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Volume 3

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# FOREWORD FROM THE EDITOR

The New Europe College Yearbook is an annual publication of the New Europe College – Institute for Advanced Study. It features original research by the Institute's fellows, completed during their fellowship programs. What makes the Yearbook distinctive is its commitment to fostering interdisciplinary scholarship, bringing together contributions from diverse academic fields and methodological approaches. This intellectual breadth gives the publication a unique, open character that reflects the varied interests of its contributors.

The present volume brings together eight research articles, each exploring how historical processes, cultural imaginaries, and ideological frameworks shape and are shaped by society. Dmitry Asinovskiy's essay on conspiratorial thinking examines the lingering influence of Cold War ideologies in shaping post-Soviet political consciousness, from the late USSR to Putin's Russia. Ferdinand de Jong's working paper on religious heritage reflects on the paradoxes of reconstruction in a post-secular age, suggesting how the sacred persists in new forms of memory work. Mihai Lukács analyses the shifting modes of Holocaust representation in Romania, tracing a trajectory from Yiddish theatre to contemporary popular literature, and revealing complex intersections of memory, trauma, and national identity. Ararat Osipian's article investigates the role of the World Bank in shaping Ukraine's higher education system, exploring the tensions between global governance and national educational priorities. Gheorghe Pașcalău offers a philosophical engagement with Platonic metaphysics, arguing for the unitary character of the Platonic Ideas and their enduring relevance. Irina Popescu contributes a nuanced reading of urban transformation in 19th-century Wallachia, focusing on the structural and functional shifts that accompanied modernization efforts. Kristina Tanis provides a media ethnography of a film's translocation (*Secret Tibet*, 1943) from Germany to USSR, offering insights into cultural translation and cinematic circulation. Finally, Natalyia Sureva's historical study of the New Russia Governorate (1764–1765) sheds light on the imperial

ambitions, internal conflicts, and pragmatic compromises that shaped early modern Russian governance.

Together, these contributions open a space for renewed reflection on the interplay between historical legacies and contemporary challenges. We hope that the essays collected in this volume will not only enrich their respective fields but also invite broader interdisciplinary dialogue and critical engagement.

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**Biographical note**

Dr. Dmitry Asinovskiy is a Global IAS Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Central European University, and a St. Gallen Fellow at New Europe College. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Amsterdam in 2021. A monograph based on his Ph.D. dissertation, *A Curse of Anti-Imperialism. The Ideological Worldview and Soviet Support for Ayatollah Khomeini* is currently pending review for publication. Earlier, Dr. Asinovskiy worked as a Nizami Ganjavi Fellow at the University of Oxford and a Visiting Fellow at Tel Aviv University.

# CONSPIRATORIAL THINKING AND THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR. FROM LATE SOVIET UNION TO PUTIN'S RUSSIA

Dmitry Asinovskiy

**Abstract**

The article discusses the phenomenon of conspiratorial thinking as an element of the ideological worldview among the political elites of the late Soviet Union and contemporary Russia. Noting significant differences and shifts, it stresses the continuity of certain patterns in the way conspiracy theories have been shaping the worldview and the decision-making of Soviet and Russian leadership. The article provides a theoretical background for the discussed concepts and contextualizes them for the specific circumstances of the Soviet/Russian political environment. It contributes historical background to the discussion mostly dominated by political scientists and introduces the Cold War as one of the principal origins of conspiratorial thinking in contemporary Russian political elites. The article also specifically addresses one of the conspiratorial themes that can be clearly traced as a Cold War legacy in contemporary Russian policymaking: the one on subversive activities of "the West" tied to violent regime changes in Soviet/Russian allied/client states.

**Keywords**: Conspiratorial thinking, Conspiracy theories, Cold War, Soviet Union, Post-Soviet Russia; Revolutions, Political Regime Changes; Ideology

## 1. Introduction

> There will be a war with the Turks […] The war with the Turks for sure, it is all fomented by the French (*frantsuz gadit*). (Gogol, 2011)

In one of his most famous plays, *The Government Inspector (Revizor),* Nikolai Gogol, through one of the secondary characters, postmaster Ivan Shpekin, coined the expression that eventually transformed into a most commonly used Russian cultural reference to the conspiratorial

explanation of geopolitical failures. For the contemporaries, the reading of the expression was unambiguous. Blaming the French for the upcoming war with the Turks was meant to be a sarcastic representation of a foolish habit to blame one's own failures on external powers. However, during the course of the 19th century, the rhetoric around the expression changed. On the one hand, some of those who referred to Gogol were not as convinced as the author's contemporaries that the sarcastic understanding of the phrase was still universally acknowledged. Anton Chekhov, in his letters, referred to Gogol with all seriousness, arguing that blaming "the French, the Jews, Kaiser Wilhelm, capitalists, freemasons, syndicalists, Jesuits" for the problems was not an obvious resort of the fools anymore, but rather a legitimate line of argument in late 19th-century Russia. On the other hand, while Chekhov and some other intellectuals who wrote about the phenomenon clearly referred to Gogol, for a broader public, the phrase "*frantsuz gadit*" got detached from the original source and by the 1870s miraculously transformed. A French man from Gogol's original turned into an English woman (*anglichanka*). Aleksandr Dolinin (2020) noted that this gave the formula a more common flavor opposing to Gogol's literary one. Dolinin fairly explained this transformation: *anglichanka* was a clear reference to Queen Victoria and metonymically to Great Britain. As the Russo-British geopolitical confrontation characterized most of the 19th century, it should not surprise that in the Russian popular consciousness, *anglichanka* became the subversive source of all evil.

By the early 20th century, following the Anglo-Boer War, when the phrase reached its maximum publicity, it had completely lost its sarcastic origins for many Russian nationalist conservative commentators. Instead, it was often presented in their writings as ancient folk wisdom, while its connection to Gogol completely vanished (Dolinin, 2020). Fascinatingly, a century later, this conservative tradition resurfaced after the relative fading out of the phrase in the official discourse and its active sarcastic use in the intelligentsia "kitchen talks" in the Soviet period. In 2016, the anchor of the Russian propaganda television, Dmitrii Kiselev, referred to "*anglichanka gadit*" as "a many centuries-old idiom, so stable in the Russian language, that it seems ineradicable," following the reference with a "news bloc" full of anti-British propaganda (Vesti.Ru, 2016).

This resurrection of the century-old notion of "folk wisdom about British conspiracies" fitted conveniently in the narrative about the evil "West" promoted by Russian propaganda since the mid-2000s. Ilya Yablokov (2018) convincingly showed that the conspiratorial thinking related to

domestic and foreign policy in post-Soviet Russia mostly originated from the political elites that instrumentalized it for the regime's benefit. In this sense, post-Soviet Russia, in Yablokov's terms, was reminiscent of the Middle East, where, according to several researchers, the state traditionally served as the primary source of conspiratorial narratives (Gray, 2010).

The argument about the instrumental use of political conspiracy theories by the post-Soviet Russian leadership also seems legitimate because of the selectiveness in choosing specific theories. While various conspiracy theories about the evil hand of "the West" have been flourishing, other conspiratorial ideas, extremely popular in the past, have been ignored or even actively suppressed by the state. One obvious example is the variety of antisemitic theories about a secret Jewish plot to rule the world. The most famous historical document representing this set of conspiracy theories, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* was not coincidentally fabricated in early 20th-century Russia. In the decades that followed, Russia's place in constructing antisemitic narratives was one of the most important on a global scale. In the last years of the Soviet Union and the first decade following its collapse, these narratives underwent a massive popular revival. These old conspiracy theories, including *The Protocols* and a myriad of new antisemitic myths, reached an extreme popularity (Rossman, 2002). However, under Vladimir Putin, these conspiracy theories received no support from the state. On the contrary, some of the officials and propagandists who tried to employ these narratives were forced to retract their statements and publicly apologize (Yablokov, 2019). Although it is likely that following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the rise of imperial nationalism would push those deeply hidden popular beliefs to the surface of the state's instrumentalization, as of now, this example serves as evident proof of the Russian regime's selectiveness in the promotion of only some particular political conspiracy theories.[1]

Yet this selectiveness does not necessarily mean that the use of conspiracy theories for mass mobilization against the constructed Other is an exclusively pragmatic exploitation of ideas that those in power do not believe in. On the contrary, I argue that personal beliefs espoused in the ideological worldview of the leaders of contemporary Russia serve as a foundation for their selectiveness. In other words, while pragmatic motives play their role in the instrumentalization of certain conspiracy theories, the main reason of the Russian elites for employing these conspiratorial narratives is their own deeply engrained conspiratorial thinking.

That said, the argument about someone's 'true beliefs' is, by definition, unprovable, and as Kragh et al. (2022) show, "since a person's worldview is not directly observable […] we can never conclude definitively that a person who promotes conspiracy theories actually believes in them". Similarly, the adherence to a specific conspiracy theory does not imply that the person's worldview is conspiratorial in general, and the unwillingness to promote a particular conspiracy theory does not necessarily mean freedom from conspiratorial thinking as a mode of analysis. Nevertheless, I follow Kragh et al. (2022) in assuming that "analyses and opinions produced in these fields [foreign and security policy] reflect an established worldview and that such opinions can influence security and foreign policy thinking". Moreover, while for the political scientific analysis of conspiratorial beliefs among contemporary politicians, we simply lack sufficient sources, the historical analysis based on limited yet unique archival sources that include previously classified and unintended for the public internal communications between the decision-makers provide a much more grounded base for analyzing the impropriation of conspiratorial thinking by the political elites.

The rise of conspiratorial thinking among the elites of Putin's Russia, especially in the last decade, is not a breakthrough academic finding. Despite the relative neglect of the post-Soviet space in the studies of contemporary political conspiracy theories, several scholars addressed this issue in their works. Most of these researchers focused on the social origins of the Russian elites, namely their background in the military and secret services (Fedor, 2011; Kragh et al., 2022)[2]. This is indeed an important social characteristic that explains an excessive inclination towards suspiciousness and conspiratorial thinking. After all, the agents of the KGB First Chief Directorate (Soviet Foreign Intelligence Service) were trained to organize the so-called "active measures" against the adversary that would include a variety of subversive activities (Mitrokhin and Andrew, 1999). Therefore, the ideological worldview of those KGB veterans, including Vladimir Putin, who are now leading Russia, inevitably included "active measures" as an immanent tool of international relations. Consciously or not, Russian leaders with a background in the KGB use their training in their politics and seek "active measures" employed against their regime.

Previous researchers also reasonably pointed out that for many of the military and KGB veterans, including those who achieved leading positions in post-Soviet Russia, conspiracy theories about the evil hand of "the West" serve as a therapeutic measure that helps them

deal with the trauma of the Soviet collapse. For example, Fedor (2011) refers to the psychological research of Robins and Post (1997), arguing that "conspiratorial thinking offers a possible form of defense against humiliation". This psychoanalytical theory works perfectly to explain the multitude of conspiracy theories about the Western plot to dismember the Soviet Union. These theories survived the collapse of the USSR and reappeared in the form of a narrative about a new plot to dismember post-Soviet Russia.

Indeed, some of the conspiracy theories most evidently popular among the Russian elites are based on invented and forged documents and statements allegedly produced by U.S. officials and supposedly proving the intention of the United States to dismember the Soviet Union or post-Soviet Russia. One of these forgeries is the infamous "Dulles Plan," the document allegedly designed by the FBI director Allen Dulles in the 1940s that outlined a grandiose plan to destroy the Russian nation (Golunov and Smirnova, 2016; Fedor, 2011). Another example of a forged base for this kind of conspiracy theory, employed on record by Russian officials (in this particular case, at a level as high as the former Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev) is the fake statement of the former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, in which she allegedly claimed that neither Siberia nor the Far East belonged to Russia and, thus, needed to be separated from it (Kragh et al., 2022). Thus, the conspiracy theories based on the trauma of the Soviet collapse certainly proliferated among the elites of Putin's Russia. However, unlike Fedor (2011), I am not convinced that "many former chekists have turned to conspiracy theories as a way of making sense of the traumatic events of the past few decades". I argue that they did not need to *turn* to conspiratorial thinking, as it had already been a part of their ideological worldview, as well as of the ideological worldview of their patrons at the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) long before the Soviet collapse[3].

While contemporary times boosted "the conspiracy culture" through new means of communication such as social media, the Cold War era was a period no less favorable for the development of a conspiratorial mindset[4]. The Cold War ideological confrontation indeed served as a uniquely fertile environment for conspiratorial thinking. Ortmann and Heathershaw (2012), in their pathbreaking article on the lack of sufficient research on conspiratorial thinking in the post-Soviet space, fairly argued that

> Conspiracy theories continued to abound during the Soviet period, not least as part of narratives of the demonization of the Western or Soviet "Other" that fed upon one another, proliferating in a climate of mutual distrust that gave rise to narrative structures that could equally be found in a John Le Carre novel and in purportedly more somber official reports.

