this deeply rooted image of mother – to rehab, the effect of which would be a new

thinking, perceiving and qualifying of motherhood, liberated from servitude and more congruent with reality.

Here, we propose an analysis of three of Marta Frej’s memes, in which the central character is Mother Poland, but not the martyr with children hanging from her shoulders, or standing amid the steam rising from the cooking pot, compatible with the conservative-right-wing vision (which is still very much alive). We interpret them using the category of transgressiveness in relation to the traditional image of Mother Poland, described by Izabela Kowalczyk as a performative of a dutiful womanhood and its transgression into masculine roles²³⁷. Kowalczyk defines the category of performativity (inspired by Judith Butler) as: “[...] a kind of theatre of social and sexual behavior, in which the community plays roles assigned to it on the basis of coercion. Here, a problem in the understanding of performativity arises [...] it’s not a voluntary process, dependent on our will. It is rather a constant repetition of gestures, behaviors, expression etc., that results in the recreation on the surface of the body of a concrete social ideal [in our case, the ideal of Mother Poland as a suffering martyr – JB]. [...] We can talk

²³² This is a distinction awarded since 2002 by the Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka Foundation to both individuals and institutions or organizations working for gender equality and women’s rights. So far, the laureates were Maria Janion (a scholar), Monika Olejnik (a journalist), the Motorola company and the Multikino network. More information can be found on the foundation’s homepage: http://jaruga-nowacka.pl/default_016.html [access 4.10.2017].

²³³ *Okulary równości dla Anny Dryjańskiej i Marty Frej!* (Eyeglasses of Equality for Anna Dryjańska and Marta Frej), “Krytyka Polityczna”, 18.03.2015, online version: <http://krytykapolityczna.pl/kraj/okulary->

rownosci-dla-anny-dryjanskiej-i-marty-frej/ (Accessed 5.10.2017).

²³⁴ *Marta Frej i jej memy. “Tworzę, żebyśmy my, kobiety, nie dygały”* [Marta Frej and her Memes. I create art so we, women, do not have to curtsy], conversation of J. Kowalewska, [in] “Magazyn Szczeciński”, 8.09.2016, online version: <http://szczecin.wyborcza.pl/szczecin/1,150424,20665802,tworze-zebysmy-nie-dygaly-rozmowa-z-marta-frej.html> (Accessed 22.05.2017).

²³⁵ Weekly addition to *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

²³⁶ For more on memes, including internet-based ones, see Dawkins (2009) [1976]; Saja (2014), 32-35; Wężowicz-Ziółkowska (2014), 15.

²³⁷ Kowalczyk (2003), 48.

here about a copy of an ideal, as Butler emphasizes that this ideal or the original exists solely in the symbolic sphere, it is a phantasm copied again and again by the subjects undergoing socialization/culturalization. Simply put, a performative act of sexual identity is contained in the message: I am a woman! I am a man! [I am a mother! – JB], however we have to remember that this message is not only a spoken utterance, but also an entire repertoire of gestures, poses, clothes, styles²³⁸.

In the case of the mothers of Marta Frej, it is not only a question of the transgression of woman, or rather of her role, into a man, but of ‘humanizing’ her image, casting her down (for her own good, but also for expressing the non-one-dimensionality of motherhood) from a historically built pedestal. Frej’s Mothers Poland are just mothers, women and individuals who are aware that being a mother is one of the roles they play, not the only one and not the one requiring absolute perfection. After reading Danuta Wałęsa’s *Dreams and Secrets*, Agnieszka Graff interprets the memories of the former First Lady, noticing that Danuta Wałęsa gave to Poland what was needed, or even more (and this places her somehow within the traditional figure of Mother Poland), namely her own perspective, not that of a mother, but of a woman, something new and important in Polish culture (a transgression, not into a man, but rather into his hitherto domain – of the big-narrator-of-a-great-history): “the comedy of the masculine murmur of war, tweaking one’s moustache and uhlan megalomania”²³⁹.

The first mother – representative of contemporary and critical motherhood proposed by Marta Frej – has a child in her

arms. Using the strongly fixed (in pop culture) figure of the Superheroine (such as Barbarella, Supergirl or Cat-Woman, representing various types of narration) the artist makes her weapon from an already traditional attribute of the mother of a small child – the diaper.



Fig. 4. Marta Frej, „Don’t mess with mother”. Courtesy of the Artist.

The meme (the memes of Marta Frej always use a combination of image and words) warns against messing with the mother. She is not a weak being, but she is also not a Supermother, with supernatural abilities as the above-mentioned pop cultural icons. This mother is just ‘super’ for her child, and placing in her hand a weapon in the form of a diaper (instead of a sword, laser, etc.) is an indicator that motherhood may constitute power, the readiness to face

²³⁸ Balejko (2001), 136.

²³⁹ Graff (2015), 96-97.

the stereotypes surrounding it. 'Despite' having a child (placed in a wrap), one can also be a woman, as superheroines were usually beautiful, in good shape and wearing a sexy outfit – which of course does not limit a vision of womanhood to these attributes; rather, she contrasts the two culturally stiff images, that of the superwoman and the woman-mother, emphasizing the coexistence of these two roles, one of which does not necessarily exclude the other. In fact, she emphasizes their compatible character, clearly communicating the right of women-mothers, with an emphasis on the individual/subjective character of her 'self', to self-determination. And, at the same time, she attempts to disenchant womanhood/women's sexuality in reference to the function of being a mother, which is one of the threads most often appearing in the memes of the artist: "[...] Everything that hurts me. [...] Firstly, women's sexuality. Either it is marginalized or built on a filthy stereotype – a wife, a virgin and an angel, versus a lover, a harlot and a devil – or mythologized in an unbearably pretentious way. Secondly – the aim of the women to reach an idea packed into their heads by stupid women's magazines, which are a perfect vehicle for fashion, cosmetics, interior design, and similar brands. [...] Thirdly: our own vanity (supra-sexual), connected with laziness and thought patterns and stereotypes. Fourthly: in relation to children, very often deprived of respect and attention. Fifthly: the division of household chores and care duties"²⁴⁰.

²⁴⁰ Conversation of M. Frej and A. Graf Część 4 – *erotyczno-feministyczna (czyli o kulturze, popkulturze i celebryt(k)ach. Oraz o tym, jak się one mają do seksu, wolności i feminizmu. A na koniec jeszcze o książkach* (Part 4 – erotic-feminist

The artist confronts herself with another version of the myth of Mother Poland, this time as a domestic Hestia, the 'keeper of the fire', in a meme using her own image (a strategy commonly employed by Frej) against the background of a fire consuming a building (a home). Here, she issues a warning by building upon an idiom deeply rooted in the common consciousness and signifying care-giving and a preoccupation with relations, primarily emotional ones, between the members (both women and men) of the family, by stating that 'I might have exaggerated in tending to the household hearth'.



Fig. 5. Marta Frej, „I might have exaggerated in tending to the household hearth...”. Courtesy of the Artist.

This time, Mother Poland, completely absorbed with her home and the members of her household, has crossed a line between an ordinary, quotidian focus on the culturally and socially ascribed role of mother and wife, and one that is fanatical which inevitably leads to catastrophe. We do not know if there are victims in the 'home'; we see, however, (and this is emphasized) that the 'arsonist' has managed to escape and

on culture, pop culture and (women) celebrities. And on how they go with Sex, Liberty and Feminism), in Graff (2015), 178.

save herself – not exactly from the fire, but from the stereotypically ascribed role of the keeper of the hearth. It is also worth remembering that fire/flame can signify catharsis, in this case, for Mother Poland hitherto imprisoned within the four walls of the home.



Fig. 6. Marta Frej, „Let's raise a toast to the fact that perfect mothers do not exist...” Courtesy of the Artist.

In reading various internet forums, blogs and handbooks dedicated to women and/or mothers, we had a different impression about motherhood. On the internet forums for mothers we can read very often the words “Help me...” and “How can I make my child do...” Discussions are about “bumps” and “bellies” and advice about the consistency of porridge for a six-month-old; about creams to be used in order to avoid stretch marks before, during and after pregnancy, and advice about quickly return to their shape ‘before the pregnancy’. The ‘young mom’ is subjected to a regime of popular, non-reflective obligations, irreconcilable with everyday life, concerning what Mother Poland 2.0 should know and do.

Frej does not accept this. In her memes, she seats her three heroines (presumably mothers) alone (!), smiling and wearing colorful dresses, at a table filled with unhealthy, high-calorie products, and

makes them propose a toast to the fact that perfect mothers do not exist.

They do not agree to be ‘perfect mothers’, to house arrest, to tracksuits and healthy food. Besides being mothers, they are also women, colleagues, friends and sisters – but they are first of all ‘themselves’.

Mother Poland in the search for micro-ecotopia

Among the most interesting artworks of Cecylia Malik is her performance “365 trees”, in which for a year, she climbed trees and documented her actions photographically – creating in this way evocative portraits of herself, as a fragment of the canvas²⁴¹. Another important project was “6 rivers” during which she bobbed in all the rivers of Kraków in a handmade boat. In both of these projects, Malik plays the main role; however, she also collaborates with her close friends. In fact, many of her works engage broader social circles, and most of her performances were the results of collaboration between Malik, those close to her (especially her sisters, husband and friends), and other people who were engaged in the actions. Cecylia Malik and Justyna Koeke even created groups such as ‘Kolektyw Modraszka’, bringing together artists and activists who are involved in several projects. Firstly, they wanted to save the local park located in Zakrzówek, Kraków. The activists adorned their habits with handmade blue artificial butterfly wings, a reference to an endangered species of butterfly called the ‘blue butterfly’ that inhabited the area. They also encouraged

²⁴¹ See the artist web-site: <http://www.cecylialalik.pl/drzewa/d-opis.html> (Accessed 03.10.2017).

other city inhabitants to take part in the action. As a result, hundreds of people took part in the performance, and thanks to their actions, a compromise was worked out on the question of development in this part of the city. Another project that engaged a large number of city inhabitants was called the 'Plaits of Białka' – aimed at saving this small river from regulation and dredging. The performance consisted in braiding a plait that, by the end of the action, had reached a length of about 20 km. By this action, Malik wanted to attract people's attention to the problem of the devastation of small rivers in Poland.



Fig. 7. 'Mother Poland at the Cut'. Malborska Street, Krakow. Courtesy of the Artist.

The last two actions are examples of collective community action, an important aspect for Malik. Working with people and focusing on the interaction constitute the core of her artwork, which Michał Pospiszył has included in the trend of 'relational aesthetics'²⁴². In the spirit of such aesthetics, Malik created a performance entitled "Mothers Poland at the cut", which was an expression of protest against the cutting of

trees in Poland following changes in environmental law introduced by the governing, right-wing, conservative-Catholic party.

The performance consisted of an action in which Malik was photographed together with her son, whom she was breast feeding while sitting on tree-stumps left after trees were cut down. Women from around the country joined her in the action and were photographed individually and collectively breast feeding their children on the stumps of newly cut trees²⁴³.

This action was preceded by a manifesto: "'Mothers Poland at the cut' is an informal civic movement working for the conservation of the Polish environment. The change in the law concerning the cutting of trees is another decision by the current government aimed at the gradual devastation of the natural landscape in Poland. Minister Jan Szyszko, with his statements and decisions, does not give any hope for any improvement in this state of things. Therefore, we demand an immediate change in the amended law on the protection of the environment and forests, as well as the dismissal of the Minister of the Environment, Jan Szyszko. Trees play a priority role in the ecosystem we inhabit; therefore, their cutting cannot be a subject of a simple understanding of the right of ownership. Trees are a guarantee of the physical and mental health of successive generations. The effects of the cutting which is being carried out will be felt in future decades. The movement was initiated in Krakow by Cecylia Malik, with a performance by

²⁴² Pospiszył (2014).

²⁴³ See this performance on the artist website: <http://www.matkipolkinawyrebie.pl/> (Accessed 03.10.2017).

mothers feeding their children at the cut, and is spreading to all of Poland”²⁴⁴.

The manifesto expresses a preoccupation with a healthy ecosystem as a basic value guaranteeing the sustainable and proper development of societies, while the performance makes use of the well-known myth of Mother Poland. Malik refers to traditional values, namely the women’s role as the feeder of future generations of Polish women and men. She does so, however, in a subversive manner. By making reference to traditional women’s role – nurturing the children – she protests against the traditional/conservative government. The myth here is used to launch a strategy of resistance, using traditional tools as weapons in an avant-garde fight for sustainable public space. Men, who at the behest of minister Szyszko are cutting down the trees, are a sign of patriarchal culture, in which public space is governed by men, and women and children constitute subordinate subjects, confined traditionally to the private sphere. Malik turns public space into an agora where women with children play an equal role and can manifest their disagreement.

The second layer of the performance is a discussion about the myth of the woman as an emanation of sensitivity and irrationality, represented by a preoccupation with nature, which contrasts with rationality, which is on the side of ‘civilizational development’ and economic profit. Such an approach is based on eco-feminist theories which, as is noticed by Marianna Michałowska in her article devoted to the “365 trees” action, “(...) they do not agree to a simple division of the world

into a rational (masculine, cultural) sphere and an irrational (feminine, natural and emotional) one. Such a division results in an opposition between human towards nature and, at the same time, towards womanhood”. Referring to Val Plumwood, Michałowska notices later that “instead of a rational ethics of ‘universal and abstract’ laws, she offers the ethics of preoccupation, at the centre of which are such notions as respect, sympathy, preoccupation and responsibility”²⁴⁵.



Fig. 8. Mothers Poland at the Cut. Polish Aviators’ Park, Krakow. Courtesy of the Artist.

Being preoccupied by the future of the children, understood as the right to live in an ecologically sustainable space, is very rational. It constitutes a testimony to a long-term thinking and an understanding of development that ensures the comfort of the lives of all people – not only men, but also women and children.

Another action realized as part of the performance ‘Mothers Poland at the cut’, entitled ‘Father Pole plants trees’, deals with the distance from nature taken by men. This action engages in discussion with another deeply rooted Polish myth about the three conditions necessary for a man to prove his

²⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁴⁵ Michałowska (2014), 75-76.

masculinity. To become a man, one has to plant a tree, beget a son and build a house. The planting of trees by a man in order to replace those cut down due to the introduction of the new law constitutes a good example of imbuing old myths with new meanings. The act of planting a tree, symbolizing masculinity understood within very patriarchal categories, becomes here an act of resistance towards such a culture. The man planting trees stands alongside the women breast-feeding children by fighting for the same values and for the right to an eco-friendly common space. He displays the same preoccupation with nature and with the future of his children as women do. 'Mothers Poland at the cut' and the men planting trees ironically reverse and ridicule traditional myths that confine women and men to clearly defined roles with very concrete meanings. Breast feeding – a traditional women's role – in public space and fighting for the right to this space is *de facto* a breaking with such a role. Planting trees by men, in turn, places value in taking care of Mother Earth, and not in dominating nature. This is also related to an important topic for Malik: the right to public space, in relation to which ecological motifs have a special place. Together with the photographer documenting her performance, Tomasz Wiecha, Malik published one more manifesto. The performance is explained by her in the following way: "Trees are important for the future of our children. They mean clean air, unpolluted soil, a green view from the window. They are the memory of being swung in a hammock stretched between tree

trunks, playing in a tree house, and a picnic on a blanket between tree roots. They are a free nature lesson, a real one, not in a classroom, but in the bosom of nature. Trees are a guarantee of the physical and mental health of future generations. Therefore, we demand an immediate change of the current law that allows for uncontrolled tree cutting. We demand a stop to the process, catastrophic in its effects, which directly affect us and our children"²⁴⁶.

Malik's performance gave a voice in the public space to the 'ordinary people'. Its ecologic ethics are, therefore, a polemic with the ideological subsoil of the era of the Anthropocene, characterized by the dominance of man over the ecosystem on a global scale, in which economic factors play a major role. This has led some scholars to call this era the 'Capitalocene'²⁴⁷, due to the significant role played by capitalism in the ecological devastation of our planet.

Malik's project grows, however, from the belief that social activities, engaging in collective action, can change the situation and have an influence on the general condition of the people who join the public space. These performances play an important role in activating the community, as the artist points out: "After this appeal, girls from Białystok made their own performance of feeding at the cut, and later in Warsaw, and other cities. Such actions build community"²⁴⁸. In this way, Malik realizes a micro-utopia that is an emanation of the belief that art can change reality. She uses motherhood to demonstrate universal social values based on eco-development and

²⁴⁶ See on: <http://www.matkipolkinawyrebie.pl/> (Accessed May 11, 2018)

²⁴⁷ Malm (2016), 291, 389-394. Chakrabarty (2014), 1-23.

²⁴⁸ <http://przepladdemokratyczny.pl/001519-Wywiad-Cecylia-Malik.php> (Accessed 05.10.2017).

transcending the traditional division masculine vs. feminine.

