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IDENTITY, MEMORY, PLACE, NARRATIVE: THE CASE OF CRIMEAN TATARS

Abstract

Crimean Tatar ethnical identity was investigated in the context of their attachment to different places such as Crimea, Turkey, and Romania. Mythologization of these places was detected. The fact of losing and restoring their ethnic identity throughout time, which depends on political and historical circumstances, was surveyed. The study of identity of Crimean Tatars helped to understand the characteristics of their folklore in emigration. The religious character of Crimean Tatar folklore in Romania was discovered. Double ethnic identities in the Crimean Tatar case were found. The concept of *the others* in the construction of ethnic identity was analyzed using the Romanian folklore material.

Keywords: ethnic/national identity, Crimean Tatars, homeland, legends, we-the others dichotomy

Introduction

This research is a part of the ongoing anthropological investigation of Crimean Tatar folk legends which has been carried out by the author during the past ten years (2004-present). A folk legend is an oral folk narrative about real events, these events are very important for people, and they are mythologized, by this way an element of the miracle appears in legends. A legend has to be connected with real historical events, historical people or geographical places. Therefore legends are good material for studying of cultural identities.

During the author's M.A. and Ph.D. researches, the whole published Crimean legends were investigated. The previous post-doctoral research covers Crimean Tatar folklore in Turkey. The present post-doctoral project

is about Crimean Tatar legends in Romania. The state of the research in the field should be explained.

As far as the Crimean and Turkish material has been studied, it is urgent to carry on the same research in Romania. Today, approximately 250,000 Crimean Tatars live in Crimea, it is 12% of Crimean population,¹ and about 200,000 Crimean Tatars remain in Central Asia, mainly in Uzbekistan. In Romania in the Dobrogea region, there are more than 20,000 Crimean Tatars.² It is realistic to say that there are approximately 5 million Crimean Tatars-origin people who are living in Turkey.³ The research is combining Crimean, Turkish and Romanian folklore material, leaving Crimean Tatar folklore tradition in Central Asia for future research. The paper is based on analyzes of mostly published text which were found in Crimea, Turkey and Romania libraries. The concept of "homeland" (namely Crimea) is very strong among the Crimean Tatars.⁴ In the present research, more proofs of the fact are found in Crimean Tatar legends where the value of love for Crimea is the most important and constant.

The aim of the previous post-doctoral research was to find legend material in Turkey. Only some Crimean Tatar legends were found. However the texts are republished legends before the Second World War. Other genres of Crimean Tatar folklore are presented in variety in Turkey. It is important to analyze why Crimean Tatar legends were not preserved in Turkey.

There are many characteristics which define a national/ethnic/cultural identity, such as language, education, literature, mass media et cetera. Folklore of a certain group is among them and it is among important criteria. In the article, the emphasis is, put on Crimean Tatars' legendary due to the fact that legend generally has connection with particular geographical places. This introduces new interrelation of collective memory, ethnic identity and place.

It is important to explain why the Crimean Tatar case is chosen. Crimean Tatars passed through many waves of emigration and one deportation. Being moved to different places, Crimean Tatars have new and old homelands at the same time. A host country all the time tries to change an identity of ethnic minorities. The main aim of the article is to check is this happening in Crimean Tatar's case? The novelty of the present research is the fact that ethnic identities of Crimean Tatars have been never studied in a comparison of Crimea, Turkey, Romanian material spatially using their folklore as material.

In order to understand the issue properly, the first part of the paper gives a brief historical background of Crimean Tatars. The second part is about Crimean Tatar national/ethnic identity. At the end of the article, the analysis of Crimean Tatar folklore narratives is made. The results of the research are given in the article's conclusion.

A brief History of the Crimean Tatars

The Crimean Tatars (*Qırım tatar*) are one of Turkic ethnic groups which came into Crimea in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The Crimean Tatars are Hanafi-Sunni Muslims. Linguistically and ethnically Crimean Tatars are Turks. There are three sub-ethnic groups among Crimean Tatars – *Noğais*, who lived in the northern Crimean plains, *Tats*, who lived in the southern mountains and *Yalıboyus*, who lived in the coast of the peninsula. These ethnic groups succeeded in establishing their independent state (the Crimean Khanate) in 1441. Ottoman Empire invaded Crimea and the annexed cities in South coast in 1475. The Crimean Khanate came under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, the Tats and the Yalıboyus, who were living in the southern coast, were mixed with Turkish people. Their culture was transformed under Turkish influence and now it is very close to Turkish culture.

The Crimean Tatar Khanate existed more than three hundred years (1440-1783) until Tsarina Catherine the Great made Crimea part of the Russian Empire. "The Crimean Tatars were transformed into a politically passive community of peasants and began to abandon their ancestral lands in an extraordinary series of migrations to the lands of their traditional suzerain/allies and coreligionists, the Ottoman Turks."⁵ There is an opinion that the emigration of Crimean Tatars had forced character.⁶

The reasons for the migrations were both cultural and economic. First of all, cultural-religious differences between the Orthodox Russians and the Muslim Tatars. Crimean Tatars were afraid they would not be able to live their life as Muslims. There was fear of forced Christianization.⁷ The second reason was economical, namely losing their lands and increasing land taxes. In addition, there were rumors about Turkey who was giving free good lands for emigrants. It was allegedly written in some letters sent from Turkey to Tatars by their families who emigrated earlier.

This verse was recorded among emigrants to Turkey:

*“Mezarımız ğavur toprağında kalmasın,
Kızlarımız dinsizge bike bolmasın,
Ullarımız ğavurğa asker bolmasın”*

Which means: our graves should not be left in unfaithful lands; our daughters should not marry godless men, our sons should not be in an unfaithful army.⁸

The first emigration started after ending the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1792 and the signing of the Treaty of Jassy between Russian and Ottoman Empires in 1792, which confirmed Russia’s dominance in the Black sea region. Approximately 60,000 Crimean Tatars immigrated to Turkey that time.⁹

During the Russo-Turkish War (1806–1812) the Russian Empire was afraid of some sabotage because the Tatars were always loyal to the Ottomans. Tatars were moved from the coast to the North of Crimea and there were even plans to move them to Siberia.¹⁰ These rumors also caused big waves of immigrations. As a result of them only 1/3 of the population of Crimean Tatar stayed in Crimea.¹¹

