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# Frames of Reference in Central Europe and the Black Sea Region in the Last Two Centuries

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***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.**



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# Editor's Introduction

The main frame of reference in Central Europe and the Black Sea Region (BSR) is nation. Although after the two bloody world wars at the beginning of XX century it was believed that nations would disappear[1] (especially after the creation of the European communities), reality shows us the contrary. Nation still frames and re-frames the political identity of the countries in the above mentioned regions, and not only. Furthermore, we can argue that nation became the myth of our time, referred to not only by nationalists, but also by globalists.

Nation was and still is understood as a real entity by some scholars who studied its gradual emergence and evolution over time. The essentialist/primordialist theory defines nation as a geopolitical construct where belonging is based on blood, ethnicity, kinship, ancestry, language, shared traditions and values[2]. Huntington[3], Anthony D. Smith[4], Geertz[5] refers to a nation as a fixed geopolitical entity characterised by language, culture and ethnicity.

The constructivist approach describes nation as an 'imagined community' (Benedict Anderson[6]), where traditions are invented (Eric J. Hobsbawm[7]) by the dominant groups in order to gain and/or maintain power[8].

Taking into account Jean Jacques Rousseau's idea of a social contract[9], scholars like Habermas[10] are looking for a civic sense of belonging. According to 'civic democracy' theory, people, groups, civic associations and entities should not be linked by ethnicity and culture, but by the rule of law and by a set of rights to be respected and implemented both by the State and its citizens.

Rogers Brubacker, on the other hand, emphasizes the necessity to look at nations not as 'substantial collectives', but rather as 'institutionalized forms', and to study nation "not as entity but as a contingent event"[11].

In this respect, national identity should be considered an 'ideal-type', as defined by Max Weber, meant to help scholars make sense of the world and "not to completely represent reality"[12]. However, scholars agreed that national identity is "a sense of belonging to a geopolitical entity"[13], which might be "affected by many factors, including relational, normative, contextual, kinship, and historical"[14].

Contingent to the nation and national identity is the issue of national minorities. The reconfiguration of the political space along nationalist lines after WWI and WWII, as well as after the collapse of the Soviet system (1989-1991) in the BSR and Central Europe, transformed millions of people into minorities of uncertain national identity and state loyalty[15].

A national minority is not a group framed by ethnic demography, but rather a dynamic political stance claiming recognition[16]. The complex interplay between nationhood, national minorities and homeland (seen as a

[1] Brubaker (1996), 1.
[2] Verdugo, Milne (2016).
[3] Huntington (1996).
[4] Smith (1991).
[5] Geertz (1973).
[6] Anderson (1983).
[7] Hobsbawm (1990).
[8] Hobsbawm, Ranger (1983).
[9] Rousseau (1762).
[10] Habermas (1994), 106-184.
[11] Brubaker (1996), 16.
[12] Verdugo, Milne (2016).
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Brubaker (1996), 55-56.
[16] Ibid., 60.

political and cultural constructed category) defines today's minorities in the regions mentioned above[17].

A common frame of reference for both the BSR and Central Europe is Communism. The communist experience re-framed not only nationhood, but also the State, national identity as well as personal and gender identity. The fall of this regime brought to light "a new polarity between societies that prefer to forget and those that like to remember"[18]. Far from liberating people and minds, it emphasized the importance of identity as "an active construction and a discursively mediated political interpretation of one's history"[19]. The revolutions of 1989 became a frame of reference "for any mass mobilization, from the Arab spring to the occupy movement to Brexit"[20].

Europe can be seen as another important frame of reference. Although subsidiary to nationhood, nevertheless, one can easily grasp the reference to Europeness, which characterises the political, ideological and identity stances in the BSR and in Central Europe.

The articles gathered in this issue of MemoScapes, titled *Frames of Reference in Central Europe, and the Black Sea Region, in the Last Two Centuries*, assess the importance of nationhood in constructing the social imaginary in the above mentioned regions. Furthermore, they emphasize the national myths, the building processes of national, local, and regional identities in the post-communist/post-soviet world as well as the role played by scholars and politicians, by mass-media and social media in forging new narratives on the past, present, and future. The role of minorities and diasporic communities in the national building processes in the region are also highlighted by a number of papers.

The importance of the linguistic turn in defining Georgian national identity and nation branding is underlined by Dominik Gutmeyr in his article, *Branding a Linguistic Turn in Nationalism. The Case of the Georgian Alphabet.* The debates and the myths around the origins of the Bulgarians as well as of local minorities such as the Pomaks and the Gagauz are summed up in the article of Alexander Nikolov *Who is A Bulgarian: 'Ethnic' vs. 'Civic' Identity, and the Case of the Pomaks and the Gagauz in Bulgaria*. The complex issue of today's minority groups is addressed in the article *Greeks of Tsalka: History, Culture, Language, and Problems of Ethnic Identity* by Alla Kondrasheva and Stavris Parastatov. The process of building a new post-soviet national identity is analyzed in the article *The Belarusian People's Republic, and the Belarusian National Identity* by Anna Kuleszewcz and Marek Figura, while *The Romanian State Strategy towards the Romanian Diaspora* is discussed in a paper by Yana Volkova. The role of historians and archaeologists as well as of their findings in defining the ideological framework of nation-states, with a particular focus on Romania and the Greek settlements in the BSR, is addressed in the article *Equivocal Ancient Foreigners and Modern National Identities* by Liviu Mihail Iancu. The sifting in personal identity of the officers of the Red Army due to repression in the 1930s in the USSR is researched by Jakub Wojtkowiak in his paper entitled, *The Contractual Identity of Officers of the Red Army from Central and Eastern Europe during the Great Purge in the USSR.*

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Assmann (2013), 55.

[19] De Laurentis (1991), 12.

[20] Kosicki, Kunakhovich (2019), 1.

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# Dominik Gutmeyr

## Branding a Linguistic Turn in Nationalism. The Case of the Georgian Alphabet

**Abstract**
Under the premise that language and script may constitute central elements in today's nation building processes, this article argues that the Georgian alphabet holds a particularly important role in the articulation of a post-socialist identity for society as also for government foreign policy objectives in Georgia. By examining Batumi's "Alphabetic Tower", a 135m tall iron construction with the letters of the Georgian alphabet represented along a twisting double helix pattern, as well as the brand "Georgia. Made by Characters", developed for Georgia's status as guest of honour at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair, the paper demonstrates how internal nation building and external nation branding are intrinsically interlinked. Drawing on studies examining a linguistic turn in Georgian nationalism, I suggest that the script's visual-iconographic rather than its phonographic dimension is used for intertwined identity politics and nation branding. The envisaged definition of Georgia as a nation of high and unique culture transcends the need for stabilizing new post-socialist national narratives from within. By defining itself as a nation based on cultural values, Georgia additionally attempts to position itself as culturally associated to Europe, thereby seeking to underscore the ambition of Euro-Atlantic integration.

**Keywords**: Georgia, Georgian Language, Alphabet, Script, Nation Branding

## Introduction

Scripts have long been considered as written language, thereby being reduced to a transporting medium function for a specific message in spoken language. By the concept of "notational iconicity", Sybille Krämer argues for the understanding of script beyond a speech-oriented dimension, as merely a medium in what she calls "a phonographic dogma" to do justice to its cognitive, aesthetic, religious and playful utilisations[21]. Building on the "pictorial turn", a visual-iconographic component needs to be added to understand scripts as more than languages written down. Embedded in societal norms and practices, "notational iconicity" suggests understanding writing as a hybrid construct in which the discursive and the iconic intersect[22].

Many prominent scholars of nation and identity building processes have discussed the role languages have played in both spoken and written form. Questions of language are thereby always related to the negotiation of identity, no matter whether concerning

[21] Krämer (2017), 303; Krämer and Totzke (2011), 13-15.

[22] Krämer (2003), 519.

individuals or social groups. Benedict Anderson argued that in 19th-century Europe for instance, in almost all of the newer nationalisms "national print-languages" were of central ideological and political importance[23]. Given the centrality of language in many nation building processes, there are many aspects of language policy that aim to exert an influence on the development of language and its societal role. One may consider linguistic purism in Croatia[24] or historical Magyarization[25] as examples of policies taking an influence on the language per se, but language policy can also take roots in script or writing systems. The Antiqua-Fraktur dispute is one example of script or typography becoming a point of interest for national identity. By the end of the 16th century, the Romanic countries of Southwestern Europe used Antiqua-type typefaces while Fraktur was in use in the German-speaking parts of Europe as well as by the Scandinavians. While the latter predominantly decided to adopt Antiqua-based typefaces by the end of the 19th century, the Fraktur question became the centre of a heated debate in Germany, where Antiqua typefaces were denounced 'un-German' and the Fraktur script was considered an integral part of German identity[26].

More common are debates and changes in the writing system, i.e. the alphabet used to write a language. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms of the newly founded Republic of Turkey in the 1920s included the transition from the Perso-Arabic alphabet, which had been in use for writing Ottoman Turkish, to the Latin alphabet – a transition not only of practical value but also highly symbolic, from the holy script of Islam toward the script in use in Western Europe and the Americas. The Azerbaijani language was rendered in three different scripts throughout the 20th century, changing from Perso-Arabic to Latin, to Cyrillic, and back to Latin letters, corresponding to all-encompassing political transitions from the Russian Empire to the Soviet Union and an independent post-socialist republic. Debating and changing the writing system of a language, however, are not purely a relic of the 19th and 20th centuries. In Montenegro, the state-owned daily newspaper Pobjeda decided to change from Cyrillic to Latin script in 2010. It did so on the country's fourth day of independence, which despite Serbia's diachronic digraphia and the editor's note that the decision was based upon practical reasons[27], has to be understood in the context of a nation building process aiming at the transition from a multi-layered toward a singular Montenegrin identity. As recently as 2017, the president of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbaev decreed the transition of the Kazakh alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin script – a transition aimed to be completed by 2025[28]. Both in Montenegro and Kazakhstan the arguments brought forward in support of the Latin script mention the need to adapt to the global economic, scientific and information space.

The need of adapting to globalization, however, does not necessarily correlate with a supersession of the former script as the example of another former Soviet republic shows. Under the premise that language and script may constitute central elements in today's nation building processes, I argue that the Georgian alphabet has a particularly important role in the articulation of a post-socialist identity within the country's society as well as within the Georgian governments' foreign policy objectives. For this purpose, the article draws briefly on discussions of linguistic identity in Georgia and nation branding and then outlines the development of the Georgian alphabet and language before proceeding to demonstrate

[23] Anderson (2006), 67.
[24] Langston and Peti-Stantić (2014), 175-180.
[25] Sugar (2000), 139-144.
[26] Franzki (2011), 214-216; Hartmann (1998).
[27] Kusovac (2010), 2.
[28] Nazarbaev (2017).

how internal nation building and external nation branding are intrinsically interlinked.

## Georgia – A Language-Conscious Society

In the late 1990s, the British linguist Vivien Law observed that: "Any visitor to Georgia is immediately struck by the centrality of the Georgian language, both in everyday functions and in cultural contexts […]" and concluded that "Georgia could thus be considered as a highly language-conscious society."[29] Ritualised oral communication in the framework of festive banquets[30] together with the great prominence of poets and writers in memory culture[31] support Law's conclusion. The observation that the Georgian language plays a central role in Georgian society is thus neither breaking news nor a desideratum in scholarly research but an issue that has been adequately covered in recent studies.

Christofer Berglund argues that the Saakashvili era saw a decrease of exclusionary nationalism, which had characterised Georgia in the 1990s and had poisoned relations between ethnic Georgians and the country's minorities[32]. Instead, the post-2003 government fostered an understanding of the Georgian nation, "wherein belonging was contingent upon speaking the state language". Despite the government's ultimate failure to abolish religious and historical barriers to the inclusion of minorities, Berglund's matched-guise experiment suggests that for minorities, knowledge of Georgian is necessary but sufficient to be embraced as peers by the majority – a criteria known also from Ernest Gellner's tale about the borderland region "Ruritania" inside the empire of "Megalomania". Thus, Berglund concludes, nationalism in Georgia today can rightfully be considered as centred on language rather than being ethno-religious[33].

Against the backdrop of the Russian language in contemporary Georgia, Timothy Blauvelt underscores how the Georgian language is "the exclusive official language and a key criterion of membership in the state's civic conception of Georgian national identity"[34]. The case of Georgia thereby emerges as representative for the challenges "small cultures" are facing in an increasingly globalised world with a given need to interact with large cultures not only in a geographic vicinity, but also exerting influence on the global scale. According to Blauvelt, it "also illustrates well the contradictions between the postcolonial goals of identity building and individuals' goals of maintaining practical and advantageous language repertoires"[35].

## Branding a Nation

In an increasingly globalized world, all kinds of organisations and companies aim to achieve customer appeal around the globe, a task for which they need internationally comprehensible communication strategies. One of these strategies involves the establishment of a brand, including the respective organisation's name and a trademark catchphrase. The development of brands, however, is not limited to the sphere of commerce and trade. Fostering a brand is mostly about distinguishing a product from fierce competition while aiming at creating and promoting a particular image regarded as an asset. The key to any branding process is the inherent desire to create instantly discernible uniqueness, while an established

[29] Law (1998), 168-169.
[30] Mühlfried (2006), esp. 89-97.
[31] Shatirishvili (2009), 394-395.
[32] Berglund (2014), 522.
[33] Ibid., 536-537.
[34] Blauvelt (2013), 205.
[35] Ibid.

brand is simultaneously attached to emotions it is intended to evoke among its recipients[36].

Aside from the globalized economy, other players such as cities, regions, and nations have discovered the potential to present themselves as brands or at least try and establish one of their qualities in a brand-like form. Communication strategies, advertising methods and branding do not necessarily have to be part of selling and commerce but are equally a part of national narratives for they have been shaped and re-invented due to social, political, and cultural changes in history. Melissa Aronczyk stresses that the capital of nation branding goes beyond the economic motivation of branding for markets when she writes "the national imaginary is created and re-created beyond the profit incentive"[37]. Thus, the emotions of certain national narratives are given priority in branding practices that involve a nation while actors in the position of taking influence on the process lead, change and evolve the brand and subsequently the feelings and desires it includes. These various directions, changes and evolutions a branding process can go through are strongly dependent of the actor's, i.e. the historical development of the nation's framework. Branding a nation through a specific quality is one part of a nation building process and historical changes can take the effect of re-modelling a specific narrative within this process[38]. Nation branding is more than simple advertising, but as its advocates argue, should be considered a "component of national policy" rather than individual campaigns that are "separate from planning, governance or economic development"[39]. It should neither be put nor understood within a "silo of communications or public affairs" but in an active role of informing policy-making, implicit in the way the country in question is run[40].

Branding a nation exerts an influence on historical imaginations as undesired associations are either remodeled or replaced in the process. Marketing strategies in Egyptian tourism for instance, have aimed at disassociation from a turbulent present toward an illustrious past: "Egypt – Where it all begins"[41], while the nation branding campaign "Timeless Macedonia" sought to establish a connection to the Macedonia of antiquity, thereby also countering official Greek claims of the state being based on an "artificial and spurious notion of the Macedonian nation"[42]. Costa Rica's state policy of fostering a pioneering role in ecotourism led to the brand "Costa Rica: No artificial ingredients" already in the 1990s and paved the way for a self-image of a country aspiring toward sustainable energy and a green economy[43]. In her study of nation branding processes in post-1989 Eastern European countries, Nadia Kaneva suggests, "the focus on the post-communist experience is motivated by a broader goal contributing to the study of changes in the structures and relations of power, identification, and mediation that were enabled by the end of communism"[44]. The ability of nation branding to simultaneously serve a nationalistic agenda as well as the need to find a place within globalisation resonated in the post-socialist world where a series of countries was both forced and enabled to re-imagine themselves.

## The Georgian Language and Script in History

By virtue of its 1991 declaration of independence, Georgia ceased to be one the

[36] On The Rise of Brands, cf. Moor (2007).

[37] Aronczyk (2013), 9.

[38] On concepts, issues and practice of nation branding cf. Dinnie (2016).

[39] Anholt (2008), 23.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Avraham (2016), 5-6.

[42] Bieber (2018), 133.

[43] Pearson (2012), 92.

[44] Kaneva (2012), 5.

Soviet Union's fifteen republics, but an extensive re-imagination of the nation was long in coming. Aside the personified continuity of Soviet politics in form of President Eduard Shevardnadze, the young republic faced what turned out to be a turbulent decade with conflicts over the breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in addition to civil war and economic crises. Eventually however, the negotiation of Georgian identity would draw extensively on the history of the Georgian language and script.

Georgian is a Kartvelian language and the native tongue of 3.7 million people, most of whom live in Georgia itself and its neighbouring countries Russia and Azerbaijan. Within Georgia proper, it is furthermore the official and literary language of the country's regional minorities such as the Mingrelian, Svan, and Laz peoples. The Georgian literary language is considered to have evolved in three major stages, i.e. Old Georgian (until the 11th/12th centuries), Middle Georgian (11th/12th–18th/19th centuries), and Modern Georgian (18th/19th century until present)[45]. The starting point of Georgian becoming a literary language and thereby the exact origins of the Georgian script are little known and therefore a point of discussion between both Georgian and non-Georgian scholars to this date. However, most of them link its creation to the introduction of Byzantine Christianity in the fourth century CE, while it is believed that it was inspired by the Greek and possibly Syriac alphabets[46]. The British literary scholar Donald Rayfield assumes that the Georgians, like the Armenians before them and the Slavs after them, received a package deal, which included ambitious Byzantine missionaries drawing up an alphabet based on the phonetic principle of each sign equaling one sound[47]. Byzantine influence was predominant in the western Georgian provinces while literacy and Christianity most probably came to central and eastern Georgia through Armenian or Syrian intermediaries.

The oldest Georgian script is the so-called asomtavruli, meaning 'capital letter', which is also known as mrglovani or "rounded script". Like the Armenian script, it is monumental and was therefore suitable for inscriptions in stone[48]. Within a few centuries, Georgian texts were also written in a modified minuscule, the so-called nuskhuri, which is nowadays known as the second Georgian script. The combination of the two scripts became known as khutsuri, or "priestly script", which is occasionally still used in the writings of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Already in the 11th century however, a third script emerged for secular use – the mkhedruli, literally meaning "warrior script"[49]. This unicameral script, like its predecessor a minuscule, soon became the dominant writing outside the Church and 33 of its originally 38 letters also compose the present Georgian script.

The first centuries of Georgian writing were closely linked to Orthodox Christianity and only in the 8th century CE did the literary language obtain secular character[50]. At that time, the Georgian language was carried by the western provinces and their strong cultural and political ties to the Byzantine Empire. The integration of the eastern Georgian territories as well as the transition from Old to Middle Georgian is linked to the rule of Davit IV. ("the Builder") from 1089 until 1125. The so-called Golden Age of Georgian history was about to start and found its literary manifestation in Shota Rustaveli's epic poem *vepkhistqaosani* (The Knight in the Panther's Skin). The 13th-century fall of Golden Age Georgia led to centuries of foreign influence and domination while it was the Georgian language that continued to be the main integratory factor for

[45] Fähnrich (2012), 7.

[46] Chikovani and Shosted (2006), 255; Sanjian (1996), 356; Schulze (2002), 853-858.

[47] Rayfield (1994), 1.

[48] Ibid., 2.

[49] Morchiladze (2016); Schulze (2002), 858.

[50] Ibid., 852.

Georgian identity. When the Russian Empire annexed much of Georgia in 1801, Georgian was replaced by Russian as the official language. The subsequent policy of Russification was met by increased articulations of distinctly Georgian cultural programs, aimed at strengthening Georgian traditions and language against Russian pressure[51]. This resulted, for instance, in the programmatic 1879 foundation of the "Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians"[52].

The 19th century romanticists' ambitions, however, were crowned with success only in 1918, when the Democratic Republic of Georgia was established. The state did not exist for longer than three years but also in Soviet times, a strong sense of Georgian language identity prevailed. The 1920s policy of korenizatsiia ("nativisation") and the 1930s revival of Georgianisation strengthened the Georgian language and put pressure on minorities and their languages such as Abkhaz or Ossetian[53]. The Abkhaz population for example experienced massive pressure on their language throughout the 20th century, with their writing system changing several times including the Georgian script imposed on the Abkhaz language in 1938, a measure lasting until the reintroduction of an adapted Cyrillic alphabet in 1954.

When the 1977 Soviet Constitution was drafted and the issue of adopting new constitutions also in the Union republics came up, the Moscow government sought to have the three South Caucasus republics drop the clause guaranteeing the language of the titular nationality as the sole state language and replace it with a clause that would have given Russian an equally official status, as in all other republics of the Soviet Union[54]. Since the question of language was particularly sensitive in Georgia, these plans met widespread resistance and demonstrations took place throughout the republic. The protests reached their climax on 14 April 1978 when thousands of Georgians took their anger to the streets. Eventually, the government gave in to the protesters' demand of not changing the clause and Georgian was re-affirmed as the republic's state language. When Georgian nationalism gained momentum against the backdrop of the disintegration of the USSR, even the Georgian Communist Party took a strong position on the language question when it published a "State Programme of the Georgian Language" in 1988[55]. The document foresaw the creation of a permanent state commission on the Georgian literary language, a barrage of articles and programs favouring the paramountcy of Georgian plus the declaration of 14 April as the Day of the Georgian Language, eventually established in 1990 and maintained to this day[56].

After the turbulent 1990s and the 2003 Rose Revolution, the question of Georgian language and identity came under scrutiny once again. Especially concerning the two regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are no longer under the control of Tbilisi, continued nation building and branding processes emphasizing the distinct features of the Georgian majority bring the danger of increasing the alienation between Georgia and its separatist provinces even further. The Georgian government, however, has proceeded with its policy of promoting the Georgian language and script as key assets to national affiliation. A "linguistic turn" in Georgian nationalism made the state language a necessary but sufficient criterion for inclusion in the nation-building program under President Mikheil Saakashvili (2004–2013)[57].

[51] Suny (1994), 133.
[52] Reisner (2000).
[53] Law (1998), 171.
[54] Ibid., 171-172.
[55] Jones (1992), 81-82.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Berglund (2014), 522.

## Showcasing "the genetic code of Georgia"

The years following the Rose Revolution, i.e. the years of Saakashvili's presidential dominance over Georgian politics, were accompanied by several prestigious building projects, since architecture is a potent expression of political power. In his study of the role of capitalist brands in post-socialist Georgia, US anthropologist Paul Manning describes how the Georgian government sought to use visual symbols, including architecture, in "its particularly thorough, one might say obsessive, attempts to erase any and all visible signs of the socialist and the immediate postsocialist past"[58]. As one result of a top-down influence on architecture as part of identity politics, the skylines of the capital Tbilisi but also of other cities in the country such as Kutaisi or Batumi, have changed significantly within a decade. Foreign investors or foreign construction firms were invited or hired to re-design the city panoramas, in what has been described an embodiment of a particular shift in the country's geopolitical alignment after 2003[59].

Batumi, the capital of Georgia's south-western province of Adjara, is the location for one of the main architectural landmarks in the country during the post-socialist years. The Alphabetic Tower, a 135m tall iron construction, was built on the Black Sea in 2010–2011 (cf. Fig. 1). The tower was planned to house a revolving skybar-restaurant, an observatory and a TV studio, but for years all that could be seen of these projects was the info sign at the foot of the building proclaiming that the tower would have all of these facilities, while in fact the construction had never been adapted or utilized ever since its core was completed. By 2015 the building was already in poor condition and was leased for one symbolic Lari to a Spanish company for the next 20 years[60]. A restaurant at the top of the tower has been opened since then, but the primary function of the tower is its character as a monument to the Georgian alphabet. According to the building committee, "the shape redefines the city skyline and represents the character of Georgia and its fast evolution since the independence in 1991"[61]. The Georgian letters are represented along a twisting double helix pattern, since according to former president Mikheil Saakashvili the Georgian alphabet was "the DNA, the genetic code of Georgia"[62]. The very same narrative can be found on the tower's website, where under conceptual design it says "The alphabet, the uniqueness of Georgian people" followed by information on DNA *per se* and further elaborations on the alphabet being Georgia's essence[63]. It reads: *So the tower transmits the uniqueness of the Georgian people with his original script. Two helix bands rise along the tower holding 33 pieces of the Georgian alphabet of 4 meters height made in aluminum. […] The beauty of this [sic!] characters is now projected onto a major scale, never seen before, on the tower's design spreading the personality of an hospitable and open country, proud of their cultural heritage*[64].

The Alphabetic Tower illustrates exceptionally well what role the script plays in today's national narrative in Georgia and what role the state plays in conceptualizing the nation as the bearer of a unique language and script.

[58] Manning (2009), 928.

[59] Harris-Brandts (2018), 1131.

[60] "Batumi's Alphabet Tower" (2015), n.p.

[61] "Alphabetic Tower", http://http://www.alphabetictower.com (Retrieved 05.10.2018).

[62] Saakashvili (2010), n.p.

[63] "Alphabetic Tower. Conceptual Design", http://http://www.alphabetictower.com/?page_id=8 (Retrieved 05.10.2018)

[64] Ibid.

*Fig. 1: "Batumi's Alphabetic Tower"*

The state uses the opportunity provided by the Day of the Georgian Language or "Mother Language Day"[65], on 14 April, to reiterate this narrative. According to the platform *agenda.ge*, which the administration of the government of Georgia launched in December 2013, the day marks "Georgia's courageous victory over the Soviet repressive machine in maintaining the Georgian language as the country's official language"[66]. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 1978 protests, Tbilisi's mayor Kakha Kaladze addressed the public by saying, "We are obliged to protect our language. This is why we actively work to ensure that all the signboards around the city are written in Georgian since this has not been not paid enough attention to in recent years"[67]. Additionally, Tbilisi City Hall announced a draft law to increase fines for "violations of language regulations", meaning that both individual business owners and legal entities would then be fined between 1.000-3.000 Lari for posting signs not written in Georgian letters[68].

The Day of the Georgian Language is also the platform for another stakeholder to underscore its central role in Georgia's society: the Georgian Orthodox Church. It has established a religious cult of the language, a cult that was already practiced in Soviet times. In his 1980 Christmas message for instance, Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II addressed his flock with a warning that "where language declines, so the nation falls" to which he added a year later that "the one main source where Georgians receive their spiritual strength is from the ancient and merciful Georgian language"[69]. In 1986 and on the occasion of the Day of the Georgian Language, it published a booklet entitled "Glory to the Georgian Language", building on the poem *kebay da didebay kartulisa enisay* by tenth-century Georgian monk Ioane-Zosime[70]. This religious cult became intertwined with dissident nationalism or as Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who would become the first president of post-Soviet Georgia in 1991, put it: "The struggle against the Georgian Church is a struggle against the Georgian language and culture"[71]. Hence, ever since the Day of the Georgian Language was established as an official holiday in 1990, both state and church are able to publicly draw on the symbolic capital of the language which in reciprocity strengthens the importance of the Georgian language in imagining a Georgian community.

## Branding the Cultural Nation: "Georgia. Made by Characters"

Drawing on the linguistic turn in nationalism under Saakashvili, the successive governments following his ousting from power continued to

[65] "Georgia celebrates Mother Language Day" (2015), n.p.

[66] Ibid.

[67] "Georgia celebrates Georgian Language Day" (2018), n.p.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Cited in Jones (1989), 186.

[70] Ibid., 187.

[71] Cited in Ramet (1989), 36.

use language and script for nation-building processes directed toward the inside, i.e. toward the Georgian society. In his 2013 inaugural speech, Saakashvili's successor Giorgi Margvelashvili equally highlighted the Georgian script as essential to the Georgian nation: "I see a comeback of the excitement caused in the whole world by the magnificence of the Mtskheta Monastery of the Cross, the uniqueness of the Georgian alphabet, the depths of Vazha-Pshavela's poetry, the amazing harmony of the Chakrulo and Krimanchuli [folk] songs, the scope of Georgian academic thinking, and stunning achievements in sports"[72].

Nation-building, however, does not exclusively work toward the inside but encompasses an external dimension while the internal and the external remain intrinsically interlinked. The Frankfurt Book Fair 2018 offered the Georgian government a platform to transport the message of its internal nation-building process to an external audience. At the world's largest trade fair for books, the literature of one guest of honour is promoted with special prominence every year. The guest country is able to develop a motto, a concept, a brand, by which it can sell its cultural work and achievements. In 2016, the Netherlands and Flanders chose to appear jointly with the motto "This is what we share", looking at transnational cultural unity. In 2017, France drew on Paul Ricœur and stressed the openness of the French language as well as the close French-German relations by its motto "Francfort en français." The 2018 guest of honour was Georgia and the brand it superimposed on the country's literary production was "Georgia. Made by Characters", alluding to its unique selling point of the 33 letters of its alphabet (cf. Fig. 2). Moreover, it adds an explanatory concept text by author Aka Morchiladze: *[W]hat seems to us the main symbol of Georgia's eternal essence, is the Georgian writing system: 33 letters which have carried Georgia through so many centuries and which we must acknowledge as the force that has held it together and is what chiefly unites it in all its heterogeneity. Nothing in Georgia is so like Georgia as the Georgian alphabet. Nothing suits Georgian words and Georgian moods so well as the Georgian alphabet does, and nothing is so Georgian as the Georgian alphabet*[73].

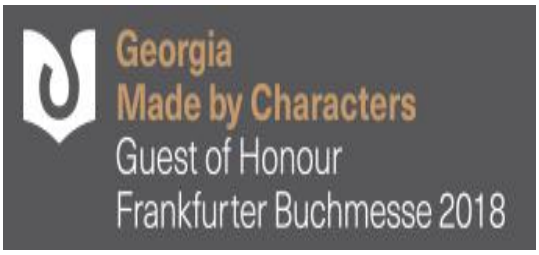


*Fig. 2: "Georgia. Made by Characters"*

Directed by Mikheil Batiashvili, the Georgian Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the brand complements the Saakashvili era's endeavours to prominently integrate the Georgian language and script into the narrative of post-socialist Georgia being a cultural nation. While the internal dimension of framing and showcasing the alphabet as "Georgia's DNA" was one part of the linguistic turn in Georgian nationalism, the external dimension of prominently presenting the script as a unique cultural feat strengthens Georgia's European identity as an element of foreign policy objectives. Batiashvili paraphrased the benefit of Georgia's status as guest of honour at the book fair as follows: *Georgia will have an opportunity to showcase its culture and values in Germany throughout the whole year. We strongly believe that these activities will support Georgia's further integration into Europe thus raising awareness of the Georgian culture*[74].

