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Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies is an interdisciplinary refereed journal focusing on the humanities and social sciences of the Balkan countries and the former Soviet republics. The journal welcomes contributions in the fields of history, economics, politics, international relations, culture, art, geography, literature, theology, ethnography and environmental sciences. The idea behind this initiative is to extend a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary approach over issues of regional importance. Under this light, the journal aspires to act as an academic forum for scholars in historical as well as contemporary context on a wide range of cross-regional issues and to provide the epistemological framework for a comparative investigation, which would enhance our understanding of the Balkan, and Black Sea societies, politics and communities. Furthermore, manuscripts connecting the region with wider scopes, such as technological applications, will be also considered.

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Editorial

Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies is an Istanbul-based journal aiming at strengthening academic exchange among social scientists from Turkey, the Balkans, the Caucasus and Eastern European countries. We started the journal in 2018 and have published five issues until now. The fifth issue includes three research articles and a special issue. The special issue on “*Transottoman Infrastructures and Networks across the Black Sea*” consists of one introduction and four research articles on the history of infrastructure in the Balkans and the Black Sea region. The special issue underwent a double editing process, first by the editors of the special issue, *Dr. Lyubomir Pozharliev*, *Dr. Florian Riedler* and *Prof. Dr. Stefan Rohdewald*. The research articles of the special issue were additionally evaluated through a double-blind review process, including reviews both by some editorial board members and external reviewers.

The first article of the special issue titled “*Concessions and Mirages along the Lower Danube: The Town of Silistria in the Plans of Foreign Railway Promoters during the mid-1850s*” by *Assist. Prof. Dr. Boriana Antonova-Goleva* (Sofia) deals with railway and road projects aiming to connect the Danube with the Black Sea to facilitate the transportation of goods from the Balkans. The second article of the special issue titled “*(Dis)Connected: Railway, Steamships and Trade in the Port of Odessa, 1865–1888*” by *Dr. phil. Boris Belge* (Basel) discusses the port of Odessa which was constructed at the end of the 18th century and became the most important Russian port across the Black Sea. The connection of Odessa with different parts of Russia is the main subject of the article. The third article of the special issue titled “*State Goals and Private Interests in the Development of Transport Infrastructure in the Russian Black Sea Region in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*” by *Dr. phil Lyubomir Pozharliev* (Leipzig) deals with -parallel to the territorial expansion of Russia - the increasing Russian investments in the Black Sea coasts to improve the transport infrastructures. The fourth article of the special issue titled “*Integrating the Danube into Modern Networks of Infrastructure: The Ottoman Contribution*” by *Dr. phil. Florian Riedler* (Leipzig) dwells on the projects and investments to improve and facilitate the transportation over Danube. The increasing corn export from the Balkans to Central Europe and development of trade in the region made the infrastructural investments in connecting Danube with hinterland essential.

The first article of the issue 5 titled "An Ottoman Story Until the End: Reading Fan Noli's Post-Mediterranean Struggle in America, 1906-1922" by *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Isa Blumi* (Stockholm, Sharjah) examines the life and historical role of Fan Noli, founder of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, celebrated in Albania as one of the leading national heroes of the Albanian national movement. The author discusses different aspects of his life as a transnational personality and tries to show the role of the diaspora communities, particularly the Tosk community in the USA, in the transformation process of Albania after its independence in 1912.

The second article of the issue 5 titled "Kemalism, Literature and Politics: Turkish Historical Novel in a Comparative Perspective" by *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslı Daldal* (İstanbul), focuses on the Turkish novelists Kemal Tahir, Atilla İlhan and Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar in the Interwar period. Daldal evaluates their historical novels in the context of Kemalist nationalism, national historiography and perception of the East and West, and discusses if there is in their novels any criticism or support regarding the Kemalist modernism.

The third and last research article of the issue 5 titled "Theoretical Approaches to the Black Sea Region: Is the Wider Black Sea Area a Region?" by *Nasuh Sofuoğlu* (Rize, Istanbul) tries to evaluate the existing literature and theories about the Black Sea area within the concept of regionalism and new regionalism.

The issue also includes four book reviews.

I would like to thank the editors of the special issue and especially Dr. Florian Riedler, who carried out the collection and submission of the articles of the issue, and the authors of the articles and book reviews. We feel privileged due to the fact that they decided to publish their valuable contributions in our journal. I would like to thank also all the referees for their precious efforts during the evaluation process of the articles. Finally, I would like to thank the national and international institutions which started to index our journal.

Mehmet Hacısalihoglu, Prof. Dr.

Editor in Chief

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Special Issue

“Transottoman Infrastructures and Networks across the Black Sea”

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Introduction to the Special Issue:

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Lyubomir Pozharliev, Florian Riedler, and Stefan Rohdewald

Traditionally, the larger Black Sea area acted as a pivot that connected the Ottoman realm with the empires in the north such as Poland–Lithuania and Russia, as well as the territories of Moldova, Walachia, and Hungary and also the Habsburg Empire via the Danube, and Persia via the Trabzon route.¹ This special issue aims to explore such connections by looking at the infrastructures that organized them spatially and socially. We are particularly interested in tracing the transformation of older Transottoman connections and networks through the development of modern infrastructures in the larger Black Sea region.² From the nineteenth to the twentieth century when the geopolitical outlook of the whole region changed, Russia and the Ottoman Empire as well as other states were connected in new ways. New technologies such as steam shipping on the Black Sea, the Danube, and other rivers, as well as railways in the hinterland, played a decisive role in the transformation of the entire region and its connections. New goods and products such as wheat or oil called for new transport infrastructures and resulted in new trans-imperial competition. Old ports and new ports were (re)connected to the hinterland and the Black Sea region in its global context.³

¹ Y. Eyüp Özveren, "A Framework for the Study of the Black Sea World, 1789–1915," *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* 20 (1997): 77–113; Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz–Trabzon Trade, 1830–1900: Rise and Decline of a Route," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 1 (1970): 18–27.

² Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht Fuess, eds., *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken: Perspektiven und Forschungsstand* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019).

³ Constantin Ardeleanu and Andreas Lyberatos, eds., *Port-Cities of the Western Black Sea Coast and the Danube: Economic and Social Development in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Corfu: Black Sea Project, 2016), <https://books.blacksea.gr/en/15/>; Edhem Eldem, Sophia Laou, and Vangelis Kechriotis, eds., *The Economic and Social Development of the Port-Cities of the Southern Black Sea*

In a narrow sense, infrastructures are material components of wider networks that enable exchange and mobility, e.g., roads, railways, canals, ports, and others. Only as part of networks and in close collaboration with the human actors can they offer insight into the development of social life. Because they function as sociotechnical systems, infrastructures in a wider sense can also include associations, institutions, networks of merchant houses or banks. Thus, they can be associated with all structured practices of transport, migration, and the mobility of people and objects in general. Both aspects, the material and the social, come together in Thomas P. Hughes's notion of large technological systems.⁴

From a historical perspective, infrastructure is intricately connected to the state and its development. Because of the huge investment costs involved, infrastructures were often constructed with public money and this expense was justified by declaring their effects a common good. In particular, the ability of transport infrastructures to penetrate territories and to project power has made them interesting for states in their attempt to intensify or extend their domination. This is true for foreign colonies as well as for home territories that were subjected to "internal colonization."⁵ The following contributions will examine this issue in greater detail in relation to the nineteenth-century infrastructure policies of the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Focusing on infrastructure development can provide a new perspective on specific state policies. From such a perspective, the element of planning gains a special importance, and through it we can access geopolitical visions of power and mental maps of state actors that do not necessarily match with reality.

However, although infrastructure development is very often politically driven, it lies beyond political boundaries. Thus, it is linked to transnational and trans-imperial studies and can also enhance our understanding of larger trends such as modernization. The map that modern infrastructure outlines does not necessarily overlap with the political one – it is a map of economically and symbolically important centers constituted by the various infrastructural networks themselves. Technological skills and specific knowledge are intertwined in its

Coast and Hinterland, Late 18th–Beginning of the 20th Century (Corfu: Black Sea Project, 2017), <https://books.blacksea.gr/en/6/>.

⁴ Thomas P. Hughes, "The Evolution of Large Technological Systems," in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*, ed. Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 45.

⁵ Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas 1880–1960* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004); Joanna Guldi, *Roads to Power: Britain Invents the Infrastructure State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

construction. The direction and nature of the transfer of knowledge, along with the networks of mobile actors engaged with this transfer, become visible through them.

Once built, infrastructures become a conduit for the exchange of goods and people. Therefore, by setting the focus on infrastructure in a broad sense, this special issue attempts to change the dominant prism of studying the Danube and Black Sea region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a bipolar conflict zone between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Rather, it seeks to place the connection between the two empires, but also between other political actors, in a wider framework of Transottoman connections that include perspectives on all regions around the Black Sea, from the Danube to the Caucasus, Persia, the Caspian Sea and the Don-Volga regions, but especially the former Polish-Lithuanian territories within Russia and the Danubian connections to the Habsburg Empire via Walachia and Bulgaria. The contributions unveil the intertwined trajectories of mutual interest in the regions, the established networks constituted by cooperation and competition, and the consolidation of hubs or centers of communication and infrastructures of structural importance in the formation of a cross-imperial or Transottoman society.

At the same time, the impact of modern infrastructure, as well as various aspects to and imaginations of modernity are complex. Besides connecting and transporting necessary goods, technologies, and knowledge, the consolidated infrastructure also facilitates the rapid spread of life-threatening epidemics, wars and weapons, or a change of perception in criminal activities surrounding drugs and prostitution. It simultaneously changes the interpretations of the trajectories through which it passes, upsets local everyday routines, and brings uncertainty as part of the connotations of modernity. As before, infrastructures enabled trade, transcultural exchange, migration, and mobility, all of which went beyond bilateral connections between the imperial centers. But often these connections were transformed and reshuffled in line with new technological possibilities. For example, new trade routes and railways opened the Black Sea region in a now direct connection via the Caspian Sea to the emerging world market;⁶ Orthodox pilgrims from Russia and Muslims from Central Asia discovered the opportunities of rail and steamer transport in reaching Jerusalem and Mecca respectively via

⁶ Reinhard Nachtigal, *Verkehrswege in Kaukasien: Ein Integrationsproblem des Zarenreiches 1780–1870* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2016).

Batumi, Sevastopol, and Odessa.⁷ Exploring the dual nature of infrastructure will shed light on the practice and conception of what is called “modernity” in the different societies of the area in focus here.

Finally, yet importantly, the focus on infrastructures will explain the geopolitical restructuring of the region as a consequence of transformed patterns of mobility. As mentioned above, this concerns the integration into new global economic flows and patterns of migration. Moreover, this also concerns the consolidation of cross-regional, Transottoman society and the internal restructuring of states and empires. Van Laak binds the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects to colonial domination and the imposition of imperial power.⁸ The concrete analysis in the cases examined in this special issue can illustrate a more complex relationship. For instance, the upgrading of infrastructure in the Ottoman Empire was driven to some degree by recognized and certainly new and challenging self-understandings that relate to their own lack of technical equipment. For the Ottomans, the acknowledged paucity of new technologies and knowledge was linked to the lack of cultural prestige and, ultimately, to imperial legitimation. The question remains though: who were the actors who triggered the imperial centers to invest in new infrastructures from the eighteenth to the twentieth century? Were they the imperial elites, lobbyists for Western interests, or to some degree independent mobile players from the provinces with – let us call them Transottoman – cross-imperial horizons of actions and interests?

Is there a reversal in the implementation of imperial policy not only conceived in terms of the movements of troops, weapons, and military infrastructures, but through the broader and general, economic and societal usage of forms of technological acceleration of time and their respective spatial accessibility? Conversely, did the new infrastructures and technologies offer a chance to emancipate imperial subjects from the center and to formulate cross-regional societal horizons of action and economic interest? These are some of the questions that the contributions to this special issue attempt to address.

Boriana Antonova-Goleva’s contribution starts by depicting early Ottoman railway development through the example of the Silistra Railway Project. During the 1850s, the Ottoman Empire started to develop its own railway infrastructure. The project for this line was one of the first railway

⁷ Eileen Kane, *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁸ Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur*.

schemes in Rumelia that was introduced to the Ottoman government by a British group of investors. The group's primary aim was to strengthen other railway schemes along the Lower Danube in which some members of the group were directly involved, and to foster grain trade via the Black Sea, the Principality of Serbia, and the Danubian Principalities. They competed with another group that favored an alternative railway route. As a result of their competition, after 1850 the urban centers on the Lower Danube became a focus for Transottoman and global infrastructure enterprises.

Boris Belge illustrates old and new trade practices in the port of Odessa in the second half of the nineteenth century. He makes clear why the port of Odessa, which had become a high-performing hub, rather quickly lost its importance after a few decades of blossoming, and how it faced growing competition from a regional rival such as Nikolaev (Mykolaïv). The causes can be explained in terms of the port's infrastructure: the connection to the imperial railway network was not good enough to ensure links between waterfront and hinterland. Although the port and regional administration lobbied the capital, they were unsuccessful as the empire's governmental priorities shifted to other ports on the Black Sea shore that could be used by the army, too.

Lyubomir Pozharliev continues in this context, and argues that the creation of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (ROPiT) in 1856 was not enough to make up for other systemic infrastructural shortcomings: Although the state intended that the company play a dominant role in Russia's imperial policy of control and influence over the Black Sea and its Southern territories, this was structurally hampered by the bigger picture – the continued lack of roads and railway routes linking the interior of Russia to Odessa and insufficient investments for other Russian Black Sea and Caucasus ports.

Florian Riedler, finally, turns to the Ottoman side again, and illustrates how the Ottoman bureaucratic elite adopted modern technological and infrastructural thinking and how it collaborated with international experts. He does so through the example of preparations for international cooperation on the regularization of the Danube at the Iron Gate and its delta. As a consequence of new technical and infrastructural solutions, older Transottoman routes of trade and travel were transformed and intensified.

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Concessions and Mirages along the Lower Danube: The Town of Silistria in the Plans of Foreign Railway Promoters during the mid-1850s

Boriana Antonova-Goleva*

Abstract:

The paper focuses on three railway schemes from 1856 to 1857 that included the town of Silistria in their routes: the Varna and Silistria Railway, the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and the Medjidieh Railway. The primary aim of these rival projects' promoters was to engage in Danube and Black Sea grain production and trade. Thus, such infrastructures were designed to supplement other railway schemes along the Lower Danube and the Black Sea region, as well as in neighboring countries. As a result of their competition, urban centers along the Lower Danube, such as Silistria, featured at the center of Ottoman and Transottoman infrastructure enterprises during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: railways, Ottoman Empire, Silistria, Varna and Silistria Railway, the Danube and Black Sea Railway, Medjidieh Railway

1. Introduction

During the 1850s, the Ottoman Empire started to develop its own railway infrastructure. British capitalists, engineers, and speculators

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played a key role in the early stages of this process. Many of these concession hunters were involved in a broad range of undertakings both in the Ottoman Empire and in other parts of the world. Some of them were also entangled in various social networks and interlocking company boards. They lobbied, therefore, for certain railway schemes that favored different regional Ottoman and Transottoman infrastructure enterprises. One of the regions that attracted the attention of many concession hunters in the mid-1850s was the area between the Lower Danube and the Black Sea coast, since it offered great commercial prospects. Thus, the cities and the towns in this part of the Ottoman Empire featured at the center of the rivalries between several British groups that had various interests in the region. The present paper focuses on one such case, and examines the place of the town of Silistria (Silistra, Turkish: Silistre) in three competing schemes from 1856 to 1857: the Varna and Silistria Railway, the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and the Medjidieh Railway.

During the mid-1850s the town of Silistria was part of the Ottoman Eyalet of Silistre. It was the center of the Sancak of Silistre and one of the commercial spots along the Lower Danube. However, Silistria had no significant role in regional trade compared with other urban centers like Rusçuk (Ruse) and Varna. The town's importance for the Ottoman Empire was rather strategic. It was a key stronghold on the Ottoman border and played an important role in the Ottoman-Russian military conflicts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and especially during the Crimean War.¹

After the end of the latter war and the liberalization of river navigation, trade along the Danube started to grow and intensify. Furthermore, in 1856 the Ottoman Empire entered the second stage of the Tanzimat reforms, and as part of its economic and technological modernization program, the imperial government invited western capitalists to develop a railway infrastructure in the lands of the Sultan. Various entrepreneurs thus became interested in the urban centers along the Lower Danube.

* I am grateful to Philip "FTA" Atanassov for preparing the maps for the present paper.

¹ Virginia Paskaleva, "Shipping and Trading along the Lower Danube during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *Southeast European Maritime Commerce and Naval Policies from the Mid-Eighteenth Century to 1914*, ed. Apostolos Vacalopoulos, Constantinos Svolopoulos, and Béla Király (Boulder, CO: Social Science Monographs; Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1988), 131–151; Andrew Robarts, "Crimean War," in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters (New York: New York Facts on File, 2009), 161–162; Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853–1856)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 184–186.

At present, little is known about the significance of Silistria in the plans of the foreign railway promoters in the Post-Crimean Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Varna and Silistria Railway has not been examined at all by modern scholarship.² Perhaps the lack of studies on the topic is also because of the scarcity of sources. There are only a couple of documents that contain information about this project. They are held at the Ottoman Archive in Istanbul (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, hereafter BOA) and at the collections in The National Archives in Kew, London (hereafter TNA).

As regards the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and the Medjidieh Railway, there are several studies that examine different aspects of their history. Yet, the place of Silistria in these infrastructure projects as well as in the broader interests of their promoters in the region has not been examined so far. Unlike the sources available on the Varna and Silistria Railway, there is an abundance of information about the Medjidieh Railway project, and the Danube and Black Sea Railway. These include various official documents held at BOA and TNA, reports in the British

² The main studies on Ottoman railways in Rumelia are: Ali Akyıldız, "Balkanlar'a Osmanlılardan Miras Bir Çağdaş Medeniyet Ürünü: Rusçuk-Varna Demiryolu," in *Balkanlar'da İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri, Nisan 11-23 2000*, ed. Ali Çaksu and Eklemeddin İhsanoğlu (Istanbul: İslâm Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 2002), 123-145; Ali Akyıldız, "Bir Teknolojik Transferin Değişim Boyutu: Köstence Demiryolu Örneği," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 20 (2000): 313-327; Ali Akyıldız, "The Modernizing Impact of Technological Transfer: The Case of the Constanta Railway," in *Science in Islamic Civilization: Proceedings of the International Symposia 'Science Institutions and Islamic Civilization' and 'Science and Technology in the Turkish and Islamic World'*, ed. Eklemeddin İhsanoğlu and Feza Günergun (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History and Culture, 2000), 201-212; Yağub Karkar, *Railway Development in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1914* (Ann Arbor: Vantage Press, 1972); John H. Jensen and Gerhard Rosegger, "British Railway Builders along the Lower Danube, 1856-1869," *The Slavonic (and East-European) Review* 46, no. 106 (1968): 105-128. In fact, these studies focus on the history of the successfully implemented projects such as the *Rusçuk and Varna Railway* and the *Danube and Black Sea Railway*. Several other studies examine both successful and unsuccessful projects, like the *Medjidieh Railway*: Vahdettin Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları* (Istanbul: Eren, 1993); Mihail Guboğlu, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Karadeniz-Tuna Kanalı Projeleri (1836-1876) ve Boğazköy-Köstence Arasında İlk Demiryolu İnşası (1855-1860)," in *Çağın Yakalayan Osmanlı! Osmanlı Devleti'nde Modern Haberleşme ve Ulaştırma Teknikleri*, ed. Eklemeddin İhsanoğlu and Mustafa Kaçar (Istanbul: İslâm Tarih, Sanat, ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 1995), 217-247; Orhan Kurmuş, "British Dependence on Foreign Food and some Railway Projects in the Balkans," *METU Studies in Development* 2 (1971): 259-284; Yakup Bektas, "The British Technological Crusade to Post-Crimean Turkey: Electric Telegraphy, Railways, Naval Shipbuilding and Armament Technologies" (PhD diss., University of Kent at Canterbury, 1995), 115-119; Georgi Pašev, *Ot Tsarigrad do Belovo*, (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1965). However, they do not provide any information about the Varna and Silistria Railway project.

and Ottoman press, prospectuses, and other types of primary sources that provide data on these schemes.

Thus, examined in a broader context, the short history of Silistria's place in the railway projects of 1856–1857 reflects the main trends in early Ottoman railway development. It can also serve as an example of how the general patterns in nineteenth-century entrepreneurship influenced the Sultan's domains. Therefore, by revealing the place of Silistria in the railway projects of 1856 to 1857, the paper will address questions on the interrelation between the promoters of this line and those of other railway schemes in the region, and also how Silistria related to other Ottoman and Transottoman infrastructures.

2. The Varna and Silistria Railway Project

Little is known about the Varna and Silistria Railway project. According to the Memorial on the Varna and Silistria Railway – one of the few sources that provide information on this scheme – the construction of a trunk line between Varna and Silistria as well as the establishment of two entrepôts on the termini were proposed to the Ottoman government. In the memorandum, “the right of transit along the Railway with other privileges in the accompanying heads of Firman of concession” was also requested and a further extension of the line to Turtakia (Tutrakan, Turkish: Turtukaya) and Rusçuk was planned (see Map 1).³

The promoters of the Varna and Silistria Railway highlighted the advantages of the proposed scheme, as this was the practice with applications for railway concessions at that time. These advantages were grouped into three categories – commercial, political, and strategic. Since the memorial focused on the first category, the main purpose of this scheme was clearly related to regional commerce. According to the text, this railway was intended as an important transshipment connection between the Danube and the Black Sea.⁴ Moreover, Silistria's location was seen as suitable “for an inner emporium on the Danube,” which may also attract traffic from the Prut, Galatz (Galați) and Ibrailow (Brăila, Turkish: İbrail) and may compete with the Sulina canal route. Yet, the terminus at Varna was considered to be “capable of being rendered by connection

³ BOA, Hariciye Nezâreti Londra Sefareti Belgeleri (hereafter HR.SFR.3)/29/16/2/1, Note, London, 13 October 1856 and HR.SFR.3/29/16/2/2, Memorial on the Varna and Silistria Railway, London, 10 October 1856.

⁴ BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/2/2.

with the Lake of Devna." According to the memorial, after the completion of the Hungarian and Walachian lines and their extension through Bucharest to the Danube, the Varna and Silistria Railway would become an important link between Western and Central Europe and the Black Sea coast.⁵ Therefore, the promoters of the scheme proposed to establish a steam ferry at Turtakia that would be "capable of transporting whole Trains of Carriages without transshipment."⁶ According to them, "Varna if connected by Rail with Silistria must ere long eclipse Odessa."⁷

Many of the above mentioned claims sound exaggerated and unrealistic. It is unclear, however, to what extent the Varna and Silistria Railway promoters were aiming to convince the Ottoman government in their project's prospects, and to what extent they truly believed in the described advantages. Yet, it is certain that the group was interested in the commercial potential of the Lower Danube.

Who were the promoters who stood behind this project? E. Ward Jackson claimed to be the main originator of the scheme.⁸ His name was written as one of the project promoters in a note to the Ottoman ambassador to London, Kostaki Musurus, to which the memorial was attached.⁹ The memorial was signed by John Robinson McClean, Henry Robertson, Charles Manby, and Forbes Campbell.¹⁰ All of them, except Campbell, were civil engineers and were engaged in various infrastructure projects.¹¹ As for Campbell, he was not only a promoter of the Varna and Silistria Railway project, but also the agent of the group.

It is not clear when exactly this scheme originated. It was put forward at the end of 1856 and seems to be one of the earliest projects

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/2/1.

⁷ Interestingly enough, the last statement was included in description of the political advantages of the line, BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/2/3.

⁸ TNA, FO 195/460, Embassy and Consulates, Turkey (formerly the Ottoman Empire)/ General Correspondence/ Banks, Telegraphs and Railways, 1854-1857 (hereafter TNA, FO 195/460) Letter from E. Ward Jackson, London, to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Constantinople, 3 October 1856.

⁹ BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/1/1.

¹⁰ BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/2/3.

¹¹ "Obituary: John Robinson McClean, Former President and Vice-President, M.P., F.R.S., 1813-1873," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 38 (1874): 287-291; "Obituary: Henry Robertson, 1816-1888," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 93 (1888): 489-492; "Obituary: Charles Manby, F.R.S., 1804-1884 (Secretary of the Institution, 1839-1859)," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 81 (1885): 327-334.

from that period to include Silistria in its route. Initially, on 3 October, E. Ward Jackson sought support for his plan from the British ambassador to Constantinople, Stratford de Redcliffe.¹² In his letter to de Redcliffe he also claimed that “an attempt is now being made, by Mr. Thomas Wilson and other parties associated with him, to appropriate to themselves” his project of a railway between the Danube and the Black Sea. In fact, E. Ward Jackson was referring to the British promoter Wilson who in 1855 formed an Anglo–French–Austrian consortium together with Duke Charles de Morny and Count Ludwig von Breda, and applied for a concession for a canal between Rassoava (Rasova) on the Danube and Kustendjje (Constanța, Turkish: Köstence) on the Black Sea. In May 1855 the group received a firman for the concession, from the Ottoman government.¹³ Yet, in the summer of 1856 Wilson started a new round of negotiations with the Sublime Porte to transform it into a railway concession. It seems that E. Ward Jackson was also associated with the initial project. According to his letter to the British ambassador, “Mr. Wilson has abandoned his Canal scheme, as utterly impracticable, and seeks to oust me of my prior right.”¹⁴ Therefore, Ward Jackson proposed the Varna and Silistria Railway project as an alternative route that would unite the Danube and the Black Sea.¹⁵

Between 1855 and 1856 Forbes Campbell was also associated with the Anglo–French–Austrian consortium, since he represented it before the Sublime Porte. However, at a certain moment in 1856 he made a shift and became part of E. Ward Jackson’s group.

In addition to contacting Stratford de Redcliffe, by 13 October the group had presented the project to Kostaki Musurus and to Lord Clarendon, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.¹⁶ It is unknown whether this scheme was supported by the British government or if the Ottoman government was interested in it. The project was never implemented.

¹² TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from Ward Jackson to de Redcliffe, 3 October 1856.

¹³ Thomas Forester, *The Danube and the Black Sea: Memoir on their Junction between Tchernavoda and a Free Port at Kustendjje with Remarks of the Navigation of the Danube, the Danubian Provinces, the Corn trade, the Ancient and Present Commerce of the Euxine; And Notices of History, Antiquities, etc.* (London: Stanford, 1857), 48.

¹⁴ TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from Ward Jackson to de Redcliffe, 3 October 1856.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, Ward Jackson still claimed the rights on his project for a railway between the Danube and the Black Sea, *ibid.*

¹⁶ BOA, HR.SFR.3/29/16/1–2.



Map 1: The 1856 Varna and Silistria Railway Project

3. The Danube and Black Sea Railway

As already mentioned, initially the Danube and Black Sea Railway scheme started as a canal project. The negotiations for it between the Anglo–French–Austrian consortium and the Ottoman government began in 1855 and resulted in a firman granted on 5 May 1856.¹⁷ Subject to its agreement, a company called The Abdul Medjid Canal & Railway Company was to be established “for the construction and working of a Canal from a point near Rassova to a point in the Bay of Kustendjie.”¹⁸ A free port at Kustendjie was also included in the concession.¹⁹ Yet, in the late summer of 1856, Thomas Wilson started to make enquiries to the

¹⁷ On the negotiations over this project see TNA, FO 195/460; on this project see also Florian Riedler’s article “Integrating the Danube into Modern Networks of Infrastructure: The Ottoman Contribution” in this issue.

¹⁸ TNA, FO 195/460, Heads of firman granting Concession in perpetuity to Thomas Wilson of 20 Gloucester Square, Hyde Park, London, to Monsieur le Comte de Morny, Paris and to Monsieur Ludwig Von Breda, Vienna.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Ottoman government to shift the project focus from a canal to a railway line. In September of the same year, the final decision to construct a railway between Tchernavoda (Cernavodă, Turkish: Boğazköy) and Kustendjie was passed as this scheme was more feasible.²⁰

The changes made in the second half of 1856 also resulted in a shift in the project promoters involved. The company that put forward the railway scheme was still led by Thomas Wilson. Yet, the remaining promoters totally changed. The new board of directors included Samuel Cunard, William Philip Price, George Byng Paget, Josiah Lewis and William Johnstone Newall.²¹ As already mentioned, E. Ward Jackson and Forbes Campbell also dropped out of the project. Later on, John Trevor Barkley was appointed as the group's agent.²² The name of the undertaking was also changed to the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and the Danube and Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Company was established in 1857.²³

Despite these shifts, Wilson, and later on his new joint-promoters, referred to the canal firman that claimed the right to transform the main concession.²⁴ The imperial government, however, required that the group submit an entirely new application, since "it cannot acknowledge to him [i.e., to Wilson] any right to change the concession of a Canal to that of a Railway, and if he wishes to obtain concession for a Railway he must make new propositions as any other party."²⁵ Thus, de facto in the beginning of 1857 the British group began new negotiations for the Danube and Black Sea Railway.²⁶ They were finalized in September 1857

²⁰ BOA, HR.SYS.587/15/6, Lettre de Thomas Wilson à Fuad Pacha, London, 23 August 1856; See also the documents in BOA, HR.TO.425/23/1-5; Forester, *The Danube and the Black Sea*, 51-55.

²¹ Later on, the members of the board of directors changed again and Thomas Wilson was not part of it anymore; Cunard became chairman and Price became vice-chairman of the company; Samuel Beale and Thomas Moxon also joined the board at different stages; C. Liddell and L. Gordon were appointed as engineers. TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from Samuel Cunard to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, Westminster, [London], 28 February 1857; Forester, *The Danube and the Black Sea*, 215, 227; BOA, Sadâret Divan-ı Hümâyûn Kalemî Mukâvele Kısmı Belgeleri (hereafter A.DVN.MKL).1/8/2/2-3, Receipt for firmans of concession, London, 16 October 1857.

²² TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from Cunard to de Redcliffe, 28 February 1857.

²³ TNA, Board of Trade (hereafter BT) 31/280/954; TNA, BT 41/182/1037.

²⁴ See for example FO, 195/460, Letter from J. Trevor Barkley to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, Constantinople, 24 March 1857.

²⁵ BOA, HR.SFR.3.29/10/6/1, Draft of a note from the Ottoman Ambassador [Kostaki Musurus], Bryanston Square, [London], 18 September 1856.

²⁶ TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from Barkley to de Redcliffe, 24 March 1857.

when the group received two firmans – one for a railway concession and one for a concession for the port of Kustendjie.²⁷

During the negotiations the application was suspended twice. The first suspension was between 16 March and 4 April 1857 and was caused by the claims of Austin Henry Layard, who headed the Medjidieh Railway – a rival scheme in the region. Layard's request to the Porte related to his attempt to renegotiate the terms of his concession. However, it was unsuccessful.²⁸ Thus, in the beginning of April 1857 the application for the Danube and Black Sea Railway concession was resumed.

A second suspension followed soon after.²⁹ This time the reason was a local group from the town of Şumnu (Shumen), which at that moment was applying for the Rusçuk and Varna Railway concession. The group was headed by several prominent Bulgarian merchants from this town, and it was also supported by some wealthy Turks from the region, as well as by the eminent Galata financier Jacques Alléon, who was the enterprise banker. Unofficially, the application was patronized by the local and central Ottoman government, chiefly by the Ottoman Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha.³⁰

In May 1857 the Ottoman railway promoters objected to the Council of Tanzimat,³¹ where the Danube and Black Sea Railway project was

²⁷ Forester, *The Danube and the Black Sea*, 215–225 or TNA, FO 195/804, Embassy and Consulates, Turkey (formerly the Ottoman Empire)/General Correspondence/From Black Sea, Kustendjie harbour dues, 1864–1868, Convention pour le Gouvernement Ottoman, d'une part, et la Compagnie du Chemin de fer du Danube il la Mer Noire et du Port de Kustendjie; TNA, FO 198/41, Southern Department and Foreign Office: Embassy and Consulates, Turkey (formerly the Ottoman Empire): Miscellanea/Claims and Concessions, vol. 3, Railways 1875–1879, Convention relative to the concession of the Port of Kustendjie, 1 September 1857/Convention relative à la concession du Port du Kustendjie, 1 Septembre 1857.

²⁸ Boriana Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs, Social Networks, and the Modernization of the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the 19th Century" in *Power Networks in the Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Balkans (18th–20th c.)*, ed. Dimitris Stamatopoulos (London: Routledge, 2020, forthcoming).

²⁹ It lasted from 19 April to 18 May 1857. For more information see TNA, FO 195/460 and especially the letters from J.T. Barkley to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe from 21 April 1857 until 18 May 1857.

³⁰ For more on the suspension and the local application for the Rusçuk and Varna Railway concession see Boriana Antonova-Goleva, "'Top-Down' or 'Bottom-Up' Modernization: Local Railway Entrepreneurs in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the 19th Century" (forthcoming).

³¹ The Council of Tanzimat was one of the main administrative bodies that discussed railway applications. After approving successful applications, they were referred to the Council of

initially approved. The local group claimed that the presence of the British company in the Lower Danube would have a negative impact on the river traffic, as well as on their own undertaking. Moreover, J.T. Barkley started negotiations with the promoters of the Rusçuk and Varna Railway, who stated that if the British group was “willing to surrender any claim to an extension of our Line to Silistria, the opposition of these persons will be withdrawn.”³² The discussions with the local group were finalized at the beginning of May, and the two parties reached certain agreements.³³ It seems that one of these agreements was that Wilson’s group would give up the claim for extending the Danube and Black Sea Railway to Silistria.

Thus, it becomes clear that these British promoters had interests similar to those of the Varna and Silistria Railway. It seems that their plan was in a very initial stage, as it was discussed neither with the British Embassy, nor was it mentioned in the negotiations with the Ottoman government. Yet it indicates a broader interest of the Danube and Black Sea Railway promoters in the region.

The main focus of the group was on the grain trade of the Lower Danube and Black Sea region. According to a preliminary report by the project’s main engineers, Charles Liddell and Lewis Dunbar Brodie Gordon, Kustendjie should be established as a well-regulated, “commodious” free port “where the grain of all the provinces may be concentrated by easy arrangements, much cheaper in the end than those of the rude system at present in use.”³⁴ According to their estimations, the grain that would pass through Tchernavoda would also be cheaper.³⁵ The joint-promoters believed that the port of Kustendjie would compete mainly with Odessa, and in more general terms with Russian trade in that region.³⁶ Moreover, according to them, “completed on a magnificent

Ministers for further authorization. After the applications were finally approved by the Sultan a firman and a convention were issued.

³² TNA, FO 195/460, Letter and Memoranda from J. Trevor Barkley to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, Constantinople, 9 May 1857.

³³ TNA, FO 195/460, Letter from J. Trevor Barkley to Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, Constantinople, 11 May 1857; a copy of the letter is also enclosed to TNA, FO 78/1262, From Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, from 3 to 15 June 1857, (hereafter TNA, FO 78/1262) Letter from Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe to the Earl of Clarendon, Constantinople, 18 May 1857, no. 437; *Journal de Constantinople*, no. 807 (21 May 1857).

³⁴ Charles Liddell and Lewis Dunbar Brodie Gordon, *Report on the Proposed Railway Between the Danube and the Black Sea (from Tchernavoda to Kustendjie) and the Free Port of Kustendjie* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1857), 9.

³⁵ Liddell and Gordon, *Report*, 9–10.

³⁶ Forester, *The Danube and the Black Sea*, 129–130.

scale, [Kustendjje] will be incontestably the most valuable in the Black Sea."³⁷

The group was also highly interested in "the capabilities of the Danubian Provinces as corn-growing states."³⁸ These were Walachia and Moldavia, and especially Bulgaria.³⁹ Therefore, it is unsurprising that the promoters of the Danube and Black Sea Railway planned to extend their project to Silistria. According to Tomas Forester's memoir "The Danube and the Black Sea", this town was "one of the most prosperous and commercial places on the Danube."⁴⁰

Thus, the Danube and Black Sea Railway promoters did not request any government guarantees from the Sublime Porte, contrary to railway concession practices in that period.⁴¹ According to the researchers Rosseger and Jensen, the company accepted this and other heavy responsibilities and unfavorable conditions of the concession, since it expected a great profit from its operation.⁴²

The activities of some of the persons involved in the Danube and Black Sea Railway project are also indicative of the group's interest in the region. Thus, in 1856, during the negotiations around Thomas Wilson's initial project for the Abdul Medjid Canal & Railway, another small-scale scheme mostly intended to support the canal project appeared. It seems that its promoters were associated with Wilson's project. According to the proposal by the Danube and Black Sea Company, who applied for the concession,⁴³ a railway between Ram or "Desira"⁴⁴ on the Serbian bank of the Danube River, and Baziaş on the Romanian bank was considered. Linking the railway with Vidin on the Ottoman bank of the river was also

³⁷ Ibid. 79-80.

³⁸ Ibid. 135.

³⁹ The name "Bulgaria" at that time designated the European territories of the Ottoman Empire located between the Balkan Mountain range and the Danube River.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 18-19.

⁴¹ In fact, this approach was initially applied to the Abdul Medjid Canal & Railway concession, TNA, FO 195/460, Memo in support of Clause III [that the Abdul Medjid Canal & Railway concession shall be "perpetual"] by Forbes Campbell, Therapia, [Constantinople], 9 August 1855.

⁴² Jensen and Rosseger, "'British Railway Builders,'" 111-112.

⁴³ The company which applied for the concession was formed in 1856 and initially was called the Danube and Black Sea Trading and Colonization Company. Its aim was to "purchase culture and colonization of Lands upon and for general Trading operations with the European and Asiatic Shores of the Danube and Black Sea." Later on, it was renamed the Danube and Black Sea Company, see TNA, BT/31/173/520; TNA, BT/41/182/1038.

⁴⁴ Desine, 20 km south of Ram.

planned, either via Pec⁴⁵ or via Porečki⁴⁶ and Negotin.⁴⁷ Yet this project was never implemented.

Several years later the engineers of the Danube and Black Sea Railway, Charles Liddell and Lewis Gordon, together with Thomas Page, also applied for a railway project in the region. In 1860 they succeeded in receiving a concession for a railway from Constantinople that passed through Adrianople (Edirne), Phillipopolis (Plovdiv, Turkish: Filibe), Sofia, and Niš, and which terminated at the border of the Serbian Principality, with a branch line to Thessaloniki (Turkish: Selanik).⁴⁸ The group, however, did not manage to fulfill the requirements that the imperial government made and they eventually lost the concession.⁴⁹

Liddell and Gordon also did common business with the family of another director of the Danube and Black Sea Railway and Kustendjie Harbour Company, William Johnstone Newall. In 1839 they, together with Robert Sterling Newall, a brother of W.J. Newall,⁵⁰ established R.S. Newall and Company for the commission of wire, ropes and machinery.⁵¹ The main activities of R.S. Newall related to submarine telegraphy. During the mid-1850s, R.S. Newall and Company became a leader in this field, and produced a significant portion of all the submarine cables of that period.⁵² During the Crimean War, in 1855, the company built the submarine telegraph between Varna and Balaclava. The chief engineer of the project was Liddell. In the same year, the company laid and maintained the submarine cable between

⁴⁵ Unidentified.

⁴⁶ Possibly Porečki zaliv.

⁴⁷ TNA, FO 195/460, Railway Between Kustendjie and Black Sea, Constantinople, 1856.

⁴⁸ Sublime Porte, *Railway from Constantinople to the Frontiers of Servia with a Branch to Salonica* (London: Cox & Wyman, 1860), 3, article 1.

⁴⁹ Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolari*, 47.

⁵⁰ See <<https://mcmanus168.org.uk/mcmanus168entry/george-h-newall/#source7>> (date of access 26 January 2020); <<http://www.fdca.org.uk/pdf%20files/LockitN.pdf>> (date of access 26 January 2020); Agnes Mary Clerke and Anita McConnell, "Newall, Robert Stirling (1812–1889), engineer and astronomer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Oxford University Press, <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-19974>> (date of access 26 January 2020).

⁵¹ *The Railway Times* 6 (1843): 1065, 1089, 1113.

⁵² "Obituary: Robert Stirling Newall, F.R.S.," *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers* (1889): 335–336; Walter Peterson, "The Queen's Messenger: An Underwater Telegraph to Balaclava" First published in: *The War Correspondent: The Journal of The Crimean War Research Society*, (April 2008), reproduced in <<https://atlantic-cable.com/Cables/1855Crimea/index.htm>> (date of access 26 January 2020).

Constantinople and Varna.⁵³ R. S. Newall and Company was associated with other telegraph projects in the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean, too.⁵⁴

It seems that Liddell and Gordon were central figures in the Danube and Black Sea Railway, since they also enlisted John Trevor Barkley to be an agent for the group. Subsequently, J.T. Barkley and his three brothers helped build the line.⁵⁵ During the 1860s, they also engaged in the construction of the Rusçuk and Varna line. Moreover, J.T. Barkley was the general agent of the group that negotiated the concession. He and his brothers were also engaged in the construction of the Bucharest and Giurgevo (Giurgiu, Turkish: Yerköy, Yergögü) line in the United Principalities of Walachia and Moldavia. These two railway projects also emerged as a result of prospecting for profit from the grain trade in the Lower Danube and Black Sea region.⁵⁶

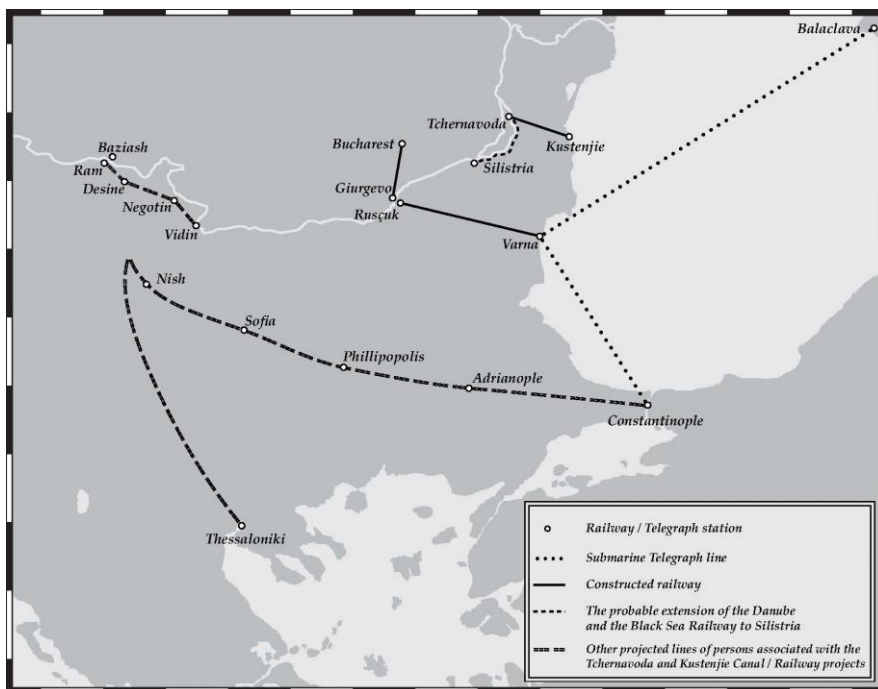
The review of the activities of the Danube and Black Sea Railway members shows their involvement in several successful and unsuccessful Ottoman and Transottoman infrastructure projects (see Map 2). Thus, their efforts to extend their projects to different urban centers along the Lower Danube, such as Silistria, suggest an enduring interest in the region.

⁵³ Bektas, "The British Technological Crusade," 39; Ivan Rusev, "Krimskata vojna (1853–1856) i izgraždaneto na p'rvite telegrafni linii v B'Igarskite zemi: Po novootkriti dokumenti ot frenskite arhivi," in *Sine ira et studio: Izsledvaniya v pamet na prof. Zina Markova*, ed. Konstantin Kosev, Iliã Todev, Elena Statelova, Olga Todorova, Plamen Božinov (Sofia: Akademichno izdatelstvo "Marin Drinov", 2010), 371.

⁵⁴ Jorma Ahvenainen, *The History of the Near Eastern Telegraphs: Before the First World War* (Helsinki: Acad. Scientiarum Fennica, 2011), 23–26; 33–39; 52–57.

⁵⁵ Jensen and Rosegger, "British Railway Builders," 110–111.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 105–128.



Map 2: The Danube and Black Sea Railway and other railway and telegraph infrastructures undertakings in which Wilson's group was involved during the 1850s and 1860s

4. The Imperial (Medjidieh) Ottoman Railway Project

At the very end of 1856, another project that included Silistria in its route was presented to the Porte – the Imperial (Medjidieh) Ottoman Railway (hereafter referred to as the Medjidieh Railway).⁵⁷ This scheme was promoted by the British archaeologist, politician, and entrepreneur Austin Henry Layard in a letter to the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha, dated 22 December 1856.⁵⁸ In fact, the application for the Medjidieh Railway was very unusual in many regards.

⁵⁷ This paragraph mainly follows Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs," which offers a detailed study of this railway project.

⁵⁸ BOA, İrade Meclis-i Mahsus (hereafter İ.MMS).9/393/4-7, Lettre de A. H. Layard à Son Altesse le Grand Vizir [Reschid Pasha], Pera, [Constantinople], le 22 Décembre 1856. In fact, Layard was not behind this project. It belonged to George Cruikshank, an artist, and Joseph Gibbs, a civil engineer. They presented their idea to the British archaeologist in the summer

Thus, for example, the initial negotiations between Layard and the Ottoman government were completed very quickly. In the very beginning of January 1857, both parties reached an agreement and by 15 January the Council of Tanzimat, the Council of Ministers, and the Sultan had all approved the project.⁵⁹ Several days later, on 23 January, a firman and a convention were issued.⁶⁰ According to the Medjidieh Railway Company's⁶¹ prospectus, this was "a dispatch of business unexampled in the annals of the Porte."⁶² Indeed, it was very unusual for the imperial government to so speedily approve such an undertaking.⁶³ The initial success of the negotiations for the Medjidieh Railway was most probably due to a combination of factors, and mainly to Layard's influential contacts in the Ottoman and British governments, the high interest of Sultan Abdülmecid in the project, and the favorable conditions for the scheme's execution.⁶⁴

One of the main advantages of the proposed project was that, as with the Danube and Black Sea Railway, the imperial government did not request financial guarantees.⁶⁵ In fact, some of the other conditions of

of 1856 and invited him to become chairman of the future railway company. Cruikshank and Gibb decided to involve Layard in the scheme since he had good positions both in the Ottoman government and among the British capitalist elite. Thus, according to their original plan, Layard was supposed to represent them in Constantinople. Yet, after arriving in the Ottoman capital, he started negotiations on his own behalf, and later on excluded Cruikshank and Gibb from the board of directors of the company. See: British Library, Layard Papers (hereafter BL, LP)/Additional Manuscripts (hereafter Add MS) 38985, Letter from George Cruikshank to A. H. Layard, 48 Mornington Place [London], 14 February 1857, ff. 129-130; Kurmuş, "British Dependence," 275-276; Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁵⁹ For the different stages of the negotiations' progress see *Railway Record* 14 (1857), 39; *Times*, 15 January 1857; *The Proposed Imperial (Medjidieh) Ottoman Railway, its Purposes and Prospects* (n. p. [London], 1857), 4; *Times*, 30 January 1857; BOA, HR.SFR.3/32/10/3, Copie, Lettre de Reschid à Monsieur Layard, Membre du Parlement, à Londres, 15 Janvier 1857.