The next wave began directly after the Crimean War in 1856-1861 this time 180,000 Crimean Tatars moved to Anatolia,¹² 30,000-40,000 of the number to Dobrogea which was a part of the Ottoman Empire at that time.¹³ The emigration was quite tragic and went through the hard circumstances, thus many Tatars died of diseases and drowned in the Black Sea. The second post-Crimean War migrations happened in 1874 and 1891-1902, and were caused by “rumors concerning the pending Tsarist repression of Islam and the Muslim way of life.”¹⁴ By the time of World War I Tatars in Crimea numbered 25% of the Crimean population when Russians were 50% and the other ethnic groups were 25%.¹⁵

Repressions and Migrations of the First Years of Soviet Union

After the Great October Socialist Revolution, Crimean Tatars got a chance to create their own independent state. Unfortunately, it had a short life (**1917-1918**). In spite of this in the first years of the Soviet regime, the Crimean Tatars had preferential treatment. The **1920s** were the Golden age for all Soviet nations due to the so-called politics of *korenizatiia* when many state institutions work on the development of the ethnic languages, non-religious national traditions, history, and folklore. Thus, the Soviet Union policy aimed to develop and revived the culture of Crimean Tatar.

In 1921, the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was found. It could not be the republic of Crimean Tatars, because Crimean Tatars became a minority in the peninsula, but they certainly were a privileged native nationality. For example, the Crimean Tatar language (in addition to Russian) became the national language of Crimea.

Nevertheless, it did not last long:

By 1927, the Soviet regime had, however, finally established a firm central authority throughout the USSR and new Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, saw the burgeoning national identities in the Union's various ethno-administrative territories as a centrifugal threat to his long-term objective of creating a unified Soviet *Rodina* (in Russian, Motherland) in which the various nationalities were to undergo *sliianie* (literally, "merging" but, in fact, Russification).¹⁶

The 1930s in Soviet Union history are known as the Great Purges or Stalin's repression. At this time, national newspapers, magazines, literature, folklore were forbidden, shut up and destroyed. Stalin made an effort to create so-called *Homo-Sovieticus*, but in these years the Crimean Tatars "developed greater emotional attachment to their Crimea Vatan/ASSR than the larger Soviet Rodina." "This tendency was exacerbated in the Crimea (and elsewhere) by Stalin's ill treatment of national groups during the 1930s. The Soviet Center had killed or deported as many as 40,000 of the Crimean Tatars' newly formed intellectual and political."¹⁷

Before the Russian annexation of Crimea, Crimean Tatars were 80% of the total Crimean population. During different migration periods and repressions, approximately 1.8 million Crimean Tatars moved to the Ottoman Empire what reduced per cent of Crimean Tatars by 21% before their deportation.¹⁸

After World War II the politic of the Communist party was aimed at the destruction of the Crimean Tatar nation and Slavisization of Crimea. The slogan "Crimea without Crimean Tatars" appeared. The Crimean Tatars had been accused of treason and cooperation with the Nazi army, and then in 1944 the whole Crimean Tatar population was deported from the Crimea to Siberia and Central Asia, mostly to Uzbekistan. Many did not survive and died on their way to the place of their exile, where many more died of various diseases: 110,000 out of a total of 238,500.¹⁹ Moreover the immigrants received a cool welcome from their host soviet republics. To create a strong Soviet identity the state needed to find *the Others*.

For the rest of Soviet time Crimean Tatars were labeled as “enemies of soviet nation.” This was the reason why Crimean Tatars lived all the time together and never mixed with other Turk ethnic groups such as Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens et cetera.

Stalin tried to erase more than five hundred years of Tatars presence in the Crimean peninsula. Russian and Ukrainian colonists were sent to live in Crimea. Crimean Tatar material culture was mostly destroyed, many mosques, graves, turbehs were ruined. The whole Crimean Tatars toponyms were replaced with Russian names. Crimean Tatar Literature was forbidden. Crimean Tatar history and folklore was re-written, in the new version, Tatars were shown as robbers and occupants of Crimea. By this way many examples of folklore were lost. This is why it is so important to study Turkish and Romanian material.

The repressions went on until Khrushchev’s times when totalitarian regime was reduced. In 1954, Crimea was connected to Ukraine. In 1957, many ethnic groups who had been deported in Stalin’s time were found not guilty and got opportunity to come back home, every ethnic group but Crimean Tatars. In 1967, Crimean Tatars were found not guilty but did not get permission to come back to Crimea. This was a time when the Crimean Tatar National Movement started. In 1968, the department of Crimean Tatar literature and language was open at the Tashkent Pedagogical Institute.²⁰ This was reason for publishing books of Crimean Tatar folklore in the exile in native language. Mostly fairy tales were published.²¹

When Gorbachev came to power and politics of *Glasnost* started, Crimean Tatars rehabilitation and homecoming became possible. National morale of Crimean Tatars by this time was extremely high. They got as a charismatic leader, Mustafa Dzhemilev. They organized various demonstrations, wrote open letters, and did everything to come back to Crimea. Thus, in 1987 in the Red Square, there was demonstration with slogans “Motherland or death”.²²

Crimean Tatars were approximately fifty years in their exile until “the Supreme Soviet’s decision of 1989 regarding the repatriation of the Crimean Tatars to their homeland caused a large-scale return migration of the Crimean Tatars to Crimea”.²³ These migrations continued until 1991, and by this time about 120,000 Tatars were living in their homeland when about the total population of Crimean Tatars in Central Asia was 500,000.²⁴

In 1991, Crimea became an independent Republic which was subordinated to Ukraine. Crimean Tatars established their own executive-representative semi-official body, namely Mejlis with Mustafa Dzhemilev

as its leader. Crimean Tatars national flag, hymn, and other national symbols of 1917 were renovated. This provides the ability to restore the Crimean Tatar language, to found new religious organizations, to open school, to start publish national newspapers and broadcast TV programs. However, relationships between Tatars and other ethnic groups in Crimea have been very tense since Tatars' returning home.

Ukraine has never been an empire. The state was tolerant to national and ethnic identity of Crimean Tatars. Crimea had been part of Ukraine until 2014 when Crimea again became a part of Russia. The only Crimean Tatar TV channel "ATR" was forced to shut down after failing to register under Russian law in 1 April 2015.