Conclusions

The works of art of Polish artists analyzed here touch upon the topic of motherhood in various ways; all of them, however, deal with a myth deeply rooted in Polish culture: the myth of Mother Poland. Ewa Wójciak is concerned with mothers in the face of the heroic death of their children. Marta Frej discusses the traditionally understood role of the mother and motherhood, which is both idealized and forced into martyrdom. Cecylia Malik, in turn, makes her own motherhood a medium enabling resistance towards a patriarchal system based on dominance over nature, and fighting for sustainable development of the public space.

The myth of Mother Poland is imbued here with new meanings, in which motherhood is no longer a symbol of suffering, a sentence locking a woman up in the house, nor an expression of her agreement to give birth and raise young patriots prepared to give up their lives for the fatherland. The performers refer to the myth of Mother Poland without accepting its traditional content. They re-interpret it in a positive way, trying to draw from it the power to transgress traditional stereotypes and clearly marked borders for women's roles.

The roles of women-mothers newly created by the artists enable the existence of a discursive space with varying understandings, functions and forms of motherhood. They stand in contrast to a mummified, one-dimensional model of motherhood and the related schematic of

womanhood. They make it impossible to unequivocally answer the question of what it means to be a woman and a mother, and, above all, what it means to be Mother Poland. They show to contemporary Polish women that their motherhood does not have to be reduced to an objectifying stereotype, and that they can revalue the traditional and historically built model of motherhood. Being Mother Poland does not need to mean subordination and suffering; it can equip one with the power to act, with public agency. The three case studies above show that it is not through collective activity in one place and time, but by means of a community of values that Rancière called 'ethical community' is shaping women's actualizations of the past. These, in turn, derive power from both a resistance towards encountered forms (here the myth of Mother Poland), as well as from a critical approach to it. Ewa Wójciak, Marta Frej and Cecylia Malik 'take possession' of the myth of Mother Poland, and invite other women to re-interpret it and give it new meanings; at the same time, they put this myth in relation to other women's pasts and to both their own and others' expectations for the future. Thus, through these three artists' works the horizon of expectations inscribed into the myth is not represented anymore by the choice of whether or not to be Mother Poland, rather it provides various, often surprising scenarios for motherhood. The past is an inspiration, and performance makes it real.

References:

Austin, G. 1990. *Feminist Theories for Dramatic Criticism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Balejko D. K. 2001. "Teatr ról płciowych. Teorie o performatywnym charakterze tożsamości płciowej oparte na filmie Jennie Livingston 'Paris Is Burning' oraz tekstach teoretycznych Judith Butler (The Theatre of Gender Roles. Theories on Performative Character of Gender Identity. Based on Jennie Livingston's movie 'Paris is Burning' and Theoretical Texts of Judith Butler), in M. Radkiewicz (ed.). 2001. *Gender w humanistyce* (Gender in Humanities). Kraków: Rabid.

Bourdieu, P. 1998. *La domination masculine*. Paris: Seuil.

Boy-Żeleński, T. 2013. *Piektło kobiet* (Women's Hell). Warszawa: Jirafa Roja.

Butler, J. 2016. *Zapiski o performatywnej teorii zgromadzeń* (Notes for a Theory of Performative Identity). Warsaw: Wyd. Krytyka Polityczna.

Chakrabarty, D. 'Climate and Capital: On Conjoined Histories' *Critical Inquiry* 41 (2014), p. 1-23.

Chmura-Rutkowska, I. E. Głowacka – Sobiech, I. Skórzyńska. 2015. "Niegodne historii"? O nieobecności i stereotypowych wizerunkach kobiet w świetle podręcznikowej narracji historycznej w gimnazjum ("Unworthy of History?" On the Absence and Stereotypical Images of Women in Light of the Historical Narrative in Middle School Textbooks). 2015. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.

Dawkins, R. 2009 (1976). *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drewniak, Ł. *Matczyzna. Nowa premiera Teatru Ósmego Dnia w rocznicę poznańskiego Czerwca* (Motherly. New Premiere of the Theatre of the Eight Day in the Anniversary of Poznań's June) *Przekrój* (2006).

Głowacka-Sobiech, E., M. Michalski, A. Napierała, I. Skórzyńska. 2016. 'Historia –

raport przedmiotowy' (History – Subject Report), in I. Chmura-Rutkowska, M. Duda, M. Mazurek, A. Sołtysiak-Łuczak (eds.). 2016. *Gender w podręcznikach. Projekt badawczy. Raport* (Gender in Scholl Textbooks. Research Project. Report), vol. 3: *Raporty przedmiotowe I rekomendacje* (Subjects Reports and Recommendations). Warsaw: Fundacja Feminoteka.

Graff, A. 'Polska i Polka' (Poland and Polish Woman), in A. Graff, M. Frej, 2015. *Memy I Graffy. Dżender, kasaiseks* (Memes and Graphs. Gender, Cash and Sex), Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.

Graff, F. 2010. 'Feminizm, patriotyzm, religia – czyli o kłopotach z tożsamością' (Feminism, Patriotism, Religion. On Troubles with the Identity), in A. Ostolski, H. Böll (eds.) 2010. *Kościół, państwo I polityka płci* (Church, State and Gender Politics). Warsaw: Stiftung.

Hartwich, M. J. 'Męczenniczka y imperatorka? 'Polonia' a kobiece alegorienarodowe w sztuce europejskiej XIX i XX wieku' (Martyr or Emperor? 'Polonia and Polish Feminin Allegories in the 19th and 20th Century European Art) *Kultura I Historia*, 6 (2004), p. 56-62.

Imbierowicz, A. 'The Polish Mother on the defensive? The transformation of the myth and its impact on the motherhood of Polish' *Polish Culture and Society* 1 (2012), p. 140-153.

Jewsiewicki, B. 2016. 'Kto ustanawia wydarzenie' (Who Establishes an Event), transl. M. Heruday-Kiełczewska, in I. Skórzyńska, M. Bugajewski, M. Forycki (eds.). 2016. *B. Jewsiewicki, Praca pamięci i historii. Studia z antropologii historycznej pamięci* (The Work of Memory and History. Studies in Historical Anthropology of Memory). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii UAM, p. 53-72.

Kalembe-Kasprzak, E. 'Matki nadchodzą' [Mothers Approach] *Teatr* 10 (2006). Online at: <http://www.hypatia.pl/web/pageFiles/attachments/5891/teatr-nr-10-2006.pdf>.

Keetley, D., J. Pettegrew. (eds.). 2005. *Public Woman. Public Words. A Documentary History of American Feminism: 1900-1960*, vol. 2. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Kosseleck, R. 1999. 'Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten' quoted by M. Bugajewski, *Tradycja w "Temps et récit" Paula Ricoeura* (Tradition in Paul Ricoeur's "Temps et récit"), in J. Jurkiewicz (ed.). 1999. *Krajowość – tradycje z godynarodów w dobie nacjonalizmu* (Countryness – Traditions of Nation's Consent the Age of the Nationalism). Poznań: Wydawnictwo IH UAM, 143-158.

Kowalczyk, I. 2003. "Dziewica Orleańska" Jana Matejki – spektakl nie tylko o Joannie' (Jan Matakos's 'The Maid of Orleans' – the Spectacle not only about Joan), in S. Czekalski (ed.) 2003. "Dziewica Orleańska" Jana Matejki Materiały II seminarium Instytutu Historii Sztuki UAM i Muzeum Narodowego w Poznaniu, Rogalin 9-10 /2001 (Jan Matakos's The Maid of Orleans' Contents of the Seminar of Institute of Art. UAM and National Museum in Poznan. Rogalin 9-10/2001). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk.

Kuligowski, W. 'Pokaż jak się angażujesz, a powiem ci kim jesteś' (Show me how you engage, and I will tell you, who you are) *Czas Kultury* (3 October 2017).

Kusiak [Kusiak-Brownstein], A. 2002. 'Heroina narodowa' (National Heroine), in I. Skórzyńska, J. Ostrowska (eds.) 2002. *Dialog(i) w kulturze* (Dialogue(s) in Culture). Poznań: Wydawnictwo EmPi2, p. 24-38.

Makowska, M. 'Matka Polka – konstrukcja złożona' (Mother Poland – Complexed Construction), in J. Skoczyński. 2012. *Mit. Historia. Kultura. Materiały z V Seminarium Historii Filozofii Polski* (Myth. History. Culture. Contents from the 5th Seminar of the History of the Polish Philosophy). Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.

Malm, A. 2016. *Fossil Capital. The Rise of Steam Power and the Roots of Global Warming*. London: Verso.

Michałowska, M. 2013. *Oswajanie drzew. 365 dni z życia Cecylii Malik* (Familiarization of Trees. 365 Days from Cecylia Malik's Life), in A. Rostkowska, M. Niedosiała (eds.). 2013. *Cecylia Malik + Rezerwat miasto*. Krakow: Bunkier Sztuki, p.68-81.

Mizielińska, J. 2004. *(De)konstrukcje kobiecości* ((De)construction of the Womanhood). Gdansk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria.

Monczka-Ciechomska, M. 1992. 'Mity kobiecy w polskiej kulturze' (Myth of the Women in the Polish Culture), in S. Walczewska (ed.). 1992. *Głos mądra kobiety* (Voice for Women). Kraków: Convivium.

Mościcki, P. 'Zaangażowanie i autonomia teatru' (Engagement and Autonomy of Theatre) *Dialog* (December 2007).

Pospiszył, M. 2013. 'Produktywność sztuki: między biopolitycznym wyzyskiem a polityczną wyobraźnią' (Productivity of Art: Between Biopolitical Exploitation and Political Imagination), in A. Rostkowska, M. Niedosiała (eds.). 2013. *Cecylia Malik + Rezerwat miasto*. Krakow: Bunkier Sztuki, 115-122.

Raczak, L. 'Madness and Method: Improvisation in the Theatre of the Eighth Day' *Mime Journal* (July 2014), p. 67-76.

Rancière, J. 2009. *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Rynkiewicz, B. 2016. 'Matki Polki – Feministki, czyli niebezpieczne związki na obrzeżach kultury. Wokół doświadczeń współczesnego macierzyństwa' (Mother Polands – Feminists. Dangerous Liaisons on the Margins of the Culture), in I. Desperak, I. B. Kuźma (eds.). 2016. *Kobiety Niepokorne. Reformatorki – Buntowniczkini – Rewolucjonistki* (Disobedient Women. Reformers – Rebels – Revolutionaries). Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Saja, K. 'Laboratorium umysłu. Maszyna memowa wobec jednostki memu kulturowego' (Laboratory of Mind. Memory Machine against the Cultural Memory) *Refleksje* 5 (2014), p. 32-35;

Steiner, M. 2003. *Geneza teatru w świetle antropologii kulturowej* (The Origins of the Theatre in the light of Cultural Anthropology). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Tieszen, B. 2007. 'Matka Polka (Mother Poland) and the Cult of the Virgin Mary: Linguistic Analysis of the Social Roles and Expectations of Polish Women', in A. Jule (ed.). 2007. *Language and Religious Identity. Women in discourse*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tyszka, J. 'Characters, Connections, Constructing an Action: Forty Years of Theatre of the Eighth Day' *New Theatre Quarterly* 23/4 (November 2007), p. 403-426.

Tyszka, J. 2003. *Teatr Ósmego Dnia – pierwsze dziesięciolecie (1964–1973) głównym nurcie przemian teatru studenckiego w Polsce i*

teatru poszukującego na świecie, (Theatre fo the Eight Day – First Decade (1964-1973). In the Main Stream of the Student's Theatre Transformations in Poland and the Experimental Theatre in the World). Poznan: Wydawnictwo Kontekst.

Urbańska, S. 2015. *Matka Polka naodległość* (Mother Poland Independence). Torun: Wydawnictwo UMK.

Walczevska, S. 1999. *Damy, rycerze i feministki* (Ladies, Knights and Feminists). Krakow: Fundacja Kobięca eFKa.

Wężowicz-Ziółkowska, D. 'Jednostki pamięci kulturowej. Próba kulturoznawczej redefinicji i interpretacji hipotezy memetycznej' (Units of Cultural Memory. An Attempt of the Redefinition and Interpretation of the Memetic Hypothesis in the field of Cultural Studies) *Teksty z Ulicy. Zeszyt memetyczny* 15(2014): <http://www.memetyka.us.edu.pl/dokumenty/pliki/TZU15-2014-01-Ziolkowska.pdf> (accessed 11 May 2018)

Wójciak, E. 2009. "Czas Matek", in P. Skorupska (ed.). 2009. *Teatr Ósmego Dnia 1964–2009* (The Theatre of the Eight Day 1964-1998). Warsaw: Ośrodek KARTA, Dom Spotkań z Historią, AGORA SA.

Zielińska, K. 2010. *W poszukiwaniu nowej wspólnoty, feministki o narodzie, obywatelstwie i demokracji* (In the Search of the New Community. Feminists on Nation, Citizenships and Democracy). Krakow: Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.

Justyna Budzińska has a PhD in history and is assistant professor at the Institute of History, 'Adam Mickiewicz' University in Poznań. Her research interests include visualizations of the past (with particular emphasis on macro and micro history in visual arts); iconographic sources in historical and civic education.

Małgorzata Praczyk has a PhD in history and is assistant professor at the Institute of History, 'Adam Mickiewicz' University in Poznań (from 2012). She has numerous publications on cultural memory, monuments and memorials, anthropology of the city, bio-humanities.

Izabela Skórzyńska is professor of history at the 'Adam Mickiewicz' University of Poznań. She is the author of two monographs (in Polish), on students' theater in Poznań, 1953–1989, and on the alternative politics of memory in post-communist Poland. Her research interests include historical memory, historical civic education, and multiculturalism.

VARIA

SERGIU MUSTEAȚĂ

Soviet Moldova in the Radio Free Europe Broadcasting during the Cold War. Efim Crimerman's (Grigore Singurel) contributions

Abstract

Mass media played an important role during the Cold War and Radio broadcast was one of the most efficient tools deployed by the West against the Socialist block. This phenomenon was called 'the Battles of Western Broadcasting', 'Waves of Liberty' or the 'Voice of Hope'. One of such broadcasts was Radio Liberation (1949-1964), renamed into Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL) since 1975, which brought news about the West in various languages to the Socialist countries and to the USSR. Soviet Moldova did not have its own RFE/RL Service and it was covered by the Romanian Service of RFE and Russian Services of RL. Between 1970 and 1991 many people had important contributions to disseminating news about Soviet Moldova: our article focuses on the contributions of Efim Crimerman, who was a RFE/RL freelancer between 1981 and 1994.

Keywords: Soviet Moldova, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Cold War, Efim Crimerman (Grigore Singurel)

Introduction²⁴⁹

Radio Free Europe was founded by the Eisenhower administration in 1949 in New York, and the first programs were broadcasted in 1950; the first 30-minute program was in the Czech language on July 4th (US Independence Day), and, starting on July 14th, the Romanian broadcasts were released as well. Radio Liberation (known by this name until 1964) was founded in 1951 and recorded in Delaware. The first programs, 30 minutes in Russian and 15 minutes in other languages, were transmitted starting with March 1, 1953. In 1964, Radio Liberation changed its name into

Radio Liberty and, in this context, the American Committee for Liberation, Inc. also changed its name, into Radio Liberty Committee Inc., so as to reflect the new reality.

Both projects were initiated by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Radio Free Europe mainly addressed the socialist states, contained five services that broadcasted in the languages of the respective countries: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania²⁵⁰. Radio Liberty addressed the public in the USSR and transmitted in 16

²⁴⁹ This publication was produced during Fall 2016, when I was a fellow of the Carnegie Research Fellowship Program hosted by the Centre for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies (CREEES), Stanford University, USA. I would like to thank all my colleagues from the

Carnegie Program, Stanford University and Hoover Institution Library & Archive for this great opportunity, for sharing experiences and knowledge on Cold War issues.

²⁵⁰ The Romanian service was made up of 50 employees in 1972 (the total number of

languages. Within a few years after launching, both radio stations broadcasted programs in 28 languages, reaching over 20 countries of the world²⁵¹.

The official relations between the CIA and the radio stations Free Europe and Radio Liberty ended on June 30, 1971, when the administration of these posts temporarily passed under the aegis of the State Department and later became coordinated by a new structure – the Board for International Broadcasting. After a series of investigations and debates in several committees created by the US President Gerald Ford and led by Milton Eisenhower²⁵², beginning with 1974, RFE and RL radio stations became independent, being funded by the US Congress, breaking new ground for these radio stations²⁵³. In 1976, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were merged and since then known under the logo RFE / RL, Inc. Radio Free Europe and Liberty worked until June 1995, in Munich, since then its headquarters being transferred to Prague.

The Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (henceforth SSR Moldova) did not have a stand-alone service within Radio

Liberty, as in the case of other Soviet Union Republics. The situation in Soviet Moldova was discussed, in particular, in some of the programs made by the Russian and Romanian services of Radio Liberty and Free Europe. Thus, within the programs of the Romanian Service – ‘The Romanian News’, ‘From the Communist World’, ‘Political Program’, ‘Panorama’, ‘From Romanian History’, and during some musical programs, Bessarabia or Soviet Moldova were also discussed. Radio Liberty gave attention to the problems of the SSR Moldova in the programs of the Russian Service ‘Events and people’, ‘Jewish Culture and Public Life’, ‘Eastern European Radio Journal’, ‘The Soviet Union and the national question’, ‘The Soviet Union: events, problems, judgements’, ‘Human rights’, ‘Religion in the contemporary world’, ‘Over the barriers’, ‘After the Empire’, ‘Russia in the international context’.

employees of RFE in 1972 was 1624, out of which 1155 were in the German office), put on the air 13 hours 34 minutes per day, out of which 6 hours and 18 minutes were original programs and the rest were retransmissions. The audience, estimated on the basis of the 1971 data, was 8.4 million. The annual cost of the Romanian Service was 2,442,000\$, out of which only 814,000\$ were direct expenses. The average annual salary of an RFE employee was 8,621\$. Hoover Institution Library & Archives (henceforth HIA), RFE/RL Inc. Corporate Records, box no. 305, file no. 5, RFL/RL General Consolidation 1972-1972. Russian RL service in New York was made by 25 people in 1972, out of the total staff of 50 people and over 20 freelancers.

²⁵¹ Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Bulgarian, Estonian, Georgian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Tatar, Turkmen, Ukrainian, etc.

²⁵² The Hoover Archive contains many papers on the issue of the situation created around RFE and RL stations, as well as on the prospects for their development, increasing the annual budget from about 50 million dollars to 70 million dollars, etc. See in this respect documents from HIA, RFE / RL, Inc. Corporate Records, Box no. 65. A detailed report on the history and effectiveness of RFE / RL programs, Whelan (1972).

²⁵³ Abshire (1975).

Since the beginning of its existence, Radio Free Europe developed rules and regulations on how to organize services, program preparation, and broadcasting. Right from the beginning, in the activity guide of the Romanian Free Europe Service, a set of rules had been established on how to develop programs regarding Bessarabia as well. Thus, guide no. 8 from 18 April 1951 on Romania's broadcasts clearly indicates that "it is very reasonable for the Romanians to talk with their compatriots about the return of Bessarabia to Romania"²⁵⁴. However, in the context of the events that followed, especially in the states of the socialist camp in 1956, 1968, RFE / RL policy adapted to new realities and circumstances. Following the structural and administrative changes in RFL/RL in the 1970s and the signing of the Helsinki Treaty, the administration made some changes to the policy of the radio station. Aspects of territorial or national disputes were addressed much more carefully, including the Bessarabian issue, which often falls into the category of 'irredentism/nationalism'.

As a result of the efforts of Nicolae Lupan, both in Munich and in Washington DC, regarding the need to pay more attention to Soviet Moldova in the RFE/RL programs, an exchange of letters took place between RFE/RL leadership and the US institutions in Washington DC. In 1978, James Critchlow, the Director of Planning and Communication of the Council for Broadcasting International Programs, asked the Munich administration for data on the status of the SSR Moldova. From this correspondence, we find out that RFE/RL

subscribed to five press outlets from Chişinău, but initially received only the newspaper *The Socialist Moldova*. As local newspapers were a source of information for the Western press, the Munich-based RFE/RL administration considered that "it is unlikely that the Soviet regime would allow something disturbing to be published in Moldova"²⁵⁵.



Fig. 1. Efrim Crimerman (Personal Archive)

In the second half of the 1970s, the programs of the Romanian Free Europe Service spoke sporadically about various aspects of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Thus, since 1978, within the 'Actualitatea românească' program, Nicolae Lupan evoked the two regions under the editorials 'Historical Figures of our nation', 'The treasures of our people' or 'The Romanian

²⁵⁴ Guidance # 8 for Broadcasts to Romania. April 18, 1951. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records Collection, Box 280, file 8. <http://www.hoover.org/library-and-archives>.

²⁵⁵ Letters signed by J. Critchlow (20.10.1978), Ralph E. Walter (9.11.1978). HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records Collection.

spiritual treasures in Bessarabia and Bucovina'. The introduction of the weekly segment dedicated to Bessarabia in the 'Actualitatea românească' program had "the intention to provide accurate, balanced and informative comments on the life in Soviet Moldova to the Bessarabian Romanians". Taking into account the transformations in the USSR at the beginning of the 1980s, the Romanian Service initiated a ten minute program devoted to the Romanian listeners about the political, cultural and economic changes in the SSR Moldova – 'Echoes between the Prut and the Dniester', which was broadcasted three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, starting at 17:10²⁵⁶.

Radio Free Europe employed both permanent workers and freelancers. For security reasons, most employees were working under pseudonyms. The first generation of employees were journalists and diplomats, established in the West during the interwar period or who emigrated after the Second World War. Later on, their profile diversified.

The Romanian Service of Radio Free Europe, from the very beginning of its existence, occasionally transmitted certain programs or some editorials about Bessarabia. In most cases, these were editorials signed by I. Flavius, G. Georgescu, G. Ciorănescu, V. Georgescu, M. Cazacu,

focussed on some historical data or events: the union of Bessarabia with Romania (March 27, 1918), the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (August 1939), the annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR (June 28, 1940) etc. In the late 1970s, due to the interventions of Nicolae Lupan, within the programs of the Romanian Free Europe Service, the topics on the history and culture of Bessarabia and Bukovina and the problems of the Soviet Moldavia began to be aired more frequently. Towards the end of the 1980s, a special program was broadcasted, dedicated to the situation in the Soviet Moldavia – 'Echoes between the Prut and the Dniester'.

Although in his book Efim Crimerman²⁵⁷ writes about the 'Moldovan Service' of Free Europe, such a service did not exist during the Cold War. The subjects on Soviet Moldova were presented in two RFE/RL services: Romanian and Russian. The other services of the RFE/RL occasionally addressed the situation in Moldova, especially during the perestroika years, national emancipation and the events that led to the declaration of sovereignty and independence.

Alongside the journalists in those two services, Nicolae Lupan and Efim Crimerman have brought important contributions to the talks about Bessarabia. During the 1980s, Vlad Socor also joined the service²⁵⁸, and in the perestroika years and

²⁵⁶ The letter signed by G. Wirzynski, the Director of RFE Division, (12.12.1986) and addressed to N. Lupan. Radio Free Europe Memorandum „Romanian BD Program Change”, 8.09.1989. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records Collection.

²⁵⁷ Crimerman (2011), 265-273.

²⁵⁸ Vlad Socor was employed as a researcher at the RFE/RL Institute, but he also made a number of interventions in the Romanian Service broadcasts, even reaching a special program

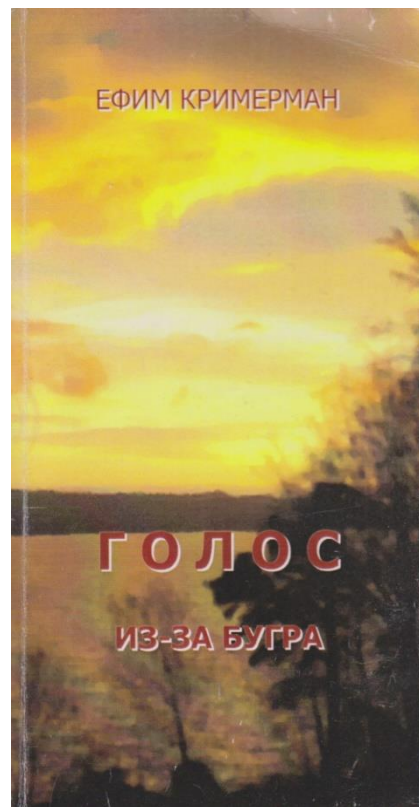
dedicated to Chişinău – 'Bessarabian Roundup' (1988-1989) and 'Moldavian Report/Echoes between the Prut and the Dniester' (1989-1991). The political analyst spoke for the first time at the microphone of Radio Free Europe about Bessarabia and Bucovina on May 12, 1982, within the program 'Romanian News' (Domestic Bloc, no. 68, 12.05.1982), and a year later he talked about Alexei Mateevich as part of the program 'Historical talk', no. 15, 20.04.1983.

shortly after the collapse of the USSR, Victor Moroșan (Victor Eskenazy) also addressed issues concerning the Republic of Moldova in his programs. Since October 23, 1991, Val Butnaru was co-opted as a local journalist who intervened by phone twice a week from Chișinău for RFE. Iurie Roșca, Mihai Fusu, Vasile Năstase also collaborated with RFE, the office of the Radio station in Chișinău being opened by Dan Ionescu.

Efim Crimerman and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (1981-1994)

Efim Crimerman was born in 1923 in Bălți, at that time in Romania, and lived during his childhood in Galați and Bucharest. Due to the antisemitism encountered in Bucharest, in 1940, his family moved to Chișinău. During the Second World War, they went into the Soviet territories and returned to Chișinău in 1944. He attended the Faculty of Letters at the Chișinău State University between 1946 and 1951. During his student years, he published his first poems. After his graduation, he taught in Nisporeni department, in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova, until 1960 when he moved to Chișinău and worked at the State Philharmonic Orchestra. He wrote more than 200 lyrics, mostly in Romanian, which became hits and brought him several national and pan-soviet prizes. He also wrote novels and articles. Married in 1949 with Șena Pilihova, a physician, Crimerman has a daughter (Silvia Crimerman). In 1981, they received the right

to immigrate to Israel. Instead of going to Israel, they went to Germany where Efim Crimerman started his collaboration with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty²⁵⁹.



In his book, Crimerman wrote that, while still in Bessarabia, he listened to Radio Free Europe with an extraordinary pleasure and quite often: “And I envied them ... look, they talked about they have in their hearts. That is why it is so convincing ... about telling the truth”. Despite Crimerman assertions regarding the easiness of listening, the reception of Western radio programs was quite difficult in SSR Moldova because of jamming²⁶⁰.

²⁵⁹ Musteață (2017), 20-36.

²⁶⁰ Although jamming created deficiencies in receiving Western posts, citizens of the socialist states and of the Soviet Union republics continued to listen to their programs. See more

details about the jamming system in the documentary *Empire of noise*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXV4nTfGHuI> (Accessed on 20.02.2017). As for jamming on the territory of the SSR Moldova see the programme

As soon as he arrived with his family in Germany, Efim Crimerman wrote to Lev Roitman, who was the editor of the 'Sovetskiy Soyuz' broadcast at Radio Liberty. While living in Limeshain, he wrote the first texts for RFE/RL, and brought them to one meeting with Lev Roitman. Crimerman recalls his beginning at RFE/RL: "... I have listened to Free Europe with extraordinary pleasure. While I still was in Chişinău. I did a material with Sulac, with these ... And I got a letter from a good friend of mine: 'Please write to me ... in Russian. Write only to me (laughs). Only to me. You do not need to write to the others'. Then I took the car and went to Munich. I went to him, he received me, and called other journalists". 'There you are. That's it'. And he introduced us, and, behold, I began to write directly to him. After that, we moved to Munich"²⁶¹.

The first meeting with Lev Roitman and Evgheni Kusev took place in the basement cafe of RFE, where they discussed several issues regarding life in Soviet Moldova, the emigration of the Jews and their further collaboration. So, owing to Lev Roitman's support²⁶², Crimerman began his work as an external collaborator at RFE/RL in 1981, and moved to Munich. In his book, Crimerman recalled a number of journalists

from RFE, highlighting in particular his colleagues whom he had known or worked with in the Russian Service (Lev Roitman, Mario Korti, Inna Svetlova, Gleb Rar, Irina Henkina, Kiril Henkin, Vladimir Tolz, Viktor Fedoseev, Evgheni Kusev and others) and the Romanian Service (Nicolae Munteanu, Emil Hurezeanu, Doina Schneider, Şerban Orăscu, Mircea Carp, Sorin Cunea, Mircea Vasiliu, Nicolae Stroescu, George Ciorănescu)²⁶³. Although he had met many people during his years in Munich, he does not have pictures of his colleagues from the radio, nor of those with whom he collaborated, nor of friends because: "I photographed beautiful places, I have beautiful memories. This is it, my friends. We were afraid of each other. They wrote boldly, they were writing, but still, they were afraid. You see, even the director of the Russian section was a KGB operative ... And he did not like me at first glance"²⁶⁴.

During his time at RFE / RL (1981-1994), he wrote about 1200 texts, out of which 1/4 for the Romanian Free Europe Service and 3/4 for the Russian Radio Liberty Service²⁶⁵. While conducting the interviews, I have discovered an interesting situation: those who had worked at RFE did not know about Crimerman's talks in Russian to Radio Liberty²⁶⁶. Even though most of his talks

'Moldova, țară de minune' with the title 'War of Radio Waves in the USSR. How the Moldovans listened to western posts, jammed by the Soviets', Publika TV, 16.02.2016, http://www.publika.md/razboiul-undelor-radio-in-urss-cum-ascultau-moldovenii-posturile-occidentale-bruiate-de-sovietici_2534291.html (Accessed on 20.02.2017).

²⁶¹ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁶² Lev Roitman lives today in Prague and in my telephone conversation on July 8, 2016 confirmed

the collaboration and support relationship with Efim Crimerman between 1981 and 1993.

²⁶³ Crimerman (2011), 252-259.

²⁶⁴ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁶⁵ Musteață (2017), 16-17.

²⁶⁶ N. C. Munteanu, who signed the vast majority of his scripts for the broadcasts in Romanian, was astonished when I told him that, in fact, most contributions by Crimerman were made in Russian. Talk in Munich, August 2015.

were in Russian for RL, his first aired intervention was in Romanian, with RFE, within the 'Romanian News' program entitled 'On Lenin Street' on July 28, 1981²⁶⁷. For RFE, in Romanian, he discussed topics regarding the situation in Soviet Moldova and the issue of the Jews; and in Russian, for Radio Liberty, the issue of the Jews, the situation in SSR Moldova and in Romania: "I had started writing about it. Systematically. Once a week. Once a week, we wrote about Moldova, once a week about Romania and about Romania in Russian. ... I did three materials on weekly basis..."²⁶⁸.

Crimerman believed that the most important thing in his work at RFE/RL was that his talks were aired constantly and, that, through the topics addressed, he contributed to demolish the communist regime, using words as his weapon of choice: "I was not focussing on anyone. Neither did I utter ugly words. I was telling the truth. And I was rebuking my conscience if I was wrong". The position of freelancer did not bother him. On the contrary, he believes that he benefited from this status, having both full freedom and an advantageous remuneration: "You understand, they offered me such conditions that I, as a freelancer, got more than ... He

advised me ... Leva ... Roitman, yes. I also enjoyed all their rights, and for me, it was more ... As for the writing, I wrote at home. I wrote in the evening. That's why I used to go to bed late. I came and read during the day. Not every day. As for the rest, I was free, they had no issue with me. In the morning, I was at work, at the cafeteria, there was a special café, we were sitting down and discussed the news, and we had the right to take home the newspapers. And I would look for something interesting, and if I found it, I wrote something, and then I was done with it"²⁶⁹.

For ten years, Efim Crimerman contributed to many broadcasts under the aegis of the Romanian Service, which was located in the left wing on the third floor of the RFE headquarters. Within the Romanian RFE Service, Efim Crimerman mainly collaborated with Doina Schneider at the broadcast 'From the Communist World' and with N. C. Munteanu at the 'The Romanian News' (Domestic Bloc) broadcast, which was the most listened to productions of the station in the 1980s²⁷⁰. He also do some talks to the 'Human Rights' program or took part in some roundtables, organized for the listeners of RFE²⁷¹. Every RFE program was

²⁶⁷ Text presented within the programme 'Domestic Bloc', no. 627 from July 28, 1981. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 3621, file 3, <http://www.hoover.org/library-and-archives>; Crimerman (2011), 262. In the weekly *Literatura și arta* from December 1987, this date is also marked: „So, July 28, 1981 can be considered the day of E. Crimerman's debut at the microphone of Free Europe". Sorin Vlaicu, „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă. (4) Războiul undelor. În prizonieratul arginților" (What is new at Radio Free Europe. The war on waves. Money's custody), *Literatura și arta* 2211, no. 51, December 17 (1987).

²⁶⁸ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁷⁰ Mircea Morariu, „Europa Liberă – aduceri aminte" (Free Europe – Memories), *Adevărul*, July 2, 2016 (Accessed on 09.02.2017).