⁶⁰ BOA, SFR.3/32/10/2-4, 7; the text of the firman is in BOA, A.DVN.MKL.2/13/4, ferman, Cemazi[yelevvel] 1273 (23 January 1857); for the text of the convention in Ottoman-Turkish see BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/1, mukavelenâme, n.d.; for an official French translation see TNA, FO 195/460, Traduction du projet de convention relative à la concession des chemins de fer de Constantinople à Roustchouk par voire d'Andrinople et d'Andrinople à Enos ou à un autre point plus convenable, 23 January 1857.

⁶¹ Officially the company was named the Imperial Ottoman Mejediyyé Company, the Imperial Ottoman Railway Company/Compagnie de chemin de fer Impérial Ottoman/Timür yolü kumpányasi-i Devlet-i 'Aliyye-yi 'Osmāniyye.

⁶² *The Proposed*, 4.

⁶³ Thus, for example, Wilson's group needed approximately a year to accomplish the negotiations for the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and to receive a firman for the concession.

⁶⁴ For more on this see Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁶⁵ BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4/7, Lettre de A.H. Layard.

the concession were very unusual, too. According to the final agreement, the Medjidieh Company had to deliver the Porte a caution money (i.e., a financial guarantee that they would accomplish the concession) by 23 April 1857, that is, three months from the date that the firman was issued.⁶⁶ This unusually short period was not in line with the railway concession practices of the time, and it related to another peculiar condition of the Medjidieh Railway scheme. The Sublime Porte agreed the necessary survey of the route to be made after the company's submission of the caution money. Usually, such a survey would be made to calculate the funds necessary for the project's implementation. The caution money was also calculated on this basis. Therefore, while it was normally transferred after the preliminary survey of the route had been made, this was not the case for the Medjidieh Railway concession. Thus, under normal circumstances a much longer period for delivery of the financial guarantees was required.

In fact, Layard's group claimed that it had at its disposal several detailed surveys of the proposed route.⁶⁷ On this basis they insisted on delivering the fixed amount of £100,000 as a guarantee.⁶⁸ The Ottoman government, for its part, insisted that the caution money should be proportional to the cost of the line and that it should be adjusted in line with the route survey.⁶⁹ Thus, it seems that Layard's group was trying to avoid full payment of the required financial guarantee by delivering less money to the Porte.

The dispute between the promoters of the Medjidieh Railway and the Ottoman government led to a new round of discussions between the two parties. Yet, there was another reason for the renegotiation of the concession's conditions, on which Layard insisted – the proposed route. According to the initial project, a railway starting either from Rusçuk or Silistria, passing through Şumnu and Adrianople, and terminating at Enos or another convenient point on the Aegean coast was proposed. Several branch lines to Constantinople, Varna, Thessaloniki, Belgrade, and to other big cities in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire

⁶⁶ See articles 16 and 19, TNA, FO 195/460, Traduction du projet; BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/1; Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları*, 46. According to the railway entrepreneurial practices, the caution money was two percent of the company's starting capital, i.e., the money necessary to execute a certain project.

⁶⁷ *The Proposed*, 5–10.

⁶⁸ Respectively the starting capital of the company was calculated at £5 million.

⁶⁹ BOA, HR.SFR.3/32/10/12, Télégramme du Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à l'Ambassadeur de Turquie à Londres [Kostaki Musurus], Constantinople, 14 Mars 1857.

were intended as well.⁷⁰ According to the final agreement with the Sublime Porte, the concession included the mainline Constantinople–Adrianople–Şumnu–Rusçuk with a branch line to Enos.⁷¹ It seems that Layard’s group was unsatisfied with this outcome, since it insisted on extending its privilege rights to build railways in the region between the Danube, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea.⁷²

The new round of negotiations was held between 16 March and 4 April 1857 and, as already mentioned, it resulted in the suspension of discussions with all other railway promoters in the region (including Wilson’s group). This second round of discussions, however, did not bring any positive outcome for Layard’s group.⁷³

The Medjidieh Railway promoters also faced problems with raising the caution money, although the Porte made some concessions by agreeing to reduce the amount of the financial guarantee and to extend the payment deadline until the end of May 1857.⁷⁴ Despite this, Layard’s group failed to fulfill this condition and ultimately lost the concession.⁷⁵

The Medjidieh Railway project attracts researchers’ attention not only because of its speculative nature. Interestingly enough, it seems that the emergence of this scheme related to the interests of various entrepreneurs and railway promoters in the grain trade between the countries neighboring the Lower Danube and the Black Sea, and namely the Ottoman Empire and Russia, but also Austria. Yet, a review of the project itself does not suggest such a conclusion. As already mentioned, the proposed railway route was supposed to start either from Rusçuk or Silistria, to pass through Şumnu and Adrianople, and to terminate at Enos or at another convenient point on the Aegean coast. Several branch lines to Constantinople, Varna, Thessaloniki, Belgrade, and other big cities of the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire were included in the project as well. The scheme’s various descriptions emphasized the importance of the Medjidieh Railway’s route for the region’s grain trade. The commercial role of Austria (with special regard to the Vienna–

⁷⁰ BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4/1-2, Lettre de A.H. Layard; Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları*, 44–45; see also the map in BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/7/1.

⁷¹ BOA, A.DVN.MKL.2/13/4; TNA, FO 195/460, Traduction du projet; BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4, Lettre de A.H. Layard.

⁷² BOA, HR.SFR.3/32/10/9, Letter from A.H. Layard, Chairman of the Imperial Ottoman Mejediyé Company to K. Musurus, London, 10 February 1857.

⁷³ For these events see BOA, HR.SFR.3/32/20/1-35.

⁷⁴ For details about this see Antonova, “Foreign Entrepreneurs.”

⁷⁵ For these events see BOA, HR.SFR.3/33/12/1-14, as well as TNA, FO 195/460.

Kronstadt (Braşov)–Szegedin (Szeged) railway, which passed through Hungary and Transylvania and was supposed to provide a connection with Bucharest and the Danube) is highlighted. Walachia and Moldavia (and the Danube ports of Orşova, Ibrailow, Galatz, Giurgevo, Iassi, and the planned lines in the region), as well as Bulgaria and “Roumelia (the ancient Thrace)” (i.e., the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas, and the urban centers from the hinterland, as for example Şumnu and Adrianople) are also highlighted as important segments on this trade route. The planned terminal station at the Aegean Sea was expected to become an important port in the grain trade, too.⁷⁶

Although the idea to make Silistria the terminus of the planned route was abandoned, the promoters of the Medjidieh Railway pointed out that the railway would link Silistria and other big towns and cities in the region (such as Rusçuk, Şumnu, and Varna) with Constantinople and with one other.⁷⁷ A glance at the map attached to the letter to Mustafa Reşid Pasha from 22 December 1856 also shows that Silistria was an important station in the project, since it would also provide a link to Iassi via Galatz.⁷⁸ According to the initial project, associated with Cruikshank and Gibb – the originators of the scheme – one of the main advantages of the planned route was that it was expected to provide a link with the planned lines in Walachia and Moldavia.⁷⁹

Thus, the Medjidieh Railway was intended as an important infrastructure in the grain-trade route in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. An analysis of the activities of the people associated with the project also reveals their wider interests, and these extend beyond the Sultan’s state. Yet, who were the persons who supported the scheme? A list with the names of the directors presented by Layard to Kostaki Musurus sheds light upon this question.⁸⁰ It includes the names of several influential London bankers such as George Grenfell Glyn, Arthur Hankey, and Kirkman Daniel Hodgson. Prominent figures from the social, political, and financial life of Britain like Baldwin Walker (a member of the British military who served in the Royal Navy), Charles Bell from the firm J. Thompson, T. Bonar and Co., William F. Williams (a

⁷⁶ *Railway Record*, 13 (1856), 263; BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4, *Lettre de A. H. Layard; Prospectus*, 9–10, 13–15; Antonova, “Foreign Entrepreneurs.”

⁷⁷ BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4, *Lettre de A.H. Layard; The Proposed*, 11.

⁷⁸ BOA, İ.MMS.9/393/4, *Lettre de A.H. Layard*.

⁷⁹ *Railway Record*, 13 (1856), 263.

⁸⁰ BOA, HR.SFR.3/32/10/10, Committee of the Imperial Ottoman Railway Company appointed to wait upon his Excellency M. Musurus.

British Major General), and Henry Rawlinson (an Orientalist) were also among the members of the company. The Ottoman merchant Pierre J. Hava was a member of the board of directors, too.⁸¹ According to the list, John Hawkshaw was engineer-in-chief, William Richard Drake was solicitor, and Lachlan MacKintosh Rate was secretary of the company. Rowland Macdonald Stephenson was also added to the list.⁸² Perhaps Thomas Matthias Weguelin, another influential figure in the City of London, was associated with Layard's project as well, though he was not part of the company's governing body.⁸³

The scheme was also financially supported by the Ottoman subjects George Zarifi and Mihran Bey Duz, influential figures in the economic life of the Ottoman Empire,⁸⁴ as well as by a "certain Baltazzi."⁸⁵

During the 1850s and 1860s many of these people were engaged in various enterprises in the Danube and Black Sea region⁸⁶ as well as in Russia, another major exporter of grain. Some of them were involved in the Russian trade. Such was the merchant house Thompson, Bonar & Co., in which T. Bell and T.M. Weguelin were partners. According to Fraser's Magazine, the house had been involved in Russian trade for several generations and possessed an establishment in St. Petersburg;⁸⁷ Weguelin (who was of Russian origin) was governor of the Russia Company formed in 1855;⁸⁸ the merchant house P. Hava & Co. was oriented toward the Russian market, too, and had an establishment in Odessa. The house Zarifi Zafiropoulo and some members of the Zarifi family were engaged in the grain trade with the Danubian Principalities and Odessa.⁸⁹

⁸¹ In fact, although Hava was ready to provide a certain amount of money to financially guarantee the project, he refused to sit on the board of directors. This happened on 13 February, i.e., three days after Layard sent the list with the names of the board members to Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Kurmuş, "British Dependence," 280, n. 63.

⁸² His name was written at the end of the list with ink of another color.

⁸³ It seems that he also supported the scheme, Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁸⁴ BL, LP/Add MS 39054, Lettre de George Zarifi et Mihran Duz Bey à A. H. Layard, Constantinople, le 12 Janvier 1857, ff. 15-16; Kurmuş, "British Dependence," 280.

⁸⁵ Kurmuş, "British Dependence," 280. Presumably this was Théodore Baltazzi or Aristide Baltazzi, both of whom were prominent Galata bankers.

⁸⁶ In fact, in the same period when the Medjidieh Railway project appeared, most of them were engaged in the establishment and the governance of the Ottoman Bank. For more on this see Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁸⁷ Fraser's Magazine 28 (1843): 207.

⁸⁸ *The British Imperial Calendar, or General Register of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and Its Colonies (etc.)* (London: Varnham, 1854), 251.

⁸⁹ Haris Exertzoglou, *Prosarmostikotēta kai Politikē Omogeiakōn Kephalaïōn: Ellēnes trapezites stēn Kōnstantinoupolē: To Katastēma 'Zariphēs Zaphairopoulos', 1871-1881* (Athens: Idryma Ereunas

Some of the persons associated with the Medjidieh Railway Company also took part in railway projects in Russia and the Austrian Empire. Thus, for example, Hawkshaw was engineer-in-chief of the Riga and the Dünaburg (*Daugavpils*) and Witepsk (*Vitebsk, Vitsebsk*) Railways in Russia.⁹⁰ The Lemberg (*Lviv*) Czernowitz (*Chernovtsi*) Railway in Austria, built in the 1860s, was another undertaking in which some of the persons associated with the Medjidieh Railway scheme were involved. These were L.M. Rate and E.R. Drake who took part in the establishment of the Imperial Royal Privileged Lemberg Czernowitz Railway Company in 1864. Rate became chairman of the board of directors in England and Drake was also a board member. The company of the latter, Messrs. Birhman, Dalrymple, Drake & Ward, was a solicitor firm, and the companies Messrs. Glyn, Mills, Currie & Co. and the Anglo-Austrian Bank (both of them associated with G.G. Glyn) were banking houses.⁹¹ According to the railway prospectus issued in 1869: "The extension of the Lemberg and the Czernowitz to the Black Sea had always been the ultimate desire and ambition of the direction since the establishment of the company. The guarantees of a prosperous future lie in this extension, be it either Odessa or to Galatz."⁹² Along with Odessa, Varna also occupied an important place in these plans.⁹³ For this reason extensions to Botoşani and Iassi were built later.⁹⁴

As for Layard himself, he was rather interested in the Asian parts of the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Mediterranean. According to the map of the Medjidieh Railway, the proposed route was supposed to link with other railway schemes in Western Anatolia. Its extensions would pass very close to Scala Nova (Turkish: Kuşadası), where Layard and two other directors of the Medjidieh Railway Company, Charles Bell and

kai Paideias tēs Emporikēs Trapezas tēs Ellados, 1989), 11–13; Vassilis Kardasis, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea: The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861* (Lanham: Lexington Books 2001), 163; Dimitris Stamatopoulos, *Metarrythmisē kai Ekkosmikeusē: pros mia anasynthesē tēs Istorias tou Oikoumenikou Patriarcheiu ton 19o aiona.* (Athens: Alexandria, 2003), 64–65; Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁹⁰ *Railway Times* 20 (1857): 695; "Obituary: Sir John Hawkshaw, 1811–1891," *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers* 106 (1891): 325; Robert Henry Mair, *Debrett's Illustrated House of Commons, and the Judicial Bench* (London: Dean & Son, 1870), 282.

⁹¹ Charles Barker and sons, *The Joint Stock Companies' Directory* (London: King, 1867), 201; Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

⁹² W.J. Adams, *Bradshaw's Railway Manual, Shareholders' Guide, and Official Directory for 1869* (Manchester: Bradshaw and Blacklock 1869), 358.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ For this line see Ihor Zhaloba, "Leon Sapeiha – a Prince and Railway Entrepreneur," in *Across the Borders: Financing the World's Railways in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Ralf Roth and Günter Dinshobl (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 49–62.

5. Conclusion: Silistria in the Context of Ottoman and Transottoman Infrastructure Projects

After the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire started to develop railway infrastructure in its various regions. The territories between the Black Sea and the Lower Danube region were among the areas that attracted the attention of various capitalists and entrepreneurs from the very beginning of this process. Naturally, due to its location, Silistria, together with other urban centers along the Danube River was the focus of many railway promoters interested in commercial prospects, which this part of the Sultan's empire could offer. Thus, in the early stage of Ottoman railway development, three competing schemes included this town in their route. Several conclusions regarding their appearance, interrelationship, and their place with respect to other Ottoman and Transottoman railway infrastructures can be drawn.

The earliest of these schemes, from October 1856, was the Varna and Silistria Railway. It emerged as an alternative to the Rassoava/Tchernavoda-Kustendjie route and was the only project in which Silistria had a central role as a terminus. Yet, it had to compete with other schemes that sought to link the Danube and the Black Sea, namely, the Danube and Black Sea Railway, and the Rusçuk and Varna Railway. Perhaps because the first of them had strong political support from the British government and the second was of primary importance to the Sublime Porte, the Varna and Silistria Railway lost this competition.

At the end of 1856 and the beginning of 1857, Silistria appeared in the plans of other railway entrepreneurs, though it had a secondary importance. The lack of available information means that the plans of the Danube and Black Sea Railway promoters for this town remain vague and obscure. A general review of the group's intentions, however, shows that its members were interested in the grain trade along the Lower Danube, and they aimed to compete with Odessa over grain exports from the region. In this context, Silistria attracted the attention of Wilson's group. Again, owing to the competition with the Rusçuk and Varna Railway, the Danube and Black Sea Railway promoters were forced to abandon their plans to extend the line in this direction.

In the third scheme, the Medjidieh Railway, Silistria played an important role as a link to other Transottoman railway infrastructures in the Lower Danube region. Yet, this town was once again of secondary

importance as a terminus on the Danube and also as a connection to the Walachian and the Moldavian railway networks, because in the course of the negotiations with the Sublime Porte, Rusçuk was chosen as more suitable in this regard. The result of the discussions between Layard and the Ottoman government, however, did not satisfy the group. They therefore initiated a second round of negotiations to extend their powers to construct railway infrastructures in the European provinces of the empire. It is quite possible that Silistria may have been part of those plans again. Eventually, Layard did not manage to renegotiate the concession and fulfill his engagements with the Porte. Thus, the Medjidieh Railway project, as well as the plans for a railway connection to Silistria, were never implemented.

Analyzed from a broader perspective, the three projects reflected the different scales of interests of the various entrepreneur lobbies in this part of the world. Thus, the composition of E. Ward Jackson's group does not indicate the participation of its members in other undertakings in the region. In fact, most of its members were engaged in engineering, which also explains the weaker positions of the Varna and Silistria Railway compared with its rival counterparts.

Yet, the competitor group of T. Wilson had a much wider interest in the Lower Danube region. The participation of some of its members in various Ottoman and Transottoman projects in neighboring countries that bordered the Danube, e.g., the Principality of Serbia and the Danubian Principalities, leads to such a conclusion. Central figures in the Danube and Black Sea Railway included the engineers Gordon and Liddell, as well as J.T. Barkley. Unlike the members of E. Ward Jackson's group, they were engaged in various enterprises in the Ottoman Empire (mainly in railway entrepreneurship but also in telegraph construction), and thus had a strong position before the Sublime Porte.

Finally, Layard's group had the broadest range of interests compared with its counterparts. It sought out entrepreneurial opportunities in the countries neighboring the Lower Danube and the Black Sea, such as the Ottoman Empire, the Danubian Principalities, the Russian Empire, and the Austrian Empire. The members of this group were engaged in various types of undertakings, such as banking, railway entrepreneurship, commerce, etc. In fact, many of the persons associated with the Medjidieh Railway were held together by interlocking

directorships in various companies around the world.⁹⁶ Moreover, Layard's group had a strong influence in the Ottoman government. As a result of similar interests to Layard's and Wilson's group in the region, the Medjidieh Railway project became a strong competitor to the Danube and Black Sea Railway.

Viewed from this perspective, the choice of Silistria by both groups is evident. In fact, the three schemes reflect the growing global interest of different entrepreneurs in the Lower Danube and the Black Sea region in the Post-Crimean Ottoman Empire. Although they were never implemented, in the second half of the 1850s Silistria, together with other urban centers along the Lower Danube became an important element in the Ottoman and Transottoman railway infrastructure projects.

In fact, the process of modernizing transportation affected the region's urban network in various ways. On the one hand, because of the construction of various Ottoman and Transottoman railway infrastructures, many settlements expanded. By transforming Kustendjie and Varna into railway termini and by enlarging their ports, for example, these two cities emerged as important stops on the region's grain-trade route. On the other hand, Silistria was never linked to the railway, and thus remained only one of the important military strongholds in this border region of the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, it never grew as a significant commercial center like Rusçuk or other towns and cities along the Lower Danube. Thus, the bright perspectives for a prosperous future alluded to by the plans for a railway link to Silistria remained only a mirage in the foreign entrepreneurs' schemes.

⁹⁶ For more on this see Antonova, "Foreign Entrepreneurs."

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(Dis)Connected: Railway, Steamships and Trade in the Port of Odessa, 1865–1888

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Abstract:

After the end of the Crimean War, politicians, engineers, and economists alike debated the future of the port of Odessa. Two particular issues that relate to the rising age of steam emerged: Odessa was forced to adapt its port infrastructures to bulky steamships and the city questioned its place in the developing railway network of Imperial Russia. This contribution argues that by balancing economic and military (geostrategic) demands, ministry officials and engineers laid the foundation both for Odessa's success in the 1860s and 1870s and its failures in the 1880s and 1890s.

Key Words: Odessa, infrastructure, steamships, railway, Russian history

1. Introduction

Grain is more difficult to handle than one might expect. At best, it comes perfectly dried and stowed in leakproof bags that are easy to pile, store, and move. In practice, and not only in nineteenth-century Russian commerce, things were often more complicated: Residual humidity, pests,

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and product impurity were among the reasons why grain was not moved and sold quickly. Grain was constantly under the threat of rotting, which resulted in economic losses on a large scale.¹ However, by increasing grain's speed of delivery, e.g., by accelerating time and shortening distances between producer, hub, and final destination, tremendous economic gains were to be expected. It is therefore no surprise that transport infrastructure is a crucial element in grain trade over global as well as regional distances.² In this article, I will focus on Odessa, Imperial Russia's biggest port on the shores of the Black Sea, and its function as a junction between different transport routes.³

In the 1860s, the port and its people found themselves in the middle of two transport revolutions that would ultimately shape this site of infrastructures in a new way: The arrival of steamships and railway lines heralded the beginning of Odessa's modern era. Steamships increased trade volumes on an unprecedented scale, while the railway lines fundamentally altered the characteristics of the sea-land interface. In addition, the grain market changed fundamentally when telegraphs accelerated the flow of information and synchronized prices on stock exchanges all over Europe.⁴ Taken together, these technologies posed new questions and problems for Odessa's planners both in the port city and in the capital, St. Petersburg. They were forced to find an answer to the question of whether Odessa was first and foremost part of a Eurocentric global trade network or an integral part of an imperial trade system, and thus more peripheral and dependent on the center. Debates over Odessa's place within the Russian Empire culminated in discussions over the direction and purpose of the "Southern Line," as part of Russia's railroads.

¹ For an overview of the history of grain trade cf. Steven S. Topik and Allen Wells, "Warenketten in einer globalen Wirtschaft," in *Geschichte der Welt 1870-1945: Weltmärkte und Weltkriege*, ed. Emily S. Rosenberg (München: Beck, 2012), 589-815 here: 687-723; Dan Morgan, *Merchants of Grain: The Power and Profits of the Five Giant Companies at the Center of the World's Food Supply* (New York: Viking, 1979).

² C. Knick Harley, "Transportation, the World Wheat Trade, and the Kuznets Cycle, 1850-1913," *Explorations in Economic History* 17, no. 3 (1980): 218-50.

³ Lewis Siegelbaum, "The Odessa Grain Trade. A Case Study in Urban Growth and Development in Tsarist Russia," *Journal of European Economic History* 9, no. 1 (1980): 113-151; For the history of Odessa cf. Patricia Herlihy, *Odessa: A History, 1794-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Evrydiki Sifneos, *Imperial Odessa: People, Spaces, Identities* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Charles King, *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams* (New York: Norton, 2011).

⁴ Svetlana Natkovich, "Odessa as 'Point de Capital': Economics, History, and Time in Odessa Fiction," *Slavic Review* 75, no. 4 (2016): 847-871; Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World: The Telegraph and Globalization*, sec. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

The debate touched upon the central question of Odessa's place in European, partly global, and imperial trade networks. This geographical reorientation increasingly disentangled the Odessa region from its incorporation into a Russian–Ottoman contact zone that was part of a Mediterranean trade network. Instead, Odessa was imagined as a “global” port that linked the Russian Empire with other major trade hubs such as Liverpool, Marseille, and New York.

Odessa's development was at a crossroads in the mid-1860s. Engineers, merchants, and economists in Odessa knew of possible ways to connect grain production, overseas transportation, and railroad transportation with Moscow. Decision-makers in St. Petersburg had to choose which way to go. Their choice to connect with or disconnect from the city on the shores of the Black Sea would ultimately decide its prosperity or, in Odessa's case, both its ongoing success in the 1870s and early 1880s and its failure in the late 1880s.

2. Connecting a port: Odessa and the railway system in the 1860s

In the early 1860s, the Russian Empire was the world's biggest exporter of wheat; it owed its status as the “bread basket of Europe” to its fertile black-earth soils in the southern provinces of Russia and the city and port of Odessa.⁵ Founded in 1794 alongside the eponymous city at the personal behest of Catherine II, the port came to be the Russian Empire's chief center of maritime transshipment.⁶ Within approximately 30 years, Odessa had risen to become a “[...] hub on the map of the flow of goods and money, part of the Mediterranean world and the Levant between Constantinople and Marseilles, Smyrna and Port Said.”⁷ As the official residence of the Governor-General of New Russia and Bessarabia, Odessa held a privileged position on the Black Sea coast and rapidly evolved into a central location for administrative functions.⁸ From the beginning,

⁵ King, *Odessa*, 109–12; Mose Lofley Harvey, “The Development of Russian Commerce on the Black Sea and Its Significance” (PhD dissertation, University of California Berkeley, 1938).

⁶ For the history of the port cf. Nikolay Gleb-Koshanskiy, *Port and Odessa: We Are 200 Years Old: On the Port, City and Region History* (Odessa: Vest, 1994); Taras Hryhorovych Hončaruk, *Odes'ke Porto-Franko: Istoriiâ 1819–1859 rr.* (Odesa: Astroprynt, 2005); Liliya Belousova, “The Black and Azov Sea Port-Cities: Shipbuilding and Commercial Industry in Late 18th – Early 20th Century Through the Prism of the State Archives of Odessa Region,” n.d.; V. Timonov, *Očerk Razvitiâ Odesskago Porta* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tipografiâ Ministerstva putej soobšeniâ, 1886).

⁷ Karl Schlögel, *Entscheidung in Kiew: Ukrainische Lektionen* (München: Hanser, 2015), 131; cf. Herlihy, *Odessa*, 21–46, 96–114.

⁸ Guido Hausmann, “Die wohlhabenden Odessaer Kaufleute und Unternehmer: Zur Herausbildung bürgerlicher Identitäten im ausgehenden Zarenreich,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte*

Odessa and the region of what was called the “New Russia” were designed as an economic laboratory for the whole empire. Until 1819, the Russian state actively encouraged foreigners to settle in the newly conquered territories, with Odessa being one main migration hub.⁹ Besides German and Western European settlers, emigrated subjects of the Ottoman Empire, such as Bulgarians, Greek, and Romanians, were also attracted by the duty exemptions the Russian state provided and the fertility of the region’s black soil. The port of Odessa was designed to ship large volumes of traded goods around the world, and it was foreign trade that “worked decisively to shape the economy and society of Odessa [...]”¹⁰

Although the early 1860s marked the peak of an upward trend that went on for decades, circumstances had already changed during the Crimean War, when established Black Sea trade routes had collapsed and hardly reopened after 1856. Big merchant houses of the Mediterranean world, many among them Greek or Italian, had left the city and paved the way for new merchants and entrepreneurs who would make the city more Russian and Jewish than ever before. Odessa slowly developed into an ethnically Russian port city, and the border to the Ottoman Empire increasingly divided people. At the same time, the Black Sea developed into a space of global connections.¹¹ Against this backdrop, Odessa was about to lose its status as *porto franco* (a free port), which on the one hand “stimulated Odessa’s foreign trade, but it severely restricted its access to the huge market that the empire represented.”¹² Removing Odessa’s free-port privileges sparked hope of further integrating the agriculture of the southern provinces into an imperial economic network and of boosting the industrial development of the Odessa region. While this development was intended to strengthen the inner imperial economy, Odessa simultaneously faced the rise of the steamship age and its tremendous impact on the globalization of trade.¹³ The city was one of the major places in which Russia established steam-powered seafaring, since in 1856 it had

Osteuropas 48, no. 1 (2000): 41–65; Guido Hausmann, *Universität und städtische Gesellschaft in Odessa, 1865–1911: Soziale und nationale Selbstorganisation an der Peripherie des Zarenreiches* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998).

⁹ Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall*, sec. ed., (München: Beck, 2008), 52; Dietmar Neutatz, *Die ‘Deutsche Frage’ im Schwarzmeergebiet und in Wolhynien: Politik, Wirtschaft, Mentalitäten und Alltag im Spannungsfeld von Nationalismus und Modernisierung (1856–1914)* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993).

¹⁰ Herlihy, *Odessa*, 72.

¹¹ Cf. Florian Riedler’s contribution to this issue.

¹² Herlihy, *Odessa*, 113.

¹³ Richard J. Evans, *The Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815–1914*, (London: Penguin, 2016), 147–58.

become the headquarters of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (*Russkoe Obščestvo Parohodstva i Torgovli, ROPiT*). Initially designed to mask the building of large ships that could ultimately be turned into naval ships in case of war, after Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, ROPiT soon became a major global economic player.¹⁴

All these developments were accompanied by ongoing debates and plans regarding whether and, if so, how to connect Southern Russia to the planned railway network. Back in 1844, the Governor-General of New Russia and Bessarabia, Mihail Voroncov, stated in a letter to Tsar Nikolaj I that "[...] the future of trade in our southern region depends on encouraging the construction of a network of railways in our steppes, which, by bringing closer distances, speed, regularity, and cheap delivery, would put us in a position not to be afraid of any rivalry in foreign markets."¹⁵ As early as in October 1854, the tsarist administration sent Pavel Mel'nikov on an expedition to investigate possibilities and routes for a railway from Moscow to the shores of the Black Sea. Mel'nikov proposed a line from Moscow to Feodosiâ and highlighted the economic possibilities of the proposed railway, especially the "palpable reduction of transport durations and costs," which would contribute to a "maximal development of the natural sources of wealth, of the productive forces."¹⁶ After the end of the Crimean War, when he was staying in St. Petersburg for the coronation of Alexander II, Voroncov lobbied in favor of Odessa being connected to Moscow. However, he did not succeed and the new head of the Department of Transport and Communication, K.V. Čevkin, opted to retain the proposed Moscow-Crimea (Feodosiâ) line, clearly motivated by his impression of Russia's insufficient supply structures during the Crimean War. Only two years later, things changed, and a new society grouped around the counts Strogov and Allerberg, a certain engineer Marčenko, N.A. Novosel'skij and several merchants of Odessa who advocated linking Russia's largest Black Sea port to Moscow and St. Petersburg.¹⁷ Their initiative sparked a controversy over the exact course

¹⁴ Ludmila Thomas, *Streben nach Weltmachtpositionen: Russlands Handelsflotte, 1856 bis 1914* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995); Mesut Karakulak, *Osmanlı Sularında Rus Vapurları Buharlı Çağında Vapur ve Ticaret Kumpanyası (1856-1914)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 2020); A. Skal'kovskij, "Russkoe Obščestvo Parohodstvo i Torgovli 1857-1869". https://odessitclub.org/publications/almanac/alm_40/alm_40_6-19.pdf (last accessed on 30 November 2020). Also cf. Lyubomir Pozharliev's article in this issue.

¹⁵ Apollon Skal'kovskij, "Biografiâ Odesskoj Železnoj Dorogi," *Trudy Odesskogo Statističeskago Komiteta*, 1865, 8.

¹⁶ Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne: Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014), 52.

¹⁷ Skal'kovskij, "Biografiâ Odesskoj Železnoj Dorogi," 11.

of the empire's southern railway line. This controversy took place both behind closed doors and in the public arena: Newspapers that propagated arguments from different ministries and departments (finance, war, internal affairs, and communications), as well as state and private actors, argued for or against two proposals that lay on the table.¹⁸ The discussions were dominated mainly by two questions: Who was to finance the Southern Line – the state or entrepreneurs – and which direction should it take?¹⁹ Two options were discussed the most: Connecting Odessa with Kiev via Balta and then via Orel to Moscow, or connecting Odessa first with the economic centers of Imperial Russia's south before leading northwards to Moscow (Odessa–Balta–Kremenčuk–Poltava–Harkov–Moscow)?²⁰



Fig. 1: Russian railway map of 1906 with the Odessa–Harkov line marked in green. Source: *Shema železnych dorog Rossijskoj imperii izdanie I. F. Zauera 1906 goda*. S.Peterburg 1906

What seems a rather technical decision was much more, since the railway's course determined the main purpose and ultimate goal of the

¹⁸ Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, 70–72.

¹⁹ Alfred Rieber, "The Debate over the Southern Line: Economic Integration or National Security," in *Synopsis: A Collection of Essays in Honour of Zenon E. Kohout*, ed. Serhii Plokhly and Frank Sysyn (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 2005), 373.

²⁰ Skal'kovskij, "Biografiâ Odesskoj Želesnoj Dorogi," 13–14.

line: It could either be a state-driven, strategic line that linked the center and the periphery, or a line designed to serve economic purposes in the developing southern regions of Russia, cofinanced by merchants and entrepreneurs. In December 1864, after days of heated discussions, the Committee of Ministers decided to follow the proposal of the Finance Minister of Russia, Michael von Reutern, supported by the Minister of the Navy, Nikolaj Krabbe, and, most prominently, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevič. Their opponents who rallied around the War Minister Dmitrij Milūtín had argued in favor of a strategic railway line that would help tie the Ukrainian periphery both politically and economically more strongly to the center.²¹ But, according to von Reutern, “the short-term advantages of linking the bustling Ukrainian markets to the export trade through a port easily accessible to foreign ships outweighed all other considerations. Russia’s economic development depended on its ties with Western Europe.”²² Von Reutern and his circle of reform-oriented like-minded people tended to focus on economic growth and the region’s development toward its western (the Habsburg Empire and Western Europe) neighbors. By decree it was ordered to “build the southern railway, which has already begun from Moscow to Serpukhov and from Odessa to the Baltics, by the state treasury, as active as possible, on the one hand from Serpukhov to Tula, Orël, Kursk and Kiev, and on the other from Balta to Kremenčug and Harkov.” Over the following years, Russian imperial railway construction in the south tended to prioritize this regional economic integration over a rapid strategic linking of the southern provinces to the imperial centers. However, the planners and builders of Russia’s southern railway line clearly followed both an economic *and* a political agenda. It was namely the state-financed building of railroads that, according to Apollon Skal’kovskij, would both satisfy the economic needs of the region and contribute to the nationalization of the Black Sea region: “[It’s] the first use of capital contributed by all of Russia, which will be directed to the cause which is so exciting for the whole empire – the construction of a railway from Moscow to the Black, that is, the ancient ‘Russian’ sea.”²³

Apart from the question of railway links, people in Odessa in the 1860s were occupied with another major infrastructure project: Faced with the onset of the steam age, and given the lack of sufficient wharfs, the

²¹ Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, 72.

²² Rieber, “The Debate over the Southern Line,” 394; cf. William L. Blackwell, *The Industrialization of Russia: A Historical Perspective*, third ed. (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1994), 28–29.

²³ Skal’kovskij, “Biografiâ Odesskoj Želesnoj Dorogi,” 14.

1860s saw ongoing discussion over enlarging the port, dredging the harbor basin, and extending its wharfs and piers. Steamships fundamentally altered the circulation of people and goods across the globe. As well as permitting delivery scheduling for shipments by liberating shipping from its hitherto absolute dependence on currents and wind, they made it possible for naval engineers to build larger ships that could carry higher volumes and bulkier types of cargo.²⁴ The possibilities this development opened up to world trade simultaneously posed a major challenge to ports worldwide, which found themselves needing to rearrange and expand their infrastructure to take in bigger ships and to load and unload greater volumes of goods. Wharfs and piers had to be extended, new warehouses had to be built and more docking stations had to be set up. But the most important task that Odessa's port builders faced in this context was the deepening and cleaning of its harbor basin. All parts of the port required a greater depth of water, especially the quarantine harbor, at which trading vessels from all over the world arrived. One substantial problem was the clogging of the harbor basin with stones and rocks, along with illegally dumped litter and ballast. Cleaning is a constant necessity for a port, but in the mid-nineteenth century the issue gained great urgency, with a loss to Russia's economy incurred for every steamship unable to dock in Odessa.²⁵ Another obstacle to an increase in trade in Odessa were dangerous winds from the south and southeast, alongside colliding water masses from the Bug, the Dnepr, and the Danube, which produced what were referred to as "hacking waves." Additionally, the port became increasingly cramped when trade increased, and shipwrecking was a massive danger to trade. According to one source, shipwrecking accounted for a loss of 270,000 rubles per year. During the 1860s, several measures were taken to ensure the port's relevance in global trade. These measures, too, aimed to link Odessa primarily with other global ports, such as Marseille or Livorno, and permitted an expansion in the volume of exported grain.

Both infrastructure projects of the 1860s – the linking to the railway system and the expansion of the port's facilities – focused on strengthening the port as an important part of the economic macroregion of Southern Russia and the port of Odessa as the most important trading hub for the export of grain. In contrast to this, Odessa's planners believed that intensifying the city's connections with the imperial center was an

²⁴ William Rosen, *The Most Powerful Idea in the World: A Story of Steam, Industry and Invention* (London: Pimlico, 2011); Douglas R. Burgess, *Engines of Empire: Steamships and the Victorian Imagination* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

²⁵ Timonov, *Očerk Razvitiâ Odesskago Porta*, 26–40.

issue of secondary importance. When a certain I.F. Felkner of Rostov-na-Donu denounced Odessa as an “artificial port founded by a foreigner,” his polemics were, of course, somewhat overblown.²⁶ But, like all polemics, they contained a kernel of truth: Odessa was designed as a special economic laboratory at the frontier of the Russian Empire, in which new ideas and concepts could be tested and performed long before they became economic practices in other parts of Russia. This reflected a longtime hope formulated initially at the end of the eighteenth century and vital until at least the early 1860s: As a European Great Power, the Russian Empire intended to use the newly conquered southern territories to boost economic growth and entanglements with Europe and the world. However, the auspices of geopolitics and economics changed drastically during the second half of the nineteenth century – and Odessa suddenly found itself cut off from important economic routes.

3. Disconnected: Railway networks and the global grain trade

The January Uprising, an insurrection in imperial Russia’s Kingdom of Poland in 1863 and 1864, reinforced the purported “Polish fear” present among the imperial elite in St. Petersburg. When around 10,000 men rallied around the revolutionary banner, and resisted conscription into the Russian army, they revealed – once again – the asymmetries and disbalances of social, economic, and political power within the Russian Empire. Among Russocentric politicians in St. Petersburg, it was a widely held belief that these disbalances would evoke rebellions and uprisings in the western and southern provinces and that reasonable imperial politics would include the effective suppression of separatist movements on the periphery.²⁷ Alongside the Poles, Ukrainians were also highly suspicious in the eyes of imperial elites.²⁸ This imperial situation had a profound impact on infrastructure policies in Odessa as well: In the first half of the nineteenth century, the relative independence and laboratory-like character of the southern provinces were considered to be an asset to Russia’s economic growth and geopolitical significance. But after the January Uprising, the relative remoteness of Odessa and its port increasingly became a problem in the eyes of politicians and engineers.

This politicization of transport issues in the southern provinces had a profound impact on the newly planned railway tracks. As early as March

²⁶ Rieber, “The Debate over the Southern Line,” 392.

²⁷ Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, 327–32.

²⁸ Andreas Kappeler, *Kleine Geschichte der Ukraine*, fourth ed. (München: Beck, 2014), 131–132.

1866, the tsar approved extending the railway lines from Odessa to as far as Kiev. In 1872, the railroad linked Odessa to Harkov and from there to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev.²⁹ However, these constructions were not dominated by an economic paradigm: They served mainly strategic purposes and were designed to deploy troops to the Russian–Ottoman border. This “haphazard method” resulted in “crooked lines” that were quite often unnecessarily long and poorly maintained.³⁰ In effect, the shipment of grain in Southern Russia could not benefit entirely from the acceleration and price reductions that the railway promised to deliver. However, even under these given limitations, the railroad continued to become more important for the grain trade: By 1879, 71 percent of all grain reached Odessa by train.³¹

Getting grain to the port and the sea was even more vital for Russia in the 1870s and 1880s, since Russia underwent a shift in economic paradigm: In contrast to its liberalist policy of the 1860s, Russia then aimed to boost its export surplus, for which Russia almost exclusively relied on its grain exports. In so doing, Russia ultimately sought to join the gold standard.³² Since its founding, Odessa constantly lacked a processing industry that would have helped develop the region into an economic center. The linking of Odessa with Ukrainian agricultural hotspots in the first instance, such as Balta, Kremenčuk, and Harkov, was inspired by the new economic, export-oriented policy. Consequently, regionally focused industrial development became even less important for the Ministry of Finance in St. Petersburg, and the region was unable to come to occupy a greater political significance in the imperial framework. In addition, Odessa faced being cornered by rival port cities on the Black Sea shore, which enjoyed an advantage. Among them was Nikolaev (Mykolayiv), a port city northeast of Odessa that had long been engaged in shipbuilding and, during most of the nineteenth century, hosted the Russian Empire’s Black Sea Navy Headquarters.³³ The close link between the Naval Ministry in St. Petersburg and Nikolaev was one of the reasons for Nikolaev’s rise in the 1860s. The military governor Bogdan von Glazenap encouraged foreign vessels to land in the commercial port and thereby transformed

²⁹ Herlihy, *Odessa*, 216.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 219.

³² Paul R. Gregory, *Before Command: An Economic History of Russia From Emancipation to the First Five-Year Plan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Peter Gatrell, *The Tsarist Economy: 1850–1917* (London: Batsford, 1986).

³³ Ūrij S. Krúčkov, *Istoriâ Nikolaeva* (Nikolaev: Vosmožnosti Kimberii, 2006).

Nikolaev from a naval base to a big commercial port.³⁴ In the 1880s, Nikolaev became Russia's third-largest commercial port, after Odessa and St. Petersburg. This intense regional competition increased pressure on the port of Odessa, which faced losing its monopoly on the northern shore of the Black Sea and altered Southern Russia's "regional" environment once again.³⁵

Taken together, the new political situation, an inefficient transport infrastructure, and regional rivalry threatened the wellbeing of the port of Odessa. At the end of the 1870s, these threats did not go unnoticed. During the 1880s, a multitude of reports and evaluations (both by domestic and foreign observers) tried to shed light on the port of Odessa's difficult situation. Among the most elaborate reports was one handed in by the Odessan Committee of Trade and Industry in 1875. This committee was one of many in the Russian Empire, created at the request of urban or merchant societies. Committees of trade and manufacturers were established to discuss issues of trade and industry, based on the proposals of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Empire and the provincial government, as well as issues related to local trade and industry that were raised by the committee itself. Until 1872, Odessa had no such committee, as it was organized through the Imperial Board of Trade (*Kommerčeskij Sovet*), which maintained branches in some of the empire's most vital economic centers: Odessa, Riga, Arhangelsk, Taganrog, and Rostov-na-Donu. But in 1872, this institution was abolished, a decision that intended to end or limit economic autonomy in the region and further attach these regions to the center. Subsequently, committees for trade and industry were introduced and Odessa's committee immediately started work. In the early 1880s the committee moved into its new building where a new commercial college was established. Designed by the architect F.B. Gonsiorovskij, the engineer Alexej N. Paškov erected the building in 1876–1877. He would later preside over the committee's board. Its members evaluated the region's economic situation thoroughly, and the results were published as annual reviews on the current situation regarding trade and industry in the respective region. The committee in Odessa even distributed their reports commercially.³⁶ In 1875, immediately after its foundation, the committee felt an urge to alert St. Petersburg. A report

³⁴ D.D. Gnusin, *Materialy dlâ opisaniâ Russkikh portov i istorii ih sooruzeniâ*, vyp. IX, *Nikolaevskij Port* (St. Petersburg, 1889).

³⁵ In his book, Walter Sperling investigated the railroad's impact on the region of Âroslavl' and Saratov: Walter Sperling, *Der Aufbruch der Provinz: Die Eisenbahn und die Neuordnung der Râume im Zarenreich* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2011).

³⁶ *Enciklopedičeskij slovar Brokgauz i Èfron* 15a (1895), 850, art. "Komitety trgovli i manufaktur."

titled *On the Decline and Measures of Development in Odessa* was sent to the economic department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire.³⁷ On page two, the report's authors directly addressed the problematic situation in the city and the port of Odessa, "Which is beginning to raise the most serious fears for the future." It continued:

The present state of affairs in Odessa can be expressed in brief words by the fact that it is not only experiencing a temporary crisis, depending on the state of harvests at home and abroad, etc., but is also entering a period of decisive decline. And this decline will be fatal for her if it is not prevented by the most energetic measures and if no measures are taken at the most urgent time.³⁸

The report ultimately evaluated two reasons for the port's decline, both of which related to changes in regional economic and infrastructure relations:

The success or failure of the Odessa trade [...] depends on the conditions under which it struggles with someone else's rivalry. Until recently, these conditions were very favorable. Southern Russia ranked first in the world in terms of quantity and quality of the bread it produced and Odessa was almost the only holiday destination in the whole vast region. Now this has changed. On the one hand, vacations began to be made via Nikolaev and Sevastopol, on the other hand, the development of the railway network allowed our bread to reach its foreign consumers, bypassing the Black Sea.³⁹

According to the report, Odessa was faced with two threatening developments: First, the Black Sea region had diversified, with Nikolaev and Sevastopol' rising to become significant economic centers, which thus undermined Odessa's former monopoly in the region. Second, the Black Sea region itself lost its status as a prime hub for grain trade, and lost its share in favor of the developing and booming railway network. Instead, the Baltic seaports (and most prominent among them, Riga) were now rising fast.⁴⁰ They benefited from their close links to the central railroad

³⁷ Rossijskij Gosudarstvennyj Istoričeskij Arhiv (RGIA), f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728, Hozâstvennyj departament MVD, Ob upadke i o merah razvitiâ trgovli v Odesse (1875).

³⁸ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 2.

³⁹ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 2.