Since the studies of conspiracy theories originated in the United States and started from Richard Hofstadter's (1964) work on the paranoid style in American politics, it is not surprising that the U.S. Cold War conspiracy culture is researched far more profoundly than the Soviet side. For one example, Melley (2008) shows how the concept of "brainwashing" appeared in the political discourse during the course and the aftermath of the Korean War as a conspiratorial explanation for a multitude of U.S. PoW's defections and refusals to be repatriated. It was later appropriated by the popular culture and has been normalized in the consciousness of mass audience as an actual practice, despite being a conspiratorial fantasy defined by the Cold War environment. This case study showed that the Cold War ideological confrontation was essential for the transformation of "the conspiracy theory" as a notion. As Melley (2008) argued, "the term *conspiracy* has migrated from its classical sense of a contained plot toward the mysterious operations of a vast *organization, technology, or system*. Since the Cold War, 'conspiracies' have insistently been seen as the work of entities so dispersed and obscure that they are the very antithesis of the traditional conspiracy." In addition, Melley fairly suggested that the growth of the covert sphere in the Cold War times added to the spread of conspiratorial beliefs. The same "brainwashing" theory could not become a viable popular myth without the existence of actual covert experiments in "psychological warfare" conducted in the CIA that simultaneously led to presumptions that the adversary pursued the same path of military-related research, perhaps with more success. Lastly and most importantly, the case of "brainwashing" shows us that the popularity of the rise of conspiratorial thinking in the Cold War period is tied to the fact that it provided a way to think about ideology (Melley, 2008). "Brainwashing" is an extreme example of the ideology's supposed influence on a person's mind, with an underlying thesis that the ideology can be used to falsify the 'normal' mind.

Cold War narratives in the United States traditionally claimed that it was the Soviet Union that was dominated by the ideology, whereas the United States was the bulwark of unideological 'normality'. In this sense,

conspiracy theories allowed to explain the deviation of certain Americans from 'normality' through conscious, well-planned, subversive ideological warfare efforts of the adversary. Since the times of the Cold War, the alleged non-ideological essence of a U.S. liberal democracy was repeatedly challenged and discarded (Hunt, 1987; Westad, 2005). The United States was an ideological side of the Cold War, with the conspiratorial thinking being one of the important symptoms of its involvement in the ideological confrontation. However, the discussion about ideology is not limited to the simple question of its existence or non-existence. For decades, historians of the Cold War have been arguing about what the ideology truly was and what role it played in connection to actual decision-making. If we look at the Soviet case, for quite a while, the discussion revolved around the dichotomy of ideology and pragmatism in foreign policy decision-making during the Cold War. In other words, the question was whether the Soviet Union was ruled by ideologically charged people, or Soviet ideology was just a façade for a realist geopolitical struggle[5]. Although this discussion is unlikely to be over any time soon, several scholars offered a challenge to this dichotomy, arguing that ideology and pragmatism are not mutually exclusive (Gould-Davies, 1999; Kramer, 1999). Building on this argument, I use *ideological worldview*, a term I borrowed from Michael David-Fox (2015), to include both formal doctrine (in the Soviet case, a fluid and changing Marxist-Leninist teaching) and pragmatic geopolitical aspirations of the decision-makers in one term. I define ideological worldview as a system of thinking based on the foundations of the doctrine reflected through personal experience and beliefs. This worldview does not prevent its holders from acting pragmatically and seemingly neglecting their doctrinal beliefs for circumstantial benefits. Yet, the end goal of situational decisions, in this case, is defined by ideological beliefs[6].

Perhaps one of the biggest revelations of the CC CPSU archives of the late Cold War period that have been undergoing declassification in the last decade is that the Soviet leadership of the 1960s-1980s was indeed driven by an ideological worldview. The internal communication between the CSPU Politburo and Secretariat leaders was saturated with Marxist-Leninist language that was, nevertheless, often employed to justify decisions seemingly incompatible with the foundations of Marxism-Leninism. Another detail that the archives reveal is the obsession of the Party leaders and the Central Committee's high- and mid-level bureaucrats with combatting imperialism and Zionism, two enemies whose tentacles allegedly stretched to restrain communism, which in the

late Soviet ideological worldview was intertwined with the geopolitical power of the Soviet Union as a state. Grounded in the Marxist argument about class warfare based on capitalist resistance to progress and in Lenin's argument that equalized capitalism and imperialism, this narrative experienced a profound influence of Russian imperial nationalism in the 1930s-1940s that led to its formation into what Zubok and Pleshakov (1996) referred to as "the revolutionary-imperial paradigm". This setting and the consequent argument about the immanent ("scientifically proven" as Marxism-Leninism based itself on a notion of being a scientific theory) existence of imperialist attempts to weaken the Soviet Union was the main foundation for the appearance and spread of conspiratorial thinking about the subversive activities of the adversaries.

It is noteworthy that this narrative of imperialist tentacles stretched towards the USSR with an intention to weaken and eventually destroy it as a state representation of Marxist-Leninist ideology clearly resembles the conspiracy theories flourishing in post-Soviet Russia discussed above. There are, however, important differences. In contemporary Russia, the experience of the Soviet collapse and the shrinkage of geopolitical influence boosted existential conspiracy theories about "the West" (a new supposedly non-ideological term for "imperialism") plotting to subversively attack and dismember Russia proper as a nation and a state. The elites of the Cold War Soviet Union could not truly imagine this scale of prospective threat to a nuclear power and victorious nation in the Second World War, one that would lead to the collapse of the state. Therefore, the conspiratorial thinking of the Soviet leaders was directed towards less ambitious alleged achievements of the adversary. Perhaps this difference can best be illustrated with an example of the conspiratorial thinking about violent regime changes in the states that were perceived as allies or clients by the USSR and post-Soviet Russia, respectively.

One of the most influential conspiracy theories that likely shaped the whole Vladimir Putin's tenure as the leader of Russia is the theory of the so-called "color revolutions" (Finkel and Brudny, 2013). According to this theory, the United States orchestrated regime changes in Russia's near abroad (Georgia in 2003; Ukraine in 2004 and 2014; Kyrgyzstan in 2005) using the method of "managed chaos" (*upravliaemyi khaos*)[7]. Some of the highest-ranking Russian officials, including the foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and former defense minister Sergei Shoigu, publicly pronounced the United States responsible for using this method in mentioned cases but also during the Arab Spring (in Libya, Egypt, and Syria) and in

orchestrating the protest movement in Russia proper in 2011-2012 (Kragh et al., 2022). These conspiratorial beliefs had very clear legal implications as they were used as pretexts for introducing the concepts of "undesirable organizations" (used massively against Russian NGOs funded from abroad) and "foreign agents" (initially designed to mark organizations and individuals on a foreign government's payroll but eventually transforming into an arbitrary marking of all those considered disloyal by the regime) (Flikke, 2016). Notably, the latter term, which in the Russian language has a semantic connection to espionage and sabotage, appears in great volumes in the conspiratorial writings of military and KGB veterans, albeit in a more direct form: "agents of influence" (Fedor, 2011).

The Russian officials repeatedly explained the use of the mentioned categories as a way of marking those who were the instruments of foreign meddling in Russian domestic affairs, either through recruitment by foreign intelligence or brainwashing (Kragh et al., 2022). Thus, the Cold War notion of "brainwashing" naturally reappeared on the other side of the former Iron Curtain. Following the full-scale Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022, those categories became the cornerstones for brutal repressions against all those opposing the policies of Vladimir Putin.

Yet returning to "color revolutions," Putin and his team's obsession with the U.S. meddling in the domestic affairs of post-Soviet states may be explained in realistic terms, which some scholars and pundits have been doing passionately in the last two decades. The arguments about Russian security concerns related to NATO's enlargement to the East remain popular even in the context of the Russian aggression in Ukraine that, according to some analysts, was provoked by NATO's reckless disregard for Russian interests[8]. The problem with this kind of argumentation is that while it is not entirely false, it is still extremely misleading as it leads us away from a more profound reasoning for Putin's conspiratorial obsessions. Comparative analyses of the conspiratorial thinking of contemporary Russian elites and their Soviet predecessors should highlight that while, indeed, the conspiratorial fears of today's Russian leaders became more existential, the principle of seeking the hand of Washington was there before there was anything distantly resembling direct security threats to the Soviet Union proper.

Late Soviet leaders were also obsessed with security and threats from the West. Most of them belonged to the generation that went through the horrors of the Second World War as mid-level bureaucrats in the Party and the military. Therefore, they were not as distanced as the top leadership from

the ugly side of the war and were eternally traumatized by the tragedy of the Soviet unpreparedness and the extreme atrocities of the first months of the Nazi invasion. This was the main reason for extensive investments in the military-industrial complex and the constant attention of the CPSU Politburo to Europe. Ironically, this excessive attention made the conspiratorial thinking about the direct threats to the Soviet Union and its allies/clients in Eastern Europe less likely, as constantly keeping their hand on the pulse of events in Europe the Soviet leaders were generally more confident about the security of their Western borders. Yet, conspiratorial thinking found its way around the relatively stable Cold War stalemate in Europe. For the Soviet leaders, the main arena where their belief in U.S. conspiracies found its expression became the Third World. One reason for that was that, there, the global Cold War was nowhere close to actual coldness.

Since the publication of Odd Arne Westad's (2005) pathbreaking book two decades ago, historians of the second half of the 20th century have been actively engaging with the history of the Cold War and decolonization in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. One argument that has been arising continuously in these years is about the necessity to put on or take off the Cold War lens when discussing the history of the non-European world in the second half of the 20th century[9]. This discussion revolves around the question of the agency of the local actors – to what degree developments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were defined by the Cold War confrontation of the superpowers and to what degree by local factors, actors, and interests. Naturally, the answer is in a balance of the two. There was no place in the world that was not defined by the Cold War confrontation, and yet the more we dig into local sources, the more we see the agency of the locals, including the ability to manipulate the superpowers for the sake of local interests.

However, for the Soviet leaders, this complex picture of intertwined motives and multiple actors with contradicting motives was substituted for a less detailed and much simpler picture that deprived local actors of agency and attributed all of them to one or another side in the Cold War. In this sense, we can see a clear lineage between Soviet readings of the regime changes in the Third World during the Cold War and the obsession with color revolutions in Putin's Russia. In both cases, conspiratorial thinking deprived local actors of agency and attributed violent regime change to subversive activities of the adversary.

As noted above, the tricky part in deconstructing this approach is that the conspiratorial thinking in both cases was not baseless, although in

the case of Putin's Russia, as we mentioned, there is a much more active inclination to founding conspiracy theories on forgeries, fakes and myths. Nevertheless, as Ortmann and Heathershaw (2012) fairly argued, while the U.S. control over the color revolutions through "managed chaos" is nonsense, the United States did fund the opposition groups in Georgia and Ukraine, and U.S. agencies did promote democratization and the reform of regimes there and in Russia. And we should add, NATO did enlarge towards the Russian borders. Similarly, in the Cold War era, the United States was not abstaining from active subversive activities, including organizing violent regime changes, some examples of which are discussed further in the article. However, as Ortmann and Heathershaw (2012) elaborate, "both the form of the conspiracy narrative as well as the social and political context in which it emerges, are significant beyond the veracity of individual story". To take it further, I would argue that some truthful elements in the overarching lies do not make conspiratorial thinking more reasonable and do not justify conspiratorial obsessions. On the contrary, this should urge us to pay close attention to the exaggeration and distortion of the truth that this phenomenon leads to.

Further in this article I discuss several case studies from the Soviet Cold War history that reveal the peculiarities of the Cold War conspiratorial thinking in regard to violent regime changes in the Third World that the Soviet leaders employed to explain unfavorable geopolitical developments.

## 2. Case Study 1: The Real Conspiracy Misread. The Soviet Union and the CIA Coup against the Iranian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammed Mosaddeq, 1953.

Dr. Mohammed Mosaddeq was elected the Prime Minister of Iran in 1951. A disciple of the Qajar dynasty that had been ruling Iran prior to the 1925 coup of Reza Khan Pahlavi, Mosaddeq represented the national pride of his compatriots as the first Iranian to receive a doctoral degree in a European university. He had also been engaged in Iranian politics since the years of the 1905-1911 Iranian Constitutional Revolution and developed a reputation as a proud patriot and Iranian nationalist, vehemently opposed to the colonial ambitions of the European powers in Iran. In the years that preceded his appointment as the Prime Minister, Mosaddeq consistently opposed the most emblematic of Iran's semi-colonial agreements – the D'Arcy concession of 1901, even in its renegotiated form agreed in the

1930s. The concession granted the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) (earlier known as Anglo-Persian Oil Company and later known as British Petroleum) exclusive rights for oil extraction in some of the oil-rich territories of Iran with minimal royalties paid to the Iranian national budget[10]. Similarly, in 1944, Mosaddeq managed to convince the Iranian Majlis to decline Joseph Stalin's attempts to gain similar oil concessions for the Soviet Union in Northern Iran (Gasanly, 2016).

Thus, Mosaddeq's views and political program were not secret to any attentive observer at the time of his appointment. Mosaddeq became the Iranian Prime Minister in a volatile period. Only a decade prior, Iran was occupied in a joint effort of Great Britain and the USSR, with Reza Shah Pahlavi forced to abdicate in favor of his young son Mohammed Reza. The end of the occupation was accompanied by one of the first crises of the Cold War, with the Soviet troops unwilling to depart Iran on the agreed date and local separatism of national minorities in the occupied territories fostered from Moscow and Baku[11]. Fearful of Britain and the USSR in the aftermath of these crises, the young Shah was leaning towards the United States, seeing it as the only guarantor of the Iranian sovereignty. This went in resonating contradiction with the popular feelings that were divided between the supporters of Iranian nationalism with the eradication of any foreign dependence and the adherents of communism. In these circumstances, Mosaddeq's appointment was a move that the Shah was not in favor of but was forced to make by the Iranian public.