[72] Margvelashvili (2013), n.p.

[73] Morchiladze (2018), n.p.

[74] Cited in "Georgia – Made by Characters. Press kit Georgia, Guest of Honour Frankfurter Buchmesse 2018."


*Fig. 3: "Georgia. Europe started here."*

When the Georgian government sought to re-define the country in the post-socialist era, it not only sought to process an internal nation-building but also to re-position the country on a global stage. In the years following the Rose Revolution, Georgia's orientation toward the European Union became one of the main narratives in the country's foreign policy[75]. Saakashvili put it most openly in his inaugural speech of January 2008: *Georgia is forever yoked to Europe. We are joined by a common and unbreakable bond – one based on culture – on our shared history and identity – and on a common set of values that has at its heart, the celebration of peace, and the establishment of fair and prosperous societies. Together, with our partners in the European Union we will continue to strengthen these historic ties*[76].

The "unbreakable bond based on culture" between Georgia and Europe has become a stable fulcrum of political rhetoric in the South Caucasus republic. The self-perception of European Georgia is no post-socialist phenomenon but has been subjected to heated debates among the Georgian elite for at least the last century and a half[77]. During the transition period, the tradition of perceiving Georgia "as one of the European countries" and the Georgian people "as one of the European nations" was then being politically established again[78].


*Fig. 4: "Enter key"*

The claim of Georgia's Europeanness so vigorously promoted by the Georgian government contributed to sustain the political narrative that envisions the country's membership of western political, economic, and military alliances[79]. This is the reason why posters with a computer keyboard and the EU's star spangled banner on the enter key can be seen on Georgia's National Day, while the National Tourism Administration conceptualized the campaign "Georgia. Europe started here" (cf. Fig. 3). Branding Georgia as a cultural nation with a unique alphabet as its backbone is one argument in the thrust to position the country externally, while the

[75] Cf. Georgia's European Way (2014), 6: "Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration is the foremost priority of our country's foreign policy. In turn, this priority builds upon the unwavering will of the Georgian people to become a full member of the European community." Cf. also Tarkhan-Mouravi (2014), 61-66.

[76] Saakashvili (2008), n.p.

[77] Ó Beacháin and Coene (2014), 925.

[78] Baramidze (2012), 171.

[79] Ó Beacháin and Coene (2014), 937.

closely related historical or religious arguments additionally serve this aim[80].

## Conclusion

The linguistic turn in Georgian nationalism is prominently visualised in public space and used for branding the nation as a cultural nation. The Georgian script is thereby more than just the Georgian language put into writing but bearer of its own cognitive utilisation. Located at the nexus between images of the self in post-socialist nation building and an external factor of foreign policy objectives, showcasing and branding the Georgian alphabet is not necessarily about economic exploits but an integral part of identity politics or the politics of memory. Going hand in hand with a post-socialist re-definition of a cultural nation, I suggest that intertwined identity politics and nation branding are seeking to define Georgia as a nation with a high and unique culture and this for a reason that transcends the need of stabilizing new post-socialist national narratives from the inside. By defining the nation as a nation based on cultural values, Georgia is additionally attempting to position itself on a global stage in a much wider sense, namely as being culturally associated with Europe and by inference the European Union. The re-definition of post-socialist Georgia on a global stage was accelerated by the Rose Revolution in 2003 and outlasted Saakashvili's era as president, remaining a stable fulcrum of political rhetoric in the country to this day. Imagining the Georgian script as essential to the Georgian nation plays both into the narratives of a language-centred nationalism as well as a transnational political agenda. Thus, nation-building toward the inside and nation branding toward to outside remain intrinsically interlinked and constitute two sides of the same coin.

[80] Ibid., 926-927.

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# Alexandar Nikolov

## Who is A Bulgarian: 'Ethnic' vs. 'Civic' Identity, and the Case of the Pomaks, and the Gagauz in Bulgaria

**Abstract**
The article discusses a few controversial ideas about the 'essence' of the Bulgarian nation. The foundation of the autonomous Bulgarian principality (1878) arouse the controversy between the 'ethnic' and the 'civic' perspective on the Bulgarian nation. This controversy is still actual in the Bulgarian public debates and influences the Bulgarian policy toward ethnic minorities and specific groups, such as Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) and Gagauz (Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians) who did not 'meet the standard' for the 'real' Bulgarians.

**Keywords**: Bulgarian Nation-State, Pomaks, Gagauz, Orthodoxy, Islam, National Identity

## The Medieval Bulgarian State

Historically, Bulgarians had a pre-modern identity formed in the frames of the First and the Second Bulgarian Empire. The character, the extent and the stability of this identity is debatable, however there were a couple of landmarks related to it. Namely, the Christian Orthodox faith, adopted through Byzantium in 864, the official language of the State and the Church (Slavic Old Bulgarian/Old Church Slavonic), the Cyrillic alphabet (and to a far lesser extent the Glagolitic script-the original work of St. Cyril and Methodius), and the autonomous Bulgarian Church (870) (autocephalous Patriarchate since 918/ 927).

According to the most widespread theory, the ethnogenesis of the medieval Bulgarian ethnic community took shape in the frames of the First Bulgarian State on the Lower Danube (681-1018 AD). Three main ethnic components were included in the process, namely the autochthonous Thracian population and other settlers from the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period, the Southeastern 'Bulgarian' Slavic tribes that settled mostly in the areas of the historical provinces of Lower Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia, and part of the Bulgar ethnic community (of Turkic or Iranian linguistic affiliation) that penetrated in the Balkans between the 5th and the 7th centuries in several waves. The last wave of Bulgar settlers, led by Asparuh, founded Danubian Bulgaria (First Bulgarian State) in 681 AD (a widely accepted date). These various ethnic and religious groups coexisted in the newly established state for more than 200 years before the official introduction of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 864 AD in the time of Prince Boris-Michael. The introduction of the Slavic alphabet and the Slavic (Old Church Slavonic or Old Bulgarian) language as official ecclesiastical and administrative language accelerated the creation of pre-modern

Bulgarian identity among the vast majority of the subjects of the first Bulgarian state through the second half of the 9th and the 10th century. Medieval Bulgaria became a cradle of the Slavic-Byzantine civilization that spread throughout Eastern Europe in the following centuries.

Between 1018 and 1185 AD, the former Bulgarian territories were re-conquered by the Byzantines. Despite the re-conquest, the Bulgarians, as a specific ethnic community, were endowed with a certain level of economic and ecclesiastical autonomy through the Ohrid Bulgarian Archbishoprics. Due to the fact that the Bulgarian identity prevailed in the frames of the broader Slavic linguistic and cultural community, when the Second Bulgarian State was founded in 1185 AD, its rulers, pretending to be descendants of the dynasties of the First State, tried to revive the traditions of this very past. By the end of the period, the Danubian Bulgarians were already firmly Slavic-speaking and Orthodox, despite of the non-Slavic name of the State, and the people[81].

## The Ottoman Conquest and the National 'Revival'

The Ottoman conquest during the second half of the 14th century put the Bulgarians in completely different situation. They became part of the large community of 'dhimmi' [protected people] being mainly characterized by their Christian Orthodox faith while the Slavic-Bulgarian language degraded to a simple vernacular idiom. The local aristocracy disappeared, being physically destroyed, expelled or Islamized during the 50 to 100 years following the conquest and the establishment of the Ottoman rule. The vast majority of Bulgarians became part of the 'Rum millet', the 'Greek-Orthodox community', shaped by the culturally dominant Greeks, remaining a predominantly rural population. Smaller Bulgarian groups converted to Catholicism or Protestantism between the 16th and the 19th centuries. One part of the Bulgarian population was assimilated into the Muslim community, but managing to keep its language and some local traditions (later they will be known as Pomaks) and another was assimilated by the Turks[82].

The emergence of Bulgarian nationalism in the beginning of the 19th century was concerned mostly with language revival, ecclesiastical autonomy, and educational emancipation from the dominant Greek culture. The image of the 'real' Bulgarian gradually coincided with the Bulgarian-speaking Orthodox population unified in the recently established Bulgarian Exarchate (1870), regarded by some researchers as a 'proto-state' within the borders of the Ottoman Empire[83]. All other groups that did not correspond to this design were regarded as 'aliens', and even 'traitors'. Thus, to some extent Bulgarian Catholics and Protestants were treated with certain suspicion, however, accepted within the broader national project. In 1860s, a Uniate movement was built as a shield against the pressure from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, and Russia, which wanted to hinder the Bulgarian movement for establishing a 'national' Church. It disappeared almost completely after the foundation of the Exarchate[84].

At the same time, the 'Patriarchists' (labeled also as 'Graecomaniacs' or 'Serbomaniacs'), who did not accept the ecclesiastical rule of the 'schismatic' Bulgarian Exarchate, were treated as 'enemies and traitors'. Actually, many of them, assumed later

[81] The most recent comprehensive account on Bulgarian medieval history and ethnogenetical theories could be found in Bozhilov and Gyuzelev (2006), 169-271.

[82] Minkov (2004), 29-66; Radushev (2008),1-50.

[83] Todorova (1990), 439-450; Markova (1989), 25-50; Naxidou (2012), 25-42.

[84] Genchev (1979), 35-48.

the Greek or the Serbian national identity, emphasizing the rather fluid status of the Bulgarian ethnic and proto-national identity in the Ottoman times among certain social groups and border communities[85].

## The 'Third' State and the Modern Nation (since 1878)

The foundation of the autonomous Bulgarian principality (1878) sparked a controversy between the 'ethnic' and the 'civic' option for approaching the Bulgarian national identity. This controversy is still present in the Bulgarian public debates and influences the Bulgarian policy toward ethnic minorities and specific groups, such as Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) and Gagauz (Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians) who do not 'meet the standard' for the 'pure' Bulgarian.

'The Treaty of San Stefano' (3rd of March, 1878) created the so called "Greater Bulgaria" corresponding to some extent to the limits of the Exarchate and to the two Bulgarian vilayets (Eastern with capital in Tyrnovo and Western with capital in Sofia) established by the Constantinople conference (1876-1877). It has been revised rapidly at the Congress of Berlin (June-July, 1878). 'The Berlin Treaty' created the autonomous Principality of Bulgaria, the semi-autonomous province of Eastern Rumelia and left about 1 Million Exarchists (i.e. people with more or less established Bulgarian national identity) in Macedonia and Edirne/Adrianople vilayet (parts of Southern Thrace) under the direct rule of the Sultan[86]. In 1885, the Principality and the Eastern Rumelia were united giving to Bulgaria its modern shape[87]. The today borders were confirmed by the Paris Peace Conference in 1947[88].

Bulgarian nationalism was and to some extent still is a typical ethno-nationalism. According to its widely popular criteria, Bulgarians are all the people, who declare themselves to be Bulgarians, but also share common origin, language, traditions, folklore, and blood. This approach explains to some extent why the formation of the Macedonian nation has been so negatively seen in Bulgaria, for many Bulgarians it was a direct attack against the Bulgarian ethno-national unity[89].

After the liberation, the Bulgarian authorities, and the society were confronted with a new problem. On the territory of the modern Bulgarian state lived different ethnic and religious minorities. The most numerous minorities were the Muslims, consisting mainly of ethnic Turks[90], Roma and Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims). There were also quite numerous groups of Greeks, Vlachs (Romanians and Aromanians), Jews, Armenians and smaller minority groups. A specific community were the Gagauz, Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians, concentrated mostly in the Northeast of the country, along the Black Sea coast[91]. The Constitution of Tyrnovo (1879) proclaimed the equality of all citizens of the Bulgarian State. However, the politics towards the minorities varied greatly and were not consistent to the Constitution. The Pomaks and the Gagauz were regarded from the very beginning and even before the liberation as a peculiar deviation from the normal Bulgarian ethnic standard.

## The Pomak Issue

The Pomak local vernacular idioms are almost identical to dialects of theirs Bulgarian

[85] Markova (1989), 55-67; Georgieva and Genchev (1999), 452-453.

[86] Georgieva and Genchev (1999), 549-551.

[87] Statelova and Gryncharov (1999), 52-87.

[88] Ibid., 592-593.

[89] Bakalova (2002), 276-286.

[90] Petkova-Encheva (2016), 327-335.

[91] Nazyrska (1999), 1-20.

Orthodox neighbors in the respective regions, but Pomaks almost exclusively identified themselves with the Muslim Ottoman community, often as a specific local part of it. Naturally, some Muslim religious terms and some Ottoman loan words had, and still have, an important symbolic meaning. Some of the Pomaks kept Christian family names, even memory of distant relationship to some Christian families, however, they never or very rarely associated themselves with the Bulgarian majority[92].

Conversion to Islam has always provoked debates within the modern Bulgarian society. The predominant view has described this phenomenon as happened mostly by force. This opinion is supported by folklore tradition, popular memory, and, to some extent, by the official historical narratives[93]. The name 'Pomaks" that appeared in the Bulgarian literature in the 19th century as a designation for the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims was often derived from "pomachen" i.e. "tortured" or "pomagach" "helper" [of the Ottomans]. It has been applied firstly to a local group, living around the city of Lovech in Northern Bulgaria. Very soon, it became, however, a common term used also for far more numerous groups, living in the Rhodopes Mountains, Pirin Region and some eastern areas of modern Republic of Macedonia bordering Bulgaria (Osogovo Mountain etc.). It designates similar groups in Northern Greece (historical Western Thrace) and Turkey (Eastern Thrace and some areas in Western Anatolia, mainly around Bursa). Other Slavic-speaking groups with Muslim background like Torbeshi (living in the Republic of Macedonia and Albania) and Gorani (from Kosovo and Albania) were and still are regarded sometimes as Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, but not as Pomaks[94].

### *The Islamization Debates and the 're-Christianization' Campaigns*

The concept of the forced Islamization was a subject of heated debate in the recent decades. The debate is still actual. Pomaks were often presented as living proof that almost all Muslim populations in Bulgaria descended from converted Bulgarians. This theory was used as a historical background for several campaigns of re-Christianization and Bulgarization. The first of them occurred during the Balkan Wars and affected the Pomak population living in Pirin Macedonia and Western Thrace. It ended quickly after the Second Balkan War in 1913, due to political issues, related to elections in the newly acquired territories. The second campaign happened after the Coup d'Etat on 19th of May 1934. The Rodina [Fatherland] Movement, partly organized by Pomak activists, believed that Bulgarization would be the right way for full integration, equality and modernization of the Pomaks in Bulgaria[95]. This policy has been abolished and labeled as Fascist after 1944 and its perpetrators were persecuted. In the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the Communist regime itself organized renaming campaign among the Muslim Roma and Pomak population. This met no resistance from the Roma, but in several Pomak areas, a resistance campaign, led in 1972-1973, was fierce and met with violence by the authorities which caused some casualties among the civilians. The peak of this policy was the so-called 'Revival process' undergone between 1984-1989, when the whole Muslim population had to change their Islamic names, while the Turkish language was banned and practising Islam was put under severe restrictions (this was the situation with any religion, despite of the

[92] Kalionski (1993), 122-130; Apostolov (1996), 727-742.

[93] A detailed overview of the historiographical debates in Georgieva (2011), 183-211.

[94] Todorova (2018), 398.

[95] Todorova (2018), 393-394.

claims about religious freedom in Communist Bulgaria)[96].

### *The Contemporary Situation of the Bulgarian Pomaks*

After 1989, the policy towards minorities underwent significant changes and improved greatly. However, the debates about their origin and identity are still going on, involving also the representatives of the Pomaks themselves. As for today, one could find various opinions even among this people as regards their identity and origin. There are also different opinions on their number, according to some estimations they are about 150 000 people. These opinions can be summed up as follows[97]:

1. Some Pomaks regard themselves as ethnic Bulgarians of Muslim religion.

2. Others regard themselves as Turks, who have lost their language, also under the pressure of the Bulgarian State.

3. Some Turkish scholars and/or publicists argue that Pomaks are descendants of Pre-Ottoman Turkic settlers-Pechenegs, Cumans, Oghuz[98].

4. For another group of researchers and thinkers, Pomaks are a separate ethnic community with no relation to Bulgarians or the Turks. The explanations for their origin vary a lot and one could find theories about the Thracian tribe of Agrianes (linked to local name "Ahryani" in the Rhodopes Mountain) or mentions about Arab settlers, at the beginning of the 8th century who spread Islam in this part of the Balkans. In their opinion, Pomak is a separate Slavic language[99].

5. A recently promoted theory claims that Pomaks are descendants of the Turkic-speaking Protobulgarians and are linked to the mighty Islamic culture of Volga Bulgars[100].

6. The approach of some Bulgarian-speaking Muslims who do not accept the names "Pomak" and "Mohammedan Bulgarians", which they deem as offensive, and insist to be called "Bulgarian Muslims"[101].

### *The Related Groups in the Neighboring Countries*

As already mentioned, there are significant Pomak groups outside Bulgaria. Pomaks in Greece live mostly in Western Thrace, their number vary between 3500 and 140 000 (the last number includes almost all Muslim population in Greece and is highly exaggerated, thus deliberately diminishing or ignoring local Turks and Muslim Roma). Although, Pomaks in Greece are closely connected to the local Turkish-speaking community, however, the last decades witnessed a 'Pomak Revival', including state sponsored textbooks, media, broadcasting etc. in Pomak language (Pomatsko, Pomakika). The predominant theory among them claims an autochthonous origin, linked to the Thracian tribes, closely related to the Hellenic culture[102].

As already mentioned, there is a significant Pomak community in Turkey, too. They should be separated from the far more numerous groups of the Bulgarian Turks, many of whom are also bilingual, but they do not have the Bulgarian language as their mother tongue. There are different numbers for the community of Pomak descent in Turkey. According to some researches, they are between 300 000 and 500 000[103]. Despite of the fact, that they have preserved their language

[96] Extensive account in Gruev and Kalionski (2008), 1-25; Evstatiev (2006), 40-62.

[97] Merdjanova (2013), 1-50 and 474-483.

[98] Todorova (2018), 391.

[99] Aarbakke (2012), 149-177.

[100] Encheva-Petkova (2016), 170-184.

[101] Nedelcheva (2016), 148-151; Extensive study on the Pomaks of Bulgaria also in Karagiannis (2005), 45-55; 56-115; Brunnbauer (2016).

[102] Aarbakke (2012), 149-177.

[103] Andrews (1989), 92-97.

and culture to a certain extent, they are regarded generally as a specific ethnographic group of Balkan Turks[104].

### *The Gagauz Community in Southeastern Europe, and in Bulgaria*

The other minority group are the Gagauz, Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians. Their name appeared at the beginning of the 19th century in Northeastern Bulgaria and Dobrudzha. A significant part of them left these areas during two waves in 1812, and between 1829 and 1830, together with a large group of Bulgarians and settled in Bessarabia, by that time part of the Russian Empire. These settlers initially were regarded mostly as Bulgarian colonists, but later Russian authorities started to identify the Turkish-speaking Christians as a separate group. During the Soviet times, the Gagauz ethnicity crystallized as a completely separate entity, resulting nowadays in the Gagauz yeri autonomy in the Republic of Moldova. Gagauz minorities also live in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece[105]. In Greece, one should mention two other Turkish-speaking Orthodox groups: the Thracian Gagauz and the Zichniotes (the Macedonian Christian Turks in Greece), who, together with migrants from Bulgaria, joined the far more numerically strong community of Anatolian Turkophone Greeks, who after 1922 came to Greece as refugees[106].

In today Bulgaria, the Gagauz community has less than 2000 members while their Turkish language is disappearing, especially among those living in the cities[107]. However, the existence of this group also stirred debates and gave birth to different theories as regards theirs origins.

### *Ethnogenetic Theories about Gagauz People and Their Political Implications*

There are currently three major theories concerning the origin and history of the Gagauz, all three involving the possible Oghuz (and Seljuk) settlement in Dobrudzha during the late Middle Ages, before the Ottoman conquest. According to the first theory, which has the largest number of advocates, the Gagauz are descendants of the north Turkic-speaking nomads, the Pechenegs, the Oghuz (Uzes), and the Cumans (Kipchaks). Some theories argue that the Pechenegs, and especially the Cumans played a more important role in the ethnogenesis of the Gagauz than the Oghuz. According to this version, during the Ottoman period, the language of the Gagauz, which is slightly different from Turkish, was Turkicized and lost its original Kipchak form. The Gagauz were converted to Christianity long before the rise of the Ottomans and remained strong supporters of Orthodoxy, being in contact mostly with their Bulgarian and Greek-speaking coreligionists[108].

The second theory links the Gagauz with the Oghuz tribes and especially with the Seljuks. According to this theory, a massive settlement of Seljuks in Dobrudzha took place in 1263. Those Seljuks were led by the former Sultan of Rum Izzeddin Kaykawus, who had converted to Christianity together with his people, then seized Dobrudzha from the Bulgarians, and created there an Oghuz state, which was a political ally of Byzantium, under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. This state, later known as the Despotate of Dobrudzha, was conquered by the Ottomans in the late 14th century. In the mid-17th century, the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi mentioned this territory as "Uz Eyaleti,"

[104] Aktürk (2009), 893-909. Başaran and Gürcüm (2007), 217-228.

[105] Gradeshliev (1993), 5-8.

[106] Robev (1988), 36-43; Kynchov (1996), 96.

[107] Karahasan-Cinar (2011).

[108] Jireček (1889), 5-10; Mladenov (1931), 25-32.

which strongly suggests that the memory of the Oghuz was retained by the Christian Gagauz[109].

A third theory depicts the Gagauz as Bulgarians, who were assimilated linguistically during the Ottoman times, but kept their Orthodox religion. This theory is also combined with the idea that the old Bulgars, who initially settled in Dobrudzha and probably spoke a Turkic, "Oghur", dialect, have not been entirely assimilated by the Slavic-speaking majority. The Bulgars thus retained a Turkic dialect, which was thoroughly Turkicized during the Ottoman era. They thus became Gagauz, but were in fact non-Slavic Bulgars. This theory has also another modification according to which Gagauz were simply Bulgarians, who were linguistically assimilated in Turkish environment, similar to the Anatolian Turkish-speaking Greeks[110].

## *Final Remarks: Pomak and Gagauz, and the Bulgarian National Identity*

Pomaks and Gagauz were, and still are, a great challenge for Bulgarian nationalism. Both groups qualify to some extent to the "national standard" of being a Bulgarian, namely a Slavic Bulgarian-speaking belonging to the Orthodox community, but not entirely. Gagauz, however, despite of their Turkophony, did not meet big difficulties to be accepted into the larger community. Their Orthodox faith in the frame of the Bulgarian Church and loyalty to the Bulgarian State were practically not questioned after the Liberation in 1878. The problem about their origin and ethnic affiliation was mostly a scientific issue, partly used during the 'Revival Process' in 1984-1989 in order to prove that some Bulgarians were already Turkish-speaking, before the Ottomans, keeping the heritage of the Protobulgarians[111].

The case of the Pomaks proves to be far more complex. This group, despite of their Bulgarian dialect, remained a "suspicious" and "problematic" community for the Bulgarian nation-state, sometimes, even more problematic, than the Bulgarian Turks[112]. Islam has been regarded as a "shameful relic of violence" and for a Pomak to be accepted as 100% Bulgarian, the only way was through change of his/her name and religion. For modern Bulgarians, religion is still a very important marker for ethnicity and national affiliation. If people of other Christian churches are mostly accepted as Bulgarians, the combination of Islam and Bulgarian ethnic identity still looks like a peculiar option.

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[109] Balaschev (1917), 33-36; Manov (1921), 84-93. In fact, Evliya Çelebi's "Uz Eyaleti" was a vast Ottoman province, stretching all the way to the River Uzi (Dnieper), as shown by Kapaló (2006), 80-81.

[110] Pavlov (2013).

[111] Dimitrov (1995), 147.

[112] Borden (2018).

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# Alla Kondrasheva, Stavris Parastatov

## Greeks of Tsalka: History, Culture, Language, and Crisis of Ethnic Identity

**Abstract**

The Greeks of Tsalka is a sub-ethnic group, whose ancestors originated from the Pontus and Erzurum regions and lived for several centuries under the rule of the Ottomans. Therefore they absorbed cultural elements of many peoples of Asia Minor – Turks, Armenians, Persians, Assyrians, etc. That can be traced in their language, folklore, and rites. As a result of the Russian-Turkish wars, they were resettled to the territory of Georgia – to the Tsalka region. The migration to the territory of the Russian Empire was accomplished in several waves – after the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829 until the end of the 19th century. At the time of the resettlement, most of them forget their native language and switched to Turkish.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in Georgia, the inter-ethnic issue became very acute. In conjunction with the economic crisis, the situation forced many Greeks to leave Tsalka. Currently, the Greeks of Tsalka have a little more than 50 thousand representatives, living mainly in Greece and in southern Russia. Those who moved to Greece almost immediately faced an identity crisis, as the Greek society did not welcome them well. As a result, many Greeks of Tsalka ceased to identify themselves as Greek and tried to forge new hypotheses about their origin.

**Keywords:** Greeks of Tsalka, Pontic Greeks, Turkish-speaking Greeks, Identity Crisis.

## Introduction

There is nothing more permanent than temporary. This ancient wisdom is universal and applicable to everything that surrounds us. The process of transformation of the entire universe is inexorable and unavoidable. The only constant is change, as Heraclitus of Ephesus once said.

Ethnic groups are no exception. They come into existence, grow, and eventually disappear. This trajectory can be short if, for example, an ethnos in the initial stages of its formation was enslaved by the carriers of another civilization and, sometimes, quickly assimilated. Ethnic groups are developing both extensively, populating more and more space, and intensively while developing their civilization. The geographical remoteness of some parts of a developed and numerous ethnos inevitably leads to centrifugal forces, which eventually gave birth to local (groups) identities, through contacts with neighboring ethnic groups. As a result, sub-ethnic groups are formed, acting as a transitional form between the old, declining, and the new, emerging ethnos.

This algorithm of ethnogenesis was universal and could be traced almost everywhere until recently. The today era of informatization has a serious impact on the laws and principles of ethnogenesis. The democratization and liberalization of the world, the internationalization of almost all spheres of public life, as well as the development of information technologies, have opened up new forms of identities, established new frames of reference. However, humanity is still far from

becoming a global society and nation states still represent the main form of its organization.

Most contemporary scholars, who aligned themselves with constructivism, consider ethnos as something close[113] or even identical[114] to the category of a nation, in other words, interpret it as a social construct. However, until the end of the last century, the main ethnological approach was primordialism, which interpreted ethnos as a natural construct, a link in the anthropological taxonomy of the Homo sapiens species[115].

The process of transformation of ethnic groups into a nation may cause a crisis of identity of sub-ethnic groups located outside their historical homeland. As a result, representatives of one or another sub-ethnic group, realizing their relatively equidistant position between the historical ethnos (origin, some specific traditions, religion) and the nation of the state (language, generally accepted traditions) in which they lives, at a certain moment, they have to make a choice: to stay and integrate into the dominant nation or to return to their homeland[116].

For the last three decades, the Greeks of Tsalka, a small Greek sub-ethnic group that come into existence in the southern regions of Georgia during the 19th and 20th centuries, are facing such a choice. Before analyzing the identity crisis of this Greek sub-ethnic group, it is necessary to give some brief historical and ethnographic information, in order to better understand it.

## The Greeks of Tsalka: Name, Origins, and Re-settlement

In modern ethnography, there is no well-established name for this Greek sub-ethnic group. However, there are journalistic variants of the name, such as "greki-tsalkintsy" in the Russian-speaking environment and "tsalkalides" in Greece. Both could be translated as Tsalkeans, i.e. residents of Tsalka. This variant of the name is inconvenient because it refers unequivocally to the Tsalka region in modern Georgia, where until recently most of the representatives of this Greek sub-ethnic group lived. However, they also lived sporadically in other regions of the South Caucasus. Besides, not only Greeks lived in the Tsalka region, but also Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Assyrians, Germans, etc.

There is another name, or more precisely, the self-name – the Urums, but it is even more ineffectual, since the same term also refers to other Turkic-speaking Greek sub-ethnic groups, in particular, the Urums of the Azov Sea or in some cases the Karamanlides who do not have any direct connection to the Greeks of Tsalka.

If we take into account the geographical principle of the origin of this sub-ethnic group (as far back as we know), it seems quite justifiable at first sight to call them the Pontic Greeks (from the name of the historical region of Pontus). However, this ethnonym is also inconvenient, due to the breadth of the concept. The Pontic Greeks refer to all Greeks from the Pontus region, including the Greek-speaking majority. However, the Greeks of Tsalka are predominantly Turkic-speaking, and also differ significantly from the Greek-speaking culturally, as we argue below. In addition, a separate group of the ancestors of the Greeks of Tsalka came from the region south of Pontus – from the Erzurum and Kars regions. Thus, the most appropriate option of all possible seems to be the name "Greeks of Tsalka", which will be used henceforth.

The Greeks lived in Eastern Anatolia (Asia Minor) from Antic times. The coastal region of Pontus was settled by the Greeks in the period of the so-called second Greek colonization. The cities of Sinope, Amisos, Cotiora, Kerasunth, Trapezus, which today are

[113] Trofimov (2012), 16.

[114] Koptseva, Bakhova, Medyantseva (2011), 616.

[115] Gumilëv (2013), 7.

[116] Bromley (2011).

important urban centers of the southern Black Sea coast were already founded in the 8th century BC.

The relocation of the Eastern Anatolia Greeks to the territory of the South Caucasus took place in several stages throughout the 19th century and was directly connected with the foreign policy of the Russian Empire in the region. Russia, acquiring new territories in the Caucasus, pursued a policy of increasing the proportion of the Christian population in predominantly Muslim regions in order to create new footholds to protect itself from probable irredentism in favor of Turkey or Persia. In respect to this policy, Christians were considered by Russia as trustworthy while Muslims were potential agents of Turkey and Persia. This approach is highlighted by the fact that Christians were settled on the heights of increased strategic importance. For instance, through the territory of Tsalka passed the road to the fortress Alexandropol, the central stronghold of the Russian troops against the Anatolian army of the Turks during the Crimean War.

The local Christian population – Georgians and Armenians – accepted and enforced the migration policy of Russia in the region, expressing agreement to host the Greeks, as they themselves suffered a lot from Turkish and Persian invasions. As the Georgian historian, I. Garakanidze notes, "through the Greek migrations from Asia Minor, the political and strategic plan of the Russian empire was successfully carried out on the territories of Georgia bordering Turkey – gradually concentrating all new Christian groups that could, if necessary, provide support to the Christian powers"[117]. In addition, the aim of the tsarist government was to expand trade with foreign countries with the help of this population.