⁴⁰ Cf. Katja Wezel's research project on Riga as a hub of global trade and Ulrike von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit: Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga 1860–1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); Anders Henriksson, *The Tsar's Loyal*

lines and short distances from the important markets of Germany and Great Britain. Additionally, the report highlighted the sudden change in circumstances – clearly, the forces inherent in the world’s first (modern) globalization overstrained the adaptability of Odessa’s port. Under the presidency of A. Paškov and with nine sitting members, among them Russian, Jew, Greek, and German merchants, the committee then pressed on to face up to the port’s biggest problems.⁴¹ One sure problem was the port’s bad connection to the railway network: The decision of the 1860s to bypass Kiev now appeared to be a big problem, since the efficient and profitable railroad connection from Kiev to the Baltic provinces (and, from there to the lucrative and ever rising markets of Germany and Great Britain) challenged and changed the well-trodden tracks of grain transport to which Odessa’s city officials were accustomed. The report stressed that moving a *četvert*⁴² of grain from Kiev to Odessa (481 kilometers away) in 1875 cost two rubles, while moving the same amount of wheat to Königsberg, which was far more distant (956 kilometers), cost nearly the same (1.90 rubles).⁴³ This clearly demonstrated Odessa’s poor connection to the empire’s main transportation routes, and resulted in high and unprofitable transportation costs. The essence of this argument clearly lay in the shifting notions of “center” and “periphery” that affected all parts of the empire.⁴⁴ In the late nineteenth century, connectedness to the center became a (more) crucial feature of economic hotspots, and it is this geographical shift that is also visible in the following source:

The “Odessa–Baltic Railway” [...] on the one hand to Žmerinka and Kiev, on the other to Elisavetgrad and Kremenčug, is not the shortest way to connect Odessa to the center of the Empire.⁴⁵

But the report did not limit itself to the Odessan port’s infrastructural deficits. In addition, its authors proved to be well aware of global ruptures in the grain market that would change the flow of grain and money across the oceans in a significant way. More specifically, it mentioned Argentina and the US as rising and increasingly dominant players in the global grain market, who eventually outpaced all their European rivals with respect to

Germans: The Riga German Community, Social Change and the Nationality Question, 1855–1905 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

⁴¹ The committee’s report was signed by L. Vedde, I. Vučina, G. Gurovič, A. Kievskij, L. Kommerel, N. Kriónap-Nikola, A. Novikov, A. Ratgauz and D. Rafalovič.

⁴² One *četvert* (old Russian dry measure) = 209.9 liters.

⁴³ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 11ob.

⁴⁴ Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, 60–70.

⁴⁵ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 16.

quality and price. Pessimistically, the report noted: "The bread [wheat] trade of Russia, and that means largely of Odessa, will suffer the same fate that befell our export of wool."⁴⁶ What they meant here was that the port of Odessa was threatened by both its peripheral location within the imperial economic network and by its self-restriction on exports of wheat. This resulted in a constant imbalance between imports and exports, with the former being partially neglected in the port's trade. As a result, ships were often forced to make an empty run back to Odessa, and this stopped the economic region of Odessa from developing clusters of processing-industry plants. Back in 1865, planners in Odessa and St. Petersburg sincerely hoped that the new railroad would lead to the development of new industries, since it would contribute to the intensification and concentration of commerce and the flow of goods in the region:

[...] in the eyes of a wise government, a scientifically experienced statistician, and even a simple Russian person, the construction of the southern railway would mean not only the connection of existing supply markets to Odessa, to a port for international trade, but also –through acceleration – the desire for cargo movement and convergence of localities, hitherto separated by entire deserts, the cheapening of transport and, consequently, the development of industry [*promyšlennost'*] where the most necessary branches of the economy are in complete stagnation.⁴⁷

Apparently, this problem remained an urgent one 20 years later. To overcome this issue, the report proposed that trade in Odessa should become

[...] more diverse, [it should] change from the predominance of just one specialty [...] In the future, imported trade for Odessa should take a much more prominent place than now. At the same time, it is necessary that it also creates within itself a manufacturing industry and that its capitals do not go exclusively in that one-way direction [...]⁴⁸

Taken together, in summary this report comprises a detailed analysis of the port's problems, possible solutions and a remarkable overview of the situation in the global grain trade. The report made clear assertions

⁴⁶ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 12ob.

⁴⁷ Skal'kovskij, "Biografiâ Odesskoj Železnoj Dorogi," 15.

⁴⁸ RGIA f. 1287 op. 7 d. 728 l. 13.

regarding the links between economic performance and structural features, and it accorded lesser weight to other factors such as customs duties and taxes. Its authors, many of whom had been involved in constructing the port's facilities, developed their argument through close observation of their works. They underpinned the complex framework of different challenges that Odessa would face in the coming decades at the global, imperial, and regional levels. What is quite striking is the absence of political arguments. In 1875, shortly before the outbreak of the 1877–1878 Ottoman–Russian War, commercial elites in Odessa clearly did not notice or mention the Ottoman Empire, its neighbor, as a political or economic force in the region. Furthermore, the increasingly dangerous situation inside the empire itself, with Tsar Alexander II facing multiple terrorist attacks and the “Polish Question” as hot as possibly never before, infrastructural problems obviously had a political dimension.⁴⁹ However, the Committee of Trade and Industry in Odessa refrained from pushing this argument forward and relied on solely economic argumentation. It is only in historical retrospect that we can connect these two spheres.

4. Connected, but to where?

The nineteenth century was, according to Jürgen Osterhammel, a “golden era of ports and port cities.” Seaports ranked as the “most important transaction points between nations and continents.”⁵⁰ The port of Odessa was no exception to this: It linked the Russian Empire to the world. An analysis of the port's infrastructure and its place in wider networks of transport and communications therefore contributes both to the history of the Russian Empire and the history of globalization. For Odessa, globalization did not always entail a steady increase in export and unlimited growth, and the story of Odessa cannot only be told as a success story.⁵¹ In the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s, when the world's first (modern) globalization swept across Russia, Odessa was only partially able to cope with the fundamental changes that this process brought to how it traded.⁵²

⁴⁹ Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “Attacking the Empire's Achilles Heels: Railroads and Terrorism in Tsarist Russia,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58, no. 2 (2010): 232–53.

⁵⁰ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (München: Beck, 2011), 402–3.

⁵¹ This, of course is a feature of globalisation in general, cf. Peter Feldbauer, *Rhythmen der Globalisierung: Expansion und Kontraktion zwischen dem 13. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Mandelbaum, 2009).

⁵² For globalization's impact on the history of Russia cf. Martin Aust, “On Parallel Tracks at Different Speeds: Historiographies of Imperial Russia and the Globalized World around 1900,” *Comparativ* 29, no. 2 (2019): 78–105; Martin Aust, *Globalisierung imperial und sozialistisch:*

It is this ambivalent relation to modernity's prospects that makes the case of Odessa so illuminating. The reasons for Odessa's (relative) decline were situated on all three geographical levels – global, national, and regional.

First, Russia was a prisoner of its own trajectories: For a long time, Russia simply placed trust in its position as the “breadbasket” of Europe, and this enabled it to achieve high profits from export business. When new competitors arrived in the grain market, Russia witnessed them challenging its position and hastily evaluated measures to fight back. But, although the black soil of the Ukrainian lands was certainly extremely fertile, the vast areas of Argentina and America's Midwest allowed for production on a far larger scale.⁵³ Their rise to power, though, was only possible because of plummeting transportation costs. The railway and steamships dramatically reduced transportation costs over long distances and increased the reliability of deliveries. The port of Odessa tried to secure its position as the Black Sea's main port with ambitious construction projects, but it had to witness regional rivals, such as Nikolaev, wresting shares from Odessa. This contribution identified infrastructure policies as one of the main reasons for the delayed response to these global and regional shifts. Despite having been designed from an economic point of view in the first half of the nineteenth century, in the hope of boosting an economic mesoregion in Russia's south, in the 1860s and 1870s Odessa's bad railway links with Kiev and Moscow increasingly became a big problem. They harmed Russia's grain trade at its weakest point: Because of insufficient means of transportation, grain was stored at several points along the route. Moisture played an important role: It soaked Russian grain when it was loaded on carts and when the grain rested unprotected alongside tracks and railroad lines. This exacerbated already-known problems that related to the falsification of grain (often, grain was “stretched” with added sand).⁵⁴

The port of Odessa lost significant shares in the export of grain to its rivals, most notably to Nikolaev and Herson, but Odessa remained Russia's largest export port until well into the late 1890s. Nevertheless, to a great degree, Russia's economic prosperity (and, ultimately, destiny) was dependent on the wellbeing of its hub on the northern Black Sea shore. After 1890, the situation clearly changed: Nikolaev started to overtake Odessa, and Riga rose to be Russia's biggest port until the beginning of

Russland und die Sowjetunion in der Globalgeschichte 1851–1991 (Frankfurt: Campus, 2013); Wenzlhuemer, *Connecting the Nineteenth-Century World*.

⁵³ Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 402–3.

⁵⁴ Herlihy, *Odessa*, 207–8.

the Russian Revolution. Odessa entered the twentieth century amid sailors' strikes, the workers' movement(s), and devastating pogroms.⁵⁵ Clearly, the port of Odessa was not the only one that struggled with different aspects of globalization. The age of steam was a challenge for many ports in Europe, including those in Livorno, Marseille, and Liverpool. All witnessed the "streamlining of technologies, the growth of exchange, and simultaneous political, economic, and social changes."⁵⁶ This article has argued that, in the case of Odessa, political and economic changes in the late nineteenth century were influenced by decisions to connect Odessa to, or disconnect it from, Russia's transport infrastructure. However, this did not mean that infrastructure policy determined political and economic outcomes. Quite often, the building and expansion of infrastructures reacted to or anticipated changes in economic or imperial policies (from liberalism to protectionism), political rulership (from Alexander II to Alexander III) or the composition of multiethnic city citizenship (from the Greek-Italian world of the first half to the Jewish-Russian world of the last half of the nineteenth century).⁵⁷

In St. Petersburg and Odessa, the acceleration in and intensification of the movement of goods, particularly grain, via railroads sparked hope and rose expectations among numerous people. Looking back from the 1880s, some of these hopes were fulfilled, others were not. At the end of the nineteenth century, more grain than ever was moved to the shores of the Black Sea. However, the railroad did not lead to the significant industrial development of the Odessa region until the beginning of the twentieth century, and its competitors in the global grain market set out to overtake Russia. For Odessa, globalization was both a promise and a threat. It depended upon the choices made by decision-makers in the top ministries of St. Petersburg and on-site in Odessa, and the 1860s were a crucial moment for the port's history: Shaped by reformist debates, the (dis)connections decided on at that time were to define the city and port of Odessa well until the eve of the October Revolution.

⁵⁵ King, *Odessa*, 127-251; Tanja Pentec, *Odessa 1917: Revolution an der Peripherie* (Köln: Böhlau, 2000).

⁵⁶ Carola Hein, "Port Cities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 809.

⁵⁷ Dirk van Laak, *Alles im Fluss: Die Lebensadern unserer Gesellschaft: Geschichte und Zukunft der Infrastruktur* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2018), 13: "They are the material substrate of social constellations, the coagulated state of a respective moment."

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State Goals and Private Interests in the Development of Transport Infrastructure in the Russian Black Sea Region in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract:

The article examines the development of transport infrastructure and shipping in the Black Sea region through the case of the establishment and initial development of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (ROPiT) between 1856 and the end of the nineteenth century. ROPiT was a joint-stock company co-owned by private entrepreneurs and the state. The article introduces the concept of “systemic actors,” and argues that the construction of Russia’s maritime infrastructure in the Black Sea region became possible due to the efforts of two systemic actors – Nikolaj Arkas and Nikolaj Novosel’skii – who had a comprehensive vision about the development not merely of maritime infrastructure but of infrastructure as a large technological system (cf. Hughes). The development of infrastructure also resulted from constant negotiation between the state’s and entrepreneurs’ different interests. The article thus challenges the thesis that the modernization of the Russian Empire was sustained by top-down state intervention, and shows that modernization developments, with regard to transport infrastructure, consist of a much more complex process encompassing the constant negotiation and confrontation of state and private interests. The researched case can be better explained by the notion of “entangled modernities.”

Keywords: Russian History, Infrastructure, steam shipping

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1. Research questions and concepts

This article examines the development of transport infrastructure and shipping in the Black Sea region through the case of the establishment and initial development of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company¹ (ROPiT) from 1856 to the end of the nineteenth century. ROPiT was a joint-stock company co-owned by private entrepreneurs and the state.

The article lies in the field of the social history of technology. I understand “infrastructure” in the sense of Thomas P. Hughes’s notion of large technological systems whose components are not only physical artifacts but also organizations, knowledge, legislative artifacts, etc.² Contemporary studies of infrastructure bring together politics, economics, social relations, technology, space, and time.³ In this article I will not deal with the technological aspects of the construction and development of maritime infrastructure, although they are important. I will concentrate on the biographies of two actors, Nikolaj Arkas and Nikolaj Novosel’skij, who invested their efforts in the establishment of such a structure. The question of the mobility of actors is important for the Transottomanica program⁴ and also in biography research.⁵ I will therefore also focus on this aspect as well as on the cultural and social capital⁶ of Arkas and Novosel’skij, and on their role in the success of their work.

¹ Russian: *Russkoe obščestvo parochodstva i torgovli* – ROPiT.

² Thomas P. Hughes, “The Evolution of Large Technological Systems,” in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems*, ed. Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas P. Hughes, and Trevor Pinch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), here 45.

³ Dirk van Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur: Deutsche Planungen für eine Erschließung Afrikas 1880–1960* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004).

⁴ For a detailed presentation of the priority programme Transottomanica, see Stefan Rohdewald, “Mobilität/Migration: Herstellung transosmanischer Gesellschaften durch räumliche Bewegungen,” in *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken: Perspektiven und Forschungsstand*, ed. Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht Fuess (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019), 59–82.

⁵ Malte Rolf, “Einführung: Imperiale Biographien: Lebenswege imperialer Akteure in Groß- und Kolonialreichen (1850–1918),” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 40, no. 1 (2014): 5–21; Sarah Panter, Johannes Paulmann, and Margit Szöllösi-Janze, “Mobility and Biography: Methodological Challenges and Perspectives,” in *Mobility and Biography, Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte/European History Yearbook* 16, ed. Sarah Panter (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015), 1–14.

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, “Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital,” in *Soziale Ungleichheiten, Soziale Welt, Sonderheft 2*, ed. Reinhard Kreckel (Göttingen: Schwartz, 1983), 185.

Of special importance in understanding the emergence and development of ROPiT, and hence of the maritime infrastructure in Odessa, are the visions and strategies of the key actors. In this regard, I will examine two questions concerning those strategies.

The first one concerns *systemic complexity in constructing maritime infrastructure*. Precisely because infrastructures are comprehensive technological formations, their components must be systematically interconnected. On the one hand, this means that they can be built only in an environment in which such systemic interconnection is possible; on the other, after beginning construction, they provoke the creation of other infrastructures and institutions. Hence, to ensure their success, the key actors should bear this systemic interconnection of infrastructure components in mind, and set out not just to build a port, purchase ships, and so on, but also to develop various transport routes and services, as well as educational, financial, commercial, and other institutions that will make maritime shipping more efficient. Questions should be raised and solutions proposed about, for example, how exports will be moved out and imports in; whether there will be enough trained personnel to handle not only the shipments but also the commercial servicing of ships, how this type of transportation will be regulated, etc. The systemic approach requires a vision of all the components in an infrastructure – physical artifacts, organizations, knowledge, and legislative artifacts. This is a vision that encompasses the entire complexity of the interdependence of the future elements of the infrastructure in question. I will call those who have such a vision and work on its realization *systemic actors*.

The second question addressed in my analysis is as follows: What position can facilitate such an all-encompassing systemic vision, or claims of having such a vision – is it that of the state or of private entrepreneurs? Despite Karl Mannheim's fair conclusion that all social positions are ideological, i.e., partial, even though they claim to express a universal interest, the question remains as to what interests the state and entrepreneurs have, and who contributes to the greater efficiency of an undertaking. The opposition between private economic interests and state interests posited as a public good is a leading one in the definition of infrastructure. According to Reimut Jochimsen, infrastructure is "the sum of material, institutional and personal facilities and data which are available to the economic agents and which contribute to [...] complete integration and maximum level of economic activities."⁷ Conversely, for

⁷ Reimut Jochimsen, *Theorie der Infrastruktur: Grundlagen der marktwirtschaftlichen Entwicklung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), 100.

Dirk van Laak, infrastructure is a visible, material mediator of the common good, positioned in between domination and everyday life, while being part of both.⁸ From this point of view, infrastructure is associated with the public interest of the state, as constructed by each state. The economic point of view links infrastructure with an increase in the efficiency of economic activity, and with a particular private interest. The dilemma of whom does infrastructure “serve” – a state-constructed public interest or, conversely, private interests and the wellbeing of particular groups – is of key importance in the study of infrastructure. Those interests differ across countries and in different historical situations, and they have different social implications. For example, the state interest may focus on building infrastructure for military purposes for national unification, but it may also tolerate certain regions and groups more than others. Private interests, if they are entrepreneurial and commercial, will be expansionist and will look for external horizons; they will (probably) have a stronger cumulative effect insofar as they will demand the building of institutions that support their interests being realized, etc. It is accepted that the development of the Russian Empire followed the path of a “strong arm” of centralized state power.⁹ The hypothesis I will test in this article is whether the mentioned opposition between private and state interests is artificial, in the researched case, because the successful development of transport infrastructure resulted from a complex intertwining of both types of interests.

As far as I am aware, the question of the relationship between state imperial interests and the economic interests of entrepreneurs, merchants, and shareholders in ROPiT has not been analyzed in-depth from the point of view of the construction of maritime infrastructures in Odessa. ROPiT is the subject of several important texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries¹⁰ as well as of recent times,¹¹ but these texts describe mostly the chronology of its foundation and the development and lives of the persons involved in this enterprise. Still, Baryshnikov’s text deals in part with the issue of the conflict between imperial and private interests.

⁸ Laak, *Imperiale Infrastruktur*.

⁹ David Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tzarist Russia* (London: Penguin, 2015); Victor Taki, *Tsar and Sultan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016).

¹⁰ For example, S.I. Ilovajskij, *Istoričeskii očerk piatidesiatiletiia Russkogo obščestva parochodstva i torgovli* (Historical sketch on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company) (Odessa, 1907); A. I. Denisov, *General-adiutant, admiral, Nikolaj Andreevič Arkas (biografičeskij očerk)* (Sevastopol: Tipografija D.O. Karčenko, 1887).

¹¹ M. Baryšnikov, “Russkoe obščestvo parochodstva i torgovli: učreždenie, funkcionirovanie, perspektivy razvitija (1856–1864 g.),” *Terra Economicus* 13, no. 2, (2015).

In light of the above, this article seeks to answer the following research questions:

How did the foundation and development of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company become possible – in terms of context and initiators?

What were the biographies of the two key actors, Nikolaj Arkas and Nikolaj Novosel'skij, the founders and first directors of ROPiT, in terms of the resources they had at their disposal, i.e., mobility, networks, and knowledge? Can they be defined as systemic actors and transcultural mediators?

What strategies for developing maritime infrastructure did the entrepreneurs and the representatives of the state have, and what was the relationship between state and private interests?

What were the obstacles to and consequences of the establishment of ROPiT for the construction of maritime infrastructure in the period under study?

2. The social context of 1856

According to Article 11 of the Treaty of Paris of 30 March 1856, which ended the Crimean War (1853–1856), the Black Sea was “neutralized,” i.e., the countries that lined its coasts were prohibited from maintaining a naval fleet. This article of the treaty, however, placed the Russian Empire at a disadvantage in relation to the Ottoman Empire, since the latter was able to keep its naval forces in the Aegean and in the Mediterranean and, if need be, to urgently transfer them to the Black Sea via the Straits. Deprived of such a possibility, the authorities in Russia accelerated and facilitated the creation of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company as an organization that developed maritime trade and passenger shipping. However, it also had a hidden military agenda. As early as in January 1856, before the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevič wrote a report to his brother, Tsar Alexander II, in which he insisted on the establishment of a joint-stock private company that would purchase a large number of big steamships that, “when necessary, the government will rent or buy to transport troops, or convert to battleships.”¹²

¹² RGIA, f. 107, op. 1, d. 14, l. 1.

The hidden purpose of creating such a company was that, in the event of war, its port resources, infrastructure, and relatively fast ships would be able to execute military tasks. The imperial authorities regarded the establishment of ROPiT as a preliminary step toward restoring (if need be) the Black Sea naval fleet. This is not to say that they did not recognize the economic importance of maritime transport for Russia. Along with this importance, however, the expansion of Russia's influence and presence in the maritime territories to the south of the empire was declared as a "moral purpose" of the company. This is clearly seen in a note from Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevič again to the Committee of Ministers regarding the benefits of establishing such a company:

It will be very beneficial for the development of our maritime trade by transporting goods on Russian ships, but also for [maintaining] constant contacts with different points of the Orthodox Christian East and transporting a large number of pilgrims to Palestine and Mount Athos, thus helping us to become much closer to our co-religionists and contributing to the increase of Russia's importance in the East.¹³

Behind this geopolitical strategy, formulated in moral terms, one can undoubtedly also read the empire's future political intentions. Thus, due to the specific circumstances, ROPiT became a mediator of military and economic policies. Understandably, ROPiT's military purposes were hidden, and the aim was to legitimize the company as an institution of private entrepreneurs (merchants, bankers, and producers). In the initial discussions of the proposal for establishing the company (Committee of Ministers meeting, 24 April 1856), it was expressly noted that such large-scale enterprises could not function without the help of the state. Eventually, the idea prevailed that this enterprise should be legitimated distinctly as a "movement of own capital" and a "domestic resource of national wealth."¹⁴ The private steam navigation company was incorporated on 17 May 1856; on 3 August, Emperor Alexander II signed a decree formally endorsing the company and its Articles of Association. Article 1 of the latter stated that ROPiT was incorporated "for the development of trade in Russia's southern region and for the development of shipping, commercial, and postal links of this region with Russian and

¹³ RGIA, f. 107, op. 1, d. 14, l. 3.

¹⁴ Ilovajskij, *Istoričeskij očerk*, 6.

foreign ports.”¹⁵ Its operation was to be financed by a joint-stock company co-owned by the state and private actors, thereby ensuring that its general political objectives and strategies would be compatible with the commercially motivated goals of private merchants, owners, and entrepreneurs. This is why the company’s governance should be divided between representatives of the state and of entrepreneurs. The empire’s hidden military-political interests determined the initial allotment of ROPiT’s authorized share capital. Upon the incorporation of the company, the agreed ratio of state-owned and private shareholdings undoubtedly favored the former. The government held the largest stake, as it had invested 2.1 million rubles in 20,000 shares, which represented one-third of the company’s total equity of six million rubles.¹⁶ The state’s majority share in the company was justified expressly in the Articles of Association by a desire to inspire greater confidence in shareholders. Nor was it accidental that the Articles of Association stated expressly that ROPiT would be under the special patronage of the emperor, and that an additional holding of 1,550 shares was allotted to members of the imperial family.

As regards economic issues, the government was obligated to support the company’s initial activities by granting annual subsidies for shipping along the specified maritime routes (per nautical mile sailed), for purchase of the necessary vessels as well as for exemption of the duties on ships purchased abroad. Regular state subsidies for ship repair were also provided for a period of 20 years. To begin with, the state subsidies were planned to cover the costs of purchasing and operating 21 steamships on eight maritime routes, including both domestic routes and routes to foreign destinations.

3. The founders of ROPiT as systemic actors

ROPiT was established by two emblematic figures, Captain First Class Nikolaj Arkas, and the entrepreneur and state counselor Nikolaj Novosel’skij, who became its first directors from 1856 to 1861.

¹⁵ *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj Imperii. Sobranie vtoroe. Tom 31. Otdelenie 1* (Complete collection of the laws of the Russian Empire. Collection 2. Volume 31. Section 1), www.runivers.ru.

¹⁶ RGIA, f. 107, op. 1, d. 2, l. 21-23.

A representative of Russia's imperial interests: Nikolaj Arkas (1816–1881)

I will not present in detail the remarkable life of Nikolaj Arkas, the cofounder of ROPiT. I will focus on his activities and contacts, which determined his significant role in establishing the company.

Knowledge transfer and intercultural mediation

Arkas was only 11 years old when he started sailing. Apart from studying briefly at a nautical school, his training was mostly on the job, on three-month-long training voyages along the Caucasian coast, during which he acquired military and technical expertise in navigating seagoing vessels, as well as thorough skills in reading sea and river maps, and knowledge of the reefs, shallows, and other navigational hazards.¹⁷ Later, he sailed on several voyages in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean to Greece and Italy, during which he honed his military skills and also his skills in steering tall ships amid the numerous Greek islands. As a result of those voyages, he wrote an article published in *Morskoj sbornik* (Naval Collection), "Turetskij, grečeskij i neapolitanskij floty v 1852 godu" (The Turkish, Greek, and Neapolitan fleets in 1852).¹⁸ Arkas was fluent in several languages. Born to a prominent noble family of Greek descent, he knew ancient Greek, modern Greek, and French. During his Mediterranean voyages he also studied English because of the numerous "English works on navigation and technical subjects."¹⁹ He acquired personnel-management experience, too, as commander of the crews of various naval vessels. In addition to his military-technical competencies, he had experience in navigating ships. In 1848 the emperor appointed him commander of the naval frigate *Vladimir*, which was under construction in Britain, and he personally supervised its completion and armament.

Arkas's life story shows that he did not merely acquire extensive knowledge in different fields and from different countries, but also applied it in his work. He operated as a transcultural mediator.

¹⁷ A. I. Denisov, *General-adiutant, admiral Nikolaj Andreevič Arkas (biografičeskij očerk)* (Sevastopol: Tipografija D.O. Karčenko, 1887), 4.

¹⁸ Nikolaj Andreevič Arkas, "Turetskij, grečeskij i neapolitanskij floty v 1852 godu" (The Turkish, Greek and Neapolitan fleets in 1852), *Morskoj sbornik* (Naval Collection), 1853.

¹⁹ Denisov, *Arkas*, 20.

Networks – contact with royalty

The aspects that contributed to Arkas's successful career did not just include his acquired cultural capital, but also his social capital – his contacts and relationships with high-ranking persons. His noble descent undoubtedly helped him build such a network. But it was only one of several factors in his success. Arkas was only 15 years old when he was awarded a gold medal for service by the Ottoman sultan himself. His stay in Greece, Constantinople, and Italy under the patronage of the Russian government and with the support of the Russian ambassadors also helped him establish important contacts. His biographer, A. I. Denisov, mentions the royal balls in Piraeus that he attended at the invitation of the wife of the Greek King Otto. During his stay in Livorno, Arkas welcomed the brother of Napoleon I, Jérôme Bonaparte, on board his corvette.²⁰ In 1851 and 1852, as commander of the flagship of the Russian Empire, the *Vladimir*, Arkas accompanied members of the imperial family and the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevič on their voyages and visits across the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas. Gradually winning Konstantin's full trust, Arkas was able to influence his decisions – for example, upon the elaboration of the new nautical manual. Thus, in addition to his many other qualities, Arkas's close contacts with members of the Imperial Court turned into another advantage that led to his appointment as director of ROPiT.

The systemic actor

Practical and personnel-management experience, versatile and state-of-the-art knowledge, and contacts with influential military and political figures (in Russia and abroad) endowed Nikolaj Arkas with a complex array of qualities characteristic of systems-thinking. These are Historical actors as individuals whose expertise encompassed all systemically interconnected aspects of an undertaking.

An amazing example of such system-creating activity was demonstrated by Arkas in 1844.²¹ He was summoned to St. Petersburg by Aleksandr Menšikov, Chief of Naval Staff, and tasked with helping to strengthen the Caspian Sea fleet. To this end, 12 naval vessels had to be delivered to the port of Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea in order to transport and assemble three iron steamships (two built in Britain and one in the Netherlands). Transporting such vessels by land to the north of the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The story is presented in Denisov, *Arkas*, 40–41.

Caucasus from the Black Sea to the inland Caspian Sea was unthinkable because of the lack of roads. The only possible way to transport the vessels was along the Mariinsk Canal System (the Volga-Baltic Waterway) that links the Neva River estuary at St. Petersburg to the Volga River delta at the Caspian Sea via a series of canals, rivers, and lakes. The scope and complexity of the transportation project that Nikolaj Arkas carried out are remarkable. He collected data about the entire waterway from the Department of Hydrogeography, researched the resources of every settlement, and also gained information from local helmsmen and owners of vessels about the specific characteristics of the local waterways and also the state of the auxiliary roads by the rivers and canals, along which horses and men (the "burlaks") hauled barges and other vessels upstream. Arkas also completed the accounting work such as calculating the payments due to local workers and foreign engineers. The transportation, under Arkas's direction, of the iron steamships along the Russian rivers and lakes became an attraction for the local population as well as an opportunity to popularize the advantages of modern Western steamships and to inform local shipowners of how to purchase such vessels. Arkas's inexhaustible energy did not cease upon delivering the steamships to Astrakhan. Because of a lack of ship-repair enterprises there, he quickly organized the establishment of a workshop to assemble the steamships and, upon returning to St. Petersburg, submitted an evaluation of the project to his chiefs, amid a need for much more radical future projects that ought to be implemented with government help.

It is precisely here that one can discern the idea - accepted by the ROPiT management - that the development of transportation infrastructures could not be completed in a piecemeal and partial way. However, expanding water transport and networks to attain a general economic effect and develop the Russian economy, proclaimed as the prime objective, was perceived as impossible to achieve solely through the purchase or construction of a new, more modern type of steamship. In his report to the Chief of Naval Staff in March 1846, Arkas expressly underlined that, in addition to the procurement of ships, maritime shipping would be of true military and commercial benefit if the necessary reconstructions of the Caspian Sea ports were carried out; if easy transport links to them (railways or, in the case in point, equipment to deepen the Volga fairway) were developed further; if the availability of ship resources was bound to the local industry and natural resources (as regards the Caspian Sea, Arkas proposed concrete measures to develop fishing). Arkas

also noted the contradiction between local economic development and the outdated norms of ownership in the Russian Empire.²²

Arkas's wide-ranging vision, his recognition of the complexity of the measures and actions in managing large-scale state undertakings, and his remarkable knowledge and contacts with the royal family led Alexander II to choose him as the representative of imperial interests in the newly founded ROPiT. He had two main functions: Purchasing new ships from abroad and, as a military officer heading the central office of ROPiT in St. Petersburg, mediating between ROPiT's activities and the empire's strategic military objectives. In this capacity, Arkas was also the representative of the Maritime Ministry in the company.

The day-to-day operation of the company in Odessa and the development of Black Sea shipping was done mostly under the direction of Nikolaj Novosel'skij, who was the other co-founder of ROPiT and chosen as a director from the entrepreneurs.

Nikolaj Novosel'skij: The defender of entrepreneurial interests (1818–1898)

Marriage as a path to network- and career-building

Nikolaj Novosel'skij²³ graduated from Kharkov University with a PhD in Philosophy and went on to work as a civil servant. After he was noticed by Senator Ivan Vacenko, who invited him to become his assistant, Novosel'skij moved to St. Petersburg, where he lodged at Vacenko's home. He thus began his fast-rising career in the civil service, which sped up after he married the senator's daughter. Thanks to his marriage and his father-in-law's patronage, Novosel'skij became a state counselor, a position that gave him access to the elite.²⁴ Interestingly, after he lost his first wife (it is not clear whether they divorced or she died), he married another daughter

²² Ibid., 41.

²³ I have reconstructed the life of Novosel'skij mainly from the articles by Stanislav Calik, "Transportnyj magnat Rossijskoj Imperii Nikolaj Novosel'skij" (The Russian Empire's transport magnate, Nikolaj Novosel'skij) (<https://ros-vos.net/history/ropit/3/1/>) and D.A. Stepanov, "Učreždenie Russkogo obščestva parohodstva i trgovli (1856-1857 gody)" (The establishment of the Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company (1856–1857)), *Vestnik Čeliabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* (Bulletin of Cheliabinsk State University) 237, no. 22, *Istorija, vyp. 46* (History Series, issue 46) (2011): 30–38 (<http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/uchrezhdenie-russkogo-obschestva-parohodstva-i-torgovli-1856-1857-gody#ixzz3xQixaIvs>).

²⁴ Calik, "Transportnyi magnat."

of a senator – Pavel Degai, who as a state secretary and director of a Ministry of Justice department, was very influential. According to Calik:

It was precisely thanks to the efforts of his second father-in-law that Novosel'skij rapidly expanded his transport empire and took control over the Caspian Sea, merging the Kavkaz Steam Navigation Company with the Merkurij and Rusalka river companies which operated on the Volga. He became director of the newly established company called 'Caucase et Mercure.'²⁵

Thus, Novosel'skij's marriages provided him with contacts that he used to realize his business interests. But it was not only Novosel'skij's marriages that led to his remarkable success as an entrepreneur. His philosophical education supported his practical endeavors by cultivating the ability – typical for a philosopher – to think holistically and to link the solution to certain problems with the solution to others.

As noted by his friend from his student years, the marine artist Alexej Bogoljubov, Novosel'skij surprised his colleagues with his extraordinary thinking and “speculative mind.”²⁶ His systematic thinking was complemented by initiative and innovations: “Novosel'skij's whole life – witnesses of his life commented – was an eternal leap of obstacles. He carried out many projects at his own expense, even pledging his property, despite the existing great risks.”²⁷ On the one hand, Novosel'skij shared “the ideas of Western political economy about free competition and the government's noninterference in the economic life of its subjects.”²⁸ On the other hand, he realized that large infrastructure projects could not be implemented without state aid and control either. He therefore offered an intermediate solution – a state guarantee for large-scale projects, and private bank lending to entrepreneurs, especially in the construction of roads, improvements to ports, etc. “Then – Novosel'skij emphasized – private entrepreneurs should be allowed to carry out these useful deeds for the country and the repayment of the credits should be realized from the funds, contributed by the persons, using the services of this infrastructure.”²⁹ In this context, Novosel'skij's useful acquaintances and

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Nynešnim “otcam” Odessy est' s kogo brat' primer. (The current “fathers” of Odessa have someone to follow) <https://on.od.ua> 2019/01/29

²⁷ Sergej Rešetov, Larisa Ižik Rešetov, Sergej, Larisa Ižik, *O dome gorodskogo golovy Odessy N.A. Novosel'skogo* (About the house of the mayor of Odessa N.A. Novoselsky), https://www.odessitclub.org/publications/almanac/alm_54/alm_54-68-80.pdf : 70.

²⁸ Nikolaj Novosel'skij, *Social'nye voprosy v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1881), 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 29.

two marriages only facilitated his future successful entrepreneurial activity.

His business interests also motivated him to carry out works that can be defined as a public good both for Russia and Odessa.

The systemic actor

The systemic approach of Nikolaj Arkas related to Russia's future and the achievement of geopolitical superiority, while that of Novosel'skij, as managing director of ROPiT in Odessa, was bound in a pragmatic way to the concrete development of the Odessa region and to securing personal gains from its development. Whereas Nikolaj Arkas was the representative of state-military management in ROPiT's affairs, Novosel'skij represented the interests of Russian entrepreneurs and businesspeople. This mutual complementarity was a source both of potential conflict and of positive resources for the development of Black Sea shipping and trade.

I will mention only some of Nikolaj Novosel'skij's undertakings not just as commercial director of ROPiT but also as mayor of Odessa (1867–1877). Guided by the idea that the successful operation of the maritime merchant fleet was impossible without coordination with local land and river transport, which also ensured the sustainability and regularity of cargo and passenger traffic on the Black Sea, in 1858 Novosel'skij initiated the merger of the Kavkaz Steam Navigation Company (which operated on the Caspian Sea) with two shipping companies operating on the Volga. His was the idea that it was necessary to connect water transport with rail transport, which would ensure fast access of goods and people from the coast to inland Russia and vice versa.³⁰ Novosel'skij realized that in order to develop ROPiT, it was necessary not only to have ships but also to reconstruct and, above all, to develop the existing ports. The enterprising director understood the cumulative principles behind developing transport networks. To intensify international maritime trade, big, deepwater ships were required, as well as ports deep enough to accommodate them. Frustrated by the lack of credit institutions that could finance such a burgeoning economic activity, Novosel'skij organized the establishment of the Odessa Credit Company in 1871.³¹ As mayor of Odessa, he also established schools to train the personnel needed for the development of shipping, trade, banking, and insurance. To facilitate the flow of passengers from inland Russia to Odessa, Nikolaj Novosel'skij

³⁰ Calik, "Transportnyi magnat."

³¹ Stepanov, "Učreždenie."

bought out the state's assets of the unfinished Odessa Railway and completed it.³² Apart from projects directly related to maritime trade, he was also aware of the need to create a well-developed social and urban infrastructure. As mayor, he built (on private shareholder capital once again) the Dniester–Odessa water conduit and a sewerage system in the city.³³ He contracted a 25-year lease (with the permission of the Odessa City Duma) for the Chadžibej and Kujal'nik estuaries, albeit with a clear personal-profit motive, in order to exploit them for profitable extraction of salt and as spas for affluent people. In fact, the connection between this activity and ROPiT lay in the development of tourism in Crimea and its environs for a relatively large (by then) part of the affluent population of Odessa and the rest of Russia. In the following years (especially during his term in office as mayor) Novosel'skij was involved in virtually all infrastructural spheres that were developed or established in the region. In a sense, if we look at all projects implemented with Novosel'skij's participation – those in the sectors of shipping, ports, shops, and client services, the medical, social, and transport infrastructure of Odessa, as well as banking, education, and public utilities – we see a very vivid example of systemic thinking and activity.

4. State goals and private interests meet the challenges of the environment

Under these two modern-thinking and visionary first directors of ROPiT, the joint-stock company got off to a flying start. The modern European experience in implementing large-scale infrastructure and transport projects, such as those that ROPiT members were keen to develop, confirms a clear principle. Infrastructure operations at each microlevel already presuppose a macrolevel framework directed by more fundamental types of institution such as the state. Thus, ROPiT's actions as regards the rapid development of shipping on the Black Sea turned out to depend on what the Russian imperial center had planned in this regard, as well as on the overall development of the social environment.

Steamships and personnel

The first obstacle before ROPiT's enterprising directors was the almost complete lack of maritime vessels. In the first statistical report on ROPiT's activities, Apollon Skal'kovskij found that in the early 1850s “regardless of all the sacrifices and efforts of the government, it owned

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

only 12 steamships of 1,900 hp boiler power, which serviced two international routes (to Constantinople and Galați) and four domestic routes."³⁴ The first task of ROPiT was to purchase steamships. By April 1857, ROPiT had bought five passenger and cargo ships from Britain.³⁵ By the end of 1857, the company had already accumulated 17 vessels, which allowed it to operate not only on Russia's Black Sea and Azov territorial waters but also to launch an international line: Odessa–Constantinople–Marseilles.³⁶ ROPiT continued to purchase iron steamships not just from Britain but also from France in the following years.

In addition to vessels, ROPiT needed qualified experts in all areas. Long after 1856, it still suffered from a shortage of personnel: Engineers, helmsmen, technicians, and sailors. The problem was not resolved until 1898. The understanding that the training of seamen would be most efficient if completed on board ROPiT's ships ultimately led to the opening of the commercial shipping classes at the Trade School in Odessa on 1 July 1898. Thus, the necessary education infrastructure was added to ROPiT's transport infrastructure.

But the major practical challenge before ROPiT was that of linking the maritime infrastructure to the Russian Empire's overall transport infrastructure.

Infrastructural connections, shipment routes, and the logic of profit

The systemically thinking directors of ROPiT viewed international commercial shipping not only as an opportunity for supplying goods to the Russian market, but also as a chance to develop the inland regions. In this vein, N. Sokol'skij wrote in *Odesskij vestnik* (the Odessa Gazette): "One cannot presume that our region will long continue to exist as a simple and natural economy without industrial activity and the inflow of capital."³⁷ The development of foreign trade was conceived of as a multilateral activity with both outward- and inward-oriented goals. In a process of mutual complementarity, commercial shipping was thought of as a resource for the Russian economy whose development, in turn, should lead to an increase in the wellbeing of the local population. For ROPiT's members, this increase would additionally intensify trade because of the increased Russian industrial output and also the population's

³⁴ Apollon Skal'kovskij, *Russkoe Obščestvo parochodstva i torgooli, 1857–1869* (The Russian Steam Navigation and Trading Company, 1857–1869), (Odessa, 1870), 15.

³⁵ Ilovajskij, *Istoričeskij očerk*, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁷ *Odesskij vestnik* 59 (1857): 294.

opportunities to buy imported goods and travel. This is precisely why the ROPiT management linked “outbound transport,” i.e., the expansion of maritime trade, to “inbound transport,” i.e., the development of land transport infrastructures (mainly railroads). Furthermore, connecting the Black Sea coast to inland areas by railroad was regarded as the most important element in opening up this region to the rest of the world. One may say that the Black Sea revealed its potential for improving public wellbeing only through being better connected to inland areas by land. The Baltic Sea region’s prosperity, a result of “the railroads near our western border,” was highlighted as a case contrary to the situation in the Black Sea region.³⁸ In the same sense, the conclusion was drawn that, “regrettably, until now the Black Sea has been too far from these international transport networks that contribute to wellbeing.”³⁹ In other words, the Black Sea region was a forgotten, natural and undeveloped social territory that was closed to the outside world precisely because of the lack of transport links to the inland areas.

Here, the interests of the ROPiT shareholders did not coincide with those of the state. Although the central government had declared support for maritime shipping, it gave priority to the development of rail transport inland, and refused to link these railroads with the Black Sea region. There were several reasons for this: The inland transport network was regarded as a factor constituting state national unity, this railway system was more susceptible to government regulation and control, and there were some economic reasons too. As early as 1856, during a discussion of the draft Statute of ROPiT, the Minister of Finance P.F. Brock emphasized the financial disadvantage to exporting Russian goods by sea: “Since our export goods consist almost exclusively of raw materials transported entirely by sailing vessels, these exports could not be financially covered due to the high costs of using steamships.”⁴⁰

Furthermore, the fact that the Russian maritime trade would face strong competition from the already-established British, Austrian, and French shipping companies was also taken into consideration. The third argument stressed the unclear and risky situation on the shores of the Russian Black Sea coast and the Caucasus, immediately after the Crimean War. It concerned the fear of endangering the trade and passenger travels, thus making them unprofitable, between the ports of the Black and Azov

³⁸ *Odesskij vestnik* 5 (1856): 33.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁰ Denisov, 1887: 13

Seas. The government therefore saw no point in developing maritime trade by building a railway to Odessa.

On the contrary, ROPiT-related interests required the construction of a railway to connect the Black Sea region, more concretely Odessa, with the inland areas. Despite the ROPiT management's multiple appeals to the government, the latter constantly postponed the construction of railroads that linked inland areas with the coast and Odessa. Besides this, ROPiT's plans were for the complete – not partial – linking of the port of Odessa to inland Russia by rail. The required railway routes had to provide easy access by land to all resources necessary for efficient maritime trade. They had to ensure cheap and fast delivery of grain from the fertile rural regions, in order to guarantee the transport of people migrating to the prospering coastal centers, to supply coal from the Donetsk basin for the ships and, if need be, to provide an alternative to the sea routes between ports. As ROPiT became increasingly autonomous and expanded its operations, the company ultimately took matters into its own hands. In the summer of 1870 the company purchased the Odessa–Balta and Odessa–Elisavetgrad lines from the government, and later, the stretch from Tiraspol to Kishinev, and it built the 963-kilometers-long Odessa Railway Line. In this way, ROPiT built the infrastructure that the government had refused to build, and it established a transport center that rivaled that of Volga–Don.

To the topic of the connectedness of transport infrastructure we must also add the corrections that ROPiT imposed on the ships' destinations that had been initially agreed with the government. Two significant changes were made from "below," i.e., by the shareholders. First, ROPiT's shipping routes were specified in its Articles of Association. The government gave priority to the domestic sea lines that linked Odessa with Crimea, the Sea of Azov, the Caucasian coast, and the large Russian rivers. Irrespective of these priorities, however, the logic of private economic interests increasingly drove the ROPiT management toward an expansive development of commercial shipping to international and ever more distant destinations. The divergence of state and private interests in this case is explicable once again as a variant of the conflict between military-political and economic goals. In perceiving ROPiT's resources as a reserve for the future military, and above all, for naval defense operations (the defense of coasts, the deployment of military units, and the transport of ammunition and troops to various Russian cities), the government had insisted that the shipping routes be along Russia's coasts. ROPiT's steamships were referred to as "floating defense" since, according to the central government's intents, they had to serve as a sort of shield, as a

mobile southern border of the empire. Precisely this, however, ran counter to the economic logic of the company's operations, which reflected modern expansionist tendencies and the striving toward eliminating international borders in general. The logic of the economic actors was profit-oriented and international, while the military-political logic of the state was regional.

The founders of ROPiT declared repeatedly the need for the broadest possible diversification of Russian exports based on the principle of "goods of all sorts." The poorly industrialized Russian Empire, however, was incapable of pursuing such a strategy. Until the end of the nineteenth century, it exported mostly primary farm products – grain, wool, skins, animal fat, etc. ROPiT's modernization projects led to an increase chiefly in wheat exports. The comparative tables of I.M. Kulišer, a historian of Russian trade, show that while the range of exported goods remained relatively the same as in the previous decades, at the end of the nineteenth century wheat exports grew dramatically. Whereas at the beginning of the nineteenth century wheat accounted for 18 percent of Russia's total exports, by the end of the century it had become the top export item, with a share of 40 percent.⁴¹ Russia's limited capacity to diversify exports against the background of Russian industry's ever growing need for European raw materials and machines, as well as the fact that grain exports were not guaranteed because of the possibility of poor crops, lay at the base of ROPiT's constant efforts to rationalize its activities so as to increase its profits. Instead of the previous cheaper primary farm products, such as skins or animal fat, there was an increase in the share of more expensive goods such as timber (which made up ten percent of total exports at the end of the nineteenth century), butter, and eggs.

The limited range of exported goods was offset by the launch of new maritime lines and the intensive operation of the most profitable ones. In a sense, profits turned out to be linked to the distancing of ROPiT's ships from Odessa. In 1857, the largest amount of goods (487,907 pounds) was shipped to Constantinople. At the beginning of the 1860s, however, shipments to Britain accounted for the largest share of ROPiT's cargo. This largely contravened the mandatory routes agreed with the government. An ever growing share of the company's revenue came from long-distance destinations and especially the British line, which was not among those initially agreed with the government. In 1863, the British line yielded the

⁴¹ I.M. Kulišer, *Očerk istorii russkoj torgovli* (Essay on the history of Russian trade) (St. Petersburg: Atenej, 1923), 300.

highest revenue (345,000 rubles), followed by the Alexandria (206,000 rubles) and Constantinople (almost 100,000 rubles) lines. While the government originally intended it to operate primarily in Russian territorial waters for defense purposes, ROPiT increasingly expanded its range into international waters. At the end of 1864, the Shareholders' General Meeting argued that the company should "not limit itself to its obligations under the Articles of Association but should increase the number of voyages on particular routes that are most profitable."⁴² Driven by the profit motive, ROPiT implemented a series of measures such as streamlining its administration, downsizing excess staff, cutting operational costs, and optimizing the structure of the routes serviced. The company also increased the proportion of its noncommercial activities. With Novosel'skij's assistance, in 1863 ROPiT and the Russian Post Office Department signed a contract for postal services and transportation, under which the company transported mail not only within Russia and the Caucasus but also between Odessa and Constantinople. Mail transportation later turned out to be one of the company's most profitable activities.