Turkey as a Host Country

The Tatars "felt obligated to immigrate to the Ottoman Empire as *muhajirs* (those who migrate to Islamic lands from the lands of unbelievers to preserve their religious beliefs)."²⁵ The reasons why the Ottoman Empire was chosen for the migration are the following. First of all, both the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans were Sunni Muslims. Besides the Crimean Tatar Khanate and the Ottoman Empire historically had close connections, especially after the 1700s when the Tatar state directly came under the control of the Ottomans.

Crimean Tatars settled the cities around the whole Ottoman Empire such as Edirne, Tekirdağ, Bursa, Eskişehir, Ankara, Istanbul, Konya, Balıkesir, Çorum, Kütahya, Adana. At first Crimean Tatars got a cold welcome from locals because they had to share their lands with new comers. However, common traditions and similar languages helped in closer relationship.²⁶

The important event in the history of the Ottoman Empire, which influenced Crimean Tatars, was establishing the Turkish Republic in 1923. The first president and founder of the Republic, Kemal Atatürk, realizing the multi-ethnic character of the Ottoman Empire, had to "unite the Turkish nation on its territory that was far from homogenous."²⁷ "The government policy throughout the life of the Republic has aimed at the homogenization of the population of Turkey based on Turkish culture and linguistic coordinates. The main tools in this process were education and the press."²⁸ The whole ethnic groups in Turkey were under influence of all-inclusive Turkish identity.

It is possible to say that Crimean Tatars experienced certain pressure from the Turkish state. Crimean Tatar organizations were forbidden, the state warned to use the name “*Turk*” and not “*Tatar*,” by this way the term “*Crimean Turk*” came to existence. Thus, Crimean Tatars have been Turkified and retain only a passive identification with their former homeland.²⁹ Even the Young Turks, who were the most politically active Crimean Tatar intellectual group, accepted Pan-Turkic ethnicity.³⁰

The changed of politics started after the collapse of the Soviet Union when other Turk ethnic groups such as Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazaks attracted attention. The 1990s Turkey has changed its position on the ethnic issue and then Crimean Tatar organizations began to prosper. This was a time for revoking of Crimean Tatar identity. However, urbanization and intermarriages have been challenges for reducing ethnic identity.³¹ Thus, according to Hakan Kırımlı, Crimean Tatars in Turkey were partially assimilated and became hybrid, ethnically and culturally.

However, in spite of the tragic circumstances of the migrations of Crimean Tatars to Turkey and politics of Turkification in the period of formation of Turkish Republic, they “managed to preserve some of their culture (songs, literature, newspapers) but largely assimilated with the surrounding Turkish population over the next two generations.”³² Whereas, Crimean Tatars in Romania have been surrounded by Christians have been not assimilated and have kept their identity on a religious rather than a national basis.³³

Romania as a Host Country

The earliest Tatar existence in Dobrogea was recorded in the thirteenth century.³⁴ It is interesting, that at the same time Crimean Tatars were enemies for their Romanian neighbors which had been living under the fear of their raids for a long period of time.³⁵ From the fifteenth century Dobrogea had been the part of the Ottoman Empire. In Dobrogea, two ethnic groups (Tatars and Turks) have lived together since. Both groups blended with each other. Thus, the term “*Turko-Tatar*” is usually used to describe the community.³⁶

However, constant wars between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires in the end of the eighteenth century were largely fought in Dobrogea. By the way in the beginning of the nineteenth century Dobrogea became depopulated. The Ottoman government needed to find potential

immigrants to settle in Dobrogea. Tax-free lands, religious and cultural rights were advertised in European newspapers by the Ottoman Empire.³⁷ As long as the Russian Empire encouraged Crimean Tatars emigration,³⁸ the Ottoman Empire assisted with their resettlement.

The most active emigration started after the Crimean War (1853-1856). Crimean Tatars settled mostly in the provinces of Constanta and Tulcea, but also outside Dobrogea: in the towns Braila, Cluj, Craiova, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, Iasi, Orsova, Slatina, Timisoara.³⁹ The emigration stopped in 1878 when Dobrogea became a part of Romania according to the Berlin treaty.⁴⁰ Thenadays, Turks, Tatars and Bulgarians were the majority in Dobrogea.⁴¹

The Romanian state offered equal rights to all citizens⁴² by this way the Crimean Tatars cultural identity was preserved. Tatars in Dobrogea were mostly from intellectuals. The important role in preserving of their cultural identity played Tatar Mass Media, namely *Emel*⁴³ magazine (1930-1941). On the magazine's pages, there were publications about Crimean Tatar literature, history and what is more important for the present research Crimean Tatar folklore. The World War II ended the work, and the magazine has continued its life in Turkey from 1960 till now.

Dobrogea several times changed hands between Romania and Bulgaria in the beginning of the twentieth century. The factor forced many Tatars to emigrate to Turkey, as part of *hijra* (migration from unfaithful lands to a Muslim country).⁴⁴ Moreover, the Romanian state made an attempt to settle Romanian population in Dobrogea. By the 1930 there were 22,000 Tatars in Dobrogea and by the end of the World War II both Turks and Tatars formed 28,000.

In 1947 the People's Republic of Romania was declared. The Communist regime stopped emigration of Crimean Tatars to Turkey because unfriendly relations between two states. In the 1950s Romanizing of Tatars and Turks started, but was quite mild in comparison to the Soviet Union. For example, publications in the Crimean Tatar language were not forbidden. National education was available too, but only in primary school. Before the Communism the education of Crimean Tatars was in Turkish, after books in Kazan-Tatar were imported from the Soviet Union.⁴⁵ In spite of isolation from Turkey, Turk-language education survived.⁴⁶ During the Soviet period of history in Romania, there were ant-religious propaganda and some restrictions on Islam, but religion was not totally forbidden.⁴⁷ However the Communist regime led to homogenization process and assimilation of the Crimean Tatar population.⁴⁸

Crimean Tatar National/Ethnic Identity

Crimean Tatar national/ethnic identity has been studied by many scholars. These are separate investigations of identity of different groups of Crimea Tatars those who migrate to Turkey and Romania and those who was deported to Central Asia. However, there is no research which combines three groups together (two voluntary and one forced migration). The comparison could give interesting material for further researches. Initial trial is going to be done in the present article, using the previous works on national/ethnic identities of Crimean Tatars.

It is important to define some notions which are important for the study. Defining ***national identity***, it is possible to say that it is a sense of belonging to one's state/nation. The identity is based on common symbols, language, history, territory, culture, and so on.

