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DAS SPIEL DER EMERGENZ.
ASPEKTE LUDISCHER FIKTION UND NARRATION

Das Emergente zeigt sich von selbst her und repräsentiert nichts.

Wolfgang Iser, *Emergenz*

Abstract

Im Mittelpunkt des Beitrags steht die Frage, wie der Modus der Fiktion in der Kontaktzone von Spielen und Erzählen Emergenz moderiert. In dieser Zone nämlich – dem Residuum des Uneindeutigen, Nicht-Eigentlichen, Entpragmatisierten – kommt es zu Effekten, die sich in Verständnis-, Handlungs- und Bewertungsparadoxen geltend machen. Ludische Fiktion – als Spiel im Narrativ und Narrativ im Spiel – begegnet dieser Problematik durch ein kooperatives ‚Modalitätsmanagement‘, das Wirklichkeitsbezüge über das Prinzip ‚geteilter Steuerung‘ zu organisieren erlaubt. Auf diese Weise wird die Emergenz des spielenden Erzählens und erzählten Spielens zum Auftrag der Interaktion.

Keywords: Emergenz, ludische Fiktion, geteilte Steuerung, Modalitätsmanagement

1. Spiel – Modell – Fiktion

In *Galaxy Quest*, Dean Parisots subtiler Star-Treck-Parodie, bekommt die Crew der gleichnamigen Fernsehserie überraschenden Besuch von Außerirdischen. Sie offenbaren sich den Castmitgliedern während einer Fanveranstaltung, um deren Hilfe gegen ihre Gegner zu erbitten. Da die ‚Thermians‘ sich von den Fans der Serie allerdings nicht unterscheiden – sie sind ebenfalls mit serientypischem Equipment ausgestattet und in menschlicher Gestalt erschienen –, hält der Leiter der zerstrittenen Vagantentruppe, Jason Nesmith, deren Anfrage für ein privates Fan Event und überredet seine Crew zur Teilnahme. Die Aliens freilich haben ein

Transferproblem. Da ihnen das Fiktionsbewusstsein mangelt, deuten sie das irdische TV-Spektakel als „historical documents". Die Erstbegegnung zwischen Crew und Aliens führt bei Nesmiths Truppe folglich zum *reality*, genauer: *fictionality check*; die Thermians dagegen bleiben unbeirrt:

> Gwen DeMarco (alias Lieutenant Tawny Madison): „You – know us?"
> *[Gelächter der Thermians]*
> Mathesar: „I don't believe that there is a man, woman or child on our planet who does not. Since we first received transmission from your historical documents we have studied every facet of your missions and strategies."
> Tommy Webber (alias Lieutenant Laredo): „You've been watching the show?"
> Jason Nesmith (alias Comander Peter Quincy Taggart): „Lieutenant, ‚historical documents'."
> Webber: „– historical documents, from out here?"
> Mathesar: „Yes." […]
> DeMarco: „Is this a spaceship?"
> Nesmith: „No. This is a starport for the ship. Would you guys like to see the ship?"
> *[Man präsentiert das Serienraumschiff in Originalgröße]*
> Alexander Dane (alias Dr. Lazarus): „Oh my god. It's real."[1]

Auf dieser Basis – *facts from fiction* – setzt die thermianische Modellbildung im ganzen an und etabliert dabei ein höchst reales Anwendungsprofil. Die SciFi-Show entpuppt sich in der Wahrnehmung der Thermians geradezu als Matrix eines ethischen *self-fashioning*, das ihre Gesellschaft als ganze betrifft:

> Mathesar: „The past hundred years our society had fallen into disarray, our goals and values had become scattered, but since the transmission we have modelled every aspect of our society from your example, and it has saved us. Your courage and teamwork and friendship through adversity. In fact, all you see around you has been taken from the lessons gathered from the historical documents."[2]

Entsprechend umfänglich ist der Erwartungshorizont. Die Thermians erhoffen sich vom Schauspielteam die Rettung aus der Hand des widerlichen Sarris, eines humano-formicoiden Schildkrötenreptils mit klarer Fiktionskompetenz. An Bord des Raumschiffs kommt es folglich

zu erwartbaren Verwirrungen, zu Differenzen der Modalpragmatik und zu Aporien fiktionaler Kommunikation:

> DeMarco: „Jason, we're actors, not astronauts."
> Nesmith: „You guys want to go home? Say the word and we're going home. Pay your bills, feed your fish, fall asleep in front of the TV and miss out on – *all of this.* […] Alexander, this is the role of our lifetime."[3]

Während Nesmith also im realen Weltraum-Setting die Gelegenheit zum Life Action Role-Play (LARP) erkennt, um seinen fiktionalen Rollenspielcharakter auszubauen, ahnt die Crew bereits die Grenze des Projekts. Im Umgang mit den arglosen Thermianern gibt es daher erste Aufklärungsversuche, die das Phänomen ‚Fiktion' vermitteln wollen. Da die Crew im theoretischen Diskurs nicht recht bewandert ist, versucht man mittels einer klassischen *petitio principii* Abstraktes durch Konkretes zu ersetzten, und das Beispiel – auf der Ebene der Gattungen wie des konkreten Exemplars – tritt an die Stelle der Definition. Da Fernsehshows in der Modalkultur der Thermianer aber kein Pendant besitzen, ist der interplanetare Dialog zum Scheitern verdammt:

> DeMarco: „We are not the people you think we are."
> Mathesar: „I do not understand."
> Dane: „Don't you make any TV shows on your planet? Any theater, films?"
> Mathesar: „The historical documents of your culture… Yes, in fact, we have begun to document our history from your example."
> DeMarco: „No, no, not historical documents."[4]

Da sich der Unterschied von *fact* und *fiction* auf der Beispielebene nicht klären lässt, versucht de De Marco einen Strategiewechsel und nähert sich dem Phänomen von Seiten der modalen *agency*:

> DeMarco: „Is there no one on your planet that behaves in a way that is contrary to reality?"
> Mathesar: „Ah, you are speaking of – deception, lies. We have only recently become aware of this concept in our dealings with Sarris. Often Sarris will say one thing and do another, promise us mercy but deliver destruction. It is a concept we're beginning to learn at some great cost. But if you are saying that any of you could have traits in common with Sarris –" *[Gelächter der Thermians]*[5]

Damit aber zeigt sich das Fiktionsproblem als letztlich nicht vermittelbar. Das „concept" des nicht-eigentlichen Sprechens ist den Thermians auch in der Fassung des ironischen bzw. zynischen Diskurses unzugänglich und wird ausschließlich als Täuschung oder Lüge dekodiert. So ist es letztlich Sarris selber, der die Schauspieltruppe gegenüber den Thermianern zum Bekenntnis zwingt:

> Nesmith: „I'm not a commander."
> Sarris: „What did you say?"
> Nesmith: „I said, I am not a commander. [...]"
> Sarris: „Explain!"
> Nesmith *[zu Gwen de Marco]*: „Go ahead, show him the ‚historical documents'."
> DeMarco: „Computer, show the historical documents of the Galaxy Quest missions."
> *[Intro Galaxy Quest]* [6]

Hier nun kommt es zu der filmgeschichtlich denkwürdigen Szene, in der echte Außerirdische und falsche Astronauten ihren Zwist für einen Augenblick beiseite stellen, um gemeinsam den Beginn der Start-Treck-Parodie zu inspizieren (Abb.1a-c):

Abb.1a-c: Space, lies and videotapes: „A moment I will treasure."
Schauspieler und Aliens vor dem Hintergrund der Serie *Galaxy Quest*

Das Modalitätsdesaster führt zum Offenbarungseid, der der klamaukigen Fiktionsgroteske eine ergreifende Note verleiht:

> Sarris *[lacht]*: „Wonderful. You have all done far greater damage than I could have. Bravo, bravo! This is a moment I will treasure. Explain to him [Mathesar] who you all really are!" […]
> Nesmith: „Mathesar, there is no such person as Captain Taggart. My name is Jason Nesmith, I am an actor. We're all actors."
> Sarris: „He doesn't understand. Explain as you would a child."
> Nesmith: „We, uh, we pretended." *[nach Mathesars fragendem Blick:]* „We lied." […] Mathesar, I'm not a commander. I – there is no ,National Space Exploration Administration'. We – we don't have a ship."
> Mathesar *[deutet zum Bildschirm]*: „But there it is."

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Nesmith *[zeigt mit Daumen und Zeigefinger die Größe des Schiffsmodells]*: „That ship is *that* big."
Mathesar: „But inside I've seen many rooms."
Nesmith: „You've seen plywood sets that look like the inside. Our beryllium sphere is – is wire with plaster around it. And our digital conveyor is – it's Christmas tree lights… It's a decoration, it's all fake. – Just like me."
Malthesar *[wimmernd]*: „But why…?"
Nesmith: „It's difficult to explain. On our planet we pretend to – to entertain… – I am *so* sorry. God, I am so sorry."
Sarris: „So now you know."[7]

Der *re-entry* des Nicht-Eigentlichen in sein eigenes, Realität gewordenes Modell fungiert zwar als modaler Schock, begründet aber einen Handlungsdruck, der den Modellbildungsprozess neu kalibriert. Gerade die Detailgenauigkeit, die im Modellurteil der Thermianer „every facet" ihrer Ausgangsmatrix zu Modellobjekten ausformt, mit prognostischem Vertrauen auflädt und und zu Applikaten wandelt, hat das Zeug zur *self-fulfilling prophesy*. Was auf der Ebene der filmischen Fiktion als Parodie des Repräsentationsmodells erscheint, wird in der Modellierungskunst der Thermians erstaunlich funktional. Und siehe da: die Energetik der Beryllium-Motoren funktioniert tatsächlich, der noch nie geprüfte *digital conveyor* beamt und die Beseitigung des üblen Sarris wird in eben dem Moment ermöglicht, da die Crew ihr eigenes Fiktionsbewusstsein aussetzt und das Drehbuch ihrer Fernsehtaten als Programm für zukünftiges Handeln anerkennt. Inverse Emergenz. Indem die Schauspieler ihr Spiel als Postfiktion, als transmodale Handlungskompetenz entwerfen, sprich: verwirklichen, vollenden sie zum einen die Modellbildung der Thermians und liefern, zweitens, einen unerwarteten *re-entry* des Realen in die LARP-Fiktion. Er zeigt sich plakativ beim Aufschlag des realen Shuttles im *convention center* jener Fangemeinde, die in voller *Galaxy*-Montur der Autogrammstunde der Schauspieler entgegenharrt. Mit diesem *loop* des Wirklichen in die Fiktionskulisse wird vor allem der postfiktionale Status des *convention*-Wesens adressiert. Die Nähe des Konzepts zum Gaming[8] zeigt sich dabei idealtypisch in jener Szene, in der Nesmith sich zur Landung seines Schiffs von jugendlichen Fans der Serie lotsen lassen muss. Gerade jene Jugendlichen hatte er zuvor als Nerds beschimpft und unterstellt, sie könnten Wahrheit von Fiktion nicht unterscheiden – hatten sie doch ihre eigene Modellbildung ins Spiel gebracht. So konfrontierte Brandon, Fan der ersten Stunde, seinen Captain mit einem spezifischen ‚*blueprint*'-Problem:

> Brandon: „Hey, Commander, uh […], in ‚The Quasar Dilemma' you used the auxiliary of deck B […] for Gamma override. The thing is that online [my own] blueprints indicate deck B is independent of the guidance matrix, so we were wondering just where the error lies?"
> Nesmith: „There is no ‚quantum flux', there is no ‚auxiliary', there is *no goddamn ship*! You got it?"

Als er seine Fans zur Steuerung des höchst realen Schiffs benötigt, muss der Captain das ernüchterte Fiktionsbewusstsein wieder animieren – was jedoch erfreulich schnell gelingt:

> Brandon: „I just wanted to tell you that I thought a lot about what you said."
> Nesmith: „It's okay, now listen…"
> Brandon: „But I want you to know that I'm not a complete brain case, okay? I understand completely that it's just a TV show. I know there's no beryllium sphere…"
> Nesmith: „Hold it."
> Brandon: „No digital conveyor, no ship…"
> Nesmith: „Stop for a second, stop. *It's all real!*"
> Brandon: „Oh my God, I knew it. I knew it! I knew it!"

Wie Fiktion sich hier in Windeseile in Realität verwandelt, so verarbeiten auch die Thermianer ihr modales Schockerlebnis ohne Rest. Denn da der Auftrag nach der fiktionalen Formel „never give up, never surrender!" von der Schauspieltruppe souverän gemeistert wird, verstehen die Thermianer deren Offenbarungseid *ex post* als Finte gegenüber Sarris. Eine Lüge hat es nie gegeben, es war immer *„all real"*.

So kann es gehen, wenn im Spielen das Fiktive als Reales, im Realen das Fiktive als Spiel emergiert. Für die Thermianer, die ja keine Spieler sind und nur den Schauspielern als solche scheinen, emergiert der Modus der Fiktion in ihrer Alltagswelt. Für Nesmiths Truppe emergiert dagegen das Reale im Fiktiven (ihres Rollenspiels) bzw. die Fiktion (ihr Rollenspiel) im Raumschiff als Reales, das es mit den Mitteln fiktionaler Kompetenz zu steuern und zu kontrollieren gilt. Sie aktivieren also die Pragmatik der Fiktion, und zwar in dem Moment, wo sie nicht länger spielen sondern modellieren. Denn im Modellieren wird das Imaginäre real.[9]

Der Handlungsdruck erzeugt hier also auf der Ebene des genretypischen *emplotment* ein genauso dilletantisches wie effizientes Modalitätsmanagement. Die Differenz von *fact* und *fiction* löst sich auf in den *re-entries* eines autonom gewordenen modalen Zirkels, der im

Genre Film die Funktionalität der ludischen Modellbildung beschreibt. Reale *agency*, so lernen wir, beruht auf Fiktionskompetenz. Die Leistung des Nicht-Eigentlichen im Modellgeschehen (Simulieren), in der ludischen Aktion (Dissimulieren) und in der Fiktion (Erfinden) wird beobachtbar, wo alle drei zugleich vertextet werden, wo die ludische Modellbildung zum Gegenstand der fiktionalen Rahmung wird. Von hier aus lässt sich dann auch zeigen, wie die operationalen Modi ineinanderwirken: Die Modellbildung wird zum Entwurfsgeschehen, die Fiktion wird repragmatisiert, das Spiel ‚macht Sinn'.

Fiktion, Modell und Spiel – in den zentralen Stellgrößen des kreativen Produzierens wird Modalität performiert: anthropologisch auf der Ebene der Spielsubjekte, technisch auf der Ebene der modellierten Gegenstände, ontologisch auf der Ebene des Wirklichkeitsstatuts.[10] Ist das modale Management im Spielen stets auf seine handelnde Instanz zurückbezogen, so entäußert es sich im Prozess des Modellierens ans Modellobjekt, an jenen zum Modell erhobenen realen oder virtuellen Gegenstand, an dem es sich objektivieren kann. In der Fiktion wird das modale Management sich schließlich selbst zum Thema. Da der Modus der Fiktion die Seinsbezüge dezidiert in Klammern setzt, wird dort die Zuschreibung des Wirklichkeitsstatuts mitsamt den Mechanismen, die im Spielen das Subjekt und im Entwerfen das Objekt verändern, ihrerseits beobachtbar.

Man müsste sich gleichwohl die Frage stellen, ob und inwiefern die drei Konzepte, Welthaltungen oder Praktiken nicht aufeinander reduzierbar sind. Ist Spielen eine Art des Modellierens? Ist Modellbildung die Außenseite eines Spielkalküls? Ist das Nicht-Eigentliche im Vollzug des Spielens (Mimikry) und Modellierens (Repräsentation) ein Ausdruck fiktionaler Distanzierung, ja sind Spiel und Modellierung nicht sogar die Quellen des Fiktionsbewusstseins, oder bildet das Fiktionsbewusstsein die Voraussetzung für jede kreative Umformung von Ding und Selbst? Wenn dem so wäre, sollte das Verhältnis zwischen Spielen, Modellieren und Fingieren wenig problematisch sein. So ist es aber nicht. Modell und Spiel z.B. treten in ein Konkurrenzverhältnis, wenn es um den praktischen *re-entry* geht.

Es bleibt somit in der Beziehung der Modalpragmatiken ein Rest, der sich im kulturellen Feld verstärkt zur Geltung bringt.[11] Gerade dort, wo Spielen nicht im Modellieren aufgeht und sich beide nicht in der Fiktion erschöpfen, werden die drei Strategien an der Grenze von Erzeugung, Wiederholung und Erneuerung zum Kontext füreinander.[12] Da schon jedes der Konzepte an sich selbst bereits das Spannungsfeld von Virtuellem und

Realem (Spiel und Nicht-Spiel, Repräsentationssystem und Quellsystem, Fiktion und Faktualität) gestaltet, führt die Abbildung der einen Tätigkeit im Feld der anderen zu einer Form der *Selbstbeobachtung*, die als Beobachtung der zweiten Ordnung gelten kann und Selbst- und Fremdgestaltung als gekoppelte Aktion erfahrbar macht. Im Spielen wie im Modellieren zeigt sich ein Erproben, das *als Probe* im bzw. des Reellen wirksam werden soll. Im Spielen wie im Modellieren ankert somit ein *pragmatisches* Als-Ob auch dann, wenn dieses Spielen oder Modellieren ‚selbstgenügsam‘, also nicht auf eine Einübung konkreter Handlungsweisen oder kalkulierter Abläufe gerichtet ist. Im Sinne Vaihingers sind die Modell- und Spiel-Fiktionen also stets instrumental zu denken, „nützlich" mit Bezug auf ihre Rückbindung an die Gestaltung der Instanz und ihrer Gegenstände.

Beim Spielen wie beim Modellieren handelt es sich um Verfahren des *modalen Managements*, die das Verhältnis zwischen dem Realen und dem Virtuellen offenhalten, ohne damit einem ontologischen Verdikt bzw. der pragmatischen Entgleisung zu verfallen. Dieser Moduswechsel ist ihr eigentliches Element. Man könnte ihr modales Management im Gegensatz zum Fiktionalen daher fast als ‚Modusignoranz‘, zumindest aber als Invarianz bezeichnen, als bewusstes oder unbewusstes Aussetzen bzw. als gezielte Manipulation der Modusgrenzen im Verlauf der Spielhandlung bzw. des Modellentwurfs. Im Spielen wie im Modellieren wird der Modus also nicht als Norm verhandelt, sondern als ein Medium, mit dessen Hilfe Wirklichkeit verfügbar und gestaltbar wird. In diesem Sinn ist Spielen ein Sich-Selbst-Entwerfen, Modellieren ein Bespielbar-Machen eines Gegenstands. Man könnte also Spielen als ein Modellieren fassen, welches das Subjekt betrifft, und Modellieren als ein Spielen, das sich an Objekte hält.

2. *Emergent narratives*

Emergenz – das Auftauchen des Ungeplanten, die Nichtreduzierbarkeit des Ganzen auf die Teile, die Zusammenordnung des Verschiedenen sowie die Typisierung des bis dahin Unmarkierten durch Prozesse autonomer Organisation – ist ein Problem der Wiederholbarkeit und Selbstbezüglichkeit.[13] Denn „Emergenz", so Niklas Luhmann, „ist [...] nicht einfach Akkumulation von Komplexität, sondern Unterbrechung und Neubeginn von Komplexität."[14] In diesem Sinn ist Emergenz sowohl

die Folge rekursiver Wiederholungen (des Trainings) als auch selbst ein Trigger (Trainer) neuer Rekursivität.

Nach dieser Grundannahme lassen sich zwei Strategien dessen unterscheiden, was man ‚Kontingenzmanagement' nennen kann. Da Emergenzen stets auch den modalen Zustand des Systems, sein ontologisches Profil betreffen, handelt es sich hierbei um Verfahren des Modalitätsmanagements. Man könnte sie als *Emergenzvermeidung* und als *Emergenzerwartung* charakterisieren, je nachdem sie Unvorhersehbares unterdrücken resp. marginalisieren oder protegieren. Was sie leisten, wird ersichtlich, wenn man sich ein Grundmodell der technischen Modellbildung vor Augen führt (Abb. 2):
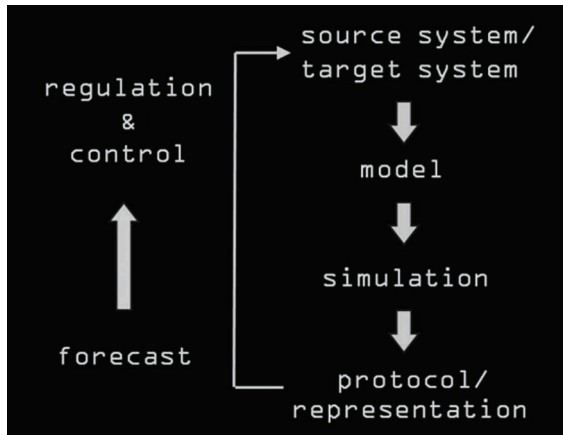
Abb. 2: Technische Modellbildung

Das Grundverfahren aller Steuerungsmodelle ist die Reduktion systemischer Komplexität. Um das Verhalten eines Quellsystems vorherzusagen, wird zunächst ein Repräsentationsmodell erstellt, das ausgewählte Merkmale der Matrix übernimmt – dieselben nämlich, die nach der *Modellannahme* für die Steuerung des Quellsystems entscheidend sind. Auf ihrer Grundlage wird das Systemverhalten simuliert. Die daran anschließende Analyse richtet sich nun nicht mehr auf die Ausgangsmatrix, sondern auf die mittels des Modells vollzogene Simulation. Das Protokoll, das von ihr angefertigt wird, geht dann in die Voraussage des künftigen Systemverhaltens ein. Es liefert die zur Steuerung erforderlichen Daten,

deren Wert und Leistung am tatsächlichen Systemverhalten resp. am Erfolg der Steuerung ermittelt wird. Auf Basis dieses Testverfahrens lassen sich nun die genannten Strategien unterscheiden, die auf die im Simulat erzeugten Emergenzen zielen: 1. Emergenzvermeidung, um die reibungslose Wiederholung des Systemverhaltens zu erzwingen (technisches System), 2. Ermöglichung der Emergenzspielräume, um verändertes Systemverhalten zu befördern (Experimentalsystem).

Man ahnt bereits, dass diese Grundspannung der technischen Modellbildung auch die Erzähltechnik der ludischen Fiktion tangiert. Im Limbus zwischen technischem und Experimentalsystem entstehen Narrative, welcher selber ‚technisch' oder ‚experimentell' zu nennen sind bzw. zwischen diesen Polen hin- und hermäandern. Man kann überdies die These wagen, dass sich ludisch-narrative *Ermergenzbewältigung* nicht nur im Medium des Games vollzieht. Sie könnte auch, wo Ludisches verhandelt wird, ein Gegenstand traditioneller Narrative sein. Versteht man diese dann als Nullpunkt ludisch-narrativer Agency (wie sie das Art Game inszeniert), so stellt sich generell die Frage, ob man fiktionale Narrative nicht weit adäquater fassen könnte, wenn man sie als Simulationen versteht.

a) Poetische Steuerung

Dass fiktionale Welten Emergenzen produzieren oder Emergenzen sind, ist schnell behauptet. Unabdingbar ist hier eine Unterscheidung jener Modellierungsebenen, auf denen Emergenz erscheinen kann. Im allgemeinen ist dies nicht die Ebene der Zeichen. Sind die Welten nämlich literarisch, also textuell verfasst, so ist kaum einzusehen, wo sich in der Welt *fixierter* Zeichen Emergenz ereignen soll. Kombinatorik ist ein Prätext-Phänomen. Der Text (und ebenso der Film) kann sich ja höchstens im Entstehen überraschen, nicht jedoch *ex post*. Das 'Spiel der Zeichen' ist kein Zeichenspiel; es ist die Fährte einer eingefrorenen Dynamik, die auch im Prozess der textgesteuerten Lektüre nicht mehr taut. Ist das Gefüge einmal etabliert, der Zufall ausgewürfelt, dann ist dieses Muster auch beständig, lesbar und tradierbar. Das ist auch die Crux des Experimentalromans, der ebenfalls kein Experimentieren auf der Ebene der etablierten Zeichen (des Romans und des Romangeschehens), sondern auf der Ebene der Programmierung, sprich: der Produktion *zum Text* beschreibt. Insofern ist der Experimentalroman kein literarisches Experiment im Sinne eines Experimental*prozesses*, sondern das Ergebnis

eines solchen, kurz: ein Protokoll. Er produziert aus diesem Grunde keine Emergenzen, sondern lässt sich höchstens selbst als Emergenz, als Resultat der Modellierung einer Matrix und als Applikat im literarischen Sozialsystem verstehen. Dort, im Rezeptionszusammenhang, vermag er Emergenz zu produzieren, freilich nicht mehr als Verfahren an sich selber, sondern als Modellobjekt für fremde literarische und interpretative Modellierungen, auf materialer Ebene wie im semantischen Bereich.

Gleichwohl kann Emergenz zum Gegenstand, zum Thema eines Textes werden. Im Modellobjekt des Narrativs – als *fabula* bzw. als *sujet* der Kommentierung – kann der Text sein Emergentsein modellieren: als Ereignisfolge der erzählten Welt bzw. als Rekurs auf deren Darstellung. Wie schon in Ilse Aichingers Novelle *Der Gefesselte* ist hier der Umstand wesentlich, auf welche Weise die erzählte Welt ihr Emergentsein als *re-entry* in die eigene Modellbildung zurückspielt, prozessiert und indiziert.[15] Gerade weil die Modellierung ontologisch offen ist – in ihrem dreifachen Bezug zum Eigenwert des Noch-Nicht- oder Anders-Modellierten (Matrix), ihres Gegenstands (Modellobjekt) und ihrer eigenen Interventionen (Applikat) – erfasst sie die Dynamik ihrer Emergenzen, ihre Fähigkeit zur Distinktion und Proliferation. „Den emergenten Realitäten", konstatiert auch Iser, „eignet [...] die Eigenschaft, sich selbst fortzuzeugen."[16] Emergenz erscheint somit als „Modalität" einer „Rekursion",[17] die in sich selbst dynamisch ist: „Wenn daher eine Figuration des Emergenten zu einem vermeintlichen Produkt gerinnt, so ist dieses nicht mehr das Emergente, sondern dessen von außen aufgesetzte Interpretation".[18] Es ist der Auftrag dieses Beitrags, darzulegen, dass sich eine solche Interpretation (und damit die Vergegenständlichung des Emergenten) nicht nur einfach ‚aufsetzt', *sondern von der immanenten Modellierung mitgesteuert wird*. Im fiktionalen Text, so meine These, wird (im Gegensatz zur außerfiktionalen Modellierung) das Verhältnis zwischen Rekursion, Iteration und Emergenz als Ausdruck einer doppelten Pragmatik ausgehandelt: *der geteilten Steuerung*. Dies wiederum wird nirgends deutlicher als im *self-fashioning* des digitalen Spiels.

‚Beim Wort genommen' und ins Bild gesetzt ist diese Emergenz im Independent Game *Bientôt l'été.* Auf allen Ebenen des Game Designs – im Algorithmus, in der Storyworld, im Gameplay – emergieren Phänomene, deren Emergenz als solche sichtbar und zum Thema wird. Was hier erscheint, erscheint um des Erscheinens willen, gleichsam zufällig und doch von höchster Systemrelevanz. So steigen bei der Wanderung des

Avatars am Strand Fragmente eines Textes auf, die sich zugleich im Sand einschreiben – und vergehen (Abb.3).
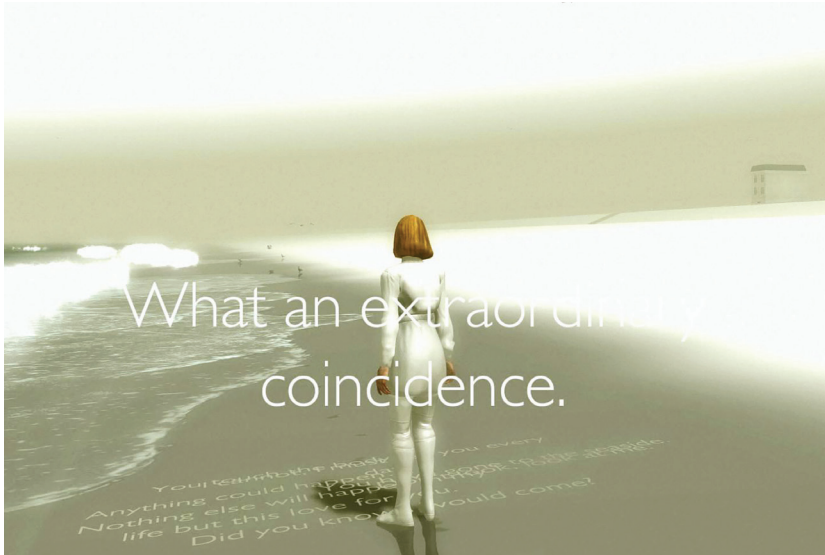
Abb.3: *Emergent narrative* – Fragmentpoetik im ludischen Sand

Temporalität gerät hier im direkten Sinne ‚in den Blick'. Zum einen dadurch, dass das Emergente flüchtig ist, zum anderen durch seine Fortpflanzung in rekursiven Serien, die die Wanderung als Ganze in ein emergentes Phänomen verwandeln und zugleich verstetigen. Die Avatarbewegung funktioniert dabei als Generator jener Emergenzen, die der Avatar als Emergenzmaschine prozessiert. Hier wird dann in der Tat, wie Derrida so treffend sagt, ‚Präsenz zerissen',[19] denn im Spiel bleibt die Bewegung gleichsam zeit- und ursprungslos. Hier gleiten die Signifikanten einmal wirklich – aber wird man hoffen dürfen, dass sie diese „Unbestimmtheit" ‚feiern', die „*Substitution vorgegebener, existierender und präsenter Stücke*", wie der postmoderne Denker sie als Ausdruck des ‚sicheren Spiels' definiert?[20] Vollzieht *Bientôt l'été* womöglich *l'aventure seminale de la trace?* Oder träumt es nicht vielmehr davon, „eine Wahrheit und einen Ursprung zu entziffern, die dem Spiel und der Ordnung des Zeichens entzogen sind, und erlebt die Notwendigkeit der Interpretation gleich einem Exil"?[21] In jedem Falle lässt sich seine Emergenzbewegung

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auch als *evocatio*, als *revocatio* versunkener *memoria* beschreiben, als – mit Derrida gesprochen – ‚nostalgisches Spiel'. Ein solches aber ist bedeutungsschwer. Das Spiel bereitet daher einen Rahmen – wenn man will: Ereignisraum – für emergente Narrative eben dadurch, dass es sein Verfahren sichtbar macht: sein Modalitätsmanagement. Denn „Emergenz […] befaßt sich mit den Modalitäten, *wie* etwas in die Welt kommt […], das Erscheinen von etwas, das es vorher nicht gab."[22] *Bientôt l'été*, der Name sagt es schon, verweist auf das Erscheinen eines Künftigen, in dem es dieses Künftige als gegenwärtiges Entstehen simuliert.

Im literarischen Diskurs ist das Verhältnis zwischen Spiel und Narrativ seit jeher auf das Spiel der Spiele ausgerichtet, auf den Prototyp des strategischen *agon*: Schach. Gerade hier, am Beispielfall des reinen *ludus*, dessen Regelwerk gerade keine Emergenz zu fördern scheint, entzünden sich die Phantasien. Und gerade hier ereignen sich die Transgressionen und Transformationen, die schon Caillois erahnt, doch *sub specie ludi* verwirft. Man könne sich, so schreibt er unter dem nicht wirklich kompromissbereiten Titel *Korruption der Spiele*, durchaus

> fragen, was aus den Spielen wird, wenn die strenge Abschließung, die ihre idealen Regeln von den diffusen und listigen Gesetzen des Alltagsdaseins trennt, ihre unerlässliche Eindeutigkeit einbüßt. Natürlich können sie sich nicht so, wie sie sind, jenseits des für sie reservierten Terrains ausbreiten (Schachbrett, Damebrett, Ring, Piste, Stadion oder Bühnenraum), noch die ihnen zugeteilte Zeit überschreiten, deren Ende unwiderruflich den Abschluß eines Zeitabschnittes bedeutet. Sie würden sonst zwangsläufig sehr viele und zweifellos recht unerwartete Formen annehmen.[23]

Zweifellos. Im literarischen Diskurs ist diese Einsicht alles andere als neu. Bereits im Jahre 1943 stellt sich der Erzähler in der *Schachnovelle* Stefan Zweigs die ebenso rhetorische wie interdiskursive Frage (und entwirft so faktisch eine Gegenposition zu Caillois' erst 1958 publiziertem Plädoyer):

> Aber macht man sich nicht bereits einer beleidigenden Einschränkung schuldig, indem man Schach ein Spiel nennt? Ist es nicht auch eine Wissenschaft, eine Kunst, schwebend wie der Sarg Mohammeds zwischen Himmel und Erde, eine einmalige Bindung aller Gegensatzpaare; uralt und doch ewig neu, mechanisch in der Anlage und doch nur wirksam durch Phantasie, begrenzt in geometrisch starrem Raum und dabei unbegrenzt in seinen Kombinationen, ständig sich entwickelnd und doch steril, ein

> Denken, das zu nichts führt, eine Mathematik, die nichts errechnet, eine Kunst ohne Werke, eine Architektur ohne Substanz und nichtsdestominder erwiesenermaßen dauerhafter in seinem Sein und Dasein als alle Bücher und Werke […]. Wo ist bei ihm Anfang und wo das Ende?[24]

Diese Aufwertung des Spiels im Gegensatz zum Text weist nicht nur auf die ludologisch-narratologische Debatte voraus. Sie indiziert zugleich, was in der Schach-Novelle folgen wird: die narrative Ausfaltung gerade jenes Überschusses, den das Ludische allein erzeugen, aber in der offenen Struktur des Spielens nicht erzählen kann. Denn der Verweis auf Ursprungslosigkeit und Abschlusslosigkeit bezieht sich ja nicht auf die ludische Struktur des Spielens (dessen Ausgangspunkt und Ende sind klar definiert); es zielt vielmehr auf jene Unverfügbarkeit des Narrativen, die das Ludische aus sich entlässt. Es wird erst greifbar durch den doppelten *re-entry* – des vom Ludischen erzeugten Narrativen und des Ludischen als Narrativ – im fiktionalen Text.