The transportation of passengers gradually increased as well. After the practically minded Admiral Nikolaj Čičačëv was elected managing director of ROPiT (1862–1876), he prioritized as a corporate strategy the voyages and routes that had proven to be most effective and more profitable for the shareholders. As early as in 1864 the number of "optional" (but money-making) voyages increased rapidly at the expense of the "mandatory" destinations included in the Articles of Association and agreed with the central government. It is telling that when presented with ROPiT's successive annual report, the shareholders fully approved an almost 50 percent decrease in voyages to "mandatory" destinations.⁴³

After the war of 1877–1878, the ROPiT's activity became increasingly independent and concentrated on passenger and freight transport in international waters. Odessa became the center of the commercial and economic goals of shipping in the Black Sea, while Sevastopol and the region of Kerch and the Crimea became the center of the navy. The main tasks for the Russian Imperial Navy were to reequip it with modern, fast, and deep-sea steamers suited for carrying the latest military equipment. In this regard, the possibility of using the existing merchant and passenger ships of ROPiT for military purposes was questioned. An article on armored warships in the *Morskoj sbornik* (Naval Collection) journal

⁴² RGIA, f. 107, op. 1, d. 240. l. 74–75.

⁴³ RGIA, f. 107, op. 1, d. 226, l. 60–61.

explicitly stated that “the use of ‘merchant ships for military purposes was never met with much sympathy among the navy.”⁴⁴ Warships were required to have “greater speed, depth, protection of inhabited parts and good maneuverability,”⁴⁵ – features that were lacking in merchant vessels.

This technically substantiated difference between commercial and military vessels was definitely important, but no less important was the growing economic autonomy of ROPiT’s activity. One of its executive directors, Admiral Nikolaj Čičačëv, despite the predominantly military positions he held, realized the inevitability of the mismatch dictated by the economic expansion of ROPiT with the original military plan of its creation. He declared: “The state is not able to find in the merchant steamers an inexhaustible source for its military armament and for counteraction to a naval war.”⁴⁶ Thus, the commercial activity of ROPiT was gradually freed from its inherent military-political goals. Proof of this lies in the fact that despite Russia’s numerous wars with Turkey, after the last war from 1877–1878, it was trade with the Ottoman Empire that occupied the most important place in ROPiT’s activities.⁴⁷

All those processes demonstrated a growing autonomy in ROPiT’s operations as well as a gradual shift away from their military purposes and turn toward commercial interests. At the end of the nineteenth century, this drove the government to tacitly relinquish control over the company’s operations, which left them entirely up to the enterprising shareholders.

Sea and rivers

At the end of November 1859, the ROPiT Shareholders’ General Meeting discussed ship traffic on the inland rivers, and especially on the Dnieper. They noted that shipping on that river was negligible compared with the traffic on the Volga. This directly affected the shareholders’ profits because grain produced in the lands to the north made up the bulk of exports from the port of Odessa. Since there was no river transport, grain was transported to the south in a primitive way by the “*čumaki*,” local workers and stevedores who brought stocks by large ox-drawn wooden carts. An article in *Odesskij vestnik* of 25 February 1860 noted that 500,000 people and more than 1,000,000 cattle a year were employed in this mode

⁴⁴ *Morskoj Sbornik* (Naval Collection) 12 (1869): 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

⁴⁶ RGAVMF, f. 410. Op. 2. D. 4103. L. 88.

⁴⁷ See Hayri Chapraz, *The Ottoman Empire and Russia in the Western Caucasus in the First Half of the 19th Century* (St. Petersburg, Kartlia: SPGU, 2004).

of transport. The shareholders found that this traditional mode of transporting grain for export to the Black Sea coast was extremely unprofitable and that transportation costs took up 20 to 50 percent of its commercial value. This was due to the slow speed of the carts, the frequent diseases that affected draft animals (the term *čumak* originated precisely from the word *čuma*, the Russian for plague, in this case, cattle plague), and the mishandled storage of cargoes that resulted in a deterioration in the quality of the wheat. The shareholders accepted that the transportation of the valuable grain had to be organized by the company itself because otherwise the profits from transportation “went solely into agriculture.”⁴⁸ Given all the benefits that would come from connecting maritime routes with railroads, this required paying attention to river shipping. The transportation of wheat to the coast by ROPiT’s ships and barges was praised in the newspaper as follows: “The timely delivery of grain products to the sea ports will lower their prices and the navigation company will thus be able to flood all Western Europe with them.”⁴⁹ Because of ROPiT’s declared commitment to the government’s military policy, the strategy for expanding river transport was justified also with the argument that, should the need arise, ROPiT’s ships would be able to transport troops and ammunition by river to the sea. In reality, however, such an activity (along the rivers to the north of Cherson and Nikolaevsk) was not provided. Thus, with flexible ad-hoc initiatives driven by direct profits, ROPiT found ways to circumvent the requirements of its agreement with the government. The measures it took to develop river shipping yielded a positive result. Haulage on the Dnieper and Bug rivers brought the company solid profits as early as in 1861 (179,000 rubles from shipments on the Dnieper and 65,500 rubles from shipments on the Bug).⁵⁰ ROPiT was even unable to fulfill all shipment orders because it did not have enough vessels. The above-quoted article in *Odesskij vestnik*, however, misinterpreted the strategy for developing river shipping in a national-patriotic sense: “It must be admitted that rail routes, despite their profitability, must yield primacy to river routes. In our fatherland rivers always have priority.”⁵¹ Indeed, in Russian culture, big rivers (especially the 3,531-km-long Volga) are a symbol of the unity and integrity of the Russian people, as a center of communication and intensive economic life. In reality, it was precisely ROPiT’s modern project for developing international trade on the Black Sea that transformed domestic river shipping into a significant resource and added modern economic

⁴⁸ *Odesskij vestnik* 21 (25 February 1860): 71.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

meanings to the symbolism behind big rivers. ROPiT's initiatives affirmed an important principle of infrastructure development: The principle that the realization of large-scale macro-infrastructures produces, subordinates, and integrates into itself a series of macro-infrastructure projects. It was precisely the opening up of the Russian economy to the rest of the world with ROPiT's mediation that also boosted the development of domestic transport. This principle was confirmed also by other concrete undertakings of ROPiT. Labor-intensive and slow manual stevedoring was replaced with mechanical handling. To ensure that the voyages would proceed on schedule, it was necessary to eliminate the delayed or irregular arrival of export goods that the ships had to carry. To this end, one of ROPiT's first initiatives was to build a complex of warehouses at the port of Odessa. In addition, to hedge investments in shipping and steamships, ROPiT set up an insurance system for its shareholders as early as in 1857. Once again under Novosel'skij's auspices, a credit system necessary for seafaring was also developed in Odessa. To service the company's regular lines, branches, and offices were opened, and staff was hired abroad.

Coal

The ROPiT management's systemic way of thinking was demonstrated especially clearly in concrete and apparently very private spheres of activity. Coal mining in the Donetsk basin was one such example. First of all, the significance of coal mining in this basin was linked to domestic Russian consumption. Transporting coal from the mines to the southern Black Sea ports by river became a routine operation for ROPiT because of the significance of coal as a fuel for households, industry, and steamships. By analogy with the abovementioned examples, coal transportation led to new initiatives by the company. ROPiT built warehouses, dredged the harbors, and acquired barges and large-capacity cargo steamships. Nikolaj Arkas solicited from the government the right of shareholders to acquire their own coal mine in the Donetsk basin. It was presumed that this would reduce expenditure on the purchase of imported British coal. Thus, coal mining, as well as shipbuilding, became ROPiT's first purely industrial, not transport-related, undertaking. In 1857 the construction of the company's first coal pit commenced, on the bank of the Gruševka River.

The case of ROPiT's coal-mining project, however, shows another variant of the company's relationship with the state. So far, I have focused on the dormant conflicts and discrepancies between private economic and state military-political interests. In their light, the history of ROPiT can be

read as a history of the emancipation of economic from public actors on the territory of the Black Sea. In the case of coal mining, however, the situation was completely different. The government found this undertaking to be fully justified. The expansion of coal mining was expected to be useful in future military operations, as developing a national coal-mining industry would ensure the independence of the navy. Besides this, Donetsk coal was called “smoke-free” because it did not release the usual black smoke when burned in the boilers of steamships. This was considered an obvious advantage over the Ottoman Navy, since its ships could be recognized from afar by the huge puffs of black smoke. That is also why the coal-mining area in the Donetsk region was leased to ROPiT without any objections. The results, however, were problematic. It was not until 1870 that ROPiT began to mine coal.⁵² This delay was due to the lack of experience in this specific production sphere, the inappropriate use of funds, and embezzlement by the mine’s management. Another problem came from the fact that the coal seams in the leased area turned out to be very deep underground, but the company initially did not have the necessary mining equipment. Last but not least, the costs of coal mining and transportation to Odessa by river and railroad significantly exceeded those of buying coal from abroad. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the anthracite coal mined locally was used only partly by the fleet and Russia was still buying the cheaper British coal.

The case of coal mining shows, then, that the development processes in Russia in the nineteenth century (as illustrated by the history of ROPiT) were not unequivocally dependent on the degree of autonomization of the economy and trade from state geopolitical strategies. Freed from state patronage, most of ROPiT’s pragmatic projects did indeed lead to prosperity and development. In the case of coal mining, though, we see the exact opposite result: Inefficiency and even failure. Hence, imperial interests are not necessarily an antipode to private entrepreneurial interests. In a complex dialectic of interactions, the first can be a condition for, and an obstacle to, the second; but the lack of interaction between the two is also not a guarantee of success.

⁵² See Ilovajskij, *Istoričeskij očerk*, 321.

5. Conclusion

The construction of Russia's maritime infrastructure in the Black Sea region became possible because of the following factors:

First, the existence of systemic actors who had a comprehensive vision of the development not merely of maritime infrastructure but of infrastructure as a large technological system (cf. Hughes). The realization of this vision was possible for at least two reasons: The systemic actors were competent in different spheres as well as familiar with the experience of foreign countries; in this sense, they transferred knowledge and were transcultural mediators (Arkas). Second, securing a position of power that would allow them to realize their ideas required building a network of contacts with high-ranking persons both from the government and from the Imperial Court. This network was developed through personal achievements (Arkas) as well as marriage (Novosel'skij).

Second, the analysis of the case of the ROPiT shipping joint-stock company rejects the thesis that the development of the Russian Empire was sustained by "strong-handed" state intervention,⁵³ and shows that at least the development of transport infrastructure was a much more complex process, a result of the constant negotiation and confrontation of state and private entrepreneurial interests. This complex process enabled the cumulative development of infrastructure as a series of modern institutions due to the need for efficient operation of the already-built infrastructures.

⁵³ Lieven, *Towards the Flame; Taki, Tsar and Sultan*.

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Integrating the Danube into Modern Networks of Infrastructure: The Ottoman Contribution

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Abstract:

For the Ottoman Empire, the Danube served not only as a border, but also as a means of communication and transport. This function was determined by the river's prevailing natural conditions. Because of the geopolitical, economic, and technological developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, global connections came to substitute older connections with Eastern and Central Europe. This article examines the Ottoman role in this transformation of the Danube between 1830 and 1878. It focuses on infrastructure projects such as the regulation of the Iron Gate and those in the Danube Delta, and construction efforts in the Danube Province during the last decades of Ottoman rule around the Danube.

Keywords: Danube, river transport, Ottoman Empire

1. Introduction

Hayrullah Efendi (1818–1866), an Ottoman doctor, official, and intellectual of the Tanzimat period, was also the author of the first Ottoman tourist guide. His *Travel Book (Yolculuk Kitabı)*, which he wrote in

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1864 but for unknown reasons was not published, is an account of the author's journeys to Europe.¹ In contrast to earlier such accounts, which had been written exclusively by Ottoman ambassadors, Hayrullah adds practical information about the best travel routes, ticket prices, necessary luggage, places to eat, and places to stay, just as any present-day guidebook would. While a large part of the book focuses on the author's extended stay in Paris, it begins with Hayrullah's first trip to Europe, which led him to Vienna. Leaving Istanbul on a Black Sea steamer, he changed to a train in Köstence (Constanța) and reached the Danube at Boğazköy (Cernavodă). From there he took the steamer upriver and passed Ottoman cities such as Silistre (Siliștra), Ruşçuk (Ruse), and Vidin before landing on the Walachian side in Turnu Severin to change boat and pass through Austrian customs in Orșova. From there he continued his journey up the Danube via Semlin (Zemun) and Buda to reach his destination.

In the nineteenth century, as with other European rivers, such as the Rhine and Rhone, the Danube was turned into a modern waterway for trade and travel. This became possible thanks to the technical development of steam shipping and the large-scale regulation works undertaken on these rivers. Typically, such regulations and the subsequent reorganization of traffic involved several international actors. Therefore, scholars identified this as the beginnings of modern international cooperation not only among states and politicians, but also among communities of experts. Similarly, turning the Danube into a modern waterway involved state actors such as the European Powers and the riparian states, and also nascent international institutions such as the European Danube Commission, as well as private actors such as transport enterprises and engineers. While previous research has stressed this international perspective,² this article focuses on the Ottoman role in planning and constructing the new infrastructures, which was an important aspect of the general geopolitical transformation of the region. More precisely, it will examine the Ottoman position on the regulation works at the Iron Gate in the 1830s, and the various regulations in the delta in the 1860s, and will finally turn to the Danube Province in which the

¹ Hayrullah Efendi, *Avrupa Seyahatnamesi*, transl. Belkıs Altunış-Gürsoy (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002); Ömer Faruk Akün, "Hayrullah Efendi," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 17, 67-75.

² Starting with Edward Krehbiel, "The European Commission of the Danube: An Experiment in International Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 33 (1918) to Luminita Gatejel, "Imperial Cooperation at the Margins of Europe: The European Commission of the Danube, 1856-65," *European Review of History/Revue Européenne d'histoire* 24, no. 5 (2017): 781-800.

Ottomans created a new institutional framework for a more systematic modernization of infrastructures.

In this article, the Lower Danube region serves as an example of a space of interaction, exchange, and mobility in the context of Transottoman connections with Eastern Europe.³ In particular, it seeks to demonstrate the transformative role of new technologies and the modernization of transport infrastructures on the river and in the region during the second half of the nineteenth century. I argue that during this time Transottoman connections were integrated in and, in the long run, superseded by global connections. This is a process that we can observe by looking at the history of infrastructure, the actors involved in its planning and use, and these actors' interests.

2. The Danube: From Transottoman space to international mobility space

From a geopolitical point of view, the Danube played an important role for the Ottoman state from the beginning of its conquest of the Balkans. We do not have to adopt the rhetoric of a famous German Orientalist who called the river the Ottoman "stream of destiny"⁴ in acknowledging this role. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the river served as the northern border that protected the flank of Ottoman conquests in Southeast Europe. This gradually changed when Walachia on the northern bank became a more or less stable Ottoman vassal from the early fifteenth century and the empire directly occupied the Danube Delta and the region north of it, the Bucak. After the conquest of Hungary in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans directly controlled an even larger part of the river.

Two important land routes connected the Ottoman capital with the Danube and the lands north and east of it. These were centrally maintained connections that had an important military function but also were used by merchants and others for transregional trade and travel.⁵ To the west, this

³ Stefan Rohdewald, Stephan Conermann, and Albrecht Fuess, eds., *Transottomanica – Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken* (Göttingen: V&R unipress); Florian Riedler and Stefan Rohdewald, "Migration and Mobility in a Transottoman Context," *Radovi* 51, no. 1 (2019): 37–55.

⁴ Franz Babinger, "Die Donau als Schicksalsstrom des Osmanenreiches," *Südosteuropa-Jahrbuch* 5 (1961): 15–25.

⁵ Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme (Menziller)* (Istanbul: İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2014).

was the Belgrade road, which formed the spine of a region called the Middle Corridor (*orta kol*) in Ottoman administrative parlance, a region where the power of the center was particularly strong.⁶ In Belgrade, travelers could cross the Danube by ferry for the road to Temeşvar (Timișoara), from where there were connections to Transylvania. Alternatively, from Belgrade the road continued along the right bank of the river, and headed in a northwesterly direction to reach Budin (Buda) via Ösek (Osijek).⁷

The road connection from Istanbul to the mouth of the Danube and beyond established the Right Corridor (*sağ kol*). It ran parallel to the Black Sea coast, but moved inland, and crossed the Danube at Tulçı (Tulcea), the main city of the Dobruja region, or alternatively a little to the west at İsakça (Isaccea), the nearby fortress at which the river was so shallow that it could be forded at certain periods. Beyond the river, the route went via Akkerman (Bilhorod) at the mouth of the Dniester to its ultimate destination Özi (Očakiv), an important fortress at the mouth of the Dnieper. An alternative route began at Tulçı, which connected the empire to its northern neighbors, such as Walachia, Moldavia and Poland-Lithuania, and led via Iași and Hotin to Lviv. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Oriental textiles, weapons and other luxury goods were traded along this route to Poland, in which they played an important role in the self-representation of the Polish nobility.⁸

As a waterway, the Danube was not only a border and an obstacle for people and goods on their way to the north, but also a connection in its own right. Traditionally, the Ottomans used it to ship Walachian grain via the Lower Danube to Istanbul and, until the first half of the sixteenth century, this part of the river was also integrated into the trade route that brought Oriental goods, such as spices, silk, and cotton cloth via

⁶ Florian Riedler, "Orta Kol' als osmanischer Mobilitätsraum: Eine transregionale Perspektive auf die Geschichte Südosteuropas," in *Jenseits etablierter Meta-Geographien: Der Nahe Osten und Nordafrika in transregionaler Perspektive*, ed. Steffen Wippel and Andrea Fischer-Tahir (Baden Baden: Nomos, 2018), 131–149.

⁷ Olga Zirojević, "Das türkische Straßennetz (Land und Wasserstraßen) auf dem Gebiet der heutigen Vojvodina und Slawoniens," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33, no. 2/4, (1987): 393–403.

⁸ Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Polish-Ottoman Trade Routes in the Times of Martin Gruneweg," in *Martin Gruneweg (1562–nach 1615): Ein europäischer Lebensweg*, ed. Almut Bues (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 167–174.

Transylvania to Central Europe. Especially after the conquest of Hungary, provisions for the garrisons were frequently shipped up the Danube.⁹

However, the Ottoman political and military domination of the river from Upper Hungary to the river's mouth, as well as its importance for transport, cannot hide the fact that in the Ottoman period too, the river's function as a pathway for trade and travel always remained precarious. Before its regulation, which began in the nineteenth century, it was very difficult to use the full length of the river because of the hydrological and geological conditions.¹⁰ The Danube Delta as well as the Iron Gate, one of a series of cataracts that mark the border between the Middle and the Lower Danube, were difficult to navigate and impassable during certain seasons when the water level was too low. In winter the river frequently froze, and the accumulating ice made passage impossible for ships. This is the reason why until the nineteenth century all bridges across the Danube were temporary pontoon bridges that were seasonally disassembled. Because of these factors that restricted traffic and transport on the river, roads that ran along the river or crossed it were just as important for ensuring mobility of people and goods.

These natural conditions still proved an obstacle to trade and transport, when the geopolitical and economic conditions began to change from the eighteenth century. To the west, the Habsburgs conquered Hungary and the river between Belgrade and Orşova was established as the border between the two empires. In the economic treaty of 1718, the Austrians acquired the right of free navigation on the Danube as far as Rusçuk; for the rest of the journey down the Danube and on the Black Sea they had to hire Ottoman ships. But although general trade between the Ottoman Balkans and Central Europe was increasing, most goods were still transported along the above-described land routes. For Ottoman exports to Central Europe, the river was even less attractive, as the upstream journey was difficult.¹¹ Only toward the end of the century did Habsburg merchants conduct a series of commercial expeditions that used the Danube as a route to establish a link to the Crimea and the northern Black Sea coast. However, because the state's support of such expeditions

⁹ Halil Inalcik, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, 1300-1600 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 295-311.

¹⁰ W.G. East, "The Danube Route-Way in History," *Economica* 37 (1932): 321-345.

¹¹ Numan Elibol and Abdullah Mesud Küçükcalay, "Implementation of the Commercial Treaty of Passarowitz and the Austrian Merchants, 1720-1750," in *The Peace of Passarowitz, 1718*, ed. Charles W. Ingrao, Nikola Samardžić, and Jovan Pesalj (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2011), 159-178.

soon ceased, they did not transform the Danube into a permanent trade route in contrast to the maritime route from Trieste, which became very successful.¹²

The Black Sea became an attractive goal for trade expeditions from the Habsburg Empire, and also from France, after Russia had conquered the Crimea and the northern Black Sea coast between 1774 and 1792. The geopolitical and economic position of the Black Sea changed, alongside that of the Lower Danube. From the northern Black Sea coast, Russian expansion continued toward the Danube, which became a zone of contact and conflict between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires. The northern branch of the Danube Delta became the border between the two empires after the war of 1806–12 when Bessarabia together with the Bucak were conquered by Russia. Subsequently, Russia gained control over the entire delta in the Treaty of Adrianople after the war of 1828–29.

Together with this territorial expansion, Russia gained the right to trade on the Black Sea. After 1774, the Ottomans had to tolerate the free navigation of Russian merchant ships – a privilege that was soon extended to other European states. This stimulated grain exports from the Russian Black Sea provinces through its main port Odessa to Western Europe and particularly to Britain. These exports reached significant quantities during the Napoleonic Wars and continued to grow in the postwar period. They were completed by Greek merchants, originally Ottoman subjects, whose trading and shipping companies rested on wide-reaching family networks, and who transformed the Black Sea from a Transottoman space to a space of global connections.

The Danube's importance as a route for trade grew, when, in the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople, Walachia and Moldavia gained freedom of trade, while still remaining vassals of the Ottoman Empire. The same treaty opened the Danube for ships of all nations. Grain from Walachia and Moldavia was exported through the river ports of Galați and Brăila, located to the west of the delta. Under normal conditions, these ports could be reached by seagoing ships that enter the delta from the Black Sea. However, because of continual silting this became increasingly difficult during the first half of the nineteenth century.

¹² Hans Halm, *Habsburgischer Osthandel im 18. Jahrhundert: Donauhandel und -schifffahrt 1781–1787* (Munich: Isar, 1954); Manfred Sauer, "Österreich und die Sulina-Frage (1829–1854)," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 40 (1987): 199–206.

Austrian economic interests created a similar entanglement of river regulation and politics on the western limits of the Lower Danube. Here, the introduction of a new technology to the river, steam shipping, was decisive. In 1829, with the founding of the Donau-Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft (DDSG) in Vienna, waterborne traffic became more reliable and profitable. First, the DDSG served the inner-Austrian route from Vienna to Semlin, the border city of the Austrian Empire near Belgrade, but by 1834 it was able to extend its service to Galați and ultimately to Istanbul. The precondition for this connection becoming quicker was regulation works at the Danube cataracts.

The following section will examine the role of the Ottoman state and its politicians in regulating the Danube, triggered by the growing trade opportunities. First, we will consider the regulation of the Danube cataracts and especially of the Iron Gate initiated by Austria, which resulted in the destruction of some of the underwater rocks from 1833 onward. In a second step, we will turn to the mouth of the Danube at which a canal was planned but not realized, although the European Commission of the Danube was successful in clearing the delta's sandbanks.

3. Regulation works at the Iron Gate

For the DDSG steamers, just as for all the other ships that had traveled on the Danube previously, the Danube gorges with the river's series of cataracts located approximately halfway between Belgrade and Vidin posed a serious obstacle. Of these, the last of the cataracts between Orșova and Turnu Severin, commonly called Iron Gate or Demirkapı Girdabı by the Ottomans, was considered the most dangerous. This was because here the river valley became wider, and the water level fell to such a low level that underwater rocks reached close to the surface and prevented the passage of ships altogether when the water level was low.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Ottomans named an official called *girdap ağası* whose role was to supervise the cataracts and help ships to pass through them safely. They were partly unloaded, their cargo was transferred to special boats with a flat bottom and a shallow draft, or transported by land, and local pilots steered the unloaded ships and the boats with their cargoes through the difficult passages. In addition, land crews tried to keep the ships away from the rocks with ropes. When going upriver these crews, which were recruited from local Christians,

towed the ships against the stream. For this service, the passing ships had to pay a fee, but were insured in case of an accident.¹³

The idea of easing this difficult passage through the cataracts was discussed in Austria immediately after the introduction of steamers to the river. Not only the steam-ship company but also the government – many politicians and members of the court were also shareholders – saw the potential of the Danube as a transregional route for trade and traffic. Chancellor Metternich was interested in promoting Austrian trade with Southeast Europe, and through him the plan to make the Danube more viable received support from the highest echelons of government.¹⁴

In 1830, Istvan Széchenyi, a Hungarian nobleman and politician, prepared an expedition to explore the possibilities of exporting Hungarian grain to Southern Europe via the Danube. Initially, he was skeptical and stated that “for us, the Danube flows in the wrong direction, and at its mouth it does not belong to us, but to others.” His expedition with a ship built for this purpose in Buda was a private initiative, but coordinated with the government. According to Széchenyi’s diary, the Iron Gate posed no problem for the ship; however, during the rest of the journey he was sick with malaria from which he was only able to recover after reaching Istanbul. On his way home, he preferred to take the land route, which took him 20 days from Istanbul to Belgrade.¹⁵

Széchenyi was a conservative reformer who wanted to stimulate Hungary’s trade and economy, but also the country’s transport infrastructure, by modernizing feudal laws and institutions. Many of his projects were based around the Danube, e.g., the construction of the first permanent bridge between Buda and Pest and the construction of a shipyard in Buda. Consequently, he also advocated the idea of regulating the Danube cataracts either by blowing up the rocks in the river or by bypassing them by building a canal inside the bed of the Danube, which would have enough draft all year round. Additionally, a road running along its northern shore all along the canyon was planned. In 1833, he was nominated president of the Danube Commission and, in this capacity, mostly addressed the project’s political tasks such as liaising with the

¹³ M. Emre Kılıçaslan, “XVIII. Yüzyılda Tuna Demirkapısı ve Girdaplar İdaresi,” *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 25 (2010): 59–76.

¹⁴ Miroslav Šedivý, “From Hostility to Cooperation? Austria, Russia and the Danubian Principalities, 1829–40,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 89, no. 4 (2011): 646–650.

¹⁵ Andreas Oplatka, *Graf Stephan Széchenyi: Der Mann, der Ungarn schuf* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2004): 190–198.

different bodies of the Austrian government and the local foreign authorities of Walachia, Serbia, and the Ottoman Empire. The Hungarian civil engineer Pál Vásárhelyi planned and executed the actual regulation works. On an extended trip through Europe, both sought the advice of other experts and thus linked the project up with the nascent community of hydraulic engineers. Among others, they met with the Russian diplomat Pëtr Mejendorf who was undertaking a very similar fact-finding mission to Széchenyi's, aimed at the regulation of the Dnieper rapids.¹⁶ This shows that the region's geopolitical and economic restructuring went hand-in-hand and was supported by an attempt to open new routes for modern transport infrastructures.

While the regulation on this part of the Danube was an Austrian initiative, it involved a host of other international actors, because of the location of the cataracts. In a pioneering article Luminita Gatejel has pointed to the conflicts at the different administrative levels and between political entities, e.g., on the Austrian side between the central government and that of Hungary.¹⁷ The same was true for the Ottoman side where the two dependent countries, Serbia and Walachia – the latter still under Russian occupation at that time – and the Ottoman central government had divergent positions regarding the regulation. In 1833, when the engineers realized that they could not survey the river properly from the Austrian shore of the Danube alone, and therefore wanted to cross over to the Ottoman side, they were stopped by the Ottoman authorities. While the local commander of the Ottoman fortress on the Danube island Ada Kale opposite Orşova was open to the Austrian project, the central government was hesitant. Still, the Austrian engineers were able to carry out some of the works on the Ottoman side. They even blasted some of the rocks in the riverbed, probably with the tacit agreement of the local pasha.¹⁸ But to resume their work in full, they had to wait a full year until the Porte (i.e., the Ottoman central government) gave its permission. The frustration ran high, especially with the Austrian ambassador in Istanbul. He reported to Vienna that the Ottoman side had told him that removing the rocks from the Danube was against God's will. It is particularly odd that he ascribed this view to Pertev Efendi, the Ottoman minister of the interior and early representative and sponsor of the reform movement. In

¹⁶ Luminita Gatejel, "Overcoming the Iron Gates: Austrian Transport and River Regulation on the Lower Danube, 1830s-1840s," *Central European History* 49, no. 2 (2016): 172-174.

¹⁷ Gatejel, "Iron Gates," 168-172.

¹⁸ The Pasha of Vidin's report to Istanbul would give valuable hints as to his view of the situation. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see the respective document in the Ottoman Archive, Istanbul, HAT 1200/47107 dated AH 1249 (=1833/1834).

hindsight, it is hard to tell who was fooling whom with this story, if it were not an outright invention of the Austrian ambassador. Other reports seem more reasonable, which state that the Ottoman government did not subscribe to the Austrian argumentation that the works would be economically beneficial for all, but rather saw the matter from a military point of view, and feared that a warship could sail down the river just as easily as an Austrian passenger ship once all obstacles were removed. However, when the Austrians asked the Russians for support in the matter of the Iron Gate, at the very end of 1834 the Ottomans gave their consent to continue the works.¹⁹

For the Ottoman government, this cautious cooperation paid off in several respects. It would be seen as doing Russia a favor, its principal ally against Mehmed Ali, the ruler of Egypt who threatened the Ottoman position in Syria. At the same time, as it turned out, also after the regulation, the Iron Gate remained a formidable obstacle. Vásárhelyi was able to blow a small passage through the cataracts, through which the Austrian steamers could pass. But this was possible only when the water level was high enough. Like Hayrullah Efendi, who traveled up the Danube to Vienna in the 1860s, passengers usually had to change at Orșova from one steamer that operated on the Upper Danube, to the other on the Lower Danube. Under these conditions, not only were special boats used, but the new road on the left bank of the Danube also proved very important for the transport of passengers and goods from one ship to the other.²⁰ In the decades following the first regulation of 1834, there were several plans to make the Iron Gate passable for big steamers too; but only in the 1890s this was finally achieved by blowing up the last rocks and building a dam in the riverbed, which separated a bypass channel.²¹

The regulation of the Iron Gate has been retold here in detail, because it happened at a time when Ottoman statesmen began to adopt a modern understanding of infrastructure and because it opened the door to a string of projects in this field. In the 1830s, the sultan's policy of asserting his own role and that of the central state against political rivals such as provincial power holders as well as the Janissaries, as representatives of the traditional military, had finally been successful. The Ottoman civil bureaucracy emerged as the leading group to shape the empire's future

¹⁹ Šedivý, "Hostility," 648–650.

²⁰ Hayrullah, *Seyahatname*, 18.

²¹ G. Luther, *Die Regulierung der Katarakte in der unteren Donau (Eisernes Thor)* (Braunschweig: Meyer, 1893).

political structure. Together with a new understanding of political authority, and the practical functioning of government, this group also promoted new economic policies in which the modernization of the country's infrastructure played an important role. In his writings, one of the leading politicians from the civil bureaucracy, Mehmed Sadık Rifat Pasha (1807-1858), advocated state investment in roads so as to give the population the opportunity for economic development. As an Ottoman ambassador to Vienna from 1837 to 1839, he was influenced by cameralist ideas about economic development, which were similar to those held by Széchenyi. In the 1840s, as president of the Supreme Council (Meclis-i Vala), a new institution in the central administration, as an official in the Ministry of Public Works (Nafia Nezareti), and as member of the Reform Council (Meclis-i Tanzimat), Sadık Rifat decided on and oversaw many infrastructure projects. These mostly concerned the empire's main road connections, to which railroads were added only in the 1850s. Another newly created institution, the Ministry of Trade and Public Works, was also responsible for the regulation of rivers. In the 1856 reform decree, the sultan even declared the construction of roads and canals a state goal.²²

To sum up, from the 1830s to the end of the century, alongside changing understandings of political authority and legitimacy, infrastructural development became an important state goal. As a result of the Ottoman politicians' adoption of a modern understanding of infrastructure and infrastructural governance, the Ottoman Empire was increasingly involved in international infrastructure projects as the next section will demonstrate.

4. Regulation of the Danube Delta

The idea of regulating the mouth of the Danube arose at approximately the same time as the regulation of the cataracts, but initial steps were taken later because here the political situation was even more complicated. The 1829 Treaty of Adrianople had given Russia the entire Danube Delta including the Sulina (Sünne) river branch, the only one through which seagoing ships could pass relatively easily. Almost immediately, Austria and Britain, the two main trading nations on the Danube, began to blame the Russian authorities for having taken

²² Ali Akyıldız, "Sâdık Rifat Paşa," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 35, 400-401; Florian Riedler, "Crossroads Edirne: Building Modern Infrastructures on Ancient Routes," in *The Heritage of Edirne in Ottoman and Turkish Times: Continuities, Disruptions and Reconnections*, ed. Birgit Krawietz and Florian Riedler (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2020), 438-446.

advantage of the situation by hindering the free passage of merchant ships, which the treaty guaranteed. According to these allegations, the Russian authorities took illegal fees, implemented quarantine in an excessive manner and, most importantly, neglected the river channel's maintenance. The situation was negatively compared with the period before, when the Ottoman authorities had dredged the channel regularly. Despite the Russians' pragmatic attitude in allowing a dredging ship to operate, the situation did not change fundamentally until the Crimean War.²³

The diplomats and merchants who objected to the Russian possession of the delta also looked for other solutions. One involved cooperation with the Ottoman Empire to a much higher degree than had been present with the cautious works at the Iron Gate: this was the project of building a canal from the Danube to the Black Sea through the Dobruja region, which bypassed the delta in the south. Apparently, by the 1830s merchants in Hungary had discussed such a solution. In 1837, the British Foreign Office sent a fact-finding mission to the region, and also the Ottoman government, which was negotiating with the DDSG about the possibility of building such a canal, sent a group of officers from the Prussian military mission in Istanbul to Dobruja. Most of the contemporary reports, except for one by an Austrian military engineer, warned of the high costs the building of a canal would incur. Thus, the negotiations ended without any conclusive results, perhaps also because Russian diplomats in Istanbul were working to stop the canal project.²⁴ Instead, starting from 1840, the DDSG transported luggage and freight by road from Boğazköy (Cernavodă) on the Danube to the Black Sea harbor Köstence (Constanța), in order to bypass the delta at times when low water prevented shipping.²⁵

The canal plan was back on the agenda when political tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Russia mounted at the beginning of the 1850s. On this occasion it was also supported by Romanian reformers and intellectuals, such as Ion Ionescu (1818–1891) and Ion Ghica (1816–1897), who were residing in Istanbul after the failed 1848 revolution.²⁶ Together

²³ Sauer, "Sulina-Frage," 185–196.

²⁴ Constantin Ardeleanu, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube: The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)* (Braila: Editura Istros, 2014), 185–190.

²⁵ *Vereinigte Ofener-Pester Zeitung* (8 March 1840): 190.

²⁶ Mihail P. Guboğlu, "Boğazköy-Köstence Arasında İlk Demiryolu İnşası (1855-1860)," in *Çağın Yakalayan Osmanlı! Osmanlı Devleti'nde Modern Haberleşme ve Ulaştırma Teknikleri*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Mustafa Kaçar (Istanbul: İslam Tarih Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 1995), 221–223.

with other options such as different railway schemes, the Ottoman council of ministers discussed the canal once again, as did a commission in the Ministry of Trade. The various councils and ministries – particularly the Supreme Council (Meclis-i Vala) and the Council of Reforms (Meclis-i Tanzimat), which had been founded in the 1840s and 1850s, offered the institutional framework to discuss and take decisions on the modernization of infrastructure.²⁷

In his article, Erdoğan Keleş presents in detail the negotiations of these institutions with foreign engineers and investors, with both sides now reproducing the discourse of economic development. Especially British engineers, some of whom came to the country during the Crimean War, were submitting such projects. The legal instrument needed to realize them was a concession, which gave a company the right to build and run a certain infrastructure. Such concessions were often awarded for a long period, e.g., for 99 years, after which the infrastructures would fall to the Ottoman state. Construction costs were usually shared between the company side and the Ottoman side; the latter often also granted land, provided labor, or both. The company usually retained profits, and in some concessions, the Ottoman state even guaranteed a certain annual profit in case of losses.

In the case of the Danube–Black Sea canal, the Ottoman administration was presented with no less than three project proposals between 1853 and 1855, some of which also included a railway line.²⁸ Finally, in 1856, after complicated negotiations, a company founded by a group of English, French, and Austrian investors won the concession to build the Abdülmecid Canal (Mecdiye Cedveli), named after the sultan. The canal was advertised as benefiting mainly the Ottoman lands along the Danube and rescuing them from the Russian economic stranglehold at the mouth of the Danube. Also, the fact that Sadık Rifat Pasha – one of the company's founders on the Ottoman side – was to receive a total of three percent of the company's annual profits may explain why this group was given the concession.²⁹

However, as with many other infrastructure projects, the Abdülmecid Canal was never built, despite a company having been founded, a

²⁷ Erdoğan Keleş, "Sultan Abdülmecid Döneminde (1839–1861) Tuna-Karadeniz Arasında Kanal Açma Teşebbüsü," *Çanakkale Araştırmaları Türk Yılı 16*, no. 25 (2018): 174–175.

²⁸ Keleş, "Kanal," 177–191.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 193.

concession issued, and the Ottoman government having begun the expropriation of the land along the planned course of the canal. The reason for this was that a little while after the canal concession had been granted, the British investors in particular wanted to change it into a railway concession. They had to renegotiate and were successful in obtaining a concession for a railway linking the Danube to the Black Sea along the same route and the construction of a new harbor at K ostence. The railway concession's stipulations were more favorable to the Ottoman side. The railway company immediately started construction and was able to open the line, which Hayrullah used on his way to Vienna two and a half years later in October 1860, as the first railway in Ottoman Europe. For John Trevor Barkley, the leading engineer of the project, it was a successful start to his career. Together with his three brothers, he built or planned a number of other railways in the Danube region such as the Rus uk-Varna line and the Giurgiu-Bucharest line.³⁰

The history of the planning of the canal and railway is indicative of the entwined nature of transport infrastructures. Water and land transport cannot be assessed in isolation, but for travelers and goods both are combined on larger routes.

The failing canal project was not only substituted by the railway line, but also by the improvement of shipping in the Danube Delta, which made it redundant. The Russian defeat in the Crimean War (1853–1856) offered the opportunity for an experiment that combined infrastructure development with the river's internationalization, following the example of the Rhine after the Congress of Vienna. While the right to free shipping on the river was maintained, the Russians had to cede the delta to the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, the seven states involved in the war (Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, Piedmont, Prussia and Russia) together formed the European Commission of the Danube (ECD), which was charged with implementing measures to ensure passage through the delta. Originally envisaged for just two years, the commission was continued because the regulation proved complicated. While the chief engineer proposed turning the southernmost branch of the Danube into the main shipping canal, provisional works – which had begun at the middle Sulina branch – ultimately proved successful. It was possible to raise the water level with two dams that were completed at the beginning of the 1860s

³⁰ J.H. Jensen and Gerhard Rosegger, "British Railway Builders along the Lower Danube, 1856–1869," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 46, no. 106 (1968): 105–128; Keleş, "Kanal," 198–200; also cf. Boriana Antonova-Goleva's article in this issue.

leading into the sea, and so even large ships could pass the sandbanks at the mouth of the river most of the time. By 1817, an Ottoman fortress engineer had proposed a very similar solution, but his plan was never implemented.³¹ Until the First World War, the ECD continued overseeing traffic and infrastructure development in the delta. It was one of the first international expert commissions that became an example for similar forms of cooperation among experts.³²

Ottoman participation in the commission was characterized by a fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, the Ottoman state wanted to assert its territorial rights over the delta that it had just won back from Russia. Therefore, it insisted that the Ottoman delegate, Ömer Fevzi Pasha, a general who had spent some time in Vienna for his education, acted as president of the commission. For the same reason, it was also keen to see the commission come to an end after two years and its tasks be taken on by a commission of the riparian states, which existed in parallel. On the other hand, the commission offered an arena in which the Ottoman state could participate in the “European Concert,” to which it had been formally admitted by the Paris Peace Treaty at the end of the Crimean War. Moreover, Ottoman officials had a good understanding of the economic advantages that the regulation works in the delta would give to their country, especially as concerns the export of grain from the Danubian lowland. Therefore, the Ottomans continued to work in the ECD, offered a loan so that it could start the works and provided material support in the form of building material.³³

Furthermore, the abovementioned commission of the riparian states (Württemberg, Bavaria, Austria, the Ottoman Empire with two additional delegates for Serbia and Walachia), offered another arena of international cooperation. In 1871, Austria and the Ottoman Empire, as the principal members of this commission, collaborated on a new plan for the regulation of the Iron Gate. However, this regulation was never implemented, because the Ottoman Empire ceased to be a riparian state after 1878.³⁴

Even Hayrullah Efendi’s tourist guide broached these issues of international prestige with its readers: “Because most of the places the

³¹ İlhan Ekinci, “Tuna Komisyonu ve Tuna’da Ticaret (1856-1883)” (PhD diss., Samsun, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, 1998): 19-20.

³² Gatejel, “Imperial Cooperation.”

³³ Ekinci, “Tuna Komisyonu,” 120-155.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 176-179.

Danube crosses from its source to its mouth belong to the Ottoman Empire, the presidency of the commission founded by the states along its shores should have belonged to the Ottoman state [...] In fact, I am very interested in the question of how to profit from the Danube (and therefore I have thought a lot about it)."³⁵ It is possible that Hayrullah, who started his career in the Ottoman Imperial Medical School and later became its director before being employed in other government councils, even had firsthand professional experience of this question.

In the above examples concerning the regulation of the Danube Delta, the Ottoman Empire mostly played the role of a cooperation partner either with international investors or the European Powers. However, in the Lower Danube region it also experimented with a new approach to developing its own territory in order to reinvent itself as a modern infrastructure state. This approach was spearheaded in the Danube Province, which was founded in 1864.

5. The Ottoman Danube Province

The Danube Province (Tuna vilayeti) in many respects grew out of the logic of the Tanzimat, i.e., the reform program that the Ottoman administration had proclaimed in 1839. The new province was an instrument of centralization, because it united several smaller provinces under one governor who answered to the authority of Ottoman central government. At the same time, the councils that were created on its various administrative levels opened a way for better representation of the local population, which was mostly Christian. Thus, these councils can also be seen as an Ottoman-government instrument in fighting nationalism in the Balkans.³⁶

Besides this administrative logic, the new provincial administration – tested on the Danube and later exported to other parts of the empire – was also to implement the economic goals of the Tanzimat. While in the 1840s

³⁵ Hayrullah, *Seyahatname*, 16–17: “İşbu Tuna nehirinin menba’ından munsabbına kadar dolaştığı yerlerin a’zam-ı kı’ası memâlik-i devlet-i Osmaniyye dâhilinde olmakla, nehrin idaresine Tuna etrafında bulunan devletler taraflarından bir komisyon teşkil olunmuş olsa riyaseti devlet-i Osmaniyye’nin hükmünde olmak lâzım gelir iken, [...]. Zira Tuna’dan istifade etmek maddesi benim ziyadesiyle heves eyeldiğim bir madde(dir) (olduğundan bu bâbda pek ziyade sarf-ı efkâr olunmuştur.)”

³⁶ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963): 142–159; İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Yerel Yönetim Geleneği* (Istanbul: Hil, 1985): 56–61.

infrastructure projects were mostly restricted to modernizing important road connections from ports to the hinterland, in the 1860s the Ottoman administration tried to spread and deepen these measures. In 1861, Midhat Pasha, an official in the central administration, was appointed as governor of the province of Niş (Niš) at the border to Serbia. He started a modernization program of the road network and the transport system there by founding a coach company, which linked the border city to Sofia and Filibe (Plovdiv). Under Midhat's governorship, urban infrastructures were also overhauled and he tried to strengthen the local economy by founding vocational schools for orphans (*Islahane*) and a local fund (*memleket sandığı*) that gave credit to farmers at moderate rates of interest.³⁷

To develop this new approach to provincial administration, in 1864 the Danube Province was formed by combining the smaller provinces of Niş, Sofia, Vidin, and Silistre and appointing Midhat as its governor. Thus, the province comprised the whole Ottoman shore of the Danube from the delta to the Iron Gate at the Serbian–Ottoman border and the lowland as far as the Balkan mountain range. The only part of the new province not linked to the Lower Danube was Niş, and consequently it was separated a few years later in a territorial reform.

As governor of this exceptionally large province, Midhat continued the program he had earlier pursued. Apparently more than 3,000 kilometers of new roads and around 1,400 bridges over smaller rivers were built during his three and a half years in office. A coach company ensured a connection between the province's capital Rusçuk (Ruse) and the inland cities in which new streets, markets, prisons, barracks, and other official buildings were constructed. In 1866, a railway line that connected the provincial capital with Varna on the Black Sea was opened, which had been planned and built by the engineers who had also built the Boğazköy–Köstence line. Apparently, Midhat also planned other lines, e.g., one from Plevna (Pleven) to Niğbolu (Nikopol), which included a new Danube port to be called Sultaniye. However, this project was not pursued further under Midhat's successors.³⁸

³⁷ Nejat Göyünc, "Midhat Paşa'nın Niş Valiliği Hakkında Notlar ve Belgeler," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1982): 279–316.

³⁸ Milen V. Petrov, "Tanzimat for the Countryside: Midhat Paşa and the Vilayet of Danube, 1864–1868" (PhD diss., Princeton, 2006), 111–133; Felix Kanitz, *Donau-Bulgarien und der Balkan: Historisch-Geographisch-Ethnographische Reisestudien aus den Jahren 1860–1879*, sec. ed. (Leipzig: Benger, 1882), 2:67.