The first stage of the relocation was the years 1813 and 1814, when after the wars against Persia and Turkey (1804-1813 and 1806-1812 respectively) about twenty Greek families from the Pasen area of the Erzurum region of the Ottoman Empire were resettled west of Tiflis in the then free state lands of the Tsalka zone of the Borchaly district of the Georgian province (South Georgia). Today this territory corresponds to the Tsalka, Dmanisi and Tetritskaro municipalities of the Republic of Georgia. As mentioned above, this area was at the border with the Ottoman empire, and its main population were Muslims – Borchaly Tatars, the ancestors of modern Azerbaijanis. Their presence on the territory was the main reason for the settlement of this region by Christians. The first Greek settlement of the region, Tsintskaro, was supplemented in 1822/1823 by another 100 Greek families resettled from North-Eastern Turkey.

The second stage was the period of 1825-1827, i.e. the years of the Greek War of Independence. During this period, the resettlement was carried out in the same area – the Borchaly district of the Georgian province. This time there were more settlers, who established the settlements of Keivan-Bulgason (now Velispiri), Damir Boulakh (Sarkineti), Ambarlo (Ganakhleba).

The third stage of the relocation was connected with the Russian-Ottoman war of 1828-1829. The Christian population of northeastern Turkey has cordially greeted the Russian troops that entered the territory of the Ottoman Empire in June 1828. Moreover, the local Greeks joined the Russian army, created their own so-called "Greek squad", and fought against the Turks. However, according to the 'Adrianople Peace Treaty' concluded on September 2, 1829, Russia ceded to Turkey the regions of Kars and Erzurum. Fearing imminent revenge by the Turks, the Greeks urged the Russian authorities to resettle them in the Russian territory. Commander-in-Chief, General Ivan Paskevich, the vicegerent of the Russian tsar in the Caucasus, conscious of the complexity of the situation and foreseeing the danger that threatened the Christians,

[117] https://www.e-reading.club/book.php?book=1031311 (Retrieved 03 February 2019).

petitioned the government to resettle them in the Caucasus. The report stated: "Your Excellency, I do not have the moral right to leave these Orthodox Greeks loyal to us and ask for your permission to resettle them on the territory of our empire"[118].

By personal decree of Emperor Nicholas I, the petition of General Ivan Paskevich was approved, and 27 thousand Greeks of Trebizond (mainly from Gumushhane (Argyroupolis) and its environs) and Erzurum vilayets left in 1829-1830 the territory of the Ottoman Empire along with the Russian army. They were resettled in a mountainous area hardly suitable for life, which was called Tsalka. Within two years, Erzurum Greeks founded eighteen villages while Trebizond Greeks six. Special rules, conditions, and other orders concerning the settlement of the Greeks on the aforementioned free lands were established. According to the provision approved on October 22, 1829 – "About the Georgian landowners who have to welcome the migrant settlers and to relocate them on their own lands"[119] – the Greek immigrants were excepted from paying state taxes for the first six years and from any territorial obligations for the first three years. The same conditions applied subsequently to the Greeks moving to Eastern Armenia.

The fourth stage of relocation took place during the Crimean War. During three years, from 1861 to 1864, several hundred Greeks of Trebizond Vilayet moved to the territory of Tsalka. The new settlers founded five new villages.

This was the last stage of the mass migration of Greeks to the designated area. Later, the settlement zone of the Greeks who arrived (single immigrants) from the Ottoman Empire extended to the Black Sea region of Georgia and the regions adjacent to Georgia in Eastern Armenia. However, Tsalka remained the main Greek region in the South Caucasus. Single migrations continued until 1919. Thus, from 1813 to 1864, Greeks migrants from Pontus and Erzurum regions founded more than 30 villages in the lands of the Tsalka region allocated to them by the Russian government.

The settlers were linguistically divided into two categories – the Turkophones, who spoke only Turkish, and the Hellenophones, who spoke, in addition to Turkish, their native language – the Pontic dialect of Greek. The first came from the Erzurum and Kars regions, the second – from the Trebizond region of Pontus. Numerical superiority was in favor of the Turkophones. However, if in the middle of the 19th century the preponderance was not striking, then by the beginning of the 20th century most of the Greek Hellenophones had lost the Greek language. This happened due to the fact that the Turkish language was *lingua franca* in this region, while the Greek language, apart from the Greek world, did not have much practical significance. In addition, trade was conducted mainly with the local Borchaly Tatars, whose language was very close to the Anatolian dialect of the Turkish language spoken by the Greeks of Tsalka. The final factor in the loss of the native language by the Greeks was the policy of the Bolsheviks, who closed the parochial schools, where, among other things, Greek was taught. Thus, the Anatolian dialect of the Turkish language is now the mother tongue of most of the Greeks in Tsalka, who call it simply "bizim dil", which could be translated as "our language". Today, only Greeks from only five villages of Tsalka have preserved their native language, the Greek. However, in the Turkish language of the Greeks of Tsalka, there are many words of Greek origin, mainly Christian and professional concepts as well as some words used in everyday life.

[118] Russian State Historical Archive. f.565, op.6, d.20916, l.2.

[119] https://www.e-reading.club/book.php?book=1031311 (Retrieved 06 February 2019).

## Sub-ethnic Identity

Culturally, the Greeks of Tsalka constitutes a united group. The contemporary native of Tsalka, who has preserved the Pontic dialect of the Greek language, is culturally closer to the Turkophone Greek than to other Pontic Greeks, for example, to those from the North Caucasus, despite the fact that all who speak the Pontic dialect originate from the same region – the Pontus. Over 200 years of living together in the Tsalka region, the Pontic (Greek-speaking) and Erzurum-born (Turkish-speaking) Greeks formed a unique Greek sub-ethnic group, mutually enriching each other. In addition to the common Greek and common Christian traditions, early Turkish influence can be traced in their culture, as well as the influence of some Caucasian peoples and even Russian.

The Greeks of Tsalka practice rituals of ambiguous origin. For example, the rite of animal sacrifice in honor of a Christian holiday. Among the ethnographers, there is no consensus regarding the origin of this rite. Some consider it as a Muslim influence, others as an element of the Old Testament tradition, and others as a pagan heritage from the ancient Greeks. Our position on this issue is close to the views of the Russian historian Nikolaĭ Brabanov, who believes that this type of sacrifices practiced by the Greeks of Tsalka goes back to the ancient tradition[120]. Another example is the ceremony dedicated to the beginning of the sowing season, which consists in playing musical instruments on the field before sowing, and kneeling. This rite is most likely of ancient Greek origin, too.

The Greeks of Tsalka are zealous Christians and ardent patriots of Hellenism. Apparently, this boundless devotion to their faith and nation preserved their Greek identity in such harsh historical conditions. After all, the Ottoman yoke was replaced by difficult living conditions in Tsalka, an area unsuitable for agriculture, and by a life among Muslim ethnic groups who did not sympathize the Christians. The main site of any Greek village in Tsalka was a rural temple, which was erected immediately after the resettlement. Before settle down properly in the new land, the Greeks began to build the shrine.

## Crisis of Ethnic Identity

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the inter-ethnic issue became very acute in Georgia having an impact on the Greek community as well[121]. In conjunction with the economic crisis, the situation forced many to leave Tsalka. The majority moved to Greece and almost immediately confronted with the problem of identity since the Greek society as a whole was sensitive to the Turkic-speaking Greeks. Many of them were called Turks or Russians, which caused a backlash, an unwillingness to socialize. The Greeks of Tsalka were also accused of being of non-Greek origin by other Greek repatriates. In the article "Ethnic Greeks from the Former Soviet Union", Eftihia Voutira presented a typical dispute between Greek representatives of Tsalka and Kazakhstan, where a Greek of Kazakhstan would say: "You are not real Greeks, because Stalin didn't exile you"[122].

As a result, among the Greeks of Tsalka, there are now quite a lot of people who claim that they are not Greeks, but Pontians although when they lived in Tsalka nobody used the category "Pontian" for self-identification. The term "urum" was used in Turkish, "romeos" in Greek and "grek" in Russian. "Urum" and "romeos" have the same root and go back to the Byzantine period, when the Greeks called themselves Romans.

The crisis of the identity of the Turkic-speaking Greeks of Tsalka caused the emergence of various theories and hypotheses about their origin. The overwhelming majority

[120] Barabanov (2004), 89-113.

[121] Wheatley (2006).

[122] Voutira (2004), 541.

undoubtedly continues to regard themselves as Greeks. However, some individuals argue that Greeks and Pontians are completely different ethnos. The authors of the article themselves recorded during an interview with the residents of the village of Beshtasheni of the Tsalka district of Georgia that the Greeks of Tsalka are Georgians, as they come from the Pontus region, where the Laz people, one of the Kartvelian-speaking ethnic group, had been living since ancient times. Probably, they were influenced by the point of view supported and promoted by the modern Georgian authorities. In the late 90s, a Doctor of Historical Sciences, the Archbishop Ananias (Tengiz Japaridze) of the Georgian Orthodox Church published some articles declaring that the Greeks of Tsalka are descendants of Hellenized Georgians of the Southern Black Sea and Northeastern Anatolia. This statement has some impact as the Archbishop Ananias was the Chairman of the so-called research group on the "Ascertainment of Real History".

However, even those Greeks of Tsalka who believe in the hypothesis of their non-Greek origin are not united in their views on this matter. They could be divided into two groups, the Pontophils and the Hellenophiles. The first group favors the traditional point of view of their Pontic origin, while the other emphasizes the idea of the Peloponnesian roots. The Hellenophiles believe that the Greeks of Tsalka are not related to the Pontic Greeks, but were relocated from the Peloponnese to the territory of Northeastern Anatolia during the Ottoman rule. This view originated in the Turkic-speaking environment of the Greeks of Tsalka and gradually becomes more and more popular.

The main argument in favor of this assumption is the popular oral folk tradition about their origin from "Mora", which is interpreted as Morea (the medieval name of the Peloponnese area). The Greek-speaking group of the Greeks of Tsalka does not have this tradition. In addition, the Greeks of Tsalka do not know many common Pontic traditions. The already mentioned musical ceremony dedicated to the beginning of the planting season is characteristic only for the Greeks of Tsalka. The musical culture of the Greeks of Tsalka is closer to the Armenian and Assyrian than to Pontic. They do not play the Pontic lyre – one of the symbols of the Pontic Greeks, they do not sing about the Pontus in the folk songs, as the Pontians do. At a wedding of the Greeks of Tsalka, one of the traditional dances is the so-called "Bar". Dance with similar content and symbolism can be found among Armenians and Assyrians.

Finally, another argument in favor of the Hellenophile hypothesis of the origin of the Greeks of Tsalka are the memoirs of the Russian officers who fought in the Crimean War and left descriptions of the appearance of the "Greek squad" fighters. For instance, Ivan Diomidovich Popko (1819-1893) published in the journal *Voennyĭ Sbornik*, under the pseudonym Esaul, many colorful sketches of military everyday life. Thanks to his writings, we know how the Greeks looked like. "The Greek squad," Popko noted, "was composed of residents of several Greek villages in Georgia, which were founded, they say, during the Byzantine emperors, by masons and mining masters. There are only thirty riders in this squad, and they will not converge with each other; forever they cry and argue. Theirs pants are wider than in other teams, and a white skirt is worn over the pants. Cossacks cannot get over this"[123].

In this episode, the Russian officer was surprised by "fustanella" – the traditional military skirt of the Balkan Greeks of that time. Today, fustanella can be seen on the Evzones – representatives of the Greek Presidential guard, who carries the guard of honor at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and guards the Presidential Palace in Athens. However, the Pontic Greek never had such a tradition of wearing fustanella.

[123] http://russia-greece2016.ru/culture/20160519/506426.htm (Retrieved 16 February 2019).

Recently, issues of the origin and, consequently, of ethnicity of the Greeks of Tsalka are increasingly being brought up for discussion on social networks, on special Internet portals devoted to the history of the Greeks of Tsalka, where debates are usually heated. Even large research projects are being implemented within the framework of DNA genealogy. All this testifies to the deep crisis of the identity of the Turkic-speaking Greeks of Tsalka, which might lead to their assimilation. Sooner or later, this sub-ethnic group of Greeks will become a relic. Therefore, it might be now the best time to explore this unique culture, while there are still carriers of it.

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# Anna Kuleszewicz, Marek Figura

## The Belarusian People's Republic, and the Belarusian National Identity

**Abstract**

The influence of Polonization, Rusification and sovietization on the Belarusian people made Belarusians one of the least historical-conscious nations in Europe. However, an important reference frame could play a role in shaping a future Belarusian national identity: the Belarusian People's Republic, a political entity that existed for several months in 1918. In the recent years, a certain trend of "returning to the roots" can be observed, in which the symbolism related to the Belarusian People's Republic seems to enjoy a special place.

**Keywords**: Belarus, Belarusian People's Republic, Return to the Roots, National Symbols.

### Introduction

The aim of this article is twofold: on the one hand, it depicts the history of the Belarusian lands over centuries, and, on the other, it focuses on the symbols used by the post-soviet Belarusian political parties and elites in order to shape the Belarusian national identity. We argue that the Belarusian People's Republic represents an important frame of reference for a new national identity, especially lately, when a 'return to the roots' trend can be noticed, not only in the political arena, but also in the public space.

### The Medieval Past of Belarus

The first information about Slavic tribes in the Belarusian lands dates from 10th century when Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos mentioned the tribes of Krivichs, Dregoviches, Severians and Drevlians. Over time, these tribal entities evolved into duchies, such as the Principality of Polotsk (in the north of the Belarusian lands) and the Principality of Turov (in the south).

The Baltic-Slavic duchies in the Belarus land, as well as other political entities were united by Mindaugas and integrated into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1240, the residence of the duke being established in Navahrudak (today in Belarus). In the subsequent years, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania imposed its protectorate to Smolensk (before 1326), to the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia (1320-1324), and to Kiev (1325). The Union of Krewo, from August 1385, made possible by the marriage of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jogaila, to the Polish queen Jadwiga, which meant that Jogaila could take over the Polish throne in exchange of his baptism into the Catholic rite[124], will further expand the Grand Duchy.

[124] Uruszczak (2017), 25.

### *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*

The Union of Lublin from July 1569 created a new state, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, having a common monarch, parliament, coat of arms, currency, foreign and defense policy. However, both Lithuania and Poland preserved their own treasury, administration, army, and judicial system[125]. From that moment, the historical fate of all the lands belonging to this great state was strongly intertwined.

It should be emphasized that the term "Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth" had only a political meaning, as other ethnic groups lived on the territory of the new state. Among these ethnic groups, we shall mention Belarusians and Ukrainians (called Ruthenians). The Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth was a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state in which people enjoyed religious tolerance[126].

One of the effects of the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the gradual Polonization of the Lithuanian and Russophile elites of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania[127]. The process of Polonization lasted up to the end of the 19th century, even after the fall of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, when the lands of today's Belarus came under the rule of Tsarist Russia[128]. The Polonization did not include the peasant population who managed to preserve their cultural and linguistic separateness over centuries. This specificity of the Belarus, namely the peasant language and culture, was discovered and promoted in the XIX century as part of the Belarusian identity.

## The Belarusian National Revival

Under the influence of the Romanticism and its fascination for the culture of peasants, "Belarusness" was (re)discovered, which created a sense of national identity among Belarusians[129]. However, this national revival was less intensive among Belarusians tcomparing to theirs closest neighbors, Ukrainians and Lithuanians.

The Belarusian folklore, language, etc. were used, instrumentalized or/and studied more by Poles and Lithuanians than by local elites. For instance, the folk Belarusian motifs can be found in the works of the Polish national poet, Adam Mickiewicz, while the study of folklore and arts of the land of Belarus was initiated by universities from abroad (Vilnius University played a special role here)[130].

The intensification of the Belarusian national revival process can be dated at the beginning of the 20th century, more precisely, to 1902, when Vaclau Ivanovski (a Belarusian national political, cultural and educational activist, publicist, and academic lecturer) created in St. Petersburg, together with a group of students, The Belarusian Revolutionary Party. One year later, another organization, Belarusian Revolurinary Hromada (later renamed the Belarusian Socialist Hromada - Belarusian Socialist Assembly) was created by Belarusian political activists, brothers Ivan and Anton Lutskevich. "Hromada" coalesced the Belarusian intelligentsia, the emerging cultural and political elite of their nation[131].

Over the years, the movement of the Belarusian national revival become more efficient and influential. The nationally conscious youth tried to disseminate and cultivate Belarusian ideal through publishing journals and magazines. The first Belarusian newspaper, called *Nasha Dola* (Our fate), was published on September 1, 1906, as an unofficial journal of the Belarusian Socialist Hromada. *Nasha Dola* ceased to appear shortly after its publication, being replaced by *Nasha Niva*, printed in Vilnius between 1906 and 1914

[125] Ujma (2003), 57.
[126] Kopczyński (2010), 7-8.
[127] Szczepankowska (2010), 127.
[128] Kerski, Kowalczyk (2007), 318.
[129] Olechnowicz (1968), VII.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Michaluk (2010), 597.

(even nowadays there is a newspaper bearing the same name seen as a cultural continuation of the previous one). *Nasha Niva* published and promoted Belarusian writers, journalists, political and cultural activists[132].

## World War I: Opportunities for Statehood

After the outbreak of the First World War, the lands of Western Belarus went under German occupation in 1915. At the same time, the eastern Belarusian lands remained under the Russian control, experiencing the revolutions of February and October 1917[133]. The outbreak of revolution in Russia and the overthrow of tsardom created conditions for the uprising of Belarusians on the eastern side of the front.

In October 1917, fearing the growing influence of the Bolsheviks, the democratic Belarusian political parties set up the Great Belarusian Council. Shortly afterwards, the council convened the First All-Belarusian Congress in Minsk on December 7. The Congress was dispersed by local Bolshevik authorities after several days of reunions. However, the Congress managed to found the All-Belarus Council of Soldier's, Peasants' and Workers' Deputies. Later, in conjunction with the Council, All-Belarusian Congress appointed the Executive Committee, which operated under the radar until the Bolshevik forces were forcibly expelled from Minsk by the German offensive of February 1918. In addition to Belarusian organizations, some Polish military (and not only) groups enjoyed a heavy influence among anti-Bolshevik groups in Mińsk, and in the neighbouring areas. The Polish I Corps in Russia, led by general Józef Dowbór-Muśnicki, was one of the most influential[134]. After the conclusion of Brest Treaty on March 2, 1918, the entire territory of Belarus came under the German occupation[135]. Germans supported the Belarusian movement, considering it as a counterweight to the strong position of local Poles.

Under the German occupation, the Belarusian People's Republic (also referred to as "BNR" from Biełarúskaja Naródnaja Respúblika) was established on March 9, 1918, by the decision of the Executive Committee of the First All-Belarusian Congress in Minsk. The independence of the new-born state was proclaimed on March 25, 1918 (and this day is still unofficially considered by some Belarusians as a 'true' independence day)[136]. The national symbols of BNR such as the white-red-white flag and Belarusian Coat of arms, "Pahonia", referred to the symbolism of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Until today, Belarusian nationalists regard themselves as cultural heirs of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and consider these symbols to be the righteous Belarusian symbols.

The newly founded BNR claimed territorial rights over the former Russian Governor-ates: Minsk, Grodno (including Bialystok), Mogilev, Vitebsk and Smolensk, as well as part of the Vilnius and Chernihiv Governor-ates, where a large number of Belarusians were living[137].

Although the BNR government was created under the German occupation, it was not recognized by Germany. Or by Russia![138] In a response to the letter of information about the establishment of the Belarusian People's Republic transmitted by the People's Secretariat of Belarus, the German Chancellor Georg von Hertling declared that Germany refers to the occupied Belarusian territories as part of Russia and - in accordance with the provisions of the peace treaty with Russia - they cannot recognize the newly emerging Belarusian state without the Russian permission. On the other

[132] Арлоў (1997), 34.
[133] Новик, Качалов, Новик (2013), 306-311.
[134] Szybieka (2002), 200-210.
[135] Neil (2017), 227.
[136] Новик, Качалов, Новик (2013), 306-312.
[137] Łatyszonek, Mironowicz (2002), 137.
[138] "Proceedings 1917/1918".

hand, in order to facilitate temporary occupation, the German military authorities eventually allowed the activities of the People's Secretariat of Belarus, treating it as a national authority. Germans conveyed to the BNR authorities custody over trade, education, social care, culture and industry, but did not accept the creation of a Belarusian army, which effectively stopped the development of the statehood of the nascent republic[139].

However, this refusal did not discourage Belarusians who were struggling to build their own state and to acquire its international recognition. In June 1918, the BNR delegation, headed by Roman Skirmunt, received the implicit recognition of the state by the Ukrainian People's Republic. As a result, a general consulate was established in Kiev and in Odessa. Another BNR consulate was established in Lithuania. The new republic had also received implicit recognition from Latvia. However, the only state that officially recognized BNR's independence and statehood was Finland[140].

Meanwhile, the establishment of the BNR diplomatic mission in Moscow failed. The consul Alyaksandr Burbis was unsuccessful in obtaining an audience with the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Russia, Georgy Chicherin. Attempts at establishing diplomatic missions were also made in Warsaw, Berlin, Bern, and Copenhagen[141].

The lack of political recognition of the BNR on the international arena was due mainly to the Belarusians' inability to gain effective control over their territory. In April 1918, representatives of the BNR started unfinished negotiations with Ukraine about the border in Polesia region. The negotiations about border with Latvia did not come to fruition either[142]. During the talks with Lithuania, the Belarusian government expressed their support for the Lithuanians in the expected plebiscite in Central Lithuania, but the issue of regulating borders between both states was dismissed to an undefined future[143].

The beginning of the end of the BNR was foreshadowed by the collapse of the German Empire, whose troops began to evacuate the Belarusian lands in November 1918. On December 10, 1918, Minsk was occupied by the Bolsheviks. At that moment, most of Belarusian activists moved to Grodno that was still occupied by German troops[144]. In February 1919, in Grodno, the Belarusian authorities managed to create a Belarusian Infantry Regiment of 800 soldiers and a special battalion numbering 350 soldiers[145].

Grodno with its ministries, army and government of BNR, became an isolated Belarusian island, protected by the presence of the German troops. Meanwhile, in the area controlled by the Red Army, on January 1, 1919, during the First Congress of the Communist Party of Belarus in Smolensk, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed with capital designated in Minsk. On February 27, 1919, the Lithuanian-Belarusian Republic of Soviets was also established in the part of the territory of the former BNR[146].

### *The Peace of Riga and the Collapse of BNR*

The end of the BNR was enshrined by the Treaty of Riga, concluded after the Polish-Bolshevik War by the Second Polish Republic and the Soviet Russia in 1921. According to the provisions of this treaty, the western part of the Belarusian territories was given to the Second Polish Republic and the Eastern lands were taken by the Soviet Union[147].

[139] Michaluk (2010), 552.
[140] Біч (2003), 386.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Jekabsons (1997), 49-62.
[143] Łatyszonek (1995), 109-110.
[144] Łatyszonek, Mironowicz (2002), 138.
[145] БНР.
[146] Łatyszonek (1995), 139-140.
[147] Wyszczelski (2011), 15.

Even today, some Belarusian historians refer to the Riga Treaty as the "Partition of Belarus" between Poland and Soviet Russia. In September 1939, the Belarusian lands were reunited under the banner of the Soviet Union.

After the division of the Belarusian territories between Poland and Soviet Russia, BNR institutions did not cease to exist, but moved to Lithuania. In May 1920, Vaclau Lastouski, the Prime Minister of the BNR government formed in Minsk in December 1919, reunited his government and established his headquarters in Kaunas. Beginning with 1st November 1923, the exile government moved to Prague[148]. After the Second World War, the BNR council moved its headquarters and political activities to North America.

## After 1991: BNR Tradition and the Building of a New National Identity

The Belarusian People's Republic (often referred to as the "Paper Republic") was an ephemeral political entity that existed on the map of Europe for only a few months, unable to obtain universal international recognition. However, it turns out that this amorphous germ of state, which existed so short (and even seems to be forgotten in the history of Europe) may gain a high symbolic meaning for post-soviet Belarusians, who are still struggling to carve for themselves a new national identity.

The perestroika movement in the USSR gave the possibility to the Belarusian intelligentsia to propose alternative ways in dealing with the organization of the state, the language as well as to differently approach the past[149]. The Belarusian Popular front was created in 1988, which assumed the BNR heritage and aimed at creating an independent Belarus[150].

They manage to influence the declaration of sovereignty of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic, which was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic on July 27, 1990[151]. However, only after the conclusion of the Białowieża Treaty, on December 8, 1991, when it was announced that the USSR, as a political entity, ceased to exist, being replaced by the independent republics, that the independent Republic of Belarus could appear on the political stage of Europe.

Initially, the resurgent Belarus adopted some of the BNR symbols: the white-red-white flag and the "Pahonia" emblem as state symbols[152]. These symbols were meant to address not only the history of BNR, but also the legacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The fact that Belarusian People's Republic existed in the Belarusian territories (until they were occupied by German troops), and although the competences of its authorities were rather symbolic concerning mainly the sphere of education, played an important role in shaping the national consciousness of the diaspora. Even though the BNR state was more declarative than real, its memory was kept alive and even passed on by the Council of the Belarusian People's Republic which functioned abroad[153].

In Belarus itself, this memory was very limited, and was loaded with shortcomings disseminated by the Soviet propaganda, which presented the BNR's independence as a collaboration with foreign imperialist powers, and especially with the Nazis. Furthermore, the anti-Soviet Belarusian nationalists were identified as collaborators of the Nazis and were accused of betraying the interests of the Belarusian people. They were persecuted in the Belarusian Socialist Soviet Republic, being accused of spreading nationalism and anti-Soviet activity. The BNR's idea of

[148] Błaszczak (2017), 199.
[149] Tsikhamirau (2013), 117.
[150] Pazniak (1992).
[151] Tsikhamirau (2013), 119.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Council of Belarusian People's Republic on emigration: http://www.radabnr.org/

statehood was discredited as inspired by the Germans (no positive references to it in the USSR textbooks)[154].

Such negative associations were also promoted during the first years of independence. Although, the Belarusian National Front made efforts to restore the memory of BNR, many Belarusians (especially those who still think in the Soviet categories) referred to this tradition and its symbols with reluctance and distrust.

Alexander Lukashenko, who won the presidential elections in 1994, decided to refer mainly to the Soviet heritage. Moreover, he used the reluctant position of the majority of Belarusians to state symbolism referring to BNR to win over the referendum held in 1995. One of the questions concerned the change of national symbolism by returning to a slightly modified flag and to the emblem from the times of the Soviet Belarus. The other questions concerned tightening ties with Russia, granting the Russian language the status of an official language equal to the Belarusian language. A huge propaganda campaign was launched, the supporters of Lukashenko discredited the opposition by presenting its members as inheritors of the Nazis collaborators. The referendum was gained by the president: over ¾ voters supported his postulates, including the change of state symbols[155]. As a result, the soviet symbols were restored, the national identity being built not on the historical traditions of the Great Duchy of Lithuania or BNR, but on the soviet propaganda concerning the Great Patriotic War[156].

## In Place of Conclusions

Despite the state propaganda, a nascent "return to the roots" trend can be noticed especially among the democratic opposition and intelligentia who refers to a different heritage, mainly to the BNR history. Although it did not have a significant influence in the political history of Europe, it represents a symbol of the Belarusians' struggle for their own statehood, a proof that they used to have a local elite, who struggled to put Belarus on the map of Europe.

For many intellectuals involved in the national movement, the proclamation of the BNR is the most important date in the history of their fatherland in the twentieth century. As it was stated by Uladzimir Arlou: "without proclaiming independence in 1918, the Bolsheviks would not allow the creation of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic. Of course, Belarusian independence was fiction, but at least we belonged to the United Nations, we had the word Belarus in the name of this country. In 1991, it helped a lot in gaining our independence. Perhaps if it were not for BNR, we would not be on the political map of the world today"[157].

The celebration of the centenary of the creation of BNR, in 2018, when the authorities unexpectedly agreed to mass gatherings and concerts, gave hope that the BNR tradition not only has a chance to survive, but also to gradually expand and finally become an important part of the Belarusian historical consciousness. The BNR symbols can be more and more seen in the public space in Belarus (several years ago their use was banned, but it is slowly changing), even in the souvenir shops, where it is not difficult to find a gadget in white and red and white colors. There are also more and more book publications about the history and heritage of BNR[158].

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# Yana Volkova

## Romanian State's Strategy towards Romanian Diaspora

**Abstract**
States' awareness and interest of its diaspora and co-ethnics abroad have become a widespread phenomenon all over the world. In the era of globalization and blurring of borders states' support to its minorities abroad has become an important element of states foreign policies. This article focuses on the complex relationship between Romanian state and the Romanian diaspora and kin minority. For nearly 30 years Romania has been deploying different programs towards co-ethnics living in other states. The Romanian approach to Romanians abroad is based on the division of Romanians into two groups – Romanian historical/traditional communities, and the Romanian diaspora. The article attempts to ascertain what kind of population is considered to be the object of Romanian transnational policy and to reveal its principal mechanisms. The work also aims to unite the kin state and diaspora concept by illustrating their interconnectivity through the Romanian case study.

**Keywords**: Romania, Romanians abroad, Romanian diaspora, kin minority.

### Theoretical Underpinnings of the Relationship between Romanian State and Romanians Abroad

The oldest concept that deals with a dispersed population is that of 'diaspora'. The term has elicited unprecedented interest in the last 30 years not only in the academic world, but also among politicians. The evolution of the meaning of the term, as well as the typology of diasporas, has been a matter of in-depth research, particularly by prominent figures in diaspora studies such as James Clifford, Gabriel Sheffer, Robin Cohen, William Safran, Khachig Tololyan, etc.

However, despite a vivid interest in diaspora studies, there is no single commonly-accepted definition of the term diaspora. The classic and well-known cases of the diaspora have always been Jewish and Armenian ones. With the development of diaspora studies, the term has encompassed migrants, particularly, a population of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more states and develop various links between the homeland and the destination countries. Later, however, the term had evolved further and incorporated into diaspora studies not only migrants, but the other type of dispersed population: such as cross-border ethnic groups created by shifting of borders or by the dissolution of states and empires. Robert Brubaker was among the first to include these groups into the diaspora concept. Referring to them as to accidental diasporas, he argues that these ethnic groups have crystallized suddenly following a dramatic – and traumatic – reconfiguration of the political space. Contrary to the migrant diasporas, which are formed by moving people across borders, accidental

diasporas are created by the movement of borders across people while coming into being without the participation, and often against the will, of their members[159].