Berichtet wird bekanntlich die Geschichte einer Arretierung, die ein intradiegetisch-homodiegetischer Erzähler namens „Dr. B." im Laufe einer Kreuzfahrt einem Ich-Erzähler erster Ordnung erzählt. Veranlasst wird sie durch die ungewöhnliche Erscheinung eines Schachweltmeisters, den der Ich-Erzähler kennenlernen will. Als schließlich ein Turnier zustandekommt, erweist sich Dr. B. als Spieler ersten Ranges; die Geschichte seiner Virtuosität im Schachspiel wird zum Kristallisationspunkt der Erzählung selbst. Die *Schachnovelle* produziert zu diesem Zweck den Nullpunkt aller Diskursivität, den wahrnehmungs-, aktions- und medienfreien Raum, der sich als Nullpunkt eines ludischen Entwurfsgeschehens zu erkennen gibt. Auch Dr. B. beginnt – wie der Gefesselte in Aichingers Novelle – seine Spielkarriere als Gefangener:

> [D]ie Tür blieb Tag und Nacht verschlossen, auf dem Tisch durfte kein Buch, keine Zeitung, kein Blatt Papier, kein Bleistift liegen, das Fenster starrte eine Feuermauer an; rings um mein Ich und selbst an meinem eigenen Körper war das vollkommene Nichts konstruiert. […] Auge, Ohr, alle Sinne bekamen von morgens bis nachts und von nachts bis morgens nicht die geringste Nahrung, man blieb mit sich, mit seinem Körper und den vier oder fünf stummen Gegenständen […] rettungslos allein.[25]

Der im Hotelzimmer gefangene Protagonist des Binnentextes ist der Programmierer und der Spieler, aber auch der Avatar *in ludo nascendi*. Er

befindet sich in jener restriktiven Urszene aus Orientierungslosigkeit und Amnesie, die für den *character* des Gaming typisch ist („man lebte wie ein Taucher unter der Glasglocke im schwarzen Ozean dieses Schweigens"),[26] deren ‚konstruiertem Nichts' man also nur durch die gezielte (und geleitete) Erstellung eines eigenen Konstrukts entgeht: Charakter-Bildung im direkten Sinn. Im Spiel wird diese Konstruktion zum Gegenstand der Performanz, im Text zum Reflexionspunkt seines Narrativs. Die Anleitung zum Spiel erhält der Held der *Schachnovelle* Dr. B. in einer Textform, die schon zum Programm geronnen ist:

> Verdrossen blätterte ich die Seiten durch, um vielleicht dennoch etwas Lesbares zu entdecken […]; aber ich fand nichts als die nackten quadratischen Diagramme […] und darunter mir zunächst unverständliche Zeichen, a2–a3, Sf1–g3 und so weiter. Alles das schien mir eine Art Algebra, zu der ich keinen Schlüssel fand.[27]

Erst mit der Zeit gelingt es, „die rein graphischen Diagramme" in „eine Sprache" rückzuübersetzen,[28] in die Sprache einer ludischen Modellbildung. Durch ihr Modellurteil gelingt der Aufbau eines eigenen Modellobjekts, das aus der Matrix der gegebenen Modelle (der historischen Partien) und des eigenen Profils (aus ‚selbstgemodelten' Figuren) Sinnstrukturen konstruieren kann:

> Dann begann ich aus kleinen Krümeln, die ich mir von meinem Brot absparte, in selbstverständlich lächerlich unvollkommener Weise die Figuren des Schachs, König, Königin und so weiter, zurechtzumodeln; nach endlosem Bemühen konnte ich es schließlich unternehmen, auf dem karierten Bettuch die im Schachbuch abgebildeten Positionen zu rekonstruieren.[29]

Bis zu diesem Punkt verbleibt das ‚Modeln' ganz im Rahmen eines Repräsentationsmodells. Das Applikat wird hier zum Spiegel seiner Matrix, zur Modell-Imitation. Dies hat auch Vorteile: „Nach weiteren vierzehn Tagen war ich mühelos imstande, jede Partie aus dem Buch auswendig – oder, wie der Fachausdruck lautet: blind – nachzuspielen; jetzt erst begann ich zu verstehen, welche unermeßliche Wohltat mein frecher Diebstahl [des Schachbuchs] mir eroberte."[30] Als Spiel jedoch befreit die Modellierung jene ‚inhärente Performanz', die Iser in der Mimesis verborgen sieht, und übersteigt die Repräsentation im Sinne einer eigenen

„Funktionsgerechtigkeit".[31] Am Werk ist hier die Macht des Applikats: „Als eine Aktivität […], die den Gegenstand im Blick auf die von ihm zu erfüllende Funktion ausstattet, beginnt sie [die Mimesis] zwangsläufig, diesen zweckentsprechend zu machen."[32] Auch der metadiegetische Erzähler sieht dies so: „[I]ch hatte mit einemmall Tätigkeit – eine sinnlose, eine zwecklose […], aber doch eine, die das Nichts um mich zunichte machte, ich besaß mit hundertfünfzig Turnierpartien eine wunderbare Waffe gegen die erdrückende Monotonie des Raumes und der Zeit."[33] Der neue Zweck – die quasi-mystische Vernichtung eines Nichts – wirkt als *re-entry* auf die Matrix selbst zurück, auf ihre Modellierung im Modellobjekt. Dort nämlich ändert sich ihr ontologisches Modalprofil, wenn man so will: ihr Aggregatzustand. Die graphischen Modelle des konkreten Schachbuchs werden wie die materiellen, also Schachbrettimitat und Schachfiguren, virtuell:

> [N]ach weiteren acht Tagen benötigte ich nicht einmal die Krümel auf dem Bettuch mehr, um mir die Positionen aus dem Schachbuch zu vergegenständlichen, und nach weiteren acht Tagen wurde auch das karierte Bettuch entbehrlich; automatisch verwandelten sich die anfangs abstrakten Zeichen des Buches a1, a2, c7, c8 hinter meiner Stirn zu visuellen, zu plastischen Positionen. Die Umstellung war restlos gelungen: ich hatte das Schachbrett mit seinen Figuren nach innen projiziert und überblickte auch dank der bloßen Formeln die jeweilige Position […].[34]

Das ist bemerkenswert: Die Konkretion geschieht im Virtuellen, das Abstrakte wird zum ‚Plastischen' erst in der Virtualisierung eines – kognitiven – Spielmodells. Die Virtualität erleichtert somit die konkrete Prozessierung, sie ermöglicht durch die Bildwerdung der Formeln einen Über-Blick. Zusammen mit der neuen Zwecksetzung verwandelt diese Virtualisierung Repräsentation in Simulation:

> Das aber heißt nichts weniger, als daß der Gegenstand [der Mimesis als Repräsentation] immer im Zustand einer latenten Simulation anwesend ist. Ja vielleicht ist es sogar das zunehmende Ziel der Performanz im Mimesiskonzept, den nachzuahmenden Gegenstand mehr und mehr – wenngleich anfänglich uneingestandenermaßen – zu simulieren.[35]

Dies gilt insbesondere, wo Mimesis im dramentechnischen Verständnis Mimesis von Handlung ist. Die Janusköpfigkeit des Mimesiskonzepts,

das zwischen der genauen Repräsentation (der möglichst unverfälschten Wiedergabe, Stellvertretung und Zurschaustellung der Gegenstände und Aktionen) und der eigenwertigen Simulation (der Produktion funktionsgerechter Applikate einer Ausgangsmatrix) schwankt, erscheint auch auf der Ebene des Spiels. Doch erst im Medium des Spiels, im Drama wie im digitalen Game, wird die latente Performanz des Repräsentationsmodells, das „bloße Nachspielen",[36] zum faktischen Entwurfsmodell. Hier werden die Objekte zu dynamischen Prozessen, aus Latenz wird Emergenz. Der Held der *Schachnovelle* deutet auf den Umschlagpunkt, auf jene Schwelle, wo das Repräsentationsmodell an Kraft verliert:

> Plötzlich stand ich neuerdings vor dem Nichts. Denn sobald ich jede einzelne Partie zwanzig- oder dreißigmal durchgespielt hatte, verlor sie den Reiz der Neuheit, der Überraschung, ihre vormals so aufregende, anregende Kraft hatte sich erschöpft […]. Um mich zu beschäftigen […], gab es nur einen Weg auf dieser sonderbaren Irrbahn; ich musste mir statt der alten Partien neue erfinden. Ich mußte versuchen, mit mir selbst oder vielmehr gegen mich selbst zu spielen. […] Das bloße Nachspielen der Meisterpartien […] war schließlich nichts als eine reproduktive Leistung gewesen, ein reines Rekapitulieren einer gegebenen Materie […], eine disziplinierte Tätigkeit […].[37]

Man kann die Überwindung dieses „Exercitium mentale"[38] als Befreiung aus den Zwängen materialer oder medialer Restriktionen lesen, doch die Virtualisierung ist nicht ohne Risiko. Der Held der *Schachnovelle* jedenfalls beschreibt den Wandel der Modelle als prägnante Dezentrierung der Persönlichkeit. „Nur darum", so sein Fazit mit Bezug auf das Verfahren reiner Repräsentation, „war diese Tätigkeit für meine erschütterten Nerven eine so heilsame und eher beruhigende gewesen, weil ein Nachspielen fremder Partien nicht mich selber ins Spiel brachte […]."[39] Dagegen wird im nicht-reproduktiven, emergenten Gaming auch der Spieler selbst aufs Spiel gesetzt. Die *Schachnovelle* diskutiert den Fall *avant le jeu*. Die Rede wird an dieser Stelle analytisch; auch stilistisch nähert sich die literarische *narratio* des Spielers einer ludischen Modelltheorie:

> Ich deutete Ihnen schon an, daß meiner Meinung nach es an sich schon Nonsens bedeutet, Schach gegen sich selber spielen zu wollen; aber selbst diese Absurdität hätte immerhin noch eine minimale Chance mit einem realen Schachbrett vor sich, weil das Schachbrett durch seine Realität

immerhin noch eine gewisse Distanz, eine materiale Exterritorialisierung erlaubt.[40]

Der „Spielzwang", der sich einstellt, wenn der Spieler selbst ‚ins Spiel' gelangt, wird mit derselben pathologischen Begrifflichkeit beschrieben, die man vom Diskurs des Gaming kennt. Der Virtuose prägt sogar „den bisher medizinisch unbekannten" Namen „Schachvergiftung",[41] eine Krankheit, die zu „manische[r] Erregung" und „Besessenheit",[42] vor allem aber zum *re-entry* der geglückten Immersion in die Struktur des aktualen Denkens führt. Sie führt zugleich in eine zweite Form der Virtualisierung, in den Traum:

> Ich konnte nur noch Schach denken, nur in Schachbewegungen, Schachproblemen; manchmal wachte ich mit feuchter Stirn auf und erkannte daß ich sogar im Schlaf unbewußt weitergespielt haben mußte, und wenn ich von Menschen träumte, so geschah es ausschließlich in den Bewegungen des Läufers, des Turms, im Vor- und Zurück des Rösselsprungs.[43]

So wurde, was als Therapie gedacht war, zum Modellfall eines Krankheitsbilds. Auch späterhin lässt sich die Virtuosität der virtuellen Modellierung nicht mehr ins Reale übertragen, sie wird kein Modell für Aktualität:

> Wie magnetisch festgehalten starrte ich auf das Brett und sah dort meine Diagramme […] als reale Figuren, aus Holz geschnitzt; um die Stellung der Partie zu überblicken, mußte ich sie unwillkürlich erst zurückmutieren aus meiner abstrakten Ziffernwelt in die der bewegten Steine.[44]

Der *re-entry* in die Materialität gelingt nur unvollständig, so dass in der Fülle der Phantome, die das „Traumschach" auch im Wachen liefert,[45] kein reales Schachspiel mehr gewonnen werden kann:

> Mit einem stieren, fast irren Blick ins Leere vor sich starrend, murmelte er [Dr. B.] ununterbrochen unverständliche Worte vor sich hin; entweder verlor er sich in endlosen Kombinationen, oder er arbeitete – dies war mein innerster Verdacht – sich ganz andere Partien aus […]; immer mehr beschlich mich der Verdacht, er habe […] uns alle längst vergessen in dieser kalten Form des Wahnsinns […].[46]

In der Tat geht die reale Spielwelt schließlich im Phantasma unter:

> „Aber der König gehört doch auf f7 … er steht falsch, ganz falsch. Sie haben falsch gezogen! Alles steht ganz falsch auf diesem Brett … der Bauer gehört doch auf g5 und nicht auf g4 … das ist doch eine ganz andere Partie … Das ist …" Er stockte plötzlich.[47]

Angesichts der so markant gescheiterten Pragmatik muss man schließen: ‚Traumschach' ist kein *serious game*. Man kann daraus nichts für das Leben lernen, außer, dass man es vermeiden muss. Wo mit so großem Aufwand, solcher Modellierungskraft, so viel verloren geht, was bleibt da als Gewinn? Die Einsicht, dass die Virtualisierung der Modellobjekte die Funktionsgerechtigkeit der Modellierung unterlaufen kann; dass Emergenz, die sich im Virtuellen bildet, schwer zu kontrollieren ist. Zugleich gibt Zweigs Phantasma eines exzessiven Immersionsprozesses Einblick in die Praktiken der ludischen Modellbildung: in die Verfahren der Entfesselung von Emergenz und in die Kraft des Narrativs, das diesen ludischen Prozess zusammenhält. So ist die *Schachnovelle* letztlich nicht nur eine Darstellung der ludischen Modellbildung und *cura sui*, sondern auch eine Allegorie der poetischen Steuerung. Was auf der Ebene des virtuellen Spiels misslingt, gelingt in der Fiktion: Denn durch den *entry* jener ludischen Modellbildung ins Narrativ der *Schachnovelle*, der dann als *re-entry* der vom Helden selbst erzählten Modellierung in die ludische Situation der Rahmenhandlung – das reale Schachspiel zwischen Dr. B. und einem Champion – mündet, reflektiert der Text bereits die Möglichkeiten narrativer Schließung vor der Macht des Ludischen. Die *Schachnovelle*, um es zugespitzt zu formulieren, zeichnet ein Szenario, das im Bereich des Phantasmatischen – der virtuellen Emergenz – ein narratives Steuerungsverfahren gegen eine ludische Bedrohungslage profiliert. Es handelt sich, noch stärker formuliert, um Emergenzkonkurrenz:

> Er stockte plötzlich. Ich hatte ihn heftig am Arm gepackt oder vielmehr ihn so hart in den Arm gekniffen, daß er selbst in seiner fiebrigen Verwirrtheit meinen Griff spüren mußte. Er wandte sich um und starrte mich wie ein Traumwandler an. „Was … wollen Sie?" Ich sagte nichts als „Remember!" und fuhr ihm gleichzeitig mit dem Finger über die Narbe seiner Hand. Er folgte unwillkürlich meiner Bewegung, sein Auge starrte glasig auf den blutroten Strich. Dann begann er plötzlich zu zittern, und ein Schauer lief über seinen ganzen Körper. „Um Gottes willen", flüsterte er […]. „Habe ich etwas Unsinniges gesagt oder getan… bin ich am Ende wieder…?"

„Nein", flüsterte ich leise. „Aber Sie müssen sofort die Partie abbrechen, es ist höchste Zeit […]."[48]

Hier steuert ein Erzähler einen Spieler, und er steuert ihn mithilfe eines Doppelzeichens, das als Geste (Griff) und Codewort (Eingabe) die Macht des ludischen Phantasmas zähmt.[49] Der Spieler wird hier selbst zum Avatar des homodiegetischen Erzählers, der auf diese Weise, als ein steuernder, zum Spieler zweiter Ordnung wird. Als solcher wandelt er das emergente Narrativ *des* Traumspiels, das aus einer ludischen Aktion *entsteht*, zur Narration *vom* Traumspiel, das die ludische Modellbildung *erzählt*. Das Binnennarrativ des Spielers wird erkennbar als mobile Transform, die der Spielbeobachter beobachtet und die er – diegetisch steuernd – zur Novelle fixiert. Das also ist das produktionsästhetische Kalkül, man könnte sagen: das Modellurteil des Aufrufs, ‚die Partie rasch abzubrechen', um im narrativen Simulat die Emergenz des Ludischen zu bannen: Textökonomie. Was könnte sich für diese durchaus heikle Modellierung besser eignen, als ein eingeführtes und stabiles Textmodell: als die Novelle, die Gattung der erzählten Emergenz schlechthin.

So also arbeiten das Ludische im Narrativen und die Virtualität in der Fiktion. Wie ist es umgekehrt? Wie arbeitet das Narrativ im Ludischen, wie die Fiktion im virtuellen Modus?

b) Die Spielfiktion

Es ist nicht überraschend, dass sich immer dann, wenn das Problem der intermedialen Modellierung ruchbar und am Gegensatz von Spielen und Erzählen aufgerufen wird, das Spiel der Spiele einstellt: Auch *Bientôt l'été* verhandelt seine Story am Modellspiel Schach. So werden die beim Strandgang emergierenden Fragmente aufgelöst, zugleich jedoch in die Erinnerung der Avatare eingetragen, also memoriert. Zum Einsatz kommen sie bei einer Partie Schach, bzw. dem, was von der Matrix dieses Genres übrigbleibt. Sie findet statt in einem schlossartigen Anwesen, dem einzigen Objekt in dem der Uferpromenade abgewandten Teil des Raums. Betritt man dieses Schloss, so wechselt man in eine *first person perspective*, die ein schlichtes Schachbrett zeigt, umgeben von der Aura (Stimmen, Lichtwechsel, Geräusche) eines *film-noir*-haften französischen Cafés (Abb.4).

Abb.4: Schach-Palimpsest – Die Kreise deuten textaktive Stellen an; am Rand des Spielfelds sieht man schemenhaft die Avatare; Gauloise und Rotwein rechts

An diesem Brett entwickelt sich ein schemenhafter ‚Wortwechsel' im buchstäblichen Sinne, der sich zwischen dem geführten Avatar (bzw. seinem Schatten) und dem Schatten eines Gegenübers, dem vom Spiel bereitgestellten weiblichen bzw. männlichen Pendant vollzieht. Der Austausch der am Strand gesammelten Fragmente wird durch Schachfiguren ausgeführt, die wie die Textfragmente selbst zuvor gesammelt worden sind. Zu diesem Zweck verdoppeln sich im Game-Design die Emergenzen, da das Spiel den Avatar nach jedem Spieldurchgang mit „Apparitions" überrascht. Im Gegensatz zur Textualität der Strandfragmente handelt es sich hier um feste Gegenstände (etwa ein Klavier, ein Radio, einen Tennisplatz), die sich beim Anblick zu Visionen steigern, dann verblassen und zu unspektakulären Schachfiguren werden. Diesen freilich haften nun die textuellen wie die visuellen Referenzen ihrer Ausgangsemergenzen an.

Wenn nun die Avatare ihre Schachfiguren wechselseitig auf dem Brett platzieren, evozieren sie zugleich die Text- und Bildfragmente, die an sie gebunden sind. Sie aktualisieren sichtbar ihre Avatar-Memoria. Auf diesem Weg entsteht ein ebenso gespenstischer wie mühevoller Dialog,

der im Modelltext einer krisenhaften Liebesdiskussion existentielle Tiefe und extreme Emotion suffliert. Dies freilich stilecht mit den unterkühlten Stimmen eines – unabhängig von der Spracheinstellung stets französisch sprechenden – *film-noir*-Personals. Mit dieser Umwidmung und Überformung des Modellspiels Schach entwirft *Bientôt l'été* ein ludisches Symbolgefüge, wie es Zweig als pathologisches System entwickelt oder Hermann Hesse für das „Schema" seines ‚Spiels der Spiele' proklamiert:

> Ein Leser, welcher das Glasperlenspiel nicht kennen sollte, möge sich ein solches Spielschema etwa ähnlich vorstellen wie das Schema einer Schachpartie, nur daß die Bedeutungen der Figuren und die Möglichkeiten ihrer Beziehungen zueinander und ihrer Einwirkung aufeinander vervielfacht gedacht und jeder Figur, jeder Konstellation, jedem Schachzuge ein tatsächlicher, durch eben diesen Zug, diese Konfiguration und so weiter symbolisch bezeichneter Inhalt zuzuschreiben wäre.[50]

Spiele dieser Art, so muss man schließen, wollen schwierig sein. So auch *Bientôt l'été* – doch schwierig nicht im Sinne solcher Gamestrukturen, die sich an die manuellen oder kognitiven Skills der Spieler richten, sondern wie das Metaspiel des Calwer Theologen als semantisches Modell: Es will bedeutsam sein. Und doch ermöglicht der Diskurs der Liebenden so wenig eine kohärente Story wie das Gameplay eine echte Schachpartie. Der Game Designer ist hier explizit: „Maybe there's no story at all in Bientôt l'été. I certainly didn't write one. And while the texts come from novels that do contain stories, they have been removed from their context and cannot be put back."[51] *They cannot be put back:* Das Gameplay wiederholt hier keine vorgegebene Bedeutung, keinen Ursprung, das Design versteht sich nicht als Hermeneutik, sondern als *re-entry* emergenter, dekontextualisierter und – wenn man so sagen möchte – ‚ent-narrativierter' Zeichen in die Matrix eines offenen Bedeutungsraums. Was sie tatsächlich liefern ist die Oberfläche einer *möglichen* Bedeutung, eine ludische ‚Semantosphäre', aus der tiefere Bedeutungen entstehen können oder eben nicht. Man könnte dies als künstlerische Interpretation der Cailloischen These zum Problem des Modus lesen (die Ergänzungen stammen von mir):

> Spiele sind […] nicht geregelt *und* fiktiv, sondern geregelt *oder* fiktiv. Wenn nun ein geregeltes Spiel unter gewissen Umständen [Moduswechsel] demjenigen als eine ernste Tätigkeit erscheint, der die Regeln nicht kennt [oder bewusst ignoriert], das heißt, wenn ihm das Spiel so vorkommt, als sei es ein Teil des täglichen Lebens [Arbeit], so kann es doch dem verwirrten

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und neugierigen Nichteingeweihten [oder dem Künstler] als Hintergrund einer vergnüglichen Scheinwelt dienen [Fiktion]. Man begreift leicht, daß die Kinder [und Künstler], um Erwachsene zu imitieren mit Ersatzstücken, mit realen oder vorgestellten, auf einem fiktiven Schachbrett manipulieren, und daß sie es interessant finden, „Schachspielen" zu spielen.[52]

Caillois wird diese – hier noch etwas unglückliche – Unterscheidung von Fiktion und Regel (auch Fiktionen sind ja strukturiert und regelhaft) zum Anlass nehmen, seine kategoriale Unterscheidung zwischen *ludus* (regelhaftem Spielen) und *paidia* (freiem Spielen) einzuführen.[53] *Ludus* liefert hierbei eine Form der Šklovskijschen Verfremdung, die auf eine Bremsung der vertrauten Abläufe, auf eine *praktische Hermetik* zielt: auf den Kontrollraum der erschwerten Form. Auch durch *paidia* wird der Spielraum aber nicht vereinfacht – ihre „Eulenspiegelei"[54] erschwert die Lesbarkeit der Welt durch die Verwirrungsleistung freien Modellierens, eine ‚unpraktische' Hermeneutik, die als Simulieren und Dissimulieren ihren Spielraum zum Testraum entgrenzt. Mit Hilfe der Modaltypen *paidia/ludus*, die als Spielverfahren auch der Unterscheidung zwischen *play* und *game* entsprechen,[55] stiftet Caillois dann die bekannte Spiel-Typologie,[56] wie sie gerade auch im ludologischen Diskurs – wenngleich oft als Ersatz für analytische Beschreibung und Vernetzung – als Ordnungsmatrix fungiert (Abb.5).
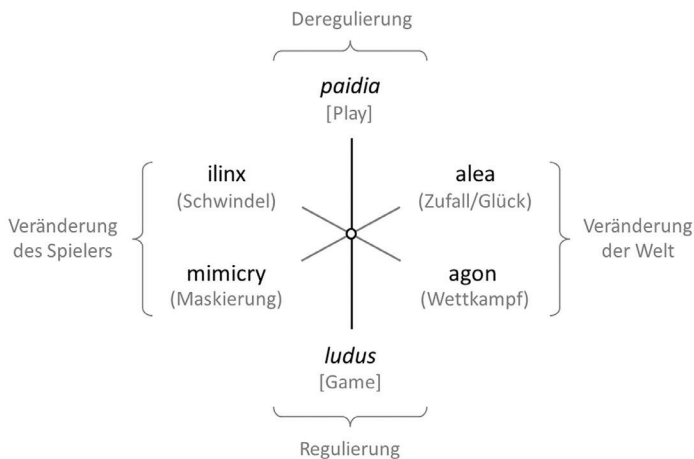

Abb.5: Das ludische Feld: Spieltypologie nach Caillois

Doch eine wesentliche Unterscheidung trifft die Cailloische Matrix nicht: die Unterscheidung zwischen Programmierung und Applikation. Denn beide, *ludus* und *paidia*, lassen sich programmseitig als Game Design und spielerseitig als Gameplay verstehen. Deutlich wird hier einmal mehr, dass diese Unterscheidung schräg zur Differenz von Produktion und Rezeption und den mit ihnen jeweils kombinierten Ästhetiken steht. Für Caillois bezeichnen beide Pole allererst Extreme einer Skala von ‚stark reguliert/codiert' bis ‚uncodiert/dereguliert', die allerdings *in praxi* mit den vier genannten Spielkategorien ein subtiles Kräftefeld entfalten – das ludische Feld.

  Beschreibt die *literarische* Novelle also einen Raum der Möglichkeiten, die sich in der Virtualität der Spielinstanz verwirklichen, so *prozessiert* das *digitale* Œuvre diesen Raum und seine Aktualisierungen im Modus der *paidia*. Damit aber wird der Spieler vom Beobachter zum Produzenten, zum Prozessor oder Co-Prozessor literarischer Modalität. Schon Caillois kann daher die von ihm als „paradox" beschriebene Behauptung wagen, „daß hier die Fiktion, also das Gefühl des *als ob* die Regel ersetzt und genau die gleiche Funktion erfüllt. Durch sich selbst erschafft die Regel eine Fiktion."[57] Fiktion bei Caillois ist also ein erkenntnistheoretischer Begriff im Sinne Vaihingers, der zwar ein eigenständiges Terrain – das Spiel – behauptet, aber nicht die literarische Fiktion, den Modus Fiktionalität im Auge hat. Das macht ihn angreifbar, weil die Fiktion auf diese Weise mit dem Spielbegriff zusammenfällt:

> Man kann die Auffassung vertreten, daß die Prinzipien, welche die Spiele leiten, und die gestatten, sie einzuordnen, ihren Einfluß außerhalb des durch Definition abgetrennten, geregelten, fiktiven Bereiches ausüben, der ihnen zugemessen ist und dank dessen sie eben Spiele bleiben.[58]

Nach Caillois ergibt sich also ein modaler Dreischritt: 1. Spiel*prinzipien*, die dem Spiel als kategoriale vorgelagert sind, 2. Spiel*regeln*, welche an der Schwelle zwischen Vor-Spiel und realem Spiel erscheinen und sich 3. innerhalb der Spielwelt und des Spielverlaufs zu Spiel*fiktionen* wandeln: Regeln des Als-Ob im Modus des Als-Ob. Mit diesem Ansatz wird jedoch ein wesentlicher, wenn nicht der entscheidende Aspekt des ludischen Dispositivs *de facto* unsichtbar bzw. unbeobachtbar: der Umstand, dass im spielerischen Modus *Fiktionalität gestaltet wird* (durch Narrative, Metalepsen und Modalpragmatiken), der fiktionale Modus wiederum *das Spiel als Gegenstand* (als ludisches Verfahren, Thema und Pragmatik) *modelliert*. Fasst man jedoch die beiden Ansätze, den kategorialen und

modellpragmatischen zusammen oder integriert den ersten in den zweiten (da die Ausformung von kategorialen Leitprinzipien der Modellbildung als ganzer zugehört), so zeigt sich ein höchst spannendes Modalgefüge ludischer Fiktion (Abb.6):
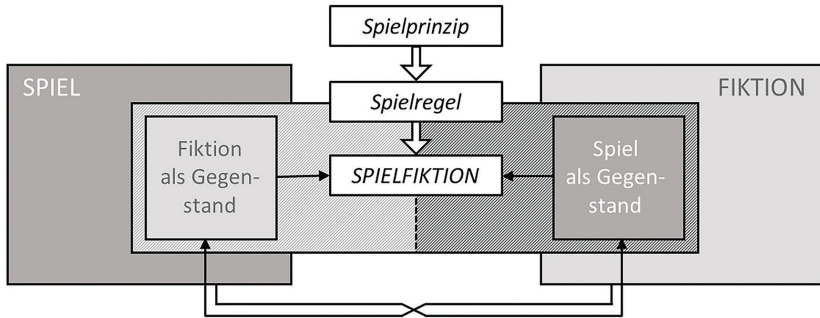
Abb.6: Modalgefüge in der Spielfiktion

Fiktion als epistemische Kategorie (im Schaubild vertikal) und als Aspekt des ludischen Dispositivs (horizontal) fällt in der *Spielfiktion* zusammen. Spielfiktionen im pragmatischen und epistemischen Verständnis kann man also Fälle nennen, wo Fiktion als Gegenstand des spielerischen Modus oder Spiel als Gegenstand des fiktionalen Modus tätig wird. Im epistemischen Verständnis deshalb, weil die beiden Regeltypen – ludische wie fiktionale – zwar verschiedenen Funktionen (und Diskursen) dienen, aber gegenüber ihrer jeweiligen Umwelt einen *entpragmatisierten Status* innehaben. Spiele und Fiktionen neigen also zur Beobachtung der eigenen Modalität. Sie sind, so meine These, gleichrangige Typen des Nicht-Eigentlichen; wo sie in der Spielfiktion zusammenfallen, tragen sie die Entpragmatisierung, also ihr Modalprofil, in ihre jeweilige Matrix ein: das Spiel in die Fiktion und die Fiktion ins Spiel (s. Abb.6). So werden sie Modelle füreinander, besser: zu Beobachtungsmodellen, die nicht nur ihr eigenes Beobachten beobachten. Sie observieren vielmehr – als Beobachtungen dritter Ordnung – die Modellbildung als ontologischen Beobachtungs-, Transformations- und Kreationsprozess im ganzen: als Operation. Aus dieser Überlegung kann man schließen, dass Modellbildungsverfahren sich am besten dort beobachten und deuten lassen, wo sie im Modell der Spielfiktion verwirklicht sind. Denn in der Spielfiktion beobachtet und deutet sich die Modellierung selbst.

ENDNOTEN

1   Galaxy Quest, Regie: Dean Parisot (USA 1999), 26'31"-28'00".

2   Ebd., 26'31"-27'40".

3   Ebd., 28'41"-29'02".

4   Ebd., 43'58"-44'47".

5   Ebd., 44'48"-45'19".

6   Ebd., 62'23"-63'25".

7   Ebd., 63'27"-66'45".

8   Tommy, der Pilot, erhält zur Überwindung seiner Abflugpanik den gezielten Hinweis „point and klick!"

9   Vgl. Wolfgang Iser, Das Fiktive und das Imaginäre. Perspektiven literarischer Anthroplogie, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1993.

10   Aus dieser Perspektive gibt es, wie ich meine, keinen Anlass, die bekannte Volatilität des Spielkonzepts zum Vorwand seiner Nichterforschbarkeit zu nehmen. Einschläge Einwände hat Caillois bereits zusammengestellt, vgl. Caillois, Roger, Die Spiele und die Menschen. Maske und Rausch, Frankfurt am Main et al. 1982, S.185f. Dagegen ist der hier erprobte Forschungsansatz zur Modellbildung trotz seiner Anwendung auf literarische Verfahren im extremen Sinne transdisziplinär. Er geht von einem informatischen und ludologisch informierten Ansatz aus, der im Gefolge Huizingas und Caillois' das Ludische als kulturelles, produktionsäthetisches Moment untersucht. Vgl. Bernd Mahr, On the Epistemology of Models, in: Rethinking Epistemology, hrsg. von Günter Abel und James Conant, Berlin/New York 2011, S.301-352, und Robert Matthias Erdbeer, Poetik der Modelle, in: Textpraxis 11, 2015, S.1-35, http://www.uni-muenster.de/textpraxis/robert-matthias-erdbeer-poetik-der-modelle.

11   Zur Leistung und Funktion des fiktionalen Modus vgl. auch Darin Tenev: Modes of Fiction, Models of Fiction, in: Literarische Form. Theorien – Dynamiken – Kulturen. Beiträge zur literarischen Modellforschung / Literary Form. Theories – Dynamics – Cultures. Perspectives on Literary Modelling, hrsg. von R.M. Erdbeer, F. Kläger und K. Stierstorfer, Universitätsverlag Winter, Heidelberg 2018, S.102: „A mode is determined by (1) *what* the fictional work of art relates: the narrated story, the characters, the setting, the society, the worldviews, etc.; (2) *how* it relates it and in relating it conforms to, forms and transforms literary conventions, formal devices, generic traditions, etc.; (3) *how it relates to itself* and in this relation with itself produces the very ‚self' it is, making possible the other two directions and, in turn, is made possible by them."

12   Vgl. auch Caillois, Die Spiele und die Menschen, S.74: „Indessen weicht das, was in den Spielen Ausdruck findet, nicht von dem, was sich in einer Kultur ausspricht, ab."

[13]   Vgl. Jens Greve / Annette Schnabel, Hrsg., Emergenz. Zur Analyse und Erklärung komplexer Strukturen, Berlin 2011. Wolfgang Iser unterscheidet unter dem Begriff der *Rekursivität* zwei komplementäre Prozesse: *Rekursion* als Austausch zwischen Ebenen und Elementen innerhalb des Steuerungssystems (als Redundanz, die Störungen beseitigt), sowie *Rückkopplung*, die sich in informationalen Schleifen zwischen dem System und seiner Umwelt vollzieht (als Steuerung, die das Verhältnis der Systemfunktionen gegenüber ihrer Umwelt kontrolliert). Vgl. Wolfgang Iser, Emergenz. Nachgelassene und verstreut publizierte Essays, hrsg. von Alexander Schmitz, Konstanz 2013, S.69ff.

[14]   Niklas Luhmann, Soziale Systeme. Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie, Frankfurt am Main 1984, S.44.

[15]   Vgl. dazu meinen Beitrag *Poetik der Modelle*. Man kann dies als ‚formale Anzeige' im Sinne Heideggers beschreiben, als konkrete Modellierungsform, die – als formale – Emergenzen nicht begrifflich feststellt, sondern narrativ erfahrbar macht.

[16]   Iser, Emergenz, S.93.

[17]   Ebd., S.88.

[18]   Ebd., S.93.

[19]   Jacques Derrida, „Die Struktur, das Zeichen und das Spiel im Diskurs der Wissenschaften vom Menschen", in: *Postmoderne und Dekonstruktion. Texte französischer Philosophen der Gegenwart*, mit einer Einführung hrsg. von Peter Engelmann, Stuttgart 1990, S.114-139 (137): „Gespanntes Verhältnis des Spiels zur Geschichte, gespanntes Verhältnis auch von Spiel und Präsenz! Das Spiel ist Zerreißen der Präsenz."

[20]   Ebd.

[21]   Ebd., S.138.

[22]   Iser, Emergenz, S.35f.

[23]   Caillois, Die Spiele und die Menschen, S.52.

[24]   Stefan Zweig, Schachnovelle (1943), Frankfurt am Main 1985, S.19f.

[25]   Ebd., S.49.

[26]   Ebd. Man denke etwa an die kuppelartige „Barriere", die in *Gothic I* den Handlungsraum begrenzt und überdies die Storyworld auch intradiegetisch, nämlich in bespielbare und nicht-bespielbare teilt. Entsprechend konstruiert die *Schachnovelle* auch das Gleichnis ihres Tauchers, „der schon ahnt, daß das Seil nach der Außenwelt abgerissen ist und er nie zurückgeholt werden wird aus der lautlosen Tiefe". Ebd., S.49f.

[27]   Ebd., S.62.

[28]   Ebd.

[29]   Ebd., S.62f.

[30]   Ebd., S.64.

[31]   Iser, Emergenz, S.109.

[32] Ebd.

[33] Zweig, Schachnovelle, S.64.

[34] Ebd., S.63.

[35] Iser, Emergenz, S.109.

[36] Zweig, Schachnovelle, S.69.

[37] Ebd., S.66, 69f.

[38] Ebd., S.70.

[39] Ebd.

[40] Ebd., S.68.

[41] Ebd., S.74.

[42] Ebd., S.71f.

[43] Ebd., S.72.

[44] Ebd., S.80.

[45] Ebd., S.81.

[46] Ebd., S.92.

[47] Ebd., S.93.

[48] Ebd., S.93f.

[49] „Remember" ist in diesem Kontext ein markantes Zeichen, da ja in der Diegese selbst kein Grund zu finden ist, warum die Warnung englisch ausgesprochen werden muss. Man könnte sie als intertextuelle Anspielung auf eine Décadence-Novelle lesen, die sich nicht nur einer ähnlich pathologischen Thematik widmet, sondern den Begriff bereits im Titel trägt: *Remember*, die einzige Novelle des rumänischen Erzählers und erklärten Zweig-Bewunderers Mateiu I. Caragiale. Zweigs Novelle ordnete sich auf diese Weise einer dekadenten Rollenspielthematik zu, indem sie am Protagonisten Dr. B. und seinem Körper den Typus des Spielers entwirft. In Caragiales Text trifft der Erzähler einen Unbekannten, der, bis zur Unkenntlichkeit geschminkt, die Rolle eines Dandys spielt: „Man mag denken, wie man will: So aufgemacht geht man nicht aus. Der Puder, mit dem er sein Gesicht getüncht hatte, war blau, die Lippen und Nasenlöcher waren violet gefärbt, das Haar mit Goldstaub gepudert und um die Augen herum zogen sich breite, schwarz-blaue Ringe, die ihm das Aussehen einer Chanteuse oder Tänzerin verliehen." Auch hier kommt es am krisenhaften Punkt des Plots zu einer Steuerung, die freilich umgekehrt verläuft: „[E]r nahm sogar meinen Arm und hieß mich umkehren. Ich spürte, daß er wie im Fieberfrost am ganzen Leibe bebte, und sah, daß seine Augen, glasig […], bald ins Leere starrten, bald müde und verloren tränten." Mateui I. Caragiale, Remember / Craii de Curtea Vecche. Remember / Die Vier vom Alten Hof, Ediție bilingvă / Zweisprachige Ausgabe, Bukarest 2003, S.7, 31. Diese Umkehr allerdings trifft das Erzählen selbst. „Remember", die *subscriptio* auf dem heraldischen Emblem des Freundes, dient hier ebenfalls als Codewort eines Abbruchs. Doch im Gegensatz zur Spielverweigerung,

die Zweigs Novelle predigt, während sie vom Spiel geleitet wird, setzt Caragiale auf Erzählverweigerung, indem sich der Erzähler unter Hinweis auf den esoterischen Charakter des Erzählens jeder Auflösung des Rätsels sperrt. Die beiden Stopp-Signale treffen sich in ihrer therapeutischen Funktion (dem Schutz der Ich-Erzähler) und in ihrer paradoxen Anlage, den Ausschluss eben jener Emergenzen einzufordern, die den Plot ermöglichen.

[50] Hermann Hesse, Das Glasperlenspiel. Versuch einer Lebensbeschreibung des Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften, hrsg. von H.H. (1943), Frankfurt am Main 1972, S.131.

[51] Michaël Samyn, Blog-Eintrag zu *Bientôt l'été* vom 17.05.2012, http://tale-of-tales.com/bientotlete/blog/ page/19/

[52] Caillois, Die Spiele und die Menschen, S.15f., meine Hervorhebung.

[53] Vgl. ebd., S.17.

[54] Ebd. Vgl. ebd., S.39: „*Ludus* erscheint als Komplement und Weiterentwicklung der *paidia*, die er diszipliniert und bereichert", ja er lässt sich sogar als „Metamorphose der *paidia*" verstehen. Ebd., S.43.

[55] Caillois kann daher kategorisch sagen: „*Ludus* und *paidia* sind keine Kategorien des Spiels, sondern Spielweisen." Caillois, Die Spiele und die Menschen, S.63.

[56] Vgl. ebd., S.21ff., 39ff. Die Kategorien ‚Agency' und ‚Code' in Abb.5 sind gegenüber Caillois' Darstellung ergänzt.

[57] Ebd., S.15.

[58] Ebd., S.94.

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"NICHT VERGANGENES, WAS DAS HERZ NOCH REUT": EXILE, MEMORY, AND THE SEARCH FOR HOME IN HEROLD BELGER'S WRITINGS

Abstract

The article considers the German-language writings of the ethnic German Kazakh writer, Herold Belger, and explores whether his literary output can be understood as a model for moving beyond the postcolonial struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy in favor of intercultural encounters. Belger's enunciation of cultural diversity and differences at the margins of Soviet cultural life gestures towards a relational and fluid conception of identity, one that eschews dogmatic nationalism. Various theoretical perspectives, such as Bhabha's third space theory, Rothberg's multidirectional memory, and Boym's notions of nostalgia, shed light on Belger's essay "Aul" and novel *Das Haus des Heimatlosen*.

Keywords: Russian-German literature, Herold Belger, exile, hybridity, memory, Kazakhstan

I. Introduction

In an interview with the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Kazakhstan) two years before his death in 2015, Herold Belger was asked about his unique personal background as someone with the ability to inhabit and indeed embody three distinct cultures – German, Kazakh, and Russian. A self-designated *Zögling* of each culture, he described himself in the following manner:

> Die Verflechtung dreier Kulturen stellt meinen größten Reichtum im Leben dar. Ich sage allen: Ich trage drei Säcke auf dem Rücken mit mir herum – einen russischen, einen kasachischen und einen deutschen. Wenn du einen davon wegnimmst, wird mich das innerlich verarmen lassen. Was mich für andere vielleicht interessant macht, ist wohl in erster Linie, dass

ich als ethnischer Deutscher im kasachischen Umfeld aufgewachsen bin, dass ich Kasachisch beherrsche und auch schreiben kann. Wenn man davon etwas entfernt aus der Persönlichkeit, dann werde ich nur noch ein mittelmäßiger Deutschstämmiger sein, der Russisch sprechen und schreiben kann. Jede dieser Kulturen bedeutet sehr viel für mich. Ich bin in einer deutschen Kultur geboren, großgeworden in der kasachischen, die letzte Kultur jedoch war die russische.[1]

Although a Kazakh prose writer, essayist, publicist, politician, and literary critic, Belger was not strictly Kazakh by any geographical measure as his interview indicates. In fact, he was neither ethnically Kazakh nor Russian, but rather German, and in spite of his initial "outsider" status he is considered by Kazakhs to be one of their most important writers of the twentieth century (and indeed one of the country's most important writers of any century).