It is necessary to distinguish the concepts of national and ethnic identities. National identity is a broader concept. ***An ethnic group*** is a community which shares common values, ancestry, religion, language, rituals, characteristics which are different from other ethnic groups. It is possible to say that the feeling of differences from the others is the most important characteristic for both national and ethnic identities. In the case when an ethnic group is living in a state which official religion is different from its own, *religious identity* could be distinguished.

Dr. Ismail Aydingün and Dr. Ayşegül Aydingün introduced the notion of *cultural identity*. They suggested that the cultural identity has hybrid character. The researchers analyze how different cultures and state politics shaping ethnic and cultural identities. They proofed that it is easier to analyze the Crimean Tatar case from this perspective.⁴⁹ Dr. Ismail Aydingün and Dr. Ayşegül Aydingün criticized the fact that national and cultural identities are used as synonymous. A cultural change, for example, disappearance of certain traditions or language loss, does not necessarily mean loss of ethnic or national identity, because self-consciousness of a group may continue to exist.⁵⁰ Ethnic boundaries are more important than cultural content.⁵¹ Thus, the total loss of culture may still preserve its ethnic and national consciousness. In the case, a group may reconstruct itself symbolically and generally its leaders and intellectuals become leaders of such cultural revival projects.

In the case of Crimean Tatars, a notion of *diaspore* must be defined as well. It is a migrant community which settled outside their natal

territories, but maintains strong collective identities and sometimes feeling of connection with the ex-homeland.

Symbolic ethnicity has connection with the previous notion. It is H. Gans's term, he explained it: "Members of a group may have nostalgic feelings towards their culture and homeland, or they may be proud of their traditions and love them, without necessarily living them in their daily lives. This is a 'state of mind', one that is defined as 'symbolic ethnicity'."⁵²

In the case of Crimean Tatars we have an interesting phenomenon. Crimean Tatars during the three-century existence of the Crimean Khanate, firstly as an independent state, then as a subordinate state to the Ottoman Empire, did not form the national identity; most probably due to the fact that the eighteenth century was not the time for national identities. Crimean Tatars at that time had just strong connection to their land and religion.

After the Crimean Tatar state was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783, Crimean Tatars started to feel strong a national identity which also included a sense of belonging to the Islamic world. Thus, in case of Crimean Tatars two types of identification could be marked out: macro and micro identifications (connection with Islam and Crimea), because "a community can have a strong national identity without being a politically recognized nation and without possessing a state, as in the case of the Crimean Tatar."⁵³

The emigrations of Crimean Tatar to Turkey and Romania led to a crisis of identity among the Tatars who stayed in Crimea. After less than one hundred years of Russian rule and "the Crimean Tatars were a culturally, economically and politically impoverished people with almost no sense of political identity."⁵⁴ Alan Fisher noted that "only a sense of traditional religious identity remains intact".⁵⁵ The same effect happened among Romanian Tatars after connection of Dobruja to the Orthodox Romania.⁵⁶ It is possible to conclude that religious identity is the most constant by the reason of its meta-character.

However, after the 1870s, young Crimean Tatar elite who was studying abroad, and was influenced by nationalism and socialism, which were so popular that time, organized Crimean Tatar National movement which was headed by Ismail Gaspiralı. Edited by him newspaper "*Tercüman*" ("Translator") became the cultural source for the whole Turkish speaking audience. These new movements helped in the redefining of Crimean Tatars identity.⁵⁷ When in 1917 the Crimean independent state had declared, the most important national symbols were created (flag, anthem, oath, martyrs).⁵⁸

The deportation of Crimean Tatars had an aim to erase their national identity. "The Kremlin had erased this nation of 'traitors' from the USSR's ethnic map and it became apparent that the unique Crimean Tatar ethnic identity had been slated for total eradication. Scattered across thousands of miles throughout six Soviet republics with no institutions to maintain their national identity (the Crimean Tatars had no newspapers in their language, no schooling in Tatar etc.)."⁵⁹ It seemed there was no way to restore the identity of the nation.

The important role in the revival of Crimean Tatars' national identity was played by Mustafa Dzhemilev, who had a Mandela-like status among Crimean Tatars in Central Asia, and they gave him the honorary title *Kırımoğlu* ("son of Crimea") for his sacrifices made in the name of his people. He spent fifteen years in prisons and labor camps, making personal sacrifices to bring Crimean Tatars to their ancestral land.

One more factor which helped to save ethnic identity of Crimean Tatars was the fact living of Crimean Tatars as a closed community which strongly differentiated itself from the other ethnic groups in Central Asia. Crimean Tatars always felt guest in Central Asia.⁶⁰ Mixed marriages were forbidden even with Turk ethnic groups such as Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks.

Different situation was for the Crimean Tatars who immigrated to the Ottoman Empire. Mixed marriages were a problem at first, but after all they were accepted, by this way assimilation and losing of their ethnic/national identity began. The loss could also be explained by their strong Islamic identification.⁶¹ It is possible to say that now Crimean Tatars in Turkey have a Turkish national identity and Crimean Tatar ethnic identity.

The most interesting case of Crimean Tatar identity is in Romania. Romanian Tatars changed "the focus of their identity from the traditional religious community approach to the ethnic community approach, the latter marked by a sense of national identity and strong attachment to their motherland Crimea."⁶² At the same time they have a Romanian national identity. For example, the Romanian government generally privilege Tatars over Turks because Tatars look at themselves primarily as Romanian citizens, and only secondary as Crimean Tatars. Turks, on the other hand, identify themselves more with Turkey than with Romania.

Multiple identities are the mixture of two or more different identities, for example Turkish-Tatar identity in Romania. The Soviet Union aimed to merge the whole nations into one soviet nation, and soviet identity had actually become meta-identity for every ethnic group who was living in the Soviet Union. Crimean Tatars managed to preserve their ethnic identity

under broader soviet identity. **Subordinate identity** is national and ethnic identities together. The good example is Turkey, which has many *millets* (ethnic groups) under one Turkish nation.

It is possible to say that identity of Crimean Tatars in Romania is the most complicated and composed of many elements. There are many reasons of the plurality. First of all, the Tatars who immigrated to Romania in the end of the nineteenth century were afraid of their identity because of mythologization and demonologization Tatars in Middle Ages. It was safer to belong to general Muslim or Turkish identity. Choosing the Turkish identity had also material reasons. Turkey supported Crimean Tatars in Romania economically, assisted with national education and cultural development.⁶³ The Turkification was easy due to the original orientation towards Turkey: common religion, shared customs, belonging to the same Turk culture. Mixed marriages between Turks and Tatars were not forbidden and of course children from such couples also choose a Turkish-Tatar identity.