²⁷¹ For example, the round table on the political legacy of Brezhnev in the 'Political Program', no. 282 from 15.11.1982. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 3965, file 5, <http://www.hoover.org/library-and-archives> (Accessed on 09.02.2017).

composed of several segments. For example, the program 'From the Communist World', lasted 12-20 minutes, and had from two to four speakers. In many programs, there were only the talks of Doina Schneider and Efim Crimerman (speaking under the name Grigore Singurel)²⁷². The 'Romanian News' program lasted 30-40 minutes and had between four and six speakers. At the end of the broadcast, Efim Crimerman constantly brought about news from Soviet Moldova. The 'Human Rights' broadcast, during its 20 minutes, had 3-5 speakers. The editor of the program moderated it and had short introductory comments at the beginning of each speaker's intervention. The news was broadcasted live, while the other programs were mostly recorded in the studio, edited,

and afterwards handed to the editor on the weekly agenda²⁷³.

Based on a statistical analysis of the scripts signed by Grigore Singurel (Efim Crimerman), found in the Hoover Archive, for 1983 and 1984, we can infer that about 50-60% of his editorials were written for 'From the Communist world', 30-35% for the 'Romanian News' and only a few for the programs 'Panorama' and 'Political program'. Thus, analysing the archive data and the number of the scripts signed by Crimerman, it is very clear that he collaborated most intensively with Doina Schneider and spoke about Soviet Moldova within the 'From the Communist World' broadcast.

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Total
Program											
Domestic Bloc	1	2	10	13	14	12	16	29	23		120
Sunday Panorama			2								2
Panorama			2	1	2					7	12
Communist World			12	21	27	23	11	2	12	6	114
Political Program			1							5	6

²⁷² Efim Crimerman used several names. He signed his article while in Soviet Moldova as Efim Zorin and Efim Ciuntu while his interventions at

RFE/RL were presented under the name Grigore Singurel.

²⁷³ Crimerman (2011), 251.

Youth Program						1						1
Human Rights								4				4
Moldavian Report									3	2		5
Chronicle										2		2
The World of Religion										2		2
Article of the day										1		1
TOTAL	1	2	27	35	43	36	27	35	38	25		269

Table 1. Contributions by Efim Crimerman to RFE programs according to the Hoover Archive.

The collaboration with N. C. Munteanu within the 'Romanian News' program was both productive and durable. About N. C. Munteanu, Efim Crimerman recalls that he was a very cheerful, courageous and exceptional critic, reason for which he was hated and pursued by the Romanian *Securitate*²⁷⁴. With Nicolae Lupan, the collaboration was limited to a few short meetings. They had already known each other from Chişinău, when Nicolae Lupan was the director of the State Moldovan Philharmonic. During my interviews, both of them had hostile attitudes towards each other. Efim Crimerman writes succinctly about Lupan in his book, noting that many of Lupan's texts were not aired because of his nationalist approach and his support for unionism, which is confirmed by a string of

documents from the Hoover Archive²⁷⁵. Thus, the relationship between the two Bessarabians was rather rigid. Although they did not collaborate with each other, Crimerman and Lupan intersected quite often in the programs 'Panorama', 'Romanian News' and 'From the Communist World', where each came with his own intervention. In most cases, they were on different days, but sometimes they participated in the same edition, such as the issue of June 24, 1982, about the annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR²⁷⁶.

Topics Addressed by Crimerman

The style in which Efim Crimerman wrote and spoke was a special one, sometimes ironic, often critical and

²⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 260. N.C. Munteanu was admired by more people 'for his well documented and pugnacious shows, but also for his subtle humour and the rich tones of his voice'. Ţurcanu (2016), 241.

²⁷⁵ Crimerman (2011), 233-234, 268-269.

²⁷⁶ Domestic Bloc no. 99, 24 June 1982. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 3936, file 4. <http://www.hoover.org/library-and-archives>.

humorous, attracting public attention. Three basic topics were discussed by Crimerman in his broadcasts at RFE/RL: the situation in Soviet Moldova, the problem of the Jews (in Romanian and Russian) and the situation in Romania (in Russian). Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty had a highly developed library and a research institute that received newspapers and magazines from all over the world, and since 1978 also from the SSR Moldova. Crimerman had full freedom to choose the topics for his airings in both Romanian and Russian.

The vast majority of the texts written by Efim Crimerman drew inspiration from periodicals, both Moldovan newspapers (*Sovetskaia Moldova, Socialist Moldova, Literature and Art, Moldovan Communist, Moldovan Agriculture*) and Soviet Union newspapers (*Sovetskaja kultura, Literaturnaja gazeta, Pravda, Novyj mir* etc.). Knowing the language, history, culture and political realities of Soviet Moldova, with formation and expertise in writing, it was easy for Efim Crimerman to select and write texts for RFE/RL: "I'll tell you. First, I got newspapers. The radio did not say anything ... I would take the newspapers. I would go to the library for this, the library was fantastic. It had all the newspapers that appeared in Chişinău. Political newspapers with political tendencies were passing through my hand. And I would give them back. I would read, I would choose. ... Look, this is how it was. I took the paper. I looked at it. I found it. Something. There was something, it was

little. I also had a backup in the head. And I would sit down and write"²⁷⁷.

Problems of Soviet Moldova

Crimerman spoke about various aspects of the Bessarabian realities during the Soviet regime. One of the most important was the cultural and linguistic situation in the country: the dominance of the Russian language, the distortion of the Romanian language by the Communist authorities and the *şantist* movement, the communist censorship in art and science, the abundance of monuments and names of streets in Soviet style at the expense of national traditions and culture, the establishment of full control over all state institutions, including in the field of culture by the party and the KGB bodies: "Second Lieutenant Constantin Vornicescu has 'cleaned' the art of the Republic for almost a quarter of a century, led the network of security agents in this field. He decided, in essence, who had the right to sing and to dance on stage, who could be left abroad. Not the talent, but the political considerations decided the fate of our artists. Not once, in the capacity of a 'director', a 'literary critic' etc., he accompanied our artists abroad"²⁷⁸.

Ivan Bodiul's regime and his 'affairs' were addressed during several airings at RFE, such as Jan Janâci's²⁷⁹ ban on Romanian books, Romanian music programs, Romanian artist tours into the SSR Moldova, etc. Crimerman also approached economic

²⁷⁷ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁷⁸ Grigore Singurel, *Pe strada Lenin* (On the Lenin street). Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc' no. 627 from July 28, 1981. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free

Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 3621, file 3.

²⁷⁹ Jan Janâci is a nickname of Ivan Bodiul, first secretary of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Moldavia.

issues: the problems of the Moldovan economy, those faced by an ordinary citizen, namely the access to basic goods, especially bread, the quality of service and goods, the quality of roads, bureaucracy, corruption, theft, non-fulfilment of the plan or the declaration of false data for the implementation of annual and five-year plans, the alcoholism, the differences between village and city etc.: "And the first 'object' called by the author is bread. Our daily bread. Namely, in its search, the Bessarabian peasants now have to waste time and take to the road. You might be lead to believe that the locusts attacked the crops in Bessarabia or that the year was droughty? No. As even the *Socialist Moldova* writes, in 1984 the cereal harvest in the Republic was on average of almost 40 quintals per hectare. If so, then where is the bread? What do you mean - where? Together with meat, vegetables, fruit, and grapes - it took the road to Russia"²⁸⁰.

Crimerman often addressed the issues living conditions or even the problems regarding the funerals: "...In Moldova of real socialism, it is not easy to sleep somewhere, nor to live, nor to die. In Chişinău, you can still order a coffin, transport, flowers and even music, but in the Moldavian villages and regional centres, this is left to the fate. There, no one deals with funerals. The newspaper *Literature and Art* gives a passing mention to it. Curious thing:

is it true that in the era of real socialism people die only in cities?"²⁸¹

Coming from the Moldovan cultural environment, Efim Crimerman knew very well the realities and the peculiarities of the regime and its attitude towards culture. That is why he often referred to the problems faced by the artists, the art having been dominated by the communist censorship: "Out of all this, the editor must exclude any negative allusion to Soviet reality. The song must reflect the spiritual beauty of the new man, the love for the party, the proletarian internationalism. Satire should be without teeth, without generalization, to laugh at 'unusual' phenomena of Soviet society. Only salespeople, locksmiths, small clerks are allowed to come under criticism. Those texts which do not meet these requirements are returned to the authors. From the texts without an author, i.e. folk songs, everything that reminds of faith, customs and traditions of the people, its national heroes, the reminders of a prosperous life, wealth (land, horse, cart with oxen, a rich harvest) must be eliminated. Folk songs must be sad, full of sorrow. The past has to be hard, the present - happy. The past must be deleted, forgotten. It is much easier to keep in thrall a people without a past"²⁸².

Simion Grossu's time in power was also debated in the broadcasts of RFE, highlighting both the servility of Moldovans towards Moscow's central power and the

²⁸⁰ Grigore Singurel, *Gustul pâinii* (The Taste of bread). Text presented within the broadcast 'Communist World', no. 456 from March 26, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁸¹ Grigore Singurel, *Curiozităţi din lumea socialismului real* (Curiosities from the real socialism world). Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 211 from October

31, 1983. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 4004-4.

²⁸² Grigore Singurel, *Artişti cu lacătul la gură* (Artists locked up). Text presented within the broadcast 'Comunist World', no. 113 from July 25, 1983. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe. HIA, RFE/RL Broadcast Records Collection, Box 3995-4.

struggle of local bureaucrats and communists with Moldovan citizens and traditions: “Simion Grossu, the first secretary of the Communists of Soviet Moldova, was angry with his party cadres. Not only do they not understand the new and complex character of current tasks, but they are overweight, dealing in distortions, unjustified increases, fraud, abuse of power, scams, they enjoy a glass and take bribes. He spoke about this from the high platform of the ‘October’ Palace in Chişinău at the last plenary of the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Moldova. In his report, he criticized the *nomenklatura* in 19 ministries and directorates, as well as 30 Party District Committees out of 39 that the Republic has”²⁸³.

In the same context, Crimerman also addressed the makeup of Chişinău *nomenklatura*: “... As a rule, the CC's first secretary must be of the people's nationality at the head of which he is placed by Moscow. That is, to be a national in form and a socialist in content...”²⁸⁴ Crimerman's statements on the democratization of the Moldovan society during perestroika were rather pessimistic: “The year '88 has been illustrative to the utmost that the *nomenklatura* in Chişinău is in no condition, is not able and does not want to go through the process of democratization. And it will be an absolute wonder if they do in 1989.

This *nomenklatura* on the shore of the Bâc has gotten bogged down in the slump of stagnation”²⁸⁵.

Crimerman approached a number of important issues for the Moldovan society in his programs: the famine of 1946/47, the deportations from Bessarabia, the nationalization, the censorship in media and culture, the fate of orphaned children, the problems of the Moldovan village, the lack of infrastructure, the war in Afghanistan and the participation of Moldovan youth in it, the Chernobyl catastrophe, the consequences of the earthquake of 1986, and some ecological problems, such as the Dniester pollution, etc. Crimerman also spoke of the fact that Moscow's new leadership penalized Communist leaders in Chişinău for falsifying reality and reporting erroneous data: “Soviet Moldova has scored a new victory. It took the first place in the Union as regards fake information. Over the past few days, Moscow has taken away the diplomas of honour and the prize money it had received as winnings in the Union Socialist Contest of the winter of '85-'86. And shortly before, the Central Committee of the Communist Party admonished Simion Grossu, the leader of the Communists of Moldova, for misinformation and unjustified increases of the results”²⁸⁶.

Another issue of interest for Crimerman was Moldovan-Romanian

²⁸³ Grigore Singurel, *Pe scara ce coboară în jos* (On the stairways down). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Communist World’, no. 436 from February 19, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁸⁴ Grigore Singurel, *Schimbări în aparatul de conducere* (Changes in the top department). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Communist World’, no. 504 from June 18, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁸⁵ Grigore Singurel, *Antitezele lui Matcovschi* (Antithesis of Matcovschi). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Domestic Bloc’, no. 482 from January 3, 1989. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁸⁶ Grigore Singurel, *Marele mistificator* (The great mystification man). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Communist World’, no. 792 from November 12, 1986. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

relations, which became more active in the context of perestroika and glasnost: "...This is in reference especially to the villages that were cut in two parts by the Prut, when the state border was established in 1940, villages that have retained their ancestral name on both banks. According to the new instructions, special crossing points are opened for the inhabitants of these communities twice a week. You only have to provide a written confirmation of the cause of the trip, an official invitation from the relatives, a passport with the stamp that you have a residence visa in the frontier zone and you can move from Moldova to Moldova. A small step, but a step forward. The climate of trust in cultural contacts is improving ..." ²⁸⁷

The actions of national emancipation were also presented by Efim Crimerman in the broadcasts of RFE, where he talked about history, language and democracy, about the articles published in the newspaper *Literatură și artă* and the *Nistru* magazine, about the Green Theatre and the Victory Square etc.: "It seems that the rigid wheel of democracy in Moldova has gotten moving. When you open some issues of the *Literature and Art*, you have the impression that the rays of the sun, wrapped in newspaper print, come from Chișinău. Moldovan writers and publicists, with an unparalleled boldness so far, put on top of their priorities the most pressing national issues. In the parks and other public places of the capital of Soviet Moldova, the so-called unofficial organizations convene rallies and meetings. And not long ago, as it is known, bus drivers

in Chișinău declared a strike. Some of their economic claims were immediately met. Sun rays wrapped in newspaper print. But when you open the *Sovyetskaja Moldova* and the *Socialist Moldova*, heavy clouds and lead, thunder and lightning appear to be wrapped in the same newspaper print" ²⁸⁸.

Taking into account the political transformations in Moldova, still Soviet though, Efim Crimerman presented weekly the most important events which took place between 1989 and 1990: the elections in the Soviet Union and the Republican Supreme Soviet, the declaration of sovereignty, the role of the new political organizations: the Popular Front, the *Edinstvo* and the Gagauz-Halky movements, the emergence of self-proclaimed separatist republics - Gagauzia and Transnistria etc. Crimerman working relation with RFE ended in 1990, because the post's roster was filled with new journalists from Chișinău, while his collaboration with Radio Svoboda continued until 1994.

The Jews Issue

Crimerman spoke about the problem of the Jews from the USSR in Russian, mostly at Radio Svoboda, addressing the issues of anti-Semitism, prohibitions on leaving the USSR, changing surnames or using the pseudonyms by cultural workers to hide their Jewish identity etc. He also touched on these issues in some airings in Romanian at Radio Free Europe, emphasizing the state of affairs in SSR Moldova: the closure of Jewish

²⁸⁷ Grigore Singurel, *Climatul de încredere și vigilența* (The confidence climate and the vigilance). Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 297 From April 19, 1988. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁸⁸ Grigore Singurel, *Pe baricadele restructurării* (On the barricade of the restructuration). Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 382 from August 16, 1988. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

schools, the state of the Jewish cemetery in Chişinău, the creation of the anti-Zionist Committee: “Chişinău has 40,000 Jews. Many of them have submitted applications for departure. They are called ‘refuseniks’ (not allowed to emigrate) because the Soviet authorities do not let them go. Their number is kept secret, but the newspaper *Sovetskaja Moldavia* has told its readers that the ‘refuseniks’ in Chişinău are doing well and are surrounded by parental care”²⁸⁹.

In the context of the perestroika, the Jews were more easily allowed to leave USSR, a reality that disturbed the party authorities in Chişinău and which was discussed at one of the plenary sessions of the Moldovan Communist Party in 1989. Crimerman commented on these debates in one of his talks at Radio Free Europe: “Speaking about the complicated social-political situation in Soviet Moldova at the plenary session, Lavranciuc states: ‘It must be stressed out that, under the influence of this situation, migratory pressings are increasing. If, in 1987, 1,100 inhabitants of the Republic left to settle abroad and 1,700 in 1988, in the first four months of this year, more than 2,000 people received a visa.’ Let’s look at the figures quoted. In January this year, for example, 2800 Jews left the Soviet Union, out of which more than 500 were from Moldova. As we can see, the percentage of the Bessarabian Jews in this wave of emigration, taking into account the small territory of the republic, is very high - about the fifth part. Thus, it can be assumed that in a decade there will be no so-called ‘Soviet

citizen of Jewish nationality’ between the Dniester and the Prut”.