Born in 1934 in Engels, the capital city of the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1918-1941), Belger and his family were amongst the approximately 1.4 million ethnic Germans who became subject to Stalin's 1941 mass deportations following Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Officially viewed as politically unreliable, scores of ethnic Germans were sent to Central Asia, particularly to present-day Kazakhstan. Following their deportation to a Kazakh aul, Belger and his family were the only ethnic Germans in the immediate area; they spoke virtually no Kazakh and had as many possessions. It is quite remarkable, then, that Belger, who is revered as one of Kazakhstan's most important writers, had no knowledge of the country, its language, people, and customs for the first seven years of his life. Although his early efforts focused on translations between Russian, German, and Kazakh, he worked for the majority of his life as a writer, literary critic, and chronicler of Russian-German literature. His mother tongue was German and he identified himself throughout his life first and foremost as ethnically German. Only later did he acquire Kazakh and Russian at school and through his upbringing in a Kazakh aul. Following Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, he became an advocate for minority rights and even the restoration of the Volga Republic. His substantial body of work, which includes over forty books along with hundreds of translations, newspaper, and journal articles, marks him as an important writer of Kazakh letters. In this respect he is viewed by many of his compatriots as something of a *Kulturträger*, or an individual who

fosters the transmission of cultural history and ideas. In addition to his not insubstantial literary output as well as his numerous prestigious honors, which include the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany (2010), Kazakhstan's Order of Parast (1994), he was as a founding member of PEN Kazakhstan and even served a brief stint in the Kazakh parliament (1994-1995).

In his fiction and literary criticism, Belger relentlessly examined the psychological scars stemming from punitive displacement and exile, which was characteristic of the ethnic German minority experience in post-WWII Soviet Union. Consequently, his work offers insights into the many complexities of linguistic, geographic, and cultural interstices that resulted from this exilic condition. As a means of entering into his work as well as providing a theoretical signpost for the analysis, we might consider the following question: Can Belger provide a model for moving beyond the postcolonial struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy in favor of intercultural encounters? Following his expulsion, he continued to use German and Russian to navigate his cultural dislocation along with his status as an ethnic German outsider in Soviet-controlled Kazakh Central Asia. Consequently, I argue that his commitment and contributions to Kazakh language and culture urge us to reconsider essentializing dichotomies of home and exile or self and other in favor of a fluid conception of identity, one in which externally-imposed cultures (i.e. Russian and Kazakh) cross-pollinate with his German ethnic background to produce a striking hybrid. This cross-pollination becomes immediately apparent in his literary criticism in which he often assumed a comparative approach, reading canonical Kazakh authors such as Abai Qunanbaiuly with German writers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Russian writers such as Mikhail Lermontov. Therefore, I would like to propose that Belger's repudiation of modernity's disjunctiveness deconstructs language and national boundaries and such transgressive 'border crossings' destabilize culturally embedded taxonomies of differentiation. Can Belger, for example, be understood to have inhabited what Bhabha described as a space "in-between the designations of identity"? If so, does "this interstitial passage between fixed identification", as Bhabha has argued, "open up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (*The Location of Culture* 5)? In an attempt to answer such questions, I employ Bhabha's notion of hybridity as well as his third space theory in order to suggest that the enunciation of cultural diversity and differences by a writer at the margins of Soviet cultural life

gestures towards a relational and fluid conception of identity, one that eschews dogmatic nationalism.

II. Volga Germans – Historical Overview

Despite the significant geographic and linguistic distances between Kazakhstan and Germany, the two countries share considerable historical, cultural, and ethnic ties. The roots of these ties were established in the eighteenth century, when some thirty thousand Germans colonists emigrated to the Volga River region at the behest of Catherine the Great (formerly, the Prussian Princess Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg). In her July Manifesto of 1763, she invited foreigners to settle in Russia, offering generous incentives such as exemption from military service, self-governance, tax breaks, financial aid, and 30 hectares of land per settler family as well as freedom of language (particularly German) and religion.[2] Much like today's migrants from Syria, Iraq, North Africa, and elsewhere, eighteenth-century Germans left their homes and indeed their homelands, which were plagued by chronic political instability and military conflicts, in search of economic opportunities, religious freedom, and general safety and stability. With the still-visible scars of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and intra-religious infighting between Catholic Austria and Protestant Prussia along with the lingering traumas of the Seven Year's War (1756-1763), waves of German families from states such as Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, West Prussia, and Danzig emigrated to the Volga River region over the course of the next one hundred and fifty years. This region was initially settled between 1763-1769; Mennonite colonies were established in the Ukraine between 1789 and 1809; and migration of German speakers to the Black Sea area occurred between 1805-1856.[3]

However, the very circumstances that these early settlers sought to escape would ensnare their descendants in the twentieth-century, when millions of ethnic Germans endured mass expulsion from the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and other German colonies within Russia. During the 1930s the status of Russian Germans decreased significantly, with purges in 1937 and 1938 resulting in the arrest of approximately 38,000 Russian-Germans and eventual execution of about 29,000 of those arrested (Pohl 274). The Soviet government also eliminated all German national districts, schools, publications, and

changed nationality laws so that legal nationality became based solely on biological descent rather than on ethnicity or self-identification. The status of Russian-Germans reached its nadir in the 1940s, particularly after the mass deportations of 1941, which occurred between 15 August and 25 December. During this period, some 856,168 Russian-Germans were sent to collective farms and forced labor camps in Kazakhstan and Siberia (Pohl 274). The official Soviet line was a fear that extra-territorial German minorities within the Soviet Union would be loyal to their ancestral homelands and thereby undermine Soviet war efforts. As a result, virtually the entire Russian-German population of the European areas of the USSR in 1939 ended up as special settlers east of the Urals by 1946 (Pohl 275). After 1941 Russian-Germans were immersed almost exclusively in a Russian-language environment and legally the Soviet government considered them to be Germans by nationality. In the late 1950s the West German government offered citizenship to German minorities. Although conditions for ethnic minorities within the Soviet Union would gradually improve over the next decades, mass emigration to Germany began in 1987 with the lifting of freedom of movement restrictions by Gorbachev. By 1993 the German government introduced an annual quota of 225,000 Russian-Germans allowed to emigrate, but by the late oughties the numbers of so-called *Spätaussiedler* (late German emigrants or re-settlers) had declined significantly. In 2006 the German government estimated 600,000 Russian-Germans in Russia and 230,000 in Kazakhstan. Unlike large numbers of his fellow ethnic Germans, Belger and his wife chose not to re-locate to Germany, but were committed instead to remaining in Kazakhstan as Kazakh citizens.

III. Terminological Considerations

Diasporic peoples and cultures *in transit* have come to define recent political and social conversations within Germany and indeed across Europe. Within the cultural sphere, especially as it relates to "Deutsche Literatur", such conversations have yielded a dizzying array of terms and typologies as communities of readers, writers, scholars, and citizens engage with the evolving, and at times tumultuous, nature of cultural production. Variously emphasizing interculturalism and multiculturalism whilst highlighting categories such as "Nation", "Heimat", and "Identität" such descriptively varied typologies include: Ausländerliteratur;

Gast-, Immigranten-, Emigrations-, Migranten-, or Migrationsliteratur; Minderheitenliteratur; deutsche Gastliteratur; Literatur ohne festen Wohnsitz; Literatur der Fremde; deutsche Literatur von außen; and Literatur mit dem Motiv der Migration. To further complicate matters, a number of scholars have argued for what they describe as "die andere Deutsche Literatur", or German-language writers writing at geographical, cultural, and often historical peripheries. Included amongst this designation are "Russian-German" writers, or what in German are referred to as "Russlanddeutsche" and "Deutsche aus Russland", whose body of work comprises "sowjetdeutsche Minderheitenliteratur". Here the emphasis is not on Russian migrant authors in Germany (i.e. Russich-Deutsche) such as Wladimir Kaminer or Austria in the case of Vladimir Vertlib, who have no historical connections with German minorities in Russia, but rather ethnic Germans from Russia or formerly Soviet Central Asian countries such as the Kazakh-born writer Eleonora Hummel (who now lives in Germany). It is into this latter category that Belger's writings fall.

The terms "Exil" and "Exilliteratur" are similarly problematic. There are literary texts by authors in exile from Nazism (for example, during the period between 1933 and 1945) and those by authors who did not return to Germany following the end of the Second World War.[4] More recently, scholars have argued for the notion of an "Eastern European Turn" in contemporary German-language literature. In a 2015 special issue of *German Life and Letters* Brigid Haines introduced a collection of essays that examined works by contemporary authors, ones which are products of post-Wende German-speaking countries and post-communist Europe (145). The phrase "Eastern European turn" denotes Eastern European writers who have emigrated to German-speaking countries as well as the turn towards Eastern Europe by German, Austrian, and Swiss writer. Rather problematically, however, scholars include Herta Müller within this recent "turn" despite the fact that she fits neither category due to her German ethnicity, and so a gap in the scholarship presents itself. By focusing on Herold Belger's literary output on the periphery of Eastern Europe, the current article aims to broaden the accepted understanding of the aforementioned "turn" to include twentieth-century ethnic Germans who were active in formerly communist European countries.

IV. Theorizing Memory: Michael Rothberg's Multidirectional Memory and Svetlana Boym's Memory as Nostalgia

Discussing memory within the context of German history necessarily involves an ongoing and complex engagement with private and public forms of remembrance as well as the not insubstantial weight of history. One of the core questions of the article asks how we think about the relationship between different social groups' histories of victimization. Does the remembrance of one history, for example, erase others from view? In his book *Multidirectional Memory. Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* Michael Rothberg has proposed a conceptual model for moving beyond such a hierarchal framework of memory, the core aspect of which is his understanding of *multidirectional memory*. As he writes in his introduction: "Against the framework that understands collective memory as *competitive* memory—as a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources—I suggest that we consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative" (3). Rothberg is attempting to weave the transhistorical into the transcultural and transnational by arguing that narratives of memory, victimization, and trauma should not compete within the public and scholarly realms. Rather, dialogical acts of remembrance exist along a shared spectrum of multidirectional memory that embed and become in turn embedded in other histories. But all of this begs the obvious question - what is memory? How can we define it? The secondary literature on the subject is vast, but Richard Terdiman, whom Rothberg cites, has offered a pithy formulation, namely that "memory is the past made present" (Rothberg 3). There is, then, a certain contemporaneity about memory – the ever-present past and the ongoing individual and collective negotiations involved in remembering – in other words, the relationship between the agents and the sites of memory. Closely aligned with memory is identity and Rothberg argues that a direct line connecting the two cannot be made. Rather, in his words,

> our relationship to the past does partially determine who we are in the present, but never straightforwardly and directly, and never without unexpected or even unwanted consequences that bind us to those whom we consider other. When the productive, intercultural dynamic of multidirectional memory is explicitly claimed […] it has the potential to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice. (5)

As cultural artifacts that speak to the exilic conditions of ethnic Germans within the former Soviet Union, Belger's literary writings reflect a comparativist approach to conceptualizing difference in which the border-traversing power of memory informs his own complex negotiations of identity.

Conversely, a companion of memory is nostalgia and Svetlana Boym has written at length about its various forms and implications. Just as we sought a definition of memory, we can rely here on the Greek roots of the word nostalgia: *nóstos* ('return home') and *álgos* ("longing"). As Boym argues, nostalgia is "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own phantasy" (*Nostalgia and Its Discontents* 7). In the introductory remarks to her book *The Future of Nostalgia* she further articulates her understanding of nostalgia, which is variously "a symptom of our age, an historical emotion" (xvi); "a new understanding of time and space that made the division into 'local' and 'universal' possible" and in this respect thoroughly modern (xvi) ; it is a yearning both for a different place and a different time (xv); nostalgia is both retrospective and prospective involving "individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (xvi); an idea or emotion that can work laterally as it envisions possible utopian alternatives in the present (xvi). Nostalgia is, in other words, the seemingly paradoxical attempt to reconcile longing with belonging – when loss is replaced by a rediscovered or renewed identity one steps out of the universal human condition and into the specifics of national communities with their particular histories, cultures, languages, and spaces. However, Boym rightly warns of the negative consequences of what she describes as "outbreaks of nostalgia" (xvi) in which imagined, idealized pasts are constructed, confusing reality with fantasy. Unfortunately, we are recent witnesses to such outbreaks of nostalgia and its attendant and characteristically empty slogans and instrumentalized populist discourse. If, as Boym has written, the twentieth century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia, then perhaps the twenty-first century, having begun with nostalgia, might end with utopia – or worse. Nevertheless, the salient point for our consideration of nostalgia's function within Belger's fiction is to highlight the extent to which his characters distinguish, embody, repudiate, or indeed balance between restorative and reflective nostalgias.

V. Home and Hybridity in Homi Bhabha's Third Space Theory

Within Belger's fiction the notion of *Heimat* or "home" is linked inextricably with memory and nostalgia. Since studies of *Heimat* are equally if not more vast than those that treat memory, the following comments are meant to be suggestive rather than comprehensive and therefore will serve merely to introduce relevant key concepts for the subsequent analysis of Belger's literary works rather than to offer an exhaustive account of this much-discussed idea. The word *Heimat* dates back to fifteen-century German dialects, gained currency perhaps unsurprisingly during the nineteenth century as a consequence of the French Revolution and a burgeoning German national consciousness, and has ballooned in use since the 1970s, when politicians began invoking it, the media featured articles about it, museums commemorated it, and theorists attempted to define it. As Peter Blickle recounts in his study *Heimat A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, some 400 books published between 1995-2002 had the word Heimat in their title (154). It has been imbued with a range of meanings from aggressive nationalism to ossified conceptions of German identity suspended in the eighteenth century, and from the nation state to regional localities within those national borders. Conversely, the weakening of place-belonging is also an aspect of the "disembedding" which Anthony Giddens has described as characteristic of Late Capitalism, and it is the postcolonial reconfiguring of generic ideas of space, place, and time (which are often interrelated with notions of *Heimat*) that I would like to consider here briefly.

In his book *The Location of Culture,* Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural difference employs the conceptual vocabulary of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and the third space. For Bhabha indeterminate, liminal spaces offer possible sites for disrupting and indeed displacing deeply embedded colonial narratives as well as their practices and structures. In its most basic form, Bhabha's "Third Space Theory" argues that identity is realized through the act of articulation or enunciation, which takes place in language. More precisely, Bhabha writes: "The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in a passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself' be conscious".[5] In other words, the locus in which this act of linguistic negotiation and translation takes place is understood as a "third space", one that is interpretative and interrogative

and thereby capable of blurring existing boundaries as well as calling into question established categories such as culture and identity. He continues:

> For a willingness to descend into that alien territory – where I have led you – may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the "inter" – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. (*Location of Culture* 38)

Belger's status as a transnational writer calls attention to the fact that literature and indeed culture exist as hybrid forms in a state of flux, and it is in an *inter*national culture that a hybrid third space makes possible an ambivalent site where cultural representations and meanings lack fixity. In his earlier essay, "The World and the Home", Bhabha uses Freud's concept of the uncanny to describe a characteristically (post)modern sense of "unhomeliness" in the world. According to Bhabha, the displacement occasioned by a condition of "unhomeliness" presents a rupture in which borders become blurred: "In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (141). Nevertheless, despite the disorienting effects of this rupture in which certainties are called into question, "another world becomes visible" (141), one in which ambivalences and ambiguities offer possibilities for the creation of new meanings beyond essentialist notions of cultures and, by extension, cultural identities.

VI. Belger's Fiction: *Aul* (2002) and *Das Haus des Heimatlosen* (2009)

The Kazakh aul occupies a central place of importance in Belger's writings. It is usually translated into English as "village", but its earliest meaning referred to a nomadic gathering. Only later did it come to mean a more or less permanent settlement of houses united by a collective economy. In 2002 Belger penned an essay on the subject of the Kazakh aul in which he described its history and organizational structure but lamented

its diminished significance and seemingly irreversible disappearance in Kazakh culture. Reflecting on his experiences of displacement as a six-year old in exile, Belger reveals that "aul" was the first Kazakh word to become part of his vocabulary. It was to be an auspicious introduction to the language since "aul" would become synonymous with "home" in his later literary writings. Describing the first glimpses of his new homeland, or what Bhabha might characterize as the liminality of the migrant experience, Belger recalls: "It was quiet. It was deserted. It was expansive. There were no people. This was an unknown and hitherto unseen world. Both huge and incomprehensible. '*Aul*' said our wagon driver […] "*Kasachisch Dorf*," my father translated. *Aul*: my first Kazakh word would echo in my soul".[6] Displeased with the dictionary definition of an aul as a village, grouping of nomadic tents, or a settlement in the Caucasus or Central Asia, Belger offers an extended meditation in which the aul begins to resemble a third space between and indeed within competing national contexts:

> And yet…and *aul* is not simply a collection of houses or *yurt* tents. It is not simply a small or large settlement. It is primarily people, united by a place of residence, who are of a kindred spirit, like mentality, way of life, morals and behaviours, who live in close, continuous contact with one another, bonded through labour and hard graft, who have a propensity for one another, who share the same or similar morals, culture, community, and social circle, who pursue the same or similar aims, strivings, Weltanschauung and spiritual order. An aul is a kind of world in itself. With its own infrastructure. An economic, social, psychological, and ethno-cultural infrastructure. It is a community with a complex root structure. […] The *aul* is home. The aul is a big family. The aul is your own kin on one land, under a single sky. The *aul* is your conscience, your love, your cares, your pride, your green landing stage and your comfort and joy. The *aul* is the rudiments of motherland. (*Selected Works* 11)

With his emphasis "on the complex of values, customs, beliefs and practices which constitute the way of life of a specific group", Belger's description echoes Terry Eagleton's oft-cited notion of culture (*The Idea of Culture* 34).

Moreover, Belger's act of enunciation expands the notion of the aul from a fixed modality to a fluid and liminal space, one (in Bhabha's words) "which gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation"

(*The Third Space* 211). In this "in-between" space, identities are formed, reformed, and constantly in a state of becoming, and Belger writes of this very process of the layering, shifting, and at times shedding of identities as a result of his childhood experiences in his new home:

> It became a part of me. I knew every home, every resident, every last shrub in the district, every path in the Terensai gorge and thicket of the riverside woodland, every boulder in the Tas-otkel ford. The *aul* became mine and I was accepted as a part of the *aul*. All my disparate childhood impressions of the Volga, about the playground at the Engels summer school, about my parents' village of Mannheim, about the canton centre of Gnadenflur, from where, in early September of those troubled years we were sent away in accordance with that sinister and scandalous Decree of 28 August 1941, from where we faded away, blending into the distance, into the irretrievable and so we fancied at times, unreal world, while the Kazakh aul seemed to be the real beginning of my life, the starting line for a grand run, as I dreamed it'. (*Selected Works* 17)

Is this not what Bhabha describes when he writes of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation? As he puts it, "The recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorientating" (*Location of Culture* 9). Belger here experiences the disorientating unreality of both past and present, with his earlier and characteristically German milieu resembling a fading snapshot of a life lived elsewhere whilst his present circumstances in the aul assume a hazy, dream-like patina. Despite the internalization of both locales as a result of his displacement, his is clearly a divided consciousness. Thus, the aul in Belger's personal history functions (in Bhabha's idiom) as a borderland space "in-between the usual designations of identity", a place that "open[s] up the possibility of a cultural hybridity", which stands in stark contrast to Soviet nationalist discourses with their essentialist politics of inclusion and exclusion (*Location of Culture* 4). Significantly, the aul is transnational insofar as it enables (and seems to encourage) the integration of multinational groups (in this case, ethnic Germans) as well as pre-national and indeed pre-modern, which is to say that it predates the modern concept of the nation state along with the accoutrements of modernity such as industrialization, urbanization, and secularization. In this respect, auls should be understood as intermediary spaces in which

home for Belger was embodied perhaps less as a geographical fixity and more as a fluid process of endlessly constructing, deconstructing, and re-constructing the self in borderland communities.

If Belger's recollections of his early days in a Kazakh aul allow him to reconstruct a remembered past, then his fictional worlds in a novel such as *Das Haus des Heimatlosen* (2009) offer the possibility to re-write himself. The allusion here, of course, is to Franz Fanon's bold assertion of the individual's agency in shaping its identity despite the weight of past traumas: "In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself".[7] By combining autobiography with fiction, *Das Haus des Heimatlosen* exists as a work of autofiction, one in which Belger attempts to plumb the murky depths of memory in order to better understand the emotional landscape of displacement and exile. The basic plotline involves an account of an ethnic German family's traumatic forced exile from the Volga River region to the Kazakh steppe and the subsequent intergenerational attempts to assimilate into Kazakh culture under Soviet rule. Structurally, the novel is comprised of three separate parts, each centered on the experiences of one person in particular (although the three narratives do indeed overlap). And so the first part, which corresponds to the experiences of Belger's father, is entitled "David"; the second part draws from the violence visited upon Belger's father's brother and bears the title "Christian"; and the final part or "Harry" recounts Belger's experiences growing up in a Kazakh aul before concluding with his eventual entry into university. Given the novel's relative obscurity, even amongst Germanists, a brief plot summary might prove beneficial to the reader. In this manner, such a prefatory summary will offer an interpretive *terra firma* of sorts upon which to engage with specific passages, ones which are illustrative of the liminality of the migrant experience and point to the extent to which the notion of a third space can and often does disrupt homogeneous notions of national identity.

The first third of the novel concerns David's exile to a distant Kazakh aul. Married to a Russian woman whom he is forced to leave behind, David, an obstetrician by profession, is made to perform his duties within a rather large area encompassing a number of disparate auls. His encounters with local Kazakhs—the communication and inevitable miscommunication that results from mixing German, Russian, and Kazakh along with the otherness of the respective cultures—reflect vast and, initially at least, insurmountable cultural and linguistic differences. Additionally, he must simultaneously balance the demands of an oppressive state power whilst

navigating these differences, and in this way David embodies the migrant act of survival amidst conditions of cultural displacement and social discrimination. As the novel transitions from the first to the second part, the reader is introduced to Christian, David's younger brother, who has barely survived extreme trauma as a member of the "*Trudarmee*" or Labor Army. It was customary to fill the ranks of the *Trudarmee* with men from entire German colonies, all of whom were forced to work in labor camps following their deportation to various settlements in the Siberian taiga. Although rich in ethnic German history and culture, particularly German songs, Christian's physical and spiritual emaciation and eventual silencing and death come to symbolize the trauma of dislocation and the interrupted transmission of ethnic and national traditions as a result of those traumas. Amidst the backdrop of such bleak conditions, the final third of the novel, which focuses on the childhood and teenage years of Harry, stands as a beacon of hope. Drawing from his own experiences, Belger imbues his character "Harry" with the burdens of memory as well as possibilities for renewal based on those memories. Among other things, he (Belger) highlights the discrepancy between young Harry's acceptance within the Kazakh aul and the overt, state-sanctioned institutional discrimination that he faces within the larger framework of Soviet bureaucracy and society as a consequence of his outsider status. Throughout the course of the novel, the aul functions as a place that offers various opportunities for cultural hybridity in which cultural differences can be entertained without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. For David the aul becomes instrumental for negotiating his German identity against the backdrop of two competing foreign cultures; for Christian the aul proves merely incidental to his identity and ultimately a liminal place between life and death, the transmission of culture and its eventual cessation; and for young Harry the aul is neither incidental nor accidental, but rather essential – a heterogeneous arcadia against the backdrop of an exclusionary Soviet metropolis in which he wishes to study at university.

In the opening chapter of the novel, which highlights the migrant act of survival, David struggles to orientate himself amidst condition of exile. Here Belger underscores the ongoing reciprocal process of interdependence and differentiation between David's ethnic German self and the Kazakh "other" of the aul by juxtaposing the two. When seen from David's eyes, the aul appears wild, impoverished, and even primitive despite the interjection "Schöner Aul […] Gibt kein besserer" by his Kazakh companion:

Ärmliche graue Häuschen bildeten zwei Reihen. Sämtliche Dächer waren mit Grassoden bedeckt. Über die Grasschicht hinaus wuchsen Wermut und Disteln. In der Abenddämmerung wirkte die Straße ungeheuer breit. Jedes Haus hatte Aufsatz einen Schuppenanbau, der oben in einem runden, kuppelförmigen Ausatz aus Weidengarten endete. In der Aulmitte zog sich eine Baumkette hin. Gleich hinter den Bäumen erhob sich ein großes Holzhaus mit Blechdach. Die Schule, ahnte der Wanderer. Der Aul lag in einer Senke. Zwei, drei Kiolmeter entfernt schimmerte dunkel der Auenwald. Den Hügel hinter dem Aul herunter kam eine Herde: Kühe, Schafe, Ziegen. (16)

Invariably, memories of village life back home encourage a celebratory romance or nostalgia for the past in which fossilized memories reinforce boundaries rather than create the possibilities for bridging the divide between exile and homeland. As the narrator describes:

Der Wanderer lächelte schief. Er dachte an sein Heimatdorf Mannheim, an die gediegenen Häuser, die hohen Umzäunungen, die gestrichenen Tore, an die nirgends fehlende Sommerküche – das *Backhaus*. Und hinter Haus und *Backhaus* befanden sich beinahe bei allen Dorfbewohnern diverse Anbauten – Getreidespeicher, Geflügelstall, Pferdestall, ein Viehhof für Kühe, Jungbullen, Kälber, für Schafe und Ziegen, ein Schuppen für Kamele. Und hinter diesen stattlichen und gepflegten Bauten erstreckte sich der Garten. So war es im Mannheim auf der Wiesenseite, und das war längst nicht das wohlhabendste. Hier hingegen… (16-7)

Estrangement and alienation rather than openness pervade David's language, which enunciates with great specificity what has been lost, but glosses over what stands before him because he lacks the cultural vocabulary to articulate the particulars of his present circumstances. As the chapter closes, his companion ushers him inside for tea and sleep – tomorrow is, of course, another day: "Los, Perschil, in Haus. Wir Tee trinken und schlafen. Du müde, ich müde. Morgen, wenn Allah will, ist neuer Tag" (17). And indeed David spends many days and many nights in the aul acculturating to its rhythms and routines. It is rather fitting, then, that the last chapter of the first part of the novel concludes with David Pawlowitsch (no longer bearing the metonymic appellation "Der Wanderer") on the verge of sleep once again:

Er schloss die Augen und sah sogleich Schneehügel vor sich, dazwischen den sich endlos windenden winterlichen Weg, er sah den Alten, sein Bärtchen mit den Eiszapfen darin, sah die vom Frost gefesselte Steinfurt, sah die harten Schneebröckchen unter den Hufen des Passgängers hervorstieben, und wieder Schneewehen, Schneewehen und die grenzenlose stumme Steppe. Nun ja, sagte er sich im Einschlafen, da ist also ein weiterer Tag in meinem Leben vergagen, ein langer, langer Wintertag… (165)

David has learned to approach the aul on its own terms and this internalization of Kazakh life and landscape serves to initiate the process of resettling the self within this borderland space.

Whereas the aul gradually comes to represent a third space for David, it offers only a state of unhomeliness for his brother Christian, who has endured but does not survive the terrors of state-sanctioned discrimination and violence. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha employs Freud's concept of *unheimlich* in order to examine the unhomely condition of the modern world in which there is a creeping recognition that the line between public and private as well as world and home disintegrates. When Christian first returns to his brother he uses the word "Dochodjaga" or "Muselmann" (i.e. those starving and resigned to death in the Nazi concentration camps) to refer to himself, but the narrator reveals a certain optimism of the will amidst the overwhelming pessimism of Christian's intellect: "Christian lächelte in sich hinein bei dem tröstenden Gedanken, dass er ja jetzt in einem gottverlassenen kasachischen Aul unter der Obhut seines großen Bruders weilte und dass ein winziger Strahl Leben in seiner geschundenen Seele noch nicht erloschen war". (164) As Bhabha puts it, "The incalculable colonized subject - half acquiescent, half oppositional, always untrustworthy – produces an unresolvable problem of cultural difference for the very address of colonial cultural authority" (*Location of Culture* 33). Attempts to reclaim his ethnic German cultural traditions and repressed history soon follow: David and Christian sing folksongs; they speak in dialect; they discuss their family histories; and they draw maps of the Volga River region, essentially trying to re-map their German identities onto their alienated psyches. However, whereas David has internalized, at least to a certain extent, aspects of Kazakh life in the aul, Christian's unhomeliness reinforces a nagging sense of estrangement as well as the irrevocable erasure of his cultural identity:

Jawohl, die Sehnsucht nach der Heimat, dem Vaterhaus, die Unmöglichkeit, eine Heimat zu haben, das erzwungene Umherziehen durch die weite Welt, die Verlorenheit, das unauslöschliche Heimweh, das einsame Schicksal des ewigen Wanderers, das tragische Empfinden, kein Zuhause zu haben – dies ist das verbreiteste, das herzzerreißende Motiv deutscher Lieder. Der Deutsche zieht durch die Welt, sucht überall Wurzeln zu Schlagen, er schafft sich eine Basis, richtet sich ein, baut ein Haus, trotzdem ist dies nicht seine Erde, bleibt er ein Fremdling, ein nicht Aufgenommener, ein Reisender, und sein Haus, wo immer es steht, ist das Haus des Heimatlosen, welches man ihm fatalerweise unbedingt wegzunehmen versucht [...]. (231)

In another passge, Christian laments:

Ja, die Erinnerung... [...] Wir haben keine Heimat, kein Haus. Nur die Erinnerung. Den wichtigsten Schatz des Heimtalosen. Des freiwillig oder des unfreiwillig Heimatlosen, ganz gleich. Unser Zuhause ist die Erinnerung. Unser Haus ist demnach die Hauslosigkeit. [...] Solange in dir die Erinnerung brennt, bist du am Leben. Wo immer du weilst. Wo immer du dir ein Haus baust. Die Erinnerung ist unsre Hoffnung. [...] Darin offenbar besteht unsere einzige Rettung'. (234)

But the trauma is too great, the bridge cannot be crossed, and the language of the prison camp supersedes the language of home and the estranging syntax creates an unbridgeable distance between personal agency and the events of his past.

Schneesturm. Frost. Das Knarren der Zweige unterm kalten, tiefhängenden Himmel. Das Kreischen der Säge. Das Ächzen der sterbenden Kiefer, die unwillig in die tiefen Schneewehen stürzt und alles ringsum mit ihrem Todesdonner betäubt. Die schweigenden Schatten am Lagerfeuer. Die muffige Baracke. Der spitzig gesträubte Stacheldraht. Die Wachttürme. Die höhnischen Witzeleien. Das heisere Geschimpf am glühenden Kanonenofen. Das Gewälze auf den knarrenden Pritschen. Das Gebell der Schäferhunde. Das Zählen auf dem Appellplatz... (165)

His memories of the labour camps have irrevocably altered his personal, psychic landscape, and here Belger approaches the issue of home and displacement in an attempt to make literature the site on which the unhomely is enacted. Within this borderland space, the aul can also

function as a site of human dislocation. Capturing the condition of estrangement glimpsed from the recognition of the world as an unhallowed place, Christian's repeats the words "mir ist so kalt" before drawing his last breath. Through Christian's fixity and fetishism of an ethnic German identity, Belger seems to sound a note of warning against what Bhabha described in *The Location of Culture* as "the celebratory romance of the past" (9). In many ways, his experiences speak to the impossibility for some of coming to terms with the traumas of exile.

Perhaps more so than the previous two parts, the third and final part of the novel explores the complexities of pluralistic selves along with the possibilities for constructing identity through language. All three characters - David, Christian, and now Harry - seem to inhabit borderland spaces in which cultural hybridity and (to use Kristeva's striking expression) a wounded cosmopolitanism permeates their lives. However, with his focus on the sixteen year old Harry, Belger offers a model for moving beyond the postcolonial struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political autonomy in favor of interculturality. Unlike Christian, who clings to the exilic souvenirs of his memory, young Harry's circumstantial sanguinity undercuts such chimerical nostalgia. Repeating the line "Nicht Vergangenes, was das Herz noch reut…", Harry begins to reflect on his past and the narrator offers a window into his thoughts:

> Was hatte er, Harry, schon für "Verganenes"? Was konnte er bereuen? Seine Vergangenheit erschien ihm freudlos, leer, gewebt aus Kränkungen, Erniedrigungen, Entbehrungen und Bedrängnissen. Tatsächlich, was hatte es in seiner Vergangenheit gegeben? Bruchstücke kindlicher Erinnerungen, vage wie der Nebel über dem Ischim zur Frühlingszeit, irgendwelche Streiche, Vergnügungen mit der Kinderkorona im fernen deutschen Dorf an der Wolga […] "Nicht Vergangenes, was das Herz noch reut…" Diese Zeile sagte alles. Was kam danach? Umherirren, Hunger, Erniedrigung, ein fremdes Land, eine andere Sprache, andere Sitten. Keine Behausung, keinerlei Rückhalt, alles nur provisorisch und ungewiss, Not ohne Ende, Niedergeschlagenheit, Verunsicherung. (273-4)

Belger offers a striking contrast between Christian's ossified notion of ethnic German identity, one that is simultaneously utopian and ephemeral, and Harry's unsentimental pragmatism, which acknowledges the traumas of the past as a catalyst for the future recreation of the self within this new context.

Belger's peregrinatory prose culminates in Harry's formative experiences within the labyrinthine Soviet bureaucracy, which echoes Belger's own experiences. Despite his deportation, he has attended Kazakh schools, acquired both Russian and Kazakh, and his use of the latter is virtually indistinguishable from the ethnic Kazakhs that he encounters. He is outwardly and indeed inwardly in the eyes of his Kazakh peers as well as inwardly "one of them". And yet, as Bhabha reminds us, "Hegemony requires iteration and alterity to be effective" (*Location of Culture* 29). In one instance, he excels academically at school and should receive the top prize, but he is instantly branded by his "otherness" when he referred to as "ein Deutsche" (290) and denied the accolade. However, he is not without his supporters as one character, a witness to the discrimination heaped on Harry, rebuts: "Unsinn! Was haben der Deutsche und der Sonderübersiedler damit zu tun? Das riecht hier nach keiner Politik. Es geht allein um Leistung und um Fleiß. Er ist Schüler eine kasachischen Schule. Er hat all die Jahre Kasachisch gelernt. Auch die Aufsätze schreibt er kasachisch" (290-1). Nevertheless, beyond the boundaries of the aul, Harry remains for some an outsider despite his linguistic proficiency: "er ist kein Ka-sa-chhe!" (291). The act of linguistic negotiation makes possible a space for translation in which hybridity offers a viable alternative to the strict demarcation of identity based on ethnicity or nationality – *either* "German" *or* "Kazakh". Although he is haunted by history, Harry comes to find acceptance amongst Kazakhs. Impressed by his ability to speak fluent Kazakh, a school official proclaims: "Da bist du ja einer von uns, ein Kasache. Mein Brüderchen! Hab ich doch gleich bemerkt, dass du das Iman im Gesicht hast" (406). However, the blacklisting of ethnic Germans excludes him from pursuing his university education until a high-ranking Kazakh from a neighboring aul intervenes. The enigma of exile has resulted in Harry living the locality of culture, which is to say one that is more temporal than historical, with the aul serving as an interstitial space for the ongoing process of re-negotiating the self across linguistic designations of identity.

VII. Conclusion

By way of concluding, we might recall the question posed at the beginning of the article, namely whether Belger's writings represent a model for moving beyond the postcolonial struggle for ethnic, cultural, and political

autonomy in favor of intercultural encounters. In the first instance, his essay "Aul" and novel *Das Haus des Heimatlosen* should be understood as transnational literature in which migrants and migrant communities are theorized along an axis that includes multiculturalism, identity, and hybridity, all of which intersects with considerations of minority literature. In other words, Belger presents a multiplicity of perspectives, which is to say that he portrays characters caught between two worlds due to their essentialist views of cultural identity; he offers characters that ascribe or embody multicultural notions of fixed ethnic identities that are conterminus with specific groups; and he includes characters that acknowledge the fragmented nature of identity and subsequently re-evaluate it as a fluid, ongoing process. Often his fictional characters seem to seesaw between restorative nostalgia and reflective nostalgia, as if caught between naive essentialism and self-conscious melancholy past no longer present. And yet both Belger and his writing move beyond the stuck-between-two-worlds binary as well as the rather static notion of multiculturalism by affirming the migrant writer's fundamental hybridity, one which undercuts what Rita Felski has described as the "doxa of difference". By employing metaphors of hybridity, Belger eschews further atomization in favour of multiplicity and the interplay of pluralistic selves. In her eponymously entitled article Felski described the necessity and value of such approaches to fiction: "Metaphors of hybridity and the like not only recognize differences within the subject, fracturing and complicating holistic notions of identity, but also address connections between subjects by recognizing affiliations, cross-pollinations, echoes, and repetitions, thereby unseating difference from a position of absolute privilege" (12). In this way, Belger's deterritorialized memory makes possible the renegotiation of identity, history, and political practices within contested linguistic and cultural spaces.

NOTES

[1]   See Klimenko.

[2]   See, for example, Pohl.

[3]   On the migration patterns of Russian-Germans, see, for example, Pohl, Brantsch, Eisfeld, Fleischhauer, and Pinkus.

[4]   Of the latter category, namely 'Exilliteratur' (1933-45) some of the most important authors include Alfred Döblin (*Babylonische Wanderung*, the Amazonas-Trilogy), Brecht (*Furcht und Elend des dritten Reiches*, *Flüchtlingsgespräche*, *Mutter Courage*, *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*), Anna Seghers (*Das siebte Kreuz*, *Transit*), Thomas Mann (*Dr Faustus*), Heinrich Mann (*Henry IV* novels), and Arnold Zweig (*Das Beil von Wandsbek*). Additional authors in exile include Joseph Roth (*Tarabas*), Hans-Henny Jahn, Lion Feuchtwanger, Oskar Maria Graf, Franz Werfel (*Die 40 Tage des Musa Dagh*), Stefan Zweig (*Die Welt von gestern*), Franz Mehring (*Die verbrannte Bibliothek*), and Ernst Toller, among others.

[5]   Homi K. Bhabha, 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences', http://monumenttotransformation.org/atlas-of-transformation/html/c/cultural-diversity/cultural-diversity-and-cultural-differences-homi-k-bhabha.html [accessed 25 July 2017]. See also *The Location of Culture*, pp. 35-39.

[6]   Herold Belger, *Selected Works*, p. 7.

[7]   Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 204.

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THE MERCENARY IDENTITY IN BYZANTIUM: THE CASE OF WESTERN EUROPEAN MERCENARIES

Abstract

Throughout its history the Byzantine army relied heavily on foreign soldiers of diverse cultural and ethnic background. By focusing on the west-European soldiers who served in Byzantium from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries, this paper investigates Byzantine ideas about mercenary service, as well as the self-concepts of mercenaries.