While the railroad construction was still organized through the model of a concession owned by a foreign company, the provincial government could plan and build its roads by relying entirely on its own resources. Local peasants were obliged by law to do the heavy earthmoving labor. The first Ottoman provincial newspaper, the bilingual *Tuna/Dunav*, published in Rusçuk by the provincial government, publicly justified this measure with the argument that peasants would profit most from better roads.³⁹ For the planning and supervision of the works, the Danube Province employed its own engineers. In addition to Ottoman engineers, it could also rely on a group of Polish engineers who had gained asylum in the Ottoman Empire after the failed revolution of 1863.⁴⁰ As with Hungarian political refugees after the failed revolution of 1848, it was the political neutrality of the Ottoman Empire that made it a convenient place of exile. At the same time, it demanded skilled workers and had a long tradition of integrating foreign experts.

Because the province stretched all along the Danube from Vidin to the delta, the river as a waterway also played a role in Midhat's development plans. Before, only the Ottoman Navy had attempted to operate ships on the Danube, but their draft proved too large to effectively run when the water level was low. Therefore, as with the coach company, a steamboat company, the *İdare-i Nehriye*, was established by the Danube Province administration. In addition, for a few years a private Ottoman company owned by two Bulgarians also operated with one ship on the river. In parallel, the wharf of the provincial capital Rusçuk as well as the ports of the other cities on the river were modernized. By the 1870s up to seven smaller steamboats had been purchased from England and Austria and were used for military as well as civilian purposes. They were never serious competition for the DDSG service, but they made the Ottoman administration more independent. Most importantly these boats served between Rusçuk and the Romanian side at Giurgiu. In this way, they established a missing link for the Orient Express from Paris to Istanbul, which ran via Vienna, Pest, and Bucharest to Giurgiu, from where passengers used the Rusçuk-Varna railroad, before continuing by steamer to Istanbul.⁴¹

³⁹ Petrov, "Tanzimat", 134-139.

⁴⁰ These were the engineers Karol Brzozowski, Gavronijski, and Menejko, cf. Ortaylı, *Yerel Yönetim*, 57 and Kanitz, *Donau-Bulgarien*, passim. A certain Zagorski Efendi was the acting president of the commission of public works (*nafia komisyonu*) of the province; cf. *Salname-i Vilayet-i Tuna* 1 (1285): 25.

⁴¹ Ekinci, "Tuna Komisyonu," 75-93.

In the Russian–Ottoman war of 1877–1878 the Ottomans lost the Danube Province and the river became the border between the newly independent states of Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Only Ada Kale was forgotten in this territorial reorganization, and it remained an Ottoman enclave until the end of the empire in 1923. Most of the ships of the Ottoman Danube fleet had been sunk by their captains to prevent them from falling into Russian hands. After the war, only a few could be recovered and began to serve in Izmir.⁴²

6. Conclusion

For the Ottomans, the Danube served as a border, but also as a means of communication and transport, although these functions were restricted by the river's prevailing natural conditions. Especially the Lower Danube was a connecting region between the Ottoman Empire and its northern neighbors such as the tributary states of Transylvania, Walachia, and Moldavia as well as Poland–Lithuania and Russia. Because of the geopolitical, economic, and technological developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, these older Transottoman connections with Central and Eastern Europe were increasingly substituted by global ones. Typically, for Hayrullah the Danube was a path to Central Europe as the gate to the West. After 1878, the Danube even lost this function, when in 1888 the direct rail link from Istanbul via Belgrade to Vienna was completed.

The infrastructures that were planned and constructed in the Danube region to connect it with the wider world were heavily dependent on European capital and know-how. But, as a state bordering the river, the Ottoman Empire had to be involved in the planning and construction. In the Danube Province it developed a framework and a testing ground for an independent infrastructure policy. Because the other states and political entities in the region were in a similar condition, we can witness numerous instances of cooperation and exchange of knowledge and personnel in the field of infrastructure development. These continued the older forms of Transottoman exchanges, which were now integrated in larger, global circuits.

On a larger level, the Danube played an important role in the formation of an ideology of infrastructure and its implementation in the form of modern infrastructural governance. As much as it provides

⁴² *Ibid.*, 92–93.

practical information for travelers, Hayrullah Efendi's *Travel Book* also offers a good example of this ideology.⁴³ In general, it celebrates European achievements in culture, education, and wealth, and illustrates the overall goal of the Tanzimat. In practical terms, traveling to Europe means studying the development model for the Ottoman Empire. In his conclusion, Hayrullah also offers his readers a method for how to deal with the obvious discrepancies between progress abroad and backwardness at home. Anger and frustration are understandable, says the author, but not a productive way forward. Instead, Hayrullah reminds his readers that even in Europe the achievements of that time stand at the end of a long process, and he stresses what had already been achieved during the process of Ottoman reform. First, he enumerates the promises of the Tanzimat, the freedom of possession, life, and honor. But, as if sensing the emptiness of these slogans he continues to give more material proof of progress in the Ottoman Empire:

Did they not start three years ago to build railways in your country, the Ottoman Empire, like in Europe, where they simplified traveling and the transport of goods? And did they not also for ten years extend telegraph lines in all parts of the empire, which ten years ago amazed you by conveying news from the whole world in an instant. And similarly, did they not also found new factories and steam companies, which are the result of security and trade, in your fatherland, the Turkish land?⁴⁴

This list of achievements demonstrates the central position that real material progress in the field of transport infrastructure and the economy had acquired. And, as Hayrullah's own travels show, the Danube was an important area in which such progress became manifest.

⁴³ Caspar Hillebrand, "Narrative Strategien der Autor-Leser-Identifikation in Vor- und Nachwort von Hayrullah Efendis Europareisebericht (1863/64)," in *Wenn einer eine Reise tut, hat er was zu erzählen': Präfiguration – Konfiguration – Refiguration in muslimischen Reiseberichten*, ed. Bekim Agai and Stephan Conermann (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2013), 119–150.

⁴⁴ Hayrullah, *Seyahatname*, 190–191.

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An Ottoman Story Until the End: Reading Fan Noli's Post-Mediterranean Struggle in America, 1906-1922

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Abstract:

As the lives of so many men and women in the late nineteenth century Ottoman Balkans collapsed, many began to invest in ways to circumvent the accompanying powers of the modern state. An equal number attempted to manage the changes by availing themselves to the evolving Ottoman state with the hope of fusing efforts of reform with the emerging political-cultural structures of the larger world that was explicitly geared to tear the multi-ethnic Ottoman Balkans apart. By exploring the manner in which some members of the Balkans' cultural elite adapted as their worlds transformed, this article introduces new methods of interpreting and narrating transitional periods such as those impacting men like Fan S. Noli. His itinerary itself reveals just how complex life in the Balkans and Black Sea would be during the 1878-1922 period, but not one entirely subordinate to the ethno-nationalist agenda so often associated with him.

Keywords: Albanian Nationalism, Egypt, Diaspora, Migration, Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, Ottoman Empire, United States of America

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Introduction

Many men and women who lived through the dramatic transformations of the late Ottoman Empire (1878-1922) contributed their fair share to the process. As their Ottoman homelands collapsed in face of pressure from Western banks demanding payment of debts, the resulting wars transformed the state institutions that were increasingly invested in socially managing its subjects. Accordingly, many among those targeted by the state responded in ways that resulted in political-cultural ideals that directly clashed with what we understand today as modernity. Within a generation, these challenges to the “modernization” process spread across the world, resulting in the subsequent constructive friction that birthed our modern world order.

As will become evident below, some of the prominent mechanisms for collective action were individual and group adjustments to these disparate processes. Often, the results included the creation of social and sports clubs, new places of worship, labor unions, secret order committees, theatre groups, and intellectual salons. As well reflected in the literature, these creations infested cities throughout the late Ottoman territories. Invariably associated with the founders of ethno-national successor states, nationalist historians have worked overtime to identify such communities as crucial agents of the modern nation-state. More important still are the suggestions that out of these organizations came individuals who have since been celebrated as the post-Ottoman nation’s heroes.

Unfortunately, the roles such “national heroes” must perform in retrospective nationalist historiographies disguises the deep intersection of interests that often compromised the explicit “nationalist” function allocated to these individuals. Missing from much of the narrative is the documented patronage of individuals and the groups with which they were associated from powerful capitalist interests. The pre-World War I sponsorship of politically entrepreneurial organizers, today associated exclusively with nationalist activism against, for instance, Ottoman or Habsburg rule, often downplay their contribution to the “patriotic struggle.” Clearly research, however, suggests the consular staffs of powerful states based throughout the Eastern Mediterranean actually played a more direct role than allowed in the heroic descriptions of these individuals and groups. It is now well-documented that support of foreign interests included subsidizing the publication of pamphlets and newsletters while covering the expenses related to recruiting, training, and then unleashing activists when the time proved ideal. This was

certainly the case for the Ottoman-Albanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Arabic language material produced at this time.

Today in the Balkans, the idea that Ottoman-era “patriots” could have served the strategic interests of outside powers seeking the destruction of their societies is an uncomfortable paradox if not handled well. Especially in the context of the late Ottoman Empire, individuals and groups considered as “patriotic” that strived for ethno-national separation and thus “liberation,” supposedly aimed to secure “independence” from the Ottoman state. It is also assumed that the relationships maintained with outside interests during this often long, drawn out period of struggle were both essential and entirely contradictory to the survival of the cosmopolitan Ottoman Empire.¹

What is missing is the possibility that as, for instance, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) successfully overthrew the entrenched Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1908/9, it helped reinsert a set of institutions that explicitly sought to accommodate those seeking a solution to the crisis that began with the end of the Tanzimat era. Clear from their rhetoric and grand declarations after the successful revolt in late 1908, many diverse peoples throughout the empire seemed to actually work to preserve a cosmopolitan, ecumenical Ottoman society.² In other words, many Armenians, Albanians, Arabs, and Greeks, all of various faiths, often struggled well into World War I to reform and thus preserve the Ottoman Empire.³ Failing to accommodate such possibilities hints at a selective interpretive reading of the activities of such social groups and the individuals associated with them. As argued below, the frequent misreading of these actions have both methodological and philosophical consequences.

The following counter-reading of various Ottoman Albanian activities seeks to challenge the entrenched logics often found in the scholarship that naturalize exclusivist identity politics and ethno-nationalist activism. As one of the most celebrated Albanians coming out of this late Ottoman era, Fan S. Noli’s (1882-1965) biography upsets some of the conventions about how the many socio-cultural, let alone explicitly

¹ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

² See Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2011).

³ Richard E. Antaramian, *Brokers of Faith, Brokers of Empire: Armenians and the Politics of Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2020) and Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

political, activisms are historicized. In his case, the apparently exceptional man often claimed by scholars as a uniquely heroic engine of modern Albanian nationalism, actually proves to be abrasive, contradictory, and often a source of conflict during the post-Ottoman nation-building process.

By looking at a cluster of men around Noli who formed the Albanian-speaking Ottoman communities found scattered throughout the world by 1900, I resist making the ethno-national story coherent to the ideological expectations of future generations of historians (and those commissioning their writing). Instead, the following highlights the larger social contexts of these men, settings that includes and at times aggressively excludes individuals like Noli. This approach requires moving beyond normative claims about their ethno-national cohesion and returning to more ambiguous, socially fluid moments that compelled men like Noli to adapt as much as create.

Founding Fathers

From at least the beginning of the Communist era, Albanian historians have lionized the careers of Ismail Kemal Bey (Qemali), Fan S. Noli, the Frashëri brothers, Dervish Hima and others as the quintessential nationalist hero.⁴ Out from the many communities that Albanian-Ottoman activists emerged in the late nineteenth century, men like Noli became by 1906 central for what they initially sought in theory and only later embraced in practice. What is left out of these histories is the fact that supporters of these thinkers for many years were advocates of sustaining the Ottoman Empire and only later embraced Albanian nationalism that privileged a regional, most often Southern Tosk, and specifically the areas around Korçë (Görice in Ottoman), reference.⁵

Unfortunately, ever since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, nationalist historians have demanded from our often reluctant heroes to accept an agenda that seeks the entire effacement of their

⁴ Arshi Pipa, "Fan Noli as a National and International Albanian Figure," *Südoest Forschungen* 43 (1984): 241-270.

⁵ Hailing from a distinctive region known as Toskalk in Ottoman and locally as Toskëria (Southern Albania), the most remarkable factor among these late Ottoman activists is their regional bias. These men all promoted differentiating their immediate homelands in the South-western Balkans from others, including Albanian-speaking regions to the north. Known as Gegs, these northern Albanian-speakers were mostly Catholic and Sunni Muslim, while the southern Tosks were Orthodox Christian and Bektashi. For details see Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans*, 20-23, 52-71, 86-88, and Nathalie Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais: La naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 315-321.

contemporary cosmopolitan Ottoman world. This act of separation from the Ottomans conjoins, it assumes, the foundation work of establishing the “inevitable” future ethno-national, Albanian collective. This has meant historians interpret the lives of Noli (and by default those with whom he interacted) as exclusively that of an agent for ethno-national delivery. The problem, however, is being an ‘Albanian’ was (and still is) much more complicated than asserting a simple monolithic ethnic association.

Often lost is just how constitutive those social, economic, and cultural contexts nurtured in, for instance, Ottoman-era social clubs or underground opposition parties (the Committee of Union and Progress, led by, among others, the Romania-based Albanian Ibrahim Temo), were to shaping those individuals mobilized by our biographies of them. As much the product of what would eventually collapse—multi-ethnic empires like the Ottoman and Habsburg cases—the myriad of actors whose lives shaped that of men like Noli end up being analysed as agents of change while actually striving to avoid it. In other words, Noli’s (and the many around him) Ottoman context is irredeemably antithetical to life as an Albanian nationalist after the empire’s destruction by war.

Our quest here is to discover how dynamic and complex the late Ottoman past was and perhaps to begin to explain what efforts were taken to navigate life during this transitional period in ways that avoid a narrow, exclusivist nationalist view. Looking into Noli’s life prior to the collapse of the Ottoman state upsets the normative origin stories that seek to anachronistically place those active during the 1870-1918 period fundamental to the Albanian (or other) national story. Instead, we can observe (and read) the works of many activist Ottoman-Albanians as part of a more expansive, multi-regional orientation that often embraced the Ottoman Empire (in its many factionalized orientations) as their home while fighting for principles that were increasingly global in spread.⁶

While his development as a young man in the beginning of the 20th century is treated as a uniformly nationalist “Albanian” story, there are more specific factors that shape the configuration of associations that

⁶ Similar movements were found throughout the industrializing world. They too avoided an exclusivist, ethno-national orientation that contradicted their “universalist” objectives. From Lenin’s Bolshevism, José Rizal’s anarchism, various cultural brotherhoods throughout the Americas, and masonic lodges, an ecumenical spirit predominated, explicitly defying the narrowing spectrum of ethno-national exclusivism that taints most research on the late Ottoman Empire. Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-colonial Imagination*. (London: Verso, 2005).

ultimately contribute to Noli's ascent into History. For instance, Noli's parents came from what is today southern Albania/Northern Greece – Korçë – and resettled as internally displaced migrants in Ottoman administered Eastern Thrace (now Bulgaria). Originally named Theofanes Stylianos Mavromatis, Noli was born into an Albanian Ottoman community of the Eastern Orthodox faith that faced persecution from a Church elite keen on halting the expansion of nationalist autocephalous churches in the non-Greek Balkans. Noli's primary conflict growing up was thus addressing the resulting alienation from a Church that educated him in a manner that sought to erase his distinctive ethnic heritage.

Going to Greek-language elementary and secondary schools was the only option for those neglected subjects of the Ottoman state already losing influence in the Balkans due to the rising sectarianism, irredentism, and the identity politics after 1878. Noli thus grew up seeing his use of language as key to claiming political rights that could be granted by the Ottoman state.⁷ Crucially, while the resulting activism has been made to service an ecumenical nationalist Albanian cause, in actuality the associations Noli made until World War I were predicated on an explicitly regional (Korçë) and Southern Albanian (Tosk) cultural agenda that recognized value in reforming the Ottoman Empire, not destroying it. This regionalist bias would inform Noli's entire political career.⁸

The deracinated state he must have felt while growing up reflected Noli's eagerness for opportunistic flight when the resources were available. First making his way to independent Greece by 1900, he was able to exploit his polyglot upbringing. Amid translation jobs that utilized his knowledge of Ottoman, Arabic, Bulgarian, Greek and Albanian, Noli also landed himself a place in the world of the performing arts. Within two years he joined a new cadre of like-minded vagabonds and relocated to Egypt.⁹

⁷ For details of conditions in the region see Theodora Dragostinova, "Speaking National: Nationalizing the Greeks of Bulgaria, 1900-1939." *Slavic Review* vol. 67, no. 1 (2008): 154-181.

⁸ To thwart these Pan-Hellenic efforts, members of the Tosk diaspora forged political clubs in Romania, Bulgaria, Egypt, and the larger Ottoman Empire. For much of the time these social clubs advocated not separation from the Ottoman Empire, but reforms that could harness ideologies of solidarity that helped stem the empire's collapse. For further detail see Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans*, 165-168 and Clayer, *Aux origines du nationalisme albanais*, 394-410.

⁹ For an accounting of the dynamic society Noli likely faced see Lucia Carminati, "Alexandria, 1898: Nodes, Networks, and Scales in Nineteenth-Century Egypt and the Mediterranean." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 1 (2017): 127-153.

After almost three years in Egypt, Noli, once a simple, enthusiastic young man who just wanted to perform in the theatre, is vexed by conflicting demands on his skills. By the time his Tosk Albanian-Egyptian patrons identify him as a valuable weapon against the Pan-Hellenic activism threatening to lay claim to all Orthodox Christian communities, Noli had to occupy a plurality of roles. Straddling often exclusive social, ideological, and cultural circles, Noli sat at junctures of power that make it difficult to identify him any longer as the key ingredient to the subsequent rise of Albanian nationalist politics in Egypt, the US, or Balkans. It is perhaps for this very reason that the flexible and intellectually dynamic Noli is ultimately chosen by the community in Egypt to resettle in industrializing North America. Moving to the factory-towns of the Northeast of the United States in 1906, where many Albanian-Ottoman subjects had already migrated in search of work, we must see Noli's maturation as part of a larger collaborative effort. His emigration to the US helped consolidate a network of Tosk Albanian-Ottomans from Korçë who were based in Brussels, Romania, Egypt, and North America (especially Boston, Buffalo, and Detroit). These links put Noli in a setting beyond him playing an individual nationalist "hero." As Noli interacts in various settings throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, ultimately reaching Egypt by 1903 and then moving to the US in 1906, we benefit by reading the context of a region not yet impacted by World War I.

Birthing Ethno-Nationalism in Egypt

Men based in newly independent Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Egypt or Italy and the Habsburg Territories hired the talented polyglot Noli to pursue agendas that aimed to gain concessions from the Ottoman state. The motivations were to assure more protection for their homelands at the time facing irredentist claims by now independent Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. A quick re-reading of the region's history between 1890s to the 1908 reminds us that a diverse group of activists forming the CUP struggled to reinstate a constitutional monarchy that had been destroyed with the rise of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1876.¹⁰ This was the CUP's primary objective as an opposition party and then one in power, a struggle fully embraced by men who are today exclusively associated with ethno-nationalist narratives. Indeed, almost all the major activist intellectuals at the time were eager to secure a justly run, multi-ethnic state that would thwart the evils of sectarianism, Slavic and Hellenic

¹⁰ Eyal Ginio, "Shaping the Constitutional Sultanate: The Reign of Mehmed Reşad (1909-18)." *Turkish Historical Review* 10, no. 1 (2019): 50-70.

irredentism, and/or the resulting ethnic separatism so many in Europe supported.

Among those we would today consider nationalist Albanians— Ibrahim Temo, the Frashëri brothers, Dervish Hima, Ismail Qemali (Kemal) and those around Noli—all positioned themselves at key moments as Ottoman patriots fighting to preserve their collective homeland. What activists among those Tosk elites who recruited Noli by 1902-1903 ultimately wanted was the reversal of an alliance between the Abdülhamid II regime and the ‘traditionalists’ within the (Rum) Eastern Orthodox Church based in Istanbul/Constantinople.¹¹ The consequential forging of a generation of activists shaped the social, political, and cultural parameters of activism that made Fan S. Noli possible.

Throughout his young adult life, Noli would be followed by the conflicted demands on his sensibilities and loyalties. As these were times both of tumult and opportunity, Noli joined the hundreds of thousands of other Balkan men to wander the Eastern Mediterranean in search of work and reason. As in Athens from 1902-1903, Noli worked as a common labourer in a theatre group while also teaching Greek to Albanians based in the boomtowns of Egypt’s Nile Delta.

This setting is critical as it again upsets the logic often found in the scholarship on Balkan diasporas. What Noli found when he migrated to Egypt was a large number of distinctive Albanian-speaking communities spread throughout the territories. Already settling in large numbers to become major land-owners, merchants, engineers, a rising Albanian-Egyptian intelligentsia was also a major patron of the arts while investing heavily in local politics that necessarily engage a British-led occupation regime, established since 1882. What Noli entered into upon his arrival was a set of mature Albanian-Egyptian communities eager to translate their wealth into influence over the fate of their homelands in the Balkans.

The resulting political and economic partnerships these mostly Tosk Christians forged confused the neat binaries filling the scholarship since the end of World War I. For example, many Southern Tosk Albanian-

¹¹ Already by 1870, a schism between “traditionalists” who stressed the need to continue using ancient Greek (the original biblical language) in church ceremonies and what we today call “nationalist” advocates of mobilizing the native languages of the various non-Greek speakers. The contested establishment of the Orthodox Bulgarian Exarchate, supported by the Russian Tsar and established by decree from the Sultan defied the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Denis Vovchenko, *Containing Balkan Nationalism: Imperial Russia and Ottoman Christians, 1856-1914*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

Egyptians reached out toward the Catholic Habsburg Empire in recognition that Austrian-Hungarian ambitions in the Balkans could prove mutually beneficial. Documents produced by Austrian consuls based in Cairo offer a rich picture of how the Ottoman-Albanian migrants and the Habsburg Empire operated in Egypt. The Austrian embassy reports from 1900 to 1902, in particular, reveal that alliances were formed around groups who strategically maintained good relations with representatives from Italy, or, if they were Muslims, the Egyptian state, but were never resigned to any one partner.¹²

Clearly the political acumen and/or economic weight of these Tosk Ottomans helped them mobilize seemingly contradictory associations by catering to rival European states' needs for influence. Italian or Austrian officials in particular sought to gain otherwise impossible access to the day-to-day affairs of the Ottoman Balkans through these Ottoman Tosk activists. The primary tool mobilized at the time was the printing press, with newspapers proving especially useful when soliciting direct support from the many European agents seeking influence in the Balkans. In need of still limited numbers of translators, Noli became an ideal vehicle for the very foundations of the eventual 'nationalist' programs that men like Noli was paid to represent.

Already in 1894, an association calling itself *Vëllazëria e Shqipëtarëve*, or the Albanian Brotherhood, took on the task of recruiting European state support for the protection of the homeland. Established by Milo Duçi (1870-1933) a Cairo-based activist who was also the son of a powerful cotton merchant from Korçë, the function of the club was use its broad network of allies to shape a generation of Albanian-Egyptian activism.¹³ Among the most visible accomplishments was the establishment of bi-lingual newspapers, including in 1900 *Besa-Besën* (meaning 'word of honour', the first newspaper using a specially designed alphabet for the Tosk dialect). Furthering these efforts, *Vëllazëria* collaborated with the poet Thoma Abrami to set up the newspapers *Toska* (1901-1903) and *Shqipëria*. These papers were specifically geared to ideologically shape the Albanian Orthodox Christian community living in Cairo. While largely forgotten in the historiography after Albania's independence, at the time Duçi's activities

¹² Isa Blumi, *Foundations of Modernity: Human Agency and the Imperial State* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 131-35.

¹³ See Faik Konitza, "Mémoire sur le mouvement national albanais," Brussels, January 1899, found in Haus-,Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna (hereafter HHStA), PA, XIV/18, Liasse Albanien XII/2, pp. 11-12.

attracted the attention of many in the larger diplomatic community based in Egypt.¹⁴

The resulting political links helped Milo Duçi's family emerge as an important player in the general economic development of Egypt's delta region and by extension the larger Eastern Mediterranean. By 1901, Duçi started working with his well-connected uncle, Loni Logori (1871-1929), on projects that explicitly tied the commercial interests of members within the British administration and local landowners. Crucially, Logori, who had built much of the canal network in the Minah district several years earlier, was known to have maintained contacts with members of émigré organizations in Bucharest, Athens, Istanbul, Italy, and Brussels.¹⁵

These interlinking channels of political, cultural, and economic exchange were collectively mobilized to protect the homeland from irredentist Hellenism. Much money from these Albanian-Egyptian communities ended up supporting the CUP efforts. Some of these exchanges were driven by political expediency, no doubt, but much was also informed by the assumption that the Ottoman Empire's survival in the Balkans assured protection of these Tosk communities' homeland.¹⁶

Paradoxically, as it appears the case with Noli whom Duçi recruited for his linguistic skills,¹⁷ despite aggressive Greek policies, many Albanian Orthodox Christian (AOC) migrants took advantage of Athens' identity politics. The Greek state had long laid claim to every Orthodox non-Slav Christian living in the Balkans and the Middle East. As a way to assure recognition of these claims by major powers (for the purposes of

¹⁴ Although it is not clear whether it is the same Albanian Brotherhood, as late as December of 1912, an organization calling itself the *Vellazërisë Shqipëtarëve* was writing letters to Thanas Tashko and Sotir Kolea (the two men who bankrolled Noli's career in the US) demanding that Tosks in Egypt help fund Albanian-language schools in the homeland. See Arkiv Qendror i Shtetit, Tirana (hereafter AQSH), F.54.D.67.f.54-55, *Vellazërisë* to Tashko, dated Cairo, December 6, 1912.

¹⁵ HHStA PA XIV/16 Liasse XII/7, Velics to Gołuchowski, dated Cairo, 18 December 1901.

¹⁶ The collaboration remains somewhat cryptic in the scholarship, but it did translate into a unified armed front in the Balkans that led to overthrowing the Hamidian regime in the summer of 1908. See M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257-258.

¹⁷ Duçi was constantly forced to stop publication projects due to the lack of effective writers, something resolved with the recruitment of Noli in 1903. I. Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans*, 205 n. 51.

negotiating the redrawing of boundaries taking place since the 1870s), Athens offered diplomatic patronage to any Tosk willing to play along.¹⁸

For AOCs, the opportunity to exploit this was clear. For example, there is evidence that many seeking to obtain travel documents claimed Greek citizenship by equating their faith as Orthodox Christians to being ethnically Greek. This appears to be the case with Noli, who first needed the right to work in Athens from 1900 to 1903 and then permission to travel to Egypt after his recruitment by Duçi. Traveling under his original name Theophanis Stylianou Mavromatis, Noli secured a position as a Greek language teacher in Alexandria and did not attract the attention of his superiors for being hostile to his assumed Greek identity.¹⁹

The Austrian Consul Velić based in Cairo reported that the Egyptian government grew concerned with this policy of granting Greek nationality to Tosks. The concern was that such liberal distribution of Greek passports to non-Greeks from the Ottoman Balkans helped Athens infiltrate local markets (and labor unions), thereby threatening to divert regional trade (and political loyalties) into “Greek” hands.²⁰ Indeed, this issue became such a central concern that the Cairo-based Albanian newspaper *Toska* published an entire issue on the subject in 1902.²¹ To them (and the Khedive’s government), this constituted a crisis that reflected how successful Greek challenges to Tosk interests had become.

Such a willingness to reach out to interested foreign parties goes a long way toward presenting the varied and often conflicting interests of Egypt’s Tosk communities in a more nuanced manner. The Ottoman state monitored these activities and was frequently surprised by the profile of those who participated in the unity meetings held in enemy territory. For example, the Ottoman embassy in Athens reported that Ismail Qemali (in 1912, one of the “rulers” of several states in Albania) held negotiations with an organization called *Hellenismos* funded by wealthy Tosks and the Greek state.²² This prominent ex-Ottoman governor apparently was

¹⁸ HHStA, PA XIV/28, Albanien XX/3, “Mémoire über Albanien (Ende 1901 bis Anfang 1905),” dated Vienna, 14 April 1905, p. 15.

¹⁹ Metropolitan Fan S. Noli, *Fiftieth Anniversary of the Albanian Orthodox Church in America, 1908-1958* (Boston: AOCA, 1960), 104-108.

²⁰ Isa Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 195 n. 76.

²¹ See *Drita* (Sofia) no. 14, dated 22 July 1902.

²² Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul (hereafter BBA) HR.SYS 128/18, 10070/157, Ottoman Legation to Sublime Porte, dated Athens, 27 June 1902.

prepared to forge “una liga Greco-Albanese” with the enemy as late as 1907.²³

Cairo-based Austro-Hungarian diplomats wanted to give ammunition to the AOC efforts to challenge Ismail Kemal (Qemali)’s dangerous scheme to conjoin the Korçë homeland to a Southern Balkan union that would not only thwart the Ottomans, Russians, Italians, but also the Habsburgs.²⁴ As many observed from the base in Egypt, many AOC organized outside the main circles of influence among the rich landowners who paid for Noli’s life in Egypt, these Albanian-Egyptian migrants appear to have paid lip-service to something akin to ethno-nationalist separatism via union with Greece. Indeed, many journals published in British-occupied Egypt, while short-lived, started to articulate support for “Albanian” political rights in both Egypt and the Balkans.²⁵ But these activities need to be put in this larger context in which the community is actually divided. The fact that Vienna, fundamentally opposed to seeing Greece (or Serbia in the north) monopolize the Balkans, funded so many of those Albanian-language publications today heralded as nationalist separatist projects warrants deeper consideration.

There was an increasingly strong connection Austro-Hungarian consuls maintained with AOC in Egypt, many who were primarily concerned with distinguishing their homelands from Greek claims to “Greater Epirus.” Those recognizing the value of Vienna’s support to ward off expansionist Hellenism making inroads among the poorer labouring Tosk Albanians in Egypt humoured the Austrian-Hungarian authorities. In time, a more intimate collaboration emerged, with key recruits like Dervish Hima specifically sent off to work with Austrians (while also willing to use Italian money) to help protect the larger Adriatic from Greek and/or Serbian expansionism.²⁶ Doing so, however, the multiple trajectories that result pointed to very different objectives

²³ For details of these operations as interpreted in Athens by Italian intelligence, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome (hereafter ASMAE), Serie P Politica, Busta 665, no. 365/108, Consult to Foreign Ministry, dated Athens, 26 April 1907.

²⁴ Many European powers shared Vienna’s concerns. ASMAE, Serie P Politica, Pacco 665, Consular report on “Ligue albanasie” led by colonel Sekos, dated Athens, 21 February 1902 and Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris (hereafter AMAE), NS Turquie, Vol. 12, Comte d’Ormesson report, dated Athens, 16 June 1900.

²⁵ AQSH F.23.D.25.f.5-6, enclosure, 30 June 1900, copy of journal *Bashkimi i Shqiptarëve* published out of Cairo.

²⁶ Hima’s activities were first in Bucharest (a major hub of AOC activity) and then Rome on behalf of both host governments (and at times in conflict). ASMAE SAP Pacco 667, no. 1144/103, consult to MAE, dated Bucharest, 22 May 1902.

among Albanian-Egyptians, objectives that rarely fit under the goal of creating an ecumenical, universal Albanian state.²⁷ A closer look into those who would ultimately mobilize Noli to fight their seemingly contradictory causes will help stress this corrective to the historiography.²⁸

A prominent advocate for first AOC (despite being born a Muslim) and then later Albanian cultural rights more generally was the premier political interloper of the period, Faik Konitca (1875-1942). Based in Brussels since 1896, he was known for managing a close relationship with the Khedive's family (of Albanian-Tosk origin) that helped a select group of Ottoman Tosks living in Egypt.²⁹ Konitca himself would benefit from Egyptian financial support (along with funds from Vienna) for his important bi-lingual newspaper, *Albania*, which he published out of Brussels until 1909.³⁰ Importantly, there is some indication that Konitca's strong connections to Egypt included the same sources of funding that would first recruit Noli from Athens in 1903 and then send him to the US in 1906. The previously mentioned Milo Duçi, for example, actually published the first two issues of his important newspaper *Toska* in Brussels, courtesy of Konitca's established printing operations there.

Visibly eager to position himself as the primary agent for the evolving AOC cause, Konitca enthusiastically reported to Austro-Hungarian authorities about his ambitions to create an intellectual space for "responsible" leaders to collaborate. Unfortunately, officials in Vienna became frustrated that Konitca regularly expressed in his letters an unwillingness to defer to others on major issues. Consequentially, Konitca's Vienna (and Egypt-based AOC) backers quietly reigned him in and tried to promote other, more collaborative members of the Tosk diaspora.³¹

²⁷ AQSH F.19D.32/2.f.278-280, Hima to Temo, dated Rome, 20 March 1903.

²⁸ Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939*, 80-82.

²⁹ For instance, the uncle of the Khedive, Ahmed Fuad Pasha, supported the publishing of Albanian-language journals, both in Arabic and Greek script, throughout Egypt and the larger Mediterranean world. HHStA PA XIV/18 Liasse XII/2, Konitca to Zwiedinek, dated Bruxelles, 5 May 1899.

³⁰ The Italians, competing with the Austrians for influence in the Balkans wrote an extensive report on Konitca's relations with Vienna, including a long discussion on the newspaper *Albania* and how it served its backers well. Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, Serie 3: 1896-1907. Vol. VI. (Roma, 1985), 187. Doc. N. 251, Leoni to MAE Prinetti, dated Roma, 15 marzo 1902.

³¹ HHStA, PA XIV/19, Albanien, XII/2, "Faik Bey's, des Herausgebers der 'Albania,'" Kral to Zwiedinek, dated Scutari, 5 December 1905.

Clearly the intersecting pathways of Noli's mentors do not have a single geographic starting point. As Tosk activism disperses in the late Ottoman era, so too the network of influence that ultimately shapes Noli into a potential leader. Critically, Noli will have to leave Egypt for his true worth to surface. But much would have to happen from the time he arrives penniless in 1903 in Alexandria to the point when he is enthusiastically sent off to the United States in 1906.

At the forefront of his cultivation in Egypt (perhaps already in Athens) was his lifelong mentor, Thanas Tashko (1863-1915). Known as the great actor and patron of the first opera in Fayum, a wealthy suburb of Cairo, Tashko represents the privilege that powerful Tosk-Albanians like him secured in British-occupied Egypt. As their extended families managed massive plantations, talented men like Tashko sharpened their trans-continental political networks by recruiting men like Noli.

In collaboration with a number of luminaries in Ottoman-Albanian culture, Tashko mobilized the printing-press, along with theatre, to, as the French consul in Kosova put it, "beat-up" the Greeks.³² Indeed, through a 1906-1909 publication Noli likely had a brief role in starting named *Shkopi* (the Stick), Tashko and partner Jani Vruho (1863-1931) established a thriving activist community. They spent large sums of money to distribute their newspapers *Shkopi* and *Rrufeja* (Lightening Strike) for free. The tone of the papers were humorous but critical, no doubt drawing on Noli's eventually revealed talents as a writer.

As much as these efforts seem cohesive to a common narrative in the historiography, with a closer look there are deeper complexities to an otherwise straight-forward story of Albanian "nationalist" activities. Unhelpfully, it is simply accepted in much of the scholarship that the newspapers published by organizations throughout the Balkans and larger Europe and West Asia, North Africa (WANA) reflect the dynamism of the Rum Orthodox, Vlach, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Albanian, Arab, and/or Ladino Jewish communities. On the contrary, most peripatetic Ottomans were simply not interested in participating in the kind of politically active groups mentioned in this article.

Indeed, in Romania, Bulgaria, Egypt, or larger Europe, such organizations never enjoyed a membership of more than a few hundred people. The actual distinctions within these "diaspora" groups thus require closer analysis as dispersed, often openly hostile, rival

³² AMAE, Turquie, Vol. VI. Politique Interieure, Albanie, dated, Uskub, Vice-Consul to MAE, 21 May 1907.

communities and not uniformly aligned. For example, a majority of Albanian-Ottoman activists residing in Romania, Bulgaria, and Egypt actually came from the previously mentioned Korçë region in what is today south-eastern Albania. This constitutes a (sub) regional orientation among members of the most active proto-nationalist groups that helps explain why those exile/refugee communities created in such contexts should never be treated as monoliths. In other words, Albanian Ottomans living in exile simply did not coalesce exclusively around “Albanian” associations.

Traditionally assumed “nationalist,” activism associated with bilingual newspapers, textbook publication, and schools actually suggest that in the pre-1908 Ottoman context these social clubs were supporting Ottoman unionist parties first. That is, they advocated for regional autonomy within a strengthened (and reformed, post-Hamidian) Ottoman state. In the particular case of the famous social club *Drita*, based in Bucharest, its leaders often communicated to the larger Ottoman diaspora via *Osmanli*, the publication of the CUP based in Geneva, to highlight their commitment to Ottoman union. To them, without a unified Balkans under Ottoman rule (or some other mega state), battles between rival interests would continuously tear at the seams of society, leaving the otherwise productive (and wealthy) homeland in a state of constant violence and social chaos.³³

Venturing Further Afield

Destinations of Ottoman refugees like British-occupied Egypt as a result became a magnet for talented Ottoman Albanians to settle. Crucially, these areas also become springboards for another wave of migration to the New World, especially Brazil, Argentina, and the United States of America. One of the most famous migrants would be Fan Noli, whose new calling would rapidly translate into an entirely different set of opportunities and life trajectories as he moves to the United States. It is in this period of transition that sees him develop into a major (but not without challenges) representative of first his Egyptian-Tosk, Korçë-born allies and later a new segment of an emerging global Tosk Albanian political network. While the evolution from his departure for Buffalo, New York in early 1906 to his becoming both a major political actor in the Western Balkans and Albanians’ first Archbishop in 1922 is seemingly the necessary follow up to an already interesting life, this last section explores but a limited portion of the story.

³³ Blumi, *Ottoman Refugees*, 71-88.

As much as others have already developed the complicated story of the post-World War I era in Albanian history (indeed volumes are dedicated to Noli's role in the period), his maturation while in the US is still largely neglected. We thus reserve the rest of this article to the task of reading Noli's extraordinary evolution through the increasingly complex relations with others who have invested (and divested) in him. By the time he is established as "representative" of a major diaspora group in Boston in 1911, a role that translates into his failed attempt to return the Balkans and claim a leadership role in the creation of a post-Ottoman state, Noli's personage must be read as both a political "leader" but also a political rival. Be it his own making or not is what we shall determine while ending this study with his formal placement as agent of an expanding Egypt/Romania/Bulgaria faction of the AOCs into the morass of post-Ottoman Balkan (and larger European) politics. It is this AOC network that hoped to utilize their number one North America asset to both lobby the United States and then, in time, hijack the post-war allocation of political (and economic) rights that will take place in Geneva between 1920 and 1922. As such, we must treat Noli as an adversary whose objectives are at once shaped by patrons and the extensive resistance from other Albanians.³⁴

The origins of his conflicted relationship with a transformed AOC community was Noli's confrontation with a rival claimant to its leadership. Noli had already crossed paths with another Korçë native while in Egypt (and perhaps earlier in Athens), Sotir Peçi (1873-1932) who moved to the US in 1905. Settling in Boston and establishing himself immediately as a leader of the small but growing AOC community, Peçi helped create the Patriotic Brotherhood of Dardha (Albanian: *Vëllezëria Patriotike e Dardhës*), while translating the money he brought from Egypt into the weekly newspaper *Kombi* (The Nation). The move constituted a preparation of sorts for Noli's subsequent arrival the next year. Indeed, by the time Noli arrives in Buffalo, an infrastructure is already being laid out for his next stage of cultural development.³⁵ The problem is Peçi had changed since leaving Egypt.

³⁴ Impossible to cover in detail here, the post-Ottoman era constitutes a complex set of competing projects that is explored in Robert C. Austin, *Founding a Balkan state: Albania's Experiment with Democracy, 1920-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

³⁵ Noli is initially sent to join Petro Nini Luarasi (1865-1911) in Upstate New York. An Orthodox priest also from Korçë, Luarsi came to Buffalo in early 1905 to set up a diaspora group called *Malli i Mëmëdheut* (Homeland Calling). Having fled the Balkans under pressure from the Orthodox Church (for establishing Albanian language courses while serving as a priest), he would soon return to the Balkans to help run several presses and eventually teach

Noli quickly abandons his lumber job and small community in Northern New York to join Peçi in Boston and start building a cultural infrastructure that aspired to challenge Hellenistic expansionism in North America. But by July 23, only a month after Peçi gave Noli his first serious activist position as deputy editor of the newspaper *Kombi*, they were already rivals. While the original idea was for Peçi to ease Noli into his designated role in the larger community, the former elected to not pay Noli enough for him to properly live in Boston.³⁶

Finding himself without a formal role because Peçi refused to (or could not) bankroll him, Noli gravitated toward his religious calling. Seeing his faith a tool to do what was originally expected of him, Noli reached out to the larger Orthodox community. By January 6, 1907, Noli is President of a newly created society (*Besa-Besën*) that likely took its lead, and funds, from the Duçi group in Cairo. Considering the challenges he would face from a rival claimant to the leadership of the Boston community, all through the next year Noli had forgotten about marriage and apparently resolved his money problems.³⁷ Indeed, by early 1908 Noli was armed with a considerable new following of AOC supporters.

When Kristaq Dishnica, a member of the AOC was, because of his advocacy of Albanian-language education, denied proper burial in late 1907 by the Hellenist-led Church authorities in Boston, Noli led a confrontation that eventually resulted in a fateful alliance with the Russian Archbishop Platon (Rozhdestvensky). Sharing a common cause against the chauvinism of the Greek bishop in the city, the Russian ordained Noli as priest on March 18, 1908. The challenge to Greek authority over AOC lives initiated a new phase of activism among US-based AOC that eventually created the Albanian Orthodox Autocephalous Church. This rapid change of fortunes projected Noli into an entirely new direction, one that none of his backers envisioned when they sent him to Buffalo, New York two years earlier.

Immediately raising money, Noli and his supporters throughout the AOC diaspora in the US, Balkans and Egypt created an independent

again as the new CUP-run government permitted Albanian-language instruction in late 1908. Greek nationalists would murder him in 1911. Noli, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 100.

³⁶ Noli, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 103. He later confided to Tashko in Egypt that he broke free of Peçi because he was 'too different'. Letter Noli to Tashko, dated Boston, 23 July 1906 in Fan S. Noli, *Topi i Lidhur*. ed. Anton Pashku, (Prishtine: Rilindja, 1977), 176.

³⁷ By 1907 Peçi's *Kombi* had become recognized by Vienna as the most important diaspora newspaper after *Drita* in Sofia.

church with Noli translating liturgy into Albanian. Already by March 22, in fact, he gave his first sermon in Albanian at the Knights of Honor Hall of Boston.³⁸ The society *Besa-Besën* collected enough donations to rent out the establishment and eventually buy it, resulting in it becoming the Saint George Albanian Orthodox Cathedral, now the seat of Albanian Archdiocese of the Orthodox Church in America.³⁹

All the while, Noli starts his studies at Harvard University, leading first to a BA in Fine Arts.⁴⁰ Over the course of this 1908-1912 period of taking classes, translating dozens of liturgies into Albanian, he also maintained and expanded *Besa-Besën*, creating by February of 1909 the still-running *Dielli* (The Sun) newspaper, which he also managed. Oddly, during all of this activity, Noli is at the same time writing Tashko back in Egypt that things are not going that well personally. In May, for example, Noli again declares his intentions of going back to the Balkans but now to help fight the newly established CUP government in Istanbul.⁴¹ In direct contradiction to all that the AOC diaspora had struggled to realize – the successful overthrow of the Hamidian regime – Noli seems lost in the political discourse of the United States. His attempt to reassure Tashko that he intends to ‘service’ his homeland by way of bringing ‘Nietszchean’ values to the Balkans is not reassuring to his patrons in the East Mediterranean. Perhaps a subconscious slip for a lingering political reorientation taking place in his own life, within the time it takes to exchange messages, Noli retracts somewhat and tries to reassure the great landowning patron of the Egyptian opera (and later film industry) that he actually intended to continue his service to the Church by translating two or three more books of liturgy.⁴²

This attempt at reassuring Tashko that Noli was maintaining an active translation schedule, one already started in Egypt, and not veering dangerously towards ideals antithetical to his benefactors’ interests, becomes obvious in the next letter to his deep-pocketed sponsor. Noli wrote that his intentions of returning to fight the new regime in Istanbul would have to wait on account of the debt he had accumulated. No figures are provided but he somewhat shames Tashko by highlighting the fact that the newspaper *Dielli* was so successful because ‘I have paid for it’. Claiming that he has reached his financial end, he requests a ‘loan’ to be paid back with all the older funds his Egyptian patrons sent over

³⁸ Noli, *Fiftieth Anniversary*, 104-108.

³⁹ Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 162-163.

⁴⁰ Austin, *Founding a Balkan State*, 4.

⁴¹ Letter Noli to Tashko, dated Boston 5 May 1909. *Topi i Lidhur*, 189.

⁴² Letter Noli to Tashko, dated Boston 5 May 1909. *Topi i Lidhur*, 190.

the last two years.⁴³ Perhaps in response to what appears from a distance a quick decline in Noli's capabilities, by the autumn, Faik Konitca, with his Brussels mission (and *Albania* newspaper) now terminated, reunites with Noli. As it becomes clear from subsequent measures, Konitca was expected to take over the day-to-day management of the newspaper and also look after Noli.⁴⁴

This fortuitous reunion saves Noli from what seems an inevitable clash with his main supporters in the Eastern Mediterranean. He is allowed to continue with his foundational work as an ordained priest. On more practical matters, however, he would have to work under close supervision as the tandem of Noli and Konitca attempt to build capacity for the next phase of advocacy, necessary as so much has, in the meantime, changed in the homeland. With the 1908/9 coup in the Ottoman Empire translating into growing tensions between rival powers coveting the empire's valuable resources, the heavily invested Austro-Hungarian project of cultivating an Albanian team faces declining returns from Konitca in Brussels. Already facing criticism for Konitca's abusive handling of relations in the larger European context, even he would admit he did not have the full support of key collaborators from among the southern Tosk elites (like those bankrolling Noli). By the time his money ran out in Brussels, he seemed to have no immediate choice but take the offer given to him by Tashko and others to move to Boston and help an overwhelmed Noli with the growing diaspora in the Americas.⁴⁵ The results were immediate.