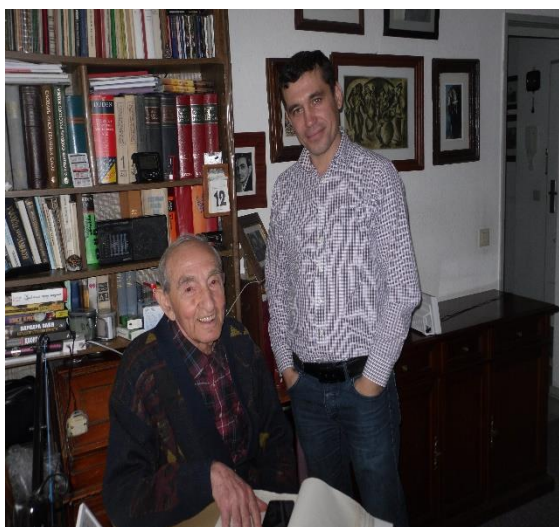
At the same time, Crimerman pointed out some positive changes in the life of the Bessarabian Jews: “Recently, two synagogues were opened in the Republic and a Jewish culture society was established. Since the beginning of this year, two Jewish ensembles have been formed in Chişinău, the Russian theatre in the capital of the Republic has presented the premiere of the show ‘The Last Prayer’ after the novel by Şolom-Aleihem, ‘Tevie-lăptarul’. Even the number of Jewish students in higher education institutions has increased over the past two years from two to three percent. Yet, the Jews are leaving.”²⁹⁰

The Situation of Romania

Efim Crimerman spoke about the situation in Romania only in Russian at Radio Svoboda. In most of his talks, during 1981-1989, he criticized the Ceausescu regime and presented various social, economic and political realities of socialist Romania. In the context of the political changes which took place in Romania in December 1989, the Moldovan-Romanian relations were revived, and therefore Efim Crimerman sometimes mentioned some events regarding Romania’s attitude towards still Soviet Moldova in his broadcasts at RFE during 1990.

²⁸⁹ Grigore Singurel, *Antisemitism official* (Official Antisemitism). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Communist World’, no. 448 from March 12, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

²⁹⁰ Grigore Singurel, *Exodul evreilor basarabeni* (The Exodus of the Bessarabian Jews). Text presented within the broadcast ‘Domestic Bloc’, no. 608 from June 28, 1989. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.



Efrim Crimerman and Sergiu Musteață, Aachen, 2014.

To my question on censorship and textual interventions by the editors of RFE/RL, Efrim Crimerman stated that they were mainly of orthographic order and limited to proofreading his texts, both in Russian and in Romanian: “He did not intervene. I wrote the material. I brought it in two or three copies. I gave them to Leva, Leva Roitman. He read it. He proofread it. He knew Russian well, I did it worse. Yes, he did only that. Munteanu. We were friends. He helped me, he laughed while reading. He was looking to add. He added. He knew that I was not afraid of ... correction”²⁹¹.

The traces of these editor’s interventions can be found in the scripts discovered in the Hoover Archives. In all likelihood, the corrections attempted to bring the articles in line with the guidelines

²⁹¹ Interview with Efrim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

²⁹² RFE/RL, based on a series of surveys and research works, made quarterly and annual reports on the impact of its emissions. For instance: Radio Free Europe Audience Research.

and the action rules of RFE/RL. At the same time, the editor wanted the statements to be confirmed from two or three sources. Therefore, in most cases, the sources are shown at the end of the texts signed by Crimerman, these being, as a rule, the newspapers published in the SSR Moldova.

As regards the impact of the broadcasts, despite the fact that some surveys and reports had been conducted, some of them based on letters received from Socialist countries and USSR²⁹², Crimerman says that very few letters from the USSR or SSR Moldova arrived to him. Moreover, some of them had denigrating content and were most likely written by party representatives, KGB officers or by persons affiliated to the Soviet state institutions. The surveys by RFE/RL were based on a number of criteria with regard to the RFE/RL audience, including the analysis of the correspondence received from URSS and the socialist states. Thus, in the first semester of 1971, SSR Moldova reached 2% of the total number of letters, so was the situation in Estonia and Latvia, while the Ukrainian SSR received 30%, and the Georgian SSR only 4%²⁹³.

Efrim Crimerman vs. Communist Regime

Efrim Crimerman does not consider himself to be a dissident but someone who attempted to show the real face of the communist regime, especially the way the

The Effectiveness of Radio Free Europe. Audience Research Department, RFE, December 1965. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records Collection, Box 478, file 1.

²⁹³ Whelan (1972), CRS-265.

Romanian language was destroyed and the Jews were treated in the USSR: "I did not say: 'Down with ...'. I worked, I'm anti-Soviet, yes, that is what I'm convinced of. But I'm not a dissident. What did I do, did I break anything in Moldova? On the contrary, I helped them get closer to the Romanian language. What have you done with this language? That's what I was fighting with"²⁹⁴.

His work at Radio Free Europe was disregarded by the party organs and the KGB in the USSR. Soviet authorities conducted an active policy against the Western propaganda, especially against radio stations. In order to better understand the USSR policy towards Western radio stations, I will present some examples of documents from the archives of Chişinău²⁹⁵. The protest manifestations in the states of the socialist camp, GDR (1952), Hungary and Poland (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), covered extensively by the Western radio stations, including RFE/RL, were considered potential sources of grievance in the USSR, while the access to Western sources of information could contribute to reduce people's confidence in the Soviet mass media. That is why the spirit of the SSR Moldova's population was very closely monitored by the party and state security

bodies, countering any manifestation that was qualified as 'antisovietic' or 'unhealthy'²⁹⁶. Thus, in the years of the Soviet regime, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union made several decisions to combat 'hostile radio propaganda', such as the decision from July 19 1960, 'About the measures of active counteraction to hostile radio propaganda'. Jamming was just one of the technical methods used to prevent citizens from listening to these channels.²⁹⁷

In 1959, the Soviet authorities partially halted Voice of America and BBC radio stations²⁹⁸, but RFE/RL still remained forbidden in the USSR. That is why, in the battle for audience, the USSR radio stations broadcasted in the languages of the Republics between 5 p.m.-10 p.m. (taking into account the time zone differences), which would have drawn the attention of the listeners from the programs of the Western radio stations. The Communist authorities considered Radio Free Europe as 'a weapon of imperialist propaganda directed against the socialist states and, above all, against the Soviet Union', led by the Committee of Free Europe in New York, organized with the help of 'American Zionists'²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Efim Crimerman, 12 July, Aachen, Germany.

²⁹⁵ The archive of the Social-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova (archive of Central Committee of Communist Party of Moldova) and the Special Deposit of SIS (archive of the State Security Committee attached to the Moldovan SSR Ministers' Soviet Union / KGB).

²⁹⁶ Caşu (2009).

²⁹⁷ See more details about jamming techniques and history in the following articles: Pleikys, (2003) (accessed on 20.02.2017); Król (1992).

²⁹⁸ Only broadcasts considered hostile, ranging from 5-30% to 75-95%, were jammed. Cf. the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the CPSU for Union Republics, July 15, 1960.

²⁹⁹ The response of the State Committee of the Soviet of Ministers of the SSR Moldova for the Television and Radio broadcasting at the request of the KGB on Free Europe Radio, signed on May 26, 1972. The special deposit of the SIS (KGB), the Judiciary Files of the Persons subjected to Political Repression during the Communist regime, personal file 017006 (Usatiuc-Ghimpu), volume 10, f. 263-264.

In 1960, there were about 20 million radio sets in the USSR that could receive broadcasts from the radio stations of the West, but the authorities could not imagine the real picture of the number of listeners. It was clear though that people listened to those stations extensively and adapted their radio sets in order to receive ultra-short waves. The Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Communist Party of the USSR reported in July 1960 to the Central Committee that 'some disabled war veterans, radio-technicians, and especially radio enthusiasts install ultra-short diapason, from 10 meters, into the radio sets available to the population for 250-300 roubles. Only Western radio stations can be received on these waves. Even in Moscow, in the GUM and other stores, the buyers of radio sets were closely approached by people without any occupation, with the proposal to install ultra-short waves diapason into the radio'³⁰⁰.

Unhappy with the way in which the decisions from 26 February 1960 and 16 July 1963 were implemented, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR approved a new decision in 1970 attempting to prosecute more efficiently those who used the radio sets illegally³⁰¹. Besides listening to the Western radio stations, the programmes of these radio stations were treated as dangerous, as 'hooligan songs, vulgar jokes, and uncensored talks, harmful political and anti-Soviet talks are transmitted'. That is why the party bodies call for a more serious

involvement of the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Committee, the Republican Committee of the DOSAAF, the Prosecutor's Office, the Supreme Court, the city and district councils in combating this phenomenon, attested in many communities of the SSR Moldova³⁰².

Following the events in Prague in 1968, the Soviet authorities took a number of steps to monitor the mood of the population and to prevent access to alternative sources of information. Thus, in May 1972, the State Committee of the Soviet of Ministers of the SSR Moldova for Television and Radio broadcasting reported, at the request of the State Security Committee (KGB), that "in 1968-1971 false information on the so-called 'Bessarabian problem' and Romania's claims on the territory of Moldova, the rebirth of nationalist tendencies in the Republic and so on are included more and more often in the Radio Free Europe programs"³⁰³.

That is why, in 1972, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova addressed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR the request to dispatch a number of KGB operatives in the frontier regions of the Republic of Moldova in order to more effectively combat 'the work of special services and ideological centers from Western countries and Israel, that turn up the heat, use the formations of Jewish Bessarabian emigration and the Romanian nationalist

³⁰⁰ Musteață (2017), 56.

³⁰¹ Musteață (2017), 57.

³⁰² *Ibidem*.

³⁰³ The response of the State Committee of the Soviet of Ministers of the SSR Moldova for the Television and Radio broadcasting at the request

of the KGB on Free Europe Radio, signed on May 26, 1972. The special deposit of the SIS (KGB), the Judiciary Files of the Persons subjected to Political Repression during the Communist regime, personal file 017006 (Usatiuc-Ghimpu), volume 10, f. 263-264.

centers³⁰⁴. Until 1972, the KGB had offices only in 12 districts out of the 33, and therefore the Chişinău leadership requested the opening of the sections of state security bodies in other districts. First, the opening of sections in the districts along the Romanian border was requested, where, out of 11 districts, the KGB had offices in only five districts.

During the plenary meeting of the CC of the Moldovan Communist Party on December 1983, Simion Grossu, the First Secretary, spoke about the need to intensify counterpropaganda activities against the Western information offensive. In March 1984, in Chişinău, a scientific-practical conference on counterpropaganda took place, attended by over 100 specialists in various fields. Historian Ivan Țaranov said that the broadcasts of Free Europe are hostile to the Soviet people. After the conference, the Scientific Center of Counterpropaganda was created, and a similar office was opened in Chişinău, which co-ordinated the activity of counterpropaganda groups within the Party Regional Committees.³⁰⁵

In spite of the fact they were working under a pseudonym, the real name of those who worked at the radio stations was relatively quickly discovered by the communist authorities in the SSR Moldova. We find out that the activity at RFE/RL was dangerous from Efim Crimerman's report: several times he was called on his phone home, most likely by the agents located on the territory of the German Federal Republic, and prevented: "Yes, I was told like that: «Заткнись, а то убьем тебя» (Shut up, or we'll kill you.). Russians... Yes. The

Russians. Because I was listened to not only by the Romanians, I was listened to by the Russians, and the Russians were in power there..." One day he was invited to a meeting in town by two strangers, who, pretending to be tourists coming from Romania, wishing to meet Crimerman very much. They claimed they had been given his telephone number by a priest who wrote for Free Europe: 'It was dangerous because they were sent from Romania, there were two of them. One called me in the evening': 'Mr. Crimerman, we came to interview you and ...' but they did not say they were from Romania ... and 'we know this one, that priest.' 'I say I do not know him. I knew one priest, but it was not him. Not this one.' And I went to the Antiquity Exhibition with my wife. And one of them stopped us. (They were not stylishly dressed and they were no longer young.) And he started pulling my leg: 'I did, I was ... And I felt he was a phony. So I smelled it was' ... So I told my wife in Russian: 'It smells like a rat'. He invites me: 'Come, I have some sweets from Bucharest, very, very tasty and very rare'. 'Thank you, on another occasion.' And then, it has been confirmed that both of them were ... They wanted to finish me, as they killed two people from the Romanian editorial staff"³⁰⁶.

Soon after this meeting, an aggressive campaign against Efim Crimerman started in the newspapers of the SSR Moldova with the title 'Anti-Sovietism. How is it being formed?' Thus, on August 29, 1984, the newspaper *Moldova socialistă* (Socialist Moldova) published the article "A 'Knight' of lying and slander" in the 'Moldavian' language, signed by Fiodor Angheli, the

³⁰⁴ Secret letter no. 210c addressed to the CC of the PCUS, signed by I. Bodiul, first secretary of the CC of the PCM, July 3, 1972. AOSPOM, fond 51, op. 33, folder 82, files 1-4.

³⁰⁵ Crimerman (2011), 267-268.

³⁰⁶ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

Director of the Moldovan Telegraph Agency (ATEM), and member of the CC of PCM³⁰⁷. Soon afterwards, the article was published in several Russian-language newspapers in the *Sovetskaja Moldavija* on 4th of September 1984, and in the *Večernij Kišinev*, on 8th of September³⁰⁸. The article directly targets Efim Crimerman, who, 'as a CIA agent, is hiding under the pseudonym Grigore Singurel, the former inhabitant of Chișinău...'³⁰⁹.

Fiodor Angheli, the author of the article, tries to link the Jewish problem in the USSR to the situation of the black people and the Jews in the USA, considering that Crimerman makes 'Zionist propaganda', which was associated by him with 'the phrases widely applied by Goebbels's Chancellery in Hitler's Germany'. Crimerman's interventions on the economic situation in Soviet Moldova were described as 'an attempt to discredit socialism as a whole and, in particular, the cooperative plan of V.I. Lenin'. Finally, Crimerman was described as a 'liar', a 'knight of slander' associated with Nozdriov, the hero of Gogol.

The content of the article allows us to notice that Crimerman's talks at RFE/RL were recorded and analysed very carefully, Grigore Singurel's own words being quoted very often. So, the Chișinău authorities were strongly disturbed by Crimerman's performance at RFE. The campaign of denigration continued in the following years through a series of articles in the Moldovan press.

In January 1987, the newspaper *Moldova socialistă* published another article, which stated that "in order to cloud the minds of the people of our country and of other countries of the socialist community, our ideological opponents largely use the most unworthy ways and means, including religion and nationalism"³¹⁰. This article attempted to combat allegations regarding the USSR's ban on the anniversary of a millennium since the Christianization of Russia, scheduled for 1988, considered to be 'hostile attempts' that have 'anti-Sovietic purposes'. Grigore Singurel and Nicolae Lupan were attacked within the article, being the first time that they were labelled 'dissidents' by a Soviet daily: "They were singing to the tune of their masters and the dissidents - such as Singurel, who had taken hold at Radio Liberty, and Lupan, the anointed of Free Europe, who claimed that the baptism of the 'Romanian' people, whose inseparable part they considered to be the Moldovans, happened long before 'the baptism of Russia'³¹¹.

In the same style were the speeches delivered by the participants in the gathering of the Republican activists of the party from September 29, 1987. The speech given by G. M. Volkov, the head of the State Security of the SSR Moldova (KGB), stands out, as it labelled Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe as parts of the subversive activity of special services, centres and organizations from abroad against Moldova: "...Our classist opponent regards nationalism and

³⁰⁷ In Ion Țurcanu's view, „the intelligence agency ATEM, led by a servant of the regime, exceedingly zealous, a Russophile and Russophone Gagauz F. Angheli...” Țurcanu, 144.

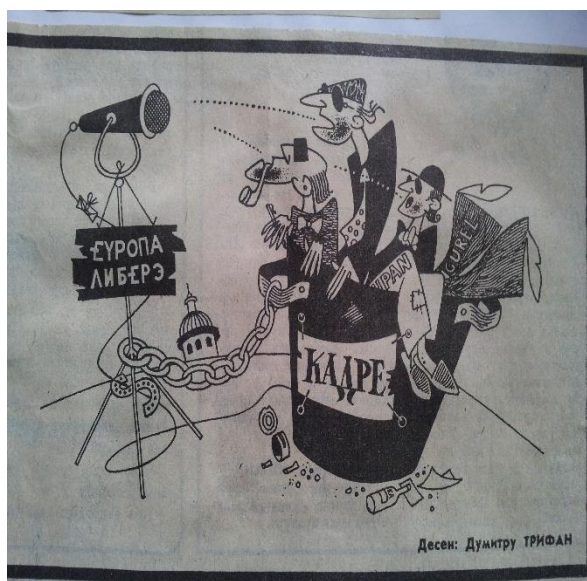
³⁰⁸ F. Angheli, „Un «cavaler» al minciunii și clevetirii” (A knight of the lie and gossip), *Moldova socialistă*, August 29, 1984.

³⁰⁹ Crimerman (2011), 267.

³¹⁰ L. Makarov, „... Cu piatra în sân”, *Moldova socialistă*, January 30, 1987.

³¹¹ *Ibidem*.

religion as Trojan horse, called upon to break down socialism from within. In the organization of ideological diversions, the most active are, as before, the subversive radio stations Liberty and Free Europe, where the father and the son Lupan, Crimerman and Renata Lisnic located themselves, after having left the Republic. Trying to cope in their vile activity with the restructuring that takes place in our country, the scum have changed their tactics. Not only do they comment in a slanderous form on the critical articles published in the Union and the Republican press, but also call on the radio listeners in Moldova to anti-Soviet, nationalist actions"³¹².