Keywords: Byzantium, mercenaries, Byzantine army

Introduction

This paper examines Byzantine attitudes towards mercenary service and ideas mercenaries had about themselves. It is well-known that since the Late Roman period and until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453 large numbers of foreign soldiers were recruited frequently by the Byzantine emperors.[1] Many of them were mercenaries and the investigation of their role in the affairs of the empire provides useful insights into the military history of the Byzantine state. The present analysis focuses on Western European soldiers who served in Byzantium. The Byzantine empire recruited mercenary soldiers from the East and the steppe people such as Cumans, Petchenegs and Alans. However, significant differences in social structures and culture between these people and Western European political entities imply that the question of the role of mercenaries from nomadic peoples in Byzantium requires a separate study.

Most modern studies discussing the role of foreign troops in the Byzantine army are either chronologically based accounts of where mercenaries fought, or thematic studies which focus on specific sources or groups of soldiers. Two should be mentioned. Sigfus Blöndal's monograph on the Varangian imperial guard, translated and revised by

Benedikt Benedikz, provides a brilliant survey of the history of the unit through the analysis of Greek, Latin, Rus, Arabic, Armenian sources and most interestingly, through Scandinavian and Icelandic saga. Jonathan Sheppard's classic study of Frankish mercenaries is essential for understanding the role of mercenaries in the eleventh century and of great value to any historian of the period.[2]

Modern Ideas about Mercenaries in Byzantium

Definitions are crucial in identifying mercenaries and understanding their function in the army. They are also useful in understanding the differences between modern and medieval ideas about mercenaries. Article 47 of the Geneva Protocol which was published in 1977 to supplement the Geneva Convention of 1949 is a useful starting point for any discussion about the definition and identification of mercenaries. According to this article a mercenary is a person who

a) Is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict

b) Does in fact take a direct part in the hostilities

c) Is motivated to take part in the hostilities by the desire for private gain, and in fact, is promised by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that party.

d) Is neither a national of a party to the conflict, nor a resident of a territory controlled by a party to the conflict.

e) Is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict.

f) Has not been sent by a state which is not a party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its military forces.[3]

This definition emphasizes the foreign identity of the mercenary soldier. He does not belong to the formal military structure of the state and receives a higher reward than the native warriors. This raises the question whether these qualifications can be applied to Byzantine and medieval mercenaries. The foreign identity of medieval mercenaries is emphasized by modern scholars. In his discussion of the role of mercenaries in the medieval period, M. Mallett states, "the concept of fighting for profit together the

gradual emergence of a concept of foreigness which distinguished the true mercenary from the ordinary paid soldier."[4] Describing the military organization of medieval England, M. Prestwitch states that, "the term mercenary applied to professionals who fought for pay, and who were not much concerned by whose money they were taking. They were hardened foreign soldiers not subjects of the English crown, but effectively stateless."[5]

Scholars of Byzantine history do not provide a definition of mercenaries. It is taken for granted that they are foreigners who contributed to the political and military failures of the empire and are usually viewed as the opposite of peasant soldiers who had supposedly defended the empire successfully in its heyday. For instance, P. Charanis wrote, "the enrolled soldiers from among the free peasantry, neglected and reduced to poverty, had neither the will nor the equipment to fight. The mercenaries who replaced them helped to complete the disintegration of the state." According to R. Jenkins, "the expensive and otherwise unsatisfactory system of importing foreign mercenaries was widely resorted to". Similarly, S. Vryonis concluded that, the professional mercenaries who took the place of the indigenous thematic soldiers in this period of crisis (11th century) were ineffective replacements and were unable to stop the Turks and that after 1204 the army was transformed into agglomerates of foreign mercenaries seeking temporary employment. In her analysis of Andronikos II's Palaiologos (1282-1328) decision to employ the Catalan Grand Company in 1303, A. Laiou commented that the reliance on pre-organized groups of mercenaries was disastrous, since groups of mercenaries whose business is war were a threat to any army and to any society.[6] Although there are still scholars who consider the abandonment of what they identify as "the national army of Byzantium" as a detrimental factor to the affairs of the empire, negative comments about the employment of mercenaries are rarer in more recent studies.[7] These attribute the military failures of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to mismanagement of resources and domestic political conflicts. The massive recruitment of mercenaries cannot be seen as a cause of the weakening of the Byzantine defenses in the second half of the eleventh century and the failure to fully restore the empire's strength in the end of the twelfth century.[8]

The contrast between "national or peasant army" and mercenaries, implies that the former were thinking of themselves as citizens fighting for their country, and therefore, they were more willing to fight than soldiers who were recruited from outside the frontiers of the empire and lacked bonds to Byzantine society. However, it is questionable whether it is

possible to talk about any form of conscript and volunteer military service in Byzantium and in pre-industrial societies in the modern sense of the world. What was foreign in multiethnic empires, geographical mutable kingdoms and across multivalent political and cultural boundaries is not easy to determine and can be subjected to anachronisms. The dominant role of citizen armies began in the nineteenth century and is seen as the result of the development of Enlightenment ideas, material shifts and domestic conditions in the most powerful European states.[9]

Moreover, the connection of mercenaries to military failures exaggerates the role of what scholarship has traditionally seen as the national army of Byzantium. These were the armies of the *themata* and the assumption is that they were both more loyal to the empire and their homelands, hence more reliable, as well as cheaper, than mercenaries. The origins and connection of these armies to the provincial administration of the Byzantine empire has been the subject of a long and largely inconclusive debate.[10] These armies were mostly made up of what can be called seasonal local militia. Traditionally, they have been seen as the armies which succeeded in stopping the Arab expansion and successfully defending the empire in the ninth century and tenth centuries. Nevertheless, during the course of the tenth century Byzantine emperors began to increasingly to fiscalize military service. They passed laws which fixed the value of military lands which supported their military service. For instance, between 945 and 959 the minimum value of military properties supporting military service was fixed at four pounds of gold for cavalrymen and two pounds of gold for sailors. In a well-known passage the twelfth-century historian Zonaras comments that in the 960s the Nikephoros II made everything to register the lands of his subjects and extract from them the highest level of military service they could support.[11]

Furthermore, the provincial armies were not capable in pursuing the expansionist military policy adopted by the Byzantine rulers in the second half of the tenth century. [12] The aggressive military operations of the Byzantine army against the Arabs were spearheaded by the so-called *tagmata*. These were elite units made up of better trained and permanent soldiers. The first of the *tagmata* were created probably in the 740s by Constantine V (741-775). They gradually evolved and became the central and most effective part of the Byzantine campaigning army.[13] The soldiers of these units were maintained through salaries and many of them were recruited from outside the borders of the empire.[14] However, they are never identified as mercenaries by the sources of the period. This reflects

that these soldiers were seen as integral part of the Byzantine society and were deeply embedded in the social networks of Byzantium. Their service was at least partly a social obligation. They were not groups of adventurers who sold their military skills to the highest bidder. Instead, they had a stake in the well-being of the empire.

Therefore, by the middle of the tenth century the state preferred military revenues to personal military service, and the employment of permanent salaried soldiers. The same period witnessed internationalization of the army. The multiethnic character of the Byzantine army is pointed out by tenth-century Arab authors who mention the presence of Slavs, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Chazars and possibly Georgians in the Byzantine army, while a military treatise analyzing the battlefield tactics of the Byzantine army mentions the presence of Rhos.[15] However, these foreigners can hardly be seen as mercenaries. States like Armenia and the neighboring principalities in the Caucasus, Bulgaria and Kiev were not only neighbors. They were either in closes relations with Byzantium or were depended upon their trading agreements or were simply satellite or vassal states of the empire. In order to raise units from these people, the Byzantine emperor had to have the permission and active co-operation of their respective leaders and lords. In other words, more often than not these were allies.

Byzantine Views about Mercenaries

Although foreign and salaried soldiers had been serving in Byzantium since the late Roman times, the term mercenary (*misthophoros*) to refer to soldiers hired for pay appears for the first time in the sources in the eleventh century. More specifically, the term appears for the first time in the work of the twelfth-century historian John Skylitzes to refer to events that occurred in the second half of the tenth century. Since the precise term used by Skylitzes' source remains unknown, it is impossible to know whether these soldiers were mercenaries, or that the author was using a term that was rather common in the twelfth century.[16] The campaign against the Arabs in Sicily in the 1030s to be the first military operation in which the Byzantine army appears to have relied significantly on materialistic volunteers, who served for pay.[17] Some of them must have travelled significant distances in search of good pay and the opportunity to make a profit through pillaging. These men were mercenaries not only because they received payments for their remunerations but rather because

there were available to them market options which were unconstrained by limited numbers of potential employers.

The influx of mercenaries of diverse background raises the question whether they posed a threat to the stability of the government. The prevailing view, which is heavily influenced by modern ideas that reject any form of military service outside patriotic duty, is that mercenaries are fickle, ill-disciplined materialistic individuals who were ready to betray their paymasters. However, Byzantine emperors hired mercenaries to impose a stricter control over the imperial army. Unlike provincial native soldiers, mercenaries had not developed a strong local identity. They were not prone into getting involved in local politics and it was less likely to support and join revolts of provincial magnates against the throne. The recruitment of mercenaries reflects the mistrust between the throne and native commanders. Describing the arrival of the Varangians in Constantinople in 988, Michael Psellos remarks,

> the emperor Basil (Basil II 976-1025) was well aware of the disloyalty of the Byzantines, but not long before this a picked band of Scythians had come to help him from Taurus. These men, fine fighters, he had trained in separate corps and put them in a division with other foreign troops, and sent them out against the enemy.[18]

Similarly, it is not a coincidence that the first emperor to systematically recruit foreign mercenaries appears to be Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055), who faced a series of revolts which nearly cost him his throne. Moreover, in the first decade of the fourteenth century, the mistrust of the throne towards native soldiery prompted the employment of Alan mercenaries in 1301 and of the Catalan Grand Company in 1302.[19]

The expansionist policy which prompted the employment of mercenaries in the eleventh century was irrelevant in the period from the twelfth until the fifteenth centuries. Nevertheless, apart from the continuous need of rulers to employ soldiers who were depended on them, there were other important factors which prompted the continuous reliance on mercenaries. Financial factors should be taken into consideration. Many mercenaries were employed only for the purpose of individual campaigns and not year round. They would be discharged immediately after an operation ended at no additional cost. Furthermore, the increasing use of weapons which required long practice and training to be used effectively, such as the crossbow, the increasing use of heavier armor and

developments in siege warfare and architecture encouraged specialization which was provided by mercenaries. For instance, in1138 during the siege of the city of Shayzar in Syria, the Byzantine emperor John II Komnenos (1118-1143) hired a group of Armenian engineers who were famous for their skills in siege warfare.[20] In 1323, the Byzantine army besieged Philipoupolis. The emperor and historian John Kantakouzenos (1347-1354) reports that a German mercenary, who was trained in the construction of siege engines, supervised the construction of five-storey wheeled siege tower. This tower was manned by crossbowmen who almost certainly were mercenaries.[21]

The vast majority of mercenaries were recruited from outside the frontiers of the empire and oftentimes Byzantine authors identify them with their ethnic names or with general terms such as *ksenikon* or *ethnikoi* (foreigners). However, the concept of foreign identity within the armed forces seems to have been different from the modern idea of foreign mercenary service. Byzantine military ideology did not make any distinction between native and foreign soldiers. It was the emperor's prerogative to recruit soldiers and organize the defense of the empire. In the preamble of an imperial *chrysobull* issued by the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos in the 1290s it is stated that it is an imperial duty to look after the forces of the empire, to organize the military roles and make the necessary arrangements for the of weapons.[22] Moreover, John Kantakouzenos defines mercenaries as soldiers who serve for pay and are always ready to campaign and are not allowed to be involved in commerce or agriculture, since they should not have any hindrance that would force them to stay at home and prevent them from campaigning.[23] He makes no reference to the ethnic background of mercenaries. In his account of a clash between an imperial army and Alan mercenaries in 1302, the historian George Pachymeres comments that, "a dispute and a battle broke out. Although the armies were of different race, they were placed under a single authority, the imperial one. Therefore, this was a civil war."[24] The same author considers the conflict between the imperial government and the Catalan Grand Company a civil war.[25] This reflects the fact that Byzantine imperial ideology emphasized the ecumenical character of the imperial office and therefore there was no distinction between natives and foreigners in the eyes of the emperor. Mercenaries might have been recruited from outside the frontiers of the empire but once they entered imperial service they became imperial subjects. The real categorization of mercenaries is one of length of service; long service

established personal bonds and created binding commitments and blurred any tide distinction between native and foreigner.

Modern scholarship tends to view foreign troops as prone to rebellion and betrayal. However, Byzantine historians portray a different picture of mercenaries and view the idea of serving for pay as absolutely acceptable. According to John Skylitzes, in 1040 the mercenaries of the general Michael Dokeianos in Sicily revolted when he failed to provide them with their monthly salary. Skylitzes comments that when their leader asked kindly Dokeianos, "not to deprive them of the rewards of their labor," the Byzantine general reviled him and had him flogged. This caused the Frankish mercenaries to revolt.[26] Similarly, Kantakouzenos remarks that it is inhumane brutal and unjust for mercenaries not to receive their payments on time.[27] The modern idea that foreign mercenaries were rebellious and unreliable is reinforced by the rebellions which were led by Robert Crispin, Hevre and Roussel of Bailleul in the eleventh century.[28] These should be examined in the context of the conflicts between clans of the ruling elite and of the numerous rebellions of native military commanders. They should not be seen as actions which were motivated only by the greed of mercenary leaders.

In addition, the authors of the period do not portray a negative image of mercenaries. For instance, Skylitzes, or the source he used, portrays Hevre as a competent general who was obedient to the Byzantines. He was led to revolt because the emperor did not keep his promises towards him.[29] In his account of Crispin's revolt during the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes (1068-1071), Attaleiates comments that the rebel general did not kill any Byzantines and treated his prisoners with respect. When he asked an amnesty, the emperor granted it, "because of the man's courage and his reputation for martial deeds and command. In fact he had previously encountered great multitudes of Turks and had accomplished exceptionally valiant deeds in close combat." Attaleiates seems not to be convinced that Crispin's final dismissal was fair. As he comments, "he was not so much convicted legally as suspected because of his former depravity and the strong accusations made by a prominent figure, a German."[30]

Moreover, the authors of the period are not reticent in pointing out the martial achievements of mercenary soldiers. For instance, in his account of the defeat of the imperial army loyal to Michael VI (1056-1057) at the hands of the rebel and future emperor Isaak Komnenos (1057-1059) in the battle of Haides in 1057, Skylitzes reports that after the end of the battle, Randolf the Frank was seeking "someone of rank with whom to fight."

Eventually he was engaged in single combat with the future emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates.[31] Robert Crispin is called, "extremely brave in hand-to-hand combat and seemed to be the strongest man alive, having given proof of the superior mettle in the noble things he had accomplished. He greatly raised the morale of the soldiers by arriving at the moment when the conflict reached its climax."[32] In another example, describing the battle of Antioch-on-the-Maeander in which the army of Theodore I Laskaris (1204-1221) defeated the Seljuks, the thirteenth-century historian Geroge Akropolites remarks that emperor's army included 800 "Italians" who were noble men and strong of arm. They were the first to attack the enemy and exhibited deeds of great prowess and noble soul.[33]

Unlike historians, authors of theoretical works appear to be critical of the employment of mercenaries than historians. However, their criticism does not focus on the idea of serving for pay. They disapprove the employment of soldiers who were recruited on a temporary basis and lack any bonds to the Byzantine society. In his *Strategikon*, which he compiled in the 1070s the general Kekaumenos advises the emperor no to appoint foreigners (*ethnikoi*) to high offices. As he writes, "the foreigners, if they do not come from the royal family of their land, do not raise them in great offices nor trust them with important titles. Because if you honor the foreigner with the office of *primmikerios* or *strategos*, then what is the point of giving the generalship to a Byzantine? You will turn him into an enemy."[34] It is possible that this statement reflect the dissatisfaction of native generals to the restoration and favoritism of Michael VII Doukas towards Robert Crispin.[35] Kekaumenos does not object the employment of foreigners and uses as a good example the future king of Norway, Harald III Hardrada, who had served in the Varangian guard from 1034 until 1042. According to Kekaumenos, Harald did many notable things in Sicily and performed great deeds of valor against the Bulgarians, which was fitting for one of his nobility and personal ability.[36]

In his treatise entitled *On Kingship*, which he compile in the early fourteenth century, the scholar Thomas Magistros comments that foreign mercenaries always prove to be weaker than it is thought and remain loyal only as long as the Byzantines are victorious. He suggests that the army should be composed of native soldiers who are property owners and well established in their hometowns, where the tombs of their fathers are. As Magistros concludes, "those who own nothing, have nothing to protect and would easily submit in the manner of traitors for the sake of profit."[37] Magistros must have witnessed the catastrophic conflict between

the Byzantine state and the Catalan Grand Company. This experience could have influenced his negative views about foreign soldiers who were employed on a temporary basis.[38] Moreover, his rejection of the employment of mercenaries is in agreement with his strong views against tax increases. It is also probable that Magistros was influence by Synesius' of Cyrene (ca.370-413) *On Kinship* who had suggested the emperor Arcadius (395-408) to rid the Byzantine court of German generals.[39]

Another critic of mercenaries was the fifteenth-century philosopher, Gemistos Pletho. He proposed measures for the re-organization of the Byzantine Peloponnese which in the 1410s was threatened by the Ottomans. In his address to the emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425), Pletho protests that although the taxes imposed on the local population were small, they were numerous, and objected their raising in order to hire mercenaries. He proposed that the population should be divided into soldiers and taxpayers because, as he believed, these two functions cannot be combined. He expected that as a result of this reform the army will be sound psychologically and have high morale. Mercenaries, should be removed because they fulfill neither qualification.[40] Consequently, while he opposes the employment of mercenaries, Pletho suggests the creation of a fully professional army made up of soldiers who would be maintained exclusively through salaries. His ideas have been the subject of debate. Scholars argue that his proposals offered a genuine solution to the problem of the defense of the Peloponense, while others considered his views heavily influenced by classical authors or the Ottoman military organization.[41]

It is rather difficult to understand how the local population viewed mercenaries, due to the very limited available sources. Large groups of mercenaries, which were not completely dismissed after the end of the campaign, spent the winter and non-campaigning season in the provinces. The local population bore much of the brunt of their maintenance. Exemptions the emperor granted monastic properties indicate the large number of taxes and other burdens imposed on the local population for the maintenance of passing armies. In addition, these exemptions reflect the polyglot character of the Byzantine army since they mention the presence of Rus, Varagians, Koulpigoi, English, Franks, Nemitzoi, Bulgarians, Saracens.[42] The most common tax was the so-called *mitaton*, an army levy in the form of purchases of provisions at nominal prices or requisition of supplies. A characteristic example of the imposition of mercenaries on the local population is provided by the Catalan Grand Company,

the soldiers of which were billeted in houses in Kyzikos from October 1303 until April 1304.The chronicler of the company Ramon Muntaner admits that the maintenance of the Company imposed a heavy burden to the local population. [43] It can be speculated that the local population did see mercenaries as a burden and there is evidence suggesting that ill-disciplined mercenaries could pillage Byzantine territory.[44]

However, when the throne proved unable to provide the local population with the necessary protection, it was possible for mercenary commanders to gain popularity among the locals. The career of Roussel of Bailleul provides a characteristic example. He took advantage of the anarchy that followed the Byzantine conflicts between clans of the Byzantine elite in the 1070s and together with 400 Frankish soldiers established his own independent authority in Anatolia. He proved victorious against the Turks as well as the imperial army, and as a result he attracted a significant number of warriors who joined his forces and augmented his army.[45] He challenged the imperial authority of the Doukas family and attempted to cause confusion in the capital by declaring the emperor's (Michael VII Doukas) uncle, John Doukas, who had become his prisoner, emperor. He was also able to levy taxes on Amaseia and it is obvious that he succeeded in providing a high degree of order in his dominions by protecting them against the raids of the Turks. [46] As a result he seems to have become popular, since he was seen able to defend the area from Turkish raids. According to the sources, the people of Amaseia rioted and tried to set him free when he was eventually captured by the future emperor Alexios Komnenos.[47]

Self-Concepts of Mercenaries

The most important problem in examining the ideas mercenaries had about themselves is that almost everything that we know about them is written by others. Moreover, the modern rejection of any form of military service outside national service has prevented any thorough discussion about the self-portrayal of mercenaries. Instead, it is taken for granted that all of them were materialistic volunteers, without any ties to the Byzantine society. There is no doubt that the Byzantine emperors employed large numbers of mercenaries for the purpose of specific campaigns for whom we know nothing. It is likely that such troops made up the majority of the mercenaries who served in Byzantium. For instance, the Byzantine

campaign in Italy in 1154 relied heavily on mercenaries who probably never set foot on Byzantine soil. The general Michael Palaiologos was sent to Italy by the emperor with a military and a large amount of money in order to recruit locally.[48]

Nevertheless, it seems that a significant number of mercenaries could not be seen as individuals who lacked any connection with Byzantine society. The aforementioned leading mercenary figures Hevre, Robert Crispin and Roussel of Bailleul had received properties on the eastern frontier and were granted court titles, which provided them with significant financial profits and influence on the court. It is not a coincidence that the revolts of Hevre and Crispin are attributed to their dissatisfaction about the titles they received from the emperor.[49] These mercenaries and their followers entered the hierarchy of the Byzantine aristocracy and had a stake in the well-being of the Byzantine society. Moreover, the fact that their possessions were situated on the eastern frontier indicates that the emperors of the period trusted them more than the native military commanders. Herve's seal shows that he had been appointed "*stratelates* of the east."[50] This indicates that he was the highest military officer in the eastern frontier. It might be not a coincidence that one of his immediate predecessors was the general Katakalon Kekaumenos who had been involved in a revolt against the emperor.[51]

The practice of granting land and other privileges to mercenaries was intensified in the thirteenth century. Documentary evidence suggests that many western European soldiers received grants of *pronoia*. This was a grant of a certain amount of tax revenue derived from specific properties.[52] These grants reflect an attempt to reduce the cost of mercenary service and at the same time to secure their long-term commitment. It is impossible to know the percentage of mercenaries who received these grants. Nevertheless, from the thirteenth-century until the end of the empire this type of grant was the main means through which the Byzantine state rewarded the most effective part of its native soldiery. Therefore a good deal of mercenaries and the best part of the native soldiers were maintained through payments they receive from the value of properties. This blurred the already not sharp distinction between foreign and native troops.

The difficulty in making the distinction between native and foreign troops is well-reflected in the various palace guard units the most famous being the Varangian guard. Almost all palace guard units in Byzantium were made up of foreigners and they were identified according to the ethnicity of their soldiers; The Vardariots were originally Hungarians

who were established along the Vardar River in the twelfth century, the fourteenth-century Mourtatoi were of mixed Turkish and Byzantine Greek origin. While, theoretically the typical mercenary has no ties to the society of the state he is fighting for, the palace guard units, and the Varangians in particular, were deeply embedded in the political structures and developments of the state. For instance, they played an important role in civil wars and succession disputes. On the other hand, they were intentionally set off from society through having special status and privileges as well as restrictions designed to guarantee their loyalty to the ruler over against the interests of powerful groups. Moreover, the long existence of the Varangian guard in Byzantium- it survived for almost four and a half centuries- reflects that it was not uncommon for soldiers of diverse ethnic background to serve under a unit with a generic foreign name. The early Varangians were Scandinavians, Rus and probably some of them were Slavs. After the Norman invasion of England, Anglosaxon warriors entered the Varangian guard.[53]

Moreover, the knightly class in western Europe despised mercenaries, whom it viewed as incompetent soldiers capable only for the most sordid aspects of warfare. Unlike knights, mercenaries were supposed to lack any sense of social responsibility and loyalty and were not seen as participants in the community of interlink loyalties that helped define noble society in European west.[54] Furthermore, by the early thirteenth century there was a legal and theological tradition which condemned mercenaries. Most notably, in 1179 Canon 27 of the Third Lateran Council condemned mercenaries and laid down penalties for them, while theologians made the distinction between mercenaries and *milites stipendiarii*, or salaried knights, who fought just wars and received their due wages.[55] This moral and religious objection to mercenary service was also based on a famous passage in the Gospel of St John in which Christ contrasts himself , the Good Shepherd with the "hireling whose own the sheep are not who flees at the first sign of trouble because he is a hireling and cares not for the sheep."[56] However, in practice there were many similarities between landless household knights and mercenaries, since both they expected to receive payments and oftentimes equipment and knights were not less violent than mercenaries.[57] Plundering and pillaging was as much the preserve of the knight as of the mercenary and was not strictly speaking contrary to the chivalric code. The common peasant who is the usual victim of raids did not figure in the chivalric code.

Chivalric ideals and mercenary service could overlap and many mercenary leaders throughout Europe were of noble birth, while oftentimes, the names of pre-organized Companies of mercenaries echoed those of chivalric orders.[58] Mercenaries of noble birth served in Byzantium. In his account of the civil war between Andronikos II Palaiologos and his grandson Andronikos III (1328-1341), Kantakouzenos reports the presence of German mercenaries who were noble.[59] According to a French chronicle, in 1347, the noble citizens of Metz, William Poujoize and John Braidy requested the permission of John Kantakouzenos to change the swallows in their arms into eagles, in recognition of their service to him.[60] The chronicle's statement that the Byzantine civil war between John Kantakouzenos and the regency of John V Palaiologos (1341-1391), which was fought from 1341 until 347, attracted many young European warriors is an allusion to the fact that it was very common for young nobles throughout Europe to serve as mercenaries abroad, in the hope of enriching themselves by exploiting the endemic warfare of the period. These were trained military men who, due to the social and economic conditions in their lands, were forced to search for employment and patrons abroad.

That the contradiction between mercenary service and chivalric ideals was superficial is shown by the fact that Crusaders could be turned into mercenaries. Since the 13th century, crusading armies were composed largely of mercenaries and often the distinction between a mercenary and a crusader was not easy, particularly as there were professionals who were attracted by indulgences.[61] For instance, the army of the so-called empire of Nicaea, which was the strongest of the successor state to Byzantium after the capture of Constantinople by the armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, relied heavily on western European mercenaries. Many of them had been soldiers of the army of the Latin empire of Constantinople who due to lack of funds joined the armies of Nicaea as mercenaries. They were subsequently excommunicated by the Pope Innocent III, who in the 1190s had used mercenaries against Markward of Anweiler.[62]

The Nicaeans seem to have enhanced the religious motivation of these mercenaries by adopting practices that contradicted Byzantine traditions. Between 1208 and 1210, the Patriarch Michael Autoerianos compiled a letter which was addressed to the soldiers of Nicaea. The letter concludes with the statement,

> Let the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen. Receiving the Grace of Christ we forgive all the trespasses committed by those of

you who defended the people of God and happened to suffer death and bore the brunt of battle for their homes, and for the common salvation and redemption of the people.[63]

If the conclusion of Autoreianos' letter is authentic, it contradicts Byzantine canon. Moreover, in the imperial oration which he compiled on the occasion of the victory of Theodore I Laskaris against the Seljuks in 1211 in Antioch-on-the –Maeander, Niketas Choniates states that the emperor achieved his victory by the sign of the Cross, which he enjoyed his soldiers to wear as an ensign.[64] This is attributed to the large number of western mercenaries who fought in this battle. It is interesting that around 180 years later these mercenaries were portrayed by the Aragonese version of the *Chronicle of Morea* as Crusaders and martyrs. This was compiled in 1393 under the patronage of the Master of the Knights of St John of the Hospital, Juan Fernádez de Heredia. It reports that the Byzantine victory was achieved by Spanish soldiers who were heading to Jerusalem.[65] Consequently, military deeds of soldiers for hire are described as acts of valor carried out by Spanish pilgrim warriors, many of whom achieved martyrdom by falling on the battlefield defending Christendom. By claiming that they were Spanish soldiers, the *Chronicle* wished to provide an ideological and historical basis for the presence of the Hospitallers in the Balkans.

Furthermore, the chronicler and leading member of the Catalan Grand Company, Ramon Muntaner emphasizes the ideological and religious justification of the activities of this large self-interested group of mercenaries in Anatolia. He claims that to the great dishonor of Christendom, the Byzantines in Asia Minor were forcibly converted, oppressed and tormented by the Turks. Therefore, as he concludes, it was absolutely necessary for the Company to campaign against them. This religious aspect of the war against the Turks justifies the decision of the leader of the company Roger de Flor not to give quarter to any man above ten years of age and to enslave the wives of the defeated after the first victory of the Catalan Grand Company over a Turcoman tribe. In a similar fashion, Muntaner praises the soldiers of the Company for slaughtering many Turcomans who belonged to the emirate of Aydın.[66] Moreover, in his account of the conflict between the Catalans and the Genoese, which broke in 1307, Muntaner depicts the Catalan Grand Company as an army that defended Christianity and promoted the interests of the Holy See. Muntaner relates that the Genoese demanded that the Catalans leave the

Byzantine Empire. They officially challenged the Catalans three times. The Catalans demanded that the Genoese stop challenging them in the name of the Catholic faith, which the Catalans had come to Byzantium to exalt. Muntaner claims that he made his request to the Genoese envoy in the name of the Holy Apostolic father whose standards the Catalan Grand Company carried against the Byzantine emperor and his soldiers, who were schismatic and had most treacherously slain the Company's leaders, though they had come to aid them against the infidels.[67] It is likely that the depiction of the fighting against the Turks as a religious war served the interests of high-ranking members of the Company, many of whom were Catalan and Aragonese knights. It is reasonable to infer that in spite of serving as mercenaries, these knights would have been attracted to the idea of promoting their war against the Turks as a war against the impious for the defense of Christendom.

Furthermore, the concern of foreign soldiers about their reputation is reflected in the case of Western European individuals who in a number of thirteenth-century documents are identified as *lizioi kavallarioi* of the emperor.[68] Pachymeres relates that the title was conferred by the emperor upon foreigners and John VI Kantakouzenos writes that he awarded the title *kavallarioi* upon the most illustrious of his western European mercenaries in the ceremony of his coronation in 1341.[69] That they received their titles from the emperor implies that they entered the hierarchical system of the Byzantine aristocracy and that they were seen by the Byzantine rulers as nobles who shared their ideals and had political and personal ties with them and the empire. The use of the epithets "the bravest," "the most loyal," "the well-born," which accompany the title *kavallarios* may be seen as a response to the criticism that foreign soldiers were fickle and unreliable soldiers.[70] By being identified as proud and loyal "knights', these soldiers were dissociated from the stereotypical image of the mercenary as a greedy and rootless individual who lacked any sense of duty.

Moreover, in the early years of the civil war of 1341-1347 Kantakouzenos relied heavily on the support of the Serbian ruler Stefan Dušan. In 1343, Kantakouzenos marched on Byzantine territory leading German mercenaries whom he had borrowed from the Serbian ruler. Kantakouzenos reports an incident which sheds important light on the attitudes of these soldiers. He claims that when the civil war started turning in his favor, Stefan Dušan began to fear that he would lose control over Kantakouzenos's movements. Therefore, he recalled the German mercenaries he had given Kantakouzenos. However, they refused to obey

their paymaster's order. They accused the Serbian ruler of being malign and assured Kantakouzenos that, in the case of a Serbian attack, they would defend him. They justified their decision by arguing that if they were ordered by their paymaster to aid someone, they would obey his order to abandon him only if he were in a safe position. However, since they were ordered to desert Kantakouzenos, while he was on campaign and ready to fight a battle, to desert him would be treachery, which they considered a shameful act.[71]

Kantakouzenos's description of the Germans' attitude towards him indicates that they had established a particular code of conduct which they observed and according to which they circumscribed their actions. It is expected that continuity of service was a key factor in the development of a set of rules that the members of a company of soldiers felt compelled to follow. Moreover, the Germans' statement that they would not abandon Kantakouzenos before the completion of their mission and that to desert him would be considered a shameful act indicates their concern to promote themselves as loyal, competent and reliable soldiers.

In conclusion, modern concepts and definitions of mercenary should not be applied to the study of mercenaries in Byzantium. Foreign identity and cash payments are problematic criteria in identifying mercenaries in Byzantium. While it is certain that many mercenary soldiers were materialistic volunteers who served only for the purposes of a specific campaign, a significant number of them served long-term, created bonds to the society of the Byzantine state. They received properties and titles and they cannot be seen as materialistic unreliable volunteers. Moreover, from the Byzantine point of view, once they entered service in the Byzantine army they became subjects of the emperor like the native troops. Furthermore, the historians of the period do not hesitate to point out the martial virtues of foreign mercenaries and do not object their employment. Criticism directed against mercenaries can be found in theoretical texts, and is influenced by the personal experiences of the individual authors and classical prototypes. In addition, many groups of mercenaries which were employed in Byzantium had developed a complex attitude and a code of conduct which reveals their concern to maintain their reputation as competent and loyal soldiers.

NOTES

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[9] D. Avanta, "From Mercenary to Citizen Armies: Explaining Change in the Practice of War", in *International Organization* 54, 2000, 41-72.

[10] For useful overviews of the history of this debate see J. Haldon, "Military service, military lands and the status of soldiers: current problems and interpretations", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 47, 1993, 3-11; C. Zukerman, "Learning from the Enemy and More: Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium", in W. Brandes *et als* (eds.), *Millennium 2/2005. Yearbook on*

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[11] Zonaras, *epitomae historiarum libri VIII*, M. Pinder (ed.), Weber, Bonn, 1847.

[12] J. Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society, 565-1204*, UCL Press, London, 1999, 90; Shepard, "Uses of the Franks", 279.

[13] J. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians*, Habelt, Bonn, 1984, 228-256; N. Oikonomides, "L' evolution de l'organization administrative de l'empire byzantine", in *Travaux et Mémoires*, 6, 1976, 125-152; For the tenth century army see H.-J. Kühn, *Die byzantinische Armee im 10. Jahrhundert*, Fassbaender, Vienna, 1991.

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[22] *Acta e diplomata graeca medii aevi*, 6 vols. F. Miklosich-J.Müller, Vienna, 1860-1890, V 264

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[25] Pachymeres, IV 433, 459-463, 531.

[26] Skylitzes John, *Synopsis historiarum*, I. Thurn (ed.), De Gruyter, Berlin, 1973, 400-401.

[27] Kantakouzenos, I 238.

[28] J. Shepard, "The English in Byzantium: A Study of their Role in the Byzantine Army in the Later Eleventh Century", in *Traditio*, 29, 1973, 53-92.

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30   Attaleiates Michael, *Historia*, I.Pérez Martín, Madrid Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 2002, 124-125.
31   Skylitzes, 495.
32   Attaleiates,171.
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34   Kekaumenos, *Strategikon et incerti scriptoris de officiis regiis libellus*, B. Wassilewsky-V. Jernstedt (eds.), St Petersburg, 1896/Amsterdam, 1965, 95.
35   Attaleiates, 97.
36   Kekaumenos, 95.
37   J-.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus cumpletus, series Graeca*, 166 vols. Paris, 1857-1866, 145, cols.461,509.
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44   Attaleiates,145-147.
45   Attaleiates, 184-188.
46   Bryennios Nikephoros, *Historiarum Libri Quattor*, P. Gautier (ed.), Byzantion, Bruxelles, 1975, 184-185; Attaleiates, 199.
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48   Kinnamos John, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, A. Meineke (ed.), Weber, Bonn, 1836, 112.
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[52] For the institution of *pronoia* see M. Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: the Institution of Pronoia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012.

[53] See J. Shepard, "The English and Byzantium: A study of their role in the Byzantine army in the later eleventh century", *Traditio* 29 (1973), 53-92.

[54] D. Crouch, "William Marshal and the Mercenariat", in J. France (ed.), *Mercenaries and Paid Men*, Leiden, Brill, 2007, 18-25.

[55] N. Housley, "The Mercenary Companies, the Papacy, and the Crusades, 1356-178", in *Traditio*, 38, 1982, 257-258; M. Lower, "The Papacy and Christian Mercenaries of Thirteenth-Century Africa", in *Speculum*, 89, 2014, 604-605.

[56] *The Gospel of John*, 10.12.14 .

[57] J.H. Pratt, "Was Chaucher's Knight Really a Mercenary?", in *The Chaucer Review* 2, 1987, 8-27.

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[59] Kantakouzenos, I 98.

[60] *Les chroniques de la ville de Metz*, J.F. Huguenin (ed.), S. Lamory, Metz, 1835, 83.

[61] Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades Against Christian Lay Powers, 1254-1343*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1999, 148.

[62] S. Kyriakidis, "Crusaders and Mercenaries: The west-European soldiers of the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204-1258)" in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 29, 2014, 140; For the use of mercenaries by the Papacy in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries see D. P. Waley, "Papal armies in the Thirteenth Century", in *The English Historical Review,* 72, 1957, 15.

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[69] Pachymeres, I 119; Kantakouzenos, II 166.

[70] *Acta e diplomata graeca*, IV 36, 39, 41, 79, 89, 94.

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BEING A SEVERAN AUTHOR: CLAUDIUS AELIANUS AND AUTHORIAL SELF-REPRESENTATION IN MISCELLANEOUS COMPILATIONS

Abstract

The paper focuses on the peculiar status authors of miscellaneous compilations from Roman imperial times have. On the one hand, they seem to be mere collectors of pieces of knowledge written down by former scholars. On the other, however, they also highlight their own creative approach in the compilation process. This attitude becomes visible in the way they present their collections to their intended readers, most of the time in the introductory or conclusive remarks they provide. Our analysis will deal with these paratextual frameworks and compare the images the compilers used to describe their activities, so that our study will demonstrate how they understood their contributions and how they wanted them to be appreciated by their readers.

Keywords: Roman imperial times, Pliny the Elder, Aulus Gellius, Clement of Alexandria, Julius Africanus, Athenaeus, Claudius Aelianus, ancient miscellanies, collecting and compiling as literary practices

1. Introduction

At the turn of the 2nd and 3rd century CE, works of compilation, such as the *Attic Nights* by Gellius, had become a fashionable trend. In most cases, such books took the form of voluminous assemblages of large amounts of anecdotes and stories that their authors collected during their extensive readings. Gellius, for instance, alludes explicitly to this procedure at the very beginning of his work:

> usi autem sumus ordine rerum fortuito, quem antea in excerpendo feceramus. Nam proinde ut librum quemque in manus ceperam seu Graecum seu Latinum vel quid memoratu dignum audieram, ita quae

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libitum erat, cuius generis cumque erant, indistincte atque promisce annotabam eaque mihi ad subsidium memoriae quasi quoddam litterarum penus recondebam, ut quando usus venisset aut rei aut verbi, cuius me repens forte oblivio tenuisset, et libri ex quibus ea sumpseram non adessent, facile inde nobis inventu atque depromptu foret.