Nadir Devlet wrote that the tendency is common for all Tatars, to pick a mega identity in a place of micro identity.⁶⁴ The term *Crimean Tatar* got an official status in the first years of the Soviet Union.⁶⁵ In their deportation Crimean Tatars lost the word *Crimean* in their name.⁶⁶ Generally the most sensitive for the specification "Crimean" are only Tatars from Crimea, not Kazan Tatars or Siberia Tatars. However, in Romania, the Tatars have less expressed ethnic identity, using mostly Turkish language, prefer to call themselves as "Dobrogea Tatars" or "Romanian Turks."⁶⁷ In Turkey Crimean Tatar are generally called Crimean Turks (*Kırım Türkleri*) and their language is called Crimean Turkish (*Kırım Türkçesi*) because everyone in Turkey who was living in Anatolia was called Turk.⁶⁸

In this case, religion is also very important factor of the duality. Crimean Tatars are related to so-called **faith-based** collective identities. Islamic religion in Romania had been under formal protection *Şeyhülislam* (based in Turkey) until the foundation of the Turkish republic when the whole religious institutions were closed down. In spite of this, Tatar organizations continued to have religious character and their religious identity was stronger than their ethnic identity in inter-war Dobrogea.⁶⁹

Fifty years of communism regime in Romania worsened the situation with Crimean Tatar ethnic identity, because Tatars were afraid of associating with the 'forbidden Crimea' and repression of the NKVD.⁷⁰ There were certain difficulties for religious identity, but not like in the USSR where religion was forbidden. Romanian Tatars kept their religious identity. It should be noted that there was no such a problem in Turkey.

The opportunity to rediscover their ethnic identity was given for the Crimean Tatars in the Post-communist period. In early 1990s Tatars and Turks split by political reasons. The conflict was sparked by the discussion about the assignment of the next Mufti. The separation led to return to their own Crimean Tatar identity and revision of ethnic values in spite of the dominance in Turkish orientation.⁷¹ The twenty-first century is characterized by urbanization and strong secularization which are challenges for religious and ethnic identities.

As a result of this loss/preservation of national identities, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the whole Crimean Tatars from Central Asia, Turkey and Romania had the opportunity to come back to Crimea, but only the Crimean Tatars from Central Asia came back. The reason why the other Tatars did not come back could be explained by many factors such as absence of the real Crimean Tatar state, Russian subordination, losing connections to the historical roots, differences in languages, culture and economical situations. What was different for Crimean Tatars who were living in Central Asia? They were always ready to come back to Crimea. There were some sad examples such as couples did not marry, waiting for their wedding in Crimea.⁷² It could be explained by some practical reasons. In this case the theory of forced and voluntary migrations could be used. In spite of the pressure of the Russian Empire, the Tatars who emigrated to Turkey and Romania, did this voluntarily it was their decision. In the case of the deportation, violence was involved. Deportation was proposed as collective punishment which bound Crimean Tatars.

Greta Lynn Uehling in her book *Beyond Memory*, analyzing the reasons of Crimean Tatars' return, suggested that the trauma of the events helps in the integration of the nation. They were mobilized by sharing their collective memory from the tragic experience and building solidarity. One more proof of the theory is the H. Kırımlı's statement about Crimean Tatars who emigrate to Turkey the twentieth century were emigrants, whereas after twentieth century were émigrés, exactly the latter inspired national thoughts among other Tatars.⁷³

It should be mentioned that oral narratives about the tragic events could be a subject for separate investigation of the relationship between collective memory and certain places. The first attempt was made by G. Uehling who used multigenerational interviews to analyze feelings and memories of Crimean Tatars in relation with political, social, and geographical space.

Folklore as Material for the Analysis of Construction of Ethnic/ National Identities

This paper refers to J. Assmann and Y. Lotman's definitions of cultural memory. According to J. Assmann, cultural memory is a continuous process, in which every culture shape and stabilizes its identity via reconstruction of its own past. On the other hand, Y. Lotman, described it through the definition of culture: culture is cultural memory, a supraindividual mechanism of maintaining and transmitting texts and creating new ones. Combining these two definitions, a new one was suggested in the present article: cultural memory is a myth-making process of a certain nation for the construction of its identity. The analysis of Crimean Tatars legends can give current data about the ways of construction of their national identity.

Construction of an ethnic identity is closely associated with emotions. Therefore, the conceptual and the categorical apparatus of a national identity includes notions "*national pride*" and "*nostalgia*." These concepts appeared in interaction with another ethnic group in crucial moments of their lives. These could be wars, foundations of new countries, migrations, deportations etc. These events stimulated creation of new mythological texts. Extremely productive is studying narratives from different nations which live in one cultural space.

There are following genres in Crimean Tatar folklore: epic poem (*destan*), fairy tale, legend, anecdote, folk song, humorous rhyme (*çin and mani*), proverb and saying. It is interesting that Crimean Tatar folklore does not have folk tales.

Epic poems in Crimean Tatar culture could be prose or poetic narratives about heroic or romantic events in the remote past. The most popular epic narratives are *Qoplandı Batır*, *Edige*, *Çorabatır*, *Köroğlu*. Heroes of the poems generally are shared by the whole Turkic ethnic groups; this is why they are not suitable material for the present research. Fairy tales of any nations have no connection to any historical events, and they could not be used for the analysis of cultural memory and ethnic identity.

Legends, on the other hand, are oral folk narratives about real historical events, historical people or geographical places, which are very important for the society in which they are told. This leads to mythologization of the events and people. Thus, a miracle and a value are important elements of legends. It has to be mentioned that the more significant is the value in a legend, the more incredible is the corresponding miracle. This statement was used as a method for analysis in our previous articles and in two

books. It will be used in the present article as well. To sum up, legends, as short narratives about the recent past, could be good material for studying collective memory and identity among prose narratives in the Crimean Tatar folklore.

Small forms of folklore, such as humorous rhyme, proverb and saying, do not have a plot and cannot be used for the analysis. Crimean Tatars anecdotes have common Turkic hero Nasreddin Hodja and do not have stories about recent past. It should be noted that some part of folk songs are about historical events or love for homeland, but the fact that they are in verse make them less flexible and changeable to compare with legends. Thereby, the focus of the present research is Crimean Tatars legends.