Immediately after his appointment, Mosaddeq started preparations for his main reform: the nationalization of the oil industry and complete cancellation of the AIOC's concession. In 1951, the nationalization decree was approved by the Majlis, which led to a massive disappointment of the British government. In the following years, British diplomats made several attempts to renegotiate the agreement and find a compromise that would suit both sides, yet Mosaddeq's position remained firm. Eventually, the British government approached the U.S. Administration of Dwight Eisenhower with an argument that Mosaddeq's policies favored the Soviets. At the height of the early Cold War Red Scare, espoused in all kinds of conspiracy theories about Soviet subversive plots (including "brainwashing" and McCarthyistic witch-hunt), the U.S. President fell for this argument and ordered the CIA to cooperate with MI6 in preparation of a coup against Mosaddeq. In August 1953, the Iranian Prime Minister was overthrown in the CIA-planned operation TPBEDAMN[12].

One of the questions that disturbed historians for decades was why the Soviet Union did not support Mosaddeq and did not prevent the coup. Several recent works unveiled the answer to this question. Zubok (2020) and Kalinovsky (2014) convincingly showed, relying on some of the previously unavailable Soviet documents, that Stalin was convinced that Mosaddeq could not be an independent actor that defended the national interests of Iran. Stalin's explanation for Mosaddeq's nationalization efforts was that the Iranian Prime Minister was the U.S. stooge used by the Americans to push the British out of Iran in order to take their place there. The archival documents clearly show that this conspiracy theory was not supported by the intelligence that the Soviet leader received from the ground. On the contrary, the intelligence was rather solid and convincingly suggested that Mosaddeq was a nationalist who sought to defend the Iranian national interests. This did not help to alter the conspiratorial beliefs of the Soviet leader. Moreover, when Stalin died five months prior to the CIA coup, Viacheslav Molotov, who inherited the responsibility for foreign affairs, did nothing to change the Soviet position. In fact, his personal collection of documents in the archive proves that he was no less convinced than Stalin of Mosaddeq's dependence on the Americans. Only years later, with Nikita Khrushchev consolidating power, Molotov's actions were pronounced as a resonant mistake and used against him in Khrushchev's bid for power against Stalin's old guard. Only in the late 1950s Mosaddeq was included in the Soviet pantheon of national liberation heroes in accordance with Khrushchev's new strategy of seeking partners in the Third World. Astonishingly, though, even in this later period, the CIA coup against Mosaddeq did not become the ultimate reference point of the Soviet leaders to the U.S. subversive activities in the Third World, instead giving way to other, much less obvious examples, most notably the Pinochet coup against the president Salvador Allende in Chile.

## 3. Case Study 2. The Murder of Peaceful Socialism. The Pinochet Coup and an Omnipresent Hand of Washington.

The electoral victory of Salvador Allende and his *Unidad Popular* in Chile in 1970 was a tremendous achievement in the eyes of the Soviet leadership, which was traditionally less involved in Latin American affairs, with the notable exception of Cuba. The reason for this sudden interest

in the developments in South America was that Allende gained power through peaceful means. This was a major example that proved that the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence and fermenting détente was not the revisionist retreat but a crafty strategy for the future victory of global socialism. Challenged on the one hand by Maoist China which publicly denounced Moscow's strategy as capitulationism and on the other hand by guerilla revolutionary groups of the Guevarist kind that despised Soviet orthodox Marxism, statism, and imperialism, the CPSU Politburo saw Allende's achievement as a vivid proof of their dominance over these challenges, a proof that could be presented to the world (Friedman, 2021).

Therefore, Allende's success in the eyes of the Soviet leadership was a crucial element in their ideological struggle against the Chinese and other radical leftists, who refused to acknowledge peaceful means of global revolutionary struggle as no less legitimate than the violent ones. Nevertheless, while the Chilean case was limited to this for the Politburo, for the bureaucrats of the CC CPSU's International Department, the Chilean peaceful revolution turned into a personal endeavor. Although Allende's coalition was quite diverse, and this was one of the major concerns for the Soviet leaders, for the International Department officials, many in the new Chilean leadership, especially in the Communist Party, were more than some distant revolutionary comrades but rather people with whom they had personal, often close, relations. This was often one of the main features that distinguished a colder realist approach of the Politburo that was, in most cases, willing to throw the communist allies under the bus for the sake of beneficial outcome for the USSR and a more personal attitude of the International Department officials.

Allende's radical reforms and his inability to make the Chilean economy function without American investments or aid from fraternal regimes brought Chile to a desperate situation by 1973. To a large degree, this was a result of the mutual unwillingness between Allende and the Nixon Administration to seek a compromise. The U.S. leadership, obsessed with the idea of not allowing the appearance of a "new Cuba" in the Western hemisphere, despised Allende and had already sought once to plot against his ascendance to power. Even more than the Americans, the Chilean regime disturbed the military juntas of the Chilean near abroad, especially the Brazilian one. The rapprochement between the United States and Brazil created grounds for the anti-Allende coup (Harmer, 2011).

Unlike the Mosaddeq coup, the Pinochet one did not come as a surprise to most international observers. As Friedman (2021) argued, it

was likely the most anticipated coup since Caesar returned to Rome. According to Nikolai Leonov, the high-level KGB officer responsible for the ties with Latin America, Soviet arms were already on their way to Chile in hopes of assisting Allende but were turned back after growing concerns that they might end up in the arms of the putschists and used in international anti-Soviet propaganda (Leonov, 1999)[13]. Unlike the coup against Mosaddeq, here there was no direct involvement of the CIA in the coup, but the U.S. and Brazilian governments and secret services were certainly not uninvolved in creating circumstances for the coup and its success[14]. That said, as Brands (2012) fairly put it, "as much as Allende suffered from an adverse international environment, his most critical economic wounds were self-inflicted."

In this sense, the involvement of "the hand of Washington" in the toppling of Allende was much less obvious than in the case of Mosaddeq. Nevertheless, at least for the part of the Soviet establishment, it became a point of no return with regard to seeing U.S. subversive activities in every negative development in the Third World. This was mostly the case for the CC CPSU International Department. As Friedman (2021) showed, in subsequent assessments of the prospects of the U.S. intervention to suppress "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" movements, the officials of the International Department never failed to bring up the Pinochet coup as a reference point. The Politburo's reaction was much less conspiratorial and emotional. Soviet leaders used the overthrow of Allende to score points in their struggle against the Chinese, choosing to break all ties with Pinochet's Chile and highlighting in propaganda Beijing's unwillingness to do the same. Soviet leadership also rather pragmatically used global solidarity with Chilean socialists, standing at the forefront of this solidarity movement (Paranzino, 2022; Gradskova, 2014).

## 4. Case Study 3. Anti-Imperialism over Common Sense. Soviet support for Ayatollah Khomeini.

The legacy of Chilean events evidently played out as a major factor in the reactions of part of the Soviet leadership, namely the International Department, to the events that unfolded in the late 1970s in Iran. However, initially, the Soviet leadership did not pay too much attention to the growing turmoil in the neighboring country. In the first 9-10 months of 1978, when the protests were accelerating in Iran, the Politburo and the

International Department did not discuss the worrying news from there even once. In this sense, the Iranian official press and the U.S. officials revealed much more conspiratorial thinking in this initial period of the Iranian revolution's build-up. Since the early days of the protests, the Shah's media referred to the political leaders of the protest movement as "black and red reactionaries," i.e., religious and leftist figures as one entity, allegedly controlled by foreign powers (Abrahamian, 1982). Similarly, the officials of the National Security Council (NSC) in the United States were growing more and more convinced with the aggravation of the situation in Iran that the protests were instigated and controlled by Moscow. One of the former NSC officials, Gary Sick, remembered that he had a hard time convincing his colleagues that Moscow had nothing to do with the Iranian turmoil (Welch and Westad, 1996).

Nevertheless, by November 1978, the Politburo finally turned its attention towards Iran. Notably, its reaction had very little to do with the actual developments in Iran. Instead, the Politburo agreed to issue a public statement along with a private message sent via diplomatic channels, warning the U.S. Administration against any form of intervention, active or subversive, in the situation in Iran. The statement published in *Pravda* in the form of Brezhnev's response to a correspondent's question shook the Central Committee's bureaucracy, revealing different kinds of conspiratorial beliefs (Asinovskiy, 2022).

For one example, Leonid Zamiatin, the head of the CC CPSU Department of International Information, started to distribute a version of the Iranian events, according to which the protests were instigated by the United States. Allegedly, the Carter Administration, dissatisfied with the Shah's authoritarian policies and his disregard for human rights issues, decided to teach him a lesson, give him a fright, and make him more cooperative. Yet, according to Zamiatin, the situation went out of control, and now the Shah's position on the throne was in real danger due to these reckless decisions of the U.S. Administration (Asinovskiy, 2024; Yodfat, 1984). Here, we can see a very clear pattern of conspiratorial thinking: the Carter Administration that put human rights at the center of its political agenda, was indeed dissatisfied with the Shah's style of ruling. However, this small truth in Zamiatin's fantasy was taken to a whole new level that had no connection to reality. Quite contrarily to Zamiatin's version, Jimmy Carter, in his 1978 New Year's speech in Tehran, referred to Iran as "an island of stability in the Middle East," clearly not anticipating any radical moves of the anti-Shah opposition. Moreover, as we know today,

the U.S. Administration was extremely concerned with the turn of events in Iran, and there is simply no credible evidence to claim any kind of U.S. involvement in the revolution.

Nevertheless, Zamiatin did not hesitate to announce his version publicly, including on national television. Anatolii Cherniaev, at the time the deputy head of the International Department and later the main foreign policy aid to Mikhail Gorbachev in the times of *Perestroika*, burst out with anger towards Zamiatin's activity in his diary:

> …we have a "competent" opinion of the head of the International Information Department [Zamiatin – D.A.], pronounced on television for all the Union to see: "All these events are a result of the CIA machinations, as if the Americans wanted to scare the Shah a bit because he had not behaved well…" Zamiatin even wrote a note to the Central Committee, proposing "to follow the line of support of stability in Iran" (i.e., to support the Shah!). Suslov and Kirilenko already signed the note with their approval visas. Luckily, the events developed faster than the bureaucracy functioned in the Central Committee apparatus. They overshadowed this "Zamiatin line" (Cherniaev, 2008).

In this passage, Cherniaev appears as a sensible, pragmatic intellectual who, unlike Zamiatin, understood the absurdity of such conspiratorial thinking about the hand of Washington behind the Iranian crisis. However, only a few weeks and several diary pages earlier, same Cherniaev was not as confident in the absurdity of the U.S. conspiracy behind the shaking throne of the Iranian Shah. He noted in the diary a conversation that he had with another Party official, the head of the Leningrad Party Committee, Grigorii Romanov. There, when Romanov asked him about what was happening in Iran, Cherniaev reacted not too differently from Zamiatin:

> – What will happen in Iran? – he almost shouts.
> – I do not know. Perhaps the Americans will topple him [the Shah – D.A.]. He does not suit them anymore (Cherniaev, 2008).

These examples reveal to us that on different levels of the Central Committee's bureaucracy, conspiratorial thinking was so deeply engrained in the consciousness of Soviet officials that even when those who presented themselves as rational and reasonable independent thinkers and criticized others for leaning towards conspiratorialism, were in practice susceptible to the same disease.

The conspiracy about the U.S. involvement in instigating the protests in Iran was proven wrong by the very development of events, which unfolded so quickly that these ideas were turned to the archives before they could seriously influence the decision-making. Yet immediately after the Shah's flight from his country, this conspiracy theory gave way to another one: the one of an inevitable U.S. invasion or subversive interference. In January 1979, the Politburo established a Commission that was supposed to closely follow the developments in Iran and advise the Politburo accordingly for further actions. However, the available reports of the Commission show that the Politburo members were preoccupied exclusively with deterring the United States and cared very little about Iran itself. The reports are filled with alarming passages about possible U.S. intervention to suppress "the anti-imperialist revolution" (Asinovskiy, 2024).

The latter term was attached to the revolution in Iran immediately after its initial successes in getting rid of the pro-American monarch. At that point, the Soviet leadership was not interested in who were the forces that were leading the revolution that had already been labeled as "anti-imperialist." In this manner, the Soviet Union took the side of the new post-revolutionary Iran, which was soon dominated by radical religious jurists led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Throughout the following years, the Soviet leaders grew more and more disappointed with the reactionary developments in Iran, yet they remained convinced that the threat of U.S. intervention was a bigger issue than the transformation of Iran into a viable 20th-century theocracy. The officials of the International Department, including the head of the department, Boris Ponomarev, developed their reactions based on the experience of the Chilean failure less than a decade earlier and were convinced that the U.S. intervention was imminent should the Soviet support for the revolutionary anti-imperialist regime in Iran weaken (Friedman, 2018; Friedman, 2021; Asinovskiy, 2022; Asinovskiy 2024). Thus, the conspiratorial thinking overshadowed reason, proving the point that realism was only one part of the ideological worldview, too often obscured by the latter's less rational elements.

## 5. Conclusion

The post-Soviet Russian political elite did not come from nowhere. It was formed in the late Soviet Union and, to a large degree, was a part of the late Soviet bureaucratic and military elite. These people did not go through

lustration and migrated to the realities of a new Russian state virtually unchanged. Their worldview, nevertheless, went through a considerable evolution in different aspects since rejecting most of formal dogmatic elements of the Soviet Marxist-Leninist ideology. However, rejecting the communist postulates, the leaders of post-Soviet Russia could not reject a deeply engrained principle of ideological worldview, the immanent part of which was the conspiratorial thinking. Not all of it had its roots in the Soviet period. As we see with concepts revived from earlier years, there is a conspiratorial heritage beyond the Cold War that remains available for active implementation in the ideological worldview and application for more practical use for mass mobilization in the population. In this paper, I sought to highlight the crucial importance of the Cold War heritage for the establishment of conspiratorial thinking in post-Soviet Russian elites and for the development of specific topics in conspiracy theories.