But I kept to the random arrangement of my material (ordine rerum fortuito) that I adopted while excerpting my notes. For whenever I had a Greek or Latin book in hand, or whenever I heard anything worth remembering, I made notes of whatever please me, no matter of what kind it was, regardless of any classification or ordering and I stored them as subsidies for my memory – a sort of literary storehouse –, so that when the need arose of a word or a subject, which I happened accidentally to have forgotten, and in case the books from which I had extracted the information were not at hand, it would still be easy for me to find and produce it. (Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 2)[1]

He is, however, neither the first nor the only scholar, who composed such kind of works. Gellius himself alludes to an ongoing tradition in a subsequent passage from his *Preface*, in which he mentions an impressive list of about thirty works of the same type as his.[2] Such a tradition of miscellaneous writings is also confirmed by other writers, who give similar lists. For instance, already in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, which antedates Gellius' *Attic Nights* by almost a century, we find such a list:

inscriptionis apud Graecos mira felicitas: κηρίον inscripsere, quod volebant intellegi favum, alii κέρας Ἀμαλθείας, quod copiae cornu (ut vel lactis gallinacei sperare possis in volumine haustum), iam ἴα, Μοῦσαι, πανδέκται, ἐγχειρίδια, λειμών, πίναξ, σχεδίων – inscriptiones, propter quas vadimonium deseri possit. at cum intraveris, di deaeque, quam nihil in medio invenies! nostri graviores Antiquitatium, Exemplorum Artiumque, facetissimi Lucubrationum, puto quia bibaculus erat et vocabatur.

Among the Greeks there is a marvellous creativity with regard to their works' title: One they entitled κηρίον (Kērion), meaning Honeycomb; others are called Κέρας Ἀμαλθείας (Keras Amaltheias), what means Horn of Plenty (so that you may even hope to get hen's milk from the volume); further you find Violets, Muses, Holdalls, Handbooks, Meadows, Tablets, *and* Improvisations, *titles for which one might to give up one's bail. But when you open them, good heavens, how little you will find inside! Our authors, being more serious, entitle them* Antiquities, Examples *and* Artistries, *and the most polished ones,* Lamplights, *I suppose because the author was not only by name a tippler.* (Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 24-25)

Also after Gellius, and when turning to the Greek speaking part of the Roman Empire, we find evidence that points towards such a tradition. We may mention here Clement of Alexandria, although the relevant passage does not stand at the beginning of his *Stromateis,* but comes from Book 6:

ἐν μὲν οὖν τῷ λειμῶνι τὰ ἄνθη ποικίλως ἀνθοῦντα κἀν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἡ τῶν ἀκροδρύων φυτεία οὐ κατὰ εἶδος ἕκαστον κεχώρισται τῶν ἀλλογενῶν (ᾗ καὶ Λειμῶνάς τινες καὶ Ἑλικῶνας καὶ Κηρία καὶ Πέπλους συναγωγὰς φιλομαθεῖς ποικίλως ἐξανθισάμενοι συνεγράψαντο)· τοῖς δ' ὡς ἔτυχεν ἐπὶ μνήμην ἐλθοῦσι καὶ μήτε τῇ τάξει μήτε τῇ φράσει διακεκαθαρμένοις, διεσπαρμένοις δὲ ἐπίτηδες ἀναμίξ, ἡ τῶν Στρωματέων ἡμῖν ὑποτύπωσις λειμῶνος δίκην πεποίκιλται.

Neither the flowers with their colourful blossoms in a meadow nor the plantations of fruittrees in a garden are separated, each according to its species, from those of other kinds (hence some writers compose their learned collections as Meadows, Helicons, Honeycombs, *and* Robes, *having picked the most various selections). Likewise, the outline of our* Stromateis *presents the diversity of a meadow, as its topics came to my mind as they pleased, and were arranged neither according to order nor to any thoughts about the expression, but were on purpose spread in confusion.* (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 6.2.1) [Stählin/Früchtel 1960]

Unfortunately not all of the quoted works came down to us. Among the ancient works that are usual defined as miscellanies, we have preserved only four extant texts: Gellius' *Attic Nights*, Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis*, and Aelianus' two works, *De Natura Animalium* and *Varia Historia*. To these we may add Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* and fragments from at least two more such collections, namely Favorinus' Παντοδαπή ἱστορία (*Pantodapē historia: Miscellaneous Story*) and the *Cesti* by Julius Africanus.[3]

In our paper, we aim to focus on this group of authors and to analyse how they saw their own role as authors and how they described their literary activity. In this study, we shall give particular attention to Claudius Aelianus from Praeneste in Italy.[4] This choice is justified by the fact that we encounter in one of his work, the concept of ποικιλία (*poikilia: manifold variety*), which was used by modern scholars to define this kind of works.[5] But our analysis will not be confined to this author. We shall take a broader approach and combine two lines of investigation: on the one hand, we shall compare the miscellaneous compilations among themselves by focusing in particular on the variation in their titles and by discussing the explanatory remarks, which most of the authors provided at the beginning

(or at the end) of their works and which give some insights into the author's perception of his own activity.[6] On the other hand, however, we shall have to weight these images against Pliny's *Preface* to his *Natural History*.[7] This step becomes necessary, because Pliny has often been considered as a precursor of this tradition,[8] although his text is not usually included in the category of miscellaneous compilations. Nonetheless, despite the substantial differences in scope, method and historical context, the *Natural History* can provide a common point of reference to all of the works we shall discuss and create a certain background, from which to start.

2. Pliny the Elder

The main difference between Pliny's *Natural History* and our group of miscellaneous compilations comes from a famous passage in his own *Preface*. Pliny uses the Greek expression "ἡ ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία" (*hē egkyklios paideia*: *allround education*) to define one kind of education. This statement makes him a precursor of the modern concept of encyclopaedism.[9] In Pliny's time the expression has, however, a slightly different meaning than in our modern usage, referring to a general knowledge that one should acquire after an elementary instruction and before going into any specialization.[10] Moreover, Pliny seems to adapt the expression to his own purposes, as he emphasises the completeness of the set of knowledge that he defines as ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (*egkyklios paideia*),[11] setting aside the notion of unity or circularity, which is often focused on by other ancient authors, when using the expression ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (*egkyklios paideia*).[12]

This shift, from unity to completeness, is of great relevance for our study, as it introduces two important notions that underlie Pliny's work and distinguish it from miscellaneous compilations. On the one hand, this feature highlights Pliny's intention to be exhaustive, on the other it also allows him to focus on how challenging it is to order all the information he gathered. Pliny refers indeed several times to the demanding task of ordering his material,[13] giving, in doing so, the impression that this was a necessary counterpart to his claim of completeness, even if, throughout the preserved work, the internal order of exposition often changes.[14] Moreover, ordering the available knowledge is also a feature of Pliny's work that links it to its specific historical context. The necessity to order or structure the amount of knowledge that had accumulated within the

Roman Empire was felt in Pliny's time with particular intension and this for two reasons. On the one hand, the expansion of the Roman Empire tremendously increased the amount of knowledge available and brought about the need of inventories for this new mass of data. On the other hand, Pliny witnessed the ascension of Vespasian to the imperial throne, after the troubled years of Nero's reign. In his efforts to legitimize the Flavian dynasty, the new Emperor also reshaped many aspects of Roman life, seeking a more ordered and hence more controllable vision of the Empire.[15] This imperial initiative brought the importance of classification, catalogisation and ordering of one's field of expertise to the fore and provides a historical context for Pliny's undertaking. However, this historical timeframe constitutes the third aspect of Pliny's undertaking that distinguishes his work from those of the group of authors, in whom we are interested here. They are dated, either under the Antonine or under the Severan dynasty, almost a century after Pliny.[16]

However, and despite the differences we just highlighted, two passages from Pliny's *Preface* are of particular importance for our investigation, as they bring his undertaking closer to the works of compilation we are investigating. In both, he alludes to the way he sees his own undertaking and to the role he wants to play as an author. In the first, he uses the topos of modesty, claiming that he has not much talent.[17] But, at the same time, he also mentions that he will develop his narration in a straightforward way, without digressions and additional information. This suggests the idea of a strong intervention from the author, who is able to outline the material gathered according to a clear plan that he has in mind, even though he does not clearly explain this plan in the passage:

meae quidem temeritati accessit hoc quoque, quod levioris operae hos tibi dedicavi libellos. nam nec ingenii sunt capaces, quod alioqui in nobis perquam mediocre erat, neque admittunt excessus aut orationes sermonesve aut casus mirabiles vel eventus varios, iucunda dictu aut legentibus blanda sterili materia: rerum natura, hoc est vita, narratur, et haec sordidissima sui parte ac plurimarum rerum aut rusticis vocabulis aut externis, immo barbaris etiam, cum honoris praefatione ponendis.

My own boldness has indeed reached the point that I dedicate to you the present books as a lighter work. For they do not exhibit much talent, of which in any case I possess only very little, nor does their topic allow of digressions, nor of speeches or dialogues, nor marvellous accidents or unusual events, matters interesting to relate or entertaining to read when considering such barren material. Our works narrates the nature of things,

which means life itself and this through its filthiest parts, using for the great majority of them either rustic or foreign terms, or even barbarian words, for the use of which one has to apologise. (Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 12-13)

In the second, challenging somehow his previous claim of modesty, he mentions his extensive readings and how he believes to be able to contribute, through his work, to the improvement of knowledge by updating his sources. Nonetheless, he also alludes to the selection he had to make in his numerous notes in order to create the book he presents, emphasising in doing so a form of incompleteness of the undertaking and the subjectivity of his choice:

(…) viginti milia rerum dignarum cura – quoniam, ut ait Domitius Piso, thesauros oportet esse, non libros – lectione voluminum circiter duorum milium, quorum pauca admodum studiosi attingunt propter secretum materiae, ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus triginta six voluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis, quas aut ignoraverant priores aut postea invenerat vita. nec dubitamus multa esse quae et nos praeterierint; homines enim sumus et occupati officiis subsicivisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis, ne quis vestrum putet his cessatum horis.

We collected, in 36 volumes, 20'000 facts of interest – so that, as Domitus Piso says, storehouses instead of books would be more appropriate –, that were taken from the readings of about 2000 volumes, very few of which were thoroughly studied due to obscurity of their contents, and from the exploration of one hundred authors, adding a great number of other facts that were either ignored by our predecessors or have been discovered since then. Nor do we doubt that there are many topics that have escaped our attention; for we are human beings, and, while engaged with our duties, we took care of this in our spare time, which means at night, so that none of your company may think that I am inactive in these hours. (Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 17)

However, as this feature of his work is due to his human condition rather than to any lack of perseverance, he adds another dimension to the notion of completeness that he champions. It is the idea that human achievements, however accomplished they may be, should always be seen as a process that can and will be improved, when further knowledge is gained. We find this conviction once again, when Pliny compares his own state of mind about his work with the custom of ancient sculptors and painters to give their masterpiece a provisory title.[18] As we shall

see, this comparison not only reintroduced the notion of modesty Pliny developed previously. It will also allow us to see the difference between Pliny's understanding of his contribution and the conception the authors of miscellanies have about their achievements. We may, therefore, come back to it at several places in our paper.

3. Aulus Gellius

The difference between Pliny and the group of authors we are interested in appears already in Gellius, even if he takes up many of the themes of Pliny's *Preface*.[19] The most obvious parallelism is the claim of modesty, which Gellius most explicitly expressed, as did Pliny, when explaining the choice of the title of his work, pretending to have not aimed at being as witty as his precursors.[20] The parallelism to Pliny is particularly visible as Gellius' statement is immediately followed by the list of other miscellaneous works with fancier titles than his *Attic Nights*. This recalls Pliny's list we mentioned above. However, interestingly for us, Gellius does not merely reproduce Pliny's strategy,[21] but modifies its structure. Indeed, Gellius explains the choice of his title before giving the list, whereas Pliny concluded his list by referring to his choice about the title. Moreover, the image the two authors convey through their choices about the title is also very different. Gellius recalls, through the title of his work, the long winter nights that he spent in Attica during his stay in Greece, which most probably took place during his youth:

> sed quoniam longinquis per hiemem noctibus in agro, sicuti dixi, terrae Atticae commentationes hasce ludere ac facere exorsi sumus, idcirco eas inscripsimus Noctium esse Atticarum, nihil imitati festivitates inscriptionum quas plerique alii utriusque linguae scriptores in id genus libris fecerunt.

> *And since, as I have said, I began to assemble and to play with these notes during the long winter nights which I spent in the countryside of Attica, I entitled them* Attic Nights, *making no attempt to imitate the wittiness of their titles' formulation, which many other writers of both languages have displayed for works of this kind.* (Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 4)[22]

This description suggests a particularly favourable place, and a special moment of leisure, which both allowed him to start the collecting of his material. It also suggests some sort of nostalgia, as he focuses on the

beginning of the undertaking, which seems far away in the time of his education.[23]

When switching to Pliny's text, the situation is different. Pliny does not explain the choice of the wording of his title, but starts his *Preface* by calling his work *Libri Naturalis Historiae* (*Books of Natural History*) defining later its subject as dealing with nature in so far that it comprises and defines all things (rerum natura, hoc est vita, narratur: *our work narrates the nature of things, which means life itself*).[24] Moreover, he calls his topic a barren one (sterilis materia: *barren material*), which implies that there was some commitment of his to treat this subject. It, therefore, suggests the seriousness and gravity not only of the subject, but also of the scholar, who was willing to engage with this difficult topic. This is in sharp contrast with the playful memories of Gellius (ludere: *playing with*) and underlines Pliny's claim to aim to be useful, through his research, for the reader.[25] This attitude of Pliny also justifies the absence of any digression or other pleasant addition, to which we alluded above, even if, according to Pliny, this would have been more interesting to relate and more entertaining to read (iucunda dictu aut legentibus blanda: *matters interesting to relate or entertaining to read*). His work is, therefore, presented as a useful service the author provided to his reader by preferring a difficult topic over pleasure and popularity.[26]

Finally, also when Pliny compares his choice of the title with the one made by sculptors and painters, we see the difference between his undertaking and Gellius' motivations. With this comparison, Pliny insists on the provisory state of his research, which could easily be amplified and improved over time. Indeed sculptors and painters usually sign their works with formulas such as "Apelles or Polyclitus has been working on it" (Apelles faciebat aut Polyclitus) instead of formulas such as "he produced it" (ille fecit)[27], whereas Pliny calls his works *Naturalis Historia*. In doing so, he refers to the Greek term of ἰστορία (*historia*), which means "inquiry" and goes back to Herodotus.[28] In this sense, Pliny's work is an inquiry into the realm of nature, which he did the best he could, according to his human condition and remaining well-aware of the tentativeness of his results. When taking this aspect into consideration, we understand how different Pliny's way of conceiving his activities is when compared with that of Gellius. On the one hand, we can follow Gellius' amusement during his *Attic Nights*,[29] whereas on the other we witness Pliny's tiresome inquiry into all forms of life.

However, the most important difference between Gellius and Pliny is the fact that they have completely opposed views about the concept of order. As we have seen, Pliny very much insists on the necessity to give the material that he collected a meaningful order.[30] In opposition to that, Gellius is among the first authors, whose works we have preserved in its entirety, who claims that he did not give his collection a clear order. He states this at the very beginning of his *Preface*, by calling his arrangement a fortuitous order (ordine rerum fortuito),[31] but he also repeats it a few lines later:

> facta igitur est in his quoque commentariis eadem rerum disparilitas quae fuit in illis annotationibus pristinis, quas breviter et indigeste et incondite ex eruditionibus lectionibusque variis feceramus.
>
> *Therefore the same disparity is displayed in these comments as the one found in those early notes, which I had made hastily, with neither order nor clear plan, from various investigations or readings.* (Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 3)

This characteristic of Gellius' work is actually the distinctive feature of all the miscellaneous compilations that we mentioned and distinguishes them radically from Pliny's point of view.[32] We shall, therefore, come back several time to this principle of avoiding order and see how other authors justify this practice. As far as Gellius is concerned, he nonetheless takes an intermediary position on this question. Despite the repeated claim that his book was showing the random order of the discovery of memorable anecdotes during his readings, he gives, as Pliny, a table of content at the end of the *Preface* and justifies this step by inviting his readers, with a similar phrasing to the one used by Pliny, to browse through rather than read his work.[33] With such an ending of his *Preface*, Gellius does not only show that he thought, at some point, about the overall structure of his work. He also seems to have intended to place his work into a same tradition than the one to which Pliny belonged, despite all the differences we highlighted.[34]

4. Clement of Alexandria, Julius Africanus and Athenaeus

If we move on, we may treat together three contemporaries of Claudius Aelianus, who took part in the same literary framework. As mentioned

previously, Clement of Alexandria also composed, with his *Stromateis*, a work that can be seen as a miscellaneous compilation. We have already seen that he gives a list of works of predecessor similar to that of Pliny and Gellius and therefore counts himself as contributing to this tradition. Also, the choice to entitle his work *Stromateis* is a clear indication that he sees his work as an assemblage of several pieces of knowledge that are given in a non-straightforward or not easily graspable arrangement.[35] The image the title suggests is indeed that of a patchwork of initially independent pieces of fabric that the author gathered first, before sewing them together into one piece of cloth. In this representation, there is no fixed or privileged order and the assembling could have taken a completely different form, if the author has decided to do so, or at least we do not learn from Clement what would have been the ordering principle of his *Stromateis*, and the passage quoted above clearly shows that this was not his primary goal.

Nonetheless, if we consider the very beginning of his work, we learn some more details about how Clement saw his undertaking.[36] He also alludes to his education in younger years, as did Gellius in giving his work the title *Attic Nights*, and mentions that the book grows out of personal notes that he accumulated over time. However, he rather speaks of notes he took when listening to his teachers than of excerpts from his various readings in libraries, so that we may single out here a difference between Gellius and Clement in this respect.[37]

Finally Clement also gives us some indications, why he choose this form of literature to convey the knowledge he accumulated to his audience and here we discover an further important singularity of Clement. He justifies his choice for this form of exposition with the intension to hide the true message of his work so that it may be available only to a selected audience:

σιωπῶ γὰρ ὅτι οἱ Στρωματεῖς τῇ πολυμαθίᾳ σωματοποιούμενοι κρύπτειν ἐντέχνως τὰ τῆς γνώσεως βούλονται σπέρματα. καθάπερ οὖν ὁ τῆς ἄγρας ἐρωτικὸς ζητήσας, ἐρευνήσας, ἀνιχνεύσας, κυνοδρομήσας αἱρεῖ τὸ θηρίον, οὕτω καὶ τἀληθὲς γλυκύτητι φαίνεται ζητηθὲν καὶ πόνῳ πορισθέν. τί δή ποτ᾽ οὖν ὧδε διατετάχθαι φίλον ἔδοξεν εἶναι τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν; ὅτι μέγας ὁ κίνδυνος τὸν ἀπόρρητον ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς ὄντως φιλοσοφίας λόγον ἐξορχήσασθαι <τού>τοις, <οἳ> ἀφειδῶς πάντα μὲν ἀντιλέγειν ἐθέλουσιν οὐκ ἐν δίκῃ, πάντα δὲ ὀνόματα καὶ ῥήματα ἀπορρίπτουσιν οὐδαμῶς κοσμίως, αὐτούς τε ἀπατῶντες καὶ τοὺς ἐχομένους αὐτῶν γοητεύοντες. «Ἑβραῖοι μὲν γὰρ σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν,» ᾗ φησιν ὁ ἀπόστολος, «Ἕλληνες δὲ σοφίαν ζητοῦσι.»

I indeed refrain from mentioning that the Stromateis, although embodying thorough learning, aim to conceal with much art the seeds of knowledge. Similarly to when someone fond of hunting captures a prey after seeking, tracking, and hunting it down with dogs, truth, when sought and acquired with toil, appears with the taste of sweetness. Why, then, did it once seem appropriate to be fond of the present order of these notes? Because there is great danger in divulging the truly secret message of the genuine philosophy to those, who wish, at variance with justice, to contradict every statement without mercy, who reject, without any decency, each name and word, and who deceive themselves and bewitch those who adhere to them. "The Hebrews seek signs", as the apostle says, "the Greeks seek wisdom"[38]. (Clement, *Stromateis* 1.2.20.4-21.3) [Stählin/Früchtel 1960]

This is a completely new aspect that Clement introduced.[39] For instance, even if Pliny and Gellius may have had specific person in mind as their addressees,[40] they did not want to hide their knowledge or their expertise to others. They conceived their works rather as a way to display it, even beyond the intended addressees.

This idea of a more hidden form of knowledge that may be available only to a few addressees, or at least a work that addresses several audiences at several levels, is also something that can be assumed for the fragmentarily preserved *Cesti* from Julius Africanus. His work has, as we learn from one of the few fragments, in which Africanus speaks about his purposes, magical or medicinal lore as its overarching thematic subject. In this passage, which is an extract from the prologue to his book 7, he explicitly defines one part of the material he gathered as "secret knowledge":

κατὰ λόγον ἢ νόμον ἢ εἱμαρμένην ἢ τύχην αἱ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐκβάσεις, ἐπιγοναὶ καὶ φθοραί, ἀλλοιώσεις καὶ ἰάματα· ὧν ἕκαστον καλὸν εἰδέναι συναγαγόντας ἐκ πάντων ὠφέλειαν ποικίλην καρπουμένην θεραπείαν παθῶν ἢ ἱστορίαν ἀπόρρητον ἢ λόγου κάλλος· ἅπερ ἔν τε τοῖς φθάνουσι καὶ τοῖς ἑπομένοις, ὥς γε οἶμαι, κατὰ τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ μέτριον κατώρθωται.

It is according to reason or law or fate or chance that affairs turn out as they do, both production and decay, mutation and healing. It is good to know each one of them, thereby gathering from them all a harvest of various kinds of benefit: treatment of maladies, secret knowledge, or beauty in speech. These, at least in my estimation, have been accomplished to the best of my modest ability in what precedes and follows.[41] (Julius Africanus, *Cesti*, fr. 12, Prologue [Wallraff])

Taken for itself, this statement may be a rather weak evidence for the point we want to make here, but our reading may be strengthened, when we add considerations about his choice of the title. Indeed, the term Africanus chooses for his work is very special. The word (κεστός/kestos) occurs first in the Homeric poems, again in a very special context. In the *Iliad*, it defines a richly embroidered and sophisticatedly manufactured belt worn by Aphrodite.[42] It is a powerful garment that represents the goddess' overwhelming charms that even the goddess Hera needs to possess to seduce Zeus. Africanus knows this passage, as he alludes to it in his work.[43] Moreover, we know from another fragment that he intensively dealt with the Homeric poems and also claimed expertise in this field.[44] Therefore, it is highly probable that he chose this word for his title on purpose. He may have wanted to highlight the power of the information that he is transmitting, as suggested in the few lines quoted above. But the word may also be applied to the author and his undertaking. In this case, it would also suggest the idea of the author as being a crafted individual who has the knowledge, and the mental capacities, to select the most effective pieces of knowledge and to assemble them, with an impressive dexterity, in an extremely sophisticated way, as a splendid piece of art, for the benefit of an enchanted audience. This image of the author would also include the idea of the special power coming from the craftsmanship that created the work. Furthermore, because of the divine realm, to which the word alludes, there is also the idea of something beyond human knowledge, that may not be available to all, but only to a few chosen ones, who see further or are more initiated into a given field of knowledge. In this respect too, the author and his special achievement are highlighted. Both of these aspects can be seen as a strong contrast to the claim of modesty uttered by Pliny and Gellius, even though both were able, as we saw, to highlight their special commitment, so that their achievement as authors do not get forgotten by the readers. The contrast is based on the difference between the image of an empowered author, who is able to create through his witty craftsmanship a work of art that is similar in power and beauty to Aphrodite's garment, and the one of a committed scholar, who invest all his resources to achieve a modest contribution that may easily be overrun by later scholars, but that allows a direct insight into and a true understanding of the richness and power of nature, that becomes, at least in Pliny almost a divinity.[45]

Finally, when turning to Athenaeus, we are fully back in the Greaco-Roman tradition[46] and its emphasis on the intellectual activities of the

upper classes of the Roman Empire. It is for instance interesting to note that Athenaeus is the only author in our group, who evokes, in his work and its title, the social context, to which such miscellaneous works belong, rather that its output (the object of craftsmanship) or the authors' commitment (their intensive readings, their special access to sources and their leisure). Athenaeus' work is entitled the *Deipnosophistai*, which means the "intellectuals at dinner". The image alluded to in the title and developed in the book is the one of a moment in time (the dinning party) during which learned conversations take place.[47] It is, therefore, not the moment when the knowledge is acquired (like the *Attic Nights* by Gellius) but the one, in which the learnedness that was accumulated can be displayed. Indeed there was a long tradition to accompany dinning parties with extensive discussions and all sorts of entertainments where one could enjoy and display literary skills.[48] However, by superposing through the setting that he imagines for his work, two layers, the one of the actual dinning party that he describes and where food is displayed in various forms and prepared with different degrees of sophistication, and the one of the discussions that happen during this party and where pieces of knowledge and utterances taken from literary works are displayed by the participants of the party, Athenaeus also draws attention to the process through which works of compilation go, before being released as readable output.[49] However, he does not focus on the gathering of material, as did Pliny, Gellius and Clement for instance, but on the many preparatory stages the material went through and its arrangement in the finalised work. Indeed when comparing a work of compilation with a dinning party, Athenaeus suggests that the piece of knowledge (the quotation or textual sequences that are selected and displayed) are no longer in the form in which they were initially found, but have been transformed in order to fit the context (as the food is cooked or treated, so that it is no longer row material). Moreover, even if the conversation may take unexpected turns when lead by association of ideas (as the dinning guests may be surprised by unexpected dishes), there is a general outline of the events that is not arbitrary. A meal starts with the arriving of the guests, proceed to all kind of starters and then to main courses, and finishes with deserts and drinks before the company dissolves and guests go home.[50] Therefore, when compared with Gellius, for instance, Athenaeus insists on other aspects of the miscellanies. Gellius states that the order was fortuitous, reflecting the way he found the interesting pieces of knowledge in the works that he read, whereas Atheaneus seems to indicate that, although the whole

may look very colourful, diversified and bestrewed with many unexpected developments, there is an overall plan that the author masters as the cook masters the sequence of the different dishes.[51]

Therefore Athenaeus draws on another set of images to represent himself as author, when we compare his work with other miscellanies. First, he does not speak of himself as the scholar who has assembled to quotations. In the frame story, which is given instead of a prologue, he depicts himself as one of the guests at the dinning party and pretends to rely on his memory, so that he can give a faithful summary of the event he assisted.[52] Therefore in Athenaeus, the focus is not on the books he read or the notes he took while attending a course or while reading, but on his abilities to remember them when appropriate, even though it is impossible to think of the *Deipnosophistai* as not having been composed in the same way as the other miscellanies, namely by the assembling of notes previously takes when reading a large amount of books found in one or several libraries. Nonetheless, by focusing on his faculty of remembering, Athenaeus not only put himself within his narration as one of the intellectuals at dinner (deipnosophistai) seeing himself as an equal to others who have the same faculties and who compete with each other at given occasions (the dining parties). This image also allows him to set himself apart from other authors of miscellanies. By insisting on the faculty of reproducing by memory what he has learned in a given context, he creates the self-representation of the gifted performer,[53] which is different from the one given by Gellius (who relies on notes taken while studying in his youth), as well as the one by Clement (who sees himself as sewing information, he took previously in form of notes, together in one narrative), or the one by Africanus (who highlights the craftsmanship of the composer and the empowering force of the output) and finally also the one created by Pliny (the investigator admiring the diversity he discovered).

5. Claudius Aelianus

If we turn now finally to Aelianus, we encounter a still different way of defining a work of compilation. At first, as announced, we may look at the passage where Aelianus justifies the deliberate avoidance of order for the exposition of his material. At a closer look, we see that the passage can be divided into two parts, as Aelianus actually gives two reasons for his choice:

ἐγὼ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν τὸ ἐμὸν ἴδιον οὔκ εἰμι τῆς ἄλλου κρίσεώς τε καὶ βουλήσεως δοῦλος, οὐδέ φημι δεῖν ἕπεσθαι ἑτέρῳ, ὅποι μ᾿ ἂν ἀπάγῃ· δεύτερον δὲ τῷ ποικίλῳ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως τὸ ἐφολκὸν θηρῶν καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν ὁμοίων βδελυγμίαν ἀποδιδράσκων, οἱονεὶ λειμῶνά τινα ἢ στέφανον ὡραῖον ἐκ τῆς πολυχροίας, ὡς ἀνθεσφόρων τῶν ζῴων τῶν πολλῶν, ᾠήθην δεῖν τήνδε ὑφᾶναί τε καὶ διαπλέξαι τὴν συγγραφήν.

First, as far as I am concerned, I am not the slave of another's judgement or intention, and I claim not to have to follow another's lead, wherever he may drive me. Secondly, while aiming, thanks to the variety of my readings, to be attractive and to avoid the distaste that arises from the identical, I thought that I should weave and braid the strands of this composition as a field of flowers or a garland which receives its beauty from its multiple colours, assuming that the many animals would furnish the flowers. (Aelianus, *NA*, Epilogue)

The second reason is more often adduced, when dealing with Aelianus' works or with miscellanies in general, as Aelianus compares his activity with the picking of flowers or the braiding of a garland. He claims that he wanted to provide as much variety as possible in order to avoid the horror that may raise from monotony. In order to do so, he decided to create a work that would imitate the colourfulness of a meadow or the craftsmanship of someone having interlaced several strands to create a beautiful garland. Taken for itself, this statement develops Gellius' idea that the composition of his work reproduces the order of discovery of the noteworthy anecdotes during the course of his readings.[54] However, there are two major differences between Gellius and Aelianus: first the reasons, which made them opt for this procedure, are very different and secondly their attitude towards it also differs. As we see here, Aelianus is afraid to create boredom when sticking to an order of exposition that would be expected – and therefore predictable – for a book on animals.[55] Gellius, on the contrary, is eager, on the one hand, not to overload his readers with too much information,[56] but, on the other, also acknowledges that he did not give much thoughts to the order of exposition. He simply kept to the one that was created almost spontaneously during his readings. Moreover, these readings were not directed toward any specific subject, as in Aelianus, but just reflect his own manifold interests. A few paragraphs later, Gellius even adds that he did not mean to produce a very indepth research, but presents the first results of his own reading.[57] He justifies his behaviour by the desire to create pleasure and to motivate his reader in pursuing readings and acquiring knowledge.

Aelianus, on the contrary, – and here we have to come back to the first reason mentioned above – claims that he has acquire during his research a true expertise in one specific topic, namely the understanding of the characteristics and behaviours of animals, which is clearly stated in the title too (Περὶ ζώων ἰδιότητος / Peri zōōn idiotētos).[58] This superiority allows him to justify, from another angle, his choice of exposing his material in his own way.

In summary then, his justification for his voluntary refraining from organising his material is also based on the particularly deep knowledge he acquired during his readings. Because of this special knowledge, he takes the right to be more independent from previous scholars and exposes the material freely. However, he does not arrange it at random, but decides to expose his material, in the most interesting way for his reader, namely by avoiding monotony, as seen. Therefore, because of his superior knowledge, so he claims, he can be more creative in the arrangement of his material and play with it, as someone may do while braiding garlands with flowers that are as diverse and colourful as blooming meadows. From this image we see the difference with regard to Gellius: whereas in Gellius the arrangement of the material happened almost by change, and the author pretend that he did not give much thoughts to it, Aelianus affirms that he willingly decided to create a great variety to avoid monotony and tedium, and was allowed to do so by his in-depth expertise.

Aelianus' claim is, moreover, also in sharp contrast with the statement of modesty that we found in Gellius, as well as in Pliny. This difference has its importance, as it is clearly visible from the very beginning of Aelinus' work, and is repeatedly alluded to, in the prologue as well as in the epilogue.[59] Indeed we find this statement already in the first words of Aelianus' prologue. He starts by defining his topic (investigating the sound behaviours of dumb animals), and underlies that it is a very special and demanding topic, which calls for a special mindset to be investigated:

καὶ εἰδέναι γε μὴ ῥαθύμως τὰ προσόντα αὐτῶν ἰδίᾳ ἑκάστῳ, καὶ ὅπως ἐσπουδάσθη οὐ μεῖον τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων, εἴη ἄν τινος πεπαιδευμένης φρενὸς καὶ μαθούσης πολλά.

And to know accurately for each individual its appropriate characteristics and how, no less than humans, other animal are eager to learn, is the task of an educated and much learned mind. (Aelianus, *NA*, Prologue)

He comes back to this idea in the epilogue and claims the required skills more explicitly for himself, as a natural precondition:

καὶ δὴ λέλεκταί μοι, ὡς οἷόν τε ἦν εἰπεῖν, μὴ παραλείποντι ἅπερ ἔγνων μηδὲ βλακεύοντι, ὡς ἀλόγου τε καὶ ἀφώνου ἀγέλης ὑπεριδόντι καὶ ἀτιμάσαντι, ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα ἔρως με σοφίας ὁ σύνοικός τε καὶ ὁ συμφυὴς ἐξέκαυσεν.

I treated the topic to my best ability, neither omitting nor neglecting anything from what I learned, as if I despised and dishonoured the herd of animals void of reason and of speech, but also in these matters, I am burning with an inherent and innate love for wisdom. (Aelianus, *NA*, Epilogue)

This feeling of being able to go beyond a commonly shared knowledge can also be seen in Aelianus' treatment of the image of sculptors and painters that he uses, perhaps in answer to Pliny. We have indeed seen that Pliny associates himself with sculptors and painters, underlining, with the choice of his title, as they did with their way of signing their works, the provisory status of his work. Human knowledge or achievements can always be improved, was Pliny's basic message. Aelianus, on the contrary, sees his achievement in opposition to two groups: the sculptors and painters as well as the hunters. He reproaches both groups that they only collect different animals, either dead in the case of hunters, or immobilised in works of arts, without going into the study of their behaviours. So he clearly claims that he went further in his research as others, and that his work provides more in-depth information.

Furthermore, he ends this development by acknowledging that this thorough investigation took the shape of a personal quest, leading him to further insight into the motivations of human beings too. This introduces a further difference between Aelianus and, at least, Pliny and Gellius. Such a statement indicates a shift with regard to the addressee.

Gellius and Pliny dedicate both their books to a third person: Pliny addresses the future emperor Titus, whereas Gellius addresses his children. Both aim, therefore, through their book to facilitate the learning process of a third person, whereas Aelianus claims that he also did the research for his own sake, as well as for his intended readers.[60]

Secondly, as far as the relation to other fellow-scholars is concerned, there are also some noteworthy differences when comparing Aelianus to other compilers. For instance Gellius and Pliny certainly also drew some differences between their own works and those of other fellow-scholars, highlighting in doing so their own achievements. Pliny for instance

emphasises his sincerity in acknowledging and faithfully indicating the sources he used, whereas he criticises others for taking material from others without acknowledging it.[61] Also his commitment to deal with a difficult matter rather than with pleasant stuff goes in this direction and highlights his proficiency and willingness to be helpful rather than to gain fame and profit.[62] But he is also aware of the intermediate status of his achievement and of the fact that, as he improved the state of knowledge reached by his predecessors, he will be superseded by others. We do not find this in Aelianus, who phrases his achievement by highlighting the personal and definitive insights he gained by recognising that animals are better than humans.

Gellius, on his part, claims that he has only gathered first thoughts that may be deepened by the readers, if they are interested. Moreover, he clearly states that he put his work below that of others:

Atticas Noctes inscripsimus, tantum ceteris omnibus in ipsius quoque inscriptionis laude cedentes, quantum cessimus in cura et elegantia scriptionis.

We assigned it the title Attic Nights, yielding as much to all others, even in the praise of this very title, as we do in the care applied to, and the elegance of our writing. (Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 10)

But the most striking opposition is the one between Aelianus and Athenaeus. Indeed, when we proceed in analysing the images Aelianus develops in his introducing and closing remarks, we encounter another idea that is developed by Aelianus. Whereas Athenaeus depicted himself as one of the deipnsophistai taking part in the social events of his time, Aelianus' claim, on the contrary, to have decided, on his oven initiative, to retreat from a public and courtly life to devote himself to his study:

οὐκ ἀγνοῶ δὲ ὅτι ἄρα καὶ τῶν ἐς χρήματα ὀρώντων ὀξὺ καὶ τεθηγμένων ἐς τιμάς τε καὶ δυνάμεις τινὲς καὶ πᾶν τὸ φιλόδοξον δι᾽ αἰτίας ἕξουσιν, εἰ τὴν ἐμαυτοῦ σχολὴν κατεθέμην ἐς ταῦτα, ἐξὸν καὶ ὠφρυῶσθαι καὶ ἐν ταῖς αὐλαῖς ἐξετάζεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα προήκειν πλούτου. ἐγὼ δὲ ὑπέρ τε ἀλωπέκων καὶ σαυρῶν καὶ κανθάρων καὶ ὄφεων καὶ λεόντων (....) περιέρχομαι.