Tatar Folklore in Crimea: Short Characteristic

Crimean folklore is poorly researched and remained unknown both to Ukrainian and foreign specialists. Crimean Tatar folklore was collected in the period between the end of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth century's mostly by unprofessional collectors such as V.H. Kondaraki, N.A. Marx, S.S. Krim, A.K. Konchevskiy, and M.G. Kustova. A few collections of folklore were published, but their scientific level does not meet current anthropological criteria due to the obvious editing of the texts by their collectors and rough handling of references. There were some scientific expeditions organized by the museum of the Bakhchisaray Palace (1925) and Vorontsov Palace in Alupka (1935) in the beginning of the twentieth century in Crimea. Unfortunately, the Stalin's repression of ethnic minorities started shortly after the expeditions, this fact blocked the publication of its materials. The folklore of the post-deportation period in Crimea was considerably edited, national and ethnical features such as national heroes, folk rites and customs were erased, Crimean Tatars were described as enemies in their own folklore. After deportation and returning home, Crimean Tatar cultural traditions were mostly lost. Thus, organized by the Crimean Art Museum and the Research Centre of the Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University field work on Crimean Tatar culture did not detect any pattern of folk narratives among Crimean Tatars in Crimea in 2007-2008 years. Crimean Tatars started to forget their folklore and it became harder and harder to collect it.⁷⁴

To sum up, Crimean Tatars had rich folklore and culture, but it was mainly lost due to migrations and deportation. This is why it was necessary

to check the Turkish and Romanian material for traces of Crimean Tatar folklore. The first waves of immigrations (1792-1902) of Tatars from Crimea to Turkey and Romania are the most important for the present research, because they cover the end of the eighteenth and the whole nineteenth century. The migrations were voluntary in contrast with forced deportation in 1944. This makes Turkey and Romania perfect field for examination of examples of Crimean Tatar folklore. Turkey and Romania are good places for collecting Crimean Tatar legends also due to less oppression from the states like it was in Soviet Russia. The Crimean Tatar folklore in Turkey and Romania is going to be analyzed in the context of losing or preserving of national/ethnic identity. The folklore in the exile period was not studied properly. Hopefully this will be the subject for the future research.

Crimean Tatar Folklore in Turkey

Is it possible to create new folklore in emigration? Or the most important is to save at least what was created before? Folklore generally is about something that is important for people. Nostalgia, homesickness and sadness of impossibility to come back are the adequate subjects of emigrant folklore.

As it could be seen from the history of Crimean Tatar, there were two critical challenges for Crimean Tatars national/ethnic identity: the annexation of Crimea by Russian Empire (1783) and the deportation of Crimean Tatars (1944). Some part of Crimean Tatar migrated to the Ottoman Empire (Turkey and Dobrogea) and the another was forced to move to Central Asia. Both groups of Crimean Tatars lost their homeland. The collections of Crimean Tatar folklore in Crimea were made mostly between these two crucial events. Thus, the motif of losing and missing the homeland, namely Crimea, is constant in many folk narratives that was created in Crimea and then was kept in emigration period.

It should be mentioned that there have not been any field work on Crimean Tatar folklore in Turkey. One attempt was made by Zühal Yüksel, but her aim was to record samples of the Crimean Tatar dialect. She did her research in one district in Turkey, in Polatlı.⁷⁵

Thus, there is no collection of Crimean Tatar folklore that was published in Turkey. However, there are three Crimean Tatars legends which are still circulating among Crimean Tatars such as "Arzı Kız," "Altın Beşik," "Ayuv dağ." Besides their symbolic meaning and description of Crimea

as the most beautiful place in the world, there is a practical reason for the popularity. These are the only legends that were published in Crimea, both in Russian and Crimean Tatar languages.

In the Crimean legend “Arzı kız,” the beautiful girl Arzı was kidnapped from her village Mishor shortly before her wedding. She was sold to the harem of a Turkish Sultan. In spite of her rich life in Istanbul, homesickness made her deeply unhappy. Even giving birth to a boy did not make the situation better. She took her son and threw herself from a tower to the Black Sea. The inhabitants of her village started to notice that the girl with her child went out of the sea and spent some time near her favorite fountain every year. Thus, Arzı chose her homeland over her life and the life of her child.

In the contexts, another Crimean Tatar legend “Aziz” should be mentioned. It was published in revolutionary time in Crimea in one of scientific journals. This was the reason why it did not become popular, but time of collection, 1918, reflects Crimean Tatars’ public mood at that time. According to the legend, a centenarian made a hajj. He was asked to stay in Mecca, to live in the holy place and to serve Allah, but he remembered his homeland, garden and nut wood and decided come back. On his way home, the man was killed by Arabs, but before he died, he asked God to be buried in Crimea and he heard a voice promising him that. When the Arab cut his head, the old man took it under his arm and walked from Mecca to the Crimea. People from his village noticed a grave near his nut wood and saw a green light there, and they understood that this was the grave of Aziz (“saint”). Strong love for native land, the desire of living in Crimea (even though it was not possible), and mythological thinking constituted an unbelievable miracle – the dead man came back to Crimea. In both legends, mythological thinking tries to highlight the value of love for Crimea by using fantastic miracle “dead person returns to home” as a vehicle.

The legend about Auv-Dağ has different way to express love for Crimea. It has poetical and romantic descriptions of Crimean nature trying to say that the Crimea is the most beautiful place in the world. When residents of the Crimea read these lines far from their home, they could have a deep feeling of nostalgia. C. Lévi-Strauss mentioned a similar example of the Aranda myth-telling process. Aranda tribes narrated legends about the place where their ancestor was born with tears and deep feeling of love for the places.⁷⁶

The legend about Auv-Dağ runs as follows, in old times when people of Crimea became very sinful, God sent to Crimea one giant bear to

destroy the villages of those sinners. The bear destroyed everything on his way until he reached the beautiful Partenit valley. He stopped to admire the scenery: "beautiful hills, magnificent gardens, fragrance of flowers, succulent grass, and heavy bunch of grapes, - our lovely Partenit valley." The bear looked at incomparable beauty and riches of the valley and he realized that there had not been more beautiful valley in Crimea and the whole world. He could not ruin the valley and stopped. God turned him into a big mountain as punishment for his disobedience. Now beautiful *Auv-Dağ* ("the Bear Mountain") is a place of health resort for children. In the descriptions of beauty of Crimea, the example of the concept of "nostalgia" could be seen.