Since 2000, a growing body of literature has been reformulating the definition, framing diaspora as almost any dispersed population, and no longer referring to the specific context of their existence. Such tremendous proliferation of the term has resulted in what Rogers Brubaker has called "'diaspora's diaspora"[160].

The term diaspora, as well as the term kin minority, is subjective in its nature. Lily Cho asserts that diasporas should be understood not as an object of analysis but as a condition of subjectivity[161]. In line with this approach, the object of the research should be not the diaspora itself, but the state's perception of it and the measures a state takes towards the construction of diasporic identity.

The constructivist approach to the nature of diasporas and kin minorities opens up new possibilities for the research. Objectively, the borders of nation and state are not congruent, and every state in the world, to some extent, has population that resides abroad (due to either migration or border changes) and bears certain characteristics that link it with the external state (the same language, faith, or similar cultural and historical background). During the Cold War, it was common for states to disregard this population and diasporas had been viewed mostly negatively, sometimes seen as betrayers. Nowadays, most states of the world claim "ownership" over population living abroad and opt for their inclusion into their political strategy, utilizing such terms as diaspora, kin minority, co-ethnics, brothers, persons of "X" origin, etc. This constructivist approach towards diasporas and kin minorities goes in line with the currently prevalent constructivist approach towards nations as to imagined communities[162]. It also responds to the modern demands of globalization and to the global tendency of the penetration of politics into peoples' everyday life.

Romanian approach towards its diaspora is reflected in different normative acts, in which the term Romanian diaspora is used to describe Romanian emigrants who live in other countries of the world. While the state's interest in the Romanian historical/traditional communities has sprung up a relatively long time ago, Romania and its diaspora have a shorter history of interaction. This explains the fact that in contrast to abundant research on Romanian co-ethnics abroad, the academic literature on Romanian diaspora and Romanian migrants is scarce. Existing literature on Romanian migrants tends to highlight the socio-economic aspects of migration, and the interaction of emigrants with the host society. Among researches that deals with Romanian state policy towards the diaspora should be mentioned those by Ruxandra Trandafoiu[163], Florentina Constantin[164] or Toma Burean[165].

On the other hand, those who study ethnic and nationalism in Central-Eastern Europe usually refer to the population, which Brubaker names 'accidental diasporas', as 'kin minorities' and study them through the kin state concept. Kin-state policy as a particular type of minority protection policy is typical for East-Central European states due to historical reasons. During the 20th century, the collapse of Austro-Hungarian, Russian, Ottoman empires, then USSR, Checho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia had created a massive ethnic dispersion without any movement of population.

The kin-state concept is usually applied in order to describe Romanian engagement with Romanian historical/traditional communities in the neighboring states. Due to

[159] Brubaker (2000).
[160] Brubaker (2005).
[161] Cho (2007).
[162] Anderson (1983).
[163] Trandafoiu (2006).
[164] Constantin (2004).
[165] Burean (2011).

their importance, the Romanian and Hungarian kin state policies are constantly analyzed by researchers. Zsuzsa Csergo and James M. Goldgeyer have researched different aspects of the interaction of Romania, Hungary, and Russia with theirs co-ethnics abroad[166]. Andreea Udrea comparatively analyzes the Romanian and Hungarian legislation on kin minorities[167] while the post-communist citizenship policy of Romania has been analyzed by Irina Culic[168]. Constantin Iordachi addresses the issue of dual citizenship in kin-state policies of the countries of East-Central Europe and provides a historical overview of Romanian citizenship legislation from 1866 up to the present[169]. Simina Tănăsescu focuses mainly on the characteristics and distinctive features of Romanian kin-state policy[170] while Csaba Zoltan Novak traces the evolution of the research on Romanian ethnic communities abroad[171]. However, I could not find any study, which deals with Romanian policy towards both types of Romanians living abroad. Eszter Kovacs has attempted to combine the state's policy towards kin minorities and diaspora communities, focusing not only on Romania but within the regional context. Arguing that these two types of states' diaspora politics should not be separated, he examined seven Central European states' diaspora politics and has attempted to figure out whether there is a particular type of diaspora policy that is typical for the region[172].

The necessity to unite conceptually the literature on kin minorities and diasporas had been stressed by such researchers as Myra Waterbury, Thomas Faist[173]. The analytical division of the diaspora population by their origin – migrants or kin population - is consistent with the Romanian state official approach towards Romanian abroad. Bringing these two types of literature on Romanians abroad into dialog will help to get a broader picture of state-led transnational practices and to delineate the main principles of Romanian state's strategy towards Romanians abroad.

Since the unification of Moldova and Wallachia in 1859, Romania has experienced multiple border changes and consequently shifts in population. The end of World War I had brought a dramatic expansion of Romanian territories. With the incorporation of Bukovina, Transylvania and Bessarabia, the country not only extended its territory, but completely fulfilled its national project having brought together all Romanians in one state[174]. This historical event has a significant impact on today's Romanian nation-building.

By the end of World War II, Romania lost the North Bukovina and Bessarabia to the USSR while a large number of Romanians remained outside Romanian borders. After the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine and Moldova inherited the Romanian minority/majority residing in their territories.

Prior to 1989, the conditions of the Cold War blocked any kind of substantial interaction between Romania as a country of Warsaw Pact and its minorities abroad. After the fall of communism, the Romanian kin-state policy was based on the historical process of borders' change.

More recently, Romania has experienced a new phenomenon: the growing number of Romanian migrant workers in Western Europe. The last decades have witnessed unprecedented migration from Romania to the countries of Western Europe, especially after Romania joined the EU in 2007. Yet like many other Eastern European countries, Romania has started to engage with its emigrants much after its engagement with its kin minorities and has done little to respond to

[166] Csergo, Goldgeyer (2013).
[167] Udrea (2015).
[168] Culic (2014).
[169] Iordachi (2004).
[170] Tănăsescu (2009).
[171] Novak (2016).
[172] Kovacs (2017).
[173] Waterbury (2009); Faist (2010).
[174] Boia (2018), 11.

the challenges of this wave of 'new' migration[175]. Thus, the historical process and the latest migration waves have formed necessary objective preconditions for the current state's engagement with Romanians abroad.

An official reference to its population living abroad appeared in the Romanian Constitution of 1991. The Article 7 of the said Constitution states that "The State shall support the strengthening of links with the Romanians living abroad and shall act accordingly for the preservation, development, and expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, with the observance of the legislation of the State whose citizens they are"[176].

In the subsequent years, Romania has adopted a more sophisticated approach, the terminology had been modified accordingly. Since the adoption of the first 'so-called' beneficial law in 1998, the Romanians living abroad were defined as "românii de pretutindeni", in English, 'Romanians abroad'. One of the recent documents as regards the Romanian policy towards Romanians abroad, "The National Strategy for Romanians from abroad for the period 2017 -2020", states that Romanians living abroad consist of two categories: the Romanian diaspora (Diaspora română) and the historical/traditional communities (comunitățile istorice/tradiționale)[177]. Accordingly, in this article, the term Romanians abroad is used to describe both the Romanian historical/traditional communities and the Romanian new diaspora.

As regards the numbers, the above mentioned document indicates that there are about 10 million of Romanians living abroad (including both diaspora and historical/traditional communities) in different parts of the world. In order to support different initiatives on Romanians abroad, Romania has established diaspora institutions, such as the Ministry for Romanians Abroad (Ministerul pentru Românii de Pretutindeni), the Inter-ministerial group for Romanians abroad, and the Council of Romanians Living Abroad. The fact that the Ministry for Romanians Abroad was founded in 2017 reveals a growing concern of the state towards this population and a recognition of their role in defining the Romanian foreign policy.

## Romanian Attitude towards Kin Minorities/Majorities

Although the kin state concept is commonly applied to a kin state - kin minority relations, in some states, numerical majorities are claimed as ethnic kin populations of a neighboring country. Romania represents a rare case of a country being kin state towards kin majority. According to the data presented by the National Strategy towards Romanians abroad, the number of Romanian historical/traditional communities estimates around 6 million persons: 4,5 millions in Republic of Moldova and its diaspora, 500 000 in Ukraine, 300 000 in Serbia, Bulgaria and Hungary, etc.[178] If we take into consideration the population of Moldova, which was, according to the latest census of 2014, 2 804 801 people[179], and the figures taken into account by the Romanian state, the national strategy illustrate that Romanian kin-state policy is not directed towards the kin minority in Moldova, but to the majority of its population.

Another manifestation of Romania's strategy in dealing with its kin minorities abroad is its citizenship policy. Citizenship policy of the state reflects the state's perception of national/political community, in terms of which ethnic communities are included and/or excluded. Nowadays, there is a common

[175] Trandafoiu (2006), 142.
[176] Constitution of Romania (1991).
[177] Strategia Națională (2017).
[178] Strategia Națională (2017).
[179] Census (2014).

tendency in Europe to grant dual citizenship. Nevertheless, the underpinnings of dual citizenship differ between Western European practice and the Central and Eastern European one.

In 1990s, along with other East Central European states, Romania introduced external citizenship for its kin minorities. In the context of post-communist political transition, Romania has tried to re-incorporate its dispersed kin population into the imagined community of the Romanian nation. This has made the citizenship policy an inalienable part of the nation-building process. The Law on Citizenship (Law 21/1991), adopted in March 1991, republished in 2000 and 2010, changed several times. With the adoption of this law, the inhabitants of Bukovina and Bessarabia, who lost their Romanian citizenship during the period under the USSR, acquired the right to retrieve it. It had also allowed dual citizenship for Romanian citizens without permanent residence in Romania. Thus, article 37 state that "The ex-Romanian citizens that, before 22 December 1989, had lost the Romanian citizenship for different reasons, may reacquire it by request at the Romanian consular offices from abroad and in the country at the State Notary Office in Bucharest, on the basis of a legalized declaration, even though they have a different citizenship and they do not establish their residency in Romania (Law on citizenship 1991). The official rationale of this provision was the premise that this population (or their descendants) had become citizens of other states due to the border changes and against their wish. The article 37 also stated that: "Those to whom the Romanian citizenship was withdrawn from them against their will or from other reasons they cannot be blamed for, as well as their descendants also benefit of the dispositions from line 1." (Law on citizenship 1991). It should be noted that this situation is not unique on the European continent. Due to the frequent moving of borders during 20th century, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, and Spain also have introduced restitution of citizenship as a means to remedy wrongs of the past[180]. The fact that it has triggered the process of unification of ethnic Romanians across state borders into a single political community has made the citizenship law a key element of the Romanian kin-state policy. The importance of the law lies in the fact that the former Romanian citizens of Bessarabia and Bukovina were enabled to apply for Romanian citizenship, the law being seen as a step further towards gradual integration between Romania and Moldova.

The Romanian citizenship had become more attractive for Moldovans and Ukrainians after the introduction of the visa-free regime by the EU to Romania in 2001 and, especially, after Romania's accession to the EU. An incredibly high number of applications for citizenship determined the government to suspend this law several times. "Trying to stem the tide of applications for Romanian citizenship, after 2003 Romania also introduced 'ethnocultural' criteria: eligibility for Romanian external citizenship for residents of Moldova and Ukraine was narrowed down to ethnic Romanians defined by the criterion that they must 'possess knowledge of the Romanian language and elementary notions of Romanian culture and civilization'[181].

The law hadn't passed unnoticed by the countries where the kin minority resides. It had major implications on Romanian bilateral relations with the neighboring states, having caused tensions in those state in which the law contradicts the internal legislation. Particularly, dual citizenship was forbidden in the Republic of Moldova, until the law on citizenship in Moldova was amended in 2001. Romanian citizenship policy had been a matter of diplomatic conflicts with Ukraine, where dual citizenship is still prohibited. Nevertheless, in the light of the current Ukrainian political course towards Euro-Atlantic integration and

[180] Culic (2014), 132.

[181] Pogonyi et alii. (2010), 11.

the strong Romanian support to it, the matter of dual citizenship in bilateral relations might be eventually solved. However, the issue of dual citizenship in Romanian-Ukrainian relations is still to be regarded as potentially conflicting depending on the changing Ukrainian politics.

Romanian engagement with external kin population is also enhanced by the so-called benefit laws that provide cultural and educational privileges to the ethnic kins. In order to help co-ethnics abroad to preserve their linguistic, cultural, and religious identity, Romania has been introducing different scholarship programs, which has enabled thousands of students to receive education in Romania. The adoption of Law 84 from 1995, on the Education of pupils and students of Romanian ethnicity who live abroad, gave the possibility to apply for Romanian state sponsored scholarships. Moreover, Romania has issued two benefit laws that deal not only with the matter of education, but with other aspects of kin-state policy. The first law regarding the support granted to Romanians abroad was adopted in 1998 and assigned to the Romanian government the responsibility to offer financial assistance to education in Romanian language, arts, cultural and youth culture events, civic education, and other programs specified in the interstate cooperation agreements, but also to cover the costs of emergency medical assistance. It also established the Inter-ministerial Council for the Support of the Romanians abroad and the 'Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi' Centre for the Romanians Abroad - an institution whose role is to help those who wish to study in Romania. Created as a Centre in 1998 it was transformed into an Institute in 2008 and is currently subordinated to the Ministry of the Romanians abroad. The law also established a fund, which provides financial support for the activities of Romanians abroad, which include Romanian-language education, cultural and artistic activities, and civic education. In 2007, a second benefit law (Law 299) was adopted. It introduced a broader array of specific kin-state obligations. Similarly to the first law, the beneficiaries of the new law are Romanians abroad. However, it pays a special attention to Romanian labor migrants in Western Europe, the so-called 'newest diaspora'. In order to facilitate greater symbolic and cultural interaction between Romania and Romanians abroad, a new holiday had been introduced in 2015: The Day of Romanians abroad, which is celebrated on the last Sunday of May.

## Romanian Relationship with its Diaspora

According to the National strategy towards Romanians abroad, Romanian migratory diaspora consists of around 3,5-4 million Romanian citizens[182]. The emigration from Romania during the last 30 years has been developing in uneven manner. Constantin Florentina highlights the following Romanian migration patterns: tight migration control during state socialism, easier, but restricted migration in the 1990s, strong irregular migration between 2002 and 2007, and unrestricted migration after 2007 when Romania became officially an EU member state[183].

The collapse of state socialism in 1989 and liberalization of border controls have increased human mobility. Due to mainly economic reasons, the rates of emigration to the EU have been traditionally high not only in Romania, but in many South-Eastern European countries as well. In the 1990s, increasing unemployment and impoverishment have made Romanians to seek a source of income in other European countries. Early in the 1990s, the leading destination country for Romanian migration was Germany. Many ethnic Germans who were living in Romania (the so-called

[182] Strategia Națională (2017).

[183] Constantin (2004), 2.

Aussiedler) have massively migrated to Germany together with a large number of ethnic Romanians, including Romanian asylum seekers. Subsequently, emigration from Romania has been boosted with Romania having gained freedom of movement within the EU in 2002 and its accession to the European Union in 2007. The destination for the new migratory waves changed as well, Italy and Spain, being the new top destination-countries[184]. Nowadays, Romanians are the largest migrant population in the EU, with one-fifth working in other EU states[185]. Since Romania joined the EU, around 3.4 million Romanians have fled the country[186].

This new diaspora has transformed into an important factor in bilateral relations of Romania and Western European countries. However, some specific features of the Romanian migration to Italy made researchers to name it "commuting" rather than "migration"[187]. Because "the destination countries were seen as countries were money was made, not as countries of settlement", the migration has acquired a characteristic of "circularity" "with migrants shuttling between Romania and Western Europe"[188].

As migrants acquire more rights and deepen social ties in the country of residence, the character of migration has been changed, as well. However, migrant workers had been largely overlooked by the government, which until the beginning of 2000s has mainly focused on kin communities.

Romanian engagement with its emigrant diaspora started in 2007 with the second law on Romanians abroad, which highlighted Romania's responsibility to monitor the rights of those citizens working abroad. Economic cooperation and various diaspora projects are introduced in the first (2013) and the second diaspora strategy (2017). Whereas the first Romanian diaspora strategy was very vague about the strategic goals concerning diaspora, the second diaspora strategy is more promising, as it outlines an exact timeline for the different diaspora projects, and prioritizes economic cooperation with the said diaspora. Like many other migrant-sending countries, Romania benefits from the diaspora contribution to the country's GDP. In 2017, the amount of remittances Romanian migrants sent to home was estimated as about 4.3 billion euros[189].

Another rationale for Romania's interest in Romanians working and living abroad is related to its political domestic competition. Recently, Romania has started to see Romanians abroad as an electoral capital and has provided them with voting rights. In this regard, extending citizenship for ethnic Romanians abroad can also be considered as a way to influence the outcomes of domestic elections. Romanian dual citizens could vote in the Romanian elections and are eligible to hold public office in Romania[190]. The enfranchisement of kin-minorities has led to their influence on domestic electoral outcomes. For instance, external voters from Moldova had partly contributed to the electoral victory of the Romanian President Traian Băsescu in 2004 and subsequent elections[191]. Considering this large group of Moldovans with Romanian passports, Romanian politicians have made a habit of including Moldova in their electoral campaigns over the last few years. In 2012, before the referendum to dismiss Traian Băsescu from the post of President of Romania, he paid an official visit to Chișinau, the real purpose of which was to mobilize the local electorate. During the elections to the Parliament of Romania in 2012, Eugen Tomac, a candidate from the list of the Democratic Liberal Party,

[184] Migration profiles. Romania (2013).
[185] Besliu (2018).
[186] Turp (2018).
[187] Trandafoiu (2006), 145.
[188] Constantin (2004), 1.
[189] Besliu (2018).
[190] Csergo (2013).
[191] Pogony et alii. (2010), 16.

also opened his electoral campaign in Chișinău[192].

Particularly remarkable was the role of the diaspora in the anti-governmental protests that took place in August 2018. At that time, thousands of Romanian emigrants, under the slogan "The diaspora is coming to Bucharest", called for the resignation of the ruling Social Democratic Party's government led by Prime Minister Viorica Dancilă.

## Conclusions

Romanian policy towards Romanians abroad has become an important element of the European political landscape. A historical process has provided modern Romania with necessary preconditions for implementing extensive strategy towards Romanians abroad. During the communist rule, such transnational activities were extremely weak and restrained by the international bipolar confrontation. However, the period since 1990s has marked not only a new page in domestic developments, but has open new possibilities for foreign policy, in which co-ethnics abroad have occupied a firm place. Nowadays, the Romanian's strategy towards Romanians abroad represents an extensive unitary strategy that is divided into two branches of policy: towards its migrant diaspora, and involving the historical/traditional communities in the neighboring states. This division goes in line with academical view on the matter – diaspora studies and the kin state concept.

After 1989, one of the first steps Romania undertook towards co-ethnics abroad was simplified access to its citizenship for those co-ethnics, who resides in the neighboring states and had lost their Romanian citizenship unwillingly due to the border changes during the 20th century. The Law on citizenship 1991 is considered to be one of the key instruments of Romanian kin-state policy and is still at the limelight of academic interest. Apart from citizenship policy, Romania has developed institutional mechanisms and various initiatives that help to preserve and retain Romanian identity among kin minorities/majority. Whereas in the academic field diaspora appeared to be an old concept, in Romanian politics it sprang up relatively recently. Emerging Romanian diaspora, which is becoming increasingly active participator in home-country's affairs, is a product of extraterritorial social mobilization that has been developing during the last decades. It refers to a large number of Romanian emigrants all over the world, predominantly in the West European countries, who has developed diasporic identity and consciousness. It should be emphasized that Romania`s policies towards diaspora and kin minority/majority are not unique and have been influenced by the new global tendency of states re-territorialization, deep penetration of politics into society that creates new transnational identities across state borders.

[192] Calus (2015).

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# Liviu Mihail Iancu

## Equivocal Ancient Foreigners and Modern National Identities: The Case Study of the Greeks of Histria in the Black Sea Region

**Abstract:**
The paper explores the general issue of how ancient and medieval peoples considered not to be 'ancestors' of modern nations are dealt with in academic and popular narratives created in different ideological environments in the 20th century. The case of the modern Romanian conceptual approaches to the ancient Greek inhabitants of the western shore of the Black Sea, particularly to those living in the city of Histria, is examined. These approaches are identified both in the academic works of the archaeologists who have directed excavations at the site since 1914, and in works for larger audiences, such as touristic guidebooks and school textbooks. The picture that emerges from this preliminary research of a rather limited amount of sources is that the West Pontic Greeks were generally perceived as foreigners in contact with the autochthonous Getae, 'ancestors' of the Romanians, according to the core of national ideology. Their status was ambiguous because, apart their foreignness, they were bearers of the highly appreciated Classical culture. Consequently, ideological approaches ranged from negative views that portrayed them as perilous exploiters of the locals to positive views that either emphasized their benign influence over the Getae or nationalistically appropriated their cultural achievements. Neutral academic approaches and quasi-complete popular ignorance in favor of the Getae and the Romans are also documented.

**Keywords**: Histria, Greeks, Getae, Romania, nationalism, national communism, socialist patriotism.

## Introduction

According to national ideologies, dominant in the 19th and 20th centuries in Europe, the two main pillars for building and consolidating national identities are the past and the land, depicted by the ruling national intellectual and political elites in their quest for social domination, as shared by all the members of the newly constructed communities[193]. Consequently, in these two centuries, it was unavoidable for history and for archaeology not to bear the heavy influence of national ideologies[194].

Throughout this article, ideologies should be understood, following Geertz, in a non-evaluative manner, as "maps of problematic social reality and matrices for the creation of collective conscience". Geertz considers that while both science and ideologies are critical and imaginative symbolic structures meant to encompass real situations, the former is defined by an attitude of disinterestedness reflected in a "restrained, spare, resolutely analytic" style, while the latter feature an attitude of commitment, are

[193] Bauman (1992).

[194] Anderson (2006 [1983]), 187-205. Geertz (1973), 230-231.

expressed in an "ornate, vivid, deliberately suggestive" style and objectify moral sentiment in order to motivate action.

Like the members of the former nobility of Europe used to search in the dark past illustrious, or even better, divine legendary ancestors, in order to legitimize their position and aspirations in front of the masses and competing peers, modern nations had to find at all costs their own distinguished ancestors, able to grant them historical rights over the land they possessed or aspired to acquire.

Two consequences naturally emerged from this necessity, both important for the present study. First, scholars focused the greatest part of their interests only on certain populations which had previously lived on the same lands as the nations under construction. The status of 'ancestors' was granted, due to ideological reasons, only to those peoples which were the most promising in terms of legitimization, while others were relegated to a more humble role of mere passersby through history, even when their genetic or cultural contribution was not small at all.

Secondly, the ideological differentiation between classical and prehistoric archaeology grew stronger and stronger. The former, born in the 18th century from the passion for collecting antiquities, nurtured by classically and universally minded elites, was less prone to ideological influence than the later, whose very birth in the 19th century and development in the 20th century were intrinsically connected to the ideological need of finding and creating illustrious and legitimizing origins. It was not for Perikles and Caesar, but for Vercingetorix the Gaul and Arminius the German, that Napoleon III and Wilhelm I raised colossal statues at Alise-Sainte- Reine, supposed to be ancient Alesia (1865) and Detmold, supposed to be the place of the battle of the Teutoburg Forest (1875)[195].

My contribution aims at bringing closer to the limelight an issue that is often, if not always, ignored by those who study nationalistic influences over history and archaeology in the last two centuries: the approach of the national intellectual and political elites to past populations which do not rank as 'ancestors' in the official discourses of ethnogeneses. As a case study, I sketchily and cautiously survey how the Romanian archaeologists conceptualised the role of the ancient Greek dwellers of the city of Histria in the historical development of the Lower Danube region before the Roman conquest of Moesia and particularly their connections and interactions with the local communities of the Getae that they encountered at their arrival, depending on their own education and the changing ideological environment regarding modern Romanian identity in the 20th century.

Secondly, I assess the changes which occurred during the transmission of these approaches from the academic milieu to wider audiences, through public education and touristic advertising, under the influence of official ideologies. For achieving these goals, I analyse some of the works of the most important archaeologists that have conducted excavations at Histria and have acted as directors of the site since the beginning of the systematic research of the city in 1914 (Vasile Pârvan, Scarlat Lambrino, Emil Condurachi, Dionisie M. Pippidi, Petre Alexandrescu, Alexandru Suceveanu). I subsequently compare the results both to their personal biographies and to the official ideologies in place during their activity. A second comparison is made with texts aimed to general audiences, such as school textbooks and touristic guidebooks, in order to assess how conceptual approaches of the researchers changed in their transmission to the great public.

[195] Babeş (2008-2009), 5-7.

## 1914-1942: Classicism and Modern Nationalism

The systematic excavations at Histria were started in 1914 by Vasile Pârvan, at that moment director of the National Museum of Antiquities, professor at the University of Bucharest and member of the Romanian Academy, despite the fact that he was 31 years old. He was an excellent classical scholar and archaeologist, as he received his intellectual formation from the best tradition of classically inspired humanism and his methodological formation from the rigorous German school of Classical archaeology. At the same time, he was an arduous Romanian patriot and he discovered rather early in his carrier a constant interest for the ancient autochthonous population living in the Carpathian and Danubian area. He conducted research in some Getic settlements besides the Classical sites of Ulmetum and Histria, in Dobrudja, and his works combine the methods and knowledge of both a classical and prehistoric archaeologist, a double identity revealed also in his published works that frequently deal with the complex questions of the interactions between Dacians and Getae, on the one side, and Greeks and Romans, on the other side.

His monumental treaty of the Getic and Dacian civilization, *Getica,* is an academic work where he drew most on nationalistic ideas of continuity between the ancient inhabitants of Dacia and the modern Romanians, seen as 'ancestors' and 'descendants' united through the same high moral traits, proved in similar historical contexts[196]. These ideas were pathetically developed in writings of literary character[197].

In *Getica* is to be found the boldest valuation of Getic political power and cultural development[198], even when considered in rapport with the Greeks from the West Pontic cities and from the Aegean, perceived alike as merchants bearing a high culture, while the latter were deemed also to act as conquerors in the area of the Lower Danube. Pârvan acknowledges the tight connections between the local Getic aristocracy and the Histrian ruling families starting from the 6th century BC, assuming even the existence of mixed Geto-Greek people in Dobrudja in the 4th century BC[199]. He overemphasized a general admiration that the Greeks had for Getic wisdom[200].

But even in this work conceived as a necessary answer to the contributions of Robert Roesler and Wilhelm Tomaschek[201], whose targeted public was somehow larger than the restraint academic audiences, Pârvan lucidly avoided and criticized dilettante exaggerations as those perpetrated by Nicolae Densuşianu[202] and described the encounters between the West Pontic Greeks and the Getae mostly in terms of a benign cultural influence of a more developed civilization over a vigorous, but still primitive counterpart, as in the following illustrative example: "Thus the Getae living along the Danube were in the 6th century BC in a cultural state not qualitatively, but formally different than the Greek one: Greeks were townspeople, Getae were countrymen. But the Getae too knew the benefactions of the superior culture that they did not appreciate less, even though they were not able to create it in their simple and patriarchal lives, when they were encountering it at the Greeks. [...] The Greco-Getic culture of the Lower Danube

[196] Pârvan (1926), 137, 165, 167, 169, 170, 173, 283, 293, 432. Cf. Dragoman, Oanţă-Marghitu (2006), 61; Boia (2018a), 10-11.

[197] Închinare împăratului Traian la XVIII veacuri de la moarte (Ode to Traian emperor, 18 centuries after his death), published in Pârvan (1923c), 159-193.

[198] E.g. Pârvan (1926), 81-82.

[199] Pârvan (1926), 52-63.

[200] Pârvan (1926), 76, 82, 130-131.

[201] Pârvan (1926), 1-2, 171-173.

[202] Pârvan (1926), 1-2. Cf. Boia (2018a), 12-13.

valley corresponded to the Greco-Scythian culture of the northern Black Sea"[203].

In his historical works specifically addressed to academic audiences from abroad, like in the conferences held in Brussels, in 1923, and Cambridge, in 1926, dealing with the relations between the Getae and the Greeks, this perspective of Greek cultural superiority, manifest in conditions of close encounters between the two populations, particularly in Dobrudja, at Histria[204], is even more acutely underscored, for example: "In the earliest period (from the seventh to the fifth centuries), the Istrians were the only Greeks who visited the Getae, though these latter people were as yet too barbarous to be influenced in a lasting manner. In the Hellenistic period (from the third to the first centuries), the Rhodians had taken their place. They penetrated everywhere, playing the same role in the Danube basin as did the Venetians in medieval times"[205].

Unfortunately, Pârvan's untimely death did not allow him to elaborate more on his cursorily exposed conception on the Greek population of Histria. He managed only to publish the inscriptions he discovered during the excavations conducted between 1914 and 1925, in three subsequent studies of high academic standing, but with only minor suggestions on his way of perceiving the West Pontic Greeks[206].

We are able to delve into his thoughts on the Greeks of Histria mostly through philosophical and literary essays like the one dedicated to their views on life and world, through disparate passages in his already mentioned works dealing with the Getic interactions with them and in a few short archaeological reports. It is assured that he perceived Histria in the 7th-4th centuries BC as a powerful and flourishing typical community of Hellenic merchants, culturally as Greek as any other Aegean city, before the great barbarian movements that started in the 3rd century BC determined its slow relegation to a minor historical and cultural role[207]. There are no clues that Pârvan's evaluation was influenced by any other ideological considerations than the facts he observed in the field and his thorough knowledge of the ancient Greek world. Only his acute understanding that Histria's ruins, uncovered by medieval or modern settlements, were enormously precious for the entire Greco-Roman history and the insufficient funding that haunted his investigations determined him to strike sometimes more pathetic notes in his writings concerning the city[208].

Overall, the first leading archaeologist who excavated at Histria was able to draw a clear border between his fervent patriotic feelings, informed by the national ideology in vogue at the time, and the prerequisites of objective academic research. Any nationalistic exaggerations were incipiently stopped not only by his deep critical thinking, but also by his classical mental framework.

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[203] Pârvan (1926), 131, see also 174, 643-644.

[204] Pârvan (1923b), 33-34; Pârvan (1928), 92-93; Pârvan (1937), 95-96.