Presented case studies that trace how the conspiratorial thinking of the Soviet leaders developed in the circumstances of the Cold War and how it was applied to different situations represent only one conspiratorial narrative: one of the adversary's subversive activities to overthrow the government in the third country. These examples certainly do not reflect all conspiratorial motives inherited by contemporary Russian leaders from their Soviet predecessors. However, these examples tackle one of the foundational conspiracy theories of Putin's Russia, that of the color revolutions. More importantly, using these elements of legacy, we can investigate more parallels between the ideological worldview of the late Soviet leaders and the one of Vladimir Putin and his cronies. Perhaps the main conclusion of this work is that the search for the origins of the conspiratorial thinking of contemporary Russian elites should not be limited to the realm of the post-Soviet period as it was done till now. The Cold War was essential for the formation of conspiratorial thinking, perhaps more essential than the communicational revolution of the last decades. Its legacy in the formation of our times should be addressed more thoroughly, from this perspective included. This article is only a first approach to stating these research objectives.

## Endnotes

1 There have already been evident signs of incorporation of the antisemitic narratives in the anti-Western conspiracy theories through exposing the Jewish ancestry of certain members of Russian opposition (e.g., "conscious or unconscious agents of the West") or employing terms like "cosmopolitans", when referring to the "anti-Russian world government", a clear reference to "the rootless cosmopolitans", a euphemist term for "a Jew" used in late Stalinist antisemitic campaigns. For more, see Kragh et al. (2022).

2 Probably, the only researcher, who does not concentrate exclusively on military and KGB origins of the conspiratorial thinking in the Russian elites is Yablokov (2018). However, Yablokov's work lacks proper historical analysis and, consequently, overlooks the crucial source of the post-Soviet conspiratorial thinking – the ideological worldview of the Soviet elites in the Cold War era.

3 Notably, the KGB veterans tended to stress in their memoirs that unlike the ideologically charged Party officials, the KGB officers used to be pure pragmatists, "the crème de la crème of Russian intellectuals." The researchers of Soviet intelligence tend to attribute this mythology to these self-pleasing memoirs, see Fedor (2011).

4 For more on contemporary conspiracy culture see Fenster (1999), Knight (2000), and Marcus (1999)

5 Some of the works that highlight ideology as the essence of Soviet foreign policy are Westad (2005), Friedman (2015), and Telepneva (2022). As to the realist argument, the most recent and authoritative argument was made by Radchenko (2024).

6 I elaborate on this term in my earlier articles, see Asinovskiy (2022) and Asinovskiy (2024).

7 Notably, the theory of "managed chaos" was not only developed obscurely in the propagandist press or the statements of the politicians but was actively promoted by political pseudoscientists close to the Kremlin. A good example is Andrei Manoilo, a political pseudoscientist with a position of professor at Moscow State University. Despite three degrees in physics, Manoilo made a sudden change of interest to political science in the 2000s and became one of the most prolific authors on "the managed chaos" theory. While Kragh et al. (2022) vividly showed that Russian military science, particularly a handful of military science journals serve as a stage for promoting a broad variety of conspiracy theories, this topic transcends this narrow cluster of Russian "scholarship." "Scholarly" articles about "the managed chaos" were published in a variety of reputable journals and authored by "the scholars" of international relations and political science from most reputable Russian universities.

8 Some of the most notorious and actively promoted arguments of this kind were made by scholars like John Mearsheimer. See, for example, Mearsheimer (2014).

9 I borrow the concept of "taking off the Cold War lens" from Connelly (2000).

10 For more on the D'Arcy Concession see Navabi (2010) and Brew (2017)

11 For more on the Iranian Azerbaijan crisis see Yegorova (1996), Scheid Raine (2001), Hasanli (2006), and Fawcett (2014).

12 For more on the Mosaddeq's oil nationalization reform and the road to the coup see Gasiorowski and Byrne (2004). For the details of the CIA covert operation see Gasiorowski (2013).

13 Notably, Leonov was later among the KGB veterans-memoirists actively promoting the golden myth of the KGB as the oasis of free thought in the 1970s as well as the failure of the Party officials, especially in the Gorbachev era to hear out the warnings of the chekists about the brainwashed agents of influence, see Fedor (2011).

14 For more on the U.S. involvement in the coup see Qureshi (2009), Gustafson (2007), and Haslam (2005).

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# RECONSTRUCTING RELIGIOUS HERITAGE IN A POST-SECULAR AGE (WORKING PAPER)*

Ferdinand de Jong

**Abstract**

The theory of modernity posited that societies would secularize in the process of modernization. As we witness new forms of religiosity as well as heritagization of established religions, this secularization thesis has recently been questioned. But how should the heritagization of religion be understood in a post-secular context? This paper examines the initiative of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership to conserve and interpret the ruins of the Abbey in Bury St Edmunds (UK). In this instance of heritagization, re-assembling different materials, ideas and affects into religious heritage, processes of "sacralization", "aestheticization", and

* Research for this paper has been conducted among the members of the Heritage Partnership in the town of Bury St Edmunds between 2016 and 2023. I would like to thank the members of the Partnership profoundly for their trust, time, and the interviews they have granted me. This research was part of the project "The Heritagization of Religion and the Sacralization of Heritage in Contemporary Europe" (HERILIGION) (2016-2020), funded by Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA). Sadly, HERILIGION's project leader Professor Oscar Salemink passed away tragically in 2023. Oscar was a wonderful colleague. Acknowledging the very fruitful collaboration in the HERILIGION group, I would like to thank all colleagues for their collaboration and friendship. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the New Europe College Seminar, 11 October 2023. I thank all participants to the seminar for their insightful criticisms and helpful suggestions. The material presented in this paper is original, although the introduction draws on my "Introduction: Temporalities of Renewal in Religious Heritage", published in F. de Jong & J. Mapril (Eds), (2023), The Future of Religious Heritage: Entangled Temporalities of the Sacred and the Secular (Routledge). The section "The Legend of St Edmund" (pp. 4-6, infra) is reproduced from my chapter "Traces of the Sacred: Loss, Hope, and Potentiality in Religious Heritage in England" in the same volume. Comments on earlier drafts of this paper were gratefully received from Richard Summers and Roger Hetherington from the Heritage Partnership, whose constructive criticism helped to improve this paper significantly.

"reconstruction" happen alongside each other. In providing new interpretation of the ruins, stakeholders debated different ideas on the significance of the ruins and their history. Examining how stakeholders framed the materiality of the site differently, the paper demonstrates that the interpretation of the ruins is to this day determined by *affects* that have their origins in the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

**Keywords:** Religious heritage, heritagization, post-secular, secularization, sacralization, aestheticization, reconstruction, 3D, materiality, affect, Heritage Partnership, Bury St Edmunds.

## 1. Introduction

In the standard narrative on modernity as it was told until the end of the twentieth century, sociologists identified the increasing secularization of society as one of the defining aspects of modernization. The sociologist Max Weber famously identified secularization as the disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) of the world. Informing assessments about the future of religion (Cannell, 2010), the secularization thesis predicted the decline of religion. However, in the latter decades of the twentieth century it became increasingly clear, especially in the United States, that society was not secularizing, at least not as expected. Likewise, the exponential explosion of religious nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe raised questions about the consensus that Europe constitutes the exceptional case of secularization in the world (Casanova, 2009, 2020; Tateo, 2022). We must acknowledge that European societies are secularizing, but not quite in the way the early theorists of modernity anticipated. Since the 1990s, the secularization thesis has been revisited by Talal Asad (2003), Charles Taylor (2007), Saba Mahmood (2009), and many others. In his important contribution to this debate, Talal Asad (2003) argues that secularism is not the mere absence of religion, but the framing of religion within a particular European genealogy. This has led to the acknowledgement that secularism should be understood as a contingent formation.

In this context, we can also observe an increasing interest in religious heritage, not only by members of established religious communities, but also by lay people who increasingly identify with their declared religious heritage. Public discourses in which citizens identify with national religious heritage in ways that are compatible with liberal democracy are increasingly frequent (Wohlrab-Sahr & Burchardt 2012). As Van den Hemel

*et al*. (2022, p. 7) argue, "the return of nationalism brought along a fiery debate about the importance of the religious past for defining present-day culture." Simultaneously, religious communities have become increasingly aware of the fact that they are the keepers of a national heritage that is valued. In this context heritage initiatives contribute to the prosperity of the church, which capitalizes on the possibilities that heritagization offers. In this respect, Isnart and Cerezales (2020) have emphasized the correspondences between secular and religious heritage-making in what they call a "heritage complex" in which heritage and religion constitute an assemblage. In the discussion about this assemblage, we have suggested that heritage-making tacks between secular and sacred temporalities, entangling secular heritage discourse in acts of religious renewal (De Jong & Mapril, 2023).

This paper addresses the entanglement of religion and heritage in a particular context in which secular and religious actors collaborate in an effort to protect the remains of a Benedictine abbey in Bury St Edmunds, a market town in the East of England. In the preservation of this religious heritage, the different discourses that determine the meanings of this religious heritage interpret the stone and mortar of the ruins in different ways. In this context in which these monastic remains are interpreted as religious heritage, the materiality of the ruins matters. As we will see, the members of the local community who belong to different churches hold different views on the conservation of the material remains of the Benedictine Abbey. In my research on the conservation and interpretation of the ruins, the question how the material remains of the Abbey should be interpreted as religious heritage is a complex matter. To address this matter, we need a theory that can accommodate the multiple relations between humans, objects, and affects that are generated in their interactions. Actor-Network-Theory (2007) affords multiple ways of thinking about objects and subjects as they constitute, what Bruno Latour calls "assemblages". Actor-Network-Theory allows us to think the transformation of ruins into religious heritage as a "religious heritage assemblage" (Burchardt 2020: 159; cf. Burchardt & Yasemin, 2024).

Monastic ruins constitute an aspect of the materiality of religion (Morgan, 2010, 2020; Houtman & Meyer, 2012) and have religious meaning for many of the members of the local community. But in Bury St Edmunds, the meanings of the ruins are transformed as these ruins are interpreted as "religious heritage". Indeed, the differences in interpretation and conceptualization of the ruins *as* religious heritage, constitute a

source of tension in the community of care-takers. The process reveals that different stakeholders have different *affects* for the ruins. Affects are here defined as the emotions generated by the materiality of the ruins; the feelings people have towards the ruins that reflect their religious positions and spiritual orientations (cf. Oliphant 2021; 2022). How the materiality of the ruins generates different affects in the process of heritagization, constitutes the subject of this paper. [1]

The stones and mortar of the ruins generate affects that predispose orientations of the townspeople toward the ruins. Affects mobilize clergy, civil servants, town planners, archaeologists, gardeners, environmental activists, heritage professionals and volunteers to deploy their energies and capacities in productive collaborations that realize material and spiritual futures. Materials, knowledges, and affects are thus re-assembled to produce potentiality and vitality in the ruined remains of a medieval abbey. Such material vitality inspires the conservation of remains, the production of scientific reports, and unleashes spiritual energies that mobilize secular and religious seekers to make pilgrimages to these monastic remains. Examining the relation between materiality and affect will enable us to think about the transformative potential of monastic ruins in a secular age. But as we will see, the meanings and affects that the material remains have for different stakeholders, differ considerably.

## 2. The Legend of St Edmund

The mortal remains of St Edmund that were venerated as relics by countless pilgrims in the Middle Ages have been lost since the Reformation. Recently, a rumour ran that St Edmund's remains lie buried under the tarmac of a tennis court in the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund (De Jong, 2023). This was the latest development in an ongoing quest for the body of St Edmund (Young, 2014). The rumour increased local and national interest in the work of the Heritage Partnership, founded in 2016 to restore and reinterpret the legacy of St Edmund, contributing to the "heritagization" of the ruins of the Abbey. In this process of "heritagization" various stakeholders reclaim a Pre-Reformation legacy and transform the ruins into a religious heritage. To understand how the material remains of a Benedictine Abbey that was destroyed in the sixteenth century, can be reclaimed in the present, requires a historical analysis. This analysis invites us to rethink the materiality of ruins and their spiritual affects as a religious heritage.

The legend of St Edmund revolves around his martyrdom in battle with Viking invaders. Born in 841 AD Edmund succeeded to the throne of East Anglia in 856. A Christian from birth, Edmund fought against the pagan Viking invaders ("the Great Heathen Army') until 869 AD, when his forces were defeated, and Edmund was captured by the Vikings. They ordered him to renounce his faith and share power with the pagan Vikings, but he refused, demanding that they convert to Christianity instead. A 10th century account of the saint's life, the *Passio Sancti Eadmundii* by Abbo of Fleury, provides the following story of Edmund's fate. The Vikings bound Edmund to a tree and shot him with arrows until he resembled a hedgehog, beheaded him, and to prevent a Christian burial, threw his head in the undergrowth. Edmund's followers roamed the forests to retrieve the head of the king and suddenly heard his voice call, "here, here, here!". There, they found the head lying between the paws of a wolf, who protected it against other wild animals. The wolf allowed Edmund's followers to take the head home. Once reunited with the body, the *Passio* relates that head and body miraculously joined. Soon after, Edmund was considered a saint and his "incorrupt body" became a focus of veneration and pilgrimage.