The legend about Altın Beşik was also important for Crimean Tatar in the period of their deportation, and it will be analyzed in the context below. Before passing to the next subject it should be mentioned, that Turkey was also mythologized by those Tatars who were living in Crimea before their migrations. For example, names which were used to define Turkey: *Ak toprak*, *hak toprak* (White land, Land of Truth)⁷⁷ or the following metaphor: if Crimea is Tatars' Motherland, Turkey is their Fatherland.⁷⁸

One more example of the mythologization of Turkey is the cycle of legends about Alim. The image of Alim in Crimean Tatar folklore could be compared with British Robin Hood. The Crimean Tatar Robin Hood was a robber who took money from the rich and gave them to the poor. The Russian police was looking for Alim but could not catch him for a long time until one day when they managed to do this. In many versions, Alim was sent to Siberia, but in some variants, he was able to run on his way to the exile and went to Turkey where he became a religious person (*dervish*).⁷⁹ The symbolic meaning of the legend is obvious. Turkey always had been "Promised Land" for Crimean Tatars, and most probably the question "*What if we immigrated to Turkey and did not stay in Crimea*" was asked by Crimean Tatars who experienced hardships in Russian Crimea.

Crimean Tatar Folklore in the Deportation

At time of their Deportation, Crimean Tatars were in danger of losing of their national identity, but they were raised on the idea of Crimea as their sacred homeland. It is a good example of the importance of space and place in creating of national identity. Robert Kaiser defined the concept of motherland as "a powerful geographic mediator in sociopolitical behavior"

and suggested that “the idea of homeland was the dominant stimulus in Crimean Tatar communal activity during the exile period.”⁸⁰

Many scholars wrote about the strong connection of Tatars to their homeland – Crimea. Brian Glyn William wrote that they have “sense of almost mystic attachment to the nation and homeland”. He believes that the concept of homeland (Crimean Tatar *vatan*) was born in the beginning of XX century. For emigrants Crimea became a symbol of a sacred abode.⁸¹

New generations of Crimean Tatars who was born in Central Asia had never saw Crimea, but they had collective memory about Crimea, the mental image of their homeland: “The stories of this homeland were passed on from one generation to another and Crimean Tatar children who grew up in Central Asia never having seen the Crimea, often had very detailed mental maps of their homeland.” Some researchers use poeticization to describe love and connection for Crimea among Tatars, for example, claiming that the first word of Crimean Tatars children was not “mother,” but “Crimea.”⁸²

It is important to point this happened only for Tatars in deportation. Crimean Tatar from Romania and Turkey realized their roots in Crimea. Crimea was always their ancestral land where the graves of the forefathers were left. However, they accept Romania and Turkey as their present homeland. Whereas, Crimean Tatars, who were deported to Central Asia, did not accept “new homeland.” The sense of territorial belonging to Crimea had been developed during many years by the aged or intellectuals.⁸³ The very important role of folklore should not be forgotten. Crimean Tatar art, literature and folklore cultivate the strong connection with native land. The situation leads to mythologization of Crimea.

For example, in literature, the Crimean Tatar poet Cengiz Dagci wrote poems “The Man Who Lost His Land” (*Yurdunu Kaybeden Adam*) or “That Land Was Ours” (*O Topraklar Bizimdi*). Names of journals in Central Asia were “Return” (*Avdet*) and “Homeland” (*Vatan*).

In deportation, the myth of indigenous people was born. There have been a series of discussions about the hybridity of Crimean Tatar origin. The author of the theory is Valeriy Vozgrin who tried to prove that Crimean Tatars are descendants of the Golden Horde, which mixed with the previously-settled in Crimea Italians and Greeks, and later with Anatolian Turks who were coming to Crimea during the Middle Age.⁸⁴ This theory was called “myth of indigenous people.” It was constructed during a really difficult period time for Crimean Tatars. Valeriy Vozgrin’s book was written shortly before Crimean Tatar’s homecoming.⁸⁵ The desire

of Crimean Tatars to prove that they are Crimean indigenous people and not an ethnic minority leads to political determination of Crimean Tatars which has a strong national identity.⁸⁶

The most striking illustration of the myth is the legend about Golden Cradle which became a national legend of Crimean Tatars. The legend was first published in Crimea in 1936 and it was not re-published in the deportation, but it was not forgotten by the people. According to the legend, there were two enemy clans in Crimea, one was native, and another was foreign. When the locals began to lose the war, their leader made a decision to save his people in the following way: he climbed up to an inaccessible mountain, hid a cradle (the sacred object of the clan) in a cave, and charmed it by invoking the spirits of this cave. The war officially was lost, but the fact that the cradle has been still in the cave in one of the Crimean Mountains guarantees that the native clan will continue to live safely in Crimea.

There is an opinion that Crimean Tatars came back from their deportation because they remembered about their cradle hidden in a Crimean Mountain. The symbol of the Golden cradle has the strongest meaning in Crimean Tatar culture. The famous Crimean Tatar artist Ismet Valialuev made a picture "Altın Beşik" (The Golden Cradle) in which the symbolic meaning of the legend could be seen. The legend is used as a proof of belonging of Crimean Tatars to Crimea.

Crimean Tatar Folklore in Romania

As it was said above, Crimean Tatars have double Turk-Tatar ethnic identity, and this influenced their folklore. This material attracted attention both Romanian⁸⁷ and Turkish researchers.⁸⁸ Therefore, there are many collections of Turk-Tatars folklore. These are collection of Turkish-Tatar fairy tales, proverbs and sayings, epic poems.⁸⁹ There is no collection of legends, but the texts of legends and their analysis are included in the book and series of article about Turkish-Tatars legends in Romania.

First of all, it should be mentioned that Romanian folklore itself is very reach and voluminous. Concerning Crimean Tatar legends, it is possible to divide the two groups of narratives: Romanian legends about Turks and Tatars as *the Others*, and Turk-Tatar own legends.