Comics in the *Literatura și Arta*, 1987.

The activity of the emigrants, called 'Moldavologs' - bourgeois Romanian and Moldovan nationalists, originated from former Bessarabia, as well as the other scum

- former inhabitants of Moldova is considered by the Communist leadership of Chișinău to be 'subversive' because they 'falsify the history of Moldova', 'speculate with the 'Bessarabian problem', 'accuse the Soviet Union of violating the Helsinki agreements'. The fact that these subjects were discussed at the party meetings is not new, as it was the participation of KGB representatives at these meetings. But, through the speeches of the President of the State Security of the SSR Moldova, one can see how carefully the security officers listened to the broadcasts of the Western radio stations, and the qualifications attributed to them demonstrate their fear about the 'negative' impact on the Soviet society.

Efim Crimerman laughs at this statement and 'how well the Moldovan KGB was informed' because there was no such group, especially 'coordinated by an unknown hand', stating that Victor Lupan and Renata Lisnic lived in Paris and were not linked to Radio Free Europe.³¹³ It is true that, Victor Lupan, as a journalist, has collaborated with RFE, but mainly on Oriental issues.

In 1987, the weekly *Literatura și Arta* (Literature and Art) launched the "War of the Waves" column, a series of articles with the title "What's new in Free Europe or reflections on some radiofollies". These were signed by Sorin Vlaicu, who recognized from the very beginning that his columns were a direct response to Radio Free Europe talks that 'attacked me several times, commenting on some of my articles, robbing the truth

³¹² „Să educăm patrioți internaționaliști. Din cuvântările la adunarea activului republican de partid, care a avut loc în ziua de 29 septembrie 1987” (Let's educate international patriotes. Aspects of the talks during the gathering of the

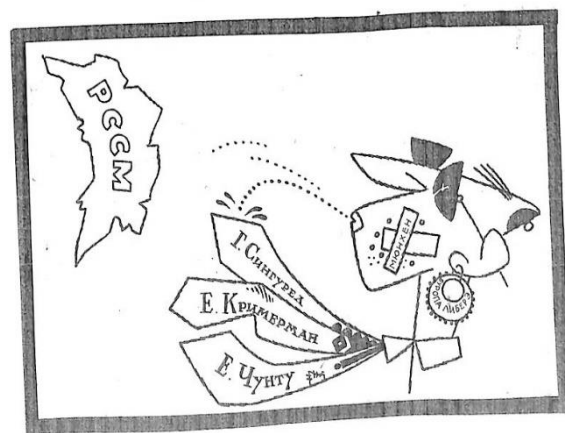
party which took place on 29 of September 1987), *Moldova socialistă*, October 3, 1987. The article was also published in a Russian version in *Sovetskaja Moldaviija*, 3.10.1987.

³¹³ Crimerman (2011), 269.

from its elementary data and calling me unjustly all sorts of things'. In fact, he wrote four articles in which he directly attacks Nicolae Lupan and Efim Crimerman³¹⁴. Sorin Vlaicu considers the Western radio stations (Radio Free Europe, Liberty, Voice of America) to be 'in the service of espionage', being disturbed mostly by RFE, which 'programs are prepared exclusively for our Republic', through the editorials of Nicolae Lupan and Grigore Singurel. Vlaicu was even more disturbed by the fact that, according to Soviet-American agreements from 1987, jamming of Western radio stations stopped, and the messages from the outside could reach the Moldovan audience easily: "So, they can reach without a hindrance the ears of listeners, ears of various kinds, whose ideological training, we recognize, sometimes leaves much to be desired, some of them being 'enchanted' by the nice phrases of those who always vociferate in front of microphone. And there is also our listener, as I mentioned, poorly informed"³¹⁵.

³¹⁴ Sorin Vlaicu, „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă sau reflecții pe marginea unor radiobazaconii. (1) Războiul undelor”, *Literatura și arta* 2199, no. 39, September 24, 1987. „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă sau reflecții pe marginea unor radiobazaconii. (2) Războiul undelor. Calea lungă a trădării”, *Literatura și arta* 2204, no. 44, October 29, 1987; „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă sau reflecții pe marginea unor radiobazaconii. (3) Războiul undelor. Calea lungă a trădării”, *Literatura și arta* 2205, no. 45, November 5, 1987; „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă. (4) Războiul undelor. În prizonieratul arginților”, *Literatura și arta*, 2211, no. 51 (December 17, 1987).

³¹⁵ Vlaicu, „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă sau reflecții pe marginea unor radiobazaconii. (1) Războiul undelor”.



Literatura și Arta, 1987. Comics by D. Trifan

On the one hand, we can notice the concern of the Chișinău authorities about the widespread access of the inhabitants of the SSR Moldova to the information from the West, following the cessation of the jamming³¹⁶. On the other hand, they admitted that the public was poorly informed, i.e. unilaterally informed, because of the way the news were presented by the institutions subordinated to the communist regime.

³¹⁶ By 1986, in the USSR, there had been 13 radio centers with wide protection and 61 stations with local protection with a capacity of 40,000 kw, jamming the programs of eight Western radio stations: Voice of America, BBC, Liberty, Free Europe, Deutsche Welle, Voice of Israel, Radio Beijing, and Radio Korea. The informative note of the CC of the PCUS, strictly secret, dated from 25.09.1986 "Regarding the cease of jamming of the broadcasts by "Voice of America", "BBC", „Radio Beijing” and "Radio Korea”, signed by E. Ligachev, V. Chebrikov. Total cease of jamming of western radio stations was suggested on November 30, 1988, according to the Order no. 38c of the Ministry of the Communications of the USSR, from 19.12.1988. Source: <http://www.radiojamming.info/> (Accessed on 20.02.2017).

Vlaicu, in the spirit of the statements of the KGB head of Chişinău, claimed that “due to the directives received from Washington, a new detachment of specialists recruited into the espionage centres or from the ranks of the ‘renegades’ has appeared at Liberty and Free Europe”³¹⁷. Thus, in the first article of the “War of Waves” series, members of the ‘Moldovan section’ at Free Europe were listed as follows: Victor Lupan, Nicolae Lupan, Grigore Singurel, Renata Lisnic and George Cioranescu, who ‘shed crocodile tears, lamenting the bitter fate of the ‘oppressed’ and ‘humiliated’ inhabitants of our Republic’³¹⁸.

The fact that both Lupan and Crimerman often based their comments on Chişinău's press, especially during the perestroika, greatly disturbed the Moldovan authorities, which categorized them as subjective and false: “Hiding themselves under the mask of ‘objectivity’, they manipulate and change the accents in every piece of information about our country, denying the success of the restructuring in every possible way”³¹⁹. The dilemma of the communist authorities was delicate: the perestroika offered the possibility to criticise the system, but they wanted the critique to be controlled by them. Moreover, when critical messages about the system or the problems faced by the Soviet society, based on the press from Chişinău, came from outside, they reacted adversely.

Lupan and Crimerman had been speaking for many years at RFE/RL, but the attacks on them intensified in 1987. Along with the cessation of jamming, communist

authorities resorted to a direct attack on people and the attempt to discredit them in front of the local audience.

The fourth article in the series initiated by the *Literatura și Arta* is devoted mainly to Efim Crimerman, who is again labelled with derogatory words: ‘diversionist, mercantile, outsider, renegade’ etc. In this article, Crimerman is compared both with Jules Verne, and with a monkey. With regard to the pseudonym, Vlaicu insists that “the pseudonym Singurel fits well with this renegade. It is even better than Ciuntu. Crimerman is not a defective man. The texts he was making were defective. He is a stranger hidden from the eyes of the world. As Victor Hugo said, a lonely person is a diminutive of a savage accepted by civilization. E. Crimerman is also a lonely savage”³²⁰.

The author of the article comments on a series of talks by Crimerman accusing him of taking only “well-known pieces of information, obsolete, outdated and consumed moments” from the Chişinău press, of repeating some texts in the broadcasts of this radio station and so on. Finally, Vlaicu addresses the RFE / RL leadership with the suggestion to get rid of Crimerman: “But don’t the gentlemen from Noah’s team know that before pointing to the garbage in the neighbour’s yard one should put one’s own house in order? In other words, those ones from Munich must get rid of mystifications and mystificators first and foremost”³²¹. These statements demonstrate once again that Crimerman's airings were listened to, recorded and analysed.

³¹⁷ Vlaicu, „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă sau reflecții pe marginea unor radiobazaconii. (1) Războiul undelor”.

³¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

³¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

³²⁰ Vlaicu, „Ce mai nou e la Europa Liberă. (4) Războiul undelor. În prizonieratul arginților” (What is new at Radio Free Europe. War on waves. Money’s prisoner).

³²¹ *Ibidem*.

The articles in the weekly *Literatura și Arta* are accompanied by a few caricatures, signed by Dumitru Trifan. The first is a snake wrapped around a microphone. On the snake's body there is an inscription *Free Europe* and on the microphone support - the abbreviation CIA. The second one is a man with black glasses at the microphone, dressed in cloth, a button on his shirt with a dollar sign, wearing a lambskin hat, with the inscription *Free Europe* on the belt and a start key on the back, like the one the mechanical clocks have, with the abbreviation DCR on it, which might have meant the CIA. In the third issue, the caricature likely represents the same person speaking at the microphone, this time in a dog booth, on the front of which there is the inscription *Free Europe*, and behind it, inside the booth, one can see the face of a guy wearing black glasses. The person has a necklace with a dollar-shaped pendant around the neck, a knife in the right hand and a piece of bone in the left. There is one bone in the jacket pocket and another one beside the booth, with the inscription *fee*. Next to the bone, there is an open can, with the inscription *jom* (sugar beet pulp). Taking into account the fact that Nicolae Lupan was discussed in articles two and three, the caricaturist probably tried to represent him. The caricature in the fourth article of the *Literatura și Arta* is even more suggestive, because the head of a guy with black glasses, who has an earring with the inscription *Free Europe* and a cross bandage on his left cheek

with the mention *Munich*, is wearing three ties with a name written on each: E. Ciuntu, E. Crimerman, G. Singurel, and spitting in the direction of a map with the inscription SSR Moldova. As I have mentioned above, this article attempts to discredit Crimerman, the caricature being an illustration of the denigrating text.

In the context of the perestroika, the editorial policy of the weekly *Literatura și Arta* changed: it became an opponent of the central power, often being criticized at the party assemblies, threatened with judicial proceedings or closure. The caricaturist Dumitru Trifan had already begun to scoff at the Communist authorities. Because of this, Demidenko, the general prosecutor of the SSR Moldova, threatened him with prosecution. Efim Crimerman, who noted the transformation of Trifan's caricatures, wrote and spoke about this subject, considering that, in all likelihood, Trifan understood that not RFE was to blame for the situation in Moldova but the Moldovan nomenklatura³²².

These articles were a 'celebration' for Efim Crimerman, because he saw the impact of his work, which disturbed the party organs and the KGB. He believes that due to his comments, the Chișinău leadership took measures to correct the situation, as was the case with his editorials about 'The taste of bread'³²³ from March 26 and 'Bakers from Chișinău'³²⁴ from May 16, 1985, when he talked about the problem of cereals assurance in the Moldavian Soviet

³²² Grigore Singurel, *Caricaturile din ziarul „Literatura și arta”* (The caricatures from *Literature and Art* newspaper). Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 487 from January 10, 1989. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

³²³ Text presented within the broadcast 'Communist World', no. 456 from March 26, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

³²⁴ Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 608 from May 13, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

Socialist Republic; at the end of May 1985, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova approved a decision to resolve the issue. His airing, 'Nothing new on the front of drinking', in which he talked about the transformation of the Greek Church into a wine tasting room also had an impact: "In Moldova, they began to fight drinking and restore cultural monuments. On the corner of Kiev and June 28th streets, in the centre of the city, they restored the building of the Greek Church, which had been erected long ago by brothers Ion and Viktor Sinadino. They re-edified its graceful lines, the stained glass lit up, the stone began to speak. You get into this place of prayer and you are stuck. Instead of the altar - the counter with bottles, instead of icons - barrels of wine. They have restored the church and made it a pub ..." ³²⁵ A few months later, the Chişinău leadership transformed the church and its surrounding area into an art exhibition. Thanks to the 'Tigers on arena' talks in November 1985, where they spoke about the dismissal of a driver from Ocniţa district, who dared criticize his boss in January 1986, the CC Bureau of the PCC reinstated him in his former position, while the respective superior and the regional secretary of the party were punished ³²⁶.

The issue of the quality and the way of presentation of Soviet Moldova in RFE/RL programs remained on the agenda of the administration and was sporadically discussed. In 1986, Vlad Georgescu, the director of the Romanian Free Europe

Service, in a note addressed to Joel Blocker, noted with satisfaction the impact of the issues addressed by Crimerman and Lupan on the SSR Moldova: "It is true that the programs issued for the Soviet Moldovans are not of the same quality as those for the Romanians in Romania... Unfortunately, our attempts to find Bessarabian professionals freely are very limited. I will, however, speak to those two freelance professionals about the issue and the need to look for some better elements in the future. ... I would like to add that the feedback from Bessarabia indicates that the broadcasts are very popular and that both people, Crimerman and Lupan, have been constantly attacked by the Moldovan Soviet press for their contributions." ³²⁷

Efim Crimerman and Nicolae Lupan, alongside other people working for RFE/RL, were included on the List no. 1, the list of persons who did not have the right to enter the USSR for ideological reasons – that was the 'black lists of the KGB' of the so-called 'anti-Soviet persons' ³²⁸. In addition to these reactions, letters from listeners came from the USSR, appreciating and thanking RFE/RL collaborators for their performance. Crimerman remembers such a message from a Ukrainian citizen living in Moldova who thanked him: "Although I live in Moldova, I do not understand much about what is happening here. I would like to thank Grigore Singurel for his exceptional analysis of this Republic" ³²⁹.

The US Administration of RFE/RL also sent thankful messages to its

³²⁵ Text presented within the broadcast 'Communist World', no. 556 from September 17, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

³²⁶ Crimerman (2011), 270-271.

³²⁷ Memorandum. Radio Free Europe Division, Letter signed by Vlad Georgescu to Joel Blocker, August 11, 1986. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records Collection.

³²⁸ Crimerman (2011), 268.

³²⁹ Crimerman (2011), 273.

collaborators for certain programs or special performances. Thus, George Urban noticed one of Crimerman's editorials regarding judges in Soviet Moldova: "I would like to thank you for the exceptional article 'Who are the judges?'"³³⁰ This is a typical radio show that addresses the listeners directly, in today's complicated context. At the same time, your scepticism and humour deserve attention. Thank you"³³¹.

Final Remarks

Efim Crimerman wrote in his book that the time of his pseudonyms had passed and nobody knows if they remain in the memory of the people. With the closure of the RFE/RL office in Munich and its transfer to Prague, many employees and external collaborators ceased their activity and collaboration with these radio stations. In this context, Efim Crimerman left Radio Free Europe too: "I said good-bye to the radio station, whose voice, during the gloomy Soviet era, was a call to another world - the world of freedom. I said good-bye to the English Garden, to my friends, to the studio, the microphone and my pseudonyms. The station moved to Prague, and Shena and I went to my children, in Aachen"³³².

During our interviews, Efim Crimerman expressed his gratitude for his years at RFE/RL: "First of all, I am glad to have found my voice", but he did not want

to return to Free Europe because "I do not want to. Let me repeat - it's a tragedy. It's a tragedy to talk about newspapers..."³³³ Crimerman means the texts based on the SSR Moldova newspapers. However, he is very pleased with his performance at RFE / RL and the years spent in Munich because: "I wrote and what I wrote was aired. I succeeded. I was listened to. ..."³³⁴

In an interview for the *Nezavisimaja Moldova*, during his visit to Chişinău in the summer of 1993, Efim Crimerman, when asked about his attitude towards those who had criticized him during the communist regime, answered simply: 'Old habits die hard', as most of them have kept their functions but turn to nationalism. Only by 'ending with nationalism, will we get rid of communism'. Thus, Crimerman, as a representative of an ethnic minority in the Republic of Moldova, believes that with the collapse of the USSR, the political actors have adopted another extreme – the nationalism. As to the question about the need for Radio Liberty, he replied that we need liberty all the time, and Radio Liberty should continue its mission, especially for the states in transition, like the Republic of Moldova. Crimerman, although convinced that Moldova is a part of Romania, of the Romanian language, culture, past and traditions, considers that Moldova should take advantage of the chance offered by history to be an independent state³³⁵.

³³⁰ Text presented within the broadcast 'Domestic Bloc', no. 728 from October 28, 1985. Romanian Broadcasting Department, Radio Free Europe.

³³¹ Crimerman (2011), 272.

³³² *Ibidem*, 273, 278.

³³³ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

³³⁴ Interview with Efim Crimerman, July 12, 2014, Aachen, Germany.