[205] Pârvan (1928), 101; Pârvan (1937), 104-105; original French text published in Pârvan (1923a), 42: "Dans les vieux temps (VII-V-e siècles), les Istriens avaient été les seuls grecs à visiter les Gètes. Mais ceux-ci étaient trop barbares pour se laisser influencer d'une manière plus durable. A l'époque hellénistique (III-I siècles), ce sont les Rhodiens, qui pénètrent partout et jouent sur le Danube le même rôle que les Vénitiens au Moyen-Âge". Pârvan (1923b), 36, 47, and Pârvan (1928), 96 .

[206] Pârvan (1916a), Pârvan (1923a), Pârvan (1925).

[207] Pârvan (1916b), 195: "the perfect cultural continuity between the Greek motherland and its colonies from Pontus Euxinus, in other words, the excellence of the Greek culture from our lands, absolutely equivalent to the culture in the South"; "Gânduri despre lume şi viaţă la greco-romanii din Pontul Stâng, 1916-1918", in Pârvan (1923a), esp. 12-13; Pârvan (1928), 82-93, 102-103.

[208] Pârvan (1915), 121; Pârvan (1916b), 190, 198-199.

The same approach was developed by his follower as director of excavations, his student Scarlat Lambrino, who was brilliantly joined in his undertakings by his French wife, Marcelle Flot-Lambrino, between 1927 and 1942. In their rather few academic publications dealing with Histria, more technical and archaeologically focused than the conspicuously historically minded works of Pârvan, the Lambrinos avoided issues suited for value judgments and expressions of historical conceptions.

A notable exception is the synthesis article published in 1930 by Scarlat Lambrino in the cultural and touristic magazine *Boabe de grâu*, edited by Emanoil Bucuţa. In this contribution targeted to larger, albeit highly educated audiences, Lambrino depicted the Greeks of Histria as foreigners possessing a superior culture, whose evolution was synchronized to the more general development of the Mediterranean civilization. Their worth is even bigger because they had fruitful contacts with the Romans and the more primitive Getae[209], deemed to be the ancestors of modern Romanians.

The research conducted in the Greek city on the shore of lake Sinoe was useful not only from a classical perspective, clearly favored by Lambrino in his enthusiastic considerations about the artistic value of Histrian monuments and artifacts: they also shed light on the history of the Romanian kin: "We saw that, based on the discovered objects, the thirteen centuries history of the ancient Milesian colony were enlightened. The monuments, among which there are some beautiful works of art, showed us the brilliance of the Greek and Roman life of the city. At the same time, whole chapters in the history of our Roman and Daco-Getic ancestors who came in touch here, in the Lower Danube area, were cleared. Thus, history in general, benefited from these excavations, but no less the history of our kin, at its beginnings, was enriched with information on times that previously had been totally unknown"[210].

The same moderate nationalistic views inform other texts aimed to larger audiences. An illustrative example is Petre P. Panaitescu's sixth edition of the school textbook *The History of the Romanians*, read in the eighth secondary grade, published in 1942. The first few chapters, dealing with the ancient period, are clearly focused on Dacians and Romans, whose mixture resulted in the birth of the Romanian people[211]. A one page long section is dedicated though to "the Greeks of nowadays Dobrudja", neutrally depicted as merchants possessing "a flourishing civilization", "able to somehow influence the Getae" due to constant trade[212]. During the Second World War, this former member of the far-right Iron Guard, albeit a lucid historian with rather rare nationalistic outbursts, depicted the Thracians and the Illyrians as peoples with a less developed culture than the Greeks and Romans and which consequently abandoned their language and customs for those of foreigners[213].

In conclusion, it is evident that the high culture and professionalization of interwar historians and archaeologists, combined with mild or even absent state ideological pressure, greatly moderated any possible nationalistic impulses in conceiving the historical role of the West Pontic Greeks. They are seen as foreigners playing no part in Romanian ethnogenesis and

[209] Lambrino (1930), 590: " ... the Histrians' taste for beauty went abreast with the development of Greek and Roman art that flourished at the same time far away, on the coasts of Asia Minor, in Athens, in Italy. Alongside this art belonging to the civilized population of the city, the excavations revealed other coarse and clumsy monuments, produced by Thracian and Getic craftsmen. They sculpt monuments for the barbarian population that lives on the Histrian territory and that is animated, under the Greek and subsequently Roman influence, by the aspiration toward a superior life".

[210] Lambrino (1930), 591, see also 570.

[211] Panaitescu (1942), 17.

[212] Panaitescu (1942), 11-12.

[213] Panaitescu (1942), 18.

therefore relegated to a marginal position of bearers of moderate civilizing influences over the autochthonous Getae. Consequently, historians and archaeologists were able to study and to present them in a mostly neutral manner, greatly informed by the Classicist standpoint.

## 1947-1955: 'Proletarian internationalism' and 'Socialist Patriotism'

Conditions greatly changed at Histria after the hiatus represented by the Second World War and the first few years when the communist regime was established in Romania. Completely reorganized archaeological excavations were resumed in 1949, under the auspices of the Academy of the Romanian People's Republic. As Scarlat Lambrino, who had acted as director of the Romanian School in Rome decided not to return to communist Romania, he was deemed to be a traitor and replaced by Emil Condurachi, former student of the School in Rome, at that time professor of ancient history and archaeology at the University of Bucharest.

Condurachi tried in the beginning to moderately accommodate the ideological requirements of the new regime while avoiding an abrupt break up with the past conceptual framework that had guided research at Histria. His report for the excavations conducted in 1949 is the best example in this wise[214].

Nevertheless, he bumped into the highly ideologised wall ferociously defended by the éminence grise of Romanian communist history between 1946 and 1955, Mihail Roller. At the first postwar general conference of the Romanian archaeologists, held in 1949, where Condurachi presented his report, Roller strongly condemned his "diplomatic" stance towards Lambrino and his "cosmopolite ideas" regarding the significance of Histria for universal Roman history[215]. In his concluding remarks to the conference, where he copiously criticized Condurachi and other Romanian archaeologists[216], Roller exposed extensively the ideological program that should have been followed from then on in the Romanian communist archaeological research.

While the concept of proletarian internationalism should have granted in theory larger freedom to studies of other cultures than those deemed to be ancestral by former capitalist historiography, the doctrine of "complete equality between nations"[217] and the expressed need to oppose "the submission to the decadent bourgeoisie culture of the West" and "the cosmopolite ideas"[218] resulted in a greater focus on "the permanent and continuous factor – the autochthonous population"[219].

"We should pay special attention to the study of the development of the people on the territory of the Romanian People's Republic, study who contributes to the development of genuine national pride, as V.I. Lenin teaches us, meaning that we are proud of our people and of those who led it in its struggle for liberty, progress and culture", emphasized Roller in his speech[220], impregnated by both 'proletarian internationalism' and 'socialist patriotism'[221], as this tight ideological framework developed by

[214] Condurachi et al. (1950).

[215] Roller (1950), 159-161, 167.

[216] Roller (1950), 162-163.

[217] Stressed by Petru Groza, then Prime-Minister of Romania in an ideological speech quoted at the beginning of the same issue of the journal where Condurachi's report and Roller's speech appeared. Groza (1950).

[218] Roller (1950), 159, 161.

[219] Roller (1950), 160-161.

[220] Roller (1950), 159.

[221] Roller (1950), 161: "to be filled with proletarian patriotism and internationalism". See more about the two concepts and their use in historical teaching in: Moldovan (2012), 362.

Lenin in a renowned 1914 article[222] might be dubbed.

Paradoxically, resistance to the West in the first few communist years required harnessing nationalistic feelings. Ancient peoples had to be portrayed as precursors of modern nations, divided like the latter in exploited and exploiting groups. Extending past economic exploitation from social groups to national groups was seen by the communist ideologues as a prerequisite to build opposition in the communist countries against the capitalist states. In Romanian People's Republic, Greeks and Romans became imperialistic exploiters of the local Getae and Dacians, precursors of the modern Western powers trying to deviously exploit through the local elites the Romanian nation. Only the high intellectual prestige of Classical civilization and the enshrined idea that the Romans were the ancestors of the Romanians prevented the radicalization of this approach. Therefore, Romanian researchers had to study Roman and Greek archaeology and history with the objective to reveal how the Getae and Dacians resisted to political and economic exploitation and developed an equal culture to the Classical one, getting involved in equal cultural exchanges[223].

These ideological statements of an oppressive regime had to be literally transposed in the subsequent historical and archaeological works, being no matter for negotiations. It is interesting to compare the first archaeological report of Condurachi with his foreword to the first volume of the monograph series dedicated to Histria, published in 1954. All the directions drawn by Roller were faithfully implemented. Lambrino is heavily criticized as an individualistic researcher and a traitor, while Pârvan is valued mainly because he "paid attention to the knowledge of the material culture and the social life of the Geto-Dacian population from Dobrudja and beyond the Danube"[224]. The ideological aims of the research, namely exposing exploitation, refuting cosmopolitism and affirming equality between the autochthonous people and the Greeks are openly stated: "firstly, this research is framed by a well-defined problem, whose data should be sought through excavations, namely the origins and the development of the slave-owning settlement of Histria and the active creative role of the indigenous population"[225]; "the appearance of the Geto-Dacian archaeological material on the territory of the city provides a categorical rebuttal to the cosmopolitan conclusions which denied the presence and the influence of the indigenous population inside the Greek colony of Histria"[226]. Indeed, local made objects discovered alongside more numerous Greek artifacts, both in the city and in its rural territory, at Tariverde, Baia, Vadu and Sinoe, were interpreted as proving a massive autochthonous presence at Histria and the existence of numerous indigenous settlements with some Greek products in its hinterland, which were able to exert a strong influence on the culture of the Greek colonists[227].

In his speech of 1949, Roller emphasized not only the academic objectives that had to be fulfilled by researchers, but also goals that they had to meet in spreading the imposed conclusions to larger audiences, mostly workers, students and pupils. 'Cultural revolution'[228] had to be achieved through people's museums, university courses and school textbooks[229].

[222] Lenin (1974).

[223] Roller (1950), 166, with explicit regard to the West Pontic Greek cities and their relations with the Getae.

[224] Condurachi et al. (1954), 5-6.

[225] Condurachi et al. (1954), 6-7.

[226] Condurachi et al. (1954), 8.

[227] Condurachi et al. (1954), 8, 10-13.

[228] Invoked by Roller (1950), 157. Moldovan (2012), 361-364, and Velimirovici (2015), 31-33, 86-90.

[229] Roller (1950), 168-169: "Archaeology, although deals with events that happened 4000-5000 years ago, is valuable and significant for our present

Roller himself had taken charge of the latter. In 1947, he and a team of fellow historians, promoted through the 'cultural revolution', published *The History of Romania*, reedited in 1952 as *The History of R.P.R.* This textbook for secondary school faithfully reproduced Roller's conception described in 1949. The issue of the ancient Greek cities founded on the nowadays territory of Romania was cursorily approached in a small section significantly titled 'The relations of the Dacians with the Greek colonies on the territory of nowadays Romania', in order to emphasize the focus on the indigenous population. Greek colonists were portrayed mostly as slave merchants, exploiting the ancestors of present day Romanians: "Greeks organized themselves on the basis of the principles of the slave-owning organization. … They took from Dacia cows, honey, wax, wheat, timber and especially slaves. … The slave trade knew a huge development. The market and the city of Athens were full of slaves *from us* [my emph.], so that the name Daos (Dacian) become synonymous with slave"[230]. In the 1952 edition, a new paragraph was added, with the aim of emphasizing the resistance against exploitation, another idea dear to Roller and the Stalinist ideologues: "From historical sources we know that inside and outside the Greek cities, there were social struggles, against exploitation, for liberty"[231].

## 1955-1971: Rejection of Stalinism, Recuperation of Moderate Nationalism and Incipient National Communism

The demise of Roller that occurred in 1955 might be seen as the counterpart in the field of history of the gradual political emancipation of R.P.R. from USSR in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The nationalist card started to be played not only against the Western capitalist block, but also against the Stalinist model and the Eastern 'big brother', that permitted, after 1965, the revival of pre-war historical conceptions.

Evolution was however sinuous and cautiously undertaken. Until the famous 'Declaration of April', issued in 1964, only the Stalinist additions to communist ideology were rejected. Its Marxist-Leninist substance was still of utmost significance as a compulsory framework for historical research while appropriations of pre-war moderate nationalist approaches were only at their beginning. After 1964, political control over historians and archaeologists became even looser: the Communist party mostly ignored historians and historians mostly ignored the party and its teachings, in a period when conducting archaeological research and writing history almost reached normality from the point of view of lack of ideological interference[232].

The new political climate allowed Condurachi, who entered the Academy as full member in 1955, and became director of the recently founded Institute of Archaeology in 1956, to abhor Roller's ideological directives that he had never sincerely agreed to, alongside other historians and archaeologists who had finished their studies before 1945, but were still employed by the communist regime, like Andrei Oțetea and Constantin Daicoviciu[233].

A comparison between the foreword of the second volume of the monograph series

struggle. We are all willing to shed light, through archaeology, on historical problems whereby our youth will be educated in the spirit of patriotism, in the spirit required to the builders of the socialist society in R.P.R."

[230] Roller et al. (1947), 27-28.

[231] Roller et al. (1952), 26-27.

[232] Velimirovici (2015), 194-195.

[233] Ibid., 113-114.

dedicated to Histria, published in 1966, and the lines quoted above from the aforementioned first volume in 1954 clearly reveals the evolution to a more de-ideologised academic environment. In 1966, Condurachi paid only minimal tribute to communist ideology, through an isolated reference to the "materialist-historical interpretation" of artifacts[234], very vague, almost imperceptible critic to the excavations made before the war[235], and a paragraph dealing with the discoveries made in the hinterland, revealing "the intensity of contacts between the inhabitants of the Greek city and the autochthonous population"[236]. In a completely different interpretation to the one he employed twelve years earlier, when Tariverde or Sinoe had been considered autochthonous settlements, Condurachi mentioned in 1966 "greco-indigenous settlements" and only "some" burials in the tumular necropolis featuring "a predominantly Getic character"[237].

The same development occurred in Condurachi's popularization works. A cursory comparison between the first edition of 1959 and the third edition of 1968 of the touristic guidebook of Histria reveals how he dropped charges to pre-war researchers and how he replaced the references to people's democracy with others emphasizing the national character of the state[238].

In this period, Condurachi not only dismissed the Stalinist socialist patriotic manner of interpreting the past at Histria, but also started the transition to a wholly new approach that sought to nationalistically harness the history of the ancient West Pontic Greeks. Although the Greek settlers have never been considered ancestors of the Romanians, their cultural accomplishments were somehow appropriated on the basis that they were achieved by Greeks who lived on the same territory of Dobrudja inhabited nowadays by Romanians.

Land, the second basic element in national ideologies, allowed forging a link between the Romanian nation and the ancient foreigners of high pedigree, particularly in works addressed to larger audiences. Thus, in the aforementioned guidebook, Histria became "the most ancient city on the territory of our fatherland"[239], satisfying the national communist obsession for oldness[240], and, given its good state of preservation, "the Pompeii of our country"[241].

Both are very significant formulas that have made career since then, reflecting the twist that allowed the nationalistic appropriation of Classical culture[242]. The latter encompasses one more significant nuance of the new conceptual approach: the equality between the cultural achievements of the West

[234] Condurachi et al. (1966), 5.

[235] Ibid. , 5.

[236] Ibid , 7.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Condurachi (1959), 5-6: "But since 1927, the excavations went on slower and slower ... which represented only the support for anemic illusions of research. In this area, so significant for knowing the past of our fatherland, the lack of interest of the bourgeois-land-owning regime for the scientific research become more prominent", and "Through the care of R.P.R. and the popular democratic government…" See also Condurachi (1968), 5-6: "But since 1927, the excavations went on slower and slower ... which represented only the support for anemic illusions of research;" and: "Through the care of the Romanian state ...". Unfortunately, I was not able to examine the second edition of the guidebook, published in 1962.

[239] Condurachi (1959), 5; Condurachi (1968), 5.

[240] Boia (2018b), 9, 17.

[241] Condurachi (1959), 29; Condurachi (1968), 33.

[242] Both expressions contain totally unnecessary references from a scientific point of view to the modern Romanian state and nation, made in an appropriating manner. As they reflect an attitude of commitment, ornately and vividly expressed, they meet the criteria delineated by Geertz (1973), 230-231 for differentiating them from science and attributing them instead to ideology.

Pontic Greeks and the better known Greek cities of the Mediterranean, emphasized wherever it was possible[243]. 'The Greeks of Romania' had to be conceptualized as good as any other Greeks in the ancient world, as Romania aspired to be considered as equal as any other contemporary country, both in the communist and the capitalist blocks.

It was not only Condurachi who opened this ingenious way of accommodating the expanding nationalistic appetite of the Romanian communist elites with the appreciation for Classical culture, even in its peripheral forms developed on the Western Pontic shores. Radu Vulpe, another gifted historian who had made his apprenticeship before the war, a disciple of Vasile Pârvan, used the opportunity given after 1955 and particularly after 1964, to revive his magister's Classical universalist approach under the thin cover of the incipient Romanian communist nationalism. In a popularization brochure significantly titled *Ancient beacons of civilization: Istria, Tomis, Callatis*, published in 1966, this otherwise sober historian of Dobrudja tried to explain to the larger audience the role of these Greek cities in "spreading the Hellenic civilization" – deemed elsewhere to be "the highest manifestation of human spirit and at the same time the most fruitful"[244] – "on our very ancient lands"[245]. In Vulpe's work we may find the most complete revival of Pârvan's past conceptions, from the masterfully alluded cultural inferiority of the Getae in comparison with the Greeks[246] to the theory of the gradual emergence of a mixed Hellenic-autochthonous population between the Danube and the Black Sea[247]. Less prone to compromise than Condurachi, who perceived him as a reactionary[248], Vulpe rejected also the nationalistic temptation to portray the West Pontic Greek cultural achievements as equal to those of the great centers of the Aegean, admitting only for them the role of active peripheral agents of Hellenism, able to light "the first flame that weld the ancient history of our fatherland to universal history"[249].

## 1971-1989: National Communism: Resistance, Submission, Adherence

Ceauşescu's July Theses of 1971 and the "Program of the Romanian Communist Party of building the socialist multilateral society and moving Romania towards communism" (*Programul Partidului Comunist Român de făurire a societății socialiste multilateral dezvoltate și înaintare a României spre comunism)* of 1974 gradually ended the more liberal period of Romanian historiography of the late '60s. Historians and archaeologists were equated with political activists that had to follow closely the new ideological imperative conceived by the Romanian dictator and that could be resumed to the mantras of complete unity and continuity of the peace-loving Romanian nation on its present territory from the earliest times[250].

Flexible or rather opportunistic, as always, no matter what his genuine intimate historical conception was[251], Emil Condurachi

[243] Condurachi (1959), 13-14, 26, 28; Condurachi (1968), 15-16, 29, 31-32.

[244] Vulpe (1966), 7-8.

[245] Ibid., 6.

[246] Ibid., 9: "The shores where Istria, Tomis and Callatis were born and flourished turned through these cities from a mere border of foam to the line of light at the meeting of two different worlds with different ways of life and different levels of development".

[247] Vulpe (1966), 32.

[248] Babeş (2007), 325, n. 8.

[249] Vulpe (1966), 9-10.

[250] Dragoman, Oanţă-Marghitu (2006), 64-65; Velimirovici (2015), 180-191.

[251] Opinions regarding the scale of Emil Condurachi's communist involvement and ideological compromises are divided between his immediate collaborators who emphasize that he acted out of necessity, in order to preserve basic conditions for historical and archaeological revival in future better times (Suceveanu (2003-2005), 28

followed the trend. It is sufficient to point out that he was one of the editors of the overly propagandistic volume dedicated in 1980 to the celebration of 2050 years since the supposed creation of "the first independent and centralized state of the Geto-Dacians" under Burebista[252], a most beloved avatar of Ceauşescu's self-projected utopian role of great leader[253].

His career after 1971 is not of much interest for the present study, as Dionisie M. Pippidi replaced him that very year as head of the archaeological excavations at Histria and he stopped writing at length about the Greeks on the West shores of the Black Sea. Pippidi had a more uncompromising approach than Condurachi, although he had had sincere leftist political views from his youth, in the interwar period. He had been one of the last students of Pârvan and he had studied abroad for a long time, being one of the interwar historians recycled by the communist regime from the very beginning: he had taken part since 1950 to the renewed excavations at Histria from his position of professor at the University of Bucharest, being in charge of the so-called Temple sector, opened in the sacred area that functioned in the city in pre-Roman times.

Dionisie Pippidi made only the minimal required compromises with the communist regime when his profession was involved and he dared to oppose several political directives, most conspicuously those regarding ideologically determined interference in the projected treatises of the Academy concerning the history of Romania, in 1958-1960 and in 1978. As a consequence he was nearly purged from University in 1959, he was prevented from taking part to some scientific conferences held abroad and he had to wait until 1990 the admission to the Romanian Academy as a full member. More severe consequences were avoided only because he was internationally renowned.

Pippidi avoided as much as possible contributions where he had to pay tribute to the official ideology in place, both before and after 1971. He focused more on technical archaeological and epigraphic topics where he cursorily made use of the materialistic approach, he did not sign popularization works, he published syntheses of greater historical scope in collective volumes where other colleagues did the most in order to accommodate the ideological imperatives, like in the first volume of the treaty of the Academy published in 1960 or in the first volume of the series dedicated to the history of Dobrudja, published in 1965, where Dumitru Berciu, responsible with the half focused on the Getae, dealt mostly with the ideological requirements of the regime, including the needed ideological opening quote, in this case, a totally banal notice from Engels[254].

Connected to the most important Classical scholars of his times, freed from the nationalistic overtones of the interwar period, Dionisie Pippidi envisaged the study of West Pontic Greeks objectively and neutrally as part of the larger field of studies concerning Greeks living outside the Aegean. Although he frequently tackled the issue of the Greek-Getic contacts in special studies based on old or newly discovered inscriptions[255] and sometimes he had to give in to the theory of the creative contribution of the autochthonous people in the cultural contacts with the Greeks, that he presented however in a very nuanced and subtle academic form[256], he rejected viewing

and Petre (2012)), and other historians and archaeologists who think his ideological twists and his collaboration with the communist regime, the Securitate included, were triggered mostly by self-interest (Babeş (2007), 325, n. 8, 9).

[252] Condurachi et al. (1980).

[253] Velimirovici (2015), 224-227, Boia (2018b), 17-18. See Anderson (2006 [1983]), 160-161 for a plausible explanation why national leaders are assuming such self-identifications whose legitimization requires engineering the past.

[254] Berciu (1965), 13.

[255] Pippidi (1961), Pippidi (1963) etc.

[256] Pippidi (1965), 156.

the research conducted at Histria as a mere tool for shedding light on the history of the indigenous population. Moreover, he avoided the temptation to appropriate the West Pontic Greek cultural achievements in a modern nationalistic manner and to depict them as more significant than they really were, pointing out on numerous occasions at the peripheral and provincial character of their civilization compared to that in the metropolitan centers of the Aegean. All these directions are present in the introductory remarks to his most important volume, whose writing took him a quarter-century: the monumental corpus of Histrian inscriptions, published in 1983[257].

For this unexpected grain of liberty in dealing with the Greeks in full communist nationalistic period, Pippidi had however to pay a heavy ideological price: he had to bestow in these very introductory remarks a more than moderate eulogy of "the powerful centralized state under Burebista", portrayed as an "exceptionally gifted chieftain"[258].

Before passing to the descendants of Pippidi and Condurachi, a short note should be made on the first volume of the series, *Din istoria Dobrogei*, in which D. Berciu dealt with the subject of the indigenous population and D.M. Pippidi with the Greek issues, in a manner directed both to specialists and larger audiences. Published in 1965, before the full rise of national communism, its division between two symmetrical parts, significantly called *The Natives and The Foreigners from Overseas*[259], illustrated the typical national ideological dichotomy between the autochthonous Getae, officially regarded as 'ancestors' of modern Romanians, and the foreign Greeks, left outside the ethnogenetic process and therefore occupying an ambiguous position in academic and popular discourse. While at that time the official solution to ambiguity was to think of the Greeks as foreigners bearing a certain influence on the more ideologically important Getae and of Greek history as a useful resource to shed light on the Geto-Dacian history[260], two strong individual characters, raised in their youth in the genuine Classical spirit, Emil Condurachi and D.M. Pippidi, provided different, original, albeit diverging fixes to ambiguity, both of them departing from the discourse that privileged the Getae and the Romans. The former envisaged the nationalistic appropriation of the pieces of Classical civilization that happened to evolve on a territory later occupied by modern Romanians, the later predicated a total separation of the Greeks from the ideologically-imbued issues related to national identity and their objective study in the traditional manner of Classical archaeology and history.

The two ways, separated not only conceptually, but also through personal enmities that were passed to next generations, were followed in the 1980s by Petre Alexandrescu, student of Dionisie Pippidi, who assumed directorship of the archaeological research in that period and had previously conducted research in the tumular necropolis and the sacred area, and by Alexandru Suceveanu, student of Emil Condurachi, who led excavations at the time in the bishop's basilica sector. While Alexandrescu, with a specialization in archaic Greek archaeology, resumed Pippidi's opposition to the progressively aberrant communist ideology and measures, attracting reprisals both on himself and on the research of Histria, whose funding was significantly diminished, Suceveanu, dealing with Roman archaeology, was more prone to embrace ideas dear to official propaganda, regarding the continuity of

[257] Pippidi (1983), 36-37: the temple of Zeus in the Sacred Area is considered "a sanctuary of modest proportions" etc. ; and "the evolution of the oldest Milesian colony on the western shore of the Black Sea, definitively fixing its place in the colonization movement of Pontus Euxinus"; See also Pippidi (1965), 150, 155-156.

[258] Ibid., 27.

[259] Berciu (1965), Pippidi (1965).

[260] Pippidi (1965), 138.

the population living in Dobrudja and the exceptionalism of the communities based on the modern territory of Romania[261].

While academic research at Histria under Pippidi and Alexandrescu became one of that 'grey zones' where the intensity of ideological pressure remained rather low even after 1971 due to the circumstantial situation of their international high repute and connections[262], the perspective allowed for mass culture and mass education was imbued with an admixture of Getocentrism and nationalistic appropriation of the cultural achievements of the West Pontic Greeks, visible, for example, in the school textbook used in the 1980s in the eighth grade[263].

## From 1990 to Present: Post-communist Nationalism

After 1990, the chance of abandoning ideologies and recovering objectivity, at least in academic research, promisingly emerged. Nevertheless, an interesting phenomenon developed during the first two decades after the fall of communism, particularly perceivable in Suceveanu's activity, who had assumed since 1989 the co-directorship of the archaeological excavations at Histria alongside Alexandrescu and since 1999 full directorship. While the communist regime was heavily criticised for its ideological interference that overemphasized social exploitation, class struggle and Geto-Dacian unity and continuity, but above all, for downplaying the universal significance of the city[264], the nationalistic overtones that it instilled were preserved and even developed[265].

Suceveanu, a faithful student of Condurachi, seems to have developed out of his own conviction the nationalistic appropriation of Histria, started rather unwillingly by his professor. He emphasized the national, circum-pontic and universal importance of the Greek city at the mouths of the Danube and its incorporation in the Romanian historical heritage. Histria outright became "the oldest city in Romania[266] / on the territory of Romania", "the Romanian Pompeii"[267], an archaeological site that deserved in Suceveanu's view all the marks that he thought distinctive for the greatest sites in the world: a plethora of celebration articles and speeches dealing with the current stage of accomplishing 'the huge editorial program' and of solving 'the wide range of problems' encompassed by Histrian research[268], a full and continuous stratigraphic sequence of its own

[261] Suceveanu (1979), 255.

[262] Velimirovici (2015), 192.

[263] Daicoviciu et al. (1984), 7, 28-30.

[264] Suceveanu (2003-2005), 27-28; cf. Suceveanu (1994), 142.

[265] Niculescu (2004-2005) explores at length nationalistic continuity between communist and post-communist Romanian archaeology, particularly when dealing with the history of the origins of the Romanian nation. See also Dragoman, Oanţă-Marghitu (2006), 67-71.

[266] Suceveanu (1996).

[267] Suceveanu (2003-2005), 21.

[268] „E.g. Suceveanu (1994), Suceveanu (1999), Suceveanu (2003-2005), esp. 26, Suceveanu (2012). The scientific results reached at Histria in more than a century are undeniably rich and significant – a brief review might start with the 15-volume monograph series or the remarkable contributions to the general knowledge of Greek pottery, made by M. Flot-Lambrino and later by P. Dupont. However, such an array of festive articles, frequently using an emphatic style that recalls Geertz's distinction between science and ideology – e.g. Suceveanu (1994), 142: "It seems to us that one of the most important rules of the deontological code of archaeology might be expressed by paraphrasing the statement attributed by a great Romanian playwright to an even greater Moldovan prince: Histria belongs indeed to Pârvan and to his diadochs and epigons, but it belongs first of all to our descendants' descendants" – is exaggerated, particularly when compared to the lower number and the more sober style of similar manifestations from other prestigious Classical archaeological sites, e.g. Delos. Cf. Plassart (1973)."

(although based on insufficient and confusing archaeological observations and thus departing from basic chronological divisions for the Greek history and civilization)[269], wide recognition both internally and abroad[270]. It is difficult to tell how much of this view was due to a sincere belief, based on a partly nationalistic mental framework, in the "weight of the meaningful message of periphery in the genesis of modern Europe"[271], to his frequently proclaimed love for the site[272] where he spent more than 50 years of his life or to his request, as frequently repeated, for more funding in times of scarcity[273].

It is illustrative for the post-communist period that after Suceveanu retired from his position at Histria, in 2010, the two co-directors who followed him, Mircea Victor Angelescu, his own student and collaborator, and Alexandru Avram, student of Pippidi, signed together in 2014 a Suceveanu-styled article that celebrated a century of excavations at the city of Histria, "la plus ancienne et la mieux connue de notre pays"[274]. The aforementioned stratigraphic sequence (based mostly on one of Angelescu's excavations) was preserved with slight revisions, as well as the proud references to the editorial program or to the incessant centennial love for "cet unique et irremplaçable chantier"[275].

Mass education and popular culture show and further exaggerate the same ideological traits in the post-communist period, when national pride formerly imposed from above over an internationally isolated Romanian society was replaced with the need to compensate the inferiority complex and frustration provoked by the hardship of transition.