I do not ignore that among those who keep a sharp look on money and strive for honours and influence, and all the enamoured with reputation will blame me for devoting my leisure to these studies, when it would have been possible to take a supercilious attitude, to be received at court and

*to earn a considerable amount of wealth. But on my side, I keep company
with foxes, lizards, beetles, snakes and lions (…)*[63] (Aelianus, *NA*, Epilogue)

In Aelianus wording, this move is motivated by his preferring the company
of more knowledgeable men than his contemporaries:

ἀλλὰ οὔ μοι φίλον σὺν τοῖσδε τοῖς πλουσίοις ἀριθμεῖσθαι καὶ πρὸς ἐκείνους
ἐξετάζεσθαι, εἰ δὲ ὧν καὶ ποιηταὶ σοφοὶ καὶ ἄνδρες φύσεως ἀπόρρητα ἰδεῖν
τε ἅμα καὶ κατασκέψασθαι δεινοὶ καὶ συγγραφεῖς τῆς πείρας ἐς τὸ μήκιστον
προελθόντες ἑαυτοὺς ἠξίωσαν, τούτων τοι καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἀμωσγέπως ἕνα
πειρῶμαι ἀριθμεῖν καὶ ἐθέλω, δῆλον ὡς ἀμείνων ἐμαυτῷ σύμβουλός εἰμι
τῆς ἐξ ἐκείνων κρίσεως. βουλοίμην γὰρ ἂν μάθημα ἓν γοῦν πεπαιδευμένον
περιγενέσθαι μοι ἢ τὰ ᾀδόμενα τῶν πάνυ πλουσίων χρήματά τε ἅμα καὶ
κτήματα (Aelianus, *NA*, Epilogue)

*But I have no aspiration to be counted among these rich men, nor to
compete with them. But, if I attempt and wish, in one way or the other,
to be one of those, among whom also the wise poets, the men witty in
envisioning and inspecting the secrets of nature, and the writers who
achieved the greatest of challenges, judge themselves worthy to be, it is
obvious that I can take better advices from myself than from the judgment
of these men. For I prefer to earn for myself one single piece of knowledge
rather than the much-praised money of the very rich and their possessions.*
(Aelianus, *NA*, Epilogue)

This statement should be weighed against another witness provided by
Philostratus, another contemporary of Aelianus. He mentions Claudius
Aelianus in his *Lives of the Sophists* and comments on Aelianus' decision
to withdraw from society. He gives, however, a very different reason for
Aelianus' choice, namely Aelianus' conviction that he had not enough
talent to be a sophist, although he was awarded this prestigious title, and
decided to dedicated himself to writing rather than to declamations:

(…) προσρηθεὶς σοφιστὴς ὑπὸ τῶν χαριζομένων τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν,
οὐδὲ ἐκολάκευσε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην, οὐδὲ ἐπήρθη ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος οὕτω
μεγάλου ὄντος, ἀλλ᾽ ἑαυτὸν εὖ διασκεψάμενος ὡς μελέτῃ οὐκ ἐπιτήδειον τῷ
ξυγγράφειν ἐπέθετο καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ἐκ τούτου.

*(…) although he was declared a sophist by those who bestow such honours,
he did not trust them, neither did he flatter his own judgment nor did he
cherish this title immoderately, despite its prestige; but after having checked
out that his talent was not made for declamation, he applied himself to*

prose writing and won admiration in this field. (Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 2.31)

There is, of course, a substantial difference between claiming superiority because one is convinced to have reached a deeper insight through knowledgeable readings, and acknowledging a flaw in one's talent. Nonetheless, the distance that Aelianus wants to make between himself and other scholars, is once again allude to by Philostratus, however from a different angle, when he claims that Aelianus was proud of not having travelled beyond the borders of ancient Italy. Most of the sophists of his time, including Philostratus himself, travelled a lot, either for their education or for their work as sophists. Actually also Gellius alludes to this practice when evoking in his *Attic Nights* his stay in Greece during his education. Aelianus, on the contrary, takes a completely opposite stance and it proud to have avoided such long travels. In the light of this, even with the hesitation about the motivation of Aelianus' choice (flaw in his talent or deeper insight) that it introduces, Philostratus' text also bears witness to Aelianus' voluntary retreat from an expected behaviour of a sophist and underlines his preference for bookish study.

However, this behaviour also stands in opposition with other statements of some of our compilers. As we have seen, Gellius – and for instance also Clement – alludes to studies that he did in previous times, during his own education, in Athens or when attending lectures. Pliny says that he could only dedicate the nights to studies, as his days where filed with other commitments and duties. But, Aelianus, on the contrary, claims that he took the time, while being a sophist, to retreat and study. In order to understand this shift, we may have to come back to the political context, in which each of these authors worked, to which we alluded with Pliny at the beginning of our paper. We may indeed have to take into account the political climate, in which Aelianus lived, so that, in doing so, we may define an ultimate difference between Aelianus and the other compilers of miscellanies.

Aelianus lived under Elagabalus, who was the successor of Caracalla. We are now under the Severn dynasty and Elagabalus, as well as Caracalla, two members of the Severan dynasty, have a rather bad reputation. We have some tiny hints from Philostratus that Aelianus must have been very critical against Elagabalus, as he may have written a text against him, however only after the emperor's death.[64] This attitude would then be in sharp contrasts with Pliny's convictions, who was a friend of Titus

and dedicated his work to the future emperor. We have also seen that Pliny's work is in some respect an attempt to justify and to glorify Rome's achievement to have extended its influence to the entire word. Aelianus, on the contrary, represents himself as someone avoiding the courtly life, judging it empty and vain, having certainly lost Pliny's enthusiasm for the Empire and its leading figures.

6. Conclusion

We have seen in this paper a wide range of images that the authors use to speak of their works and to acknowledge their understanding of taking part in one shared literary activity.

Gellius depicted himself as an interested and playful intellectual, who skims through the available books and tries to transmit to his addressees the pieces of knowledge that he found there as well as his enthusiasm and eagerness to discover new field of studies.

Clement is the ingenious weaver of a kaleidoscopic tapestry of all sorts of pieces of knowledge. He chooses this form for a very special purpose, namely to be able to hide the paths to true knowledge, so that he creates, on the one hand, pleasure to some humans, when they finally find it. On the other hand, he wants also to put off those, who are not worth of such wisdom, still allowing them to be delighted by the variety of the pieces of knowledge displayed.

Africanus sees his work as a skilfully assembled piece of art that bears witness to the craftsmanship of its creator. As such an object, it has a strong impact on the readers, who stand in awe before it. But it contains also knowledge that values the author's special status in the transmission of knowledge and empowers the addressees.

Athenaeus draws the image of an ideal performer, who can rely on his memory to reproduce, at any given moment, the large erudition that he possesses. He is not fouled by the many turns a conversation my take, but remains master of the game as a cook securely orchestrates the steps of a dinner, despite the variety of the food and the expectations of the guests.

Finally, Aelianus want himself to be seen as a true intellectual, who sacrificed all material advantages for his studies. This is, however, not only an immense effort of renouncement or an associal and unappropriated behaviour, but, in the long run, a rewarding choice, as the author gains, in doing so, deeper knowledge than anyone else. This allows him to

free himself from all kinds of authorities and to reach ultimately a form of superiority that gives him the authority to function as judge over his own species.

All of them should, however, be set apart from Pliny and his striving for order, although many of the images used by Pliny to describe the intellectual activity, in which he takes part, are reused and reworked by the later compilers. We have seen, for instance, the claim of modesty that is expanded, by each author differently, with all sorts of additions that underlay the commitment and engagement of each author. The lingering on the explanation of the choice for the title and the placing of the work in a larger tradition is another such feature we singled out. But, we are well aware of the fact that the aspects we presented in our paper remain provisory results that should be completed by further investigations. For instance, the presented analysis should be enlarged so that we may observe how the differences in the self-representations that we individualised while focusing on the introductory and conclusion remarks, influence the shape, the outline or the content of each work.

NOTES

[1]   In this paper, the texts come from the Loeb Classical Collection if not specified otherwise, whereas the translations are mine although those provided by the Loeb Classical Collection were of great help.

[2]   Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 6-9. He may, moreover, also have been influenced by the work of his contemporary and friend Favorinus, who wrote a Παντοδαπή ἱστορία (Pantodapē historia: *Miscellaneous Story*). On this, see Holford-Strevens 2003, 115-118 and Clay 2012, 970.

[3]   Favorinus' work is unfortunately too fragmentarily preserved to be treated in our paper. Only 37 very disparate sequences have been preserved and none of them give any evidence about how Favorinus thought about his book. See Amato 2010, 258-531 for a thorough analysis of the few remaining fragments. For a more comprehensive list of miscellanies, see Whitmarsh 2007, 43-45.

[4]   Souda. s.v. Ailianos (α 178). For a summary of what we know, see Wilson 1997, 2-6 and Kindstrand 1998, 2954-2996.

[5]   Most recently, Hindermann 2016, 71-98, and for the concept of *poikilia* in particular, Grand-Clément 2015, 406-421.

[6]   We are well-aware of the literary *topoi* addressed in such introductory remarks and shall treat them as self-representations the authors want to create of themselves, not as factual evidence about the authors' lives. Therefore we shall analyse how much weight the authors give to each of these *topoi* and to what extent they developed or altered them.

[7]   See Köves-Zulauf 1973, 134–184 and more recently Fögen 2009, 205-215 for a thorough analysis of Pliny's *Preface*.

[8]   Almagor 2012, 2404-2405 and König/Woolf 2013b, 1-20.

[9]   Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 14-15. See Naas 2002, 15-40 and especially Doody 2009, 1-21, who emphasises the influence of modern understandings of the notion of encyclopaedia on our reading of Pliny. Further also Folwer 1997, 3-30 and König/Woolf 2013a, 23-63.

[10]   Fowler 1997, 14-17, Naas 2002, 18-21 and Doody 2009, 11. For ancient examples: Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 1.10.1 and Vitruvius *Arch.* 1.1.12. For further ancient evidence and a comprehensive treatment of the question, Fuchs 1962, 365-398.

[11]   See for instance Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 14: qui unus omnia ea tractaverit (... *one who treated all this alone*...) or the very end of his work (*NH* 37.77 (201): etenim peractis omnibus naturae operibus discrimen quoddam rerum ipsarum atque terrarum facere conveniet: *having now worked through all of nature's creations, it would be appropriate to establish some classification of the things themselves and their locations*. Naas 2002, 171-172.

[12]   Nass 2002, 22. She emphasises the idea that with the treasures (thesauros oportet esse, non libros: *storehouses instead of books would be more*

appropriate Pliny, *NH*, Praef. § 17) Pliny pursues the idea of an inventory (with an image of drawers) rather than a complete structure of knowledge (a tree) with its branches. This is also highlighted by Bounia 2004, 173-220 who associates the desire for completeness with the notion of collecting.

[13]　See Naas 2002, 195-199 for the references.

[14]　Naas 2002, 195-208 and Bounia 2004, 208-210. König/Woolf 2013b, 14-16, on the contrary, underlay the difficulty modern readers may have to understand Pliny's principles.

[15]　Naas, 2002, 70-77 and 416. See also Bounia 2004, 200-204 for further evidence about how Pliny's work aims to legitimize the new Flavian dynasty. In Beagon 2005, 6-11 there is, moreover, a short summary on the personal links between Pliny, Titus and Vespasian.

[16]　For a more diachronic approach, see König/Whitmarsh 2007, 3-39 and Witmarsh 2007, 29-51.

[17]　See for instance Fögen 2009, 214-215 on this topos.

[18]　Pliny *NH*, Praef. § 26-27 and Naas 2002, 54-57 for more details about Pliny's usage of this image.

[19]　See Minarini 2000, 539-543 and now also Howley 2018, 112-156 for the complex and often playful ways, with which Gellius deals with Pliny's monumental work.

[20]　Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 4-5.

[21]　See Fögen 2009, 208-208 who describes Gellius' claim and Pliny's statement as a similar strategy.

[22]　See also Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. §10.

[23]　See also Gellius *Attic Nights* 1.2.1-2 and Vardi 1993, 298-301. Holford-Strevens 2003, 19-21 dates the publication of the *Attic Nights* after 178 CE. This would mean that the event recalled in the *Preface* happened at least 30 years previously, when Gellius was completing his education.

[24]　Naas 2002, 61-67. See also Bounia 2004, 176-177 for the interpretation of this phrase.

[25]　Fögen 2009, 206-209 and Beason 2013, 84-107.

[26]　Pliny *NH*, Praef. § 16 and Naas 2002, 84-86 for further references throughout the *Natural History*.

[27]　This difference between the two formulas is rooted in the Latin use of tenses: the imperfect focuses on the duration of an activity whereas the Latin praetertium expresses a fully accomplished action. Naas 2002, 55.

[28]　Naas 2002, 57, Naas 2013, 145-166 and Hdt 1.1.

[29]　See also Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 11-12 for other statements where pleasure is emphasised.

[30]　Bounia 2004, 209-210.

[31]　Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 2 (above n. 1).

[32]　König/Woolf 2013a, 52-58.

[33] Sconocchia 1978, 314 and more recently Doody 2009, 4.

[34] See for instance again Minarini 2000, 536-553, who also includes Gellius' use of vocabulary in her analyses of the author's answer to predecessors.

[35] Ferguson 1991, 10-11. For further passages from Clement about this, see Bevegni 2014, 317-331.

[36] Clement, *Stromateis* 1.1.11.1-2.

[37] On this in particular, see Le Boulluec 2006, 95-108.

[38] The last sentence of the passage is a quotation from 1 *Corinthian* 1.22.

[39] Robert 1981, 211-222.

[40] Pliny dedicates his work to the future emperor Titus, whereas Gellius has his children in mind.

[41] Here we follow, for the text as well as for the translation, the recent edition by Wallraff et al. 2012.

[42] *Il.* 14.211-217.

[43] Fr. 12.17, lines 38-42 [Wallraff].

[44] That is fr. 10 [Wallraff]: a papyrus, on which an extract from book 11 of the *Odyssey* has been preserved. It is, however, a much-modified version of the Homeric text, as it has been completed by a magical incantation. As the preserved fragment is the end of Africanus' book 18, we also have some closing remarks from Africanus about his expertise in the field of Homeric scholarship and about the place where his work has been stored and can be accessed by potential readers. See further Hammerstädt 2009, 53-69 and Middleton 2014, 139-162.

[45] Beagson 1992, 26-36 and Nass 2002, 62-67.

[46] It is not sure whether Africanus comes from a Christian or a Greco-Roman background. See Adler 2009, 1-52.

[47] Trapp 2007, 470-471 and Johnson 2010, 127-129.

[48] This is a tradition that goes back to Plato, and his famous *Banquet* where Socrates is staged during such a dinning party. See for instance Lukinovich 1990, 263-266 and Trapp 2000, 353-363.

[49] See Romeri 2000, 256 -271 and Jacob 2004a, 167- 174 for the idea of mixing the two levels (dishes and speeches), and Jacob 2000, 85-110 and Jacob 2004b, 142-150, for the transformation the material underwent.

[50] For an overview of the structure, see Maisonneuve 2007, 387-412, and for a discussion on Athenaeus' usage of the structural devices for the composition of his work, see Wilkins 2000, 23-37.

[51] Jacob 2004b, 150-158.

[52] Jacob 2004b, 150-155 and, for the importance of memory in Antiquity and its interaction with texts, Too 2000 111-123.

[53] The description of Athenaeus' usage of quotations as performance, comes from Jacob 2004a, 158-174.

54   See above the quoted passages: Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 2 et 3 (p. 98 and p. 105).

55   We may mention here that it has been highlighted for Pliny that he wanted to follow in his work an Aristotelian principle of organising natural history (see Bounia 2004, 209). It is on the contrary striking that Aelianus, who recalls in his title one of Aristotle's work (Περὶ τὰ ζῷα ἱστορίαι (Peri ta zōa historiai) / Περὶ ζῴων ἰδιότητος (Peri zōōn idiotētos)), does openly speak against a systematic way of exposition that would discuss the animals per species, an arrangement that could recall, indirectly this Aristotelian principle.

56   Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 11-12.

57   Gellius, *Attic Nights*, Praef. § 13.

58   With regard to the title Aelianus' second work, the *Varia Historia*, would be closer to Gellius' approach and even more so to Favorinus' lost work (Παντοδαπή ἱστορία/Pantodapē historia: *Miscellaneous Story*). But no introductory remarks seem to be preserved for this work, which make it difficult to assess Aelianus' plans or aims for this second book. It remains, however, to be noted that the work as preserved, starts with an anecdote on the octopus, one of the animals, which is since very early associated with the ποικιλία (*poikilia: manifold variety*). See Pindar fr. 43 [Maehler] and Theognis, 213-218 [West] and for instance Hawhee 2004, 53-57.

59   For a recent study on Aelianus' voice within the whole text, see Smith 2014.

60   But all three are aware of the importance of their individual research, as all call their work a kind of storehouse (tesaurus, pendus, κειμήλιον/keimēlion), which proves the thoroughness of their investigations and the faithfulness of their commitments.

61   Pliny, *NH*, Preaf. § 21-23.

62   Pliny, *NH*, Preaf. § 16.

63   Aelianus gives a long list of other animals that would be to long be reproduced here. There seem, however, not to be any meaningful order in the enumeration, although it can be divided into three groups. The first reproduced above contains five animals mentioned without further details. In a second group, we have the leopard, the stork, the nightingale and the elephant that are all mentioned with one (positive) characteristic of their behaviours. The third group is composed by fishes, cranes and serpents, which seem even more heterogeneous, but for each we have again one complement (the shapes of the fishes, the migration of the cranes and the species of serpents).

64   This is the work entitled *Indictment of Gynnis*. See Smith 2014, 274-279 for the most recent analysis of the few fragments.

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IN OUR WORLD:
HUMAN AGENCY IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN BULGARIAN VERBAL MAGIC

Abstract

This article deals with verbal magic, seen as power interaction between the human realm and the realm of the supernatural. Based on source material of approximately 200 medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms, the study exmines the human agency in the belief system and practice of verbal charming. First, the article analyses the ritual performance, with its instructions, actions, paraphernalia, settings, human actors and proxemics. Then, the study deals with verbal amulets as major application and manifestation of verbal magic. Finally, the article investigates the ellusive figure of the charmer, via thorough collection of all data available, and offers synthesis of the various charming systems.

Keywords: apotropaic verbal amulets, crisis management, crisis rites, magical paraphernalia and proxemics, power narratives, quotidian applications of magic, verbal magic, verbal charms

Magic is notorious for being impossible to define in scholarly terms. There is no exact, ultimate or completely comprehensive definition of magic. The same is valid for verbal magic too. However, verbal magic can be partially defined as an interaction or communication between Our World (the human realm) and the Other World (the realm of the supernatural).

Within the framework of magical belief-system, the sacred boundary between these two domains, between the Here and the Beyond, is strongly marked and secured, yet crossable. The frontier can be crossed (and is crossed) from the supernatural side. However, it can be crossed from the dairection of Our World too.[1] Together with the supernatural side, the complex of verbal magic can be seen from the human side, where "the

point of departure is the person with all their human qualities as seen in everyday life".[2]

The source material for this study consists of approximately two hundred medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. These relatively short texts are written in Old Church Slavonic language and preserved in manuscripts, dated the thirteenth and the nineteenth century. The Bulgarian verbal charms provide rich information on popular demonology, non-canonical belief-systems and religious syncretism. The charms, however, offer a valuable insight into the ritual processes and the human agency in verbal magic. In other words, the charms show us not only how the Other World reaches across and affects the human life, but also how the human practitioners contact the supernatural, communicate with it and use it for various purposes.

This happens, for example, in the following charm for curing a wounded horse:

> Find a dry bone from a horse, cast a spell with it and then return it back to the place where you took it from. Draw a line with the bone and say the following:
>
> In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost a certain person (say the name) was walking, neighing and crying. The Mother of the Lord, the healer saints Cosmas and Damian, and Cyprian, Pantaleymon, Manuel, Savel, Ismail and Roman met him and asked: What is wrong with you (say the name), so that you are neighing and crying? I am crying, because a thorn hit my good horse and now the wound is festering. The holy healers told him: Turn back, you (say the name), go to the God's servant (say the name), let him take a dry bone and to give the illness to the dry bone, the dry bone to give the illness to the earth, the earth – to the grass, the grass – to the dew, the dew – to the sun, the sun – to the wind. And let the illness dissipate, may it have neither a top up, nor roots down. Say three times: Let us stand with fear![3]

This text is a typical encounter charm with a dialogue. The *historiola* tells about the usual transmission, where the affliction is passed from one object to another, until its complete annihilation. The part with the technical instructions is rather typical too, and it will be discussed below.

The unusual element here is the behavior and the role of the owner of the horse. In a way, he or she "becomes a horse", then crosses the sacred boundary and enters the Other World. There, the owner

physically performs and demonstrates the pain of the animal, thus asks for supernatural help and receives it.

This motive of the *historiola* is very specific and very peculiar. So far, I have not found a parallel in another verbal charm, Bulgarian or foreign. One medieval South Italian text against wolves (written in Greek letters) shows some similarity.[4] In the Italian text, Santu Silvestru is herding his livestock, but the animals are attacked by a wild beast from the forest. The desperate saint receives help from Jesu Christu and la virgi Maria, who teach him how to avert the danger. As it has the same encounter narrative, dialogue and animal-related problem, this Italian charm provides some reference point. It is possible that the Bulgarian text used it a template, replacing the attacked livestock with the wounded horse, and the forest attacker with a thorn. However, there is no trace from the imitation of the suffering of horse.

The Bulgarian motive of the neighing human may possibly be related to the horse/horseman winter demons from the Balkan popular beliefs.[5] Inhabiting the underworld, these demons visit the human world in the winter and bring chaos in people's homes and injuries in people's bodies. They can appear as horses, horsemen or centaurs or strange deformed humans with certain equine attributes. The winter demons also carry away the souls of the dead. Although these being are clearly connected to death and destruction, the sacrifices offered to them, include healing curative magical rites. Another possibility is that this element of the narrative is simply a description of imitative magic. If so, then the charm was probably a part of a curative rite, where the charmer was re-enacting the *historiola* and neighing like a horse.

Besides the curious animal transformation, this charm shows how verbal magic was used by a real person in a complicated situation. It is a dynamic narrative about a crisis and its solution. Human and supernatural "individuals are involved in real-time problem solving",[6] in order to cure an ill horse. The supernatural figures intervene from their special otherworldly position. They cross the boundary, armed with their special supernatural powers, and this equipment is effective enough. The humans, however, need additional technical guidance and information, in order to perform the rite successfully. Besides the *historiola*, the charm contains such technical instructions.

Ritual Performances

The technical guidance is in this practical part of the charm's text, which contains instructions and technical information about the charming procedure. It tells about the performance and the actions of the rite (what to do), and about the paraphernalia, the settings, the human actors and the proxemics (who, when, where and how to do it, and what equipment to use).

The verbal charms are almost the only primary source on the paraphernalia, used in medieval and early modern Bulgarian magical practice. However, some contemporary sermons also contain pieces of such information and provide a bit broader context. For example, an eighteenth century collection of instructive texts for pious Christian life contains two sermons against magical practitioners.[7] One of the texts (fol. 62v-73v) is about the encounter between Apostle Peter and Simon Magus. The more interesting is the other text (fol. 48r-62v), entitled *Sermon about the samovili, the brodnitsi, the magicians and the charmers*:[8]

> The samovili, the brodnitsi and the charmers are all disciples of the Antichrist. These people, who visit them, are bowing to the Enemy and the Enemy enlists them as his people. From all the sins, there is no bigger and graver sin. This sin is very serious sin for God. You stupid woman, seduced by the Enemy, when God commanded and God's angels came to take away the man's soul, can you, whore, resist to the will of God with your charms, so that the soul not to depart from the body? What help can be given through a **piece of rope, a charcoal, a piece of blue cloth, a knife with black handle, a herb, a piece of wood from willow tree** and many other devilish devices? How they can help the ill person?

The same charming equipment (charcoal, a piece of blue cloth, black knife, herb, a piece of wood from willow tree) is mentioned again in a similar sermon against magicians from the nineteenth-century manuscript.[9]

From the approximately 200 late medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms examined, 54 charms contain technical information and instructions. Most often, they refer to the technical equipment to be used in the charming procedure: dry bone from a horse, wine, bread, knife , hemp rope, sticks from pumpkin plant , sticks from vine, sticks from wattle fence, stones, incense, (new) cup or bowl, water , the nails or the hooves of the ill human or horse, paper, lead.

In the majority of the cases, the instructions about the rite are usually short and referring to writing: *"Write these words on…"* and may come before or after the letters, the words, or the text that have to be inscribed on the material support. This instruction is usual for the charms against water retention, against rabies, against snakebite, against the *nezhit* (personified headache), for birth giving and for staunching blood. Here is a typical example from a charm for blood staunching:

> For blood flowing from the nose or the mouth. [twenty-three Cyrillic letters follow] Write these words and put them on the person, whose blood is flowing. If you do not believe, write these words on a knife and stab any animal and there will be no blood.

Another important ritual action is to pronounce or to read aloud some words or an entire text over water or over the ill person's head. This instruction appears in charms against water detention, toothache, snakebite and fever. The charm against thunder and lightning is meant it be read aloud, when stormy clouds appear in the sky. The charm for a good journey is also supposed to be read aloud before departure. The text against water detention instructs:

> *The priest to read this* [charm] *three times over clean water, and at every reading to make the sign of the cross over the water, and then the ill person to drink the water.*

There are several charms, which contain instructions in more details, or refer to a more peculiar procedure. As we saw already above, in the charm for curing the wound on a horse's leg with the help of a dry animal bone. This is the only case in the source material of using this particular equipment. In Slavic and Balkan magical traditions and beliefs, the animal bones are often employed in divination and prognostication.[10] In verbal magic, the bone can be associated with fractures, injuries and traumas of limbs, and therefore used in charms for curing or preventing such ailments. A famous example is the Second Merseburg Charm, containing the curative formula *"bone to bone, blood to blood, joint to joint as they are glued"*. The *Bone to Bone* charm type has Slavic parallels,[11] most of which simply follow the German model, without instructions about the rite. However, one of the Belarusian texts implies that the charm was accompanied by some ritual action:

> At first time, at God's hour I will pray to God, I will bow to the Virgin. Jesus Christ rode across the golden bridge. His donkey made a step and sprained its foot. Jesus Christ is standing and crying. The Virgin comes up to him and says: – Oh, my beloved son. Why are you crying? – I was riding across the golden bridge. And my donkey has sprained its foot. Do not cry, my son, I made it as if it was at birth. I put his bone to bone, tendon to tendon, blood to blood. Help me, God, I asked God for help.[12]

It is possible that the phrase "I put his bone to bone" refers to an actual ritual gesture: to bring physically the two broken bones together, or maybe to touch the injury ritually with a bone. Such an imitative magical act is completely logical, and the rite can be seen as a re-enactment of the most important curative gesture from the *historiola*.

In my understanding, the Bulgarian text is in a way related of the *Bone to Bone* charm type. Clearly, there are differences: the charm is for a festering wound, not for broken leg; the formula *Bone to Bone* is missing; the plot of the *historiola* is different. However, there are also important common points: it is a charm for curing an injury on a horse; bone plays central role as a ritual tool; there is a full description of the accompanying rite, where the charming is done with the bone. From this perspective, I think that the Bulgarian charm can shed some light on the actual charming rite from the *Bone to Bone* type. Hypothetically, the instructions from the Bulgarian text are showing what could be the ritual magical actions of Odin/Virgin Mary/the charmer from the German and the Belarusian charms.

Another very detailed technical description of a rite is given in the charm against rabies:

> When someone is bitten, do this. Take wine, sour bread and your knife. Put the wine on the ground, take the bread in your hands and the knife in your right hand and say the following prayer to the Holy Mother of God: … [here comes the prayer to be said; after that the rite continues] Read this prayer nine times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, make the sign of the cross with the knife. If the bitten person is near, give him wine and bread. If he is far away, quickly pour out of the wine, and at midnight put the knife under a big stone and say the following prayer twice: … [here comes the second prayer, where the body and the blood of Christ are pointed as a curative substance].

The rite is actually a dramatization of the *historiola*. The charmer holds the bread and the knife and tells the story of Saint John, receiving a cure. The charmer says the charms nine times, makes the sign of the cross with the knife, then re-enacts the *historiola*'s advice, i. e. give the bitten person wine and bread.

The wine and the bread are clearly situated in the context of the biblical symbolism. However, they are ritually inseparable from the knife and the stone. The usage of a knife have parallels in South Italian curative charm[13] (where the knife is used in combination with herbs and potions) and in Byzantine exorcist charm[14] where the knife is used to make the sign of the cross in water.[15] Back in time, the knife from the Bulgarian and Byzantine charms have parallels in a Babylonian text and rite, employing an axe of gold and a silver pruning-knife.[16]

If all the equipment is taken together, the Bulgarian rite can be interpreted also as ritual offering to the supernatural powers: the placement of the wine on the ground, the libation, the placement of the knife under a stone, the specific temporal settings (midnight). At the same time, the rite may also re-enact the transmission of the venom/the illness from the afflicted person into the water and finally into the ground

Another important piece of equipment is the new bowl. The snakebite charms require it and the three sisters use it to cure water retention. This has a clear parallel in a South Italian charm for successful fishing, containing two parts. First, there are ritual instructions (written in the vernacular):

> Pillia una scutella nova ed in kila di acqua dillu mari, e di kuistu psalmu supra la scutella, septi voti, psalmu 113 ἐν κτλ. e di poi cun ditta acqua sprezzia la riti e la varca, da poi di kusta orazioni supra la riti.

This is followed by the *orazioni*, which is prayer for success in fishing (written in Greek), which summons the help of God and the cherubims.[17] The motive of the (new) bowl has a Mesopotamian parallels too. In a number of Babylonian charms, "a clean vessel of the gods" is the main equipment, together with "a clean reed, a long reed".[18] The rite from the Babylonian charm is in a way illustrated by an incantation bowl from Nippur. In its center, there is a drawing of a man, holding up a tree branch in his hand. The rest of the bowl is covered with a Hebrew charm to be recited.[19]

The magical employment of vessels is best illustrated by the Jewish incantation bowls (around 2000 in number), discovered during

archeological excavation in the Middle East. Produced from the 6th to 8th century AD, they are usually inscribed in a spiral, beginning from the rim and moving toward the center. The texts are mostly in Aramaic languages. The bowls were buried face down and were meant to capture demons. They were commonly placed under the threshold, courtyards, in the corner of the homes of the recently deceased and in graveyards; in the same period, Christian incantation bowls (often written in Syriac) bowls are also found in Syria. The Babylonian texts, the Jewish and Syriac incantation bowls, the South Italian charm and the Bulgarian example demonstrate a continuity of the practice. Clearly, the charm, the bowl and the rite form a stable magical unit.

The bread and especially the host of the Eucharist is believed to have special magical properties. The use of the host for magical purposes (including writing charms on it) is prohibited by both the Western and the Eastern Christian cannon.[20]

Another peculiar rite is described in the charm for protection of the bees. After the Trinitarian formula, the instruction goes:

Take three sticks from pumpkin, three from vine, and three from wattle fence. With three stones on the door, fumigate three time with incense, in the month of March, on the first day. [**The charm follows**]

While the charm is about the protection and preservation of the bees, the rite is focused on the purification. The purification is related to liminal space and time. It is performed on the border between two places and between two periods. The aim is to bless and to fertilize the new period for the bees. At the same time, the purification is done on the boundary, in order to secure the sacred border, to purify the bees and to protect them from evil, which may emerge at the point where one period/one space ends and another one begins. These considerations are visible in the rite's structure, based on liminality: the spatial and the temporal settings like the fence (where the sticks are taken from), the door (where the stones and the incense are applied) and the first day of March (end of the winter and beginning the spring and revival of vegetation), are clearly liminal.

The connection to March 1 is very important. This is one of the pivotal and most significant dates in the Bulgarian popular beliefs. The first day of March is the day of Baba Marta[21] and the *martenitsa*.[22] It is primarily and closely related with good health, fertility, vegetation, spring and revival of nature. The *martenitsa* tradition has the one and only purpose

to provide good health for humans, animals and plants for the whole year. This tradition is alive and very active today. In this respect, the bee charm is important, because it probably represent an authentic rite, as it was actually practiced.

The bee rite is based on the significant and powerful number three: three plants, three sticks from each plant, three stones, and triple fumigation. The role of the particular plants (pumpkin, vive and wattle) is not so clear. It is possible that they are associated with the vegetative powers, or are used in the fumigation. Curative or disinfective properties may be of significance too.

While the role of the plants in the bee charm is obscure, other charms definitely employ certain plants as curative substances. This happens in charms against snakebite, for staunching blood and against rabies. The text against snakebite instructs "*When a snake bites somebody, take branches of green elder, put it on the wound, or on the hands, or on the legs. Apply often and say this prayer*". The charm for staunching blood requires leaves of ivy to be mixed with egg white and saphron, and then to be applied on the forehead of the ill person. The charm against rabies instructs to write certain words and letters on bread, then the charmer have to "*take a knife and cut green burdock and give the bitten to eat it*".

The charms with instructions about preparation and employment of curative plants and substances are de facto medical recipes. These are the most practically organized texts. They provide full comprehensive curative service according to the scheme: a particular health problem is treated with particular magical words and rites, combined with particular curative plants, applied in a particular way, and with particular remedies, prepared according to particular recipes. These charms manage the crisis from two perspectives. On one hand, there is the verbal-magical and ritualistic approach; on the other hand, there is the pharmaceutical-medical technical operative method.

The two approaches can be compared with the help of the two snakebite charms. There is the text, which employs words of power with a plant (the green elder). It uses a narrative and a curative substance. It relies on both a magical rite and a medical-pharmaceutical procedure. The recipe, the words of power and the rite form a curative whole.

However, the snakebite can be treated purely magically and ritualistically. This is the above-quoted case with the charm with Apostle Paul, which instructs about the following procedure:

If a snake bites somebody, he should do the following: to bring a new vessel, to make the sign of the cross in the vessel, saying the prayers about the Holy Cross, and to write this troparion around the cross [here follows the sentence about Moses from the Bible, then the procedure continues] He must wash himself with holy water from a new moon, is he can find one. If not, he must find clean water, to wash the whole vessel and if the person bitten by snake is near, he must drink the water. If the bitten is not nearby, the curing person must drink the water.

This text relies primarily on the power of the words and the power of the rite. The health problem is treated through a complex *historiola* and magic formulae. The curative unit consists of the magical words and the rite. The objects (new vessel and water) acquire healing and magical power, because they are placed and use in ritual context. They also have the task to re-establish the ritual message and guarantee that this message will be preserved and transmitted successfully.[23]

Inside these two approaches, the special magical functions of the objects and the substances coexist together with their ordinary quotidian roles. There is a constant shift and the same objects can move in and out of ritual context, can be ordinary and extraordinary or special. Inside the rite, the proportion changes too: the same objects can be central and of primary ritual significance, but can play a more peripheral or secondary role.[24] In the snakebite charm with the green elder, the emphasis is on the plant and the recipe. The plant in the center of the rite, the words are not used without it. The verbal charm can be seen as an accompaniment of the physical application of the herbal curative substance. In the snakebite charm with Apostle Paul, the narrative and words play the central role. The vessel and the water are the material support for the words, the physical transmitter for the ritual message.

As providers of specific instructions and practical guidance, the charms belong to the specialized technical literature, which is usually called with the well-defined and widely accepted German term *Fachliteratur*. Widely spread in the middle Ages, it covered for instance the *Septem Artes Liberales*, *Artes Magicae*, various crafts, human and veterinarian medicine, hunting and fishing, agriculture, fighting, cooking, pharmaceuticals, alcohol making, playing games, cheating, etc. *Fachliteratur* included books on conjuration of demons, divination and prognostication, necromancy, astrology, preparation of amulets and talismans, etc.. The medical and cooking recipes (for preparing food, drinks, household substances and

remedies, but for magical curative, love or poisonous potions) are typical examples.[25]

The "false prayers" are associated with "the stupid village priests", and can be found in their books.[26] Indeed, the charms are found in devotional religious manuscripts, whose initial official canonical purpose is very practical: to be the professional handbooks for the Christian priests and to guide them in their liturgical and spiritual activities. Canonical of not, the charms additionally enrich this specialized technical literature in terms of practical ritual guidance. In medieval and early modern Bulgaria, no treatises of high ritual magic survived – neither original compositions, nor Old Church Slavonic translations of Byzantine examples.[27] Therefore, the manuscripts containing an alloy of canonical prayers, verbal charms and recipes, are what comes the closest to a set of written magical equipment.

Amulets in Action

From the technical information, it becomes clear that writing plays an important role in the charming rite. Consequently, the paper and the lead pay role of special paraphernalia. They are not simply daily life objects, used in ritual context. The paper and the lead are the material support for making amulets. The closer parallels can be seen in a South Italian example, where the "prayer" (actually a rather lengthy text) has to be written on a piece of pottery. A Byzantine charm against breast-pain also instructs: "Write the following and hang it on the chest".[28]

Form all the Bulgarian charms, only six texts contain explicit instructions to be written on paper. Due to the fragile nature of the material support, no such charm survived as it was used, i.e. written on a piece of paper. Meanwhile, three charms contain explicit instructions to be written on lead. These are a charm against destructive hard rain and two charms against the *nezhit.* One of the charms against the *nezhit* comes from manuscript, dated fifteenth and sixteenth century. The other charm against the *nezhit* comes is in a manuscript, dated seventeenth century. None of these two texts survived on a piece on lead. We have the charms and the instructions about the amulets, but no actual amulets (on paper or lead) with these two charms reached our time.

However, there is another charm against the *nezhit*, coming from a seventeenth century manuscript, which is as follows:

Jesus came down from the Seventh heaven, from his home, met the nezhit and asked it: "Where are you going?" And the nezhit answered: "I am going into the human head, in order to bemuse the brain, to break the teeth and the jaws, to deafen the ears, to blind the eyes, to distort the mouth, to block up the nose, so there will be headache day and night." And Jesus said to the nezhit: "Go back into the forest and enter the deer's head and the ram's head, because they can bear everything and still survive. And stay there until the end of Heaven and Earth. And be afraid of the Lord, who is sitting on the cherubim throne, until He comes to judge the entire universe and you too, rabid nezhit, who are the source of every infirmity. I am conjuring you, nezhit! Go away from the God's servant (say the name) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."

This text has three parallels, inscribed on amulets from earlier times. This is the charm from the tenth century amulet from the village of Odŭrtsi, Varna region:

Dear Lord Christ, win! The nezhit was coming from the Red Sea and met Jesus. And Jesus asked him: "Where are you going?" He answered: "I am going to the human, to drink his brain, to shed his blood, to break his bones". Then Jesus said: "I conjure you, nezhit! Do not go to the human, but go to a deserted place…find the deer…enter their [sic!] heads Drink their brain, shed their blood, break their bones and tear their joints, because they can stand any illness. Go there and do not come back!" Now and forever, until the Judgment Day, prepared for him. Be afraid of the Lord, sitting on the cherubim throne, everything visible and invisible is afraid of him. Fear mostly the Lord, the glory belongs to him forever. Amen!

Then, there is the charm again the *nezhit* from an amulet (tenth-eleventh century, from Păcuiul lui Soare, today's Romania):

And when Jesus came down from the seventh heaven…and while walking, he met the nezhit, and told him: Where are you going, nezhit? The nezhit replied: I am going into the human head, to drink the brain, I am going into the bones, to destroy them, to blind the eyes, to deafen the ears. And Jesus told him: Go back in the …forest and into the deer's head and into the ram's head, because the deer and the ram are patient, here and now and forever. Amen.