The AOC diaspora was in disarray at the time. A number of rival groups had emerged since Noli's split with Peçi in 1906. Indeed, Peçi's operations continued to grow while a number of other Albanian-American organizations arose to vie for the leadership role. The turmoil had its consequences, especially in respect to securing manpower and money to secure leverage within the American political system. As it was made clear to Noli when he left Egypt in 1906, the main objective was to successfully organize a community that was emerging in an up-and-coming Atlantic power. The noted divisions, however, not only threatened the larger cause of protecting the homeland, but the leverage Tashko et al. in the Eastern Mediterranean also suffered.

Again, events in Europe and thus the Ottoman Empire were rapidly changing. As evident from the apparent disconnection between Noli,

⁴³ Letter Noli to Tashko, dated Boston 8 August 1909. *Topi i Lidhur*, 191.

⁴⁴ Austin, *Founding a Balkan state*, 12-13.

⁴⁵ Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 156-159.

very much isolated in Boston, and his mentors back 'home', things seemed to be getting out of control. Indeed, by the time the 1911 Ottoman-Italian war is unleashed (with the Albanian coast a prime target), it is becoming increasingly clear that new measures would need to be taken, in the homeland and overseas.

Noli himself bore witness to the rapidly changing dynamics on the ground with a visit to the Balkans, funded in part, he claimed to Tashko in a letter, by his selling his personal library.⁴⁶ No doubt trying to secure more funds from the Egyptian-AOC community, the accounting of his 1911 trip to the Balkans explain travels to Sofia and then onto Romania and even Odessa on the Black Sea. Drawing from this experience, Noli concludes that the homeland faces disaster. Everyone he met was warning that, because of the Italian war, the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Serbs were geared to take all of the homeland.

Space does not permit us to move much beyond this stage of Noli's career, which would take an entirely new set of turns by the time he and Konitca were able to forge in April 28, 1912 an alliance between *Besa* and half a dozen smaller Albanian-American clubs. The resulting creation of the organization *Vatra* (Hearth) would prove too little too late; before they could push the Americans to protect their increasingly exposed and vulnerable homeland from foreign occupation, the Balkan Wars would break, destroying the last of the Ottoman Empire's presence in the region.

The calls Noli and Konitca were making to the Americans for Albanian socio-political self-determination within the Ottoman Empire became pointless. To make matters even more precarious for Noli and Konitca, as the Balkans burned, a new wave of refugees from the homeland shifted the balance of power within the diaspora. Noli's much celebrated "leadership" role started to prove, with closer reading of the archival material, contested.

Conclusion

As when he was in Egypt, the different contexts in the Balkans, larger Europe, and the Americas, all registered differently on who Noli actually was and over whom he had influence. Indeed, for a considerable time after the celebrated 1912 creation of the *Vatra* alliance, Albanians throughout the US and the government grew increasingly alienated with Noli. Even with his delegation to Albania itself in 1913 leading the way, the claims that *Vatra* could bring some order to the now post-Ottoman

⁴⁶ Letter Noli to Tashko, dated Boston 20 July 1911. *Topi i Lidhur*, 192.

homeland, did little to impress the American-based diaspora.⁴⁷ Clearly, by then, the Albanian community had fragmented into independent, and thus competing, networks of movers and shakers.

As events in the Balkans change, so too do the interests, which all reflect new calculations as the Ottoman army fades away and new rulers over the AOC homeland fight it out for ascendancy. In other words, there are competitors to Noli, not only for the limited resources that fund social clubs, but also for the attention of governments. Even the still relatively small Albanian-Orthodox community in Boston/NYC is fragmented by the time the crook Ismail Qemali declares a mini-state in late 1912. Just as many counter-claims to authority would arise in the homeland from 1912 until late in the 1920s, a chaotic state equally reflected in the Albanian-American diaspora.

The most important actors shaping the future possibility of an Albanian existence as a people were those living in the Tosk-Ottoman diaspora that had spread globally by the end of the 19th century. This is not by mistake. To understand why may require further inquiry into the persistence of differential politics among Ottoman peoples throughout the 1800-1922 period. The exposé of Fan Noli's contribution reflected the complex intersecting paths of transition that helped contain the skills of such personalities for important points in their lives. For this, the social and cultural, let alone political economic, context of the geographically scattered locales in which those around activist Ottoman Albanians lived were necessarily the arenas of focus.

Far from the entrenched categories systematically applied to diplomatic principles during the interwar period, progressive politicians and cultural leaders like Noli necessarily meant a dramatic departure from the past. It is this break in Noli's political (and spiritual, cultural) calculations that marks the end to our (anti)biography. In this frame, one that would see how actors around Noli (as much as him personally)

⁴⁷ Representing *Vatra*, Noli goes 'home' for the first time in 1913. As his long assumed mandate to lobby Europeans with the weight of a wealthy diaspora network behind him proved more and more precarious, the delegation left without securing an 'independent' Albanian already occupied by new powers. The community of influential (and now exiled) Tosks accompanying Noli included Dervish Hima, Mark Kakarriqi, Faik Konitca, Stefan Tefë Curani, Masar bej Toptani, and Hilë Mosi. Their almost irrelevant trip "home" reflected a diversion of aspirations and sensibilities that would separate those living in the homeland and those in the relative comfort of exile. Most of the Albanian-lands had by 1913 become occupied killing zones that witnessed either massive expulsions or forced assimilations of those very people the rich AOC claimed to represent. The disjuncture would afflict Albanian politics for generations to come.

departing onto yet more alien trajectories in the post-Ottoman/Habsburg Balkans, reflect another set of contingent associations that equally demand a new look. In this context, however, we begin to finally uproot the interwar era from its variety of conflicted, mutually exclusive narratives that exclude that which preceded 'modern' history, namely the Ottoman period covered throughout.

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Kemalism, Literature and Politics: Turkish Historical Novel in a Comparative Perspective

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Abstract:

Literature is an important component of a community's culture. The relationship between literature and culture is a complex one: literature shapes a given culture and in turn is shaped by it. A literary piece of work is not the solitary production of the writer whose sole incitement is inspiration. Quite the contrary, literature is not neutral vis a vis the cultural and political requirements of its community. In fact culture itself is in no way immune from the surrounding ideology and politics of identity. This work will focus on the books of three famous Turkish writers namely Kemal Tahir (*Devlet Ana, Mother State* 1967), Atilla İlhan (*Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları, Morning Prayers in Istanbul*, 1981) and Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (*Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü, Time Regulation Institute*, 1961) whose historical novels are good examples of the complex relationship between literature, culture and politics of identity formation. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* is an allegorical novel criticizing various aspects of the Kemalist Ideology. The present analysis will mostly concentrate on the "leadership aspect" of Kemalism that Tanpınar implicitly criticizes. The "father complex" he talks about is the most controversial aspect of the Kemalist ideology. Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana*, on the other hand, is no doubt one of the most influential historical-novels of the late-Republican Era. In a sense it exemplifies Tzvetan Todorov's emphasis on how a novel can be more influential than a mere

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history book in propagating a peculiar understanding of history. Kemal Tahir's aim here is to transfer his philosophy of nationalism to the reader via a history novel based on a myth. Atilla İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* is also a historical novel. Similar to Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana*, this novel also constitutes a good example of Todorov's emphasis on literature and history. Similar to *Devlet Ana*, its language and narrative style gives us the impression that the author (or more truly the narrator) does in fact live in those days with these people (there exists a reality effect, the impression of reality, which substitutes truth with fiction). To increase this impression of reality, both authors (Tahir and İlhan) adds some familiar (but somehow obscure, even mystical) figures among the protagonists.

Keywords: Turkish Literature and Politics, Turkish History, Kemalism and Literature, Kemal Tahir, Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, Atilla İlhan

Introduction

The interaction between "art" and "society" has always been a fruitful source of inquiry for scholars and critics. It is a complex and multidimensional subject requiring an interdisciplinary approach in the context of cultural studies, literary theory, sociology and political science. The relationships between "art" and "society" can be multiple and the word "society" can encompass an infinite number of cultural, political and economic elements... It is possible to talk about the *direct* influence of socio-political powers on art such as "censure" or "manipulation for propaganda purposes" as well as the more subtle sociological and political determinants on art coming from this general rubric of "society". This work will primarily focus on "sociology and politics" of literature. The relationship between literature and culture is a complex one: Literature shapes a given culture and in turn is shaped by it. Literature, culture and politics (of identity) are inseparable from each other and they all constitute different circles of the same chain of knowledge. This paper aims at analyzing the major works of three renowned Turkish writers who mostly focused on historical-political subjects and who were, themselves, interested in socio-political matters (Kemal Tahir, for instance, was in prison for years for political reasons). These are Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana (Mother State, 1967)*, Atilla İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayers in Istanbul, 1981)* and Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar's *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü (The Time Regulation Institute, 1962)*. There are certainly other writers such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Peyami Safa or Halide Edip who also reflected various aspects of the Kemalist Cultural Revolution in the 1920s and 30s. During the 1950s and 60s, the works of intellectuals such as Orhan Kemal, Fakir Baykurt or Tarık Buğra advocated social justice for the dispossessed in a

critical tone.¹ But Tahir's, İlhan's and Tanpınar's works are among the best testimonies to the limitations of national and social modernization projects as they were able to link historiography with realism and social criticism. Although focusing on different aspects of the questions of nation building, historical myths and social justice, they also exemplified Tzvetan Todorov's emphasis on how a novel can be more powerful in shaping people's minds than a mere history book, for propagating a peculiar understanding of history.

A Theoretical Overview

The concept of literature constitutes one of the major preoccupations of Edward Said in his famous "Orientalism". He sees literature within the institutions of the Gramscian civil society, which is part of the bourgeois hegemonic order through positive will and consensus (in contrast to coercive political society) and which is often mistakenly seen as ideologically neutral. In Said's case this hegemony amounts to Europe's cultural and political leadership over the East and expressed in the orientalist discourse. For Said, Orientalism broadly meaning an epistemological and ontological difference between the Occident (Europe) and the Orient (East) which culminates in "Eurocentrism" (a Eurocentric production of knowledge which promotes the superiority of the west over the east) is basically part of a power relation with definite, imperialist tendencies in the Orient. In Foucault's spirit, Said states that all knowledge creates power and this strong interest in knowing and dreaming about the East through factual (travels, discoveries) and fictional (novels, myths) media is within this hegemonic system of power. For Said, literature is within these configurations of power because it may easily create a knowledge and a discourse legitimizing the orientalist view. He gives example of Flaubert's account of an Egyptian woman whose representation (by the European man) fits perfectly the orientalist image of an Egyptian woman (shy, submissive, weak, and ready to be possessed).²

Going back to Gramsci, literature is part of this attempted cultural leadership identified as hegemonic which gave orientalism its strength to survive over centuries with its collective notion of Europeans (us) vs. the non-Europeans (them). Some may argue that Europe's imperialist and

¹ For different perspectives on literature and politics see Ömer Türkeş, "Romana Yazılan Tarih". Zeynep Uysal (ed.) *Edebiyatın Omzundaki Melek: Edebiyatın Tarihle İlişkisi Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011). See also Taner Timur, *Osmanlı-Türk Romanında Tarih, Toplum ve Kimlik* (Ankara: İmge Yayınları, 2002).

² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New-York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

colonizing tendencies towards the East is a political one and does not concern humanitarian sciences including literature. But as Said argues, society and literary culture can only be studied together and literature is in no way politically innocent. According to Said, something is political as long as it is close to or within the sources of power and as literature creates some sort of knowledge, builds a certain type of structure, circulates certain motives and images and adopts some kind of narrative, it is within the “power cultural” which indirectly (within the institutions of the civil society) serves the imperialist tendencies of Orientalism.³

For Tzvetan Todorov on the other hand, whose main preoccupation is to reach “universalism”, literature is rather an “instrument”. For Todorov, to reach the universal, one should be aware of its own culture. From the particular and local comes the universal. Literature is an important asset in digging (in Goethe’s terminology) into one’s own culture and in finding what’s universal in there. Culture is not systemic but is made up of fragments, and contacts among cultures can only be enhanced by literature. Gabriel Garcia Marquez for instance in his *One Hundred Years of Loneliness* was rooted so much in the culture of the Carribean but at the same time was really universal as it also made use of literary discoveries of Faulkner and Rabelais.⁴ Goethe was also interested in the contacts of different cultures. Todorov cites that in a letter he wrote, Goethe says: “I have never looked or made a step in a foreign country without the intention of recognizing in its most varied forms what is universally human.” For Todorov—who is a true admirer of the Romantic German writer, Goethe in his universal literature, sought the greatest common product.⁵ The famous German critic Eric Auerbach calls this “universally human” *mimesis*, reflecting the old Aristotelian dictum that poesis lies in combining the human reality with the potentialities of *zoon politikon*⁶.

According to Todorov, there are different levels of “truth”. The production of truth can be either in the form of “truth adequation” and “truth disclosure”. The former concerns the zero-sum ontological opposition between “true” and “false”. The latter is based on the equivocal concept of “more or less”. The truth disclosure is also called the novelist truth. Citing Stendhal and Augé, Todorov supports the view

³ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks* (New-York: International Publishers, 1971).

⁴ Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Loneliness* (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

⁵ Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction To Poetics* (University of Minnesota Press, 1981) 22-39.

⁶ Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

that novel is superior to history books because it goes beyond the factual, and superior to philosophy because it stays within the "specific" and as long as the realist literary tradition is concerned, gives truth with details. In sum, novel is a middle ground between philosophy and history and produces a higher form of truth to understand the society.

Benedict Anderson on the other hand has a quite different conception for literature. He is not interested in the analyses of different cultures and identities through the use of their separate literatures, but rather builds a general theory on how literature served to create a common imagined identity that later gave birth to imagined national identities. For Anderson whose main problem is to build a (somewhat Eurocentric) theory of nationalism, literature makes the cultural artifact of national imagination. The making of the modern nationalism has to do with the concept of "homogeneous empty time" which stresses simultaneous activity of people, in other words the temporal coincidence through clock and calendar, members of the society can thus imagine each other performing some sort of activity at a homogeneous time. This imagination is largely created through novel and newspaper. Authors and readers move together through calendrical time. Anderson here gives examples of Filipino, Albanian and Mexican literature to show how the novel served to the formation of an imagined community. He does not differentiate between Albany, Mexico, and Philippines in terms of their cultural diversities but only gives them as examples to show the visualization of homogeneous empty time in different communities. As said above, literature, in Anderson's analysis, is rather the independent variable which played (as far as Europe, that is the genuine and original dreamer is concerned) an essential role in the process of "print-capitalism", and in the creation of a national (shared) imagination.⁷ In the following pages, the Turkish national identity building through a Kemalist historiography in a literary discourse will be discussed in the novels of a three renowned Turkish writers. It is also possible here to remember the famous hypothesis of Fredric Jameson that, "Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of "national allegory": The story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."⁸ In the case of the newly established Turkish Republic, literature was an important aspect of a "national

⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

⁸ Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in an Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text* (Autumn, 1986), No: 15, 69.

allegory": the Kemalist "modes" of regime construction.

The nature of Kemalism and its ideological and intellectual baggage is a much debated issue⁹. The principles of Kemalism were formed in May 1931, at the 3rd Congress of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP). It was then that the initial points of the program of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk turned into "six arrows" of CHP: republicanism (cumhuriyetçilik), nationalism (milliyetçilik), populism (halkçılık), secularism (laiklik), etatism (devletçilik), revolutionism (inkılapçılık). But of course, Kemalism was much more than the six arrows of the Party. It was basically a progressive ideological movement formed around the "personality cult" of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk¹⁰. It was mostly "progressive" as it was "a large-scale, deliberate attempt to take a whole nation across the frontier from one civilization to another."¹¹ But it also had "autocratic" aspects as recently argued by many prominent scholars.¹² So the literary works, in the forthcoming paragraphs, will focus on some basic aspects of Kemalism both "autocratic" and "progressive". Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana (Mother State)* reproduces mostly the "nationalist" emphasis of Kemalism that stresses the homogeneity of the nation and the autocratic emphasis of the national myths. İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayers in Istanbul)* tries to find the balance between the satirical Eurocentrism of some of the early Kemalist cadres and the socialist and populist tendencies inherent in some of the left-wing Kemalist intellectuals. Tanpınar's seminal work *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü (The Time Regulation Institute)* on the other hand engages in a very important and critical analysis of Kemalism: The cult of personality that is highly responsible for the authoritarian tendencies within the regime and the "father complex" that it carries from its Ottoman past towards its uncertain future.

⁹ For different interpretations of Kemalist Ideology see Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek-Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması (1923-1931)* (İstanbul: Yurt Yayınları, 1981), Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 2002), Besiki, *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası'nın Tüzüğü ve Kürt Sorunu* (Ankara, Belge Yayınları, 1991),

Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey, A Modern History* (Michigan University Press, 1993).

¹⁰ See Taha Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991).

¹¹ Bernard Lewis, "Turkey: Westernization", in Gustave E. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* (University of Chicago Press, 1955) 315.

¹² See Fikret Adanır, "Kemalist Authoritarianism and Fascist Trends in Turkey during the inter-war period" in S.U. Larsen (ed.) *Fascism outside Europe* (New-York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana (Mother State)*

Kemal Tahir (1910 - 1973) was a prominent Turkish novelist and intellectual. He knew about the western culture as he went to Galatasaray High School but dropped it upon the death of his mother. He worked as a journalist and in 1938, he was sentenced to 15 years of prison for political reasons. After his release from prison he became one of the most important intellectuals in Turkey having a wide range of influence upon cultural intelligentsia from filmmakers to novelists. He was a Marxist but also an admirer of the Ottoman past. Following the new debates on Asian Mode of Production (ATÜT) he was also convinced that the Ottoman-Turkish society was different from the West and therefore Turkey's path of ideological development should also be authentic.¹³ His most important novels include *Esir Şehrin İnsanları* (1956), *Devlet Ana* (1967) and *Yorgun Savaşçı* (1965), all in which Tahir uses historical background to support his characters and settings. Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana* (which can be translated as *Mother State*) is no doubt one of the most influential historical-novels of the late-Republican Era. In a sense it exemplifies Tzvetan Todorov's emphasis on how a novel can be more influential than a mere history book in propagating a peculiar understanding of history. It is certainly more entertaining and philosophical than a simple history book. Kemal Tahir's aim here is to transfer his philosophy of nationalism to the reader via a historical novel based on a myth created mostly in the 1930s and revived after the Kemalist Coup d'Etat of 1960.¹⁴ As Anthony Smith puts, myths serve to relate present intentions to future purposes via references to the past.¹⁵ Tahir makes use of the Ottoman dynastic myth to reinforce some of the old clichés used by the Kemalists to crystallize the Kemalist ideology as well as to show his nationalism based on a dichotomy of "east" vs "west". Here the analysis will focus on the presentation of the "other" (the enemy), its implicit contribution to the process of national imagination in an Andersonian sense, the usage of the myth of descent and some aspects of its implications in terms of age, gender and political domination.

Devlet Ana (DA) includes some of the traits that Anne Norton says that the "frontiersmen" possess. Those liminars far from the capital and the center are more equitable and just and they sympathize more easily

¹³ See, Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış 2: Sabahattin Ali'den Yusuf Atılgan'a* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), chapters 7 and 8.

¹⁴ For more information on 1960 Coup d'Etat and Art, see Aslı Daldal, *Art, Politics and Society: Social Realism in Italian and Turkish Cinemas* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

with the underdog.¹⁶ Throughout the novel it is stressed that Osman and his father had a deep tolerance for different religious beliefs and they always have pity for the prisoners of war: "...Zorlu savaş atları besler Ertuğrul Bey...Yüreklidir ve de esir kısmına acır, ünü vardır..."¹⁷ (Ertugrul feeds war horses, he has pity for the captives, he is brave.) They are self-reliant and independent. They have a big capacity for conquest as they are themselves in constant danger of being conquered.

In *Devlet Ana*, Tahir, sets dichotomous distinctions between the "Turkmens", their friends (all together forming the frame of the infant Ottoman State) and their enemies (mostly the Frankish people). There is a sharp distinction between the good (Turkmens) and evil (Frankish people) characters symbolizing the difference between the West and the East. As Norton says the enemies to whom the nation is supposed to oppose should be carefully chosen and there should be a discrimination between enemies and aliens. In DA the real enemy to the tribe of Osman is the Frankish people. This enmity does not have a real material basis in the novel except for the low personality traits attributed to them. Frankish people are greedy, pitiless etc.: "... Frenğin deli kudurganlığıdır bu, hiç bir zaman önleyemediği kan dökme tutkusu..."¹⁸ Their empires are feudal and their lords own the land and whoever lives on their land is their property. This shows in fact the backwardness and the cruelty of the western dynasties vis a vis the infant Ottomans. In that picture Byzantium has a peculiar place which is shown as originally part of this Frankish Empire but later "forced" by the customs of Anatolia to change some of its "evil" institutions: "...İstanbul'un Bizansı Frenkin karanlık dünyasından kopup geldi. Ama oranın kölelik düzenini burada tutturamadı. Tutturamayınca da "toprak Allah'ın, İmparator kahya, köylü kiracı" demek zorunda kaldı. Frenkin düzeni köylüyü köle etmeye dayanır.... İşte bu yüzden say ki Frenk adamı kuduz canavarıdır. Kahpedir, kıyıcıdır, dini imanı soymaktır... Bizans köylüsü kabul etmez bu rezilliği..."¹⁹ (The Frankish order is based on slavery. The Frankish people are like ravaged dogs. But the Byzantine peasants will not accept it. So they had to rent the land to the peasants...) The "wickedness" of the Frankish people is symbolized in the person of Notüs Gladys. He is the enemy, evil and cruel. Apart from him, there are other "bad" characters whose common point is their being non-Ottomans (religion is less important than the tribal affinities). In DA, the bad is also physically

¹⁶ Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988).

¹⁷ Kemal Tahir, *Devlet Ana*, (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1967) 41.

¹⁸ Ibid, 77.

¹⁹ Ibid, 177.

ugly. Therefore we have as the basic "bad" characters a fat Mongolian Çudaroğlu (...gövdesi kısa tombuldu...erimiş yağla doldurulmuş tulumu benziyordu., p. 241), an animal like Frankish Notüs Gladys (kısa, tıkız, hayvani), horse-faced Turkopol Uranha (uzun at suratlı, kafası omuzları inanılmayacak kadar sivri, çekik kirpiksiz gözlü... p. 59) and Pervane whose ethnic affiliation is unclear. On the other hand the "good" characters are depicted as physically very beautiful. Osman Bey, Orhan Bey, Kerim, Mavro and their female counterparts (Balkız, Lotüs, Aslihan...) were all sharing common positive physical characteristics reinforcing the contrasting positive image vis a vis the West (Frankish people) created in the novel.

As far as the image and imagination is concerned Tahir's book aim at helping in a sense to build the image of a Turkish society whose existence is continuous in time. In Anderson's words Tahir "imagines" and makes the readers "imagine" the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through time. Although the events occur seven centuries ago, and most probably the customs of living and the mode of apprehending the world were very different in the world of the 1200's, Tahir uses modern concepts of time and space to create the sense of continuity in time. What Anderson calls homogeneous empty time and temporal coincidence between the communities, exist in DA. For example a calendrical time is specified (1290) in the novel. This time elapses normally (meaning according to the norms and understandings of the modern era) which reinforces the aforementioned idea of continuity over time. Besides, although in the culture of the so-called nomadic Turkish community everything was visual and oral, Tahir depicts us a society where the chains of communication are so well established that the Andersonian concept of common imagination within the society is made possible. The image of the fellow-members of the communion lives in the minds of each member of the society. Let's take as an example the concept of "ORTAK", a chain of trade and communication. In DA this "ORTAK" anachronically makes possible all kinds of exchange of information: "...Osman Bey yarı deli görünüşüyle bu sıksa Moğol'un Kıbrıs'a haber salıp ne idüğü belirsiz bu iki serserinin kimliğini bütün girdisiyle çıktısıyla 15 günde öğrenmesini kısılandı. Bu, her yerde ORTAK diye anılan ticaret kumpanyasının korkunç gücünden ileri geliyordu....Bu kumpanya bütün Endonezya'dan Cermanya'ya, Seylan'dan Afrika'nın göbeğine, Kanarya adalarından Moskova prensliğine.... kadar uzanıyordu...."²⁰ (The ORTAK was a trade network

²⁰ Ibid, 150.

ranging from Indonesia to Moscow which made the information spread very quickly). In fact, Tahir imposes to the reader a contemporary view of the world. There are some other rather funny anachronisms that Tahir uses such as his usage of the modern Greek expressions (Panaya Mu Lotüsaki)²¹ in the world of 1200s. He helps to imagine the lives of the older Turks for the present reader through using a peculiar narrative style (resembling the Oguz Turkish), and reanimating the well known Ottoman dynastic myth so as to assure the sense of continuity over time and also to reinforce some stereotypical concepts of the Turkish thesis of history²².

The Ottoman Dynastic myth is widely used in DA. Tahir makes heavy use of what is known as the official account of the foundations of dynasty and empire. This account is mainly created upon the works of historians such as Aşıkpaşazade, Ahmedi and Neşri. Ertuğrul is depicted as the heir to Seljuks and although explicit use of this myth of descent is carefully avoided in the book, we learn that the land of Söğüt was a gift to Ertuğrul Bey, and his tribe thus possessed the inheritance of Seljuks (in conformity with Fuat Köprülü's thesis of history²³). The dream motif is also present in DA. Since in popular tales God can speak directly to man through dreams, it is natural to find the dream motif playing a part in the legends surrounding Osman and his father. Edebali's famous dream which he interpreted as meaning that God had given rulership to Osman and his line is reproduced in the novel this time also including Yunus Emre. The genealogical myth that Ottomans physically descend from Oğuz also takes part within the novel. Therefore we can appropriately say that the two basic features of Ottoman dynastic myth namely the concept of physical descent from Oğuz Khan, and spiritual descent from God through dreams are heavily used by Tahir with nonetheless more emphasis on the secular sides of them. For instance, as far as the Gazi order is concerned Tahir omits the concept of Holy War and stresses the idea of voluntary means of acquiring livelihood: "Talan etmeyeceğiz! Din yaymağa çalışmayacağız! Tersine herkesin inancına saygılı olacağız! İnsanlar arasında din, soy, varlık bakımından hiçbir üstünlük tanımayacağız...."²⁴ (No plundering, no forcing of people for a specific religion but respect for everyone's beliefs....)

²¹ In English "My Dear Lady Lotus".

²² For a detailed analysis of "Turkish Thesis of History", see Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih* (İletişim Yayınları, 2015).

²³ See Fuat Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınevi, 2000).

²⁴ *Ibid*, 178.

Devlet Ana gives us abundant material for analysis in terms of age, gender and political identity. Although *Devlet Ana* is a very entertaining novel and it is very meaningful in terms of the peculiar understanding of history it conveys so delicately, Tahir fails to legitimize its anti-Westernism as he falls prey to the usage of some western gender and age stereotypes. First of all, Tahir has a very stereotypical (even ironical) conception of gender. He uses common clichés to physically describe women and men. The general patriarchal idea that women are men's possession and that they need men's protection is widely reproduced in the novel: "...Ağlamanın hiç yararı yok....Babamın öğüdüdür, kız kısmı istemediği bir herif edepsizlendi mi babasına, yoksa ağasına o da yoksa erkek hısımlarına açacak.... Orhan Bey, Lotüs'ü tutup kabaca çektir kollarına aldı, sağ koluyla sımsıkı sardı. Kız, bulanık, anaforu akıntıda büsbütün korkmuş, hafif bir çığlıkla göğsüne sığınmıştı, tüğ gibi hafifti yumuşacıktı. Orhan Bey keyiflendi..."²⁵ (No use for crying. A woman should talk to her father or brother when an unpleasant man annoys her....Orhan held Lotus very tightly, she was soft and fragile. Orhan enjoyed that.) The age difference between a woman and a man is not so important when it comes to marriage as: "Türkmende erkeğin yaşı yıllla ölçülmez, yiğitlikle ölçülür. Bizde sakat makat olmayan erkeğin delikanlılığı kırkında başlar. Hele babam gibi güçlü yiğit yakışıklı oldu mu...."²⁶ (For the Turkmens, a man's age is measured through his bravery. A man's good years start at his forty, especially when he is handsome and brave like my father...)

It is possible to argue that Tahir does not reflect his own conception of gender but rather he tries to visualize the ways gender identity was apprehended in the early Ottomans. In DA there is also a homology between sexual and political dominance. Similar to Ashis Nandy's account of how sexual stereotypes were related to political domination in colonial and post-colonial India, we can detect some features of "virility" in the political domination of the early Ottoman period according to Tahir. The criteria of masculinity in the novel are aggression, achievement, control, power, courage, self-confidence and patience. These are necessary attributes to dominate politically in a border region where warfare is much more common than peace and, in a culture, where "erkek kısmının değeri akıl ve de yürek ve de bilektir" (a man's worth is measured by his mind, heart and muscle). As for the women who have some control over the community (i.e. Bacıbey) these are more manlike and aggressive than their male counterparts: "...Osman Bey

²⁵ Ibid, 144.

²⁶ Ibid, 408.

anası yerindeki Bacıbey tutup elini öpseydi ne bu kadar şaşırır ne de duygulanırdı. Bu selamda doğruca yüreğe dokunan, erkekçe güven vardı..."²⁷ Bacıbey whose son is killed by Notüs Gladys sheds no tears behind her son as he had a love affair with a non-muslim woman but preaches revenge before everyone else. In DA where there is an implicit praise to the bravery and warriorsip of the Turkmens, asceticism, intellectuality are second order. Although at the end of the novel Kerimcan finishes by returning to his "dervish order" and reads Nizamülmülk's *Siyasetname*, his courage and ability as a warrior is put before his "asceticism" not only in the eyes of his tribesmen but also in the eyes of the readers... As far as age is concerned, it is again appropriate to use some of Ashis Nandy's categories. Nandy tells us how in the minds of the colonizers-though they are not fully aware of that- the colonized is akin to a child whose growing up depends on the colonizers. The so-called "white man's burden" to bring civilization to the lands of primitive people is homologous to this dichotomy between childhood and adulthood. In other words, there is a homology between childhood and the state of being colonized or primitive. Thus, being a child, or being childlike is synonymous in a sense with being dominated. The same dichotomy also exists along gender roles and colonial discourse as aptly analyzed by Ella Shoat on filmic representation in the Western cinema and the rise of colonial age.²⁸ Thus, the idea of fully socialized male adulthood symbolizes the perfect human being.²⁹ We see a similar logic in DA. Although most of the protagonists in the novel are quite young (Orhan Bey is only 13 years old), there are in fact no children or more truly childish behaviour in the novel. They all act as grownups and it seems as if they had no childhood at all. This serves in the novel to show that Turks have never been primitive or backward and thus they never deserved to be politically dominated. The delegitimization of both femininity and childhood in the political domain serves to reinforce this idea.

²⁷ Ibid, 426.

²⁸ Ella Shoat, "Gender and Culture of Empire: Towards a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema", *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, (1991) No: 13, 45-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509209109361370>.

²⁹ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

Atilla İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* (Morning Prayers in Istanbul)

Atilla İlhan (1925-2005) was a Turkish poet, writer and journalist. He was an admirer of Nazım Hikmet and during his studies at Istanbul Faculty of Law, he learned French and he went to Paris to take part in supporting Nazım Hikmet. He also started to learn about Marxist philosophy. In the coming years, he became influential in the cinema circles (Yeşilçam) as well as within the literary elite, and wrote many scripts. Like Kemal Tahir he aimed at combining Socialism and Kemalism trying to find an authentic path of development for Turkey. His famous novel *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları*³⁰ (DSE) is also a historical novel. Similar to Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana*, this novel also constitutes a good example of Todorov's emphasis on how an "assertive" literary piece of work can be as influential as a mere history book in propagating a certain understanding of history and politics. Similar to *Devlet Ana*, its language and narrative style gives us the impression that the author(or more truly the narrator) does in fact live in those days with these people (there exists a reality effect, the impression of reality, which substitutes truth with fiction). The protagonists live through historical events; they are either witnessing or actively participating in these events. They make history and the reader who identifies her/himself with the protagonists feels as if s/he also takes part in the making of that history. To increase this impression of reality, both authors (Tahir and İlhan) adds some familiar (but somehow obscure, even mystical) figures among the protagonists. Yunus Emre who appeared as a "clairvoyant" dervish in DA is similar to Osman Nevres in DSE who uses the nickname of Hasan Tahsin. In addition to all these familiarization and identification mechanisms Atilla İlhan inserts some "real" newspaper articles within the chapters which reinforce his thesis of history and which "guide" the reader throughout the story.

But what is the nature of this thesis (or more truly, "peculiar" understanding) of history and politics developed by Atilla İlhan? İlhan devoted considerable volumes to put forth his understanding of "modernization". In *Hangi Batı* (*Which West*, 2001), he emphasized that the Turkish Evolution should develop along the lines of modern civilization not western diplomacy. In that respect İlhan despised both the imitators of the West which humiliated their past and glorified western civilization and those "socialists" whose theories merely reflect

³⁰ Dersaadet refers to Istanbul. It means happy and rich city. So the novel can be translated as "Morning Prayers in Istanbul".

the dogmas of some philosophers and some standards previously determined. İlhan asserts that in both cases there is no national salvation, no authenticity, but only imitation; in fact Eurocentrism. Thus, he glorifies Mustafa Kemal who fought against the imperialist West. İlhan reformulates Mustafa Kemal's assertion "Biz bize benzeriz" (We are all alike) as "Biz bize benzemeliyiz" (We should be all alike).³¹

In *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* (DSE) we observe the same dilemma experienced by the Turkish bourgeois intelligentsia who assumed the responsibility to save the Empire from disintegration in the first quarter of the century. There are two trends, in fact two orientations among those elites: Either towards France or Germany. The French oriented bourgeoisie is symbolized mainly in the person of "Bacaksız" (legless) Abdi Bey and his "entourage" composed of the Jewish "Mizrahi" family, his various love affairs including Roza and Rachel Mizrahi, Gülistan Satvet and the *jeunes-turcs* who formed "Union and Progress". Throughout the novel we see that Abdi Bey who becomes the deputy of Salonika in the second "Meclis-i Mebusan" (Grand Assembly) represents the general *jeune-turc* liberal mentality (mostly the French-English oriented wing of it) and his fate is parallel to that of the "Union and Progress" which lost power after the First World War. Abdi Bey and his entourage's pro-French worldviews exemplify a kind of orientalism directed towards their own society (also showing their own colonized minds) reinforced by the power politics of their era.

In Edward Said's account, Britain and France dominated the world orientalist system and the idea that the European identity was a superior one in comparison with non-European nations. This Eurocentric belief is reinforced with the rhetoric about "the white man's burden". Throughout DSE we see examples of this Eurocentric worldview: "...L'*Humanité* Türkiye'yi parçalamak istediklerini tebarüz ettirip, şöyle devam etmektedir: "Sosyalist dostlarımız, Balkanlardaki Cumhuriyet Federasyonu yanında, Anadolu'da bir Rum-Türk Federasyonunun teşkilini öneriyorlar."³² (Our Socialist friends propose the formation of a Turkish-Greek federation in Anatolia). Here we see the Jacobin and paternalistic attitude of the French socialists who know what is good for the Turkish society. Another interesting example may be found in the depiction by Abdi Bey of a Chinese woman living in Paris. Although the French or western educated Turkish women are described generally as being very beautiful, charming and seducing, this unique Chinese

³¹ Atilla İlhan, *Hangi Batı* (İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2001).

³² Atilla İlhan, *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* (Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2010) 113.

woman (although she lives in Paris just like the other female figures) is quite different. "Abdi Bey, Armande'in omuzu üzerinden, Madam Nhung'un suratını görebiliyor: Kaplan üçgeni bir surat, sarı esmer bir ten, bıçağın ucuyla çizilivermişe benzer iki çekik göz. Bakışları sahiden kızılıntrak mı; sanki kan sızıntısı, insanın aklına önüne geleni tırmalamaya hazır bir Siyam kedisini getirmektedir. Sizi temin ederim mon cher, eğer iblis kadına tebdil olsaydı, filhakika böyle bir siması olurdu..."³³(The Chinese woman is depicted as satanic because of her reddish eyes, triangular face and dark yellow skin).

In line with this Eurocentrism, we see in DSE a strong "xenophilic" attitude on the parts of the Turkish bourgeois intelligentsia. According to Todorov, "xenophilia" has to do with an inferiority complex; whereby a culture is perceived as wholly superior. Todorov also calls this attitude "malinchismo" which means an inferiority complex vis a vis another culture.³⁴ In that process, "the self is in a way erased, it is assimilated by the other". "Bacaksız" Abdi Bey is in many ways a xenophilic (especially towards the British culture), a cosmopolitan similar to his "comrades": "...İngiliz taraftarlığı kuvvetlendirilmeli, vakit geçirilmeksizin bütün memlekete teşmil edilmelidir. Bizim için çare-yi halas, İngiliz idaresi altına girmektir..."³⁵ (We should be ruled by the British). Abdi Bey, his friends and lovers generally speak a mixed language among each other. It is half Turkish and half French. So we normally see sentences such as "Bonsoir ma chere, au revoir mon bey". This inferiority complex comes from their "şarklı" (oriental) background. "Şarklılık" is synonymous with "primitiveness" (which in fact leads to colonization as in India). Therefore Abdi Bey accords at most importance to "asrılık" (to be modern). (...birlikte, dedi, Osmanlı taşrasının tahammül fersa hayatını yaşamayacağız. Bunu bilhassa tebarüz ettirmek arzusundayım. Vaziyet tavazzuh etsin ihtimal Paris'e yerleşiriz. Her veçile asri bir kadın olmanız, şayan-ı temennidir. Dişlerinin arasından Fransızca tekrarlıyor: une femme tout a fait moderne"..."³⁶ (We will settle in Paris, not live in the Ottoman villages, and I want you to become a totally modern woman).

Another concept related to Eurocentrism and xenophilia is colonization. Eventhough Turkey has never been fully colonized as in the case of Far East and Africa, it came quite close to it (semi-colonization),

³³ Ibid, 137.

³⁴ See Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*.

³⁵ Ibid, 91.

³⁶ Ibid, 198.

and more important than that, there occurred a colonization in the minds of people or in other words some people's minds were already colonized by the imperialist western cultures and norms before an actual colonization took place. Those people were the western educated petty bourgeoisie represented in the person of Abdi Bey. In his *Intimate Enemy*, Ashis Nandy explains how the culture of colonialism manages to perpetuate itself by inducing the colonized to accept new social norms and cognitive categories. In that way, many concepts with which anti-colonial movements work with are borrowed from the imperialist culture itself.³⁷ In DSE we often see the sensitivity of the "ittihatçı" (unionist) to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire against the English and Russian imperialisms. Against the Reval conference between English and Russians where the "sick man of Europe" was finally divided in principle, all the members of the "Union and Progress" worked unanimously to reopen the Assembly. Nevertheless it was also well known that they had a pro-British tendency: "...Her tonda liberal olan jöntürkler, Almanya'nın, Sultan Hamit rejiminin coşkulu bir destekleyicisi olduğuna inanıyorlardı. Bu yüzden Alman nüfuzunu yeni rejim için tehlike gördüler. Jöntürklerin liberalizmi için başından beri Anglomania belirtileri gösteriyordu. Hürriyet, parlamento, halk hükümeti ve ülkesi olarak İngiltere övülüyordu..."³⁸ (The British parliamentary system was praised as part of the young Turks' liberalism and Anglomania...)

Union and Progress and its liberal pro-western ideology was criticized and satirized by İlhan in the person of Abdi Bey. Other than having a colonized mind, Abdi Bey was also physically ugly; he was very short (eciş bücüş, cüce gibi bir şey), lacking sensitivity, and having perverse sexual impulses. His patriotism was in fact a "pseudo-patriotism" which was limited by imitating the West (especially France), and by political pragmatism. Abdi Bey was also against the workers' movements. In 1908 he was in charge of controlling and suppressing a general strike organized in Saloniki: "...Biz kendimizi vatanı istihlasa vakfettik mon cher, bu amele tayfasıyla mı uğraşacağız..."³⁹ (We are busy saving the country, we have no time for the workers!) Abdi Bey's lack of sensitivity was contrasted to his wife Neveser (Frau Abdi) a *müteverrim*, educated this time in the German manner. Their misfit is exemplified in many cases: For instance, when they are with their lovers, Abdi Bey with

³⁷ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford University Press, 1989).

³⁸ İlhan, 145.

³⁹ Ibid, 136.

Rachel remembers a Bulgarian folk song: “Tuna’da ırpar bezini/ hayda more/ kim sevmez bulgar kızını... (Who wouldn’t love a Bulgarian girl?..) Whereas Neveser with her lover Munif Sabri recalls a poem by Tefvik Fikret: “sen olmasan, seni bir lahza gormesem yahud, bilir misin ne olur? Sen olmasan, seni bulmak hayali olsa muhal yaşıar mıyım dersin?.. (Do you think I could live without you?..)

The Second western orientation in the novel is the German orientation symbolized by Abdi Bey’s wife’s family. Neveser, educated with “schwester” Magda, “tante” Ulrike had a “pro-german father” “Alamancı” Ziya Bey. He admires Germans and works in “the Deuthche Levant Line”. As Bismarck defeated France who lacked the German discipline and loyalty (like Abdi Bey who spends most of his time with “femmes legeres”), Ziya Bey supports the German influence and protection in the Empire. Germans give more importance to industrialization (an idea also stressed by İlhan elsewhere) which increases his admiration. Abdi Bey hates his father in law: “...Herif bir nevi Alman mon cher! Alman ırkının trrl mazarratını nefsinde cemetmiş...”⁴⁰ (The man is almost a German! He shows all the weird traits of the German race.) The German orientation within the Union and Progress is symbolized with militarism, hard work and discipline. What Germany did in Prussia is generally appreciated and it is often stressed that the coup d’état of 1908 was in fact realized by the pro-Germans in the army. Contrary to passive pro-French and English officers those Germanophilic officers are men of action. But their activities don’t bring real freedom to the country: “...İttihat ve Terakkı’de daha nceleri n planda yer alan Paris’li ve Londra’lı jontrkler saf dıŐı edildiler... Artık ynetici duruma jontrklerin askeri nderleri gemiŐti ...Bunların oĐu Prusya tr eĐitim gormŐ Mahmut Őevket PaŐa, Enver Bey trnden kiŐilerdi. Prusya kafasıyla yetiŐtirilmiŐ bu kiŐiler, devrimci anti emperyalist bir halk hareketinin baŐında egemenlik haklarına sahip smrge baĐlarından kurtulmuŐ bir Trk Devleti uĐruna verilecek kavgayı ynetecek yerde, lkelerini yeniden Alman emperyalizmine baĐımlı kıldılar.”⁴¹ (The ruling elites of the young Turks such as Enver and Mahmut Őevket had Prussian type of education. So instead of fighting for the anti-imperialist popular resistance for an independent Turkey, they made us dependent upon Germany.)

A different type of western and German orientation is found in the person of Ahmet Ziya, Neveser’s brother, educated in Berlin. He is a

⁴⁰ Ibid, 212.

⁴¹ Ibid, 172.

socialist and together with his friends (Meleho Avram and Beşir Usta) they try to form a branch of the socialist party in Turkey. They often shout joyfully "Proletarier aller Lander, vereinigt euch!" They see the liberation of the country in the internationalist workers movement. (It is in line with Anne Norton's views that where the workers are actually fewer in number they become signs for their countries' salvation). The identification of nation and worker, and the worker as the mythic representative of the nation, are dependent on the absence of a real working class. Also worker's movement indicates the transcendence of national boundaries, and a communal identification of the nation with others sharing "a world historical position".⁴² This communal identity is observed during the big Salonika strike where "hilekar rumlar, geveze yahudiler, tahta sakallı priştine arnavutlar, mütehammil türkler, hoyrat sırpırlar, ele avuca sığmaz bulgar komitacıları", Greek, Jewish, Albanian, Bulgarian, Serbian workers all come together. Nevertheless in line with İlhan's rejection of Eurocentric solutions to national question, İlhan (the narrator) despise the socialist doctor Meleho Avram who is depicted as egoistic and pedant.

So where lies the solution? The solution is within the national struggle. A struggle which is authentic to the Turkish nation symbolized by Mustafa Kemal. In DSE the person of Mustafa Kemal and the national solution is represented by Munif Sabri who had no foreign education in either France or Germany. He is (accidentally) blond just like Mustafa Kemal, and proudly says that he has complete trust in Mustafa Kemal Pasha. In Istanbul where only the "ezans" (prayers) show the "Turkishness" of the city, Munif Sabri is depicted as the true lover, true fighter and the real courageous one: The altruistic who dies for his country. And this is the culminating point in İlhan's thesis that western civilization through blood and violence cannot elevate the Turkish nation.

⁴² Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1988).

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar and *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (*The Time Regulation Institute*)

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901 - 1962) was one of the most important modern novelists and essayists of the Turkish literature. He was also a member of the Turkish parliament (the Grand National Assembly of Turkey) between 1942 and 1946. He was influenced from Yahya Kemal and Ahmed Haşim's poetry. He was also an admirer of Paul Valery and Marcel Proust. Contrary to Tahir and İlhan, he was not a Marxist and did not aim at combining Kemalism and Socialism which made him more critical of Kemalist ideology. In his first influential novel *Huzur* (*A Mind at Peace*), he was already projecting the historical traumas experienced at the onset of the Republic that became psychological traumas in his middle class characters.⁴³ Tanpınar's *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (SAE) which was translated into English by Maureen Freely as *The Time Regulation Institute* is also an allegorical novel criticizing various aspects of the Kemalist Ideology. The analysis below will mainly concentrate on the "leadership aspect" of Kemalism that Tanpınar implicitly criticizes. The "father complex" he talks about is the most controversial aspect of the Kemalist ideology. The analysis firstly will concentrate on the main character of the novel Hayri İrdal in whose person the Turkish intellectual society is criticized.

The most important character (who is also the narrator) in the novel is Hayri İrdal. He is not a real character in fact, or in other words he does not have a clear cut personality. He lives in a dream-like world and parallel to this he has a "shadowy" existence. He is not real, not unified. He is part of the schizophrenic society which tries to reconcile contradictory, mostly irreconcilable trends. Hayri İrdal in many respects represents the Turkish society that doesn't know where it belongs, to the West or to the East, to the past or to the future. This schizophrenia and fragmentation of personality as well as the wish to escape the world of the real and live in a world of illusions and "doxas" (in the platonic sense) is apparent in the novel.