Between 1990 and 2000, when referring to the West Pontic Greeks, the unique high school textbook dropped all the previous communist ideological additions in the social and economic area (e.g. slavery is totally ignored), save the nationalistic impulse to positively interpret the autochthonous population and its role in cultural contacts[276]. Moreover, after 2000, the quasi-totality of references to Histria and the other Greek cities disappeared, the official narrative emphasizing solely the Romans and the Geto-Dacians[277].

Likewise, when referring to Histria, journalists or cultural activists frequently employ the old cliché of 'the most ancient city in Romania'[278], reproduced even in exhibitions held at the local archaeological site museum (Fig. 1).


*Fig. 1 Exhibition banner for 'SCRIPTORAMA. Photo by the author of this article.*

[269] Suceveanu (2003-2005), 24, Suceveanu, Angelescu (2005), 18, Suceveanu (2012), 79-80; Angelescu, Bâltâc (2002-2003), 86, 99-100.

[270] Suceveanu (1999); Suceveanu (2003-2005), 26-28.

[271] Suceveanu (2003-2005), 27.

[272] Suceveanu, Angelescu (2005), 12; Suceveanu (2012), 87.

[273] Suceveanu (1979), 256; Suceveanu (1999), Suceveanu (2003-2005), 28-31.

[274] Angelescu, Avram (2014), 35.

[275] Angelescu, Avram (2014), 38-39. See a much more neutral approach in Avram, Angelescu (2014).

[276] Manea et al. (1992), 27-31, 76-77.

[277] Vulpe et al. (2000), 18; Cârţână et al. (2000), 6; Scurtu et. al (2000), 6; Adăscăliţei, Lazăr (2007), 5.

[278] Ionescu (2013).

The strong Greek character of Histria is more and more effaced in the public conscience. As Romanian society leaves behind the national communist obsession for the past, the knowledge of history shrinks, but abatement is made on the most basic lines of the national narrative that emphasizes the Dacian and Roman 'ancestral' contributions to Romanian history. It is telling that in front of the same archaeological site museum, the local entrepreneur who owns the only nearby restaurant placed in 2018 two dummies naively clothed as a Dacian warrior and a Roman legionary alongside two columns which feature on their top the Romanian and the European Union flags (Fig. 2 and 3)[279].

*Fig. 3 – Roman legionary in front of the archaeological site museum of Histria. Photo by the author of this article.*

*Fig. 2. Dacian warrior in front of the archaeological site museum of Histria. Photo by the author of this article.*

## Final Remarks

During the whole XX century, the Romanian archaeologists have been (almost) free to approach the West Pontic Greeks and particularly the Greeks of Histria in an objective and neutral manner, in their connection both with universal Classical history and autochthonous developments. The scientific directors who have conducted the excavations at Histria since 1914 have always been among the best prepared and intuitive Romanian archaeologists and historians and have frequently occupied positions of high rank in the academic hierarchy of their field, so that they have never slipped too much towards ideological paths they otherwise followed sincerely or by necessity outside their academic activity.

Nevertheless, some ideological influences occurred in these scholars' perceptions of the Greek city of Histria expressed in academic works, particularly when it was considered in connection with the autochthonous Getae, one of the two 'ancestral' peoples of the modern Romanian nation, according to the national ideology in place in the 19th and 20th centuries. The ideological overtones were clearly stronger when they wrote for larger audiences.

[279] The dummies in front of the museum were removed after a short period of time. Nevertheless, similar dummies are still placed at the entrance of the restaurant.

Due to their low numbers, regional presence and lack of significant influence on the later Romanian culture, the Greeks who lived in cities on the western shore of the Black Sea, in the modern days region of Dobrudja, annexed by the Romanian state in 1878, were constantly portrayed in the 20th century as foreigners from overseas, in high contrast with peoples chosen to be 'ancestors' of the Romanian nation, particularly with the autochthonous Getae.

During the ideological dominance of proletarian internationalism and Stalinist socialist patriotism, discussions on the Pontic Greek merchants had to be made only in connection to the Getae. They embodied the modern Western capitalists who exploited the peace-loving nations which finally embraced communism in order to end exploitation. Cultural equality between Greeks and Getae was also proclaimed and had to be historically and archaeologically proven.

During national communism and post-communism, the West Pontic Greek cultural accomplishments were appropriated nationalistically, due to the fact that they were achieved on the same land where Romanians were living in modern times[280]. West Pontic Greeks, and particularly Histria, with its intact ruins, started to be perceived in the gradually disappointing periods that succeeded in the second third of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century as means of affirming the universal significance of Romania.

Although peripheral in the development of ancient Greek culture, Histria and the Histrians were at least partially equaled to greater and better known centers of Classical civilization, thence the expression 'the Romanian Pompeii', and appropriated to national Romanian history, thence the other expression of high popularity, 'the most ancient city in Romania'.

[280] Suceveanu (2003-2005), 28: "For national history, it suffices to mention that, through Histria, a shred of what was justly named 'the Greek miracle' reached to the Danube and the Carpathians".

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# Jakub Wojtkowiak

## The contractual identity of officers of the Red Army from Central and Eastern Europe during the Great Purge in the USSR

**Abstract**
The period of Great Purge in the USSR was an important moment for the officers of the Red Army, a moment in which their declared nationality became particularly contractual. It did not depend on their individual choices, but on subjective assessments of the RKKA party and personnel authorities as well as the Soviet state police – the NKVD. It was these institutions that ruled, quite freely interpreting the facts, what nationality any given person was. This often decided person's dismissal from the ranks of the armed forces but could also be a pretext for much more serious repression – imprisonment and even death. It resulted from the fact that the Great Purge quickly acquired strong national feature. Representatives of the nations who inhabited Russia, and later the Soviet Union, and after the first world war their countries became a part of "capitalist camp", turned out to be particularly suspicious and therefore, were the first victims of oppression. It was easier for the political bodies of the Red Army and functionaries of the NKVD to consider the representatives of non-Soviet nations as suspects of various offenses.

**Keywords**: Great Purge, USSR, Red Army, NKVD, Officers, Nationalities.

Since its creation in 1918, the Workers' and Peasants Red Army (rus. Рабоче-крестьянская Красная армия – RKKA), a military arm of the Bolshevik regime, had a multinational character. This resulted not only from the multiethnicity of Tsarist - and then Soviet - Russia but also from the fact that the revolutionary ideas of the new social and political order that the Bolsheviks proclaimed proved to be attractive to some representatives of almost all European countries, and not only those. Therefore, the RKKA officer corps[281] in the period between the Russian Civil War and the Second World War was a real mosaic of nationalities. Of course, it was dominated by Soviet Slavs – Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians – and Jews, but even at the higher levels of the military hierarchy of the USSR you could find representatives of all nations of Central and Eastern Europe, which either already had their statehood or obtained it after the First World War.

The largest groups consisted of Poles, then Latvians (especially numerous among higher and senior officers) and Estonians[282].

[281] Revolutionary terminology, breaking with the tradition of the old order, meant that until 1943 the Red Army formally did not have an officer corps. It was called the corps of commanders and chiefs (rus. командно-начальствующий состав). It was the de facto equivalent of officers, and at the lowest levels also non-commissioned officers in other armies. In addition, until 1935 there were no formal military ranks in the RKKA.

[282] According to the available statistics of the nationality composition of the RKKA officer corps in

Although other Eastern European nations were not shown in the statistics, among higher and senior officers there was no shortage of Lithuanians, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians, Moldavians, Bulgarians, as well as Slovaks, Serbs, Croats or Montenegrins[283].

On one hand, it was the result of Russian conquests of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and, on the other, the outcomes of the First World War when hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war from multinational armies of Austria-Hungary and Turkey (to a lesser extent Germany and Bulgaria) found themselves in Russia. Some of them believed in the Soviet Utopia and joined the ranks of the Red Army. There were also those representatives of the Eastern European nations who, for ideological reasons, chose the new Russia for their homeland.

The events that took place during the Russian Civil War affected the nationality declared by some of the Red Army officers. The role played by the Latvian riflemen in the times of the Bolsheviks' struggle to maintain power made this nationality enjoy exceptional prestige. It seemed that no negative emotions were brought out by the remaining Balts – Lithuanians and Estonians – as well as Hungarians, Czechs or Bulgarians, most of whom were former prisoners from the Central Powers armies who took the side of the new rulers of Russia. The Poles found themselves in a special situation. The Soviet defeat in the Polish-Bolshevik war of 1919-1920 meant that virtually throughout the whole interwar period, the reborn Republic of Poland became one of the most important enemies for Kremlin propaganda and was portrayed as a potentially very serious threat to the Soviet power.

The USSR military circles viewed the western neighbour in a similar manner[284]. No wonder that some Poles after the end of the Russian Civil War preferred to pass themselves off as representatives of other nationalities. Such changes, based on the registration documents of the Personnel Department of the Red Army, can be observed in a number of cases. The highest-ranking Pole who remained in the close military elite until the time of the Great Purge was Michał Lewandowski (Mikhail Lewandovskiy). During the civil war he already commanded armies, and in the following years he was the head of military districts and central RKKA departments. In 1935, when individual rank insignia were introduced in the Red Army, he was given the rank of *komandarm* of the 2nd grade[285]. In party documents, as early as a party conference in 1929 and again during the 17th Congress of the Bolsheviks Party at the beginning of 1934, he appears as a Pole[286]. However, in the personnel

January 1934, it numbered almost 128 thousand people, 82.3 thousand Russians (67.4%), 19.2 thousand Ukrainians (15%), 6.4 thousand Jews (5%), 5.7 thousand Belarussians (4.5%). Poles were the fifth nationality in terms of population, there were 1354 of them (1.06%), 930 Latvians, and 390 Estonians. Remaining Eastern European nations were in the „other" group, numbering 1020. Российский государственный военный архив ( Russian State Military Achive, РГВА), фонд 54, опись 17, *дело* 402, *лист* 27 (Командный и начальствующий состав РККА по национальностьям на январь 1934 г.) (The command of the Red Army by nationality in January 1934).

[283] Based on the minutes of the meetings of the RKKA's High Commission and its subcommittees. They dealt with the awarding of military ranks in the years 1935-1936: РГВА, ф. 37837, оп. 20, *д.* 6-26.

[284] Кен, 2008; Мельтюхов, 2009; Мельтюхов, 2013.

[285] Military ranks, introduced in 1935, had a very complex nomenclature. Although among the line officers appeared the ranks of colonel, major, captain etc, more common were names of ranks originating from functions. This was the case for all higher officers (equivalent of generals in other armies) and service officers. Komandarm 2nd rank – army commander of the 2nd rank, the equivalent of colonel general later on.

[286] Archiwum Akt Nowych (Central Archives of Modern Records, Warsaw), Collection of workers' movement's activists' personal files,

files of the Red Army in the early 1930s (and in subsequent years) he preferred to pass himself off as a Russian[287]. Of course, after being arrested in February 1938, the NKVD 'reminded' him of his real nationality and he was shot as a Pole; and among the accusations brought to him was providing information to Polish intelligence[288].

One cannot forget about the situation in the so-called 'Taken Lands', areas belonging to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until its partition by the neighbours, which were taken over by the Russian Empire, but did not become part of the Kingdom of Poland created after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In terms of nationality, the inhabitants living there constituted a veritable mix of populations – apart from Poles, these lands were inhabited by Lithuanians, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Jews, Tatars, Russians, and others. These nations did not isolate themselves from each other. Mixed marriages were common. In Tsarist Russia, one did not declare nationality so much as religion. Poles (along with Lithuanians) were mostly Catholics. After the Bolsheviks took power in Russia, denomination ceased to have this kind of meaning, and it was necessary to declare nationality. Often it was declared intuitively, especially when parents were of different nationalities. There were such situations as the case of Wacław Daszkiewicz (Vaclav Dashkevich) – in the service record card at the beginning of the 1930s he wrote that he was a Lithuanian, but indicated Polish as his mother tongue, and did not declare knowledge of the Lithuanian language at all[289]. In 1938, when personnel staff, on the wave of the Red Army's purification of 'non-Soviet' nationalities, prepared to remove him from the ranks of the RKKA and when, with the rank of colonel, he served as a tactics lecturer at the Leningrad Advancement Training Courses for the Armoured Corps officers, he was assigned Polish nationality[290].

And finally, there is a third element to be considered. Throughout the 19th century, even though some Polish elites ruled out cooperation with the Russians, there were Poles in Russia who made careers. They were civil servants, engineers, railwaymen, military men, cultural activists, etc. Mainly men left the lands densely inhabited by the Polish population and scattered throughout the great empire. They married women of other nationalities. Their sons, who had taken up military service in Bolshevik Russia, had to declare their nationality. They often declared their mother's nationality, especially when she was a Russian or Ukrainian, while officers from the old Polish Duchy of Livonia, mainly the Russian region of Dwinsk (Latvian Daugavpils) and from mixed

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Lewandowski Michał, Анкета для делегата XVI Всесоюзной партконференции № 0180с, 19.04.1929; Анкета делегата XVII Сьезда ВКП(б) № 19р, 23.01.1934. Photocopies of documents stored today in the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History (Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории).

[287] РГВА. Учетно-послужная карта (then: УПК), Левандовский Михаил Карлович 1890 г.р. [1931]; РГВА, ф. 37837, оп. 18, д. 577, л. 6 (Список командного и начальствующего состава Красной армми вступившего в ряды РККА в 1918 г., январь 1938 г.) (List of commanding staff of the Red Army joined the Red Army in 1918, January 1938).

[288] Testimony given by him at the beginning of April 1938: Лубянка. 2011., p. 315) (Сводка важнейших показаний арестованных по ГУГБ НКВД СССР за 9-10 апредя 1938 г.).

[289] РГВА, УПК, Дашкевич Вацлав Теофилович 1893 г.р.

[290] РГВА, ф. 37837, оп. 18, д. 569, д. 10об-11. Later, between 1944-1946, when he was delegated to serve in the Polish Army, he claimed to be a Pole, to again become Lithuanian after returning to the USSR. This appears from his personal files, stored in Poland and Russia: Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (Central Military Archive, Warsaw-Rembertow), Personal files, 497.58/5614, Daszkiewicz Wacław; РГВА, ф. 37976, оп. 2, д. 301 (Дашкевич Вацлав Теофилович).

Polish-Latvian relationships, gladly indicated the nationality of the mother as their own[291].

All the above-mentioned factors meant that the nationality declared by the officers of the Red Army was often of a contractual nature. It was changed depending on what – at a given moment – the officer considered to be right or safe. It did not matter much until the Great Purge, or – as the famous British historian Robert Conquest called it – the Great Terror[292].

In the '30s, people in the Soviet Union witnessed a period of unprecedented intensification of terror, the height of which happened in the years 1937-1938. The unprecedented nature of this wave of repression manifested itself in the fact that, besides hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens, the state elites – political, economic, cultural and military – were also subjected to a ruthless purge.

The Red Army was subject to purge, as well. Its officer corps was affected not only by arrests and subsequent sentences, but also by punitive discharges from military service. This overlapped with the processes characteristic of the entire Great Purge, the so-called NKVD 'nationality operations', which also affected the RKKA. In addition, in the summer of 1938, at the end of the final period of repression, based on the directive of the Main Military Council, and later the People's Commissar of Defence and People's Commissar of the Navy, decisions were made to clear the ranks of the Soviet armed forces' officer corps of the 'non-Soviet' nationalities. Under these circumstances, when nationality became the basis for repression, its definition became all the more contractual. It became the domain of arbitrary decisions of the personnel and political bodies of the Red Army and the state police – the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (Народный комиссариат внутренних дел – NKVD).

Already in 1937, allegations of concealing nationality appear in the documents of the cadres and party organs of the Red Army. The vast majority of them concerns Poles. In June that year, the Military Soviet of the Black Sea Fleet discussed the case of Colonel Alfons Kolnicki (Alfons Kolnitskiy), lecturer at the School of Naval Defence in Sevastopol. Among the accusations against him we can read: "He comes from the nobility, ensign of the Tsarist army. Polish nationality. He concealed everything (…) He passed himself off as a Lithuanian (…) As not being politically trustworthy, he was dismissed [from the ranks of the Red Army – J.W.] by order of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet nr 034/ 23 June 1937 r."[293]. The same was true for Captain Władimir Jefimowski (Vladimir Yefimowskiy), Chief of Staff of the 25th Artillery Regiment. In the list of officers of the Kharkiv Military District addressed to the People's Commissar of Defence, Marshal Kliment Voroshilov, in order to dismissed them from the ranks of the Red Army, we read among others: „ [during the Russian Civil War – J.W.] he served with Galician troops, took part in punitive expeditions, concealed his nationality – a Pole…"[294].

[291] A good example is the case of Major Jan Janowski. Although he had a typical Polish surname, he consistently claimed to be Latvian: РГВА, УПК, Яновский Ян Янович 1895 г.р.

[292] Conquest (1968).

[293] Российский государственный архив Военно-морского флота (Russian State Archive of the Navy, hereafter, РГАВМФ), ф. Р-2186, оп. 2, *д.* 6, *л.* 139 (Список кнс исключенного из рядов ВКП(б) и по политическим мотивам, решением Военного Совета Черноморского флота, уволенного из РККА, 1937) (List of KNS expelled from the ranks of the CPSU (b) for political reasons, by decision of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet, dismissed from the Red Army, 1937).

[294] РГВА, ф. 25900, оп. 6, *д.* 9, *л.* 127 (Список начальствующего состава частей Харьковского военного округа подлежащих увольнению из РККА, 7.12.1937) (The list of the commanding staff of the units of the Kharkov military district subject to dismissal from the Red Army, 12/7/1937).

In 1937, the commandant of the Training Department of the Pacific Fleet's Joint School was Major Władimir Pindyczuk (Vladimir Pindichuk). He was passing himself off as a Ukrainian. However, the Training Department's command had a different opinion. In his character profile it was written – „Polish nationality, which he conceals, he knows Polish and German. Fugitive from Poland. During his service in the Baltic Fleet he had close ties to arrested enemies". Conclusion – „immediately dismiss from the Red Army and then arrest"[295]. What draws attention is the fact that political accusations are raised at the very end, while the concealment of nationality at the very beginning of his profile.

Interestingly, the reverse case is also known – on June 17, 1937 the Military Soviet of the Black Sea Fleet decided to dismiss the voeninzhener of the 2nd rank Paweł Lubicz (Pavel Lubich) from the ranks of the Red Army because, among other things, he was accused of always passing himself off as a Pole while in fact being a Jew[296].

The phenomenon of searching for the 'proper' nationality was at its most intense after the governing bodies of the Red Army decided to clean up the RKKA's ranks of commanders and political personnel of representatives of all nationalities "not belonging to the peoples of the Soviet Union" – Germans, Poles, Latvians, Estonians, Koreans, Finns, Lithuanians, Romanians, Turks, Hungarians and Bulgarians[297]. Already from the end of 1937, the cadres institutions of the Red Army were obliged to draw up lists of such officers. In the summer of 1938, specific proscription lists were ready, which were to decide the fate of thousands of RKKA officers based on the nationality criterion. In the Kiev Military District, its Military Soviet began a mass dismissal of officers on July 8, 1938. Often the concealment of „incorrect" nationality was used as the basis for the discharge. In the orders issued on August 5th, four officers were accused of hiding their Polish nationality: Major Pantelejmon Siniuk (Panteleymon Sinyuk) and Captains Roman Piech (Roman Pekh), Nikołaj Woinski (Nikolai Voinskiy) and Stefan Chodakowski (Stephan Khodakovskiy)[298].

Similar events took place in other military districts and fleets. For example, in the list of officers of the 1st Submarines Brigade of the Black Sea Fleet who were to be dismissed based on their "nationality", we read about the voeninzhener of the 3rd rank Eduard Wieliczko (Eduard Velichko): „He is passing himself off as a Ukrainian or a Russian, whereas his father Piotr Janowicz (Petr Yanovich), arrested on January 25, 1938 is a Pole. His mother – a

[295] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2194, оп. 1, *д*. 2, *л*. 567 (Особый список кнс Учебного отдела ТОФ, 1937) (A special list of KNSTraining Department of the Pacific Fleet, 1937).

[296] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2186, оп. 2, *д*. 6, *л*. 152-153 (Список кнс исключенного из рядов ВКП(б) и по политическим мотивам, решением Военного Совета Черноморского флота, уволенного из РККА, 1937) (List of KNS expelled from the ranks of the CPSU (b) for political reasons, by decision of the Military Council of the Black Sea Fleet, dismissed from the Red Army, 1937). Voeninzhener of the 2nd rank – officer's rank in the engineering and technical division, equivalent of the rank of major.

[297] Главный военный совет РККА 13 марта 1938 г. – 20 июня 1941 г. *Документы*. 2004. p. 85 (Протокол № 8 заседания ГВС РККА 28-31 мая – 8 июня 1938 г.) (The main military council of the Red Army March 13, 1938 - June 20, 1941. s, (Minutes No. 8 of the meeting of the GVS RKKA May 28-31 - June 8, 1938). In June 1938 this provision, initially referring to the cadre of the Far Eastern Front was extended, on orders of the People's Defence Commissar and People's Commissar of the Navy, to all armed forces and other nationalities – for example, Swedes, Czechs, and Greeks.

[298] РГВА, ф. 25880, оп. 4, *д*.252, *л*. 310-326 (Приказы Военного совета Киевского особого военного округа по *личному* составу № 0089, 0090, 5.08.1938) (Orders of the Military Council of the Kiev Special Military District on personnel No. 0089, 0090, 08/05/1938).

Pole"[299]. There were similar cases concerning representatives of other nations recognized at that time as dangerous. In the character profile of Senior Lieutenant Viktor Keyster, the deputy commander of the submarine L-6, one can read: „Father, mother, sister and three brothers, all of them of Latgale nationality, live abroad[300]. Kejster considers himself a Russian and, despite numerous conversations on the subject, he stubbornly refuses to admit that he is a Latgale"[301]. In all the described cases, the military bureaucrats dismissed officers from the ranks of the armed forces on the grounds of being a representative of the "non-Soviet" nations.

The Soviet state police acted accordingly. As early as September 1937, in the Volga Military District the NKVD, using the testimony of the battalionyj kommissar Władysław Antoniewicz, the commissioner of the District Training Centre for Reserve Officers, it fabricated a theory about the existence of an organization of Polish saboteurs and spies, associated with the mythical Polish Military Organization. It was supposedly to operate in military education units and military stations in Orenburg and its environs. Among the many officers „enrolled" into the organization were Major Gieorgij Klimecki (Georgiy Klimetskiy), commander of Orenburg Training Courses for Reserve Officers, and batallionnyj komissar Stanisław Łuksza (Stanislav Luksha), district military commissioner in Orsk, both inscribed on the list of conspirators as Poles[302]. The Soviet state police knew better – both of them, although they admitted to having a good command of the Polish language, in the registration documents were passing themselves off as Belarussians[303].

The flagship miner of the Baltic Fleet's staff, Captain of the 2nd rank Iwan Lubowicz (Ivan Lubowich), throughout his period of service was passing himself off as a Lithuanian, although he admitted that his father was Lithuanian while his mother was Polish[304]. The Baltic Fleet's personnel office, postulating his dismissal from the ranks of the Red Army, stated only that his brother was working at the Polish embassy in Paris, and Lubowicz himself was maintaining correspondence with relatives in Poland[305]. The NKVD, based on this information, wrote a different scenario. In February 1938, justifying his arrest, the

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[299] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2186, оп. 2, *д.* 8, *л.* 4 (Список командно-начальствующего состава 1 Бригады подлодок [Черноморского флота – J.W.] представленных на увольнение, 9.07.1938) (List of commanding officers of the 1st Brigade of submarines [Black Sea Fleet - J.W.] submitted for dismissal, 07/09/1938).

[300] Latgalia – one of the historical provinces of Latvia. Some of its population still considers themselves a nation related but separate from Latvians.

[301] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2186, оп. 2, *д.* 7, *л.* 63 (Список командно-начальствующего состава кораблей Черноморского флота по национальности и представленных на решение НКВМФ СССР, [07.1938]) (List of commanding officers of the Black Sea Fleet's ships by nationality submitted for the decision of the NKVMF of the USSR, [07.1938]).

[302] *Лубянка*. 2004, pp. 345-347. (Спецсообщение Н.И. Ежова И.В. Сталину с приложением копии телеграммы А.И. Успенского об аресте польских «шпионов и диверсантов», 10.09.1937) (Special message N.I. Yezhova I.V. Stalin with the attached copy of the telegram A.I. Ouspensky on the arrest of Polish "spies and saboteurs", 09/10/1937). Batalionnyj komissar – rank of the political officers in RKKA, similar to the major.

[303] РГВА. УПК, Климецкий Георгий Владиславович 1896 г.р., *Лукша* Станислав Иосифович 1898 г.р. (Klimetsky Georgiy Vladislavovich, born in 1896, Luksha Stanislav Iosifovich, born in 1898).

[304] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2192, оп. 3, *д.* 1933 (*Личное дело Любовича* Ивана Генриховича) (Personal file of Lubovich Ivan Genrikhovich).

[305] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2185, оп. 2, *д.* 2, *л.* 257 (*Лист представления* на кнс КБФ подлежащих уволению, 5.09.1937) (Presentation sheet to the CPC KBF subject to dismissal, 09/05/1937).

NKVD's Special Branch (ros. Особый отдел), i.e. Fleet's counterintelligence, wrote that he was Polish, "an agent for Polish intelligence, he collected spy information about the fleet and passed it on to Polish intelligence authorities through his sister [living in Poland – J.W.]"[306]. It was a peculiar irony that he went down in history as a Pole. That was the nationality with which he was included in the list of victims of the Great Purge in Leningrad[307].

Colonel Władimir Buszeczkan (Vladimir Bushechkan, according to a different version: Biszeczkan-Bishechkan), one of the most experienced regimental commanders in the Red Army (he commanded the 69th rifle regiment since 1931), was passing himself off as a Ukrainian. What's more, he referred to Ukrainian as his native language and admitted that additionally he spoke Russian[308]. Even in the application for his dismissal from the RKKA, there was no question of nationality. There were only political accusations: „in the past, he served under direct command of the enemy of the people Yakir[309]. Appointed as a commander of the regiment thanks to this relationship. While commanding the regiment, he was treating political officers boorishly and tactlessly; it was repeatedly postulated to remove him from [the command of – J.W.] the regiment, but Yakir did not pass on those reports. He did damage in the field of regiment's combat training"[310]. After his dismissal from the ranks of the RKKA and his arrest, the NKVD gave the colonel a new nationality – on October 5, 1940 he was sentenced by an extrajudicial repressive body, the Special Commission (Особое совещание) to eight years in a labour camp for the participation in the „anti-Soviet military conspiracy"– as a Moldovan[311].

An example of a specific cooperation between the armed forces personnel and the NKVD was the case of the voeninzher of the 1st rank Bolesław Gecen (Boleslav Getzen), the flagship engineer of the Baltic Trailer-Mining Brigade. The Personnel Department included information in his character profile, that he acted as a Russian but in reality was a Pole. At the same time the justification sounds quite strange – father German, mother Polish, together with Bolesław's siblings left for Poland[312]. Based on that, Gecen was dismissed from the Navy on September 3, 1938. Two days later, the Fleet's Special Branch of NKVD prepared a motion for his arrest. The motion stated that he was a Pole, „an agent of Polish intelligence, on whose orders he busied himself with spying activities and preparation of subversive acts"[313]. Fortunately, it was already the final stage of the Great Purge – at the end of

[306] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-1570, оп. 8, *д*. 22, *л*. 1 (Постановление о избрании меры пресечения и предьявлении обвинения, 02.1938) (Decree on the selection of a preventive measure and presentation of the charge, 02.1938).

[307] *Ленинградский мартиролог* 1937-1938 (2010), p. 279. Lubowicz was arrested on February 3, and shot on June 2, 1938.

[308] РГВА, УПК, Бушечкан Владимир Семенович 1893 г.р.

[309] Iona Yakir – one of the greatest commanders of the Red Army. In the 1930s, he commanded the Ukrainian and then the Kiev Military District. Together with Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevskiy, he was accused of leading the „military-fascist plot" in the RKKA, and together with him he was convicted and executed in June 1937.

[310] РГВА, ф. 25900, оп. 6, *д*. 9, *л*. 143 (Список начсостава , подлежащего увольнению из РККА, 1937) (The list of command personnel subject to dismissal from the Red Army, 1937).

[311] Жертвы политического террора в СССР, Бишечкан Владимир Семенович 1893 г.р. (Victims of political terror in the USSR, Bishechkan Vladimir Semenovich, born in 1893), http://base.memo.ru/person/show/372313.

[312] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-2185, оп. 2, *д*. 4, *л*. 68 (Список лиц кнс КБФ несоветских национальностей, 1938) (List of KNF KBF non-Soviet nationalities, 1937).

[313] РГАВМФ, ф. Р-1570, оп. 8, *д*. 160, *л*. 1 (Постановление ОО НКВД КБФ, 5.09.1938) (Resolution of the NKVD CBF).

November 1938, as wrongfully arrested, Gecen was released and could return not only to military service, but also to his declared nationality, namely Russian.

The NKVD Special Forces of the Transbaikal Military District and the Far Eastern Front also had their achievements in the field of revealing the "true" nationality of the Red Army officers. They sent numerous requests to arrest officers of the Red Army to Lev Mekhlis, Deputy People's Commissar of Defence and at the same time the head of the RKKA's Central Political Board, who was staying in the Far East from July to October 1938. In the motion for the arrest of Major Ilja Kosacz (Ilya Kosach), the artillery chief of the 6th Mechanized Brigade of the Transbaikal Military District, giving basic data about him, they wrote: „Pole". In the justification for his arrest, in addition to accusations of close ties with arrested military conspirators, the following sentences can be found: „Kosacz was born in Poland [in the former Vilnius province – J.W.], of Polish nationality, although he conceals it. During the review of his autobiography, records of service and registration information, contradictory answers were found. In one place he states that he is a Pole, in the second – a Russian, and the third – a Belarussian. In his earlier autobiographies, he wrote that he knew the Polish language well, in the latter that he knew it very little"[314]. As can be seen, the contradictory information on nationality, in the eyes of the state police, became an incriminating factor which could even contribute to an officer's arrest.

Officers of the NKVD's Special Branch of the Far East Army Special Forces adopted a different approach in some cases. Although many Red Army officers, due to the pronunciation of their surname, were almost automatically assigned to Polish nationality, they treated differently Colonel Nikołaj Szkodunowicz (Nikolai Shkodunovich), Chief of Staff of the 39th Rifle Division. Although he was born in Tver, in indigenous Russia, due to his marriage to a Lithuanian woman, he was portrayed as a Lithuanian[315].