Finally, there is the charm against the *nezhit* from eleventh-twelfth century. It is on an amulet, found in a medieval grave near the town of

Kŭrdjzali, Southern Bulgaria. Although the text is partially corrupted, it is clear that this is the same charm:

> Jesus Christ was coming from the seventh heaven from…
> … the evil spirit was coming from the Red Sea…
> Jesus met is next to his home and asked it: "Where are you going,
> brother?" And the evil spirit said: "I am coming here in the human head
> to suck
> The brain out, to dry the eyelids, to cover the backs, to deafen the
> ears, to blind the eyes, to twist the mouths and to block the
> noses … illnesses of the head day and
> night." And Jesus told it: "O, brother, …
> you evil spirit, go to the mountain and enter the deer's head and…
> because you all tolerated and all suffered. There
> you stay and wait until the sky and the
> earth end. Be afraid of God, who sit on the
> cherubim throne, until the Lord
> come to give justice in the universe. And you, rabid
> spirit, lord of every infirmity, I conjure you,
> … you, evil spirit, go away form God." Dear Lord. Heaven and earth.
> 102 years. Now and forever, and for eternity. Amen.

The charms against the *nezhit* are part of a verbal-amulet apotropaic system, which has the following hypothetical model: certain verbal charms against the *nezhit* are in circulation in Bulgaria in the period from tenth to seventeenth century. The charms are accompanied by an instruction to be written on lead. The instructions were followed, and the pieces of lead inscribed with the charms were used as apotropaic amulets. In seventeenth century, the charms were also written down in manuscripts, together with the instruction about the lead. For the period before seventeenth century, there is no data if the circulation was only oral and amuletic or the charms were also kept in written form for reference purposes.

Similar process can be observed in the case of protection against the *veshtitsa*. There is a number of charms against the *veshtitsa,* where the list of names occupies a central position. These charms were discussed in details above. The most characteristic example, coming from the seventeenth century, is the following:

> The witch said: "I uproot a fruit tree, I tie female beauty, I defeat female
> malice. I am coming closer and I shall enter the human dwelling as a

hen, as a she-dove, as a snake. I strangle the beautiful children and that is why they call me „murderer". When the true word of God was born, I went there to deceive it. Archangel Michael found me and fettered me, and I swore and said: "I swear in the throne of the Supreme and in the supreme powers that I shall not lie to you and I shall tell you the truth. If a human can copy in writing my name, I shall not enter the home of the servant of God." And Archangel Michael said: "Tell me your names!" "First name: Mora. Second name: Veshtitsa. Third name: Vizusa. Fourth name: Makarila. Fifth name: Siyana. Sixth name: Evgelusa. Seventh name: Navridulia. Eighth name: Living Fire. Ninth name: Pladnitsa (Midday One). Tenth name: Drowner/Strangler of children. Eleventh name: Thief the milk of the newborn. Twelfth name: Devil Deceiver."

The witch told Archistrategos Michael: "Let me go and I shall swear: wherever they pronounce these names, no devil will ever enter. Amen. Neither to the sleeping one, nor to the eating ones, nor in midnight, nor at noon, today, ever and forever, through the ages. Amen."

This text has a parallel in a charm against the *veshtitsa* from the tenth century. It survived on an amulet, excavated near the city of Varna, Eastern Bulgaria. Although the amulet is not in a perfect condition and parts of the text are corrupted, it is clear that this the same text:

The *veshtitsa* was saying: "I eradicate a fruit tree, I dry female beauty, I defeat female malice, I approach and enter into the human's place as a hen, as a dove, as a snake… "And Archangel Michael said: "Tell me your clan!" 1st name *mora*, 2nd *veshtitsa*, 3rd *vizusa*, 4th *makarila*, 5th *siyana*, 6th *evgelusa*, 7th *navradulia*, 8th living fire, 9th midday one, 10th strangler of children …

The charms against the *veshtitsa* too seem to be part of a verbal-amuletic apotropaic system. Its hypothetical model is the following: certain charms against the veshtitsa are in circulation in Bulgaria in the period tenth-nineteenth century. The list of the *veshtitsa*'s names is the central and most important element of the charm. In the tenth century, this type of charm was inscribed on a piece of lead and used as an apotropaic amulet. In seventeenth century, the same type of charm was preserved in manuscripts. The texts from the manuscript mention or instruct that the names of the *veshtitsa* have to be not only remembered and uttered, but also written down and carried as protection.

The charms against the *nezhit* and the *veshtitsa* clearly demonstrate continuity of practice and probably of tradition too.[29] Continuity or at

least some possible corresponding motives can be found for three other amulets, although they do not have parallels from manuscripts. The amulet with the charm against the devil could fit very well for instance among the apotropaic texts from the seventeenth century book of hours or book of occasional prayers from Sofia. The amulet charm also corresponds in tone to the St. Sisinnius and Archangel Michael charms against *vehstitsa*, *mora*, evil spirits, etc. It could be connected with the Niketa's book of occasional prayers, among its emphatically apotropaic text against evil supernatural powers.

The same is valid for the amulet with protection charm. With its simple iconography and bilingual verbal content, this is one of the shortest charms, and also one of the most concentrated apotropaic biblical *historiola*:

Side A (Old Church Slavonic): *The cross was raised, Christ was crucified. Christ was resurrected, the man was forgiven.*

Side B (Greek): *Christ was born, Christ the unburried one, Christ the unburried one.*

Hypothetically, such amulet and such text could be worn by any of the users of the charms from seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century. A medieval and early modern priest could make such an amulet (or at least provide the verbal charm for it) for a member of his congregation. On one hand, the bilingual inscription suggests a certain level of literacy. On the other hand, the Greek text is de facto corrupted. Instead of a reference to Christ's resurrection or divine power, the amulet repeats the same phrase twice. A fuller of more "correct" version can be seen also for instance in a two South Italian Greek examples.[30]

It is very possible that the mistake in the Greek text on the Bulgarian amulet comes from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the magical significance of the number of the phrases and of the numbers themselves. To some degree, this inscription is similar to the water retention charm, containing two Agripa, instead of two. In both cases, it is difficult to say with certainty if the Bulgarian charm is damaged/corrupted or consciously modified.

The amulet with charm for protection of the family and the household, and for the wellbeing of the livestock and the crops corresponds to the bee charm and the charm for wound on a horse. In my opinion, the amulet charm is also in the line like the charms against water detention in animals, and the charms against storm, bad weather and flood. These texts are related in the sense that they provide comprehensive and inclusive protection. They take care not only of a particular human, but also of a

family, of domestic animals, of the crops. In a way, these charms are for protection of the entire household, the entire farm, the entire human world.

In the broader Slavic context, it is remarkable that in the Bulgarian charms against snakebite seem unrelated to an amulet tradition. The source material speaks about bowls and cups, but there is no reference to amulets, similar to the Russian *zmeeviki*, for instance. Clearly, the list of snake's names and titles are supposed to be recited as a central part of the narrative, but nothing hints to the existence of an amulet with the titles and the names on it. Neither there is a hint to an amulet with the biblical reference about Moses.

In the context of Byzantine cultural influence, it is remarkable that the Bulgarian charms with St. Sisinnius are nor related to an amulet tradition. This marvelous saint appears in manuscripts, but is not present on amulets, neither as a text nor as an image. The extant pieces of lead show only the variant of the narrative, where the evil *veshtitsa* is defeated by Archangel Michael.

Practitioners

The figure of the charmer is something, on which the technical guidance provides very little amount of primary data. Obviously, a human practitioner is needed in order to do the charming, to perform the rite, to utter, read or write the charm and to do things with paraphernalia. On the other hand, the charms rarely say something about this practitioner. There is no information about sex, age, ethnicity, religion, social or marital status, occupation or level of literacy. Most often, the practitioner is either referred to as "you" via the pronoun or a verb in second person singular, or the instructions are given through impersonal phrases like "to be written", "to be read", etc.

Although rare, there are cases in the source material, when there is some information (like given name, occupation and sex) about the author and the owner of the book, who potentially can be the user of the charms. The following manuscripts provide such information:

- *Dragolov sbornik* № 651 from the thirteenth century, from the National Library in Belgrade. The manuscript was written by the Serbian priest Vasiliy Dragol. It was discovered in the year 1875, in Albania, in the family of an Eastern Orthodox priest, where it was kept for seventeen generations.[31]

- *Zaykovski trebnik* № 960 from the fourteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 1r, there is note: "June 2nd, 1900, Toma Zaykov, merchant from the town of Vidin." On fol. 1v-2r, there is note: "My father bought this book from Mount Athos, from a monk, it is very old." On fol. 68v, a note says that the book belonged to the teacher Neno. On fol. 75r, the male name Tseko Zayko is written
- *Psalter* № 6 from 1479, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 147v, there is a note in Italian:

  Mi Simon di Sittniza, o schritto quisto libro in gloria di dio con la mia mă propria e fii chonfitto ai 1479 adj 29 di marzo, a sta maria chastamia ă chorffo.

On fol. 82r, there is a note that the book property of Father Petka from the town of Prilep.

- *Sbornik* № 308 from fifteenth and sixteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 33v, there is a note that the manuscript is written by Deacon Gregory. On fol. 130v, a note says that the book was property of Father Michael, followed by a note from later time, with the name Hristo Yoanovich.
- *Psalter* № 464 from the seventeenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On the back of the cover, there is a note, saying: "I, Father Yovan, wrote this."
- *Trebnik* № 616 from the sixteenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol. 78, there is a note from 26th of May 1836 that the book was property of Andon Chizmets.
- *Chasoslov* № 631 from the seventeenth century, from the National Library in Sofia. On fol.182 and fol. 184, there are notes that the book was a property of Stano Semkov and Velo.
- *Chasoslov* № 1391 from 1744, from the National Library in Sofia. Based on the handwriting and the paleography, the manuscript is attributed to Father Milko from the town of Kotel. On fol. 2r, there is a note from the year 1867, telling the family history of Dobri Radiov. He seems to be the owner of the book in later times.[32]
- *Niketovo molitveniche*, № 646 from 1787 from the National Library in Sofia. The manuscript contains a large number of prayers and charms, which mention God's servant Niketa.

- *Lechebnik* № 799 from 1800, from the National Library in Sofia. On the first fol., there is a note: "Father Gregory, son of John, wrote this healer's book."[33]

In all these cases, the information is actually only about the name of the person, who wrote and owned the book. There is only one manuscript, where the user of the charms is named explicitly as such. The book is the Niketa's Book of Prayers and this is Niketa, who seems to be the owner of the book. The manuscript is from the year 1787 and contains (among other texts) ten verbal charms. These are charms for all joints, charms against storm and wind charm against lightning and thunder, charm to kill you enemy, two charms against the devil, charm for protection, two charms for success in the court of law and a charm for a good journey.[34] From these ten texts, eight are explicitly referring to "God's servant Niketa". In third person singular, he appears as a character in the narratives. One of the charms against the devil has a description of the ritual actions of Niketa. Apparently, he bows down, prays and sleeps in the church.

Based on the charms' texts, we can draw some features from the portrait of the practitioner Niketa. He is male, Christian by faith, who knew Old Church Slavonic language and who could read. It seems that he owned the prayer book with words of power. His economic and financial status was probably good enough to allow him to acquire such a book, unless he received the manuscript as a gift, or stole it. If we take at face value the charm against the devil, it hints that Niketa might had some kind of closer connections or relations with the clerical milieu or at least with a particular church. Such connection would provide him with constant access to the church building, in order to perform the verbal magic (to pray and to sleep there). On the other hand, there is the possibility that Niketa was not a real person, but only a fictitious human character in the *historiolae* of the charms.

Based on the sources, this is the closest we can get to the image of a Bulgarian charmer from the period. There are a few other texts, which also give some hints about the charmer.

One such case is the above-quoted charm for curing a wound on a horse. According to the *historiola*, the owner of the animal has to imitate the equine behavior and to re-enact the horse's pain. However, it is not clear if any person with an ill horse can or should do so, or the animal should be brought to a healer (for charming rite, including the utterance of the charm and possibly a dramatization) or to the priest (for reading the charm above the ill horse).

For comparison, the other equine-related charms (the ones against water detention) do not say anything about humans, imitating animal behavior and re-enacting the pain and the urinary problems of the horse. In the water detention charms, the instruction is usually to write letters or words on the hooves of the animal. It is not specified who should do the inscription: the owner of the horse or a charmer. The fact is that this person should have some reading and writing skills, even if only elementary ones. Hypothetically, the priest can write the water detention charm on the hooves of the horse. The priest is a very probable practitioner for two reasons. First, he knows to read and write, or at least a little bit. Second, the words to be inscribed are usually the names of the four biblical rivers, thus the charm and the charming rite are legitimate, decent and Christian. Therefore, hypothetically there is no reason for an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest not to use the charm and inscribe the hooves of the horse with the biblical names.

The birth-giving charms are another peculiar case. It is possible that due to the physiological details and sex/gender specifics of the delivery, the charms for giving birth were only employed by women. These can be for instance the midwives or other female healers, or any woman, who assists the delivery. Maybe the birth-giving charms do not tell who the practitioner is, because it was self-understood that it is always a (healing) woman. However, it is also possible that the priest was called to read the charm above the delivering woman in the beginning of the birth. Thus, he may not be present at the actual act of delivery.

The priest was probably also called to read the charm in case of complications during delivery. Hypothetically, this would be an extremely critical situation, when all help available would be mobilized, regardless of gender-related taboos. This seems to be the case with a charm, entitled "Prayer for when a woman cannot deliver". Preserved in a seventeenth century book of occasional prayers, the text contains first a non-canonical biblical narrative about St. John curing a woman with intestine problems. Then comes the charm itself ("*As the Lord and Holy Virgin Mary and St. John and St. Elizabeth are coming, the same way come out soon you too, young one, Lord's servant John is calling you, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*") At the end, there is the technical instruction: "*Write this prayer and the woman to put it under her left breast*". In this case, it is possible that two practitioners do the charming. One practitioner would be for instance the priest, who reads the *historiolae* and possibly writes the invocation formula on paper. The other practitioner would be

the midwife or the female healer, who puts the inscribed paper on the woman's body, but who may also utter the narratives and pronounce the invocation formula, as part of the charming rite.

In the source material, there are only two charms, which explicitly mention Christian Orthodox priest. These are a charm against water detention[35] and a charm against hale.[36] The first one, preserved in a book of hours from 1498, is one of the very few occasions, where the charming and the charmer are presented together. In the text, the *historiola* about the three angels on the bank of river Jordan is followed by the instruction: "*The priest to read this three times above clean water and every time to make the sign of the cross above the water, and the ill person to drink the water.*" In this case, it seems that there is only one charmer: the priest, who has the *historiola* in his book, reads it aloud above water, and performs the entire charming rite. This variant has a parallel in a South Italian charm against headache and illness (written in Greek), which is intended to be pronounced by the Christian Priest (ὁ παπᾶς) at the end of the liturgy.[37]

The other example, the charm against hale, is on a seventeenth century folio, added to a fifteenth century service book. The text instructs: on the first day of March, the names of the Holy 40 Martyrs to be written on paper, then "*the priest to come with the procession and to place* [the names of the martyrs] *around vineyards and fields. Do not be afraid of hale!* [the names of the martyrs follow]". In this case, it seems that there are two practitioners. The charmer, the farmer, or the owner of the land is practitioner № 1. Hypothetically, on March 1, he or she writes down the names of the Holy Forty Martyrs on a piece of paper, and then gives the paper to the priest. During the festal procession, the priest as practitioner № 2 places the inscribed holy names in the fields.

The last two examples present complete and logical charming systems. Schematically, these systems would look like this:

- There is a charmer, who is an Eastern Orthodox Christian priest. He has a specialized book, containing the verbal charm together with the technical instructions for the charming rite. When someone experiences water detention, he or she goes to the priest. The priest takes out the book and performs the charming rite: he reads aloud the charm above water makes the sign of the cross and gives the water to the ill person to drink it.

- There is a charmer, who has a specialized book with words of power, or an access to such book. The charmer writes down the charm on material support. Then this practitioner turns to the Eastern Orthodox Christian priest. During a legitimate Eastern Orthodox Christian religious

ceremony (a procession), the priest plays the role of a charmer too. He places the inscribed charm in the vineyards and the fields.

These models are realistic and probable for three reasons. First, the charms are preserved in clerical liturgical books. Second, the priest is explicitly pointed out in the texts of the charms. Certainly, there is clerical presence and activity in the rite. Third, the narratives of both charms consist of biblical *historiolae* with biblical characters, acting in biblical settings and framed by Christian Trinitarian formulae. Although non-canonical, this textual and ritual complex is a legitimate and decent Christian procedure. At least looks like one, and this might be of bigger importance for the survival, the usage and the transmission of the charm.

These two charms against water retention and hale in a way support the chronicles, which mention the "stupid village priests" as main practitioners of verbal charming. These two charms are actual primary sources about members of the Christian clergy, practicing verbal charming.

The charms do not reveal any information on the gender aspect. Being Christian priests, the charmers were surely males. However, the above-quoted sermons connect the charming practice and its ritual paraphernalia explicitly with the female practitioners. This is a picture, similar to the female healers, represented on the fresco from the Rila Monasery. In my opinion, it would be odd and strange, if a Christian priest would use magical instrumentarium like dry bones, hemp ropes, knives, etc. To me, it seems more probable that these ritual objects were employed by lay people, especially in the agricultural charms. The character of the paraphernalia and the information from the sermons allows the possibility that at least some part of the charmers were lay women.

Conclusive Remarks

Essentially, the verbal charms are power narratives. They function through the constant battle between the good and the evil supernatural figures. The positive agents always win, yet the negative ones always come back, and the *historiola* is repeated again and again. The verbal charms and rites promise a permanent solution of the problem, but actually do not provide it. Yet, they give the humans the necessary hope, mental support and sense of power to do something in the face of the trouble. The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms are used in and suited to human life and mentality. They are magic not in theory, but in

action – a dynamic field, providing belief and opportunity to manage and eliminate the crisis. In a challenging environment of limited resources and knowledge, verbal charms give real or imaginary ability to go beyond the sacred boundary and to keep the search for supernatural solutions of the everyday problems.

The medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal magic is curative and apotropaic. In the extant sources, there is no love magic and aggressive magic. This situation might be due to the fact that the charms were mainly preserved in and transmitted through Christian religious books. There is a big probability that the main users of the charms were members of the Christian clergy, especially parish priests. In case of illness and malevolent supernatural assault, a Christian priest is canonically obliged and naturally expected to provide help via prayers, exorcisms, service, ritual, etc. Although non-canonical, the verbal charms were one more instrument for coping with the situation.

In its own turn, such occupational and social profile of the practitioners explains the particular predominance of these three themes. The health problems, the protection against evil and the uncertainties of a journey, of a law procedure or of the weather, constituted the most common concerns in the daily life of a medieval and early modern community. Hence, these were the three spheres, where the parish priest has to respond to challenges and to solve problems. Hence, it is natural for the members of the clergy to gather and accumulate tools (including verbal charms), which are believed to be effective and which can be used in fulfilling their priestly assignments and obligations. At this stage, it is not possible to be completely certain about the users of the charms. Although the role of the clergymen seems to be very significant, it is very probable that verbal charming was practiced by lay people too.

It seems that the infiltration of non-canonical texts among the canonical contents was especially easy in the case of the books of occasional prayers. These manuscripts were a priori designed as clerical manuals, meant to provide sacred texts and words of power for various expected and unexpected occasions in the daily life of a Christian. In a situation of insufficient or non-existing authoritative control, and facing harsh and demanding quotidian realities, it is natural that the curative and apotropaic charms made their way among the canonical texts and were integrally incorporated in the priests' manuals and practices.

NOTES

1. STARK, p. 31.
2. ILOMÄKI, p. 47.
3. Added folio from the seventeenth century, in a *Service book* from the fifteenth century, Plovdiv, National Library, № 79. TSONEV, *Opis Plovdiv*, p. 49.
4. PRADEL, pp. 26-27.
5. PÓCS, pp. 22-27.
6. STARK, p. 31.
7. TSONEV, *Opis*, vol. I, p. 313. The highlight is mine.
8. The *samovili* and the *brodnitsi* are supernatural female beings. It seems that here the terms are used for female practitioners of magic.
9. TSONEV, *Opis*, vol. II, p. 426.
10. One of the medieval Slavic prohibited prognostication books is called *лопаточник*, and instruscts how to predict, using the scapula (*лопатка*) of a sheep. The bone is placed above fire and the divination is made based on the changes in the bone's color. [ANGUSHEVA-TIHANOVA], passim.
11. AGAAPKINA, passim. The article presents and analyses Belarussian parallels. I am thankful to Andrey Toporkov for the inspiring and informative discussion on these parallels.
12. AGAPKINA, p. 53.
13. PRADEL, p. 25.
14. PRADEL, pp. 33-34 and VASSILIEV, p. 334.
15. PRADEL, pp. 130-131.
16. THOMPSON, p. 173.
17. PRADEL, p. 17.
18. THOMPSON, p. 111.
19. THOMPSON, p. XLIX.
20. VASSILIEV, pp. LXIII-LXVII.
21. Old woman, personification of the month of March and of the approaching spring.
22. Apotropaic and health amulet, made out of red and white treat. It is put on humans, and on domestic animals and plants, then later, when the blossoming starts or the migrating birds star returning, the *martenitsa* is put on a blossoming tree.
23. TODOROVA-PIRGOVA, p. 64.
24. TODOROVA-PIRGOVA, p.76 and WEINER, passim.
25. STANNARD, passim. For example, the medieval and early modern Bulgarian prognostication books and divination texts are typical magical texts, but also *Fachliteratur*, as much as they are in the form of manuals and reference handbooks.

26   Similarly to the two medieval Russian chronicles quoted above, the Bulgarian *Pogodinov Index* of prohibited books (fourteenth century) states that a priest, who takes *"false books"* in church, must be excommunicated and the books must be burnt. However, according to the marginalia, there is a number of liturgical manuscripts, which belonged to lay people. See below the subchapter on practitioners.

27   STOYANOV, p. 315. For comparison, Egypt in the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages is "a world where ritual dominated the resolution of most crises in life" and handbooks with spells were highly valued. Despite the diversity of the Coptic spells, "it is more challenging to look at these spells as a group, which is the way their user regarded them. It is clear that they make up a singe practitioner's portfolio." MEYER, pp. 259 and 275.

28   VASSILIEV, p. 334.

29   As Ralph Merrifield puts it, religious and magical beliefs "may change from generation to generation; what remains constant is the ritual itself – the proper thing to do in certain cincumstances, and something that is might be unsafe to neglect." MERRIFIELD, p. 115.

30   PRADEL, p. 14 and 32.

31   PETKANOVA, p. 131-132.

32   HRISTOVA, pp. 87-89.

33   TSONEV, *Opis*, vol. II, pp. 492-493.

34   TSONEV, *Opis*, vol. II, pp. 161-166.

35   YATSIMIRSKII, p. 34.

36   TSONEV, *Opis Plovdiv*, p. 49.

37   PRADEL, pp. 35-36.

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MOVING IMAGES, STATIC LIVES: INTERWAR POLISH JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Abstract

This article examines two sets of films—those produced by amateur home movie-makers, Polish Jewish immigrants to the United States, on return visits home as well as the *Six Cities* series produced professionally by Sektor Films—in the context of the larger project of the creation of an image of Polish Jewish life in the interwar period. It uses the concepts of nostalgia delineated by Svetlana Boym to argue that even more than fundraising, the filmmakers intended their documentation to create a nostalgic souvenir for Americanized Jews and their children, a pre-facto memorialization of Polish Jewish life.

Keywords: Jews, Judaism, interwar Poland, emigration, American Jews, diaspora, film, documentary, nostalgia, Svetlana Boym

The establishment of the Second Polish Republic in November 1918 changed the lives of the new state's 27 million residents in multiple, profound ways. Among those residents, the country's nearly three million Jews (who formed the largest Jewish community of any country in Europe and the second largest in the world, after the United States) were faced with the challenge of finding a place for themselves in a state that increasingly defined itself as a creation of the ethnic Polish nation, to which Jews, by most accounts, did not belong.[1] On the one hand, the Minorities Treaties (the so-called "Little Treaty of Versailles") gave Jews, as all minorities within the newly-formed Second Polish Republic, a measure of official recognition unprecedented under the rule of the three partitioning powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austro-Hungary. At least on paper, Jewish organizations were free to open schools in Yiddish and Hebrew; a strong Jewish cultural scene grew in the 1920s. On the other hand, Jews' *de facto*

equality with other Poles was by no means assured. During the war itself, Jews faced violence at the hands of their Polish (Catholic) neighbors, and after it, their safety was hardly guaranteed.[2]

The interwar period, it should not surprise us then, was a ripe time for Jewish self-depiction, as various Jewish groups vied to create the image of the Polish Jew. The ways in which Polish Jews took up this task were varied. Among the ways in which many Jews took up this new challenge was a concentrated effort to collect and display those aspects of their past that could demonstrate that they, too, belonged in and were a vital part of the new Polish state. During the twenty years of the Second Republic's existence, between 1919 and 1939, multiple Jewish museums opened their doors to the public. Hundreds of amateur collectors (*zamlers*, in Yiddish) mobilized to document their towns' Jewish history, artistic legacy, and folkways. Professional scholars, some of them trained in ethnography, also played a central role in this collection boom. Their aims were varied; some collectors used their work to paint a picture of a Polonizing (and Polonizable) Jewry, while others sought to "define the Yiddish nation," in the words of one scholar, distinguishing a language-based Jewish nation separate from the Polish one.[3]

By and large, all of these depictions of Polish Jews were created for audiences within Poland, Jewish and gentile. But there was yet another set of images of the Polish Jew which emerged from the interwar period: those created for American immigrant audiences. Two sets of films from the interwar period, created by Polish and Polish-American immigrant Jews and aimed at an immigrant Jewish audience, demonstrate yet another facet to the contested image of the Polish Jew: that of the already-disappeared relic.

The first set of films falls into the category of "home movies," which were made for private consumption with family and friends and in some cases to be shown to larger audiences as part of a fundraising event. These films were all made by Jews who had emigrated from Poland to the United States, mainly before the Great War or in the first years of the 1920s. The second set of films was made professionally in Warsaw in 1938 and 1939, and sent to the United States for showing shortly thereafter. The two sets of films speak directly to each other, but also must be contextualized within the broader project of forming and depicting the Polish Jew.

The dominant image of Jewish life in interwar Poland—truly, the image, the visual document—was the creation of Alter Kacyzne, an immigrant photographer himself. Born in Vilna (Polish Wilno, today Lithuanian

Vilnius) in 1885, Kacyzne moved to Warsaw in 1910 with a large wave of so-called "Litvaks" (Lithuanian Jews). He worked as a translator and photographer, and was deeply involved with the modernist literary scene in both Russian and Yiddish.

Kacyzne, because he was working for various American organizations, was the photographer whose images would have been most familiar to contemporary American Jews. In 1921 he was commissioned by the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society, or HIAS, to document immigrants arriving in the United States, at Ellis Island. Then, in 1923, Ab Cahan, the editor-in-chief of the daily Yiddish newspaper *Forverts*, hired Kacyzne to photograph East European Jewish Life. Kacyzne held this job for seven years, until 1930. Cahan and Kacyzne argued quite a bit over artistic direction. Cahan did not appreciate Kacyzne's photographs of his own artistic milieus in Warsaw, preferring instead one type of image: the poor *shtetl* (market town) Jew. Kacyzne's photographs would have been widely recognized by the creators of the first set of films under discussion, the home movies of Jewish returnees.

Kacyzne was not the only Jewish photographer who emphasized poverty alongside close family life. The ethnographic expedition photographs of S. An-sky and his team, taken in 1912-1914 in the Pale of Settlement (the Russian partition of Poland), also emphasize these characteristics of the "old world"—which was already "old," that is to say outmoded, for An-sky as well as for Kacyzne, and for most Jews who had moved from *shtetl* to city in the previous decades.[4] Kacyzne and An-sky were friends and intellectual compatriots, and An-sky's influence can be detected in Kacyzne's photographs. An-sky's work served partly to memorialize *in situ* living communities "as they disappeared." Even before he witnessed the Great War, An-sky felt a sense of urgency in the face of impending disaster:

> The systematic collection of folk art and the comprehensive investigation of economic life have for the Jewish people, over and above general artistic and scientific significance, a further topical interest. If anti-Semitic theories are based on a slanderous portrayal of the Jewish character, and such a slanderous definition of the economic role of Jewry as harmful, we must be armed…with materials that clearly depict the spiritual aspect of the Jewish people, its attitudes, beliefs, hopes, and despairs, which folk art offers to us directly.[5]

An-sky hoped to rescue the Jews from persecution and from the false beliefs of others, and to build up a Jewish cultural bulwark against both prejudice and assimilation. This goal became even more important for him during wartime.

The films presented here can be seen as source material documenting the *shtetlekh* of Poland, and as a part of American Jewish relief efforts. I argue, on the basis of Svetlana Boym's theories of "restorative" nostalgia, that they can also be seen as a vehicle for atype of nostalgia, albeit with an unconventional definition: as a way to establish a break with the past, not to bridge it.[6] I posit that the desire to fix the past, in this case in film, as a method of maintaining "restorative nostalgia," the vision of the past "as it was," and unblemished (though again—not to restore as salvage ethnography aimed to restore, but rather to keep at some distance from the actor). This nostalgic action (or actions: filming and viewing) occurred before the rupture of the Holocaust; it can also be considered pre-commemorative nostalgia, something to which the filmmaker and viewers might return to in the unknown future, within the limited framework of the screen.

Jewish ethnography and collection practices have been discussed primarily as responses to catastrophic circumstances, as attempts to capture a vanished, or vanishing, way of life. It is in this manner that David Roskies has written about Jewish literature that attempted to describe Jewish life.[7] This description works from an idea of "salvage" ethnography, that is, ethnography that is intended to preserve, albeit in a fossilized form, a remnant of a life that is about to slip away. (The attempt to salvage might be considered the opposite of the type of nostalgia described here, which also aimed to preserve, but not to restore to the present.) And indeed, the tendency of Jewish ethnographic and literary writing to memorialize destruction as it is happening stretches back before An-sky, to Natan of Hanover's *Yeven metsulah*, the abyss of despair, which memorialized the Jews killed in the Khmel'nyts'kyi Uprising of 1648.[8] But as we see from later works, An-sky's and Kacyzne's among them, memorialization need not be for the dead, it could also be for a way of life, even as it was still being lived.

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As Polish Jews in the United States, some of them new American citizens, looked at the effects of the Great War overseas, and at their

own increasing financial resources, some bought one of the increasingly-affordable home movie cameras available on the market, along with a package tour to Poland, as an extension of a more traditional European vacation.[9] This paper discusses just four of the films available in digital format. Many of the extant films are difficult to watch, not due to subject matter but due to the poor quality of the camerawork and the dizzying effects it produced.[10]

1924 marks the passage of the Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the Immigration Act of 1924 or the National Origins Act. An act of Congress, it limited immigration to the United States to a quota based on country of origin, 2% of the 1890 immigration totals by nationality (meaning, in the American sense, country of origin, not citizenship or ethnicity). (The Johnson-Reed Act also completely excluded immigration from Asia.) In effect, aside from Asian immigration, the Act was designed to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. Put another way, the Act limited the immigration of Jews, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox families and communities.[11] The Johnson-Reed Act was the last step in increasingly strict immigration quotas based on racialized thinking and fears of communism as well as anti-Jewish and also anti-Catholic sentiment. Whereas other prior acts limited immigration, this Act effectively shut out whole populations, as in 1890, most immigrants to the U.S. were from north-west Europe—parts of Germany, England, and Scandinavia.

Jews from Eastern Europe had started to come *en masse* to the U.S. beginning right around 1880, in response to a wave of pogroms across the territory of today's Ukraine. Jews also emigrated as well for reasons common to most immigrants—economic crisis in smaller towns and villages, desire for a less strict way of life religiously, and a sense that America offered more opportunities in general. In contrast to many other immigrant groups, Jews had much lower rates of return to their place of origin. It was quite common for, say, a Sicilian immigrant to come to the U.S., make money, and return to Sicily either to stay or at least to marry. East European Jews really did not go back in very high numbers. From 1908 to 1925, 1,018,878 Jews immigrated into the U.S., while 52,585 departed, 5.2%. The rate for Italians was 55.8% and for Germans 15.3%.[12] In effect, after 1924, it was quite likely that an East European Jewish immigrant still had family in Eastern Europe who had intended to come to the United States, but were cut off from doing so, first by the Great War and subsequently by the Johnson-Reed Act. The passage of the Act solidified what was already a trend: the act of immigration as a

complete rupture with the past, both the individual past and the Polish Jewish past broadly.

Arriving in the cities and towns they had left as much as a decade or more prior, their reasons for their trips were diverse. Some went to visit family, who could not join them in the States after the passage of the Johnson-Reed Act. (We must imagine that some of the people in the films are family members.) Others wanted to show their Americanized children life in their former homes. We can consider these films to be, in a sense, the opposite of the "papirene kinder," the photographs of children who left for America that are visible in family portraits of East European Jews.[13]

It is important to note that regardless of the reason for traveling, there was no option for a full and unadulterated "return," for the country they were visiting had changed, in multiple ways. In all cases, they were visiting a country, the Second Polish Republic, which did not exist when they left. More than national borders had changed since these returnees' departures. The Great War had devastated the towns and villages along the Eastern Front, and roughly half of Galicia's Jewish population alone migrated away from their hometowns.[14] Reports on the losses of life and poverty, along with photographs, had been published in immigrant newspapers, as well as in national news, however, none of these home movies makers had seen the extent of the destruction firsthand.

Additionally, we must imaging that home movie makers had seen Kacyzne's images of the poor Jews of Eastern Europe, living in squalid circumstances, unable to make a materially comfortable life for themselves. They may also have been familiar with the photographs of Jacob Riis, for example, whose (often staged) photographs of New York's Lower East Side depicted crippling poverty in a bid to raise awareness of (and aid money for) "the other half."[15] Many of the returnees had likely lived on the Lower East Side themselves. It is also quite possible that some of the movie-makers drew some inspiration from the social documentary programs of the Works Progress Administration, which was established during the Great Depression to provide jobs and to document daily life. Some of the documentary projects of the WPA included films and travel writing.

Apart from individual travelers' own initiative to document, *landsmanshaftn*, fraternal societies comprised of Jews from the same hometown in Europe, also sent individuals to document their hometown's present conditions. The filmmakers would then bring these films back, and screen them with the goal of helping to raise funds for relief efforts within the United States. The scenes that filmmakers brought back to the

states attempted to make various impressions on their viewers. In some films, destitution and decrepitude are emphasized; others paint a more sentimental portrait of life back in "the old country."

The film "A Pictorial Review of Kolbishev," made by Peysakh Zukerman in 1929, falls into the category of a nostalgic, "trip down memory lane" type of film.[16] Zuckerman, who was 30 when he shot the footage, was a native of Kolbuszowa (Kolbishev in Yiddish), in the Subcarpathian region of Poland, and had immigrated to the United States as a teenager. The film opens with introductory words that underscore the idea of the successful immigration story, and the "American dream," while nonetheless paying homage to an idealized home town:

> Although we have made this glorious country as our second home, living under far better conditions and enjoying more freedom under the American flag, we still feel and consider in the depths of our hearts our native towns with all its [sic] shadows and faults as the sunny spot of the first happy years. Looking up-on all the school, synagogues, and all the other unique features prevalent in our idealic [sic] towns, we feel as a shock of pride would touch us and many a tear relieves our sensitive hearts while looking at these pictures and recalling the first episodes of our early lives.

Zuckerman, like most of the home-movie makers, used the film to raise money for Jews in Kolbuszowa, showing at a 1930 ball for the United Kobesevher Relief, which netted $4,500 in donations.[17]

Zukerman told his cameraman, "I want the life of a week … the way children go to *kheyder* and the…market-day…pictures for a whole week with the exception of the Sabbath." The scenes focus on aspects of the everyday, showing mundane scenes in a positive light. The literal light in the film comes from the sunny skies under which the film was shot; the summertime trees and natural light of the outdoor shots (home movie-makers typically did not have the equipment to shoot indoors) give Kolbuszowa an aura of a summer colony rather than a typical town.[18] The cameraman showed stacked loaves of bread in the market square, which stand in for a life of satisfaction without hunger. Scenes of bustling trade similarly depict a Kolbuszowa where people get along with their daily business, working hard but not without reward.

Around minute 20 of the film, the cameraman turns to the graveyard. There is no ominous or portentous meaning in the scene; images of stones are merely reminders of loved ones who have passed on, and the cemetery

is a part of the town, where life included living and dying amongst ones family. The graveyard shots are followed by a scene of a marching band, underscoring the absolute normality of death in the circle of life.

Considering the purpose of the film, that is to raise relief money, the choice of images may seem odd: Kolbuszowa does not appear, in the film, to be a town in need. There is bread, the town is orderly. There are no scenes of overt poverty, and while Kolbuszowa is clearly not a rich city, nor do its residents seem destitute or unhappy. We may view this partially as a function of the season in which the film was shot, as well as Zuckerman's success in the "goldene medine," the "golden land." Finding success in America, he remembered a happy childhood in the "old country." While he could never return for good—at least, he certainly would not be able to maintain his financial success if he had returned— he looked on his former life with nostalgia, a longing for simpler times. What Zuckerman did in America is unknown, however, his profession and location certainly would not have allowed him the time to do what he (via his cameraman) did in the film: wander through a town, taking in its sights, delighted by all he passed. We must also consider the impact of the film on the audience. While perhaps scenes of destitution might have encouraged the Kobishever *Landsmanshaft* member to open their purses wider, at the same time, the nostalgia *produced* by the film, and the happy memories it likely triggered, must have had a similar effect to images of poverty and want.

This film also belongs to what I suggest was a prevalent mode of depicting Polish Jewish life before the Holocaust: the pre-commemorative. Postwar viewers of these films, familiar with other filmic and photographic depictions of pre-Holocaust Jewish life in Eastern Europe, particularly in Poland, will recognize certain elements: the beautiful scenery, the implications of close family ties, the everyday humor and serendipities. The romanticized notions of *shtetl* life are only possible with its destruction. And while it is in fact the case that *shtetl* life was disappearing by force (mainly the Great War) and by choice (through migration to cities) well before the Holocaust, World War Two and the Holocaust are remembered in the popular communal imagination as the major event of destruction of the East European Jewish way of life, which is troped as *shtetl*-dwelling. The nostalgia of post-Holocaust commemoration is necessarily complete, final: there can be no return to that past, whether idealized or not. This finality is always necessarily sad. But pre-Holocaust commemoration leaves open the possibility for happiness; memories of happy life are

broken by emigration, but not by destruction. The memory of happiness, transferred to film and projected to people who may well have also had similar happy childhood memories from the exact same place, may leave the audience with a collective sigh, but it need not be tragic, sad, to be effective as a vehicle for nostalgia.