Hayri İrdal is a passive individual and he has a serious "father complex" and cannot impose his own will to the people and events that surround him. He is a foreigner, a liminal, a spectator: "Hayatımı düşündükçe daima kendimde seyirci haletiruhiyesi hakim olduğumu gördüm. Başkalarının halini, tavırlarını görmek, onlar üzerinde

⁴³ For a historical analysis of Tanpınar's novels, see for example, Jale Parla (ed.) *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Başkalaşım* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015).

düşünmek bana kendi vaziyetimi daima unutturdu.”⁴⁴ (When I think of my life, I see that I have always been a spectator. Seeing others’ attitudes, thinking about them made me forget about my own condition.)

As he himself is unable to impose his own will upon the others and challenge the world of the real, others’ wills are generally imposed upon him and he is easily manipulated. His lack of self-confidence, maturity and inner strength lead him to seek father figures (or leaders in a more sociological perspective) that will tell him what he should do: “....Ben yıllarca bu adamların arasında, onların rüyaları içerisinde yaşadım. Zaman zaman onların kılıklarına girdim, mizaçlarını benimsedim. Hiç farkında olmadan bazan Nuri Efendi, bazan Lutfullah, veya Abdiisselam Bey oldum. Onlar benim örneklerim, farkında olmadan yüzümde bulduğum maskelerimdi...”⁴⁵ (I lived among these men, within their dreams for years. They were my examples, my masks...) Hayri İrdal is a prototypical figure of the many intellectuals of the pre-republican era. A popular coffeehouse (*kahve*) that he visits frequently in Şehzadebaşı tells us allegorically that the Turkish intellectuals of the post-tanzimat Era are alienated, lonely, displaced just like Hayri Bey. In this *kahve* there are three classes or rather strata of people akin to those of the society: "Nizamı-alemciler" the aristocratic intellectuals that aim at changing the world, "Eşefili şark" the masses, and "Şiş Taifesi" the uncivilized vulgar people. We can see from this allegory that the "Şehzadebaşı Kahvesi" in fact represents the Turkish society and Hayri İrdal is a common member of that society. Hayri Bey together with other people in this *kahve* represents for Tanpınar the society in search of a father figure that can give them a coherent and unitary identity.

This search for a father figure is an important component of the Ottoman- Turkish society. As Weber puts it the patrimonial tradition of the Ottoman society, the idea of "hisba" which sees the sultan as the father and protector of the whole Ottoman society forms the basis for this endless search for fatherlike leaders.⁴⁶ Nevertheless Tanpınar’s peculiar use of this "father complex" is more significant than that. It is related to the personality cult formed in the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk which forms the basis of Kemalist ideology. As Taha Parla says, the Kemalist regime is based upon a personality cult of Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1962) 56.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴⁶ Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Univ. of California Press, 1978).

⁴⁷ Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmî Kaynakları* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991) 176.

Many aspects of this cult making around a charismatic (in the Weberian sense) leader is present as part of the general ironic criticisms in SAE. Hayri İrdal (representing, a prototypical alienated semi-intellectual) who is always in search of fatherlike figures is part of this cult-making in the person of Halit Ayarç (representing allegorically Mustafa Kemal): "Bu eserin gördüğü rağbeti enstitümüzün kurucusu, aziz velinimetim, büyük dostum, beni hiçten bugünkü şahsiyetime eriştiren yüksek meziyetlerine borçluyum.. Zaten hayatımda iyi güzel ne varsa hepsi o büyük adamındır..."⁴⁸ (The attention and interest shown to our Institute is totally indebted to the work of our founder, my dear friend, the person who took me from zero and brought to these days. In any case, whatever is good and successful in my life is thanks to him...) This part is especially parallel to the famous statement made by one of his officers to Atatürk: "What is Zero? That is me, compared to you, my Pasha!"⁴⁹

This search for father figure (Atacılık sendromu-fatherhood syndrome- as Taha Parla says) is typical for Turkish society and as Dr Ramiz's diagnosis shows it is not peculiar to the pre- Kemalist Turkish society (represented in the person of Halit Ayarç): "...Bakın etrafa hep maziden şikayet ediyoruz, hepimiz onunla meşgulüz. Onu içinden değiştirmek istiyoruz. Bunun manası nedir? Bir baba kompleksi değil mi? Şu Etilere, Frikyalılar'a bilmem ne kavimlerine muhabbetimiz nedir? Baba kompleksinden başka birşey mi?"⁵⁰ (Look around you, everyone is complaining about the past. What does that mean? Isn't it a father complex? What is this exaggerated interest for the past cultures and peoples? Nothing but father complex!) As Dr. Ramiz says Halil İrdal has remained a child, he couldn't become an adult. This represents the lack of maturity and self-governing power in the society. As Ashis Nandy says childhood is akin to the primitive stage of manhood and requires guidance.⁵¹ This is the paradox of the Turkish society highly perpetuated during and after the Kemalist Era in the personality cult of Mustafa Kemal: "This is the paradox of the Charismatic leadership: as the leader is exaggerated the individuals as well as the society gets more and more powerless and childlike."⁵² Halil İrdal is guided and manipulated by Halit Ayarç and his love and hate relationship with the latter (just like a child towards his father) is often emphasized: "Ne garipti, hepimiz Halit Ayarç'nun elinde bir kukla gibiydik. O bizi istediği noktaya getiriyor ve

⁴⁸ Tanpınar, 10.

⁴⁹ Parla, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün...*

⁵⁰ Ibid, 15.

⁵¹ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy...*

⁵² Parla, 177.

orada bırakıyordu. Ve biz o zaman, sanki evvelden rolümüzü ezberlemiş gibi oynuyorduk. İçimde ona karşı hiddet, kin, isyan ve hayranlık birbirine karışıyordu."⁵³ (It was so weird. We were all puppets at the hands of Halit Ayarlı.... I had mixed feelings of hatred, revolt and admiration towards him...)

Another aspect of this search for father figure inherent in the society is the "group psychology". As far as SAE is concerned the concept of group psychology will be used in two related ways. First of all, we will deal with the Freudian concept of the group psychology (elaborated in *The Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*) which relates the coherence and unity of a group to its fatherlike leader. In an all-encompassing ideology like Kemalism (represented in SAE in the bureaucratic working of SAE) the idea of a homogeneous group (here of course group refers to the whole community which embraces this ideology) the mechanism of the Freudian group psychology does in fact exist. Tracing its roots back to *Totem and Taboo*, Freud says that in all coherent and unified groupings there exists an identification with the community's leader.⁵⁴ This identification is apparent in SAE as all the members of the SAE work in harmony with the wishes of Halit Ayarlı and the childish admiration of Halil İrdal to his "velinimet" (beloved one).

Nevertheless, this mechanism of group membership (in the novel taking part in the huge bureaucracy of SAE) turns negative as members of a group act like automats leaving all their conscience and logic aside. In SAE, the major requisite of the newly formed bureaucracy is people that will work like automats, the so-called "plak-insan": "Yani bir nevi otomatizm...Asrımızın asıl büyük zaafı ve kudreti. İçten içe hazırlanan aydınlık ve düzenli yeni Ortaçağın temeli ve belkemiği. Haklısınız Hayri Bey...Hayri Bey siz bir dahisiniz. Öyle bir şeyi buldunuz ki.. Tam çalar saat gibi konuşup susacak insanlar. Değil mi? Plak insan...Harika!"⁵⁵ This shows in the novel in a Kafkaesk manner, how the Kemalist bureaucracy in the allegorical foundation of SAE aims at creating uniform and mindless people cut from their past (mazi) and mere imitators of their leader (or the leading cadre).

The second concept of group psychology that will be used relating

⁵³ Tanpınar, 266.

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Group Psychology and The Analysis of The Ego* (London: Empire Books, 2011).

⁵⁵ Tanpınar, 206.

to SAE is that of Erich Fromm. Nevertheless, Fromm's concept of group psychology is more politicized and in fact he uses it as a socio-political concept to explain the birth of "Nazism". In *Escape from Freedom* Fromm says that one of the basic needs of human beings is to be related to the world outside from them, and to avoid loneliness. Says Fromm: "A human being may be physically lonely but at least he can be related to sociological norms that gives him the feeling of belonging to somewhere, to some values or ideas. If he loses these norms he finds himself in an unbearable loneliness and isolation."⁵⁶ This loneliness and isolation is the psychological situation of most Turkish-intellectuals in the pre-Kemalist era in SAE. The liminality of the intellectuals of "Şehzadebaşı Coffeehouse", their immobility, weariness exemplifies this situation: "Yavaş yavaş bu hayata ben de alıştım. Ne kadar hafif ve rahattı. Uysal kalabalık başta kendisi olmak üzere insana herşeyi unutturuyordu. İşimden çıkar çıkmaz bir soluk oraya uğruyor, daha ilk adımda sanki bir başkası oluyor, günlük üzüntülerden uzak yalnız şakadan bir aleme giriyordum..."⁵⁷ (Slowly I got used to this life. The docile crowd would make everyone forget about everything. I was going there after work, and lose myself in an unreal but pleasant atmosphere...)

The whole life story of Hayri İrdal does in fact tell us his search for avoiding his ultimate isolation, alienation. Fromm says that in such depressive situations, to avoid isolation and loneliness people may advocate the most despotic, even totalitarian regimes. They wish to melt within this crowd where spirits are united for one "ultimate" goal in the person of their leader. Critical of unmediated Kemalism, Tanpınar's view is similar to Fromm's views of totalitarianism. Kemalism (as we understand from the mottos of SAE) looks too bureaucratic and despotic. First of all the real meaning of SAE is in fact controlling and regulating not watches but "human beings": "...Saatin kendisi mekan, yürüyüşü zaman, ayarı insandır...Bu da gösterir ki zaman ve mekan insanla mevcuttur!... Ayarsız saat bu halim selim adamı çileden çıkarırdı. Meşrutiyetten sonra bilhassa şehir saatleri çoğalınca ayarsız saat göreceğim korkusuyla muvakkithaneden çıkmaz olmuştu..."⁵⁸. (A clock is a space, it walks with time, and regulated by men. An unregulated clock would make this calm man crazy. He would not leave his office with the fear of seeing an unregulated clock...) The strong emphasis put on work and working (in a regulated and coherent manner) also have some totalitarian associations. Moreover, as said above, Kemalism is

⁵⁶ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New-York: Henry Holt and Co, 1994) 118.

⁵⁷ Tanpınar, 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 31.

closely related to the personality cult created around the charismatic leadership of Mustafa Kemal. In fact, the protagonists in SAE all joyfully accept to work in SAE (meaning becoming part of the Kemalist cadres) under the guidance of Halit Ayarçı as their liminality and isolation turn unbearable. Even if they turn into puppets or develop authoritarian personality traits they remain within this ideology which gives them some sort of shelter (and in the case of SAE some material gain as well) and normally do not question their adherence to these absurd ideologies. Although in the end of SAE, Halil İrdal paradoxically begins to question his puppet position and starts to quest for "absolute truth", he cannot quit SAE. The "outside" world is more frightening for him, for such a "little child"(the Turkish society in fact) unable to solve any problems by himself.

Conclusion

The political potentialities of a "historical" novel is often superior to history books because it goes beyond the factual and can nevertheless stay within the "specific". As Todorov argued, novel is a middle ground between philosophy and history and produces a higher form of truth to understand the society. The present work focused on three historical novels that were highly related to politics and historiography of the early and late Kemalist Era. Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana (Mother State 1967)* is a novel based on a specific myth of foundation parallel to the Turkish thesis of History developed in the 1930s and mostly revived after the 1960 Coup d'Etat. Tahir makes use of some political notions of age, gender and political domination to crystallize the Kemalist nationalism based on a dichotomy of "east" vs "west". The same criticism of westernism is also apparent in Atilla İlhan's novel *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayers in Istanbul, 1981)*. Critical of Eurocentrism, be in the form of socialism or liberalism, İlhan argues that it is important to develop a *sui generis* path to modernization. "Kemalist nationalism" combined with positivism is critical in finding this authentic path to modernization as described through the typical characters of the novel: Abdi Bey, Ahmed Ziya and Munif Sabri. Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar's *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü (Time Regulation Institute, 1961)* on the other hand, is one of the rare examples of a critical approach directed towards some aspects of Kemalist "nation building". Focusing especially on the "cult of personality" and the "father complex", Tanpınar aptly shows, in the persona of Hayri İrdal, the *Kafkaesque* crisis of the national myth and the reasons for the unavoidable decline of this myth.

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Theoretical Approaches to the Black Sea Region: 'Is the Wider Black Sea Area a Region?'

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Abstract:

The paper aims to shed light on how a region may be built out of the Black Sea area. Therefore, the paper asks, first, whether the Black Sea area is a region or a region-to-be. If neither, then how to transform the Black Sea area into a region through the context of 'new regionalism' and the relevant theories. First, it delves into defining what it means to be a 'region' in the context of 'new regionalism'. Then, three different theories, i.e. neo-functionalism, neo-liberal institutionalism and constructivism, are unravelled to lay the foundation for the main query of the paper – 'is the Wider Black Sea area a region'. Constructivism provides fertile ground for the most appropriate premises for constructing a region around the Black Sea in relation to new regionalism. Accordingly, the paper discovers the perils and opportunities lying ahead of any initiative to construct a region out of the Black Sea area. The paper offers that the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) acts as an anchor of the Wider Black Sea area and a catalyst for a new understanding of

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regionalism which is capable of taking root and thriving in the Black Sea area.

Keywords: Neo-functionalism, Neo-liberal institutionalism, Constructivism, BSEC, WBSA

Introduction¹

Human life has thrived and flourished in the Black Sea area for thousands of years. By building villages, cities, kingdoms and nation states, most of the times, people have learnt to cohabit and coexist over time. While the limit for humankind has always been the sky, academics ground this brand-new way of cohabitation for human society in 'new regionalism'. Regions are ontologically not out there in the world. On the contrary, 'region' is an idea to which ascribed meaning by humankind. It is a socially constructed phenomenon. People defined it in a certain manner, and it represents a particular meaning in our minds. 'New regionalism' derives from this definition of 'region'. It emphasises 'interaction' and 'cooperation' over 'institution'. This nascent definition of regionalism serves as one of the two means to answer the paper's research question which is whether the Black Sea is a region or a region-to-be; if neither, how to build a region in the Black Sea area through the context of 'new regionalism' and the relevant theories. By using theories, namely neo-functionalism, neo-liberal institutionalism and constructivism, the other means is achieved. The motivation for utilising these three theories is based on their compatibility to regionalism and regional interdependence. Whereas they are theoretically competent to question 'new regionalism' initiatives, some of the theories are practically incompetent to question the new regionalism in the Black Sea area. The combination of 'new regionalism' and one of the theories, i.e. constructivism, depicts how to construct a region out of the Black Sea area.

The Black Sea area is of particular interest because of its location and components. For instance, it is comprised of a great power, Russia; EU member states, Bulgaria and Romania; NATO member states, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the post-Soviet states, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. With a variety of interests and actors involved, the Black Sea area provides a dynamic opportunity to analyse the theoretical process of building a region. Further, the Black Sea is also a nexus of several regions

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers for their invaluable feedback on earlier draft of the paper. I also wish to extend thanks to Tara Cravens for her diligent proofreading of the paper.

such as the Caucasus, Europe, the Balkans and Eurasia. Therefore, the area is of particular interest because, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea area may serve as a peace multiplier in its vicinity.

Literature Review

The essay scrutinises the extant literature through the perspective of new regionalism, while applying the unique theories of neo-functionalism, neo-liberal institutionalism and constructivism. The paper can be divided into two main parts even though it is comprised of five distinctive components. These two main body parts are separated into a philosophical thinking section and a material thinking section.

In the philosophical section, the theoretical knowledge combined with several academics' works on regionalism is supported by Fawn's² insights on what makes a region regarding geography, identity, actors etc. Also, Väyrynen's³ article is a valuable contribution for making a comparison between 'old' and 'new' regionalism. Ethier⁴ and Mittelman⁵ provide further elaboration on characteristics of new regionalism. Furthermore, two of Hettne's extensive and pioneering works, namely "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism"⁶ and "The New Regionalism Revisited,"⁷ thoroughly affected the author's comprehension of regionalism. Besides, Söderbaum's⁸ introduction to his edited book 'Introduction: Theories of Regionalism' paved the way for this paper to provide a better expression

² Rick Fawn, "Regions' and Their Study: Wherefrom, What for and Where to?" *Review of International Studies*, vol. 35, no. S1 (2009): 5. doi:10.1017/s0260210509008419.

³ Raimo Väyrynen, "Regionalism: Old and New," *International Studies Review*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2003): 25–51. doi:10.1111/1521-9488.501002.

⁴ Wilfred Ethier, "The New Regionalism," *The Economic Journal*, vol. 108, no. 449 (1998): 1149–1161.

⁵ James H. Mittelman, "Rethinking The "New Regionalism" in the Context of Globalization," *Global Governance*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1996): 189–213.

⁶ Björn Hettne, "Beyond the 'New' Regionalism," *New Political Economy*, vol. 10, no. 4 (2006): 543–571. doi:10.1080/13563460500344484.

⁷ Björn Hettne, "The New Regionalism Revisited," in *Theories of New Regionalism*. eds. Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy M. Shaw, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 22–42.

⁸ Fredrik Söderbaum, "Introduction: Theories of New Regionalism," in *Theories of New Regionalism*. eds. Fredrik Söderbaum and Timothy M. Shaw, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–20.

of regionalism. The works of Gochhayat,⁹ Rumelili¹⁰ and Söderbaum¹¹ have allowed for an expansion of theoretical understanding.

The second integral part of the paper analyses to what extent the Black Sea area is a region and where the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) stands in this equation. For instance, Stefan Troebst¹² makes use of the concept of “meso-region” to make sense of the Black Sea Region. First of all, it should be emphasised that the book edited by Hamilton and Mangott¹³ provided a great inspiration to the creation process of this paper. Hajizada and Marciacq’s¹⁴ paper, together with Ciuta’s “Parting the Black Sea (Region): Geopolitics, Institutionalisation and the Reconfiguration of European Security”¹⁵ and “Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region,”¹⁶ present the issues of security, economic cooperation, political disputes and environmental degradation. Through a coherent perspective, the authors highlight the challenges lying ahead of the Black Sea area if the states in the Black Sea area are interested in building a region out of their neighbourhood, in addition to the BSEC, if it’s intention is to be the epicentre of initiatives for regionalism. For further detailed information, the works of Secrieru¹⁷, Manoli¹⁸ and Celac¹⁹ have been extremely helpful

⁹ Artatrana Gochhayat, “Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism: A Theoretical Framework with Special Reference to India,” *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2014): 10–26. doi:10.5897/ajpsir2013.0611.

¹⁰ Bahar Rumelili, “Bölgeselcilik ve İnşacılık: Kazanımlar ve Vaatler”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, vol. 12, no. 46 (2015) 169-185.

¹¹ Fredrik Söderbaum, “Theories of Regionalism”, in *Routledge Handbook of Asian Regionalism*. eds. Mark Beeson and Richard Stubbs (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge 2012), 11-21.

¹² Stefan Troebst, “The Black Sea as Historical Meso-Region: Concepts in Cultural Studies and the Social Sciences,” *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies*, no. 2 (2019): 11-29.

¹³ Daniel S. Hamilton, and Gerhard Mangott, *The Wider Black Sea Region in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2008).

¹⁴ Mukhtar Hajizada and Florent Marciacq, “New Regionalism in Europe’s Black Sea Region: the EU, BSEC and Changing Practices of Regionalism,” *East European Politics* vol. 29, no. 3 (2013): 305–327. doi:10.1080/21599165.2013.807800.

¹⁵ Felix Ciuta, “Parting the Black Sea (Region): Geopolitics, Institutionalisation and the Reconfiguration of European Security,” *European Security* vol. 16, no. 1 (2007): 51–78. doi:10.1080/09662830701442402.

¹⁶ Felix Ciuta, “Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region,” *Geopolitics* vol. 13, no. 1 (2008): 120–147. doi:10.1080/14650040701783367.

¹⁷ Stanislav Secrieru, “Protracted Conflicts in the Eastern Neighborhood: Between Averting Wars and Building Trust,” *Centre for International and European Studies* vol. 6 (2013): 1-13.

¹⁸ Panagiota Manoli, “Black Sea Regionalism in Perspective,” *Centre for International and European Studies* vol. 2 (2011): 1-8.

¹⁹ Sergiu Celac, “The Role and Potential of Tte Organization ff the BSEC,” *Centre for International and European Studies* vol. 1 (2017): 1-7.

at understanding what the BSEC stands for in the Black Sea area, its capabilities, and what the member states may achieve if they commit themselves to the BSEC for constructing a cohesive region.

1. Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective

There has been an ongoing debate over the definition of 'region' and the sub-terms emanating from it since the 1960s and 1970s. However, these debates have not spawned a collectively revered definition of 'what a region is.' Yet, there is a consensus on 'how to define a region' which actually articulates no strict boundaries. Indeed, there is no blueprint for 'what a region is', but the widely accepted argument is that defining a region begs for varying degrees of queries which have no particular boundaries. What the paper places a high value on is regional harmony and similarities or cohesiveness – political, economic, social, military – of states located within the given territorial limits. In other words, the characteristics a region should have are (a) geography; (b) regularity and intensity of connections; (c) shared region-wide perceptions; (d) agency.²⁰

There is no middle ground over 'what a region is'. Whether it implies a spatial proximity²¹ or it is a non-spatial phenomenon implying interdependence²² or cultural similarities etc. Several academics from various disciplines, e.g. geography, political science and international relations (hereafter, IR), have uttered assumptions over the query. Geographers focus on the geographical aspect of the term whereas political scientists regard regions as particular areas within states. Also, IR scholars are interested in supra-national regions and coherence in such territorial spaces. There are also cross-border regions and definitions of regionalism centred on economic relationships. Indeed, regions are one of the most significant foundations of scholarly works concerned with the world we live in and gaining insights into world politics. Yet, what this paper considers as a region is a territorial space comprised of economic, military, political and cultural linkages.

²⁰ Rodrigo Tavares, "The State of the Art of Regionalism, the Past, Present and Future of a Discipline," UNU-CRIS Working Papers (United Nations University, October, 2004).

²¹ Andrew Hurrell, "Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective," in *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*. eds. Louise Fawcett (New York: Oxford UP, 1995a): 58-66.

²² Joseph S. Nye, "Patterns and Catalysts in Regional Integration," *International Organization* vol. 19, no. 04 (1965): 870., doi:10.1017/s0020818300012649.

The efforts for defining a region refer to a land with people on that land. The width of this land and how many people are located there are irrelevant. The number of states on this land is also irrelevant. Therefore, any geographical place on earth is a potential region. However, such a definition does lack of scholarly perspective so that no scholarly definition would be built on this ambiguous definition. Frankly, what we are in knowledge of is that regions are not 'there' but in our imaginations and minds. It is a product of human intellect. It is a product of people talking and contemplating on such an entity.

Outdated interpretations of state-centric definitions of 'region' are questioned and replaced by a new understanding of 'region' taking into account economic linkages, cultural resemblances and transnational connections.²³ Regions frequently and partially overlap or they completely involve one another. For instance, Eastern Europe is full of post-Soviet states that are, an integral part of Europe, which is, simultaneously, a region and a continent. Describing the borders of any region, in accordance with new regionalism, is a challenge because, 'region' is a definition in flux.²⁴ New regionalism acknowledges that geography matters. However, it exceeds the limits of spatial reasoning and takes into account the socially constructed characteristics of a region which are fraught with abstract notions such as identity and culture.²⁵ It emphasises that the regional collaboration and coexistence which is in flux assume divergent meanings in time and in compliance with the ever-changing interests and identities of the relevant actors in a region.²⁶ Indeed, new regionalism pays close attention to the nascent perspective concerning transnational relations and scrutinises current trans-border mutual relations.²⁷

There are five divergent definitions of 'regionness' which are geographic, sociological, and the ones based on institutionalisation, regionalisation and supranational identity.²⁸ The first one concerning geography delineates the terrestrial space and the limits of a particular land. The second one regarding the sociological definition of 'region' depicts the social features of the inhabitants residing in a certain region.

²³ Vayrynen, "Regionalism: Old and New"

²⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of regionalism: Björn Hettne, 'Beyond the 'New' Regionalism', *New Political Economy*, 10/4 (Aug. 2006).

²⁵ Zoleka, V. Ndayi, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness by Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum," *Politikon* vol. 33, no. 1 (2006): 113-124. doi:10.1080/02589340600618180.

²⁶ R. Guy Emerson, "An Art of the Region: Towards a Politics of Regionness," *New Political Economy* vol. 19, no. 4 (2013): 559-577. doi:10.1080/13563467.2013.829434.

²⁷ Mittelman, "Rethinking The "New Regionalism" in the Context of Globalization"

²⁸ Ndayi, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness by Bjorn Hettne and Fredrik Soderbaum"

The third level describes what makes a land a proper region is political, societal, economic and military collaboration level of the actors in an area whereas the fourth portrays the harmony and cohesion of a civil society pervading all the region. The fifth one pays attention to the unique identity and legitimacy of a region.

Contentious theory-based interpretations regarding regionalism have been made for a long time. Regions inherently ever-changing notions as a change of mind is a fundamental feature of humans. People keep learning through their lives by experiences, and their reasoning behind their understanding of 'what a region is' changes shape over time. Therefore, what we considered as a region decades ago may become something else in upcoming years because of the fact that people who ascribe meaning to such notions are in a constant philosophical progress. A region is a living organism because people in it are in a constant state of philosophical flux. The peculiarity of a region depends on its characteristics such as geographical and economic. Hence, the ambiguous contemporary definition of 'what a region is' is a challenge for the students of IR who are on a quest for defining a particular territorial space as a region.

2. Theories for the Wider Black Sea Area

Many theories were spawned within IR in order to comprehend and articulate regionalism. Some authors have even endeavoured to sort out these theories. One of these ventures belongs to Hurrell²⁹ who divided these theories into three components, namely systemic approaches, regional and interdependence theories and domestic level theories. The regionalism and interdependence theories, which is the second cluster of theories of Hurrell, is considered as appropriate since its primary focal point is the linkages among the states in the region. Then, the regionalism and interdependence theories are categorised into three sections which are Neo-functionalism, Neo-liberal institutionalism and Constructivism.

Neo-functionalism

Neo-functionalists posit that intense interdependence has the capacity for bringing about region-wide political integration. In this context, supranational institutions occupy a considerable place. Such institutions are regarded as the remedy of common issues due to the 'spill-

²⁹ Hurrell, "Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective"

over effect.³⁰ The very presence of such institutions alters the meaning of collective identity in a region.

There are two spill-over effects, namely functional and political spill-over.³¹ The former implies that cooperation in an area should compel these states to extend the area of cooperation. The latter refers to a self-propelled process being initiated by the advent of supranational institutions.

According to Hurrell,³² neo-functionalism has little to say about regionalism, especially new regionalism due to three reasons which are (a) its focus is more on institutions than the dynamics that make regionalism possible (b) new regionalism is not interested in anything except for the mutual interaction among states whereas neo-functionalism has high expectations for the weakening importance of states and (c) new regionalism does not imply strong institutional structure whereas neo-functionalism regards institutions as essential for a stable and deep-rooted regional coherence.

Neo-liberal Institutionalism

Neo-liberal institutionalism primarily focuses on international cooperation, and the latest resurrection of regionalism is plausibly explained by neo-liberal institutionalism.³³³⁴ Neo-liberal Institutionalists believe high levels of interdependence cause international cooperation. Institutionalists argue that low transaction costs increase cooperation and interaction on a regional basis. Moreover, neo-liberal institutionalism considers 'state' as a rational actor which may be encouraged to cooperate. So, 'absolute gain' is a must for the neo-liberal institutionalist perspective. It is also posited that regional institutions thwart 'cheating' and deliver 'transparency'.³⁵ Therefore, the neo-liberal institutionalist logic, like neo-functionalists, assumes that the advent of regional institutions is spawned

³⁰ Andrew Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics," *Review of International Studies* vol. 21, no. 04 (1995b) 331. doi:10.1017/s0260210500117954.

³¹ Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics"

³² Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics"

³³ For further readings: Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1989); Keohane, *Power and Interdependence* (Boston: Longman, 2012); Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984).

³⁴ Gochhayat, "Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism: A Theoretical Framework with Special Reference to India"

³⁵ Hurrell, "Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective"

by the benefits of collaboration.³⁶ Neo-liberal institutionalists understand the importance of local interest groups over the substitution of regional institutions to the state. Hence, these institutions manage to survive to the extent that they keep to settle disputes and solve problems.

All in all, institutionalists assume that a monolithic region would be probable if there was a bottom-up collaboration leading a myriad of low-level cooperation to form an intense network so that grand cooperation becomes reality.

Constructivism

Constructivism is not a theory of regionalism, old or new. Yet, its content is promising for understanding regions and regionalism. Constructivism is interested in identities and interests of actors. Constructivism posits that not only material forces but also ideas and cognitive forces are imperative to make sense of world order.³⁷ Cognitive elements ascribe meaning to material forces which, only then, acquire causality. Also, actors attribute meaning to material objects through the medium of shared knowledge.³⁸ Therefore, constructivism bids fair for shedding light on new regionalism perspective.

As 'regional awareness' and 'regional identity' imply constructivist roots, Constructivism scrutinises 'what a region is' by coining terms such as 'cognitive regionalism' and 'cognitive interdependence.'³⁹ Various terms referring to shared regional features, such as collective identity, reciprocal commitment and a sense of community, emanate from the very same source as Constructivism. Additionally, the emergence of such a community depends on common societal values.

Constructivism takes into account reasoning, ideas and normative elements rather than overemphasising material factors. Constructivism

³⁶ Gochhayat, "Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism: A Theoretical Framework with Special Reference to India"

³⁷ For further information: Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1999); Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *Making Sense, Making Worlds: Constructivism in Social Theory and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2012); Friedrich Kratochwil, *The Puzzles of Politics: Inquiries into the Genesis and Transformation of International Relations* (Miltonpark, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010).

³⁸ Cladua M. Fabbri, "The Constructive Promise and Regional Integration: An Answer to 'Old' and 'New' Puzzles. The South American Case," CSGR Working Paper (University of Warwick, November, 2005).

³⁹ Hurrell, "Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics"

urges the students of IR to comprehend that identities and interests are socially constructed. Indeed, states are not given but constructed by ever-changing interactions.

3. From a Sea to Conquer to a Region to Construct

The Black Sea which is surrounded by littoral states, namely Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, the Russian Federation and Georgia, constitutes an area with densely inhabited coastal cities, ample natural resources and two straits, Bosphorus and Dardanelles, tying it to the rest of the world.⁴⁰

In the context of geopolitical position of the Black Sea area, the Black Sea is an open sea with rivers, Don, Volga, Danube, connecting it to adjacent territorial spaces. It also resides at the locus of Europe, Asia and Mediterranean. Therefore, the Black Sea area has been at the centre of military campaigns and commerce since the first Greek colonies in the Black Sea area.⁴¹ This long history of the Black Sea area which is fraught with wars and commerce refers to various cultures and cosmopolitan entities. The Black Sea area has been a place, for a number of countries, either waging war or for using diplomacy with other countries for a long time.

During the Cold War era the 'iron curtain' separated the Western countries and their 'partners' from Soviet Russia and its allies. Historically a deep interaction existed among the countries or kingdoms in the Wider Black Sea area (WBSA). The WBSA is comprised of multiple countries including Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine. However, cultural, linguistic, religious sectarian or ideological differences created rifts started with the Cold War division.^{42,43}

An area, comprised of two countries – Tzarist Russia and Ottomans – fought with each other more than for one hundred years and other components which were either 'orbits' of one of their neighbours or a part of their neighbour's territories, is not proper for building a full-fledged

⁴⁰ For further information: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Black-Sea>.

⁴¹ Also see: <https://www.ancient.eu/ionia/>.

⁴² Mukhtar and Marciacq, "New Regionalism in Europe's Black Sea Region: the EU, BSEC and Changing Practices of Regionalism"

⁴³ Even though Albania and Armenia may be thought as 'long shot' for being integral parts of the area, their presence does not hurt the aim of this paper.

region out of it. Also, an area full of countries with diverse levels of democracy and economic strength does not provide a proper zone for region-wide cooperation and coexistence. In addition to these, the harmony of the countries in a region in terms of foreign policy is a must if there is a region to be established. For example, there is a reconciliation between Russia and Turkey stemming from an aversion to the US, and it is in contradiction with Ukrainian and Georgian sentiments regarding the US.

There are incentives, which encourage the countries of an area on to construct a region, for region-wide collaboration. Some of these incentives are conservation of natural resources, region-wide commerce, regional infrastructure investments and tourism.⁴⁴ Yet, the WBSA hosts ongoing and frozen conflicts which consist of, at least, a country located in the WBSA.⁴⁵ Moreover, there are other impediments to regional coexistence such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and Black Sea Synergy (BSS) as the embodiment of EU's interest in the WBSA together with any NATO involvement in any official event.

There are incentives for and hindrances to a region to be built in the WBSA. Even though countries located in the WBSA are far away from being ready to commit themselves to a region-building process, these countries concede that cooperation on various topics such as commerce and environment is in their own interest.

The security challenges for regional cooperation deserve special attention since they prevent the WBSA to become a full-fledged region. There are divergent security threats to the WBSA, which are the most drastic impediment to regionalism in the area. There are a number of conflicts, including Crimea, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, which are protracted, frozen or ongoing. There are also closed borders, Turkey and Armenia, organized crime, migration, terrorism, etc. All these examples beg for a certain query which is "why is the WBSA fraught with enmity and antagonism?" Even though the incompetence of the political elites in the WBSA is an essential shortcoming, it alone would not have

⁴⁴ For further information and more: Charles King, "The Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century", *In the Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (NW, Massachusetts Ave.: Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS, 2008).

⁴⁵ For further information: Anna Matveeva, "Conflicts in the Wider Black Sea Area", *In the Wider Black Sea Region in the Twenty-First Century: Strategic, Economic and Energy Perspectives* (NW, Massachusetts Ave.: Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS, 2008).

such a regional and long-standing impact. To begin with, these newly-independent nation states have just discovered their ethnic and national roots, which affected regional consciousness negatively. Also, geopolitical importance of the WBSA for the great powers has converted the area into a hotspot for the great powers' competition, especially a zone suitable for power projection. Furthermore, the WBSA has not been recognised, treated and considered as a region since the last few years. As the most relevant and prominent actors, neither the EU nor NATO had any policy strengthening the coherence of the WBSA area. On the contrary, the EU and NATO policies were counterproductive in terms of supporting any regional initiative to enable regionalism to thrive in the WBSA. It is clearly observed, up to now, that contemporary WBSA is susceptible to Russian aggression. These revisionist policies of Russia are not only the reason but also an outcome of Russia's neighbouring countries' willingness to engage or maintain close ties with the EU. All in all, there will be no regional coherence or regionalism if the security challenges are not tackled.

4. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) - A Locus for a Region-to-be?

There are several cooperation attempts which do not comprise of all the Black Sea area within the WBSA. These cooperation initiatives, which have been inadequate until now, indicate that coexistence is an imperative for the survival of sovereign states and is a well-comprehended phenomenon in the WBSA. There were several attempts for collaboration such as the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) and trilateral cooperation, a sub regionalism attempt in the South Caucasus, among Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan. Yet, such ventures were insufficient to stimulate a collective consciousness among their members or participants. For instance, GUAM, consisting of Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova, does not have the resilience to stand against Russia, and these countries' collective capacity is not sufficient to nourish regionalism attempts among these states. Besides, the Turkish-Azerbaijani-Georgian trilateralism is fraught with examples of cooperation such as transportation networks, energy routes or joint military drills. Yet, their aim is not creating a cohesive habitat for their collaboration efforts. Georgia is a country longing for the EU's approval. The EU has already granted visa liberalisation for Georgia striking a decisive blow against sub regional cohesion among these states. Whereas Turkey's policies are at odds with the EU on many issues, Azerbaijan has never had close and warm relations with the EU. Indeed, all these countries have different political agendas. What brings together these actors is the Other, meaning

Russia. Indeed, all these initiatives are established to thwart Russia's incursions into her neighbourhood, in one way or another. The BSEC is a home-grown, inclusive, region-wide organisation comprising of all the countries in the WBSA including Russia. Therefore, these countries have an external impetus for having closer relations with each other, but indigenous driving force leads them to divergent paths. Additionally, both of these initiatives are sub regional attempts for cooperation and collaboration which does not imply a full-fledged region-wide cohesive initiative. Indeed, even though these attempts for cooperation among a few states reveal the stimulus to regionalism efforts, the quantity and quality of such ventures are not deemed sufficient for pondering over theoretical debates regarding regionalism.

The section focuses on the WBSA with its immense habitat for cooperation in terms of economy, politics, military, social and so on. The attempts for a cohesive WBSA are in stalemate for two distinctive reasons. Firstly, economic linkages among the states in the WBSA are underdeveloped. Even though the weak economic conditions of each of these countries beg for regional cooperation, there is neither integration nor policy coordination on a regional basis. Secondly, the security challenges these countries face undermine constructive and fruitful regionalist ventures. Such security issues should be addressed and found a proper solution as it is underlined above.

There are various countries with diverse political, economic and cultural roots in the WBSA.⁴⁶ Yet, these countries also have common ground, such as natural resources, to cooperate. Moreover, there are vulnerabilities of these countries which should lead these states to amity rather than enmity. The mere presence of BSEC should serve as a means to reach out such a regional cohesion among these states. However, there are still many things to do in order to achieve the aforementioned goal.

The establishment of BSEC is the first concrete initiative in terms of regionalism in the WBSA.⁴⁷ The BSEC is established as a centre for providing roundtable discussions and meetings to the states in the WBSA.

⁴⁶ For further information and more: Panagotia Manoli, 'Black Sea Regionalism in Perspective', *Center for International and European Studies*, (Dec. 2011); Sergiu Celac, 'The Role and the Potential of the Organisation of the BSEC', *Center for International and European Studies*, (Nov. 2011).

⁴⁷ Mukhtar and Marciacq, "New Regionalism in Europe's Black Sea Region: the EU, BSEC and Changing Practices of Regionalism"

It rendered a top-down support for regional cohesion possible.⁴⁸ Thanks to the creation of BSEC, there is a solid start for regional interstate interaction in the WBSA.

The BSEC has succeeded in intensifying the regional web of interactions. While, the private sector's interaction is feeble, their commercial success may be the only way for building a region out of the WBSA. Therefore, the states of the WBSA should encourage private companies by giving incentives to strengthen their region-wide interstate commercial relations. Transcending borders by commerce and investing into other states in the region engender a proper environment for putting an end to frozen and ongoing conflicts throughout the WBSA. Such commercial relations put pressure on warring parties and force them to make peace for the sake of a cohesive region.

All the aforementioned necessary moves beg for an intergovernmental regional organisation to oversee such procedures. As such an organisation, the BSEC has proved itself by surviving in a chaotic environment which is fraught with conflicts, economic crises, disarray and revolutionary sentiment for twenty years. Yet, the BSEC is not an impeccable organisation and regionalism does not need an organisation to vigorously thrive and flourish. Still, it is tangible and evident that BSEC is an integral part of any attempt for a cohesive region in the WBSA.

Insights into the Regionalism Attempts in the WBSA

All the hindrances to regionalism in the WBSA are put aside, there are several means for realising regional cooperation.

There are several small size states, a few middle size states and a great power in the WBSA. They are not able to export high quality and expensive products to developed countries. So, the WBSA has the capacity to become a commerce hub if these states commit themselves to such a goal. There is also a whole sea providing these states with an opportunity for collaboration on environmental policies and transport networks. Besides, these states would collaborate on less contentious issues including disaster relief operations and marine life conservation in order to get a sense of upsides of collaboration on a regional basis.

⁴⁸ For further information on BSEC's support for regional cohesion: BSEC, 'Declaration of the 25th Anniversary Summit of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation', (May, 2017).

The ongoing or frozen conflicts are the greatest impediment to regionalism. They prevent any attempts for communication and collaboration. A region cannot be constructed as long as the states cannot get along with each other or even statelets, for that matter, which are actually illegal secessionist entities and, still, recognised by a certain state in the very same region.⁴⁹ Territorial disputes are abundant in the WBSA, since they thwart the best hopes of the WBSA for warmer relations among the states of the area. Therefore, if these countries come to grip with how to construct a cohesive region, they have to get a solid grasp of how to solve the conflicts over territorial disagreements.⁵⁰

There is an exogenous incentive for regionalism initiatives in the WBSA, which is the EU. The EU is a global power thanks to its capacity to exert influence on countries located in its neighbourhood. So, the EU has the capacity to lure the countries of the WBSA into committing themselves to a certain task. There would be a better chance of region-building in the WBSA if the EU has given incentives to stimulate regionalist sentiments such as information sharing –sweet-talk– and modernisation of regional institutions. However, the ongoing conflicts force EU into conducting particular policies which do not contribute to the peaceful resolution of these disputes. What they do is actually hindering the EU's possible contributions to the region-building process.

Theoretical Remarks on the WBSA

Neo-functionalism is an approach to regionalism, because it focuses all of its attention toward regional institutions. These institutions are relatively insignificant in new regionalism, but new regionalism is imperative for cooperation efforts in the WBSA. The states of the WBSA are not interested in any interaction weakening their sovereignty. However, new regionalism paves the way for these states to engage in mutual interaction by emphasising coexistence and cohesion. Hence, the states see an opportunity rather than a threat in new regionalist efforts. Furthermore, neo-functionalism regards regional institutions as the remedy of all region-wide conflicts and disputes, which is a perspective that does not comply with the reality of the contemporary WBSA. The

⁴⁹ Dimitrios Triantaphyllou, "The Complexities of Black Sea Regional Security," *The Centre for Governance and Culture in Europe*, (June 2012).

⁵⁰ For further analysis of security issues in the WBSA: Stanislav Secieru, 'Protracted Conflicts in the Eastern Neighborhood: Between Averting Wars and Building Trust, *Centre for International and European Studies*, (Jan. 2013).

number of conflicts has been really high for a long time in the WBSA, and it prevents any cooperation-driven initiative springing from the WBSA. This vicious cycle thwarts any deep-rooted region-wide cooperation venture. Neo-functionalism enables areas, which have already overcome most of their problems spawning military disputes, to advance toward a region of coherent states. Yet, neo-functionalism's presumptions of how to evolve into a cohesive region are insufficient and deficient for the WBSA.

Neo-liberal institutionalism underlines international cooperation as one of the foundations of the resurgence of regionalism and, practically, implies that interdependence and interaction bring about international cooperation. Cooperation is, frankly, the only possible way of delivering regional cohesion. Yet, how it should be achieved is the real impasse here. Neo-liberals take 'state' into account as a rational actor regarding cooperation as the most plausible alternative. Therefore, they presume that states seek 'absolute gains'. However, what has been observed in the last decades of the WBSA is not related to 'absolute gain' in any way. These states' foreign policies are driven by prudence and caution. Their policies could only be considered as relative-gains-driven at best. They try to maintain the balance between the two poles as long as there is no explicit threat to their own territories. The thorough understanding of neo-liberalism regarding regionalism deserves closer attention than any other assumptions analysed above. Neo-liberal institutionalists comprehend that commerce and the private sector's direct involvement in regional business networks are imperative to regionalism if it is going to flourish. Moreover, neo-liberal institutionalists' appreciation of bottom-up collaboration is a must for new regionalism. However, neo-liberal institutionalism does not contemplate the ongoing and frozen conflicts in the WBSA either. These conflicts are what makes regional cooperation impossible, and it is not feasible to reach a region-wide consensus without addressing such issues.

Constructivism, although it is not a theory related to regionalism in any way, explains new regionalism's competence in the WBSA with its emphases on identities and interests. It argues that cognitive forces are as important as material factors in the world. Material objects and forces are ascribed meaning by people so that they have no meaning by themselves, therefore they have no importance, other than attributed to them by people. This reasoning alone solves multiple problems that the aforementioned two theories could not solve. Constructivism focuses on terms such as 'regional identity' and 'regional awareness' and bases its

assumptions on a solid argument about 'how to construct a region'. It underlines cooperation by taking advantage of cognitive forces which let us think out of the material world. Furthermore, it posits that the emergence of a region is explicitly related to common societal values. These values are the primary factors that people make use of when they ascribe meaning to certain material forces and factors. All in all, constructivism has the capacity to answer the queries that new regionalism compels students of IR to ask.

Conclusion

New regionalism raised hopes in the WBSA for constructing a region around the Black Sea. Moreover, new regionalism complies with the constructivist assumptions on how to build a region. This is important because constructivism relies on 'cognitive forces' to explain how a region should be built. This definition has the capacity to find a solution to the challenges to the regionalism efforts in the WBSA. The WBSA has challenges to and opportunities for 'new regionalism' ahead of its way. Most of the challenges are security-based whereas opportunities are economy-based. Yet, there is only one means to support or take the lead of the regionalism efforts in the Black Sea area which is the BSEC. The BSEC does not hold the key to success in making regionalism real for the Black Sea area. However, it is still the best hope of the states of the WBSA. If the BSEC succeeds at building bridges between these states by intensifying cooperation, collaboration and interaction, there will be a Black Sea region based on the definition of region of 'new regionalism'. Moreover, constructivism will serve as a perspective displaying that the WBSA is a region.

The paper scrutinises the nascent 'Black Sea Region' through the prism of 'new regionalism' and three pertinent theories. The area has the capacity to become a fully-fledged region called the 'Black Sea Region' even though the littoral states and the other components of the wider Black Sea area are regarded as parts of several other regions, such as the Balkans and the Caucasus. The BSEC is a good case as a starting point. It possesses the potential to construct a well-structured region. All in all, the WBSA should not be fathomed as a divided area comprised of various clusters – the Balkans, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe – but a monolithic 'Black Sea Region' anchored by the BSEC.