* * *

As can be inferred from the above examples, for the Red Army officers, the period of Great Purge in the USSR, became the moment at which their declared nationality became particularly contractual. It did not depend on their individual choices, but on subjective assessments of the RKKA party and personnel authorities as well as the Soviet state police – the NKVD. It was these institutions that ruled, quite freely interpreting the facts, what nationality any given person was. They often decided person's dismissal from the ranks of the armed forces but they could also use it as a pretext for much more serious repression – imprisonment and even death.

The Great Purge had a very strong national feature. Representatives of the nations who inhabited Russia, and later the Soviet Union, whose countries, after the WWI, became part of the "capitalist camp", were the first victims of oppression. It was easier for the political bodies of the Red Army and functionaries of the NKVD to consider the representatives of non-Soviet nations as suspects of various offenses. The effects for Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Romanians and others (also the ones who were arbitrarily considered representatives of those nations) were deplorable. If at the beginning of 1934, 1354 Poles, 930 Latvians, 390 Estonians (in total slightly above 2%), and 86297 Russians (67,42%), 19261 Ukrainians (15%), and 5748 Belorussians (4,5%) served (according to the

[314] РГВА, ф. 9, оп, 39, *д*. 51, *л*. 229-230 (Справка на арест Косач Илью Николаевича, 07.1938) (Certificate of arrest Kosach Ilya Nikolaevich, 07.1938).

[315] Ibidem, *д*. 56, *л*. 56 (Справка на полковника Шкодуновича Н.Н. начальника штаба 39 сд, 07.1938) (Information on Colonel Shkodunovich N.N. Chief of Staff 39 sd, 07.1938).

official data) in the officer corps of the Red Army[316], the data from the beginning of 1939, after the end of the Great Purge, were drastically different. Although the number of the officer corps increased to over 212,5 thousand, there remained 265 Poles, 52 Latvians, and 41 Estonians, less than 0,02% of the officers – more than ten times less than 5 years ago! In turn, the number of soviet Slavs increased – Russians to over 142 thousand (67,1%), Ukrainians to almost 42 thousand (19,7%), and Belorussians to 9,5 thousand (4,5%)[317]. Unfortunately, the data say nothing about other Central-European nations.

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[316] РГВА, ф. 54, оп. 17, *д.* 402, *л.* 27 (Командный и начальствующий состав РККА по национальностьям на январь 1934 г.) (The command and command of the Red Army by nationality in January 1934).

[317] Ibidem, *л.* 139 (Сведения на командный и начальствующий состав РККА на 1.01.1939) (Information on the command and command staff of the Red Army on 01/01/1939).

# Essay Review

by

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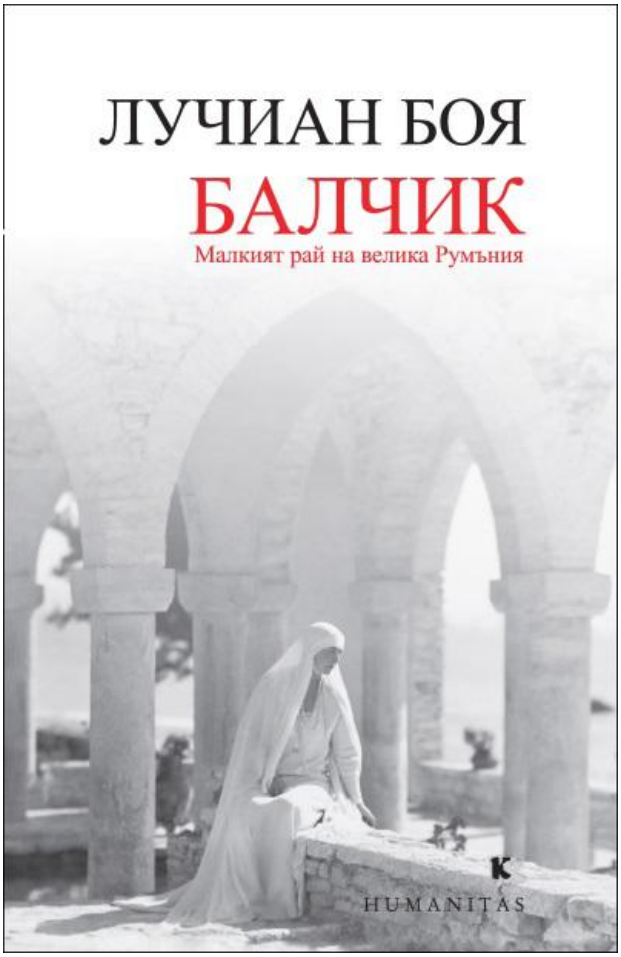
# *Лучиан Боя. Балчик: Малкият рай на велика Румъния* (Lucian Boia, Balchik: The Little Heaven of Greater Romania). 2014. [Bucureşti – София]: Humanitas–Kritika I humanizam, 188 p. + XII annexes.




## Between Heaven and Hell: The Romanian Balchik in Focus

Why and how did the white city by the Black Sea morph into "the small heaven of Greater Romania," whose memory attracts so many tourists and sparks the researchers' interest to this day? The answers provided by Lucian Boia in his book about the Romanian Balchik, now also available in Bulgarian[318], deserves attention not only because of the specific place of the small town in the history of the Romanian presence in Southern Dobrudja, but also because of the great popularity of its author and his unconventional positions as a historian.

The name of Professor Lucian Boia is undoubtedly the most commented name of a historian in contemporary Romania. A long-standing professor of historiography at the University of Bucharest, he gained national and international fame through his publications after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime. The topics Lucian Boia addresses are more than relevant to the post-1989 times of toppled taboos: the history of ideas, of the imaginary, of the writing of history and especially historical mythology, with an accent on the myths of nationalism and Communism in Romania. These subjects, significant to historians and sensitive to any national state, are developed by the Romanian historian through the prism of deconstructivist and demythologising stances.

In the spirit of the postmodern approach, Boia challenges the traditional positivist historiography, which postulated a reconstruction of the truth about the past through a critical analysis of historical sources, and which is strongly influenced by the ideological canons of the 20th century. He makes a clear distinction between history as a process and history as representation, or discourse; he rejects the argument about the one and only historical "truth" in favour of the inevitable historiographical pluralism; he puts an accent on the role of the imaginary as a

[318] Boia (2014); Боя (2014). The Bulgarian edition was presented in the framework of the Sofia International Bookfair at the end of 2014. See Vanina Bojikova, "Romania in focus. The Romanian writers invited at the Sofia Bookfair" in Kultura, № 2 (2794), 16.01.2015.

crucial element in the process of writing history. Lucian Boia understands the historical myth as an imaginary construct, neither "real" nor "unreal" which takes on a symbolic meaning as a basic interpretation in line with certain needs[319].

All that cannot but draw the readers' interest, along with controversial reactions among society and the professional milieu. Just like everywhere in Eastern Europe after the fall of communist regimes, Romania, too, is undergoing a process of de-ideologisation of historiography, understood as rejecting communist dogmas and clichés, but often taking the shape of national re-mythologisation or of a new, politically correct ideologisation of historical knowledge[320].

As regards the book *Balchik, The Little Paradise of Greater Romania*, Boia shared with the audience, during the book launch in Romania and in Sofia, that his book about the real and the imaginary Balchik is different from everything he wrote before. While in his other books he was mostly disassembling historical myths, in this particular study the movement is reversed – he is interested in the construction of a "Romanian legend about a Turkish-Bulgarian town" (p. 20) or the "Balchik myth". The interlacing of the terms "legend" and "myth" is not an accident when one bears in mind that the two narratives resemble each other in combining fact and fiction. However, unlike the legend, the myth acquires a sacred meaning of a credible representation and explanation of the past and the world. In the case of Balchik, Boia apparently prefers the term "legend", which is not negatively connoted, as opposed to the nationalist and communist myths he himself has criticized.

In order to fulfil his goal, Lucian Boia ambitiously attempts to reconstruct the complete history of the city throughout its Romanian period, which started in 1913 and ended in 1940, based on the preserved Romanian traces of the past. Despite the fact that a little more than 2000 Turks and about 3000 Bulgarians lived in Balchik – as opposed to only 17 Romanians – when the Romanian authorities arrived, the author seems to see this story primarily as a story of the Romanian newcomers – irrespective of whether they were local administration, artists, writers, other intellectuals, or royals. Given that Boia's interest is directed at "the upper crust of Romanian life" in the coastal town, its other inhabitants appear in the book only as statistics, or, at best, as extras for the reconstructed events. The Oriental heritage is overemphasized in accordance to the perceptions of the Romanian elite of that time. This is perhaps the reason why Boia depicts Balchik as "Turkish-Bulgarian", and not "Bulgarian-Turkish" town, as the data at the time shows. The town's Bulgarian past up until 1913 is omitted, except when Boia counts the "potholes" that the Romanian authorities inherited (p. 28-30).

Central to his attention are the Romanian artists and Queen Marie – more precisely, the artists who in 1913 "discovered" the picturesque "Mediterranean" landscape of Balchik, which will later appear on dozens of their canvases. All schools of Romanian art – primarily impressionist and post-impressionist – were thriving there, and some even speak of the formation of a new Romanian "Black Sea School". According to art historians, Balchik became a "real Mecca" for artists in Romania, or the "Romanian Barbizon".

A key figure in Boia's study is Queen Marie of Romania (1875-1938), a former British princess, the wife of King Ferdinand (who held

[319] Boia's most famous book, Istorie şi mit în conştiinţa românească, was also translated into Bulgarian. See Grigorov (2010). On the historical views of Lucian Boia see also L. Boia (2015). „Does it mean you're a great patriot if you say that Romania already existed in the Antiquity, in the times of Burebista? This is not quite true. What kind of patriotism is this?" Interview taken by Stylian Deyanov (2011).

[320] Njagulov (2011), 417-436.

the Romanian throne from 1914 to 1927) and mother of King Carol II (1930-1940). A strong, passionate woman open to the world (and broad-minded in her personal life), she became a legend and even a national myth in Romania during the First World War. Back then, the British Marie took a determined position in favour of Romania joining the Entente – an act not unanimously supported by the contemporaneous Romanian elite, which eventually led to the Unification desired by all Romanians and the creation of Greater Romania after WWI. The Queen fell in love with Balchik and the coastal palace complex, built on her initiative, in which she put all her energy and imagination. Queen Marie described her residence in Balchik as "the rediscovered heaven", as she often wrote in her journal; after her death in 1938, she had her heart interred in the gardens (her sarcophagus was moved to Romania after Southern Dobrudja was returned to Bulgaria, according to the Treaty of Craiova in 1940).

Apart from the rocky landscape, the Romanian artists and the Queen were especially drawn by Balchik's oriental exoticism, materialised in the local architecture – especially the mosques – and embodied by the local Muslims. It is no coincidence that some of the favorite topics in the works of the Romanian Balchik artists were the images of Turks and Tatars, as well as the scenes with the cafes and pubs of the town. What is more, the Queen wanted and got precisely a "white house, with a clean silhouette, in Turkish style" by the seacoast (the not-so-large building with a minaret was called Tenha Juvah, meaning The Quiet Nest). All this brings to light the Orientalism, understood as a paternalistic attitude from the developed West towards the archaic East (according to Edward Said), and the so-called geo-cultural Bovarism of the Romanian pro-Western elites, expressed in an exaggerated self-assessment, determining their perception of the Balkans as a backwards, but exotic Orient.

This book on the Romanian Balchik provides the readers with information and with a fascinating story about the Romanian municipal administration and its two most famous Mayors of the 1930s – the cultural "manager" Octavian Moșescu and his curious "urban utopia," and George Fotino, who became very close to the Queen. It depicts the cultural initiatives and the writers' interest, the feminist Balchik; the new villa-type architecture and its most important representative – architect Henrieta Delavrancea-Gibory. The book also describes the "unexpected end" of "the small heaven" in 1940, the Romanian-Bulgarian discussions around the villas and the palace, the personal fate of the principal actors of the Romanian history of the town; and, finally, the contemporary "return of the Queen" to Balchik through the "souvenirs and the urban legends", and the "peaceful" second conquest of the Bulgarian coast by Romanian tourists. It is worth noting that Boia's style and language are not typical of other traditional historical works. His narrative is literary and expressive, demonstrating a fair amount of irony towards the past, which can be understood as a way to overcome the megalomania and inferiority complex of Romanian national history.

Studying simultaneously the real history of Balchik – by relying on the available Romanian sources – and the creation of "the Romanian legend" about this town, Boia declares at the end that he does not want to oppose history to legend in terms of their truthfulness. According to him, the transformation of the past into a legend is "a god sign, a symptom of viability", as "the only part of the past that remains with us is the one which kindles the imagination." (p. 187) Putting the problem this way – similarly to the understanding of the myth in archaic societies as a credible and sacred narrative of the world, and not as fiction – can lead to the relativisation of historical truth and risks undermining the historians' work, including the efforts of the author of Balchik. Unless the aim of history is

to become literature, which would attract more readers and be "more pleasant", as Boia had stated at the book launch.

Boia's book is primarily a historical study, however peculiar. The informed reader will notice that it is written from the position of a Romanian author and in the Romanian readers' interest. The Bulgarian edition is a literal translation of the Romanian one – with linguistic and terminological clarifications by the translator, Stilyan Deyanov. The edition was initiated, prepared and funded by the prestigious Romanian publishing house Humanitas, which published all of Boia's recent books, and its partner in Bulgaria, the publishing house Critique & Humanism. It is worth asking whether the content of a book about a topic that is interpreted differently in Romania and in Bulgaria should not have been completed by an introduction to the Bulgarian edition. Is it not Boia himself who questions the existence of one and only historical "truth"?

How does the presented book fit into the Romanian historiography dedicated to the history of Dobrudja, and of the Dobrudja question in the Romanian-Bulgarian relations? If we limit ourselves to the period after 1989, then this topic becomes more important into the works of Romanian historians. The interpretations vary between the revival of the national historical mythology and the de-mythologization of past realities – and, often, between the values of nationalism and those of liberalism[321]. Gradually, the accumulation of research and the interest of many young historians toward the topic led to a genuine rise in the number of publications about "Dobrudja". These pay attention mostly to the topic – politically forbidden until 1989 – of the area of the Cadrilater/Quadrilateral (as Southern Dobrudja was called) in Romanian history. Along with the publication of Romanian historical sources, there is some interest towards the use of Bulgarian sources and historical studies on the same topic.

Bearing all this in mind, in my opinion, Boia's book is an important step forward, but also a step back in understanding the history of Dobrudja and the controversial Bulgarian-Romanian issues. An important step forward – because, by relying on new sources, the book sheds light on unknown or barely known sides of Balchik's history under Romanian rule, while critically presenting the construction of the myth of the town as part of the Romanian imaginary of Dobrudja. And a step back – as the book's perspective is one-sided.

The one-sided impression is given by the fact that the book relies on Romanian facts and interpretations. For example, the book re-produced (albeit ironically) the famous – in the Romanian historiography – argument according to which the Bulgarian territorial claims to Northern Dobrudja actually explain and justify the Romanian ones to the Southern part of the region: "And so, if Bulgaria wanted Northern Dobrudja, why should Romania not claim the Southern (Cadrilater)?" (p. 16) In 1878, the Bulgarian aspirations to the territory between the Danube and the Black Sea were not devoid of ethnic and other grounds, despite the multicultural character of the population in the region. Moreover, this was partially acknowledged by the Romanian side at the time of the exchange of Southern Bessarabia and Northern Dobrudja, imposed on the country by Russia and the Great Powers. In his previously mentioned book *Istorie și mit*…, Boia himself stated that the annexation of Southern Dobrudja by Romania in 1913 showed that Romanian politics were imbued with "short term imperial illusions and a dose of expansionism." (p. 285)

Boia's argumentation is also one-sided when it comes to his statement that "Southern Dobrudja had not been a very happy experience for Romanians" or that the region brought them "more problems than motives for satisfaction" (p. 17-19). We cannot but wonder

[321] Njagulov (2002), 201-228; Njagulov (1997-1999), 255-276.

what kind of "experience" the Romanian period of Southern Dobrudja's history had been for the Bulgarians and the rest of the local population. We will not find an answer to this question in this particular book about the Romanian Balchik. Of course, this is not its main topic, but the balance of historical representations of a contradictory topic might require an inquiry into it.

From the Bulgarian perspective, the Romanian regime in Southern Dobrudja was depicted as "denationalising" and "discriminatory" through local public policies, which meant the seizure of one third of the land property of the local population by the State; the poorly organized and badly carried out colonisation to the detriment of the locals, and the use of Aromanians colonists as an unofficial task force of the regime; the state of emergency at the border, the arbitrary acts of violence by the Romanian authorities, and the repressions, including the mass abductions of civilians in August 1916 and the tragic death of thousands of them in labour camps, or the pogroms against dozens of civilians, carried out by the Romanian Gendarmerie during the interwar period, etc.

Boia's statement that a radical ethnic cleansing through population exchange, as provided in the Treaty of Craiova, was "more favourable to Bulgaria", because the Romanians expulsed from Southern Dobrudja were more numerous than the Bulgarians expelled from Northern Dobrudja, while the property left by the former was bigger (p. 166), seems out of context. The forced displacement is a dramatic and traumatic experience for the population on both sides of the new "old" state border established in September 1940, irrespective of its scale and the preceding history of the migrants. However, it is not redundant to remind ourselves that, while the people expelled from Northern Dobrudja were locals indigenous to the region (at least from the 19th century onwards), the large majority of the ethnic refugees from Southern Dobrudja were recent settlers (from the 1920s). At the time of the Bulgarian-Romanian negotiations, the principle of minority exchange was adopted on the insistence not of the Bulgarian, but of the Romanian Government, which, at first, requested a compulsory expulsion of all Bulgarians from Romania (i.e. not only those from Northern Dobrudja) in exchange for the Romanian settlers in Southern Dobrudja.

The explanations for these shortcomings in the book can be accounted to Boia's intention to address mainly his Romanian readers, and his use of Romanian sources. The lack of knowledge of Bulgarian historical sources and literature can be misleading. The history of regions whose borders are often redrawn, as was the case of Dobrudja, cannot be written without relying on information and interpretations from both parties contesting said borders.

The lack of knowledge of Bulgarian historiography can also be inferred from Lucian Boia's statement while in Sofia that, as far as he knew, Balchik seemed less valuable to Bulgarians than it was for the imaginary of Romanians. However, the solid bibliography in Bulgaria devoted to the natural and architectural sites, or to the history of Dobrudja and to this Black Sea town, contradicts his statement. What is more, the "heaven" metaphor and others like it are also present in Bulgarian historiography.

There are two main threads in the most recent (after 1989) publications in Bulgaria on the topic of Balchik's history. On the one hand, the romantic-touristic interpretation, which was given a special thrust by the tourist flow from Romania after 2007, centred on the palace complex and the personality of the former Romanian Queen[322]. On the other hand, the idealisation of the palace and its symbolic equation with Balchik encounter reactions which contest this visiting card of the town and seek alternative symbols. In the spirit of an interpretation, which nationalises history, the

[322]Malcheva-Zlatkova(2011); Malcheva-Zlatkova, Yonova (2009).

Balchik royal residence is characterised as "the brightest material embodiment of the quarter-century Romanian occupation of Southern Dobrudja". The romantic Quiet Nest is transformed into "an especially dark or sad symbol", testifying to the Bulgarian "disaster" – the second loss of Southern Dobrudja in 1919, in contrast to the 1916 military victories of the Third Bulgarian Army in the region. Alternative Bulgarian symbols of the coastal town were also proposed. The first such symbol is the 2001 monument to the Bulgarian Coastal Artillery that protected the town during the bombardments of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in 1916; the second, and more important one, is the Mill of the Anonymous Industrial Society, established in 1910 as the largest and most modern automated mill, "the industrial pearl of Bulgaria" at the time. The monument to the coastal artillery and the so-called Old Mill, both located in the same square in Balchik, become bearers of a national symbol – the first, that of "heroism and military gallantry", and the second, a symbol of "the entrepreneurial spirit and industriousness of Bulgarians"[323].

Balchik architecture and art have attracted the attention of Bulgarian researchers of architecture, as well. A cultural studies analysis distinguished between two profiles of the Romanian architecture in Balchik – the "vacation villa" of the 1920s, elitist, conservative, loaded with a perception of cultural superiority, according to which the city should remain exotic, "oriental", archaic; and the "mass touristic" one of the 1930s, embodied by the presence of people of bourgeois circles from the Romanian capital[324].

The accents in the abovementioned and other historical publications in Bulgaria on the history of Balchik and Dobrudja[325] are also one-sided and nationally biased, as they omit the artists, the Queen and the palace. The dominating presence of the latter in Boia's book creates a similar impression. Apparently, all depends on the point of view from which the selection of facts and the corresponding interpretations are made.

## „O Dobrudja, you are our heaven on earth…"

This is the beginning of the unofficial Bulgarian "hymn" of Dobrudja, created by Lyubomir Bobevski and Aleksandar Krastev in 1914, i.e. soon after the first Romanian annexation of Southern Dobrudja. The "heaven" lost by the Bulgarians seems to have been "rediscovered" later by the Romanian Queen and the Bucharest elite in the White Town by the Black Sea. But if we try to extricate Dobrudja's history between 1878 and 1940 from the one-dimensional national perceptions of the past, we will find that, as in other similar cases, it flows mostly, metaphorically speaking, through the polychromatic zones between heaven and hell.

The review of historiographical visions and the officialised perceptions of Dobrudja's history in Bulgaria and Romania shows that they have been exact opposites and have practically neutralised one another. The struggle between cherrypicked facts, interpretations, and assessments found its best-synthesised expression in the notions signifying the breakthrough events in the history of the contested region. The uses of concepts such as "occupation", "annexation", "liberation", "return", "unification", etc., are completely divergent. The rational balance between what is common and what is different in the history of the two neighboring nations, between what connects and what separates them in their coexistence in Dobrudja, remains

[323] Kanavrov (2010); Kanavrov (2007).

[324] Vasiltchina (2008), 25-33. Yankova, Pencheva, Tchavdarova (2012), 166-233.

[325] Todorov, Penchikov (2003), 4-5; Nedkov (2009), 122-145; Todorov, Kuzmanova, Popov, Njagulov, Penchikov (2007); Izvori. T. 1. (1992); T. 2 (1993).

unachievable for a science directed and influenced by national ideology and politics and which is quick to turn into propaganda[326]. The changes after 1989 – the withering away of the direct political dictate over historical science, the spreading pluralism of interpretations and the mutual recognition of the territorial status quo, established in 1940 – created the conditions for a scientific debate between historians in Bulgaria and Romania. A contributing factor was the new alliance between the two neighbouring countries, established in the process of their synchronic Euro-Atlantic integration.

In the contemporary pluralist world, differences are an inevitable fact. As long as humanity is divided into nations, these nations will need their own national histories, based on more or less mythologising notions. The different histories will inevitably stress different things, they will often contradict each other, but it is not impossible that they complete each other, if we treat the past, as Tacitus suggested, "without anger or bias". If historians, in their capacity as creators and keepers of national versions about the past, have more or less contributed to the construction of one-dimensional notions of this past, then it is their professional duty to overcome these notions today. We can speculate on whether the fulfillment of this duty will contribute to the "purification" of the collective memory of contemporary national societies, or, metaphorically speaking, to a passage through purgatory, which prepares one for the yearned-for heaven. One thing is certain: that, in times of crisis and escalation of conflicts and violence in the global world, moving away from hell and closer to heaven – or at least to the possible security in the relations between communities, peoples and states – cannot be achieved without an understanding of the "Other" and without reconciling differences.

[326] Njagulov (2002), 64-86.

The return of Queen Marie's heart to Balchik Palace, where it was initially interred in 1938, was proposed during Lucian Boia's book launch in Sofia in late 2014. Soon after, the Bulgarian media announced that the Calendar of Events of the Municipality of Balchik for 2015 will be devoted to "75 years since the liberation of the White Town and Southern Dobrudja from Romanian occupation." It is obvious that the truth about the history of Balchik and Dobrudja is neither Romanian, nor Bulgarian. The book reviewed here is an invitation to think deeper on this fact.

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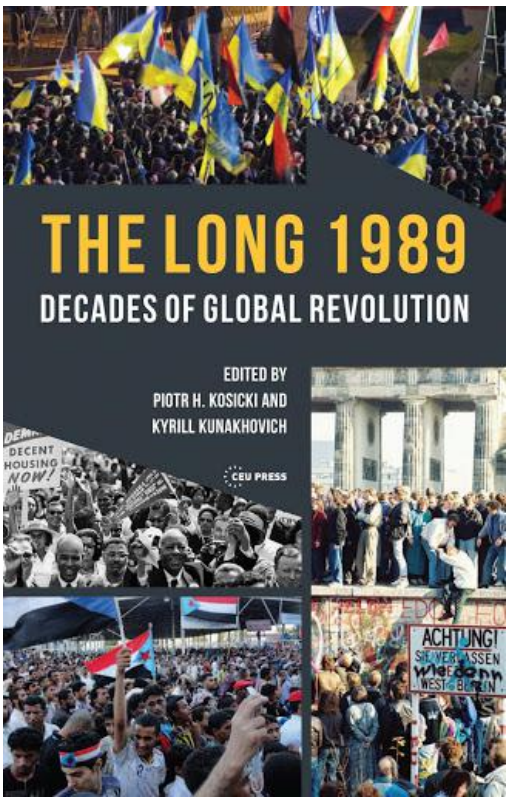
# Reviews

# *The Long 1989. Decades of Global Revolution*. 2019. Edited by Piotr H. Kosicki, Kyrill Kunakhovich. Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 284 p.




The collective volume *The Long 1989. Decades of Global Revolution* aims to analyse the events of 1989 in a broader perspective. On the one hand, it interrogates the impact of the 1989 revolutions of Central and Eastern Europe in the world at that particular moment, and, on the other, it argues that the revolution which started in 1989 goes on while inspiring mass mobilisation in other areas and in recent years, as was the case with the 'Arab spring', or the 'Occupy Wall Street' movement in the USA, to name but a few.

Inspired by the idea of Joseph de Maistre, who wrote about the French Revolution of 1789 that "for a long time we did not fully understand the revolution of which we were witnesses; for a long time, we took it to be an event. We were mistaken; it was an epoch"[327], the editors and the authors look at how the events of 1989 and their aftermath "resonated years later and thousands of miles away" (p. 2). The nine chapters deal with various topics such as Poland and the apartheid in South Africa, Soviet Central Asia, Tiananmen, the American Culture Wars, the Iraq war and the Middle East, the uprisings of 2011 in Northern Africa and the Occupy movement, the Euromaidan, etc.

The first chapter, titled '1989 Compared and Connected: The Demise of Communism in Poland and Apartheid in South Africa' (by Adrian Guelke, Tom Junes) briefly draws the picture of the social unrest in communist Poland, which eventually lead to the fall of Communism in the country, and of the racial and social movement in South Africa, which put an end to the apartheid. The description of the events is clear and logical, but the main thesis of the chapter that "the demises of Communism and apartheid were in some way connected" (p. 14) is unsustainable. To quote a French saying "comparaison n'est pas raison" – the comparison between the two events is misleading. In fact, as the authors themselves noticed, the comparison would have been more suitable with the mass peaceful mobilisation which started, in the former GDR, in Leipzig, in October 1989. The 'Leipzig Way' became a frame of reference for the anti-apartheid movement, and especially for the South-African Communist Party. However, the

[327] de Maistre (1851), 76-77.

model could not be applied locally; South Africans had to find their own way to overcome the obstacles and eventually to put an end to the Apartheid.

The second chapter, 'Islam as Ideology and Tactic: Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan' (by Vera Exnerova) deals with the instrumentalisation of Islam in Soviet Central Asia, and in Afghanistan. Based on ethnographic research conducted by the author of the article in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, the analysis argues that the Islamic community did not organise itself to resist Communism (except at the very beginning of the Soviet rule in Central Asia, and in the late 1980s in Afghanistan). On the contrary, Communism and sovietisation help the young people to self-assert themselves within the community and eventually to organize themselves in order to claim (and take) power. The Soviet education system provided the locals living in Central Asia with the opportunity to study (even abroad) and to establish contacts with other reforming Islamic groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The same approach initially characterised Afghanistan. The modernisation of the state through a new Constitution (adopted in 1963) and the development of the education system (including the establishment of a university) gave young people the possibility to surpass the traditional leadership in their communities. Some of these young people, mainly students from the University of Kabul, would go on to form Islamist groups which asserted themselves in the context of the authoritarian rule of Mohammad Daoud (1973-1978). The communist coup d'etat of April 1978 and the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR in December 1979 moved the game to another level. While the communist government persecuted the local landowners and religious leaders, the latter started to organise a resistance movement by appealing to jihad as a legitimisation strategy (p. 57). The USSR's withdrawal in 1989 and the demise of Communism in the region would bring to the fore the Islam as a political alternative, which would eventually lead to another war in Afghanistan and to purges of Christians in the former Central Asia Soviet republics. The article does not interrogate the aftermath of these events, when it could have assessed the impact of the 1989 change of systems in the long term.

The third chapter, 'European lessons for China: Tiananmen 1989 and Beyond' (by Martin K. Dimitrov) analyses the impact of the social unrest in China, which took place from April to June 1989, and its impact on Chinese politics to this day. It argues that the Chinese communists learned their lessons from the demise of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe and took the appropriate measures in order to consolidate their power. The article, inspired by the classical theories of diffusion, aims at refuting their conclusions as regards limited diffusion due to geographical and cultural barriers. However, although the article points out several of the lessons learnt by the Chinese leadership, the most obvious one is somehow neglected: the communists in China realised that people needed (more than freedom) to enjoy a certain living standard. The authoritarian communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe failed to fulfil this societal demand in the '80s, which eventually lead to the fall of Communism. After all, the Solidarity movement appeared as a result of the strikes in Gdansk against the communist government's intention to raise prices. This lesson was also learned by Vladimir Putin, who uses the carrot and stick paradigm in order to retain power. It was, without doubt, a great lesson of 1989, and its enduring heritage.

Chapter 4, titled 'Dialogical Democracy: King, Michnik, and the American Culture Wars' (by Jeffrey Stout), analyses, on the one hand, the impact of the American Civil Rights Movement on Adam Michnik's perspective on democracy and human rights, and, on the other, the importance of cultural and religious dialogue within the American society as a strategy to safeguard democracy in the USA.