In contrast to Zuckerman's portrayal, Sydney Herbst's 1935 film made for the Ershte Shendishever Galtzianer Chevra (First Sędziszów Galician Fraternal Organization) depicts Herbst's hometown, Sędziszów, in the midst of terrible decline.[19] Herbst had traveled to Sędziszów to disburse funds collected for charity. His aim was similar to Zuckerman's: to capture his town on film, while providing some financial relief. However, the image he was met with did not match that which his imagination and memory had produced.

He wrote in his diary that on the way to the town from Warsaw, "The last two hours on the train [I was] very nervous like before going to a party." But when he arrived, he was disappointed and miserable: "Terribly homesick. Horrific sight awaited me on arrival. On mainstreet like a graveyard, not a light in any of the stores, not a store open….Mother wailed, cried for hours, fainted at first and never stopped crying all night…. It's very cold here. Can't wait till I leave. Counting the days like in prison."[20] Herbst's impressions of his former town were certainly not inaccurate. The economic and political situation of Jews in 1935, contrasted with 1929, were far worse. Herbst wrote about the "unspeakable poverty" and the "misery all over town" in his travel diary. In addition to the worsened economic conditions, Herbst traveled in winter, which certainly cut a harsher impression than did Kolbuszowa in summer. While Hebrst's interlocutors, like Zuckerman's, still smile and pose for the camera, street scenes show emptied streets, and muddied roads, a poverty of dress (where women wear shawls instead of coats) and infrastructure.

Boym wrote that "Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future….[N]ostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory." Zuckerman's film of Kolbuszowa conforms to this vision; it is a way of commemorating and fixing the idealized image of the past, in order to bring it into the present, especially in the changed world of the immigrants. By contrast, Herbst's film can be seen as an attempt to capture a useful image for the present and future; instead, it underscored the absolute

inaccessibility of the past, and the misery that attempting to bridge the gap between present and past can create. "Restorative nostalgia," as opposed to "reflective nostalgia," "stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home….Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition."[21] Zuckerman's film fulfilled the goal of reconstructing the lost home; Herbst's disturbed the image of the past.

Certainly, we may attribute the difference in the two films' scenes and narration to the very real differences between the towns, and temporalities, they depict. Six years and a full season made for a very different image of the "home country." Would Zuckerman still have portrayed his hometown in such a rosy light in the winter of 1935? It seems unlikely that he could have. But we can also view Herbst's disappointment not as a byproduct of a worsening situation, but additionally as a result of a crushed expectation, the expectation for a redemptive nostalgia, one that put the filmmaker back in his childhood home, with his family, a part of the seemingly (from the perspective of an older, urbanized new American) snug and orderly town. Herbst's film is above all a reminder that "you can't go back again." It is the filmic representation of the breach of the open-ended nature of pre-commemorative nostalgia. Because Herbst had not intended to make the film in a commemorative vein, he was shocked and saddened to find that commemoration, and attendant mourning, was exactly his task.

For viewers, the films are a vehicle for memory, or, in the phrasing of Richard Terdiman, "the past made present."[22] The films bring the viewers' own pasts, or similar pasts, into the present moment. However, the films also capture the present; this is the problem presented by Herbst's film. For while he intended to capture the past, in order to seal it away, he inadvertently filmed the present.

Gerold and Lillian Frank's film of Kamionka and Skidel (Skidl in Yiddish), made in 1934, similarly to other films made in the 1930s, also depict poverty.[23] Large families, though smiling, had clearly fallen on hard times. The Franks aimed the camera at the siding of houses, with peeling paint. People hardly appeared at all, save for the first few minutes of the almost 20-minute film and a few shows in the middle. A horse-drawn cart kicked up dust on the road, and scrawny trees looked like they might snap in the breeze. Similarly, the cemetery was presented without visitors, and appeared desolate, the graves tilted left and right. Rather than the marketplace, the Franks showed market carts without goods in them. Almost no building indicating life appeared in the film.

Ethel Zim's film of Libowne (Luboml in Yiddish) and Oliwne depicts scenes of poverty, as well, but conversely to the Franks' film, it shows almost solely people, often wearing shawls instead of proper coats.[24] This is not to say that the film's subjects are not happy; certainly, the are smiling and show affection towards one another. A sense of the broader landscape is given as Zim took the camera on a train, and filmed the passing scenery through the window, but it is literally a blur, and the film ended with a sense that the houses could all be the same. There where limitations imposed on the filmmakers, of course, primarily technological. Indoor lighting technology had not advanced as quickly as had portable film cameras, most of the films are shot entirely outdoors.

These four films, only part of the corpus available of "home movies" intended to raise money for Jews in Eastern Europe from the mid-1920s through the late 1930s, were edited to present a certain picture of life in Eastern Europe to those who had departed. At once journalistic and personal, showing scenes of people who may well be family members, and places familiar to the filmmakers from childhood, they also were intended to be shown to a larger audience, albeit one with roots in the very same town. One can imagine that during such a showing, audience members would gasp, point, and whisper to each other in recognition of places and people. These moments of recognition might trigger nostalgia, in the case of seeing a favorite childhood spot projected, or sadness and horror, if the *landsman* saw ruins or despair. In both cases, the *landslayt* were viewing their childhoods and young adulthoods, a world that had gone on by and large without them.

None of these observations are intended to obfuscate the very real, and dire, economic and sociopolitical circumstances facing Polish Jewry through the 1930s. Nor are they intended to belittle the filmmakers' impressions; we know from Herbst's diary that he was truly shocked and upset by the state of his hometown, and that he wished to leave at once. It is simply to point out two things: 1) that there were attempts at a pre-commemorative, healing, nostalgia before the absolute destruction not only of the towns and their people but also of the possibility for such a nostalgia, which we also might term "closure," and 2) that the images presented relied not only on the objective lens of reality, but on the filmmaker's own desires, projected, as it were, onto the screen.

It is instructive to contrast these films with the historical records of the towns, with what we know about the economic and cultural life of these towns. None of the filmmakers, nor other filmmakers, depicted what

we tend to think of as progressive changes: the opening of new schools, building of new buildings, modernization of industry and infrastructure. Although we know from the historical record that modernizing efforts, including new train stations, modernization of homes and schools (to say nothing of teaching methods), and the development of economic cooperatives, were widespread.[25] We can attribute these lacunae to a few factors, beyond the time constraints of film. For one thing, the filmmakers needed to show either economic ruin or simple natural beauty in order to raise funds. As much as Zuckerman's idyllic images are hard to imagine sparking the writing of a cheque, the nostalgia they produce certainly did. Scenes wholly unfamiliar to the audience, however, scenes of progress and development, could not spark nostalgia, and might instead have the opposite effect of encouraging dissociation with the hometown. Secondly, the filmmakers were *re*-visiting the towns, looking for their own pasts, and not for a complete picture of Kolbuszowa or Sędziszów or any of the other towns filmed for similar purposes. Additionally, after having lived mainly in much larger cities like New York for their adult lives, the small measures of modernization taking places in the Polish *shtetl* may not have even struck the filmmakers as progress, may not have crossed their minds at all.

As a parallel to the lack of scenes of modernization, modern viewers may also notice the lack of non-Jews in the films. Of course, filmmakers shot their family and friends; most of the latter would have been Jewish as well. And the films were intended for *Jewish* relief efforts. The monoethnic portrayal, unrealistic as it is (Kolbuszowa, for example, was about half Jewish, half Catholic in the interwar period), tells us something about the construction of an idealized past, as a way of coping with (or, perhaps, avoiding coping with) a violent past and a present indelibly marked by that violence. I would suggest, however, that these pre-war home movies present a similar image—of Jews, by Jews, for Jews—for much the same purpose, to idealize the past, whether the present is portrayed as similar to, or different from, that past. The films' Americanized audience, too, surely played a role in this construction. Removed from their towns' histories, they may have stopped caring about the Catholic populations of those towns, preferring to think of them instead as a Jewish homeland. Similarly to the Jews of Białystok, who one scholar argues formed a second diaspora, with Białystok as the homeland, the immigrant Jewish audiences for these films may also have constructed a mythical homeland out of their towns.[26] The films then serve as part of the founding narratives of these mini-nations,

with all the historical obfuscation that implies. Finally, as filmmaker and memoirist of Polish Jews film Natan Gross has put it, "in an atmosphere of struggling against anti-Semitism, a Jewish environment was formed."[27] That is to say, the anti-Jewish actions within Poland, surely known to the diasporic filmmakers, influenced the way in which the Jewish environment was portrayed: mono-ethnic and mono-religious.[28]

Nostalgia, Boym wrote, can be dangerous in that it "tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one."[29] Given the circumstances of the films' creation, as vehicles for fundraising to lift the towns out of dire conditions, there would seem to be little danger in the pre-commemorative nostalgia, designed to fix a certain image of the past to be accessed on demand. Rather, the amateur filmmakers and their audiences could never be confused by the real and the imaginary; their nostalgia appears to work on a meta level, easily passing between documentation and creation of a keepsake for the future.

Six Cities: A Portrait of Urban Polish Jewish Life for American Audiences

The second corpus of films, Sektor Films' *Six Cities* series, was made under vastly different circumstances to the home movies. These films, six films of roughly ten minutes' duration each, were created by professional filmmakers in Poland. Sektor also produced films for an American Jewish audience, however, the overall impression *Six Cities* gives is vastly different from those films made by immigrant Jewish amateur filmmakers. Although the films depict urban environments, and were not intended to be viewed by former residents of the specific cities (unlike the home movies), *Six Cities* also trades in nostalgia, the pre-commemorative type of nostalgia before "something" happens to make that sort of open-ended emotion, full of pathos but also of possibility, an absolute *im*possibility.

Sektor Films was a company comprised of the brothers Shaul and Yitzkhok Goskind. Shaul Goskind, the driving force behind the enterprise, was born in Warsaw in 1907, though the family moved to Nieszwiez (preset-day Belarus), where Shaul attended elementary school. He then attended a Russian-language school in Warsaw, and received his *matura* (high school diploma) in Gdansk. After high school, Shaul had planned to attend agricultural school in Prague. However, a chance happening changed the course of his life. Goskind entered, and won, a contest

sponsored by the periodical *Nasz Przegląd* (Our Review), essentially for having a photogenic face. The prize was two years' tuition at a film school focusing on advertising.

Goskind was a member of Hashomer Hatzair (The Young Guard) in Warsaw, a youth organization similar to a scouting club which was affiliated with Poalei Zion (The Workers of Zion), a leftist, socialist-oriented Zionist movement in Europe. The club organized excursions, holiday celebrations, and political activities. Goskind's first films as a student were of Hashomer Hatzair's celebrations for Lag B'Omer, a summer minor festival, but one that is celebrated by scouting organizations worldwide, as part of the celebration involved creating a large bonfire.

After graduating from film school, Goskind opened Sektor films in 1930. The first two years, until 1932, the studio operated as a laboratory. Starting in 1932, Sektor opened Kinor ("Harp," as in David's harp), a subsidiary focused on production. Sektor itself was involved in distribution, and also owned Neo Vox, the sound firm. Neo Vox used portable sound equipment, and was the only one of its kind in Poland.[30]

The first film produced by Sektor was *Al chet*/*Za Grzechy* ("For Our Sin"), in 1936, a Yiddish-language melodrama "talkie." Most of the film's crew came from Germany, driven out of the country by the repressive measures against Jews. It received positive reviews in Poland as well as abroad, from Jewish and non-Jewish audiences, though it also received criticism for not dealing with contemporary Jewish problems.

1936 proved to be a banner year for Sektor. Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader and orator, visited Poland in that year, on a speaking tour.[31] According to the memoirs of Natan Gross, Jabotinsky, who had a lifelong interest in film, had personally spoken with the Goskind brothers. In Jabotinsky's mind, after Jews had left Poland (for Palestine), almost nothing would remain of them, demonstrating their presence. Jabotinsky told the Goskind brothers, "And after that [after the Jews leave], what will be left? Films, if you make them."[32] This is the birth story of Six Cities.[33]

Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader with desires for Jews to leave Poland within the next fifteen years, had some role in the project that produced the films. He met with the Goskinds in 1936 and this meeting furthered Jabotinsky's conviction that there was no viable future for Jews in Poland. The Goskinds, for their part, heard Jabotinsky's speeches from his tour of Poland, in which Jabotinsky preached his message of the need for emigration from Poland, to Palestine. Jabotinsky,

perhaps best known for his role in the formation of Betar, the Revisionist Zionist youth organization, and his mixed record in favor of militancy in Palestine, had lectured throughout Poland and Russia on the need for Jewish self-defense. From 1935 onwards, at the New Zionist Organization (NZO) in Vienna, Jabotinsky had publicly espoused the concept of *shlilat ha-golah*, negation of the diaspora, a tenant of Zionist thought that held that Jews must give up their diasporic identities (language, names, and other associated cultural practices) in order to become new, liberated Jews in Zion. The factors of this strand of Zionist thought, combined with the very real physical dangers that Jabotinsky perceived to Jewish life and liberty in Poland, combined to form a telos based on the absolute absence of Jews from the future of Eastern Europe. For some time, Jabotinsky had had a "premonition of doom lying in wait for the Jews of Europe unless they left it in time."[34] Jabotinsky, of course (and in contrast to some accounts), was not "prescient" or "ahead of his time;" he did, however, travel widely and observe (perhaps through the colored lens of his political sentiments) that Jews were threatened everywhere.

Initially, Sektor had no investor for the films, and it took two years to even begin production. Someone then had the idea that money might come from *landsmanshaftn* in the United States. However, without an opportunity to travel to the U.S., Goskind decided to make the films in Poland and send them to the U.S. to recoup the expenses.

The titular six cities were Łódź, Białystok, Krakow, Lwów, Wilno, and Warsaw. The Łódź film is presumed lost, but the other five are still extant. Filmmaker Natan Gross wondered in his memoirs whether the film depicting Łódź was not, in fact, kept within the archives of the Jewish community in that city, but to date, the film has not been recovered. The Goskinds had intended the films to be distributed in the United States, and had sent one copy in a package to the U.S., as well as additional copies to Palestine and to the official Jewish communal offices of the cities depicted. They shipped the packages only a few days before the Nazi German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. For unknown reasons, the United States-bound package was left in the dead letter office until 1943; the intended recipient never arrived. Somewhere between arrival in the United States and 1943, the Łódź film disappeared. We may also assume, as Gross did, that the Goskinds intended to produce films on other major cities with smaller Jewish populations.

Jabotinsky and the Goskind brothers hoped that the films would be of interest to *landsmanshaftn*, who might buy them and *post facto* finance

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the project. Due to the late date of their arrival in the United States, they were not used for the relief effort. If we might imagine a counterfactual history, though, what if the films had been used the way that the home movies were? What might reception have looked like? The voice of Asher Lerner providing factual information and punchy anecdotes is quite different from the "voice" of the intertitles providing sad commentary. And yet, most of the home movies date from the years before many of the anti-Jewish acts were in effect in Poland. By the time of *Six Cities* production, Jews faced *numerus clausus* enrollment caps in universities, and so-called "ghetto benches," physically separate seating for Jewish students, within the university. Kosher slaughter bans, boycotts, and prohibitions on Sunday trade attempted to (and to an extent succeeded in) crippling Jewish economic life.[35]

However, none of the scenes in *Six Cities* even hints at these local developments. There are two broadly negative categories of shots, and narration, that the film depicts. The first is economic: it is hard for Jews to make a living. A viewer with a knowledge of the area would know that it was hard for non-Jews to make a living as well, though of course Jews also faced the above-mentioned sanctions on economic activity that Catholic Poles did not face. The comments on economic difficulty take up no more than two sentences within each of the films, and are presented as almost neutral facts, without cause—making a living is simply difficult. . A klezmer and classical soundtrack, from the in-house firm Neo-Vox, accompanies the narration. The original narration was provided by Asher Lerner, in Yiddish.

The second negative element in most of the films is introduced visually with the image of Jews reading the newspaper. Within the photographs of Alter Kacyzne, by and large, reading is a sign of traditional Jewish life: boys read in *kheder* (Jewish religious primary school for boys), and older Jews read as part of their continuing religious studies and practice. There are no reading characters in the home movies. Within *Six Cities*, however, reading is an outlet to the broader world. The stack of newspapers from all different viewpoints, from socialist –leftist to Zionist to socialist-Zionist to religious, demonstrates the breadth of news available to Jewish readers (and those are just the Yiddish papers), as well as the political divisions amongst Jews. Inevitably, with these images of news comes a piece of narration about the troubles of the world. These "troubles," however, are never specified (although viewers would at the very least understand the implied threat from Nazi Germany, reported on daily by every Jewish

paper in Poland). Like a general economic distress, a general political distress is but one element of a vibrant society.

It is tempting to read these films back through the lens of the Holocaust, particularly images of children who, in all likelihood, never reached their teenage years let alone adulthood. Indeed, English- and Hebrew-language narration of the films, along with a new soundtrack, was added in the 1980s; this narration does mention Jewish university quotas, a pogrom, and similar hardships. The new narration also emphasized the idea that the youth were learning Hebrew and dreaming of a better world somewhere else. The future is already present in these versions of the films. In the originals, however, no mention is made of a worsening situation in Poland. Given Jabotinsky's and Goskind's shared negativity about the future of Jewish life in Poland, the overall positive portrayal in *Six Cities* might be surprising. However, Jabotinsky placed some of the blame for Jews' worsening circumstances on the Jews themselves, for not taking the reins into their own hands.[36] If this were the case, and Poland did not stand for a monolithic force against the Jews, then composing an elegy to Jewish life in Poland, as an integrated part of Poland, became less of a problem.

Despite the need to not read the Holocaust backwards, it is also important to realize that the films were already providing a pre-Holocaust elegy to Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Since World War One, Jews had been composing memorials to Jewish life in Poland and the region, and these films fit within a longer tradition of Jewish memorialization that did not begin, nor end, with the Holocaust. As a pre-event memorial, however, the films are of an entirely different character. After the promises and high hopes of the 1920s (in particular) in Poland, the films construct a memorial elegy to the good times, emphasizing not dashed hopes but rather a peaceful and happy present, "before" whatever event Jabotinsky, and the Goskind brothers, imagined.

The five films have great value as historical sources, as visual documentation of a bygone world. There is precious little moving footage of Polish Jewish life before the Holocaust, and the films thus serve as rare resource for scholars and students alike. Gross, too, wrote of the films as documentation, as scenes of a time which is no longer assessable, not even in the archive. However, the films also need to be read as documents, and not treated as neutral conveyors of information. As much as they captured images, they also shaped an image of Jewish urban life in Poland for an American audience—an audience that might be encouraged to send money and aid. They accomplish this (or rather, hoped to accomplish this)

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by creating a ready-made memorial for the happy times in Poland, times that future Polish Jewish *olim*, immigrants to Israel, might look back on fondly. That is, the films served as agents for a future nostalgia. Thy did this through their imagery and their narration, depicting happy times and local color, with only a hint of the economic and political circumstances facing Polish Jews.

The five extant films have numerous commonalities, even as the narration stresses the particular local elements of the Jewish communities. All five show monuments, civic buildings, buildings housing Jewish religious and cultural institutions, and parks. All show scenes of youth and the elderly, boys and girls, the seemingly well-to-do and the poor. The camera pans from neighborhood to neighborhood, focusing on scenes of commercial activity, schools, and monuments of the city that were built by Jews.

In all the films, Jewish life is shown as an element of a larger civic life. "Jewish Life in Białystok," for example, begins not with reference to Jews, but rather to the city generally: "Białystok tock is a relatively young city," Lerner explains. "Jewish Life in Krakow" and "Jewish Life in Lwów" begin similarly, with an overview of the towns, their monuments, and their general contours. "Jewish Life in Krakow" began with a brief overview of major buildings and statues, such as Wawel (the former royal fortifications and burial site for Polish kings), the Mariacki Church, and the monuments to the leader of the 1794 Polish uprising Tadeusz Kościusko and to poet Adam Mickiewicz. It is only when the focus moved to trade that Jews were specifically mentioned; Lerner points out that the main square (Rynek Główny) was once, in an unspecified past that is not, apparently, an object of mourning, known as the "Jewish Square." In a cinematic framing directly the reverse of the Krakow home movie, the film moved from Krakow's center to the Jewish quarter, zooming in on the Jews rather than moving from particular to general. The music modulated from a classical tune for strings and piano to an arrangement of klezmer tunes for the same instrumentation.

Scenes of cultural institutions showcase Jewish historical figures of the town as local heroes. In Białystok, Luwdik Zamenhoff, creator of Esperanto, features (though a shot of his former home), as well as do Zionist leaders. In all the cities, the sheer variety of Jewish cultural activity stands out. Libraries named for the author Sholem-Aleichem (in Białystok) or the Tarbut ("culture," a school emphasizing Hebrew literature), newspapers

of all political orientations, and other literary societies take up a large portion of the visual tour of the cities.

Innovation in industry and culture play a much larger role in *Six Cities* than in the home movies. To be sure, there was simply more industry, and a greater array of new organizations, within larger cities. But *Six Cities* specifically focus on the new. In Białystok this included long shots of factories (with Jewish workers) and clips of the industrial workings. Beyond industry, the films make note of some of the new, interwar-era social programs available in cities. In Białystok, this includes a center for children run by TOZ, the Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej (Society for Protecting the Health of the Jewish Population), an organization established in Warsaw in 1921. Scenes of children at this center (naturally, eating bialys, a bit of local taste) cause Lerner to remark on their beauty, and on how the children will be the future of the city.

In Warsaw, too, the focus was on the new. "A Day in Warsaw" focuses on the city's urban landscape, with the second-tallest skyscraper. Viewers experience the buzz of the city, and the contrast of the old city with the new. The narration underscores this. In the Old Town, for example, one can still hear about the history of the city: "today if you'd like to chat with an old Jew, who is familiar with Old Warsaw, about the lovely Warsaw Jews of old, Hassidim and *maskilim* [opponents of the Hassidim], you can in the streets of the old city." In the old town as well, Lerner mentions trials and tribulations of old. Hundreds of years ago, Jews were banished from Warsaw, but were eventually allowed back. Lerner does not connect this history to the present crisis, but rather locates it physically in the Old Town, far from both the skyscrapers and from the busy market life of today's Jews.

Each of the five extant films shows only one negative aspect of Jewish life in Poland: the difficulty of earning a living. This difficulty is mentioned one time in each of the films, generally in connection with the market day activities. In Białystok, Asher Lerner intones, "Jews try to eke out a living." In Krakow, "Jews run to and fro, trying to make a living." In Wilno as well, "How, how does one eke out a living!" The narration's light touch on economic distress warrants mention, when so many of the images of Polish Jews made for American consumption, Kacyzne's among them, depict Jews as universally poor and destitute. The economic downturn of the thirties was felt particularly hard by Jewish merchants, as boycotts and other specifically anti-Jewish measures took a toll. (There is some evidence that by the very late 1930s, economic life had started to look

up for Jews in Poland, though there are no good statistics through which we might follow this potential trend.)

However, the narration of *Six Cities* paints economic worries as an everyday affair, not something over which to become particularly distraught. In contrast to, for example, Herbst's scenes of empty marketplaces, the Jews buying and selling in *Six Cities* have enough wares, and the markets are busy and lively. To this end, the difficulties in earning a living might seem to the viewer to be no different than in years gone by, or, indeed, no different to life in the United States, where making a living was also not guaranteed for immigrant laborers. So while the narration does not gloss over the circumstances, the overall picture of a vibrant, happy Jewish life is untainted. Even Jewish underworld activity fits into this picture of average people just trying to get by: Lerner notes that in Warsaw, many Jewish traders operate without a permit.

This overall happy picture is carried throughout the films, down to their last moments. In Białystok, viewers hear that the young women strolling through a city park are "dreaming of wealthy American husbands." Over a violin and piano duet and scenes of flowers, the last line Lerner uttered was "Come visit Białystok—you won't regret it." Scenes of Krakow ended with a vision of Jews walking through the parks, then of Hassidim walking to synagogue for the Sabbath, accompanied by an upbeat klezmer tune, set in an orchestral arrangement, perhaps a metaphor for the city itself, traditionally Jewish in some ways while modern, high cultured, and Polonized in others. In Krakow's parks, like everywhere, Jews talked politics, and played games. In an ode to the city's strong religious life, Lerner reminds viewers that the Sabbath in Krakow was a "real Sabbath," complete with *shtreymlekh*, large circular fur hats typically worn by married Hassidic men. Lerner added a note of humor: And "if shtreymlekh aren't enough, here's a man in a *kolpik* [a different type of hat, also typical of Hassidim]. Good Sabbath!" In Wilno, as men discuss politics in the park, Asher ends his narration in English: "Goodbye, Vilne, goodbye!"

In Warsaw, too, we see just a hint of the current political crisis. In the park, as well, older people read the newspapers. We see a stack of newspapers, indicating the diversity of the press in Warsaw (and in Poland more generally), and the array of political opinions that Jews held. Like the economic situation, Lerner's narration briefly mentions the contents of those papers, while diminishing their importance. "There is enough to read about—war and troubles abound. But let's not dwell on the sad affairs of the Sabbath. The Sabbath meal awaits: fish, cholent, and kugel."

On this note, the film ended with "Quiet and serene on the Sabbath." This is also one of the only nods to religious life in the film, beyond the old Jewish man in the Old Town. Perhaps these brief mentions of hard times indicate that the filmmakers assumed that Jews who had emigrated due to hard times would already know quite enough about this aspect of life, and remember it quite harshly; it would be more important to focus on happy moments that got lost in immigration.

It is only in Wilno that religious life was a true focus of the film. Indeed, before the interwar period, Wilno was most well-known in the Jewish world for its circles of Torah scholars, especially for its *misnagdic* learning, the opposite of Hassidic learning, focusing on strenuous and sober text study. "Jewish Life in Wilno" begins immediately with the historical record of Wilno's Jewish settlement, its fame for Torah scholars, and its reputation as the "spiritual center of Eastern European Jewry." Only after this introduction was a nod given to the castle and Adam Mickiewicz. More so than the Lwów and Krakow films, religious life remained the focus, especially the *shulhoyf*, the famed synagogue courtyard, and the institutions, such as the Strashun Library, that were located there, and the "Jewish ghetto," or quarter.

Scenes of the "ghetto" (the Jewish district in Wilno was called the ghetto long before the Nazis established the two ghettos there) were accompanied by an elegiac and mournful tune, but the rest of the scenes, even of streets with Yiddish signs, had upbeat music. Jews in Wilno, Lerner mentioned during the tour through the ghetto, spoke a "tasty Lithuanian dialect, with a sharp *sin* [a letter of the Yiddish alphabet]. Housewives shop for *fis* and tongue for *sabes*" ("standard" pronunciation being *fish* and *shabes*).

The portrayals of Jewish life in the five (and one can assume six) cities are upbeat, showing a vibrant and diverse Jewish community. The shots of children in most of the films shows viewers not just the cultural achievements of the Jewish community, but also the future of those communities. To be sure, each film mentions economic problems as an issue for Jews, but discussion of economic problems merits far less attention and time than mentions of newspapers, programs, dialects, and jokes. The narration further urges the viewers, American Jews, to visit the cities in question. In contrast to the home movies, however, the push to engage with East European Jewish communities was not a strictly commercial one. The filmmakers did hope that money from American Jewish immigrant groups might make up for the financial loss the films incurred for Sektor. However, the films themselves were not an appeal

for resources. Indeed, well-off Jews were depicted alongside poor ones, and the competency of social welfare organizations is far more evident than their financial struggles.

Even an ardent Zionist as Jabotinsky, convinced of the futility of Jewish life in Poland, could not help but wish to preserve an image of dynamism, of local color, of *home*, for posterity. These images from *Six Cities* show a Polish Jewry that was integrated into the broader Polish society. Of course, Jewish life in cities *was* a more integrated one, with younger Jews especially speaking Polish more comfortably than Yiddish. However, the diasporic of the filmmakers must also be taken into account. Immigrant Polish Jews, returning home to their places of origin, were looking specifically for *Jewish* life specifically. They had little interest in Jews as a broader part of the town, taking part in its general features.

The image of Polish Jewish life was shaped by a number of factors: concerns about the future, both economic and political, and the desire to ameliorate difficult economic circumstances. However, it was also shaped by a desire to elegize, if not to eulogize, a past that was increasingly irrecoverable, as well as, in a sense, a present that seemed to be disappearing. We may conclude that the process of memorialization Polish Jewish life began before the *start* of the Second World War, when the physical destruction of East European Jewry could not even be imagined. For Sektor Films, this was a pre-hoc enterprise, though for the immigrant filmmakers, what they saw as terrible tragedy had already come to pass. The lens, whether Kacyzne's still large-format camera, Polish Jewish immigrants' Kodachromes, or the studio-grade equipment of Sektor Films, was trained on Jews in Poland, but directed towards American(ized) Jews—to their hearts and to their wallets.

Both sets of films are nostalgic. The filmmakers' intent was to produce a reflective nostalgic portrait, "before;" though in the case of some of the home moviemakers, what they ended up producing is a film of disappointment, not nostalgia. The films were also intended as loci for nostalgia, some time in the not-to-distant future. The movies' existence confines and desired act of salvage or recreation to the film canister, to be taken out in specific moments only. The images of pre-World War Two Jewish life in Poland, moving across the screen, are nevertheless frozen in an almost-ideal state, to be taken as souvenirs into Jews' new lives.

NOTES

[1] For an account of forms Polish nationalism took throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, especially in relation to violence, see Brian Porter-Szűcs, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York: Oxford UP, 2000).

[2] On the wartime violence, see Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan M. Meir, and Israel Bartal, eds., *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010), especially the first section. For one well-known example, pertinent to this paper: the Lwów Pogrom of 1918, in which almost 100 Jews were murdered.

[3] See Itzik Nakhmen Gottesman, *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2003). For non-nationalist ways in which ethnography was used by Jews in interwar Poland, see Sarah Ellen Zarrow, "Object Lessons: Art Collection and Display as Historical Practice in Interwar Lwów." *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 29: Writing Jewish History in Eastern Europe (December 2016), 157-176, and Sarah Ellen Zarrow, "Collecting Themselves: Jewish Documentation and Display in Interwar Poland" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2015).

[4] See Eugene M. Avrutin, et al, eds., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-sky's Ethnographic Expeditions* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis UP, 2009).

[5] Quoted in Benjamin Lukin, "An Academy Where Folklore Will be Studied': An-Sky and the Jewish Museum," in *The Worlds of S. An-Sky: A Russian Jewish Intellectual at the Turn of the Century,* ed. Gabriella Safran and Steven Zipperstein (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford UP, 2006), 290.

[6] See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), esp. ch. 5.

[7] David G. Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1984), especially chapter five, "The Rape of the Shtetl."

[8] See Shaul Stampfer, "Gzeyres Tat Vetat," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008).

[9] On the Jewish travel agents who arranged these tours from the American side, see Daniel Soyer, "The Travel Agent as Broker between Old World and New: The Case of Gustave Eisner," in *YIVO Annual*, 21: Going Home (1993), 345-368.

[10] The total collection of films at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research comprises films from 22 cities and towns, some on the same reel (some travelers visited more than one town on their trips). Not include in this figure are the few films made outside of interwar Poland; there is at least one extant film from Kiev, one from Birobidzhan, the "Jewish Autonomous Oblast" of the Soviet Union, and a few from Czechoslovakia.

[11]   See Table 2 in Mark Tolts, "Population and Migration," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008).

[12]   Jonathan D. Sarna, "The Myth of No Return: Jewish Return Migration to Eastern Europe, 1881-1914," *American Jewish History* LXXI.2, (1981), 256.

[13]   Anca Ciuciu, "Papirene kinder…'Shadows of the Departed,'" *Studia Hebraica* 9-10 (2009-2010), 212-222.

[14]   For statistics on displacement and losses in the Great War, see David Engel, "World War I," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008).

[15]   Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890).

[16]   "A Pictiorial Review of Kolbishev," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (hereafter YIVO) RG 105.

[17]   In Roberta Newman, "Home Movies of the *Alte Heym* (Old Home): American Jewish Travel Films in Eastern Europe in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* 15.1 (1993), 23.

[18]   In Roberta Newman, "Home Movies of the *Alte Heym* (Old Home): American Jewish Travel Films in Eastern Europe in the 1920s and 1930s," 25.

[19]   "Sedziszow," YIVO RG 105.

[20]   In Newman, "Home Movies of the *Alte Heym* (Old Home): American Jewish Travel Films in Eastern Europe in the 1920s and 1930s," 23.

[21]   Boym, xviii.

[22]   In Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.

[23]   "Kamionka and Skidl, Poland," YIVO RG 105.

[24]   "Libowne (Luboml) and Oliwne," YIVO RG 105.

[25]   See Jeffrey Shandler, *Shtetl: A Vernacular History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2013), and Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York: NYU Press, 2007), especially Samuel Kassow's chapter on the *shtetl* in interwar Poland.

[26]   See Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and its Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010).

[27]   Natan Gross, *Film żydowski w Polsce* (Krakow: The Center for Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jews, 2002) 62.

[28]   For details on anti-Jewish measures taken in Poland during this time, see Szymon Rudnicki, "Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland," in Robert Blobaum, ed. *Antisemitism and its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 2005), 148-170.

[29]   Boym, xvi.

[30]   Gross, 62. Gross noted that "this equipment served as a bulwark against antisemitic firms," in that firms were incapable of boycotting Sektor, as it was the sole owner of such equipment in Poland.

[31] On Jabotinsky, see Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2014), and Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin-de-Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, 2001).

[32] Gross, 111.

[33] Unfortunately, there is little source material on these films. Natan Gross's recollections serve as the only documentation, and were written well after the films were made. Nevertheless, because of the paucity of information, I have decided to include Gross's memories here as fact. Readers should be aware of this.

[34] Halkin, 18.

[35] See Rudnicki, "Anti-Jewish Legislation in Interwar Poland."

[36] Halkin, 214-215.

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NEW EUROPE FOUNDATION
NEW EUROPE COLLEGE

Institute for Advanced Study

New Europe College (NEC) is an independent Romanian institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences founded in 1994 by Professor Andrei Pleşu (philosopher, art historian, writer, Romanian Minister of Culture, 1990–1991, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1997-1999) within the framework of the *New Europe Foundation*, established in 1994 as a private foundation subject to Romanian law.

Its impetus was the *New Europe Prize for Higher Education and Research*, awarded in 1993 to Professor Pleşu by a group of six institutes for advanced study (the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin).

Since 1994, the NEC community of fellows and *alumni* has enlarged to over 600 members. In 1998 New Europe College was awarded the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize* for its achievements in setting new standards in research and higher education. New Europe College is officially recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research as an institutional structure for postgraduate studies in the humanities and social sciences, at the level of advanced studies.

Focused primarily on individual research at an advanced level, NEC offers to young Romanian scholars and academics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, and to the foreign scholars invited as fellows appropriate working conditions, and provides an institutional framework with strong

international links, acting as a stimulating environment for interdisciplinary dialogue and critical debates. The academic programs NEC coordinates, and the events it organizes aim at strengthening research in the humanities and social sciences and at promoting contacts between Romanian scholars and their peers worldwide.

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  Each year, the NEC Fellowships, open both to Romanian and international outstanding young scholars in the humanities and social sciences, are publicly announced. The Fellows are chosen by the NEC international Academic Advisory Board for the duration of one academic year, or one term. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research, and participate in all the scientific events organized by NEC. The Fellows receive a monthly stipend, and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice. At the end of their stay, the Fellows submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the New Europe College Yearbooks.

- *Ştefan Odobleja Fellowships (since October 2008)*
  The Fellowships given in this program are supported by the National Council of Scientific Research and are part of the core fellowship program. The definition of these fellowships, targeting young Romanian researchers, is identical with those in the NEC Program, in which the *Odobleja* Fellowships are integrated.

- *UEFISCDI Award Program (since October 2016)*
  The outstanding scientific activity of the NEC was formally recognized in Romania in 2016, when the Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation organized a competition for institutions coordinating ERC projects. New Europe College applied and won two institutional prizes for coordinating, at that time, two ERC grants. A part of this prize was used to create the UEFISCDI Award Program, consisting of fellowships targeting young

international researchers, also meant to complement and enlarge the core fellowship program.

- **The Europe next to Europe Fellowship Program (since October 2013)**
  This program, sponsored by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden), invites young researchers from European countries that are not yet members of the European Union, or which have a less consolidated position within it, targeting in particular the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia), Turkey, Cyprus, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

- **The Pontica Magna Fellowships (since October 2015)**
  This Fellowship Program, supported by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany), invites young researchers, media professionals, writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea, but also beyond this area (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine), for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice. The program welcomes a wide variety of disciplines in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Besides hosting a number of Fellows, the College organizes within this program workshops and symposia on topics relevant to the history, present, and prospects of this region. This program is therefore strongly linked to the former *Black Sea Link* Fellowships.

- **The Pontica Magna Returning Fellows Program (since March 2016)**
  In the framework of its *Pontica Magna* Program, New Europe College offers alumni of *Black Sea Link* and *Pontica Magna* Fellowship Programs the opportunity to apply for a research stay of one or two months in Bucharest. The stay enables successful applicants to refresh their research experience at NEC, to reconnect with former contacts, and to establish new connections with current Fellows.

- **The Gerda Henkel Fellowship Program (since March 2017)**
  This Fellowship Program, developed with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Germany), invites young researchers and academics working in

the fields of humanities and social sciences (in particular archaeology, art history, historical Islamic studies, history, history of law, history of science, prehistory and early history) from Afghanistan, Belarus, China (only Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

Research programs developed with the financial support of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, The Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education and Innovation, National Council of Scientific Research (UEFISCDI – CNCS):

- *Turning Global: Socialist Experts during the Cold War (1960s-1980s)*
  Timeframe: October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

- *Museums and Controversial Collections. Politics and Policies of Heritage Making in Post-colonial and Post-socialist Contexts*
  Timeframe: October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2017

ERC Starting Grant:

- *Record-keeping, fiscal reform, and the rise of institutional accountability in late medieval Savoy*
  Ionuț EPURESCU-PASCOVICI
  Timeframe: May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2020

ERC Consolidator Grant:

- *Luxury, fashion and social status in Early Modern South Eastern Europe*
  Constanța VINTILĂ-GHIȚULESCU
  Timeframe: July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020

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New Europe College has been hosting over the years an ongoing series of lectures given by prominent foreign and Romanian scholars, for the benefit of academics, researchers and students, as well as a wider public. The College also organizes international and national events (seminars, workshops, colloquia, symposia, book launches, etc.).

An important component of NEC is its library, consisting of reference works, books and periodicals in the humanities, social and economic sciences. The library holds, in addition, several thousands of books and documents resulting from private donations. It is first and foremost destined to service the fellows, but it is also open to students, academics and researchers from Bucharest and from outside it.

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