Written more than a century after the event by Abbo of Fleury (2018) in 985–987 AD, the *Passio* was a hagiography that anticipated Edmund's resurrection (Pinner, 2015). The legend narrates that Edmund's body was initially kept near the place of his martyrdom and subsequently taken to the town of Beodricsworth, renamed Bury St Edmunds in his honour, where it was held in a wooden church. In a further twist to this history, the Vikings who had killed Edmund converted to Christianity and came to venerate him. The Viking King Canute, who ruled over England in the early eleventh century, sought to repair the damages his forebears had inflicted on the East Anglian population and minted coins to commemorate the saint. Propagating the cult of St Edmund, he replaced the secular priests who cared for the saint's body with Benedictine monks who built the Romanesque abbey church that became a major medieval pilgrimage site focused on Edmund's "incorrupt" body – until the English King Henry VIII dissolved the Abbey in 1539. Henry's Commissioners sold off the valuable ashlar stone (Gransden, 2015). Ever since the destruction of the Abbey, the mortal remains of St Edmund have been lost. Hence, the Suppression of the Monasteries and the Reformation produced an enduring mystery about the saint's whereabouts (Young, 2018). In 2012, a rumour circulated that the remains of St Edmund lie buried under some derelict tennis courts in the ruins of the former Benedictine abbey, renewing local and

national interest in the town's religious heritage. Although the religious legacy of St Edmund has been eroded by the Reformation and progressive secularization, the renewed interest in St Edmund's human remains might instead be understood as a renewed sacralization of a religious heritage.

Today, Bury St Edmunds is a market town that encloses the ruins of the Benedictine abbey. Its population remembers the abbey as a place of historic significance, but it has not forgotten its exploitation of the townspeople by the wealthy abbots and their monks. In 2016, a Heritage Partnership was set up to improve the conservation and interpretation of the legacy of St Edmund and the Abbey ruins. Its plans included the possibility of a non-invasive archaeological investigation of the Abbey ruins. That the results of such research might raise the profile of this English market town and enhance its attractiveness as a tourist destination was never far from anyone's mind. Tourism could possibly help to highlight the religious significance of the Abbey ruins and the ancient saint – as in the cult of St Padua in Lisbon (Isnart, 2020); and it is hoped that conservation and interpretation will stimulate sacred and secular pilgrimages to the site. In keeping with Historic England guidelines, the Heritage Partnership commissioned a Heritage Assessment and a Conservation Plan, which have identified the histories, archaeologies, and potential futures of the monuments of the ruined Abbey. The reports of these studies have attributed the heritage assets diverse heritage values, mostly secular, but some also spiritual (De Jong, 2022b).

What we witness, then, is the progressive "heritagization" of the historically profaned ruins into religious heritage. The Heritage Partnership was established to improve the interpretation and conservation of the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund. It is a partnership of various title holders of the monuments and other buildings within the precinct of the Abbey grounds, including the local Cathedral, the local Council, the local St Mary's Church and English Heritage. Given the disparate ownership of the heritage assets of the former Abbey, the primary reason to set up the Heritage Partnership was to create a shared set of common objectives. Beyond these title holders, stakeholders that care for the natural environment of the local rivers and the Abbey Gardens, are members of the Partnership too, as part of creating an inclusive association. There are plans to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which will establish the Heritage Partnership as a legal entity and assist it in raising funds for future improvements to the whole Abbey area. The Heritage Partnership cultivated a strong working relationship with English Heritage that holds

statutory guardianship over the monuments of the Abbey. This resulted in collaboration on the design and installation of a series of heritage interpretation panels around the Abbey ruins as part of the Abbey 1000 Millennium Celebrations in 2022 (which were postponed from 2020 by the Covid-19 pandemic).

This paper looks at some of the tensions that arose in the process of conceptualizing the Heritage Partnership's Overarching Plan. The tensions that this paper explores relate to affects that have their roots in the Reformation but are not expressed in day-to day conversations between the inhabitants of the town. In their muted existence, these tensions arose unexpectedly during the development of the Overarching Plan. One could argue that these historical antinomies, which lie buried in Bury's religious substrate, came to the surface in the work of the Heritage Partnership. I had not anticipated to work on this aspect when I was first given permission to research the work of the Heritage Partnership; they are the result of unanticipated developments in my work. Nonetheless, these developments speak directly to the question that informed my initial project proposal: How is religious heritage re-enchanted in a post-secular context? This paper signals a difference in how stakeholders relate to the ruins and the feelings they have for them. The divergence I describe is important for how one conceptualizes the making of religious heritage. It is an interesting analytical problem which, I like to add, does not distract the partners from their commitment to collaborate in this matter. The divergence of experience I outline here arose from the relatively late involvement of one of the partners. The Heritage Partnership responded positively by promptly debating the issues that were raised and revising the draft Overarching Plan accordingly.

## 3. New Interpretation Panels and a Digital 3D Model of the Abbey

The Heritage Partnership approached English Heritage in 2020 to develop working relationships in preparation for the Abbey 1000 Millennium Celebrations and to plan practical improvements of the Abbey of St Edmund area. English Heritage professionals and Heritage Partnership volunteers started working intensively to plan new heritage interpretation for the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund. Interpretation panels had stood in the Abbey ruins since the 1970s but they required replacement because

their legibility had eroded, and because the information they provided was no longer considered adequate. English Heritage identified the provision of new heritage interpretation as a priority for the site.

Within the Heritage Partnership the dominant discourse focused on how the heritage interpretation of the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund could be improved. The Conservation Plan had suggested what information should be made available to the public. As the Heritage Partnership was preparing for the Millennium Celebrations of the foundation of the Abbey in 1020, English Heritage committed to providing new heritage interpretation panels for the Abbey ruins. A team of heritage interpretation specialists began working full-time on research, interpretation, and visualization of the history of the Abbey. This team collaborated with the Heritage Interpretation Working Group of the Heritage Partnership through regular online meetings to discuss the design and installation of the new heritage interpretation panels. This built on the standard English Heritage format for heritage interpretation panels for the historic monuments in its care.

Conversations between the Heritage Partnership and English Heritage therefore focused on defined issues within a broader set of established conventions. For instance, one of the subjects of discussion concerned the colour scheme of the new interpretation panels that English Heritage would install in the Abbey ruins. The proposal to use "Cathedral purple" was rejected in favour of "English Heritage blue". Of course, such aesthetic choices matter a great deal in presenting, branding and marketing the heritage assets of the Abbey ruins to the public. The packaging of the heritage interpretation was matched with equal concern about issues of historical interpretation especially when these were controversial.

In the conversations and meetings of the Heritage Partnership on the improved interpretation of the Abbey ruins, the prevailing idea was that there are "many gaps in our knowledge". Among the ideas that circulated about how the public could be suitably informed about the history of the Abbey, was the possibility of a 3D digital reconstruction. Archaeologists in the Heritage Partnership agreed that heritage interpretation would benefit from a 3D digital model that could be made available for visitors to use and explore. English Heritage had already committed to spend £30,000 on the heritage interpretation panels and offered to provide a 3D digital model to assist with the interpretation. The Heritage Partnership offered to match this funding with £10,000 for additional panels. The Heritage Partnership obtained its financial contribution with funding from the Bury

St Edmunds Town Council, one of the constituent partners of the Heritage Partnership.

By the end of 2021, English Heritage had advanced its work on the heritage interpretation of the Abbey and the development of the 3D digital model so much that it was able to share its advances with the public in Bury St Edmunds. Its Senior Properties Historian had spent much time on the project and had become intrigued by questions around the historical architecture of the Abbey. Digital reconstruction of historic buildings and monuments is a significant part of the heritage conservation and heritage interpretation that English Heritage uses to produce a faithful interpretation of a heritage site. The Senior Properties Historian, the Graphics Manager, and the Heritage Interpreter, who were all members of the English Heritage Curatorial Department, presented their work in a series of three presentations in Bury St Edmunds. The first of these presentations was given in The Guildhall, one of the medieval buildings in Bury St Edmunds that had had significant civic functions throughout its history and, after a recent restoration project, had re-opened for public functions. It provided a fitting backdrop to the presentation.

The meeting was organized by the Heritage Partnership, which had invited all its members, as well as the Cathedral Dean who was asked to chair the proceedings. The event was well advertized and, given that Covid-19 restrictions had just been lifted, the meeting was also presented as a social event to celebrate the newly acquired freedom to meet face-to-face without restrictions. The programme was entirely dedicated to the presentation by English Heritage. Expectations were high, as the long period of gestation during Covid was now culminating in a presentation in which one could finally learn about English Heritage's work. During the event, the Senior Properties Historian who had conducted most of the research, gave a Powerpoint presentation. The visuals included historical sketches of the ruins, photographs of the archaeological remains, and contemporary photographs as well as the 3D digital reconstructions by English Heritage. The presentation included visual representations of comparable churches, mostly Norman, notably Norwich Cathedral, with which Bury St Edmunds had entertained a historical rivalry about the size, significance and splendour of their Cathedral churches. The visual material supported a narrative in which English Heritage presented architectural stonework and other archaeological remains as evidence for the reconstructed historical architecture of the Abbey. The lecture culminated in the presentation of a fifteenth-century graphical reconstruction of the

Abbey, of which we were given several views which had been generated by a computer-generated 3D-model.

The reconstruction was based on information derived from the various forms of archaeological and visual evidence. In his exposition, the Senior Properties Historian focused on the evidence that had informed his decisions on how the Abbey must have looked. When prompted, he provided the chances of likelihood of the accuracy of his estimates. His knowledge of the architecture of the building was superb and his expositions of how he had arrived at the 3D reconstruction were convincing. Everyone rejoiced in the formidable achievement of his work. The Cathedral Dean asked him if the 3D digital model could be made available online to attract visitors to the Abbey ruins. The Historian's cautious answer mentioned financial constraints. Over lunch, prints of the reconstruction of the Abbey were on view. Everyone enjoyed meeting face-to-face.

What passed as a social event in the busy lives of the many professionals and volunteers who had spent a considerable amount of their time working on the conservation and interpretation of the Abbey ruins, seemed to me a most remarkable event in the civic life of Bury St Edmunds. What was perhaps the most striking aspect of the Historian's Powerpoint presentation, was the framing of his lecture on the Abbey's architecture. Starting his presentation, he said that the destruction of the Abbey of St Edmund was a "crime scene" comparable to the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas at the hands of El Qaeda, or the destruction of the temple complex at Palmyra at the hands of ISIS. This was a surprising statement. By making these comparisons, he explicitly compared the actions of what was then the ruler of England, King Henry VIII, and his chief secretary, Thomas Cromwell, to Islamist terrorists.

I found it remarkable that English Heritage's representative made these comments. Perhaps they were uttered to catch the audience's attention. But with his stance, the Historian positioned himself in the current political and religious landscape, not just in relation to Islamist iconoclasm in the Middle East, but also in relation to the political landscape of contemporary Britain in which Islamic terrorist acts have had notable impact. Nobody objected – perhaps because of the sensibility of the subject. The audience listened attentively. During the Q&A, one of the members of the Heritage Partnership asked the English Heritage Historian whether the destruction of the Abbey had happened with the active collaboration of the townspeople, which he confirmed. This then solicited a remark from a representative of the Guildhall, the host of the event, and the historical heir to the coalition

of townspeople who had opposed the Abbey and had taken part in its destruction. Even though the conversation was polite and good humoured, the stance taken by the Historian was thus identified as a partisan stance by those who could claim to be some of the heirs of the destruction of the Abbey. It is remarkable that English Heritage, known for seeking safe ground and avoiding provocation, seemed to do just that. After his somewhat technical presentation, the Historian concluded triumphantly, by stating, with vigour: "Bury's Abbey shall be reconstructed!" Although nobody imagined a real reconstruction of the building, the 3D digital reconstruction was thus presented in a way that placed the Dissolution of the Monasteries – and the destruction of the Abbey – in a particularly partisan light. Indeed, a certain nostalgia for the grandeur of the Abbey seemed present in the Historian's reconstruction efforts in which a comparison with other places easily amounts to rivalry, especially when it comes to the Cathedral of Norwich. But the nostalgia for the magnificence of the Romanesque church shone through most explicitly in the ironic, but emphatically uttered last phrase of the presentation: "Bury St Edmunds' Abbey will rise again!"

During his presentation, the Historian presented the project of the reconstruction of the Abbey as a regular project. This confirms English Heritage policy that interpretation of Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings requires carefully researched digital and graphic reconstruction. But on this occasion, English Heritage made it clear that it had gone beyond the call of duty; the project of reconstructing the Abbey was unprecedented in terms of the resources it had made available. Given the near-total destruction of the Abbey in the sixteenth century and the limited information available about its original plan and architecture, the reconstruction had required considerable time and effort. The Architectural Historian had had to provide the Graphics Manager with sufficient information for the ambitious 3D graphic reconstruction. The Heritage Partnership acknowledged this extraordinary commitment. The leader of the Bury St Edmunds Tour Guides and a professional archaeologist himself complimented the Historian, stating that his important work on the Abbey Ruins constituted "a mile stone" in the research on the Abbey. Likewise, the Cathedral Dean expressed his thanks. English Heritage replied that the partial digital and graphic reconstruction generated so far would be sufficient for the interpretation panels to be installed in the Abbey ruins in June 2022. The Heritage Partnership website then published a press release, from which I quote the following excerpt:

> Work began on digitally reconstructing the Abbey in early 2021 with the entire site surveyed; a large collection of stonework from the Abbey – which is held in English Heritage's stores and at Moyse's Hall Museum – was also analysed. This information, combined with meticulous research, enabled the team at English Heritage to create the initial detailed sketches of the lost Abbey which were then developed into a 3D digital model of the Abbey complex, with a final layer of historical detail added to create the finished artwork visitors can see today. The reconstruction is one of the largest and most complex reconstruction[s] that English Heritage has completed of one of its sites.[2]

That this reconstruction is one the largest and most complex reconstructions that English Heritage has ever done, was a source of pride in Bury St Edmunds. The next two paragraphs give the wider context in which the presentation of the reconstruction should be situated:

> With over 1 million visitors in 2020, the Abbey Gardens and Ruins is one of the most visited free to enter attractions outside of London. However, while the remains of the Abbey are extensive, they do little justice to what was once one of the largest and grandest monasteries in England. Named after the martyred King Edmund the Abbey was a place of pilgrimage, and around 1066 was ranked fourth among English abbeys in wealth and political importance. This importance was ultimately its downfall and, during the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII had the Abbey demolished to demonstrate his power and control.
>
> But now thirteen new panels bring the fascinating history of the Abbey to life and highlight the story of the martyred King Edmund who was buried in the Abbey church, aiding visitors' understanding of the site's historic importance. Striking new artwork which digitally reconstructs and re-imagines the Abbey in its heyday depicts the size and grandeur of the site, helping those walking among the ruins interpret the site's remains, and see it as it would have been at various points in the last millennium. Finally, a [physical] model of the site, pre-Reformation, has been refurbished and restored by the original model-maker Nigel Purdy.