³³⁵The article was commented at Radio Svoboda on July 1, 1993. HU OSA 297-0-1-57248; Radio Liberty (Radio Svoboda) Russian Broadcast Recordings; Open Society Archives at CEU, Budapest, <http://catalog.osaarchivum.org/catalog/osa:91d26d1e-09a9-4cfd-8c60-4f8c81df479f#> (Accessed on 23.02.2017).

References:

Abshire, D. M. „Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty – A New Era” *NATO Review* 23/2, April 1975.

Cașu, I. „Starea de spirit a populației RSSM în contextul destalinizării și revoluției maghiare (1956)” (The state of mind of the Moldavian population in the context of the de-Stalinization and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956) *PONTES. Review of South East European Studies* 5 (2009).

Crimerman, E. 2011. *Голос из-за бугра. Скрипты и воспоминания* (A voice from behind the hillock. Texts and memories). Gelsen.

Król, M. „Listening Through the Jamming” *The American Scholar* 61/3, Summer (1992).

Mickelson, Sig. 1983. *America’s Other Voice. The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*. New York: Praeger Publishing.

Musteață, S. 2017. *Basarabeantul bruiat de KGB. La microfonul Europei Libere – Grigore Singurel, 1981-1990* (A Bessarabian Jammed by KGB. Speaking at Radio Free Europe – Grigore Singurel, 1981-1990), vol. 1-2. Chișinău: Arc.

Pleikys, R. 2003. „Radio Jamming in the Soviet Union, Poland and other East European Countries”, http://www.radiojamming.puslapiai.lt/article_en.htm.

Țurcanu, I. 2016. *Din răsărit până în amurg. Amintiri* (From Dusk till Down. Memories). Chișinău: Arc.

Whelan, J. G. 1972. „Radio Liberty: A Study of its Origins. Structure, Policy, Programming and Effectiveness”, *Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service*, Washington, DC.

Sergiu Musteață is a historian from the Republic of Moldova, professor at the History and Geography Faculty of the “Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University of Moldova. He was awarded his Ph.D. at the History Faculty of “Al. I. Cuza” University, Iași, Romania. He is the author of 7 monographs, more than 300 scientific publications, editor of over 30 books, and two journals. His major academic interests are history of Eastern Europe, cultural heritage preservation and textbooks analysis.

REVIEWS

Cristian Vasile (ed.). 2017. „*Ne trebuie oameni!*” *Elite intelectuale și transformări istorice în România modernă și contemporană* („We Need People!” Intellectual Elite and Historical Transformations in Modern and Contemporary Romania). Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 442 p.



The formation of a new elite capable to modernize Romania was one of the priorities of the modern Romanian state. Starting with the first generation of graduates, young people returning from abroad tried to apply the Western model to the country, establishing new institutions and reforming the old ones in a modernizing spirit. After 1945, the Western model was abandoned, with Romania copying the soviet model. The old elites were eliminated or reconverted, while the new elites were formed in the USSR. After the fall of communism, the Western model is back to the forefront of cultural, social and political life, with the elites relying again on Western values.

The Romanian history of the last century and a half was marked by the need to create elites not only well trained, but also fashioned by the dominant modernizing ideologies. Under the sign of this string, the historian Cristian Vasile places his scientific approach in the collective volume of studies, *We Need People!* *Intellectual Elite and Historical Transformations in Modern and Contemporary Romania*, published by Cetatea de Scaun editing house in Târgoviște in 2017.

Putting together studies of specialists from several socio-human disciplines, the volume proposes to the reader an original approach focused primarily on understanding the mechanisms of conversion and reconversion of the elites from one regime to another and their role in various modernization projects.

By opting for such a topic, the volume contributes to the study of the relationship between the elites, the state and the society, while covering a research gap, since the studies conducted so far have focused mainly on the formation and elimination processes as well as on the process of reconversion from the old to the new political regimes (Katherine Verdery (1990), Gheorghe and Luminița Iacob (1995), Dennis Deletant (1999), Bogdan Murgescu (2010), Lucian Boia (2011), Daniel Chirot (2012), Victor Rizescu (2013)).

Actually, Cristian Vasile's edited book is not his first as regards the modernizing role of the Romanian elites, he has already published several works focused on the relationship between the elite and the

state, in communism and post-communism (Vasile, 2011, 2014). The current volume seems to be a continuation of the coordinator's scholarly interests, being the result of a collective research within the project, 'Fragmented Modernities: Intellectual Elite and Historical Transformations in Contemporary Romania', carried out at the 'Nicolae Iorga' History Institute and financed by Consiliul Național al Cercetării Științifice (National Council of Scientific Research).

The volume emphasizes from its introduction, written by the editor, that the adaptation and re-conversion of the intellectual elites from one regime to another is the sign of the resistance to change of the Romanian society as well as a pattern of the inability of various governments to develop effective mechanisms for implementing modernization projects with impact on the masses. Copied or imposed from outside, the modernization projects ended up in Romania by being implemented only partially, the 20th century proving to be 'the age of fragmentary modernities', which, however, 'made their durable mark [on society] until today, through traces left at the level of cultural, social and mental life' (Cristian Vasile, *Introduction*, p. 13).

This 'fragmentary modernity' consists of projects ranging from the ideological, national to the technical-reformist, related to the development of certain scientific disciplines such as public hygiene, demography, statistics, economics, mathematics, cybernetics, social health, anthropology, sociology, psychology, human geography. Some of these modernization projects are analyzed in the current volume by historians and anthropologists who have already

distinguished themselves in their fields of competence.

Ionuț-Florin Biliuță analyzes the case of the Orthodox ecclesial elite in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The position of most Orthodox clergy was ambivalent, alternating between supporting the modernizing policies of the state and opposing to the initiatives aimed at abolishing old church rights. At the same time, a new category of bright priests, well trained in the teachings and church canons, aware of the necessity of the modernization, showed their support to the process. Due to their actions, a professionalization of the Orthodox clergy became possible, which will gradually lead to the creation of a modernizing ecclesiastical elite, capable of dialogue with both the state institutions and the structures of the church.

Călin Cotoi investigates the role of physicians and hygienists in the nineteenth century in producing social modernity, from the moment of the inauguration of quarantine outposts against plague and cholera epidemics. This initial campaign is followed by a whole series of 'failed but productive' modernization projects (p. 65). The stage of nationalization and professionalization of medicine and hygiene through the creation in Romania of some specialized organizations, integrated into a transnational network, marked by the personalities of Jacob Felix and Carol Davila, was followed by the hygiene project crisis, the proliferation of the 'racial degeneration of the Romanian element' idea advanced by Constantin I. Istrati, as well as the establishment of the first bacteriological laboratories led by Victor Babeș.

Valentin Săndulescu focusses on the professional trajectories of some scholars such as Vladimir Dumitrescu, Petre P.

Panaitescu and Traian Herseni, from their attachment to the legionary movement, during the interwar period, to their 'radical professionalization' as an adaptation strategy during communism. Excessive specialization, often in scientific subdivisions considered as priority in the process of industrialization, was the strategy that some intellectuals adopted, abandoning the political guise of the Iron Guard in favor of the communist ideological program. Traian Herseni, for example, gave up to the theory of sociological monograph initiated by the sociological school of Dimitrie Gusti and also to the vision of the peasant civilization inspired by the legionary movement in favor of industrial psychology and sociology of success adapted to the requirements of the intensive industrialization plans.

Camelia Zavarache is interested in the trajectories of three Romanian psychologists: Mihai Ralea, Alexandru Roșca and Mihai Beniuc. The author tries to capture the ways in which they managed to adapt and ultimately serve the political regimes in Romania, from the interwar period to the establishment of communism. The sympathy manifested in the interwar and during the Second World War for left-wing movements helped the three psychologists become the specialists of the new regime after 1945, contributing fully to the implementation of the Soviet modernization plans.

Cristian Vasile's study, focusing on theory, deals with the evolution of concepts such as modernity, modernism, and modernization in Romania. The author points out the beginning of the use in the political discourse of the concept of modernization as well as its falling in disgrace and its replacement with the notion

of development as well as its return, starting with 1960. Without claiming to establish a conceptual history, the article draws, through the accuracy and force of argumentation, much more than 'a sketch of the evolution of terms in a society profoundly impregnated by ideology' (p. 285).

Anca Șincan investigates the relationship between the state and the church during communism, starting with the case of Gheorghe Nenciu, who was dismissed in the 1970s by the Department of Cults on the grounds of corruption and collaboration with the Legionary movement. Using as starting point of her investigation Nenciu's dossier, the author reaches the wider issue of how certain institutional structures come to reproduce themselves from one regime to another.

Narcis Tulbure analyzes the role of some technical elites in areas such as economics, statistics and cybernetics in the implementation of development plans in the communist period as well as in the post-communist society. Specialized in the planned economy but knowing both Soviet development models and Western models, a large part of the technical elites in communist Romania ensured the post-1989 transition from the planned to the free market economy.

The volume coordinated by Cristian Vasile carries us on the sinuous paths of modern and contemporary Romanian history, focusing on a few concrete cases of several personalities who played an important role in the intellectual and scientific fields in which they activated by initiating and implementing certain modernizing projects. The detailed and sophisticated analysis of the relationship of these intellectuals with politics, either a

direct and explicit relationship, or, on the contrary, a 'camouflaged' relationship through radical professionalization is one of the outcomes of this volume. Another successful outcome of this volume is the good use of methodology, the studies combining the 'long duration' perspective of the historical sources analysis with the biographical method, investigating even the smallest details, relevant to both individual and collective adaptation strategies.

Although limited to Romanian space, the volume could be a very good starting point for future comparative researches between the situation in Romania and that in other countries with similar or totally different developments. Equally interesting and necessary would be a research that will compare the issue of the reconversion of the elites and the training of new ones with the issue of the elimination of some of the top Romanian intellectuals under the communist regime.

Cristian Vasile and his collaborators succeed in convincing the reader that the modernization of Romania, starting with the creation of the modern state, passing through liberal democracy of the interwar period and the authoritarian regimes, as well as the current democracy, has been permanently accompanied not only by various ways of training and selection of new elites, but also by the conversion of some personalities of previous regimes.

References:

- Deletant, D. 1999. *Communist Terror in Romania: Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State, 1948-1965*. New York: St. Martin's Press, New York;
- Boia, L. 2011. *Capcanele istoriei. Elita intelectuală românească între 1930 și 1950* (The History Traps. Romanian Intellectual Elite between 1930-1950). Bucharest: Humanitas;
- Chirot, D. 2012. *Schimbarea socială într-o societate periferică. Formarea unei colonii balcanice* (The Social Change in a Peripheral Society. The Formation of a Balkanic Colony). Bucharest: Editura Corint;
- Iacob, Gh. L. Iacob. 1995. *Modernizare-europenism. România de la Cuza Vodă la Carol al II-lea* (Modernization-Europenization. Romania from Voivode Cuza to Carol II). vol. I-II. Iași: Editura Universității „Al. Ioan Cuza”;
- Murgescu, B. 2010. *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500-2010)* (Romania and Europe. Accumulation of Economic Gaps). Iași: Editura Polirom;
- Rizescu, V. 2013. *Ideology, Nation, and Modernization: Romanian Developments in Theoretical Frameworks*. Bucharest: Editura Universității din București;
- Vasile, C. 2011. *Politicile culturale comuniste în timpul regimului Gheorghiu-Dej* (Communist Cultural Politics during Gheorghiu-Dej Regime). Bucharest: Humanitas.
- Vasile, C. 2014. *Viața intelectuală și artistică în primul deceniu al regimului Ceaușescu 1965-1974* (The Intellectual and Artistic Life during the First Decade of Ceausescu's Regime 1965-1974). Bucharest: Humanitas.
- Verdery, K. 1990. *National Ideology under Socialism. Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MARIA MATEONIU

Alin Ciupală. 2017. *Bătălia lor. Femeile din România în Primul Război Mondial* (Their Battle. Women from Romania during WWI). Iași: Editura Polirom, 368 p.



Alin Ciupală, professor at the Faculty of History (University of Bucharest), is a well known specialist in the modern history of Romania in general and in the role of women in the society in particular. He has published several studies on this topic such as: *Women in 19th century Romanian society. Between the public and the private* (2003); *Modern studies* (2009); *About women and their history in Romania* (2004). Moreover, he has collaborated with other historians in writing important works and has published many volumes of documents.

The volume *Their Battle. Women from Romania during WWI* is an expression of the author's constant preoccupation for gender studies that we have already mentioned. At

the same time, the opportunity of the topic is provided by the wider context of the analysis, since we are now nearing the centennial of the end of WWI. The book opens with a double dedication: 'To Andreea', but also 'To the memory of my paternal great-grandfather, Constantin P. Moise, soldier in the Romanian Army during WWI, prisoner of war in the German lagers at Tuel and Lamsdorf'.

The book is structured in five parts, each with its own subsections, which lay out clearly all the aspects under discussion. Part I, 'The War seen by women', sets the framework of the analysis, which corresponds to the latest directions in the historiography of the Great War, such as shining a light upon the emotional dimension or the cultural history of the war.

The collective imaginary of the 19th century offered a model structured around clear gender boundaries: the polar pair man-woman, where man was the symbol of reason, force, virility and woman was characterized by frailty, submissiveness, expressing feelings. The model proved to be enduring and men constantly framed women's role in the war according to their gender. Women themselves, who were in the midst of their struggle for emancipation, became involved in the public debate about the war, spoke their minds and adhered to the Romanian national project, whose objective was the creation of a unified Romania. However, when it came to concrete action, they too operated with gender boundaries: men were those who engaged in the military and the diplomatic

war, whereas women's duty was to engage in a cultural war, of spiritual emancipation.

In the second part, entitled 'Love, sexuality, eroticism', the author supports the idea that the Great War was a complex phenomenon, which upended not only the political order of the world, but also the sphere of intimacy, bringing about a relaxation of morals and a reframing of relationships between individuals. A difference must be emphasized, nevertheless, between the rural environment, which was more resistant to change, and the urban environment, which was more permeable to novelties. At the time, sexuality was present in the public discourse about the sanitary issue or about sexually transmitted diseases: eroticism was compensated, at least for soldiers who were on the front line for years on end, by a 'theoretical erotic', as solitude was in reality their mode of existence. On the front line, but particularly in campaign hospitals or in the areas reserved for recovery and recuperation, love stories were in high demand, and reading was a coping mechanism. Morals tended to be more relaxed, rules were being questioned as much of the country was under the occupation of the Central Powers and survival was the primary concern.

In the third part, 'The Fighters', the author describes the general atmosphere and the state of mind of Romanians on both sides of the front line – the occupied South and the free Moldavia –, the organisation of women's aid societies, the organisation of the service for the aid of Romanian prisoners of war and of wounded soldiers, the activity of the National Orthodox Women's Society of Romania (SONFR). The author also points out certain rivalries and fault lines which

separated Romanian women in their actions during the war.

In so far as daily life in the two parts of Romania was concerned, it can be said that it was equally difficult. Romanian society, faced with unprecedented conflict and challenges, became organised, in an effort to support the national project. It had no prior experience to fall back on: the brief experience of the Independence War of 1877-1878 had been largely forgotten, while the experience of the Second Balkan War of 1913 had been shared only by a small part of society. The efforts of Romanian women who organised to support orphans, invalids and refugees deserve all the more praise for that reason. They formed assistance committees and centres for welcoming and caring for those in need. Private initiatives of Romanian women proved their efficiency in the organisation of campaign hospitals and sanitary trains. The National Red Cross Society of Romania played a major part in supporting the war effort. In 1916, its budget was over 7.5 million lei, and a territorial network of 54 branches, one for every county. The efforts of the authorities were not only matched, but even surpassed by private initiatives. The charitable works in the care of the wounded undertaken by ladies such as Alexandrina Cantacuzino, Nadejda Știrbei, Marta Bibescu, Constanța Argetoianu, Fatma Alice Sturdza were remarkable. Romanian prisoners of war interned in German, Austro-Hungarian or Bulgarian camps, as well as the wounded and the sick from campaign hospitals received the attention of Romanian and foreign private initiatives. Thus, Romanians living in Paris mobilised and came to their aid, under the coordination of Alexandru Em. Lahovary and his wife, Ana Lahovary, of the Red Cross societies from Paris, Bern

and Geneva, The London Committee, which was under the control of the Romanian Legation, the New York-based Romanian Relief Fund. Aid was also provided from Argentina, Brazil or the Netherlands.

Besides the National Red Cross Society, there was another society which held a national network, both in Wallachia and in Moldavia: the National Orthodox Women's Society of Romania (SONFR), whose president in 1916 was Anastasia Filipescu. SONFR organised kindergartens in Bucharest, offering children care and education. They also ran a network of canteens, a hospital for the wounded and a school for adults. The hospital, run by Alexandrina Cantacuzino, nursed 2812 wounded, between August 1916 and July 1917. The activity of SONFR covered the entire territory of Romania and in June 1918 it also created a branch in Bessarabia, under the honorary presidency of Princess Elisabeth.