For detection of legends about Turks and Tatars in Romanian folklore the two-volume typology of Romanian legends was used. The author of the

magnificent work, Tony Brill, separated about forty legends about Tatars⁹⁰ and about forty legends about Turks.⁹¹ These legends deserve separate research, but short characteristics of the group should be mentioned. First of all, the legends about Turks and Tatars are separated, but it is possible to see their resemblance. Both Turks and Tatar are described as extremely cruel and savage people. Characteristics of notion about Tatars and Turks are following. They are equated with the mythological creature Căpcăun. Căpcăun is an evil creature in Romanian folklore. The word "Căpcăun" could be translated from Romanian as "dog-head." Thus, in Romanian folklore, căpcăuns have dog heads with one/four eyes, or eyes in the nape. They are black, small, but have big hands. They could eat each other, but prefer eat Christians.⁹² Crimean Tatars in Romanian folklore are shown as Căpcăun and various stories are used to underline their evil character: torturing of Romanians, killing of small children and old men, raping of women.⁹³

Tatars and Turks are both ethnically and religiously different from Romanians. Moreover, the relationship between Turks and Romanians had not been friendly for a long time. These explain the existence of the horrible stories and demonologized of the ethnical and religious others. However, in spite of the demonologization, there are legends about the possibility of peaceful interreligious relationships between Romanians and Turks. Similar research about interethnic and interreligious relationships was done in Turkey and it showed the same results. "The value of the holy is universal to all religions, there are no distinctions between national communities and religions: both Christian and Muslims worship to saint people and their graves, religious building of different nationalities."⁹⁴ For example, in Romanian material, both Christians and Muslims go to graves of the Muslim saint Sarı Saltuk to make wishes and pray.⁹⁵

In opposition to Turkey, in Romania, the Tatar legends which were originally born in Crimea did not survive. This could be explained by strong attachment of the Tatars to Romania which became their first homeland. The fact that Tatars have been living in Romania from the thirteenth century is important factor as well. Romanian Tatars created their own folklore which had connections to Romanian history and landscape.

In the part of the article about Crimean Tatar identity in Romania, its religious character was detected. Tatar and Turkish legends in Romania is one more proof of the fact. Only religious legends were found. The texts are shared both by Turks and Tatars. These legends are about saints and their tombs. They spread mostly in Dobrogea and the most popular

legends belong to the city Babadag. These legends could be related to specific genre *menkabe*. *Menkabes* refer to a folk story about the life of a saint and his miracles which he performs during his life and miracles that happened after his death. In previous research, the detailed analysis of miracles of Turkish saints was made and the research could be used for comparison with Romanian material.

There are many different saints and their sacred places in Dobrogea but the legends about Sari Saltuk are among the most spread and well-known in the whole Turk world. It is possible to say that its main value is dissemination of Islam. The legend includes a feeling of national pride. Memory about ancestors is the most widespread form of cultural memory. The feeling of national pride exists in legends about revering ancestors, heroes, and saints. J. Assmann wrote that saint's monuments and graves unite people; because of this, some cities were founded on the graves of heroes or saints, like it happened to the city of Babadag according to some legends. This material is extensive and requires separate research.

The book *Fata din Mishor, Legendele Crimeei* has to be mentioned. The book was published in 1942 by Arvatu Ioan Georgescu. The collector itself was in Crimea during the Second World War what left a scent on characteristics of the texts. A. Georgescu collected legends from published sources in Crimea and then translated them into Romanian. The collection includes both Crimean Tatar legends and legends of the Christian population of Crimea. It is obvious that the book is edited according political circumstances of those days, and deserves a separate research.

Conclusion

Crimean Tatars had been living as a nation until the end of the eighteen century. The annexation of Crimea to Russian Empire was crucial for the national identity of the Crimean Tatar population which was basically divided into ethnic groups, such as the diaspora in Turkey, the diaspora in Romania, and a specific case, the Crimean Tatar ethnic group who was forced to move to Central Asia and then came back to Crimea after fifty years of their exile. Crimean Tatars who migrated to Turkey and Romania lost their national identity, but managed to keep ethnic one (sometimes losing and finding it again depends on political and historical circumstances). The Crimean Tatars who came back from Central Asia to Crimea were able to save their national identity in spite of, or may be

due to, constant threat to their both national and ethnic identity during tsarist and then Soviet regime.

All three groups of Tatars passed through various types of assimilations: Russification, Sovietization, Romanization, Ottomanization. However, it should be noticed that the most flexible political regime for Tatars was in Romania. As a result, rich folklore materials were found during the present research.

The Crimean Tatar ethnic identity stayed the same, but the cultural identity became hybrid. Interaction with other ethnic groups led to the hybridity in Crimean Tatar culture. What mechanisms were involved to preserve cultural identity? There are factors, which helped in saving of Crimean Tatar identity: a charismatic leader, national intelligentsia, common goals, the tragedy experienced together, and the idea of the homeland, Crimea.

Identity is usually constructed in contrast with *the others*. In case of Crimea, ethnic and religious *Others* were Russians in Russian Empire, Romanians in Romania. The question is, were there the other for Tatars in the Ottoman Empire? Ethnically close and religiously the same, Tatars were assimilated easily in Turkey. This was more challenging for identity than the Soviet repressions. This is why there were no legends detected among Turkish material.

Concerning the subject of *the Others*, the new theme for future research was found. The interaction of the Crimean Tatars with other ethnic groups: in Crimea before and after deportation, in Romania, in Central Asia. Legend material is perfect for the research, when it is possible to find legends about one event or one person in different ethnic groups which live together. Profound material was found in Romania. It is planned to do the investigation of Romanian legends from this point of view in future.

The study of identity of Crimean Tatars helped to understand the characteristics of their folklore in emigration. Losing national and ethnic identity in Turkey, Crimean Tatars could not create new folk narratives. However, some texts were saved and it is not surprising that the dominant motif of the texts is love for Crimea and nostalgia for losing of a homeland.

In the Romanian case, the national identity of Crimean Tatars changed to religious one which has a general character and has nothing to do with the sense of a place, but has the sense of belonging to the Islamic world. This is why Crimean Tatar folklore in Romania has expressive religious character. Romania is a Christian state, which in spite of some attempts to assimilate Tatars has been given the rights for national minorities.

However, there has been essential percentage of Turkish population in Romania. Crimean Tatars and Turks have been living together for a long time and they are mixed by some points. This is why it is difficult to understand what the origin (Turkish or Tatars) has the legends about saints in Dobrogea.

Crimean Tatars in Central Asia were oppressed by the government, but still managed to publish some folklore material. The investigation of folklore in Turkey and Romania showed how important to do the similar research in Central Asia because the materials definitely deserve attention of scholars.

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