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BOOK REVIEW

***The Beginnings of Macedonian Academic Research and Institution Building (19th – Early 20th Century)*. Edited by Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska, Dragi Ćorgiev, Skopje: Institute of National History, 2018, 166 p.**

Vladimir Janev *

The book “The Beginnings of Macedonian Academic Research and Institution Building (19th – early 20th Century)”, edited by Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska and Dragi Ćorgiev, was published by the Institute of National History in Skopje (2018). It consists contributions submitted at the Workshop under the same title, held in the premises of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts on 21 March 2018, in Skopje, as part of the International Scientific Research Project “Knowledge Exchange and Academic Cultures in the Humanities: Europe and the Black Sea Region, Late 18th – 21st Centuries” (funded by the European Union's Research and Innovation Program “Horizon 2020”, under the grant agreement No. 734645). In the “Introduction: the Beginnings of Macedonian Academic Research and Institution Building”, Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska addresses the Macedonian cultural revival and its representatives from the 19th century to early 20th century. Then, the activities of the Macedonian team

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during 2017, within the above-mentioned project, are described – research stay in the Russian Federation, Republic of Armenia and Republic of Macedonia, as well as participation at the International Congress of Historians-Slavicists, in St. Petersburg (12–17 September) and the International Conference on Knowledge Exchange. Europe and the Black Sea Region, c.1750–1850”, in Graz (29–30 September).

“The First Cultural-Educational Institutions in Macedonia as the Basis for Future Academic Culture (from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century)” is the title of Silvana Sidorovska-Čupovska's work. It deals with the importance of schools (church, secular, feminine) in the process of building Macedonian national consciousness, in time of an intensified activity of the neighboring educational propaganda. Macedonian intelligence had an active participation in the establishment and building of cultural and educational institutions. The educational institutions in Macedonia are also concerned in the paper “Secular Versus Religious: the Education of Muslims in Skopje at the End of the 19th Century”, by Dragi Ćorgiev, who turns to the importance of the Muslim educational institutions in Skopje, as an important part of the secularization process in the last decades of Ottoman rule in Macedonia. The guidelines sent to the local authorities at the lowest level show the cooperation of the central government with the local population for the new educational program to be as painless and as widely as possible accepted by the Muslim population, and the introduction of the French language within the curriculum in Muslim schools indicates the process of Europeanization.

“The Beginnings of Macedonian Linguistic Research in the European Context (from the end of the 19th to the early 20th century)” is the topic of Liljana Guševska's paper. This is a significant contribution to highlighting the importance of Macedonian research through Krste Petkov Misirkov's linguistic research within Balkan and Slavic studies. In that period of elevated attention to the ‘Macedonian question’ in the European diplomacy, Misirkov remains one of the key figures in the affirmation of Macedonian ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity.

Katerina Petkovska-Kuzmanova is the author of the paper “The Beginnings of Folkloristic-Ethnographic Research in Macedonia”, dealing with the research work of Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinovi, Kuzman Šapkarev, Konstantin Petkovich, Efrek Karanov, Vasil Ikonov and other, who devoted their life to folklore study and achieved significant results. They posed essential questions related to the development of Macedonian literature and science. Early collection and classification of folklore data was a major factor in the national awakening in Macedonia.

“Atanas Badev: the Beginnings of the Macedonian Musicology” is the work of Nataša Didenko. It describes the creative work of the prominent cultural figure and one of the founders of Macedonian music. The paper presents Atanas Badev’s activity and professional development in the field of pedagogy, literacy of music staff, choir conducting and creation of church and other musical compositions.

“The Debar-Mijak School of Zografs in the 19th Century and the Transfer of Knowledge in Regional Context” is the title of Sašo Cvetkovski's work. The subject is the art history of the 19th century in Macedonia with a special preview to the Debar-Mijak painting school, especially Dičo Zograf and Avram Dičov, who were the founders and the most important representatives of this school.

Blaže Ristovski is the author of the paper “Attempts to Establish a Macedonian School with a Boarding House in the Žitoše Monastery and an Academy for Teachers in Skopje”. In the period of intensification of the assimilation activities of the neighboring countries (the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century), the need to create Macedonian national institutions was crucial. Thus, the iconographer Marko Mušević stood out with his cultural activity, who tried to establish a Macedonian school with a boarding house in the Žitoše Monastery in 1910/1911. In 1909, Krste Misirkov, Petar Pop Arsov and Teodosij Gologanov tried to establish an Academy for Teachers in Skopje. Although these initiatives have proved unsuccessful, they are important for the history of Macedonian higher education and an authentic expression of the national idea. The institution building is also considered in the paper “Macedonian Cultural Associations – The Nucleus of Early Academic Research”. The author Biljana Ristovska-Josifovska deals with the Macedonian cultural associations in the process of national academic institutions building, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. In the activity of the cultural-national associations of the Macedonians abroad, one can find the beginnings of the scientific research in the process of academic research and institution building.

The book “The Beginnings of Macedonian Academic Researches and Institution Building (19th – Early 20th Century)” consists of topics on education, art history, linguistics, and folklore, with a rich illustrative material – photographs and documents, making them available to the international scientific community. It is a significant contribution to history of Macedonian academic culture through the development of the Macedonian national and cultural identity.

BOOK REVIEW

Dimitar Bechev, *Rival Power: Russia's Influence in Southeast Europe*. New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 2017, xviii+300 p., index.

Jahja Muhasilović*

For centuries Balkans is playing an important role in Russia's foreign policy. During the Czarist Russia, the region served as one of the main polygons on the Empire's way to access the warm seas of the Mediterranean, thus ending its historical deficiency of lacking navigable waters during the winter months. With the establishment of the Soviet Union, Russia was present in the region through the ideological camp formed together with the socialist regimes in the Balkans. Later on, two unusual Socialist regimes of Albania and Yugoslavia severed their ways with the Kremlin. But, despite all Soviet influence in the region would remain pretty strong throughout the Cold War. Moscow's influence will start diminishing with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. For a decade to come, through the 1990s, Russia will struggle to keep its status as a relevant power in the Balkans. With the wars in Former Yugoslavia the region entered a period of "Pax Americana" where Washington the first time in history acted as the main foreign actor that was deciding about the future restructurings in the region. This was made possible by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It has lanced the US as the only global superpower. At the same time, Russia was suffering from a painful

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transition back home, plus a full-scale war inside its borders. Kremlin just lacked the capacity to deal more actively with the crisis in the Balkans. It will have to wait for the beginning of the next millennium to start regaining once lost influence.

Under Vladimir Putin's rule, Russia managed to overcome many internal and external problems. Consolidation of Kremlin's power under Putin and economic advance of the 2000s and 2010s helped with the export of oil and gas, heightened Russia's foreign ambitions. The rise of Putin's Russia was felt in the Balkans as well, where Kremlin emerged as an energy powerhouse through its natural gas monopoly in the region. Kremlin's influence appeared to be benign until the eruption of the crisis in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. After that point, external pressure felt by the NATO's eastward expansion pushed Russia to start operating as a major disrupter in the Balkans. Kremlin's post-2014 strategy in the region includes active work on planting and growing the seeds of anti-NATO and anti-EU sentiment. Like, Czarist Russian Empire before, Putin's Russia is heavily relying on the Orthodox-Slavic population in its new strategy. But, unlike Romanovs, Putin's Russia has shown willingness to work with all the elements in the Balkans that would nurture 'anti-Westernism'.

Dimitar Bechev's, *Rival Power: Russia's Influence in Southeast Europe* written in 2017, is providing a fair insight into foreign policy that Putin's Russia nourishes in the Balkans. As it would be seen from the chapters the author carefully compiled, there are some parallels with Russia's strategies during the era of Romanovs or Cold War, but there are probably many more novelties in that strategy, where Russia in a flexible manner is not reluctant to use whatever asset it possesses as a part of its "asymmetric war against the West" from blackmailing the customer states with its energy capacities or allying with the region's Orthodox Churches and nationalists to weaponizing unemployed IT experts across to region that would spin conspiracy theories or influence public opinion to help Kremlin achieve its geostrategic goals. Bechev's book particularly focuses on the foreign policy of the Russian Federation that survived the ruins of the Soviet Union. The author starts his journey with the wars in Former Yugoslavia where actually seeds of the post-Cold War Russian foreign policy were planted.

Chapter 1: Balkans Rediscovered: Russia and the Breakup of Yugoslavia

When Milosevic-regime launched a killing spree across other former Yugoslavia, Belgrade was in a need of international support for its wars. As the majority of the Western states were critical of the killings committed by the Serb-majority Yugoslav Army, Milosevic had to turn to Serb's historical ally, which was the newly established Russian Federation. Although the transition in the Soviet Union was not as bloody as it was in Yugoslavia things were not shiny in Russia neither. After the turbulent transition of power in the Kremlin, Boris Yeltsin (1991-1999) managed to seize power. One of the first things that Milosevic's regime will do in its foreign policy was trying to get Russia's support for their cause in the war that was already taking civilian lives in Former Yugoslav republics. Milosevic was not so lucky in getting Yeltsin on the board. He made a strategic mistake by being supportive of Yeltsin's rivals from the old Soviet establishment whom the latter just managed to overthrow.

Despite the ideological differences Russia generally supported Belgrade's position during the war. Yet, there is not much that Kremlin could do through the official state channels. On certain occasions, it was forced to order Russian troops that were part of the peacekeeping mission in the region to stay put against the advancement of NATO. The reason was simple. Russia lacked the capacity to help Serbs with concrete military action. During the 1990s Russia was facing a serious economic downturn back home and had to fight a bloody war in the Northern Caucasus against the Chechen separatism. Kremlin was not able to put things under the control at home, let alone in a distanced and proved to be a not that important region as the Balkans was. While state officials and the military were too careful not to anger the NATO, the Russian public and some opposition parties were openly supporting the Serbian position during the war. Many Russians would help Serbs through non-state channels.

Kremlin's passiveness was criticized by Slavophil circles in Russia. Especially Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev (1990-1996) was under harsh criticism for siding with the international sanctions against the Milosevic-regime. As official Kremlin was reluctant to conduct concrete steps in helping the Serbs, many politicians from the opposition parties, Slavophil thinkers, fanatic Orthodox Christians, and volunteer weekend fighters will visit the region during the wars. Many Russian fighters will participate in the atrocities along with the Serbian troops. Even Aleksandar Dugin, promoter of Neo-Eurasianism, that some two decades later will be an important ideology in Putin's Russia, has paid his visit to the region.

In 1995 the United States decided to actively engage in the war. The US Air Forces air-bombarded Bosnian Serbs pressuring all the fighting factions to sign a ceasefire in 1995. The ceasefire agreement will be known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. It will serve as the basic state document of the post-war Bosnian and Herzegovina. Although Russian troops were present in the region, the operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was NATO-led which meant Russia was excluded from participating in it. Later on, Russian political leadership, especially Foreign Minister Kozyrev, will be harshly criticized by the public for letting NATO bomb Bosnian Serbs. Kremlin even failed to become a broker of the peace agreement. After the war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina Russia continued its presence in the political life of the war-torn country, generally supporting the position of the Bosnian Serbs. It did not join the Western camp in weakening the Bosnian Serbs in the political life. Russia generally opposed Western decisions and criticized Americans for relying on the force in imposing the measures against the Bosnian Serb forces. Due to its internal weaknesses, this was pretty much all Russia achieved in this country in the second half of the 1990s. Probably the greatest achievement for Russia was securing a place in the steering board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)-the international body responsible for overseeing the Dayton settlement and the work of the UN-appointed High Representative.

Another crisis where Russia proved to be unable to act was the Kosovo War (1998-1999). After NATO decided to bomb the Milosevic-regime in Operation Allied Force, Russians could only watch from the side. Despite the failure to do more in preventing NATO's bombardment, the war in Kosovo will represent an important symbol of the West's hypocrisy and American unilateralism in the Russian eyes. Later under Putin, the case of Kosovo would often be used as a counterargument against the Western double standards and unilateralism. This rhetoric was increased after this province gained its independence from Serbia in 2008. At the time Kosovo War served to the new Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov (1996-1998) to promote the idea of Russia reinventing itself as an independent center of power in a multipolar world. It was too early for such ideas, as Russia was still weak and the United States was at the height of its power in a still unipolar world.

Chapter 2: Meddling in Europe's Backyard: Russia and the Western Balkans

The second chapter provides details of Russia's relations with the particular countries in the Western Balkans. The level of Russian influence varies from country to country in the region. What was common to

Kremlin's relations with all the particular countries that its attitude has changed after 2014. For a long period of time, Kremlin tried to communicate to the West that Ukraine is a red line that should not be crossed as it served as a useful buffer between its territory and the NATO alliance. The mass protests that have erupted in Ukraine against the pro-Russian government changed the tone in Russo-Western relations. After the 2014 Ukrainian crisis and the annexation of the Crimea, the rivalry between Russia and the West that loomed for some years started being led more openly by both sides. After the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Western governments imposed limited sanctions on Russia and some of its firms. Russia also decided to act more aggressively in order to protect its national interests. Aggressiveness served as Kremlin's defense strategy against the Western pressure. As Russia was pressured in its own sphere of influence, Kremlin transferred that rivalry to other regions and tried to hit the West in its own "backyard". Among the first regions where Russia tested its new strategy was the Western Balkans.

The region that is for decades waiting at the doors of both the EU and NATO was ideal for Kremlin to disrupt the West and NATO and keep it away from its own borders. Prior to 2014 Russia's presence in the region was almost totally limited to gas export. Russian businessmen were active on the Montenegrin coast. Although Russian capital was often described as "dirty" in general West was not alarmed by the Russian limited investments in the region. After 2014 that attitude will change on both sides. Russia started playing a disrupter role by trying to undermine the region's Euro-Atlantic ambitions. It started portraying itself as an alternative to the region rather than as a power that was promoting multilateralism as the EU and NATO did. Although Russia seriously lacked a capacity to replace the role EU or NATO had in the Western Balkans, its every move would alarm the Western camp. Russia created its own channels of influence in the region, often from the Slavic and Orthodox Christian backgrounds. It works more actively in synchronizing any eurosceptic or anti-NATO voice in the region. Local media that is ideologically close to Russia would often serve as a megaphone in promoting the anti-Western sentiment.

Serbia is the closest of countries in the Western Balkans to Russia. This country has a long tradition of close to Russia that stretches back for centuries. Especially under Putin Kremlin tried to restore those historical ties with Russia. Serbia is the only country that prefers to stay neutral in terms of a military alliance, which fits Moscow's interests in the region. Although it is the closest ally in the Western Balkans the share of trade and

investment that comes from Russia to Serbia is dwarfed by the EU's share. Close ties between the two countries were best seen in the military parade that was organized in 2014 where Russia's president was a special guest. Two countries also work closely in military terms, but again, this is insignificant when NATO's military influence over the Serbian military is compared. In 2012 two countries opened a joint humanitarian center in the city of Nis. Its opening has caused a lot of concern for NATO as it has the potential to be turned into a Russian military base. But, nothing concrete in that direction had been done since the launching of the center. Serbia under Aleksandar Vucic also showed some interest to participate in the restructured gas corridor project of TurkStream, but as with many ambitious goals proclaimed by Russia in the region, this project also is advancing very slowly. Serbia might face a geographical obstacle in joining the project, as there are few countries that are basically blocking Serbia from the stream.

The first concrete step where Russia tried to undermine NATO in the region was the failed coup attempt in Montenegro in 2016. A coup was an attempt by Russians in cooperation with the local Serbs in order to prevent the tiniest Balkan country from becoming a NATO member. Luckily the plot was discovered on time and nothing serious has happened. This event proved that Russia is not willing to back down in the region. It also showed that there are elements in the Balkan countries that were ready to come under Russia's patronage.

Another country of contention between Russia and the West is North Macedonia. For a long time, Kremlin nurtured good relations with the eurosceptic VMRO party in this country. This party is receiving its support mainly from the ethnic Macedonian Slavs who form a majority of the population. As Albanians are the largest minority in the country and generally leaning toward NATO, political parties in this country are deeply rooted in the country's ethnic division. After 2014 one of the Kremlin's strategies was to play the identity card in North Macedonia in order to postpone the country's NATO membership as much as possible. Being supportive of eurosceptic elements in North Macedonia is one of the main strategies of the Kremlin in North Macedonia. This also turned to be a failed ambition as North Macedonia joined the alliance in 2020.

Another country where the Kremlin follows the strategy of disruption is Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two decades after the bloody war this country is still struggling with ethnic division. Kremlin is supporting Bosnian Serbs and has good ties to Serb-majority entity Republika Srpska. Particularly with its leader Milorad Dodik. Dodik's SNSD Party serves as the main ally

of the Kremlin in this country. Often Russian politicians who visit Bosnia and Herzegovina would first pay a visit to Banja Luka then to the rest of the country. On a few occasions, he even tried to instrumentalize his close ties to Russia during the election campaigns, when he brought folklore groups close to the Russian government to march on the streets of Banja Luka. After 2014 Russia more openly support Dodik and his secessionist policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dodik also enjoys close ties to Russian energy firms, where some of them with his blessings operate gas refineries in Republika Srpska. Because of the Dodik factor, almost all of Russian investments in Bosnia and Herzegovina are located in the Serb-majority entity of Republika Srpska.

CHAPTER 3: Across the Black Sea: Bulgaria and Romania

Eastern Balkans unlike the western part of the peninsula is more stable, which means there is less space for Russia's disruptive role. Both countries entered NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007 which made it very hard for Russia to meddle in the internal affairs of those countries. Yet, Russia is historically present in those two countries, especially in Bulgaria, and still, there are some domestic elements that would like to see more Russian influence in those two countries. Although both countries are members of the EU, like in many other member countries, there are eurosceptics with whom Kremlin nurtures good ties. Especially in Bulgaria, Russia is having links to ultra-nationalist *Ataka* which officially is known to be a Russophile political party. Russian influence was historically much smaller in Romania than it was in Bulgaria, which until lately was often described as Russia's main ally and a satellite in the region. Romania on the other hand because of its Romance origin was always more oriented toward the West and saw itself rather as part of the Latin World than of Orthodox Christian one.

Both Romania and Bulgaria have good relations with the United States in terms of military cooperation. As two are crucial in NATO's plan to counter Russian advancement to the west and their access to the Black Sea, Washington is more active in terms of military cooperation in the eastern part of the peninsula than it is in the western part. Romania is home to American anti-missile systems and the US operates together with the Bulgarian Armed Forces three small military facilities in Bulgaria. Too close relations with the US military and strict allegiance to the NATO, plus Bulgaria's withdrawal from the South Stream project have caused slight tensions in their relationship with the Kremlin.

CHAPTER 4: Friends with Benefits: Greece and Cyprus

Relations of Greeks in Greece and Cyprus with Russia are even more ambiguous than those of Bulgarians or Serbs. Greece is home to Orthodox Christianity, which Putin's Russia in its foreign policy holds high, and was for a long time in history a leader of the Orthodox Christianity. With the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, that role will be undertaken by Russia. While Czarist Russia's role in the independence of Serbs and Bulgarians was crucial, Greeks and Cypriots won their independence thanks to Western European powers, British in the first place, rather than through Russian support. Greece was the first country in the Balkans to enter the EU and together with Turkey to NATO. Because of its importance to the West, Greece always in its modern history cultivated good ties with those countries and was always considered an ally of the same. The reality that Greeks are also adhering to Orthodox Christianity has created an ambiguous attitude towards Russians which was translated into politics. Russia is seen as culturally close, but on the other hand also as a rival in terms of who will be dominating the Orthodox World. Greeks often are not so happy with Russia's own image as the "leader of the Orthodox World".

With the rise of the Syriza Party as a consequence of the economic crisis that Greece was going through, at the time Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras reached Russians for help. He also tried to use the Russia card to blackmail European partners as his country was often cornered by Germany and other rich members for not implementing enough measures to save the Greek economy. Putin welcomed Tsipras' move, but nothing substantial did not happen from Syriza's Russian strategy. Greece's importance rose in the eyes of the Kremlin when the talks of the possible inclusion of this country to the TurkStream evolved. Because of its geostrategic position the island of Cyprus is important for Russia, as well as it is to the West. For a long time, the island served as an offshore destination for the money of rich Russians. There was a fear that the island might become a hostage to Russians because of the large amounts of money that were held in Cyprus, which also proved to be an unfounded fear.

CHAPTER5: The Russian-Turkish Marriage of Convenience

Relations between Russia and Turkey are specific when compared to other Balkan countries. Because of the many wars fought between the two countries in the past and the sheer size of Turkey, Ankara is rather seen either as an ally or as a rival of Russia. Mainly the second was the case. The nature of relations between two countries under Putin and Erdogan is hard to define. On occasions they act as allies, on different occasions, they are

rivals, sometimes even enemies. Yet, what is common for the two is that they pretty much resemble each other in the methods they use in ruling their population.

For a long time, Russia was seen as the main security threat both by the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. With the end of the Cold War, that changed. Ankara stopped seeing Russia as a security threat but rather as an economic opportunity. In the early 1990s, two countries started normalizing their ties. It was the economic sphere that benefited the most from the normalization of ties. Especially when Putin came to power in Russia and Erdogan in Turkey economic ties between the two countries started skyrocketing. During the early 2010s amount of economic cooperation between the countries had reached its zenith and will generally stagnate on that level in the coming years, failing to reach a hundred billion dollars of trade amount proclaimed some decade ago. When Turkey shot down a Russian airplane over Syria in 2015, there was a short interruption in relations until 2016, when the two countries normalized their relations as a consequence of the Kremlin's empathizing with Turkey during and after the failed coup attempt in Turkey on July 2016.

Turkey is on the gas routes that brings natural gas from the Caspian Basin and Russia to Europe. Ankara tried to turn that geographical reality into a geopolitical advantage. After the South Stream project was abolished Moscow and Ankara rearranged a new deal and renamed it as a TurkStream. Yet, it remains to be seen whether this pipeline will reach Europe anytime soon. To an extent it helped the Kremlin's ambition of expanding its gas network, on the other hand, it works in consolidating Turkey as an important energy hub for the European market. For many years Turkey is trying to diversify Russia's share in its domestic energy market. Russian dominance among Turkey's gas suppliers is giving an upper hand to Kremlin over its partners in Ankara. Also, Russia is active in the construction of energy facilities inside Turkish borders, of which the most important one is Akkuyu nuclear power plant, which according to the deal signed by the two countries will be run by the Russian experts for some time.

The countries are competing in different hinterlands. They are sitting on opposite sides of the spectrum in the Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia. The first time after the Cold War the two countries entered a race for dominance was in Central Asia during the 1990s which the author of the book calls a "scramble for Eurasia". Ankara and Moscow are on different ends when it comes to allies in the Syrian Civil War. The two

countries are also rivals in the Caucasus region. In the crisis over Crimea, two countries had differing stances. Ankara openly supported Crimean Tatars, who generally were against the Russian occupation, remembering all the atrocities in the past they faced from the Russian hands. Besides Syria Balkans is the place of contention between the two countries. Turkey is generally supporting Muslims in the region, Albanians, Bosniaks, and Balkan Turks. Especially Albanians and Bosniaks are not on good terms with Russia's allies in the region, with Serbs primarily. They are also very suspicious of Russia. At the same time, Ankara is openly supporting the Euro-Atlantic ambitions of those two Muslim peoples. As a NATO member sits Turkey is on the opposite side of the region.

CHAPTER 6: From a Military Standoff to Hybrid Warfare

Although the military power is one of the strongest aspects of Russia as a macro-regional player, due to the strong presence of Western states militarily in the Balkans, Kremlin's room for maneuver is very limited. It generally tries to undermine the dominant position of NATO by working with the countries that are not members of the alliance and have retained a neutral status like Serbia and Cyprus. The only NATO member in the region with whom Russia has distressing cooperation is Turkey. Military purchase of the S-400 anti-missile systems from Russia has caused many headaches to Ankara, getting this country close to being passivized by its NATO counterparts. Although there is not a concrete competition between Russia and NATO in the Balkans, the same could not be said for the Black Sea region. Here both Russia and the West are displaying their muscles more often. The factor of Turkey is decisive in this region which side could prevail in terms of dominating the Black Sea basin. The problem of the annexation of Crimea is complicating further the real possibility that Turkey might shift the sides in this competition, and it also has similar ambitions like Russia to become a relevant factor in the Black Sea region. On the other hand, Bulgaria and Romania which cannot compete militarily with those two countries are heavily relying on the US presence on their territory. Turkey was also supportive of the Romanian initiative of establishing a permanent NATO naval task force in the Black Sea. In the Western Balkans, it is Serbia that is the most interested in seeing more military cooperation with Russia. The two established a joint humanitarian center in the Southern Serbian town of Nis, which according to some analysts has the potential to be turned into a military base. But, all that seems far from realization. NATO is even more influential in Serbia in terms of the military than Russia is at the moment. Lacking a military capacity and the support from the locals, the only tactics Russia is left to

rely on is the so-called “hybrid war”. Like in its immediate neighborhood Russia is using tactics that include propaganda, cyberattacks, political subversion, and infiltration of governments. Chances for these tactics to be successful as they were in Ukraine or other post-Soviet republics seem to be pretty slim.

Chapter 7: Playing the Energy Card

The energy sector is the only area where Russia is a hegemon in the region. Especially when comes to gas the region is almost completely dependent on Russia. This provides a strong bargaining chip in its relationship with the Balkan countries. The EU suggested for decades now the diversification of the region’s natural gas imports, but mainly failed to succeed. LNG terminal that is supposed to be constructed on the Adriatic shore is part of that strategy. Also, the EU had an ambitious project of bringing the gas from the Caspian Basin through Turkey in an ambitious pipeline named “Nabucco”. This project proved to be a good advertisement rather than a concrete step in limiting Russia’s dominance in the gas sector. Russia came with the South Stream Project in 2007 that was supposed to deliver 63 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe. The pipeline would go through Europe. In that sense, it would position Kremlin as even stronger in the region’s gas sector. After the crisis over Ukraine and Crimea in 2014, the EU pressured regional countries to leave the project. While on one had the region was pressured to leave the South Stream pipeline project. Germany and Russia proceeded with the plan to finalize the Nord Stream, thus securing the inflow of 55 billion cubic meters of gas to Germany and from there to the rest of Europe.

To some extent, Kremlin managed to bypass the EU’s abolition of South Stream by making a separate deal with Ankara and restructure the project under the new name of TurkStream. Turkey was also interested in new pipeline projects that would go through the region as it had the ambition to become an energy hub for the European market. On the other hand, Turkey itself is not in a much different position from other Balkan states when it comes to Russian gas as it is also searching for alternative gas corridors to limit Russia’s monopoly over its domestic energy market. Energy remains probably the strongest asset in the hands of the Kremlin.

Chapter 8: The Allure of Russia's Might

What was a novelty in post-Soviet Russia is the fact that the Kremlin has evolved into an energy hegemon not only in the Balkans but in Europe as a whole. Despite all the noise both in Russia and the Balkans about the Russian comeback to the region, this rhetoric became more aggressive after 2014, the real parameters on the ground are proving the opposite. Kremlin doesn't have allies in the region as it had during the Cold War, or the ideology of Putin's Russia is not popular as Socialism was between 1945 and 1991. The only area where Russia can actually rely on is its energy and a very limited number of eurosceptics and Russophiles in the region. The economy remains the main aspect of Russian influence in the region and the Kremlin is lagging way behind the EU in that area. The entire Balkans is streaming to enter the EU and with exception of Serbia to NATO as soon as possible. Dissatisfaction caused by the reluctance of the EU particularly has opened some space for Russia to enter with its propaganda. But, yet this propaganda did not cause any significant geopolitical changes in the region. Also, Bechev's book is showing that some patterns in the relation between Russia and the Balkans have continued through decades. As this book successfully demonstrated the politics of the small states in the Balkans would often cause a headache for the Russians. Small Balkan nation-states on many occasions proved to be very successful in getting from Russia what they want, after which very often Russia will be a victim of the versatile nature of the politicians in the Balkans. That pattern and attitude were transferred in relation Balkan states have with Russia today.

BOOK REVIEW

Tomasz Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War: The Forgotten 1989 Expulsion of Turks from Communist Bulgaria*. London & New York: Routledge, 2019, xxvii + 274 pages.

Cengiz Yolcu*

The year 1989 is the eve of “the great transformation” for both in Europe and the whole world. Just before the fall of the “Iron Curtain”, particularly an ethnic community in the southeast Europe, the Turks of Bulgaria had encountered the ethnic cleansing. The idea of the expulsion of non-Bulgarians was rooted back in the late nineteenth century, just after the April Uprising in 1876 and the following incidents to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and the Treaty of Berlin. The “Turkish/Muslim Question” of newly formed Bulgaria occurred after the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano in 3 March 1878, which is still celebrated as the Liberation and the national day of Bulgaria. The envision of enlargement, ethnically mixed population and the state of minority of the Bulgarians than the other ethnic groups of the brand-new state alarmed both the neighboring states and France and the Great Britain. As a result, the Treaty of San Stefano was never implemented and superseded by the Treaty of Berlin in July 1878. The

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latter of the treaties recognized the autonomous Bulgarian principality, which lacked of Macedonia and Eastern Rumelia. Since the establishment of the Principality of Bulgaria, the notion of absolute ethnic-national homogeneity was adopted as the principle for the formation of Bulgarian nation. The Bulgarian politicians and statesmen followed this ideal throughout the years. A century later, Turkish and Muslim question in Bulgaria would be solved firstly by assimilation and then the mass deportations.

The Reader in Modern History at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and the author of many monographs on the nationalism, politics and political history of the central and the southeastern Europe, Tomasz Kamusella in his last book, titled *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War: The Forgotten 1989 Expulsion of Turks from Communist Bulgaria* focuses on the expulsion of Turks and Muslims from Bulgaria in 1989. Kamusella's work reveals and tells to the reader the events little known before and indicates the mostly internationally ignored huge mass atrocity, which was committed in the heart of Europe. Starting from the Spring, during the "long" summer of 1989, approximately 360,000 Muslim and Turkish citizens of People's Republic of Bulgaria were expelled from Bulgaria to Turkey.

About twenty years after the socialists came to power in Bulgaria, Todor Zhivkov, then the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, sends a congratulatory message to the Turkish-language monthly, *Yeni Hayat* [New Life], on its tenth anniversary in 1964. A quote from Zhivkov's message is as follows:

All possible opportunities have been created for the Turkish population to develop their culture and language freely. (...) The children of the Turkish population must learn their [mother] tongue and perfect it. To this end, it is necessary that the teaching [of the Turkish language] be improved in schools. Now and in the future the Turkish population will speak their mother tongue; they will develop their progressive traditions in this language; they will write their contemporary literary works [in Turkish]; they will sing their wonderfully beautiful songs [in Turkish]. (...) Many more books must be published in this country in Turkish, including the best works of progressive writers in Turkey.¹

¹ Ali Eminov, "There Are No Turks in Bulgaria: Rewriting History by Administrative Fiat" in *The Turks of Bulgaria: The History, Culture and Political Fate of a Minority* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), p. 213.

Ironically, thirty years later of Zhivkov's encouraging letter addressing the Turkish-speaking citizens of Bulgaria, a new era, named Revival Process [*Vazroditelen protses* / Възродителен процес, which can also be rendered in English as "Rebirth Process"] of discrimination, oppression and assimilation starts. Kamusella's elaborative work aims to scrutinize the conversion of policies of the Bulgarian authorities against their citizens of Turkish origin and Muslim faith.

The book consists of seven main chapters, besides the Introduction and Conclusion. Fourteen maps are included in the book. The maps show the places, where the Turkish, Roma, Pomak and Muslim population are inhabited; changes and transformations of Bulgaria since the establishment of the First Bulgarian Empire to-day, the "Greater Bulgaria", and the areas, where the Bulgarian language is spoken. The one and only photograph² in the book shows the expellees between the Kapitan Andreevo [Checkpoint Ali] (p. 78-79) – Kapıkule, the only land border crossing for pedestrian, motorized, and train traffic between communist Bulgaria and Turkey.

Kamusella begins his book by depicting the world and international politics in 1989. While the communist regimes were on the eve of the collapsing across the Soviet bloc, the importance of his depiction is to point out how the Bulgarian authorities to some extent were successful at hiding the assimilation and Bulgarization of non-Bulgarian citizens. As the western politicians and public opinion were "busy" with forming the post-Soviet world, thousands of Turks and other Muslim minorities of the country were forced to abandon their Turkish or Islamic-sounding names and adopt Bulgarian ones, thus, Bulgaria could be a mono-ethnic state, in which consolidated Bulgarian nation inhabit. Since the formation of the Bulgarian principality, Bulgarian-speaking Orthodox has never been vast majority among the other ethnic groups in Bulgaria. The reason behind implementing the "Revival Process" was the fear of the extinction of Bulgarians in years. The 1983 declaration of the independence of the Northern Cyprus stimulated the so-called the Bulgarian anxiety to be intervened by Turkey. Kamusella's book clearly shows both the historical process that ended up with the expulsion of Turks and the political background of the events in the summer of 1989.

As for the Bulgarian authorities, all the official decisions related to the expulsion were legal, although the process must be defined as ethnic

² The photograph was taken on 3 July 1989 by Zhivko Angelov, a photographer of the BTA [Българска телеграфна агенция *Balgarska telegrafna agentsiya*, Bulgarian News Agency].

cleansing. Nevertheless, both then and now Bulgarian state officials were “lucky” to be ignored for their anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim sentiments by the international public opinion. The Bulgarian expulsions of 1989, furthermore, may well have served as a model for Slobodan Milošević in mid 1990s. Yet, the ignorance on the conducting a “successful” ethnic cleansing and getting clean away with it, was an encouraging attitude for possible offenders. Moreover, even the leader of Soviet Union, Gorbachev apparently expressed an interest in the forced name changing of Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria, supposing the Bulgarian experience as a testing ground for a policy, later to be applied for the Muslims in the Soviet Union.

Although the expulsion of Turks was the biggest one in Europe since the population transfers –the expulsions of ethnic Germans from Central Europe in 1945-1950, at the end of the Second World War, the Turkish victims of the process were disregarded even in scholarship or European public memory. Kamusella, after stating and defining the concept of ethnic cleansing, actually breaks the silence over the 1989 ethnic cleansing of Turks and Muslims in Bulgaria and over the tragic event’s political and international ramifications. Moreover, Bulgarian authorities denominated the expulsion as the “Great Excursion” euphemistically and even in a cynical manner. Because, except the state officials and high ranking sportsmen, “the common people” of socialist Bulgaria had passports for the first time. Turkish and Muslim expellees were regarded as “tourists”, who would return back to Bulgaria after “three-month excursion” in Turkey. Interestingly enough, the formal legal status of the expellees was “tourists”, until they would gain Turkish citizenship in 1990s. However, it was not a “big excursion”, but forced migration, and when its extent is considered –that over 360,000 people were forced to leave their homelands– as Kamusella stated, it was an ethnic cleaning. The expectation was the return of the “loyal” and “newly converted Bulgarians” in a short time. Nevertheless, really small amount of expellees came back. Therefore, on 29 December 1989, the Bulgarian Communist Party reversed the policy of forced assimilation of Turks and Muslims. The party officials feared that the expellees would soon be joined by a further 400,000 Turks (Muslims) wishing to leave Bulgaria, which in turn would deepen the already acute economic and demographic crisis in the country. This statement also indicates and emphasizes the amount of the expellees and their crucial role in the Bulgarian economy. Because the expulsion took place shortly before and during the harvest, the agricultural sector of Bulgaria’s economy took a hit, given that the country had already been heavily indebted to the west.

After reading Kamusella’s work, one could understand the ethnic

combination of Bulgaria since its foundation, the tensions between the Bulgarian majority and the Turks, and other Muslim minorities (including Roma people, Tatars and Pomaks); the concept of the unitary (or homogeneous) Bulgarian socialist nation and how this concept became the ideological foundation of the 1984-1985 forced assimilation campaign, and eventually of the 1989 ethnic cleansing as well. In order to conduct his study, Kamusella uses selection of articles on the subject from international press (including German, Polish, and Yugoslav press) as well as Bulgarian, Turkish sources and documents. Yet, he states his will to use the archives of Bulgarian Communist Party. However, due to the entire archive of the party went up in a mysterious fire on 27 August 1990, he could not reach the primary sources, which could shed light on the expulsion. Besides the detailed documentation of largely ignored events of 1989, Kamusella both raises many new questions for further events, as well. Another important aspect of this study is to show how the Bulgarian expulsions are related to the "Kurdish Question" in Turkey in late 1980s. On the Bulgarian side, Turkey's policy against the Kurds in the eastern Anatolia was useful apparatus for Zhivkov regime to reciprocate the criticism from Ankara related to the oppression and assimilation of Turks in Bulgaria. In summer of 1989, when Turkish emigrants crossed the border Ankara government aimed to settle them in eastern Anatolia, after the Kurds left for migration to the west. However, Turkish emigrants rejected the proposal and never went beyond the east of Ankara to settle.

Another considerable aspect of Kamusella's book is giving detailed information about Turkish political and resistance organizations against the "Revival Process". The leaders of these organizations were the first victims of the expulsion to Austria and Yugoslavia. However, after the fall of Zhivkov regime and the democratic transition in Bulgaria, former members of Turkish organizations have formed their political parties and become essential parts of politics of Bulgaria. The well-known of all, the Movement for Rights and Freedom (Dvizhenie za prava i svabodi, DPS) was founded in January 1990 and it emerged as the third major political formation in post-socialist Bulgaria. Although, Turkish and Muslim minority are represented by a powerful political formation, still not a single state official of politician of Zhivkov regime has been brought to justice for the assimilation policies and the forced emigration of Turks and Muslims. Even during Bulgaria's accession negotiations with the EU the issue of mass deportations were not added to agenda of the EU negotiators. Solely, in 2012 the deputies of 41st Bulgarian National Assembly adopted "The Declaration Condemning the Attempted Forced Assimilation of Bulgarian Muslims". Although the Declaration falls short of a straight- forward

apology, the deputies condemned vociferously the assimilation policy of the [Bulgarian] totalitarian communist regime against the Muslim minority in the Republic of Bulgaria, including the so called “Revival Process”, and the expulsion of more than 360.000 Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin [from Bulgaria to Turkey] in 1989 as an act of ethnic cleansing committed by the [Bulgarian] totalitarian regime (pp. 115-116).

All in all, despite the killing of Turkish and Muslim civilians, who were the opponents of the assimilation policies in mass protests or in the notorious concentration camp on Belene, luckily Bulgaria did not head for a civil war. Hopefully, any people will never face discrimination, oppression, and assimilation due to belonging to an ethnic group or religion.

BOOK REVIEW

İbrahim Kamil, *Bulgaristan Türkleri ve Göçler. Bulgaristan Komünist Partisi Gizli Belgeleri (1944-1989) [Turks of Bulgaria and Migrations. Confidential Documents of the Bulgarian Communist Party (1944-1989)]*. 8 volumes, Ankara: AKDITYK Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2018, ISBN 978-975-16-3528-0

vol. 1 (1944-1953), CCLVI + 281 p.;

vol. 2 (1954-1963), LXXXVI + 509 p.;

vol. 3 (1964-1983), LIX + 529 p.;

vol. 4 (1984-1985), LIV + 449 p.;

vol. 5 (1986-1987), LVI + 525 p.;

vol. 6 (January 1988-March 1989), XLIX + 469 p.;

vol. 7 (April 1989-June 1989), XLVII + 431;

vol. 8 (July 1989-December 1989), XXII + 471 p.

Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu*

The author of the book, İbrahim Kamil, Associate Professor of International Relations in Thrace University (Edirne), was born in Razgrad in Bulgaria in 1958 and migrated to Turkey after the Bulgarian-Turkish migration agreement in 1968. He belongs to the community of Turkish migrants from Bulgaria (Bulgaristan Göçmenleri) in Turkey. After studying Political Science in Istanbul, he dedicated his academic life to the Bulgarian studies with focus on Turkish and Muslim minorities in Bulgaria and

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Bulgarian-Turkish relations. As a result of decades-long research (since 1993), he prepared an eight-volume work of document collection from the Archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party related to the Turkish and Muslim minorities. The work is published by the prominent Turkish research institution *Atatürk Research Center* (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi) in Ankara.

After the collapse of communism and regime change in Bulgaria, a big number of political parties were established and took part in the political elections. In this process the Bulgarian Communist Party changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party. The Socialist Party decided in 1993 to deliver the Archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party consisting mainly of correspondence of the party secretary and Politburo and local party organisations to the Central State Archives while the local party archives were turned to local state archives. In the same year, the Turkish State Archives and the Bulgarian State Archives signed an agreement of document exchange. İbrahim Kamil was the first academician from Turkey who started to research in the Central State Archives of Bulgaria (p. xii).

One of the most crucial topics which attracted the interest of the researchers of the post-communist Bulgaria was the policy of the Communist Party towards the Turkish-Muslim minority called “Văzroditelen Proces” (rebirth / regeneration process) which was then condemned by the Bulgarian Parliament on 11 January 2012 as an “ethnic cleansing”¹ while the Turkish minority or migrant groups call it a “genocide” attempt.²

¹ “Deklaraciya. Osăzdašta opita za nasilstvena asimilaciya na bălgarskite myusyulmani”, Narodno Săbranie na Republika Bălgariya - Deklaraciya i obešteniya (parliament.bg), <https://www.parliament.bg/bg/declaration/ID/13813>; for more details, see: Tomasz Kamusella, “Between Politics and Objectivity: The non-Remembrance of the 1989 Ethnic Cleansing of Turks in Communist Bulgaria”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 22/4 (2020): 515-532; Victor D. Bojkov, “Bulgaria’s Turks in the 1980s: A Minority Endangered”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 6 (3) (September 2004): 343-469.

² See, for example, the memoirs of Ahmet Şerif Şerefli, *Türk Doğduk Türk Öldük (Soy Kırımı Yaşantıları) [We were born as Turk and we died as Turk (Genocide Experiences)]*, 1st ed. 1990, 2nd ed. Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2002. See also the inscription of the remembrance monument in Sütkesiği/Mleçino in Souther Bulgaria: “Totalitarizme ve Soykırımı Karşı İlk Protesto Mitingi 24.XII.1984 Tarihinde Burada Yapıldı” [The protest meeting against totalitarianism and genocide took place here on 24.12.1984]. The monument has also a Bulgarian inscription: “Tuk na 24.XII.1984 god. e proveden părviya protesten miting sreštu totalitarniya režim vāv vrăzka s t.n. Văzroditelen proces”. Here, instead of the word “genocide” they used the phrase “taka nareçen vazroditelen proces” [so called rebirth process] which also testifies that they regard the term “rebirth” used by the Communist Party as a “genocide”.

Several Bulgarian researchers published books and document collections on this sensitive issue of forced assimilation. Among the first studies, Ali Eminov, Valery Stoyanov and several other academicians wrote monographies on the Turkish/Muslim minorities and the issue of assimilation in a general perspective.³ There are also document collections directly focusing on the period of forced assimilation (1984-1989).⁴

The document collection by İbrahim Kamil aims to cover the whole period of the communist regime between 1945 and 1989. In eight volumes there are altogether 430 documents (Bulgarian original and a Turkish summary of content for each document). Each volume is dedicated to a specific period and, by using the selected documents, the author tries to give a general picture of the period in the introduction of each volume.

The first volume includes, however, also a general presentation of the history of the Turkish migration from Bulgaria in almost 200 pages. This part of the book consists of four chapters: the first chapter titled "historical background" deals with migrations during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Balkan Wars 1912-1913. The second chapter focuses on the "Migrations during the Cold War" covering the migrations of 1950-1951, 1968 Bulgarian-Turkish migration agreement and the migrations of 1969-1978, and forced assimilation policy 1984-1985 and the migration of 1989. A separate subchapter is dedicated to other oppression and assimilation confronted minorities such as Pomaks who the author calls "Muslim Pomak Turks". The third chapter focuses on the Bulgarian Communist Party, its organisation, congresses, offices etc. The fourth chapter discusses the content of the documents from the period of 1944-1953 and gives an overview of the developments in this period (p. cxci-ccxiii). Then follows the summary of 83 documents and the photos of the Bulgarian originals. In the end there is an extensive bibliography and an index (limited to the monographic part).

³ Ali Eminov, *Turkish and Other Muslim Minorities in Bulgaria*, London: Routledge, 1997; Valeri Stoyanov, *Turskoto Naselenie v Bălgariya Meždu Polyusite na Etničeskata Politika*, Sofia: Lik, 1998.

⁴ The document publications in Bulgaria in a chronological order: *Istinata za "Văzroditelniya Protes"*. *Dokumenti ot arhiva na Politbyuro i TsK na BKP*, Project director Ahmed Dogan, editor Samuel Levi, Sofia: Institut za Izsledvane na Integracijata, 2003; Veselin Angelov, *Strogo Poveritelno! Asimilatorskata kampaniya sreštu turskoto natsionalno maltsinstvo v Bălgariya (1984-1989)*. *Dokumenti*, Sofia: Fondaciya liberalna demokraciya, 2008; Veselin Angelov, *Sekretno! Protestnite aktsii na turtsite v Bălgariya, Yanuari-May 1989*, Sofia: Samizdat, 2009; Evgeniya Kalinova, Iskra Baeva (eds.), *"Văzroditelniyat Proces"*. Vol. 1: *Bălgarskata Dăržava i Bălgarskite Turci (Sredata na 30-te - načaloto na 90-te godini na XX vek)*, Vol. 2: *Meždunarodni izmereniya (1984-1989)*, Sofia: Dăržavna Agenciya "Arhivi", 2009.

The second volume on the period of 1954-1963 includes three parts, the analysis of the documents, the summary of 106 documents and the photos of their originals, plus a bibliography. The following six volumes follow the same schema: the third volume on 1964-1983 includes 28 documents, the fourth volume on 1984-1985 discusses 18 documents, the fifth volume on 1986-1987 includes 60 documents, the sixth volume on January 1988-March 1989: 49 documents, the seventh volume on April 1989-June 1989: 37 documents and the eighth volume on July 1989-December 1989: 49 documents.

Every kind of document selection has the potential to be subjective according to the interests of the editor. The document selection of İbrahim Kamil is also limited to the Muslim/Turkish minorities in Bulgaria. It is, however, a very successful attempt to publish the most important documents showing the plans and projects of the governing elite in communist Bulgaria regarding the Muslim minority.

The author has a very good command of the Bulgarian and Turkish languages and the information in the Turkish summary of the documents is reliable. For each document, the archive numbers are given in the book.

The only point to be criticized in this work is that the same bibliography consisting of 72 pages is repeated at the end of each volume, and altogether it takes a place of 576 pages. Instead, the bibliography only in the first volume would be sufficient. On the other hand, it lacks a common thematic index for the content of the Bulgarian documents for all volumes - could be attached to the last volume - which would be a very good orientation help for the readers.

Despite these small imperfections, this monumental publication creates new opportunities to the researchers, particularly in Turkey, who do not have access to the Bulgarian language or the Archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