The author of the article points out that both Adam Michnik and Martin Luther King promoted democratic dialogue in order to achieve consensus and to build a better society, arguing that Michnik took his inspiration from the writings of legendary American human rights figure King in promoting a non-violent inclusive movement, which would have brought together the Catholics and the secular Left in an attempt to contest the Soviet domination in Poland (p. 96). On the other hand, Jeffrey Stout states that Michnik's approach to society as a dialogical democracy should become a model for today America, when the religious Right seeks control over the State ( p. 120).

Chapter 5, written by Istvan Rev, about 'The Virtue of Not Inventing Anything', deals with the end of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, which is seen less as a Revolution (at least in the classical sense inspired by the French Revolution of 1789) and more as an attempt by society to overcome the crisis of the regimes in a peaceful manner. The author emphasises the need for anti-communists and dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe to find a new narrative after the delusional Marxism. The Human Rights perspective (after the 1975 Helsinki Accords) seemed promising and many of the dissidents embraced this approach, especially after the thinkers and scholars of the West accommodated Human Rights and social justice into the doctrine of liberalism. Furthermore, Istvan Rev argues that the Human Rights approach inspired those involved in the Round Table discussions of 1989/1990 to promote a peaceful revolution in the region (except for Romania). Istvan Rev states that the 'velvet revolutions' in the region were also inspired by the fear of the unknown. The local communists themselves, after Gorbachev announced the break with the 'Brezhnev doctrine' in 1988, felt insecure, while the opposition feared the dangers of revolutionary justice, "which had the potential to lead to terror" (p. 156). The author also underlines in his essay the influence of the French scholars of the Revolution of 1789, of those criticising its outcomes, the terror and its crimes, on the great thinkers of the opposition in Central and Eastern Europe: Adam Michnik, Vaclav Havel, Janos Kis, Bronislaw Geremek, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, etc.

The sixth chapter, 'The Rule of Law after the Short Twentieth Century: Launching a Global Career' (by Martin Krygier), draws the picture of a post-1989 popular concept, 'The Rule of Law' (RoL, as the author calls it). Krygier aims at tracing the origins of this concept, its appeal to both West- and East-Europeans (especially dissidents and anti-communists), as well as its evolution until recent days. Based on Samuel Moyn's book *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*[328], the author argues that RoL is the less ambitious project proposed to the world in the 1990s, inspired by the Human Rights movement born in the '70s. Human Rights, enshrined in the Helsinki Accords in 1975, was introduced as an alternative to the disenchantment which characterised both the Liberal, democratic West, and the dissidents in the communist world. The USSR and the Warsaw Pact interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, on the one hand, the Vietnam war, the student movement of 1968, and the rise of the New Left, on the other, created the need for a new 'utopia', as Moyn called Human Rights. But, as it happens with any utopia, its promises were hard to fulfil; therefore, something more down-to-earth was needed. This is how RoL became the new mantra of the world scene. It also fitted the economists' agenda, as they placed "great stress on law, property rights, and security of contract guaranteed by law, and more general economic predictability, also said to flow from law." (p. 178) In the 1990s, RoL seemed to function well and to have promising outcomes in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. However, 9/11 in the USA, the financial crisis of 2008, as well as the rise of

[328] Moyn (2010).

populism in former communist countries emphasised the fact that 'the Rule of Law' might not be the only alternative. Furthermore, RoL can be subverted by populist regimes, as is the case in Hungary and Poland nowadays, 'to authoritarian ends' (p. 185). However, the career of the Rule of Law is not over. As the author suggests, "it frames agendas, concepts, the very ways we think and speak; moreover, too many people have a stake in keeping it aloft." (p. 185)

In Chapter 7, 'Catalyst of History: Francis Fukuyama, the Iraq War, and the Legacies of 1989 in the Middle East', the author, Samuel Helfont, argues that Fukuyama's idea about the end of history and the triumph of the Western liberal democracy after the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe does not put an end to debates and actions, but has acted as a "catalyst for the events and ideological clashes that raged in the Middle East over the next thirty years." (p. 190) Furthermore, he emphasises the role of Fukuyama's ideas about the imminent liberal societies, which would arise after the fall of dictatorships, in the USA invasion of Iraq in 2003. The assumptions of Fukuyama proved to be wrong, as the Americans themselves realised a year later. "In places where the invading forces thought they would be welcomed by a grateful population, they often encountered fierce resistance from Saddam's popular militias and security forces." (p. 199) This American strategy to impose liberal democracy on a society with no tradition in this respect was not limited to Iraq, but extended to the entire Middle East during the second term of the George Bush Jr. Presidency. However, these politics failed and a new 'realistic' agenda was set in motion, firstly by public intellectuals, and then by politicians. Still, Fukuyama's legacy is enduring and has destabilised the Middle East for a long time.

The eight chapter, titled 'Social Movement vs. Social Arrest: The Global Occupations of the Twenty-first Century' (by Mehmet Doşemeci), deals with the uprisings of 2011 through a global lens. (p. 210) It focuses on a common characteristic of all these movements: "the continuous occupation of public space" (p. 210). The author challenged the term used to define these uprisings, namely 'social movement', while stating that "a politics of social arrest has come to define the global occupations of public space since 2011, a politics that has turned these spaces into immanent sites of democratic self-institution." (p. 210) The author argues that the 1989 revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe were the last classical type of social movement whose purpose was to end authoritarian regimes and replace them with liberal democracies. He also points out that the uprisings of 2011-2013 in Northern Africa and Southern Europe were not typical revolutions, but a different approach to governance, democracy and solidarity. People in Tahrir Square in Egypt, in Syntagma Square in Athens, or those dwelling in Zuccotti Park in New York (Occupy Wall Street) aimed not only to contest the existing regimes, but to figure out new alternatives for the *res publica*. They were able to organise themselves for a little while, but the establishment eventually succeeded in dispersing them. Mehmet Doşemeci states that "the occupiers of the world's squares, through their very occupation, put into practice the democracy they believed should take its place. … The occupations were just as much about setting up a new society as they were about criticizing the chains of the old one." (p. 226) The author's assumptions provide a fresh perspective on the topic, but a discussion about the failure of these social arrests might have been necessary as well. The fact that they represented a "threat to the world's states" (p. 226), cannot be the only explanation. Maybe grassroots-type democracy cannot be achieved in the global world at a national scale?

Chapter Nine, 'Euromaidan and the 1989 Legacy: Solidarity in Action?' (by Valeria Korablyova) discusses the uprising of 2013/2014 in Ukraine known as 'Euromaidan' or the 'Revolution of Dignity'. The author

argues that "the Euromaidan was a misinterpreted revolution" (p. 233), which shared "some legacies with the velvet revolutions of 1989 in East-Central Europe" (p. 233).

The Euromaidan of 2013-2014 was a mass revolt in Kyiv, aiming at surpassing the 2004 Orange revolution. It was a kind of 'general strike' and an 'ultimate measure of direct democracy' (p. 238). The movement had no recognised leaders, but was "driven by an ethos, being socially and politically heterogeneous" (p. 238). A parallel society was organised on the spot, with functionally specialised institutions: safety and internal affairs, fundraising and professional assistance, diplomacy, external actions and communication, etc. (p. 241) People gathering in the Euromaidan shared not only their views on society, but also their belongings, goods and money. Valeria Korablyova points out that what happened at the Euromaidan might be understood through Kojin Karatani and Marcel Mauss' ideas about the 'gift economy' (p. 242). It can be seen as a legacy of the Central and Eastern European revolutions which began in 1956 in Hungary, went on in 1968 in Prague, evolved through the Solidarity movement and culminated in the 1989 velvet revolutions. The author argues that the Euromaidan of 2013-2014 is an example of a 'civil democracy' which claims a bigger role for civil society. However, Valeria Korablyova seems to ignore the influence of the Occupy type of uprising, which occurred previously in Northern Africa and Southern Europe in 2011. In my understanding, the Euromaidan functioned in the same way as the other Occupy movements. They are very different from the 1989 revolutions: in 1989, people from Central and Eastern Europe asked for freedom and for a liberal democracy, while the Euromaidan and the others were interested in a new social organisation of the state and society. They asked for social justice, transparency in the public affairs and social inclusion, and rejected corruption and political Machiavellian arrangements.

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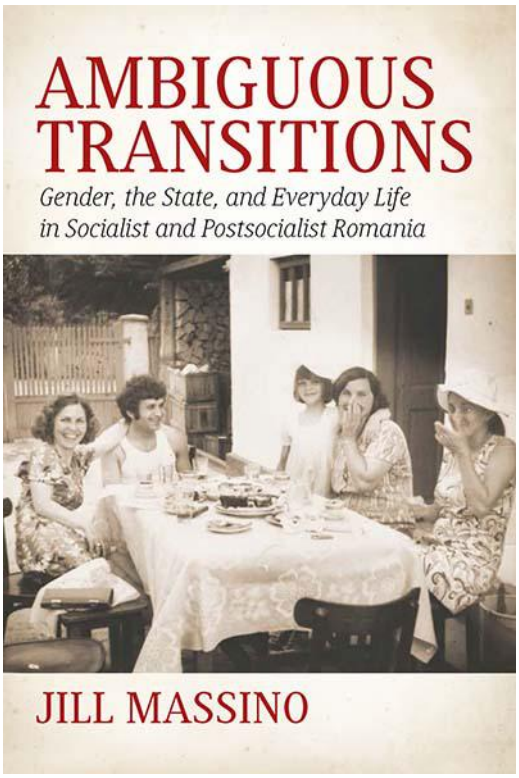
# Jill Massino, Ambiguous Transitions. *Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania.* New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2019, 453p.




An associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Jill Massino distinguished herself as a researcher of gender in Romania during Communism and post-Communism. Her recently published book, *Ambiguous Transitions. Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania*, has further developed her PhD thesis, defended at Indiana University in 2007.

The book investigates gender and its various manifestations during Communism and post-Communism in Romania. Focused mainly on the everyday life of women during Communism, it aims at constructing "a complex portrait of women's life under socialism". Although, as the author asses, "some questions were left unanswered and some issues unaddressed" (p. 19), I argue that the book fulfils all its promises.

The everyday life of ordinary people in communist Romania was only recently taken into account in interpreting the communist experience. After the fall of Communism, the repression was the main concern of scholars, while the daily life of the silent majority who survived, adapted to, integrated in, took advantage of or resisted the communist social engineering was quasi-neglected. However, analysing daily life during Communism can offer fruitful insights into understanding this regime.

Analysing and remembering Communism in Romania was, and still is, characterized by a lack of gender sensitivity. The public narrative concerning the communist regime in Romania has not yet included a feminine perspective. The male-dominant discourse depicts women as victims of the former regime, regarded as a destructive system, which encouraged them to work and behave as men, and controlled the female body through its reproduction policies.

The book *Ambiguous Transitions. Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania* shows that the study of daily life can provide a different account about Communism and its evolution during its 44-year dictatorship. A story about agency, conformism and subversive practices, about collaboration with the system, about silent dissent and enthusiastic adhesion. This research assesses that the "total colonization of daily life by the system"[329] was practically impossible.

Jill Massino's book is structured around topics relevant to the study of everyday life,

[329] de Certeau (1997), 137.

such as childhood and schooling, work, marriage, family life, leisure and consumption. Each chapter focused on the above mentioned issues analyses public policies, propaganda, as well as memories of women who have experienced Communism and post-Communism. The sources used are diverse and provide a broad image for the topics discussed: laws, archive documents, magazines, newspapers, party documents, movies, photos, statistics and archive documents, etc. as well as interviews with women from different parts of the country.

The first chapter, titled "The Times, They are A-Changin'. Gender, Citizenship, and the Transition to Socialism", provides a well documented picture of Romanian women's status, rights and duties from the creation of the modern state until late Communism. It shows how the situation evolved over time, focusing on the changes and how they were internalised by women after the communist takeover.

The second chapter, "Children of the Revolution", deals with the communist policies and tactics targeting youth, as well as with women's perceptions of this aspect of communist engineering. The creation of the "new man" started with forging children. Boy and girls were included in ideologically-driven bodies such as the Organisation of Pioneers and the Union of the Communist Youth. These political associations were seen as driving force for the communist consciousness, therefore socially unfit children/teenagers (whose parents were political detainees, for instance) were not welcomed as members, especially in the first two decades of the regime.

Gender, work, and identity are the main concerns of the third chapter, titled "Career Opportunities". It focuses on policies and propaganda meant to create a new social identity for women. Work was seen as an important element for gender identity, and the State encouraged women to join the working force. However, the traditional mentality prevailing in society, even among communist party leaders, assigned women to jobs in domains which were not praised by the communist ideology, such as healthcare, education, light industry, etc.

The fourth chapter deals with "Love and Marriage", looking back to the transformation of gender and marital roles and relations. Based on women's personal experiences, as well as on the propaganda disseminated through the Femeia (The Woman) magazine, the analysis emphasises the positive role of the regime in changing the traditional mentalities. However, as the author points out, the changes were limited and temporary as "in same cases, policies designed to promote equality of opportunity produced tension between husbands and wives – even exacerbating patriarchal attitudes." (p. 225).

The issue of reproductive policies is addressed in the fifth chapter, ironically titled "It's a Family Affair". Beginning with 1966, when abortion was banned in Romania and women who had illegal abortions were criminalised, reproduction was no longer a family affair, but a state concern. Women were again confined to their role as child-bearers, while also being expected to keep on working in order to support "the construction of a multilaterally developed society".

Chapter six, titled "Good Times, Bad Times", focuses on "consumption both as a strategy employed by the state for securing popular legitimacy and sustaining power and as everyday practice that shaped people's life." (p. 312). The strategy was difficult to put into practice in the early '50s, due to the war and its consequences as well as to the forced modernisation of the country by the regime. In this respect, some achievements were to be recorded in the '60s and '70s but, by the early '80s, Ceaușescu had replaced material goods, healthy diets, and leisure time with nationalist propaganda, pronatalist policies and forced labor on the megalithic work sites meant to praise him.

The seventh (and last) chapter of the book deals with "Revolution Blues". It

emphasises the ambiguities of the transition from dictatorship to a pluralist society, focusing on gender role transformation. It attempts to explain women's attitude towards Communism through an analysis of the postcommunist legislation, but also of women's memories. "Women lament the waning of social relationships, the dissolution of a respected value system, and their inability to adequately fulfill their maternal roles and engage in satisfying work. The tension, then, lies in the sharp disconnect between official or postsocialist identities available to women in contemporary Romania and the subjective ones as lived and experienced by women under socialism." (p. 403-404).

I conclude that *Ambiguous Transitions. Gender, the State, and Everyday Life in Socialist and Postsocialist Romania* has set the standard for any research on women's everyday life during Communism in Romania. However, minor mistakes occurred, especially in the last chapter dealing with the fall of the regime. As a reviewer of the book for Berghahn Books I know that it was sent for publication by 2016. Therefore, the author could not provide an updated account about the "Revolution" of December 1989. Only recently, in February 2019, have we learned that the streets protests were seconded by a coup d'etat organised by Ion Iliescu and members of the nomenklatura, Securitate, and high ranking officers of the Army.

The other issue that should have been better addressed in the book concerns the two concepts overlapping in it, namely socialist/communist. As most scholars agreed to name post-WWII regimes in Central and Eastern Europe "communist", it would have been informative if the author had argued her choice in the introduction. In my opinion, this overlapping is misleading. The ideology, the propaganda and public policies were inspired by the communist manifesto of Marx, by the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and not by the socialist doctrine developed in Western Europe. The State was controlled by the Communist Party, whose leading role was recognised by the laws and the Constitution.

Putting aside the above mentioned issues, the book is a remarkable work, easy to read and useful for Romanian and international scholars dealing with gender and everyday life issues during Communism. The subtle analysis of the sources through a bi-dimensional approach (from a gender and everyday-life perspective) draws an almost complete picture of the Romanian communist world from a feminine angle. Giving ordinary women a voice, Jill Massino has succeeded in providing a more nuanced understanding of life during Communism in Romania, far from the Manichean perspective which dominated the public discourse in post-communist Romania.

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**Claudia-Florentina Dobre**

# Book Presentation

**Adrian Buga, Alin Ciupală, Marian Constantin, Yvonne Hasan, Iulia Mesea, Cosmin Năsui, Cristian Vasile, Victor Sămărtinean. 2017. *Centenarul femeilor din arta românească* (The Centenary of Women in the Romanian Arts), vol. 1. Voluntari: PostModernism Museum Publishing House, 240 p.**


**Luiza Barcan, Cătălin Davidescu, Cosmin Năsui, Dodo Niță, Ileana Pintilie, Radu Popica, Cristian Vasile, Ioana Vlasiu. 2018. *Centenarul femeilor din arta românească* (The Centenary of Women in the Romanian Arts), vol. 2. Voluntari: PostModernism Museum Publishing House, 240 p.**


The two volumes entitled *The Centenary of Women in the Romanian Arts* are the outcomes of a complex project, which also includes a research turned into an exhibition, a debate, and a roundtable. The project was initiated by PostModernism Museum and was co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Identity, and realized through partnerships with the Brukenthal National Museum, the Bucharest City Museum and the Brașov Art Museum.

The project analysis the centenary of the presence of women in the Romanian artistic milieu, highlighting different cultural spaces and/or focusing on specific periods. The aim of the project was to historically recover the female presence and the role of female artists from Romania in the arts of the 20th century, to create a research platform for contemporary art collections and to open new ways of collaboration between institutions and between researchers.

The research-exhibition analyzed and then publicly presented original artwork, artifacts, catalogs, video projections, a digital archive, and memorabilia. More than 30 women artists are presented in the exhibition through their works. Moreover, the archive contains more than 1000 names of women artists from Romania, whose work is to be

recovered and historically reevaluated. Actually, the first volume dedicated to the project starts with an index containing 1037 names of female artists while the volume 2 put forward an index containing 2,185 names of female artists, an important bibliographic resource for future research.

Volume I also presents a collection of photographs by which artists and their work come to life, as well as a series of articles by authors and researchers concerned with the history of Romanian art. The second volume follows the same pattern, introducing other topics related to the Romanian women in the artistic milieus in the last century.

The study of Adrian Buga, "Alma, Eva, Jana and Yvonne" talks about the destinies of Alme Redlinger, Eva Cerbu, Jane Gertler and Yvonne Hasan, four artists and friends whose artistic works were re-evaluated and re-interpreted by the author of this study. Their creation is analyzed in terms of sensitivity, but also as a search for meaning. In fact, the artists have been prolific in this respect, for example, Eva Cerbu's work being of extraordinary size and diversity, over 800 artifacts being analyzed by the author of the study.

The article of Alin Ciupală "The Feminine Speech on War in Romania, between 1914-1918", refers to the role of women in mobilizing energies around the national idea during the WWI. In this respect, women were important not through what they represented, but from the perspective of the important mission that they assumed. Romanian women have founded associations, wrote articles and made themselves heard in a traditional conservative society where man was considered being the voice of reason, strength, vitality, while woman symbolized fragility, obedience, sensitivity. The First World War played an important role in changing this paradigm in the Romanian space, giving rise to a dispute between traditionalism and modernity.

Marian Constantin dealt with the artistic personality of Mina Byck Wepper, a pupil of Cecilia Cuţescu-Storck, who can be included in the symbolism trend and who, through her work, offers a lesson of feminism. Her contemporaries appreciated her feminine touch, while the artist adhered to the narrow circle in which the virtues of the woman were preached.

Yvonne Hasan, an artist, teacher and researcher, analyzed "Maxy's School". A study relevant also for its historical dimension as it focuses on the troubled years of the Second World War when, after the promulgation of the Racist Laws in the autumn of 1940, young people of Jewish origin were eliminated from schools. The Jewish community then set up schools from the lower to the university level. One such school was the Jewish School of Arts, at which drawing lessons were taught by M.H. Maxy. The author appreciates the innovative aspects of Maxy's arts education that were close to the most important artistic education initiatives in the West at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jewish School of Arts functioned between 1940-1944, but the drawing class continued its existence after 1944. The author also analyses another side of Maxy's controversial personality, namely his attitude during communism. Maxy, a communist from the illegality period, occupied official positions during the communist era. The author of the article points out that his position within the party facilitated, among other things, the creation of the Plastic Fund and the National Art Museum.

In the first volume, Iulia Mesea's research on "Feminine artistic presence in Sibiu and Braşov until the middle of the 19th century" focused on the creation of women artists from southern Transylvania, artists who managed to affirm themselves in spite of the prejudices that existed at the time regarding the women artists. These artists came mainly from the Protestant Saxon milieu, a more tolerant environment, from artists' families, or who had connections into the artistic world. The life of these artists differs from the other women of their time: they will not marry, with some

exceptions, and when they did it, they married fellow painters, thus assuming to their full extent the condition of an artist. They successfully studied in the Art Academies, in the country and/or abroad, in Munich, Berlin, Graz, Dresden, Budapest, and eventually being able to integrate into the artistic movement of the country, and the Central Europe. We shall mention here some of these names: Clara and Edith Soterius von Sachsenheim, Anna Dorschlag, Betty Schuller, Elena Mureșianu, Kathe Kollowitz, Elena Popea, Margarete Depner, Grete Csaki-Copony. The work of these artists deserves to be rediscovered, as a testimony to the renewal that took place in the Romanian society and artistic life.

The studies published by Cosmin Năsui and Cristian Vasile focused on the condition of female artists in communist Romania. Cosmin Năsui's research underlines the important role of women in the art of the communist period, both in terms of quantity (over 850 artists were active at that time), but also qualitatively, the women artistic endeavour gaining in consistency being worth studying it.

Cosmin Năsui's study emphasizes the emancipation of female artists. Placed by Communist ideology at the same level as men in society, female artists receive jobs in various fields of the arts and industry: book and magazine illustrations, graphic design, monumental sculpture, decorative arts, ceramics and textiles. Furthermore, the socialist society promoted a successful family pattern in the artistic field, illustrated by couples and family of artists, which eventually led to the emergence of real dynasties of artists.

The themes addressed by women artists in the socialist period reflect the social ideology: Fight for Peace, Motherland, Socialism, Maternity. The gender equality in the fine arts was also expressed through women having a relevant and constant participation in major state exhibitions. The analysis of the award-winning works demonstrates the involvement of women artists in building the socialist society and the new man: Maria Zidaru, president of G.A.C. Păuleşti, Lenin and Stalin at Smolnii, Welder Woman, etc.

Cristian Vasile, on the other hand, notes that, in the era of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, despite the discourse that encouraged the promotion of women in areas previously reserved for men, so despite the egalitarian discourse, the picture of society demonstrates the official hypocrisy. The author chose a relevant case study, that of the artist Milița Petrașcu. She was initially supported by the communist regime, but later, its ties with Ana Pauker, her creation of a bust of Constantin Doncea, the rival of Dej, and of the bust of Arethia Tătărescu, turned the artist into an undesirable person. Furthermore, according to Cristian Vasile, the 1947 year brought uniformity in Romanian art by imposing socialist realism, thus affecting artists' creativity. Censorship introduced ideological control over the work of artistic associations, artistic spontaneity has been stifled while some female artists have been marginalized.

The volume I of the work ends with the study of Victor Sămărtinean, which deals with the manipulation policy that the communist regime has achieved through various techniques and propaganda tools taken from the Soviet model. Thus, militant graphics and political satire are used to disseminate the ideology of the new regime and to criticize the old bourgeois society.

The volume 2 of this collective work introduces four studies by Luiza Barcan, on the artistic destiny of Maria Constantin, Medi Wechsler Dinu, Lucia Ioanid and Lidia Nancuischi. These artists met, created together, became friends. Theirs works, of a rare sensibility, link the Romanian interwar painting to that of our days, hence the need to reevaluate these artistic creations.

"Some artistic profiles in Oltenia" by Cătălin Davidescu deals with women-artists from this region who were appreciated during the interwar period, but were completely forgotten afterwards: Julieta Orăşanu, Maria

Fratoştiţeanu-Billek, Sabina Negulescu Florian, Maria Nicola Olga Ioan (Noche Crist). These artists created works that can be included in the modernist movement but bearing the influence of the Romanian folk tradition. Two of these artists, Maria Fratoştiţeanu-Billek and Noche Crist, left Romania, participating in the artistic life of Germany and the United States after the Second World War.

Cosmin Năsui's study entitled "Some Considerations on the Activism of Women Artists in the Communist Period" deals with the privileges granted to official artists by the communist regime which consisted of important functions, awards and medals, national and international exhibitions, promotion through the press, etc. The author notes that, like any totalitarian regime, the communist one has privileged a number of artists who have served the party's ideology, but, at the same time, physically or symbolically destroyed the artists who refused to do so. Nasui also emphasized the fact that, after the "theses of July", many artists chose to take part to the cultural revolution promoted by the communist authorities.

The author of the study underlines that, despite their adhesion to the cultural revolution ideas, after the fall of communism, some artists invented a self-dissidence and a so-called "resistance through culture". However, these moments of resistance are not sufficiently substantiated, which make the author to conclude that in fact there have been degrees of complicity, but there is no desire to tell the truth while the mystification continues.

Dodo Niţă's study analyses the personality of two artists from Cluj, Felicia Avram and Livia Rusz, whose destinies have been woven throughout their lives. Through their book illustration for children and comics, the two artists have influenced the collective imaginary of at least two generations of children. Their work is appreciated even today being republished constantly.

Ileana Pintilie's study entitled "Female identity and the atelier theme as an self-reference in the creation of Geta Brătescu" deals with the personality of a woman artist who has enjoyed a special appreciation lately. The article mentions some of the artist's major themes, including the self-portrait, the body, the artist's atelier set up by various photographic techniques - the front photo, the photomontage - that managed to equate the creator with the space reserved for the creation while defining a feminine identity. The study describes the artistic experiments of Geta Brătescu, sometimes inspired by the violent social reality, which includes also video like: Hands (1977), The Atelier (1978), The Earthcake (1992), Automatic Cocktail (1993).

Through his study, Radu Popica invites the reader to get an interest in the artistic personalities of Elena Mureşianu and Elena Popea, already analyzed in the first volume. The two artists were role models for any woman who wanted to pursue an artistic career at a time when women were not accepted in well-known art schools and in the Fine Arts Academies. Elena Mureşianu had a pioneering role, being the first female professional artist in the Romanian cultural space, while Elena Popea should be appreciated for her perseverance in following her artistic dream and for the refinement of her art.

Cristian Vasile focused in the second volume on Margareta Sterian: "A fractured and recovered biography: Margareta Sterian, an artist of the Romanian and Jewish world." The author questions the role of Margareta Sterian and its perception in the Romanian culture. Cristian Vasile is interested in the artist's spectacular biography, marked by the stigma of her Jewish origin, then by the association with the Western world during communism, but also in the historiographical recovery of this artistic personality whose paintings have been compared to those of Marc Chagall.

Ioana Vlasiu concludes the second volume with a paper entitled "Pupils and Masters. Romanian artistic education and gender issues. 1900-1945 ". The article addresses the issue of girls' access to fine arts

schools, after 1895, when the Ministry of Education, after debates that have been prolonged for many years, eventually enshrined it into the law; the article also discusses the status of artistic professions in Romania at the beginning of the 20th century. The author assesses that after 1900 the interest in the artistic profession increased, as the Bucharest artistic life intensified, artistic associations were formed, museums and events were organized. Queen Elisabeth and Queen Marie practiced decorative arts and supported the Romanian artistic life. However, many students of art schools abandoned their studies, failing to assume the status of an artist. The article also describes the artistic career of some women artists such as Cecilia Cuţescu-Storck, Nina Arbore, Rodica Maniu, Lucia Dem. Bălăcescu, and few others. These women artists enjoyed their family and their teachers support, were able to pursue an intense training for several years going from school to school while making efforts to affirm themselves in the artistic world. The large number of women choosing an artistic career in the interwar period is explained by the fact that the artistic vocation of women was more easily accepted by families than that of men, which were destined for different careers. However, the integration of women in the artistic milieu remained a problem due to gender discrimination.

The two volumes of the *Centenary of Women in the Romanian Art* are the result of an ambitious and integrative project that tries to make justice to women artists emphasizing their participation into the 20th century cultural and artistic phenomena.

**Ene Laura**

# Call for Papers, MemoScapes, No. 4/2020

## *Everyday Life in the Black Sea Region: Agency and Social Structures*

**Deadline: December 15, 2020**

Researchers who have studied daily life in different historical contexts and situations consider that it is the centre for the creation and affirmation of identity, representing that place where the individual not only learns and rehearses various roles, but also takes chances and displays agency. Agency has been defined as the individual's capacity to overcome and/or avoid visible and/or subliminal social constraints, as the capacity which determines the individual to act independently or in opposition with constraining social structures and/or to create his own social groups/structures, parallel to the dominant system through his own will and capability to act.[330] Judith Butler defined agency not only in terms of resistance to power relations, but also referred to the risks entailed by this resistance to domination.[331]

Daily life belongs to the sphere of private life, in which stability, the natural, the familiar, habitual predominate and continuity in experiences, gestures, deeds and actions is preponderant. Daily life is, at the same time, the space in which the manifestations of dominant structures make their presence felt to a lesser degree. It is a place of intimacy which offers (or ought to offer) protection and security.

In our future issue, we are searching for answers to a question essential to the understanding of modernity and postmodernity: "is the everyday a realm of submission to relations of power or the space in which those relations are contested or at least negotiated in relatively interesting ways?"[332] Is daily life both an arena in which dominant social relations are reproduced and a locus of resistance, of revolt, of transformation?

As the Black Sea Region has witnessed various political regimes, from authoritarian to dictatorial and most recent illiberal, we aim at finding answers to questions such as: Have these regimes succeeded in invading the private space both at a subliminal level, through ideology, and practically, through various public policies? Do the authorities succeeded in theirs attempts to control the lives of individuals? Do the individuals resisted the domination? Which were the mechanism through which they resisted? What techniques and strategies did they employ?

Full article manuscripts of no more than 8000 words must be submitted to the editors by 15 of December 2020 for peer review. For further details, please look at the style guide on our website:http://studii-memoriale.ro/index.php/revista-memoscapes/info-for-authors-style-guide/

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*Everyday Life in the Black Sea Region: Agency and Social Structures* 103

This issue of ***MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies,*** entitled **"Frames of Reference in Central Europe, and the Black Sea Region, in the last two centuries",** was edited by **Claudia-Florentina Dobre.**

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*MemoScapes. Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies* explores the construction of the memorial cultures and the various forms of identity (individual, collective, 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 process of patrimonialization and museification from a "longue durée" perspective. It aims at giving a new impetus to the study of the modern and post-modern social imaginary of Europe, and the Black Sea Region.

# MemoScapes

**Romanian Journal of Memory and Identity Studies**


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