Placed strategically in the Abbey Gardens in relation to the remains of the Abbey are placed 13 panels, each of which is designed according to a standard plan and design. Many panels include a visual representation of (part of) the Abbey. Ingeniously, on each of the panels the visual representation of the Abbey corresponds to the perspective

from the placement of the panels in the Abbey ruins. On the basis of the ruined remains and the visual representations offered by the panels, an imaginative visitor should be able to visualise in their mind's eye the Abbey in its heyday.

The new scheme was greatly enjoyed by visitors to the Picnic in the Park on 16 July 2022, when the scheme had just been installed. The English Heritage press release recorded the following responses of the officials who had been involved in the project:

> [The] Property Development Director English Heritage said "Bury St. Edmunds Abbey is a hugely important historical site, and of a scale and grandeur which, until now, was difficult to envisage. Now, thanks to these detailed digital reconstructions, visitors can truly understand how spectacular the Abbey once was. It has been wonderful to work in partnership with the local community and local groups to deliver this project, and as one of our most popular free to enter sites, we can't wait to welcome more visitors to reimagine the site as it stood for hundreds of years".

English Heritage sees the digital reconstruction as a huge achievement and hopes it will contribute to envisaging the "scale and grandeur" of the historical site. The Chair of the Heritage Partnership is cited as confirming this effect on the visitors:

> [The] Chairman of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership, said: "The positive reaction to the new interpretation panels from members of the public was obvious as soon as they had been installed. English Heritage have done a fantastic job with the new panels and the Heritage Partnership is delighted to have collaborated with our English Heritage colleagues. We hope with the new interpretation everyone can benefit from the amazing heritage of the Abbey".

Whilst the Chairman thanked English Heritage in the name of the Heritage Partnership, local councillors and council officers thanked English Heritage for enhancing the attractiveness of the Abbey site to visitors:

> [The] Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture at West Suffolk Council, said: "The Abbey Gardens is a very beautiful and popular place enjoyed every year by thousands of people from our local communities and tourists visiting the area. But the gardens are just one part of a site that was once an

> Abbey of national and international significance. So in this year in which we celebrate 1,000 years since the Abbey of St Edmund was founded, it is great to see this project which will help widen people's understanding of how it once looked and how various areas were once used".
>
> [The] Brand and Marketing Manager of Bury St Edmunds and Beyond – the town's tourism brand, said: "This is such a fantastic addition to our most visited visitor attraction in Bury St Edmunds. It will massively enhance visitor's experience of the ruins by showing them what the Abbey would have looked like at each of the locations within the ruins. It's a brilliant addition to such an important site".

These quotations serve to demonstrate that the work by English Heritage on the heritage interpretation infrastructure of the site was very much appreciated by representatives of the Heritage Partnership and various official organisations in Bury St Edmunds. That the interpretation helps one imagine the grandeur of the former Abbey church is celebrated by all. For those in favour of an imaginary reconstruction of the town's monastic heritage, the new heritage interpretation panels were a wonderful success.

## 4. Contested Heritage

The planning of the heritage interpretation panels and the design of a 3D digital reconstruction model were progressing at the same time as the Heritage Partnership was dealing with some differences of opinion between some of its key partners. Firstly, there were some disagreements about proposed priorities for a major funding application to be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). An early draft proposed that priority should be given to the establishment of a Visitor Centre in the Anselm Building, a disused building owned by the Cathedral, that had long since been intended for this purpose. The majority of the proposed funding was earmarked for the construction of this Visitor Centre but some members of the Heritage Partnership argued that a larger share of the proposed funding should be allocated to other improvements to heritage conservation and heritage interpretation elsewhere in the wider Abbey area. Secondly, the then Vicar of St Mary's Church, whose participation in the Heritage Partnership had previously been intermittent, raised an unexpected question about some of the assumptions on which the Heritage Partnership had been working although it later emerged that this was

a personal view which was not shared by some other members of his congregation. These challenges were unrelated, but they show how far the opinions within the Heritage Partnership diverged. As a member of the Heritage Partnership said, to explain the divergence: "The Heritage Partnership is a broad church" recognising that similar partnerships with such a diverse membership often have to balance a wide range of views and focus on finding an agreed consensus on which they can all proceed.

St Mary's Church is one of two parish churches in the Abbey precinct that was built on this site *before* the construction of the Abbey Church. St Mary's claims to be the first parish church of Bury St Edmunds. Turning into a protestant church (i.*e.* "low church") during the Reformation, St Mary's claims to represent the "primitive" Christian religion. St James, later re-dedicated to St Edmund and St James, was the second parish church of Bury St Edmunds. Its status was elevated to become the Cathedral of the new Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich in 1914 and was then re-named St Edmundsbury Cathedral. While the Cathedral may thus claim to be the more important church in terms of its ranking in church hierarchy, St Mary's remains the older "civic" church. Moreover, St Mary's is the church in which Mary Tudor, Queen of France, now lies buried. The Cathedral leans towards the other end of the theological spectrum in the Anglican Church and could be characterized as "high church". The historical legacy of the Reformation, a trauma according to some which resulted in different liturgies, explains the complex relationship between the Cathedral and St Mary's. Although the relationship between St Mary's church and the Cathedral is collaborative and ecumenical, it sits in a historical antagonism that is rarely verbalized but nonetheless persistent under the surface.

When the Heritage Partnership was set up, St Mary's Church was temporarily without a serving Vicar. It meant that it did not to have anyone who could attend the regular meetings of the Heritage Partnership. When a new Vicar arrived at St Mary's, the Heritage Partnership had already established its overall strategic priorities for heritage conservation and heritage interpretation in its draft Overarching Plan. It came as a surprise when, in 2021, the new Vicar of St Mary's outlined his concerns with what he described as the "contested narrative" about the medieval rivalries between the Abbey and the town.

The Vicar of St Mary's had thus far never attended a meeting of the Heritage Partnership but was welcomed and given the opportunity to articulate his views on the Heritage Partnership's work in an online

meeting in 2021. Around that time, the Heritage Partnership was running a successful series of online lectures and it so happened that Professor Mark Bailey of the University of East Anglia, an established historian of medieval economics, had just delivered a lecture on the exploitative politics of the Abbey that had resulted in several popular uprisings against the Abbey.

The Vicar of St Mary's picked up on this lecture to point out that the story which the Overarching Plan had proposed did not sufficiently acknowledge the contested history of the Abbey and the town. He unreservedly sided with those who had brought down the Abbey:

> There is a really fantastic opportunity to do something different because this is contested heritage and that's an important phrase in 2021 because this is contested heritage and was in the 1530s and the 1540s but it was frankly probably in 1021. We've got a fantastic opportunity to hold contested stories in a healthy dissenting, diverse way. Let's not have a meta-narrative top-down centrist approach that tells us who we are.

The Vicar of St Mary's rejected the narrative proposed by the Overarching Plan that presented the Abbey's legacy in unambiguous terms as a loss. He openly called for an acknowledgement of dissenting views on the legacy of the Abbey which he considered to be a contested heritage. This view had never been articulated before at the meetings of the Heritage Partnership. One dedicated member of the Heritage Partnership, a local historian, had now and then said that the historical legacy of the Abbey was nothing to celebrate – emphasizing the antagonistic relations between the townspeople and the Abbey – but he had never made this a subject for discussion. As the author of ten popular local history books, the historian is a very well-known and much-liked figure around the town. He owed his role in the Heritage Partnership to being the Chair of the Bury St. Edmunds Society. The Bury Society is "open to everyone who cares about Bury St Edmunds' past, present and future" (website) and constitutes the most important civic society in Bury St Edmunds. Genuinely interested in the history of the Abbey, this local historian was always in favour of the conservation and the heritagization of the Abbey ruins. As a born and bred local, proud of local history, he just did not see any reason why its history should not be celebrated.

With the Vicar of St Mary's, though, things were different. Hailing from the industrial North, he had an affinity for the church that declared itself as belonging to the "evangelical tradition of the Church of England". As

a "civic church" situated in the former precinct of the Abbey, St Mary's prides itself on being "the people's church". The Vicar claimed a genealogy for St Mary's that positioned this evangelical church in opposition to the Cathedral that, having adopted St Edmund as its patron saint, had positioned itself as heir to the Abbey. He suggested that the Cathedral could be characterized as "high church" while St Mary's is unmistakably "low church". As "low church", St Mary's places itself in the genealogy of the Reformation and thus, in favour of the Dissolution of the Monasteries imposed by King Henry VIII. This antagonism was clear in the Vicar's intervention. At the Core Group meeting in July 2021, the Vicar tabled a document that presented his dissenting view.[3] Circulated well ahead of the meeting, this document clearly presented his views on the work of the Heritage Partnership.

The document was a real pamphlet opposing the letter and the spirit of the current orientation of the Heritage Partnership. The Vicar of St Mary's seriously criticized the Heritage Partnership's draft Overarching Plan and framed his concerns in different registers. The first register in which to convey his critique was by stating that he did not accept the Heritage Partnership's narrative:

> Stories matter. The Core Group is right to realize that an overarching story will shape interpretations, stir emotions and help people to engage. But it's essential that the right story is told. It must be a truthful story.

The Vicar felt that the story told by the Overarching Plan was not a truthful story. A story that is framed to attract funding, he felt, is likely to meet scepticism. Moreover, given the "wicked" aspects of the history of the Abbey:

> I cannot support the story as it is currently offered, nor put the name of St Mary's Church to publications which endorse it.

The Vicar went on to explain the various reasons why he could not support the draft Overarching Plan. The first reason, he said, is that the Abbey no longer exists. In his mind, by using the present tense, the Overarching Plan presented the Abbey as if it still existed. In his mind, this was a misrepresentation. After all, the Abbey was destroyed in 1539 and all that remained today are its ruins. He said that at St Mary's, to this day the congregation is thankful for the destruction of the Abbey:

> Let us acknowledge, whatever we feel about the Abbey and the way that it held the Christian faith in its life, that its sheer absence from the town is its most salient and relevant feature. Its destruction was more thorough than many other similar sites in East Anglia, and across the country, presumably in proportion to its local unpopularity.

Creating a historical analogy between the original position of Protestants in 1539 and the convictions of St Mary's current congregation, the Vicar rejected the way in which the Overarching Plan remembered the relationship between Abbey and town:

> But the Overarching Plan seems to very much want to declare the Abbey to have been a success. It finds a bizarrely coy way of acknowledging that "the relationships between the Abbey and the town have been crucial and somewhat turbulent." What an understatement! Why are we so shy about the deep and prolonged conflict and the awful tyranny and bloodshed that arose because of the misrule of the abbots and their allies?

Recalling the exploitative relationship that the Abbey's monks entertained with the inhabitants of the town, and calling St Mary's as the people's church, the Vicar identified himself in opposing the way the Abbey's monks behaved toward the town's population:

> As a Christian, I am appalled at the way that the Abbey greedily exploited the most vulnerable people for its own gain and glorification. As a Christian minister, I am deeply ashamed.

Therefore, any attempt to revive the Abbey or to reconstruct its legacy should be avoided:

> Please, let us not rebuild the Abbey, neither in words or stone!

The document went on to denounce the story the Heritage Partnership told about the Abbey as if it were uncontested and also warned against telling these stories with the aim of fundraising. The Vicar also made a clear distinction between the ways in which St Edmundsbury Cathedral and St Mary's Church relate to the Abbey and suggested that the Cathedral may well wish to embrace its legacy, but St Mary's would not. It is telling that

these reasons are not just historical, they are about the present spirituality of the site:

> The Overarching Plan develops its theme of "Inspiration" as follows, "The Abbey has a special spirit of place and has been sacred since the dawn of history". This does not inspire me; it is simply glib.

The Vicar's reading of the Overarching Plan did not just object to the way it interpreted the Abbey's history, but to its very presentation of the site's spirituality. The Vicar offered an assessment of the Overarching Plan's interpretation of the Abbey's history and the rationale for its heritagization, concluding that none of it seemed to tally well with the theology and mission embraced in St Mary's Church. There was no misunderstanding in the Heritage Partnership meeting over the Vicar's principled stance. Even though this intervention was the most serious contestation of the Partnership's work to date, the discussion that followed was respectful and it was agreed that the draft Overarching Plan should be amended accordingly.