Romanian women internalised the Romanian national project and supported the Romanian war effort with solidarity. Analysing the wartime propaganda and speeches after the war, it would appear that the entire Romanian society acted in unity. Nevertheless, a closer look reveals a different reality, of rivalries and faction. Thus, the historian identifies rivalries between the ladies from upper middle class and those coming from the lower middle class. Another fault line was between Liberal families – generally supportive of the Entente – and conservative families, which favoured the Germans. There were other discrepancies as well, for example between Orthodox and Catholic women.

The fourth part, 'The Queen', is entirely dedicated to Queen Maria, who played a very important part during the First

World War. The activity and the life of the Queen during the years 1916-1918 is described along two major coordinates: her public and her private life. Publicly, she was involved in the effort to organise campaign hospitals and to look after the wounded, both near the front and further back. Her humanity, her ability to understand the desires of individuals and her empathy for their suffering were truly impressive. The queen organised an emergency hospital inside the royal residence in Bucharest, which quickly turned into a hospital for major surgical operations. She was helped by her ladies-in-waiting, but also by her daughters, who had administrative activities, but also got involved in all sorts of activities, depending on the needs. Later, the hospital was evacuated to Moldavia. With the aid of Jean Chrissoveloni and his wife, Sybille, the Queen founded the institution which bore her name: The 'Queen Maria' Institution owned three great campaign hospitals, at Căiuți and Coțofenești in Bacău County, and in Ghidigeni, in the Covurlui County. Moreover, the Queen organised military ambulances, under the authority of the same institution, as well as a network of canteens for poor children, which covered the whole territory of Moldavia.

Unhappy with the way in which public institutions operated, Queen Maria was also involved in the political life. In his analysis of this involvement, the author followed the Queen's attitude towards Ion I. C. Brătianu, the President of the Council of Ministers, her relation with the most important generals in the Romanian Army, the issue of Prince Carol taking on certain responsibilities, as heir apparent, as well as the issue of Romania abandoning the war through a separate peace.

Alongside the relation with Romanian officials, the historian also analyses the relation between the Queen and the representatives of the Allies: the members of the French and Italian missions at first, then the British and the American missions. Besides the face-to-face meetings, the many letters exchanged by the Queen in support of the Romanian cause testify to the great efforts she made. In each of these situations, Queen Maria appears as a woman of strong character and intelligence, with clear thinking, capable of making and supporting decisions, a person who always preferred to act and fight rather than to wait and despair.

The author believed the Queen's private life is also important and he analyses several aspects: the complicated relationship between her and her husband, as the mismatch in character was exacerbated by events; the relationship between the Queen and her mother, the Grand Duchess Maria Alexandrovna Romanova; her relationship with her younger sister, Victoria-Melita as well as her relationship with her own children.

Returning to the gender-based model of the 19th century, the author writes that Queen Maria was the 'Queen Mother' for the wounded in hospitals and for the orphans. Nevertheless, the Chief of the General Staff decorated the Queen in 1918 with the Order 'Military Virtue', seeing the Queen as a faithful soldier of the nation. Thus, gender-based differences seemed to become blurred.

The fifth part of the book, 'The Heroine', is dedicated to the personality of Ecaterina Teodoroiu, who is the emblem of Romanian womanly heroism. She died in combat, during the battle on Secului-Muncel Hill, on August 22nd 1917. Romanian military regulations did not allow women to enrol in

officer academies, nor the enrolment of a woman-officer. Her acceptance in the Army, in the 43/59 Infantry Regiment, may have been the result of a direct intervention by Prince Carol, who was the leader of the Romanian Scouts, given that Ecaterina Teodoroiu was a former Scout. Nevertheless, her position was honorary and she never exercised direct command. King Ferdinand had appointed her Honorary Second Lieutenant within that regiment. The image of the heroine suffered a process of masculinisation: she became less of a woman and more of a hero/heroine, invested with a non-feminine, warrior nature.

The historian makes no claims of having exhausted the topic of Romanian women during the WWI, which he declares 'still open', but does draw some conclusions. He makes a number of pertinent observations about the characteristics of the sources he had used and proposes a list of new topics and subjects for future research, such as daily life in internment camps for Romanian prisoners of war. The brief, but eloquent conclusion is a justification for the entire work: "World War One did not concern men alone, and, as such, its history must make room for women as well."

Romanian readers are presented with a valuable and extremely well documented book. The author added to the various published sources several new ones, some from his own family's archive. The 48 illustrations, accompanied by explanations, add value to this work, which represents a significant contribution to the history of the Great War.

ENE LAURA

Call for Papers, *MemoScapes*, No. 3/2019: Regional, National, Local, and Social Identities in Central Europe and the Black Sea Region in the last 100 years

Deadline: December 15, 2018

100 years ago, at the end of the First World War, the world system changed. The European medieval multi-ethnic empires vanished for good. New nations emerged on the world scene. Within the new nations, new and old minorities tried to persevere and/or develop/transmit their local/regional/national identities. A Ligue of Nations was created in order to help the new nations develop and to protect their interests. However, this did not hinder the Second World War and the genocide it brought along. Yet, the world system of nations survived the atrocities of WWII being only recently challenged by globalization, environmental issues, migrations, new technologies as well as by the establishment and development of trans-national entities such as the European Union.

Benedict Anderson defined nations as „imagined communities”³³⁶ whose traditions were invented³³⁷ in order „to establish continuity with a suitable historical past”³³⁸. These political entities are social constructed through discourse which points out the uniqueness and distinctness of a

community as well as its shared values³³⁹. Discourse is a powerful political tool which can built but also de-construct national identities (undrestood as shared and assumed discourse)³⁴⁰.

Although images always played an important role in shaping and transmitting national identities, their power increased lately due to mass media and the new technologies. The new media especially supports a simplified dominant discourse on nation and national values which is presented as objective and real.³⁴¹

New media also plays an important role in defining social identities understood as a person’s identification with a social group³⁴². „A social group is a set of individuals who share the view that they are members of the same category” through comparison and categorization processes³⁴³. Individuals are members of multiple groups and „posses multiple identities because they occupy multiple roles, ... and claim multiple personal characteristics, yet the meanings of these identities are shared by members of society”³⁴⁴.

An identity is a set of meanings that define an individual but also a community or nation which gives to the person/group/community its uniqueness

³³⁶ Anderson, 1983.

³³⁷ Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983

³³⁸ Hobsbawm, Ranger 1983, p. 1

³³⁹ Wodak 1999, p. 22

³⁴⁰ Wodak et alii. 1999

³⁴¹ Huijser 2009, p. 60

³⁴² Hogg and Abrams, 1988

³⁴³ Burke, Stets 2009, p. 118

³⁴⁴ Burke, Stets (2009), 3.

within a particular and/or historical context. National/regional/social/cultural identities are meant to create consensus and bonds between individuals and society, between groups in a given society, but also between nations (see in this context the attempts to create an European identity). Yet, identities contents and shapes are not fixed but flexible, changing over time and in space. Identity is always (for individual but also for communities) multiple and versatile depending on the context, social patterns, memorial frameworks, but also on the social, political, cultural and economic evolutions of societies.

Our current issue aims at finding answers to the question of identities in Central Europe and the Black Sea Region (BSR) from different perspectives: national, regional, local, and social. Its purpose is twofold: on the one hand, to describe and analyze the construction, adaptation, evolution and transmission of the national/local/cultural identities in Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus seen as processes under Western influences but bearing local meanings and acquiring special shapes and contents, and, on the other, to see what is at stake in building an European identity and its influence on the national/regional/local/cultural identities of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Caucasus.

We give a special attention to the impact of the Western ideas, discourse and practices on building/rebuilding national, regional and local identities in the Black Sea Region. The region is set as a case study for our issue topic as most of the countries around Black Sea, if not all of them, adopted and assumed a Western model of identity

construction. However, this model was not implemented as such but adapted to the local context. This process was best described by Popkewitz through its concept of "Traveling Libraries", a metaphor for „the different sets of assemblages, flows and networks through which intelligibility is given to the changes"³⁴⁵.

Another aspect to be discussed is the usefulness, the transformation and the new meanings of concepts such as, 'imagined communities', 'invention of traditions', 'reframed nationalism'³⁴⁶ in our contemporary world in the BSR and Central European region. Another focus of our issue will be the analysis of the role of images (including propaganda images) in shaping and transmitting national/regional/local/cultural identities as their power increased lately due to the new medias.

The issue aims at addressing the above mentioned topics as well as the following ones (but not only):

- Emerging and evolution of national identities in Central Europe and BSR
- The role of literature, arts, history, etc. in building national/local/regional identities
- Minorities within nations
- Redefining national identities in UE
- The impact of the new technologies in forging new national, local, and social identities
- New global issues (environmental, migration etc.) and their role in

³⁴⁵ Popkewitz (2005), 10.

³⁴⁶ Brubaker (1996).

changing regional, national, local identities

- Theoretical approaches of identities in Central Europe and BSR³⁴⁷

References:

Anderson, B. 1983. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso Books.

Brubaker, R. 1996. *Nationalism reframed. Nationhood and the national question in the New Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burke, P., J. Stets. 2009. *Identity Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hobsbawm, E. T. Ranger (eds.) 1983. *The invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hogg, M. A., D. Abrams. 1988. *Social identifications: A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. London, New York: Routledge.

Huijser, H. 2009. *The multicultural nation in New Zealand cinema: Production-text-reception*, Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr Muller.

Popkewitz, Th. (ed.) 2005. *The modern self and John Dewey. Modernities and the travelling of pragmatism in education*. New York: Palgrave-MacMillan.

Wodak, R., R. De Cillia, M. Reisigl, K. Liebhart. 1999. *The discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

editors by **15 of December 2018** for peer review. For further details, please look at the style guide on our website: <http://studii-memorale.ro/index.php/revista-memoscapes/info-for-authors-style-guide/>

Full article manuscripts of no more than 8000 words must be submitted to the

³⁴⁷ More on our website: <http://studii-memorale.ro/index.php/revista-memoscapes/>

Editor's Introduction	1
LUCIAN BOIA	1
Oldness, Unity and Continuity: Romanian Historical Mythology	1
Introduction: The Creation of Greater Romania	1
Historical Symbols: The Past as a Foreshadowing of the Future	3
Romanian Past according to Communists	6
Post-communist Historical Mythology	9
CÉCILE D'ALBIS	12
Le mythe de Grenade et les fêtes civico-religieuses (xvi^e-xviii^e siècles)	12
Les fêtes civico-religieuses et le mythe urbain à l'époque moderne	13
Le mythe royal	15
Le mythe martyrial et la quête des origines	17
Les découvertes du Sacromonte	18
Les Vierges grenadines et l'adaptation du mythe au XVII ^e siècle	19
Conclusions	21
LAURENT CAROZZA, ALBANE BURENS	25
Le Déluge, les savants et la mer Noire : une nouvelle mythologie scientifique ?	25
Le déluge : du mythe babylonien au dérèglement climatique	25
Le déluge, l'archéologue et la mer Noire	26
Le déluge : un mythe universel catastrophiste ?	28
Quand les scientifiques rencontrent le mythe : ou l'incarnation du lieu	31
Archéologie du mythe du Déluge	32
Le géologue et la mer	33
Du Déluge au changement climatique global : une nouvelle mythologie scientifique	38
LEONARDO GREGORATTI	43
Fighting a Dying Enemy: The Struggle between Rome and the Parthians	43
ELITSA STOILOVA	53
Food, Myths and Authenticity	53
Introduction	53
Food, Place, Authenticity, and Myth-Making	54
Food Festivals: the Bulgarian Context	56
The Festival of Red Peppers, Tomatoes, Traditional Food and Crafts in Kurtovo Konare Village	57
The Festival and the (Re)-Invention of Traditions	59
Conclusion	61
JUSTYNA BUDZIŃSKA, MAŁGORZATA PRACZYK, IZABELA SKÓRZYŃSKA	64
Performative Motherhood: The Myth of Mother Poland Re-Interpreted by Women Artists in Contemporary Poland	64
Introduction	65
Mother Poland	66
Women's Memory? Performance!	68

Ewa Wójciak, Cecylia Malik and Marta Frej case studies _____	70
Performative Motherhoods: Time of Mothers _____	71
Mother – Pole – Feminist or rehab from martyrdom _____	77
Mother Poland in the search for micro-eco-utopia _____	80
Conclusions _____	84
SERGIU MUSTEAȚĂ _____	90
Soviet Moldova in the Radio Free Europe Broadcasting during the Cold War. Efim Crimerman's (Grigore Singurel) contributions _____	90
Introduction _____	90
Efim Crimerman and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (1981-1994) _____	94
Topics Addressed by Crimerman _____	98
Problems of Soviet Moldova _____	99
The Jews Issue _____	102
The Situation of Romania _____	103
Efim Crimerman vs. Communist Regime _____	104
Final Remarks _____	114
REVIEWS _____	116
Cristian Vasile (ed.). 2017. „Ne trebuie oameni!” Elite intelectuale și transformări istorice în România modernă și contemporană („We Need People!” Intellectual Elite and Historical Transformations in Modern and Contemporary Romania). Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 442 p. _____	117
Alin Ciupală. 2017. Bătălia lor. Femeile din România în Primul Război Mondial (Their Battle. Women from Romania during WWI. Iași: Editura Polirom, 368 p. _____	121
Call for Papers, MemoScapes, No. 3/2019: Regional, National, Local, and Social Identities in Central Europe and the Black Sea Region in the last 100 years _____	125

This issue of our journal, *Constructing the Social (and Individual) World: Myth, Memory, and Identity*, was coordinated by **Claudia-Florentina Dobre**

Reviewers

Valentin Bottez, Associate Professor, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest;

Cosmin Budeancă, Researcher, Expert at the Institute for the Study of the Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (IICCMER), Bucharest;

Sonia Catrina, Associate Researcher, Centre Régional Francophone de Recherches Avancées en Sciences Sociales (CeReFREA), University of Bucharest;

Keith Hitchins, Professor, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign;

Luciana-Mărioara Jinga, Marie Curie IF Postdoctoral Researcher TEMOS (Temps, Mondes, Sociétés - CNRS FRE 2015), Universités d'Angers ;

Antal Lukacs, Professor, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest;

Maria Mateoni, Researcher, National Museum of Romanian Peasant (MȚR), Bucharest, Romania;

Denisa Oprea, Lecturer, National School of Political and Administrative Studies (SNSPA), Bucharest;

Susan C. Pearce, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, East Carolina University, North Carolina;

Christopher Scarboro, Professor, King's College, Pennsylvania;

Dorota Skotarczak, Professor, Instytut Historii Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań;

Cristian Vasile, Senior Researcher, Institute of History 'Nicolae Iorga', Bucharest.

MemoScapes is a peer-review, interdisciplinary and yearly journal, which welcomes academic syntheses, analyses and case studies. It publishes articles from the areas of Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as empirical research data, reviews and book presentations.

Scientific Committee

Neven **Budak** (Professor, University of Zagreb)

Liliana **Deyanova** (Professor Emeritus, St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University)

Gábor **Egry** (Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Political History, Budapest)

Bogumil **Jewsiewicki** (Professor Emeritus, Université Laval de Québec)

Karl **Kaser** (Professor, University of Graz)

Christine **Lavrence** (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, King's University College at Western University, London, Ontario)

Sergiu **Musteață** (Professor, 'Ion Creangă' Pedagogical State University of Chișinău)

Susan C. **Pearce** (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, East Carolina University, North Carolina)

Cristofer **Scarboro** (Professor, King's College, Pennsylvania)

Izabela **Skórzyńska** (Professor, Institute of History, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań)

Dorota **Skotarczak** (Professor, Institute of History, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań)

Bogdan **Ștefănescu** (Professor, University of Bucharest, Faculty of Foreign Languages)

Smaranda **Vultur** (Associate Professor, West University of Timișoara)

Anna **Wachowiak** (Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Warsaw University of Life Sciences)

Editorial Board

Director: Claudia-Florentina **Dobre**

Editor-in-Chief: Cristian Emilian **Ghiță**

Editors: Sonia **Catrina**, Maria **Mateoni**, Denisa **Oprea**

Copy Editor: Valeriu **Antonovici**

ISSN print: 2558-8567
On-line ISSN: 2559-415X
ISSN-L: 2558-8567

MemoScapes

Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies



MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies aims to explore the construction of memorial cultures and the various forms of identity (individual, social, cultural, etc.) that may be discerned in any society. It focuses primarily on European communities, but also looks towards other continents, when comparative approaches seem promising. The Journal explores a range of topics, such as the connections between communicative and cultural memory; myths (as elements of cultural memory); the creation of social / cultural / national / local identities; the process of patrimonialization and museification from a *longue durée* perspective.

ISSN: 2559-415X
ISSN-L: 2558-8567

www.studii-memoriale.ro