After the Vicar had articulated his concerns, asking the Heritage Partnership to pause its work, the Heritage Partnership recognized the Vicar's intervention. The Overarching Plan was promptly amended and some of the panels that were unveiled in June 2022 mentioned the antagonism between the Abbey and the townspeople including the several revolts and their suppression by the Abbey. By then, the Vicar had moved away from St Mary's due to personal circumstances unrelated to his work. At the time, some people said that his uncompromising stance on the legacy of the Abbey did not fully represent the views of the St Mary's congregation. Indeed, after his intervention St Mary's continued to attend the meetings of the Heritage Partnership in a spirit of positive collaboration.

Nevertheless, the intervention in the work of the Heritage Partnership by the Vicar of St Mary's as a principled Protestant demonstrated how the legacy of the Reformation continues to inspire very different affects for the material remains of the Abbey, even today, when it comes to the conservation and interpretation of religious heritage. Today, the legacy of the Reformation is still present in the feelings people have for the Abbey's remains, their conservation and their interpretation.

## 5. Abiding Wisdom

Between the multiple public events organized during the Abbey 1000 Millennium Celebrations of the foundation of the Benedictine Abbey in Bury St Edmunds, the weekend dedicated to the legacy of St Benedict stood out as the most spiritual celebration and the one most faithful to the reason of commemoration. It was in 1020, the brochure stated, that:

> King Cnut ordered the building of a round, stone church to house the body of St Edmund. Cnut brought 13 Benedictine monks from St Benet's at Hulme in Norfolk and seven from Ely. This was the beginning of the Abbey of Saint Edmund, 1000 years ago. (Abiding Wisdom, 14-15 May 2022)

A handsome booklet offered a full programme of events organized by St Edmundsbury Cathedral including lectures, workshops and conversations at which participants explored "what the Spirit of God is saying to us through the Rule of St Benedict today." The programme enabled St Edmundsbury Cathedral to claim the legacy of the Abbey and thus forge a continuity across the Reformation. The Dean's welcome included the words:

> Here at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, we are inspired by our Benedictine heritage in our worship, work and hospitality. Our recently published Master Plan includes the aim of establishing a new monastic community based here at the Cathedral. Your presence and contribution to Abiding Wisdom will help us discern what a new community might be.
>
> And by being here together this weekend, we draw the wider community's attention to the Benedictine heritage of this town as part of the millennium of the Abbey, our Abbey 1000 celebrations. In doing so we encourage our brothers and sisters to discover Benedictine wisdom for living well.

The event was attended by a variety of people who, in one way of another, appeared to see themselves as heirs to St Benedict's Rule. There were quite a few monks as well as several clergymen and women who did not live in monastic communities. Apart from the public events that attracted many lay people, all other events were attended almost exclusively by Christians with an explicit interest in the legacy of St Benedict and the benefits of his Rule for living today. After the formal welcome by the Dean, in the Cathedral, the guests were taken out on a

walk around the Abbey Gardens, visiting the ruins on a "heritage tour". This tour included a stop at the Holocaust memorial near the Abbey Gate where a tour guide informed participants of the most atrocious event in the history of the Abbey. In the twelfth century, the Jewish population of Bury feared and fled the mob that was chasing them; they called at the Abbey Gate and asked for asylum. Abbot Samson, whose monastery was heavily indebted to some of the Jewish inhabitants of the town, refused to open the Abbey Gate, allowing a pogrom to happen there. With this sobering tale, the participants of the Abiding Wisdom weekend were given some food for thought – and a critical perspective on the Benedictine legacy of the Abbey.

On Saturday, keynote speakers such as Jutta Brueck and Rowan Williams (by Zoom) shared their wisdom of St Benedict's Rule. There were also some interactive sessions. I attended a workshop organized by the members of the Community of St Anselm, founded on the principles of St Benedict, St Ignatius and St Francis, comprising over 150 young adults around the globe. Five young adults who had spent a year in retreat at Lambeth Palace spoke of their personal experiences to a large audience of people on average 30 years older. It was moving to see the young Benedictines reflect on their past retreat and the secular lives that they had subsequently adopted. It certainly gave a sense of what a life regimented by St Benedict's Rule might look like in the twenty-first century when few believers are willing to commit themselves to a life in celibacy.

Apart from the workshops and lectures dedicated to structured learning, other events allowed for "fellowship" amongst the Benedictines gathered here. There was lunch, dinner, mass, Sung Eucharist, and an opportunity to visit an exhibition in the Abbey Scriptorium: "Secrets of the Abbey: History Returns", an exhibition of 12$^{th}$ century manuscripts from Pembroke College, Cambridge. The weekend ended with Vespers and a Procession to the ruins of the Abbey Crypt. This event had been widely publicized and was attended by many townspeople. After the beautiful Vespers in the Cathedral, everyone followed the clergy and choir and processed out of the church onto the street. We walked the short distance to the Abbey Gate and entered the Abbey Gardens to process to the Crypt in the Abbey ruins. There, everyone gathered solemnly, listening to the Cathedral choir. Most clergy were dressed in their vestments and lay people too had dressed for the occasion. In the Crypt, the St Edmundsbury Cathedral Dean, the Anglican bishop and the Roman Catholic bishop, addressed us in an ecumenical service. Gathered at the ruined Crypt, which gave the event

a ring of holiness, the Dean uttered a claim he had made once before and addressed the entire congregation in his booming voice: "Today we reclaim this sacred space."

The Heritage Partnership has taken up the care of the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund. This partnership of religious and secular, civic and community partners, was meant to conserve and interpret the heritage of the ruins. That such an enterprise might eventually result in conflicting interpretations of the ruins was perhaps to be expected. The Heritage Partnership was very much aware of the variety of opinions amongst its members - it was set up to help find common cause in place of the previous lack of coordination between the various partners and landowners across the whole Abbey of St Edmund. Yet, this re-appropriation of a pre-Reformation legacy was probably not expected by some of the partners whose primary interests were cultural, archaeological, historical and generally, secular. Few of them would have expected this to result in a full religious reclamation of the Abbey Crypt. Remarkably, led by representatives of both the Catholic and the Anglican Church, the celebration in the Crypt should be conceived as a joint reclamation of St Edmund in which the traumatic legacy of the Reformation was sutured. On this occasion, the Churches separated by the Reformation overcame their historical divide in an ecumenical reclamation of the pre-Reformation legacy of St Edmund. The process of "heritagisation" of the religious remains eventually enabled religious institutions to reclaim the ruins as religious heritage. During the Vespers the process of secularisation was reversed, resulting in the re-sacralisation of the ruins. What might look like a ruined site bereft of spiritual significance, was on this occasion, re-enchanted. In fact, through the celebration of Vespers in the ruined Crypt, the process of heritagisation was sacralised.

## 6. Discussion

In mid-nineteenth century England, the conservation movement of parish churches was pivotal to the development of a heritage movement in England (Miele, 1995; Swenson, 2013: 59). It may even have had an impact across Europe, given that conservation movements around Europe were in conversation and in competition with each other (Swenson 2013). The conservation movement in the Church of England found a ready audience for the idea of restoration among the members of the Oxford

Movement, an intellectual movement focussed on the restoration of the Catholic liturgy in the Anglican Church, a movement that also embraced a return to Gothic architecture. It is useful to remind ourselves that since the nineteenth century, the "high church" in the Church of England has had an interest in the conservation of church buildings that the Anglican "low church", more interested in the Word and willing to break with "popish" liturgy and showy architecture, rejected as "Catholic". This genealogy explains why the interest of English Heritage to "reconstruct" the Abbey church in a 3D digital model resonated well with the congregation of St Edmundsbury Cathedral. The more Reformist members of St Mary's Church, in contrast, took no interest in the reconstruction of the Abbey church in a 3D model.

As we have seen above, the work of reconstruction can be subject to disputes of various kinds. In the nineteenth century, a conflict of interest arose over the question of whether the conservation of churches was a religious or an aesthetic concern. This conflict, which resulted in debates on the responsibilities of care for religious heritage in a secular context, reverberates today in Bury St Edmunds. English Heritage's Historian used a new technology for the historical reconstruction of the Abbey Church. But his enthusiasm for the monastic architecture was not so much inspired by religious piety, he exalted the design of late Romanesque, early Norman cathedrals as on a par with cathedrals of European stature. To reconstruct this building in 3D digital form was part of his reconstructive impulse to celebrate the building as an *architectural* and *aesthetic* achievement. His reconstruction served to convey its magnificence to its publics who have great difficulty imagining the building that once was. The reconstruction of the building on interpretation panels served the instruction of visitors as a pedagogic device.

This is not quite how the Vicar of St Mary's saw the reconstruction of the building in 3D digital and graphic formats at the time. To him, the Abbey of St Edmund was an oppressive institution that exploited the townspeople and abused people's superstitions to serve the greed of the abbot and the monks. To him, King Henry VIII and his chief secretary, Thomas Cromwell, justly suppressed the monastery. The heritage initiatives to improve the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund served at best as an opportunity to recognize the site as "contested heritage". To him, the initiatives presented an opportunity to confront the problematic past of the Abbey. While his views helped create a context for reflection on the historical institution of the Abbey, his term of office was too short to result in further dialogue

on the issue. If the Historian went about his tasks in a hands-on manner reconstructing the monastic heritage in 3D digital and graphic formats, the Vicar rejected the concept of reconstruction as a matter of principle. His rejection of reconstruction as a method of heritage interpretation conveyed his embrace of another paradigm of heritage conservation and interpretation, one not aimed at reconstruction but at reform.

Finally, the Cathedral Dean's interventions presented yet another take on reconstruction: he presents the ambition to turn St Edmundsbury Cathedral into a prospering enterprise. Conscious of the financial challenges that Cathedrals face in our secular age with shrinking numbers of churchgoers, his interest in the heritage project of the Abbey of St Edmund was partly financial. He suggested that the 3D digital reconstruction of the Abbey should enable online visitors to have a "fly-through" experience of the Abbey Church. This, he believed, could enhance the experience of the digital model and increase visitor numbers to the Cathedral. In his entrepreneurial vision, the reconstruction of the Abbey was an instrument to promote the Abbey and the Cathedral as tourist destinations. Interestingly, his ecumenical reclamations of the ruined crypt seemed to serve a policy in which the distinction between a religious reclamation of the pre-Reformation site and its promotion as a tourist destination seemed to blur. Indeed, in his and the Heritage Partnership's view, religion, spirituality, and commercial interests are not at odds, but go together. This leads us to some final reflections on the segregation and entanglement of the sacred and the secular in religious heritage.

## 7. Conclusion

In nineteenth-century France, Germany and Britain, the question arose whether churches were to be considered a national heritage and to what extent the state had a responsibility in legislating the preservation of churches (Swenson, 2013). The question was whether churches were a responsibility of care for the (secular) state. These questions do not seem to arise for the Heritage Partnership in which distinctions between the secular and the spiritual do not cause conflict. Yet among Bury's religious congregations affects for the ruins and their conservation clearly diverge. As this divergence demonstrates, the heritagisation of the ruins of the Abbey of St Edmund is subject to different religious positions. Members of different congregations have different feelings about the ruins of the

Abbey; in addition, there are other, un-churched spiritualities and affects for the ruins. What once was a church of formidable dimensions that imposed one canonical experience, is now a ruin that affords diverse affects for its conservation. In their important work, Meyer and Van de Port (2018), Meyer (2010), and Meyer & De Witte (2013) demonstrate that "aesthetics of persuasion" authenticate cultural heritage. But as our case demonstrates, such aesthetics are not necessarily shared. Affects for ruins, it is often forgotten, can be very diverse.

In this context, in which the ruins are framed in different registers, one may ask how the Cathedral Dean's reclamation of the Abbey ruins should be understood. Is it part of a spiritual mission to re-sacralise the ruined crypt? Clearly, the interpretation offered by English Heritage is not construed to sacralise the heritage of the Abbey, but to celebrate it as an architectural legacy. The reconstruction of the church in heritage interpretation mainly relies on an aestheticisation that is secular in register. In that sense, one may argue that the Heritage Partnership pursues the heritagisation of the ruins in an aesthetic register, while the Cathedral pursues its "re-sacralisation" in a religious register. Depending on the framing, the Abbey ruins are either the remains of great architecture or the remains of an inspiring monastic church. Given the spiritual connotations of the latter register, religious traces remain ambient in a post-secular public sphere (cf. Engelke 2012).

While the Heritage Partnership and English Heritage pursue an "aestheticisation" of this heritage, the Cathedral "sacralises" the ruins, resulting in separate, yet mutually supportive registers of "heritagisation" of the Abbey of St Edmund. In contrast to the intersection of "religion" and "heritagization" in other English Cathedrals (Coleman, 2023), we observe that discourses seem to be strategically segregated rather than entangled in their "reclamation" of this religious heritage. Such separation of secular and religious discourses serves the purpose of the restoration and interpretation of religious heritage in a post-secular context in which religious affects are still at work. The restoration of Pre-Reformation religious heritage strains the repair and reconciliation of these age-old religious differences. Nonetheless, in the Heritage Partnership, the careful respect for members' private affects for the Abbey ruins enables an effective collaboration between all its partners.

## Endnotes

1 In recent decades, the interdisciplinary field known as New Materialism has opened an inquiry into the connection between materiality and affect and has probed ways of assessing how materiality produces affects that predispose subjects towards objects (Bennett, 2010; Massumi, 2015). In a parallel development, Critical Heritage Studies have increasingly engaged with the notion of affect to examine how heritage affects visitors (Smith & Campbell 2015; Crouch, 2015; Tolia-Kelly, Waterton, & Watson, 2017; Smith, 2020). The critical apparatus thus developed should assist me in gauging how the transformation of monastic ruins into religious heritage generates diverse, sometimes conflicting affects.

2 '13 New Interpretation Panels and a Model for The Abbey', Home page of the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership, published 25th July 2022: https://www.abbeyofstedmund.org.uk/news/new-interpretation-panels-for-the-abbey/ Accessed 04/05/2025.

3 "Abbey Heritage Partnership - Response to the revised Overarching Plan" (6 July 2021).

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**Biographical note**

Mihai Lukacs is an independent theatre director and a cultural historian of Holocaust and Jewish studies. He wrote and directed performances as well as published articles on Holocaust representation in theatre and the Jewish and Roma engagement with the topic of Holocaust memory in the arts. He completed his PhD in 2015 at Central European University.

# REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA AFTER 1945: FROM YIDDISH THEATRE TO POPULAR LITERATURE

Mihai Lukács

**Abstract**

Between the end of the Second World War and the late 1970s, artists in Romania responded to the trauma of the Holocaust through theatre and literature, navigating censorship, ideology, and the disappearance of witnesses. In 1945, orphaned survivors of the Transnistrian camps performed their memories at the Barasheum Theatre, assisted by theatre practitioners. That same year, under Iacob Mansdorf's direction, the IKUF Theatre developed a new model that combined socialist realism with collective mourning. Holocaust themes remained central in postwar Jewish theatre, including productions such as *Night Shift* (1949) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1957), which introduced more personal and psychological dimensions. These artistic forms gradually reflected the shifting ideological and social climate of socialist Romania. The article incorporates an autotheoretical approach that combines personal narrative with critical theory, drawing on memoir, philosophy and political reflection. Through this hybrid method, the text engages with key issues in Holocaust studies, including post-witness memory, archival research and the politics of imagination. It argues that Romanian representations of the Holocaust contribute to a broader understanding of the functions and challenges of historical representation today.

**Keywords:** autotheory, representation, memory, imagination, Holocaust, theatre, phantasy

This paper explores the representation of the Holocaust in Romanian art between 1945 and the 1970s and how this specific form of historical representation can engage with contemporary debates in Holocaust studies regarding post-witness memory, the archival turn, and the ongoing question of representation's purpose. To deepen the analysis, the paper incorporates an autotheoretical approach, a hybrid genre that merges personal narrative with critical theory, by blending memoir, philosophy,

and political reflection. This involves reflecting on my own experiences working on three unconventional artistic performances that addressed the representation of the Holocaust in contemporary research-based theatre. Besides the physical disappearance of direct witnesses, a new approach to Holocaust education and representation has emerged. This shift is grounded in archival research and has been enabled by the unprecedented accessibility of freely available online information. Resources now include digitized collections of written and filmed testimonies, as well as documents published by institutions such as the Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem, or the Arolsen Archives. Numerous online encyclopedias present key events and figures, while social media platforms circulate shared experiences in the form of excerpts, podcasts, or videos (Urman et al., 2023). Hoskins (2011) associates this new Holocaust memory ecosystem with the condition of informational post-scarcity as part of a new culture, which generates a high volume of inaccuracy or one-sided views on complex topics (Grabowski & Klein, 2023) that can even lead to the propagation of new digital forms of antisemitism. The distortion of Holocaust-related information cannot be filtered in an analogue method anymore, as the flow of information overcomes human control. New technological solutions are being searched at the moment to interact with the vast amount of online Holocaust information, including generative AI integration that focuses on Holocaust memory. The amount of accessible archived materials, reactions, and interpretations of particular traumatic historical events is continuously increasing, making the "analogue" analysis even more difficult and incomplete.

The classical or pre-Kantian philosophy assumed that suitable forms of representation are adequate to the realities they evoke while modern or post-Kantian philosophy assumed the generalised crisis of representation as one of the major problems to be addressed. As the Lacanian philosopher Alenka Zupančič wrote, representation is one of the key concepts of modern thought and one of the ideas that we are struggling with today: "If one were to name one central issue that distinguishes the rise of modern thought, it is perhaps none other than precisely the issue of representation, its profound interrogation, and the whole consequent turn against the logic of representation." (Zupančič, 2004, p. 197). Far from solving the crisis of Holocaust representation, the new post-scarcity conditions offer new challenges in terms of representation, interpretation and imagination.

Representation involves not only visual images but also acts of imagination and illusion. It draws upon concepts such as synthesis,

autonomy, duality, and resemblance, all of which shape how meaning is constructed and perceived. Although representation appears infinite, it doesn't point to a fixed object; instead, it is caught in an endless chain of signifiers, constantly referring to something else. Repression helps us keep a distance from certain representations that might affect us too strongly. It allows us to push away thoughts or memories that disturb or unsettle us. The Real, in Lacanian terms, that we have no possible access to, stands for the limits of representation itself. It lies beyond what can be fully captured by language or mental images. Representation is always incomplete and alienating for the subject by distancing it from any direct experience. The tension between representation and direct experience remains a central issue in philosophy and critical theory, especially after the digital turn. In this particular historical context, the claims that Holocaust literature, poetry, and art, in general, can be read as testimony (Felman & Laub, 1992) can find new meanings. The poetry of witnessing the Holocaust was not a new phenomenon, as the historical experiences of war, slavery, torture, or killing had previously found expression in poetry through which the survivor asked the reader to bear witness and extreme attention (Rowland, 2014). This ethical contract with the reader transformed poetry into a performative protest—not only as an exercise in empathy, but as a different kind of engagement that operated, and continues to operate, as a real experience. These dynamics are especially present on stage, in imaginative performances that give meaning to historical traumatic events such as the Holocaust, mediated not by direct experience but through the presence of live bodies on stage.

The contradiction/distinction between memory and imagination was/is based on the dangers of distortion of memory, a strong interdiction based on Adorno's 1949 statement on the barbarism of writing poetry after Auschwitz and on Hannah Arendt's approach to the horror of the Holocaust: "the horror of the concentration and extermination camps can never be fully embraced by the imagination for the very reason that it stands outside of life and death" (Arendt, 1966, p. 444). Nevertheless, instead of putting an interdiction on further representation as an impossible task, the unprecedented destruction that was the Holocaust shifted the previous models of artistic representation, the usage of existing traditions and conventions in describing atrocity, undermining the possible assumptions about the limits of representation (Feldman & Sicher, 2024). Moving away from romantic or modernist conventions, the authors of what Feldman and Sicher called "poesis in extremis" also avoid the

form of documentary realism as expected in artistic testimony (Young, 1988). Artists who experienced the Holocaust themselves did not stop producing art, but on the contrary, the unprecedented reality that they experienced and survived made them use their craft and aesthetics in new artistic directions, as a necessary endeavour to preserve the will to live (Goldberg, 2017). The artistic voice continued to struggle "with the traumatising effects of dehumanisation by addressing the alienation of self and body and exposing the blurring of the distinction between life and death" (Feldman & Sicher, 2024, p.6). In this effort that became essential to stay alive, artists who experienced the Holocaust, like Ida Kamińska or Jerzy Jurandot, were more productive than they were before.

In the first decades after 1945, the major global topics of the Holocaust in terms of research and also artistic representation were the anti-Jewish policy in Europe (including ghettos and camps), the Jewish resistance, and the rescue of Jews (Baumel-Schwartz & Shrira, 2023). The interplay between memory and imagination in Romania brought into focus two distinct political sites, each carrying different historical and symbolic weight: Auschwitz and Transnistria. These were seen as the two places of absolute horror, one connected to the victims of the German state in Northern Transylvania, Western and Central Europe and the other as a location of Romanian state-run extermination. These distinctions, with their silences and moments of painful attention, are still common nowadays in Holocaust research, representation, and public commemoration. The two locations employ separate forms of memory and imagination for a Romanian-focused audience. Nevertheless, further explorations of the psychological impact of the Holocaust on survivors and on the second generation (and most recently, the third or even fourth generations) were absent from the Romanian context even if the need for these research and discussion themes could be followed when the Holocaust topic was addressed.

Following the liberation of Romania in August 1944, the Yiddish theatre emerged as the first platform in the country to confront the atrocities of the Holocaust. Drawing on a rich theatrical tradition, these productions continued a legacy of performance even under the harshest conditions — from cultural resistance at the Barasheum Theatre under the Antonescu regime to plays staged in Transnistrian camps, such as *Day and Night* by Ansky or *The Liberation of Moses* at the Vapniarka camp. This artistic response to the horrors endured by the Jews received support from the newly established post-fascist state. Even orphaned

survivors of Transnistrian camps found expression through theatre. On March 6th, 1945, the Barasheum Hall hosted a *Yiddish Language Arts Festival* performed by these children based on their camp experiences. The large audience witnessed an emotional display of sketches based on their harrowing life stories: *The Fire* and *Transnistria* brought tears to the audience's eyes. These raw portrayals depicted the horrors they witnessed in ghettos and during forced marches. But the performances weren't solely about the dark recent past. *The Yeshiva and the Cheder* offered a glimpse of pre-war Jewish life, a bittersweet blend of sadness and humour while the second half of the show looked towards the future. Another short performance calling for the realisation of a Jewish homeland, Eretz Israel, was presented as a beacon of hope. Additionally, joyful music and dance expressed gratitude to their liberators, the Red Army, and the United Nations. ("Festivalul orfanilor din Transnistria", 1945; Lukács, 2019).

In June 1945, just months after the war's end, the newly formed IKUF (Yidisher Kultur Farband / Jewish Culture Association) started its activities. They organised a Yiddish poetry festival at the Barasheum Theatre, with Iacob Mansdorf, a former actor of the well-known Yiddish Vilna Theatre Company, who performed in Romania in the 1930s, among the participants. Building on this momentum, IKUF publicly announced the establishment of their Yiddish theatre that same month. The IKUF Theatre would have a distinct artistic direction, and was described as "a progressive folk and art theatre." (Lax, 1945).

A meeting held by IKUF on June 12th attracted numerous representatives from various Jewish communities in Romania. The goal was to establish the new IKUF theatre. Dr. Eng. Lascăr Goldenberg presided, and prominent figures like Barbu Lăzăreanu, M. Lax, Lascăr Șaraga, and Mauriciu Marcu participated. M. Lax even read a letter of support from Chief Rabbi Dr. Al. Șafran. The renowned actor Iacob Mansdorf played a key role in these efforts. He explained the theatre's vision and even presented scenes from the play *Ih Leb (I Live)* by Soviet playwright M. Pincevsky. Enthusiasm was high, with attendees immediately launching subscriptions to support the theatre. By mid-October 1945, the establishment of the IKUF Theater under Mansdorf's artistic direction was solidified and the focus was building on the legacy of the Vilna Troupe.

On October 19, 1945, the IKUF Yiddish Art Theater inaugurated its activities at the Barasheum Theater Hall with the premiere of *I Live*, a drama centered on resistance within a Ukrainian extermination camp in Transnistria. This event, officially endorsed by Romanian authorities,

marked a significant moment in the postwar reconfiguration of Jewish-Romanian cultural relations. A preview performance for officials and members of the press, attended by the Minister of Arts Mihail Ralea and the General Director of Theatres N.D. Cocea, underscored the state's declared commitment to supporting Jewish artistic expression. Figures such as Niky Atanasiu (President of the Artists' Union), Iacob Groper (President of the Yiddish Writers' Association), and Ury Benador (Romanian-Jewish Writers' Association) also signaled their endorsement through their presence ("Deschiderea Teatrului Evreiesc de Artă IKUF", 1945).

*I Live* maintained the performative conventions of Jewish theatre while confronting the unprecedented historical rupture of the Holocaust. Pincevsky's script articulated a straightforward yet deep conflict: the persistence of human dignity, sacrifice, and hope in the face of unimaginable horror. The production was received with intense emotional resonance by its first audiences. In particular, Iacob Mansdorf's portrayal of Rabbi Shafir — embodying the figure of a wise and steadfast communal leader — was widely praised for its restraint and emotional power. Critical accounts emphasized that his performance succeeded in mediating the play's underlying tension between human nobility and moral collapse. The scenographic designs by Jules Perahim further enhanced the aesthetic and emotional impact of the performance.

The founding of the IKUF Theater must be situated within the broader context of postwar cultural renewal. It represented an effort to reestablish Yiddish theatrical production in Romania on a foundation of artistic seriousness and ideological engagement. Under the leadership of Iacob Mansdorf — a figure with considerable experience in the Vilna Troupe and other European Yiddish companies — the theatre explicitly distanced itself from the prewar dominance of "Schund" theatre, which had often been associated with commercialized, lowbrow entertainment. In line with emerging currents of socialist realism, the IKUF Theater pursued an artistic program that combined memorialization with social pedagogy.

The selection of *I Live* as the inaugural production was a deliberate act of cultural and political significance. It simultaneously functioned as an act of communal mourning and a reaffirmation of Jewish resilience, aligning the theatre's aesthetic project with broader postwar narratives of survival, resistance, and reconstruction. Mansdorf sought to cultivate a new generation of actors, less entangled in the factionalism of the prewar Yiddish stage, aiming to build a coherent and ideologically committed ensemble.

Nonetheless, the IKUF Theater's early trajectory was not without difficulties. Persistent financial constraints, tensions between veteran performers and new recruits, and criticisms of Mansdorf's leadership surfaced rapidly. Some contemporary commentators argued that, despite its ambitions, the theatre lacked a genuinely prophetic articulation of Holocaust trauma (Lukács, 2022). Others pointed to the unevenness of the ensemble as a limiting factor in achieving the theater's artistic goals.

Despite these challenges, the IKUF Theater occupies a crucial position in the history of Romanian Yiddish culture. By foregrounding Holocaust memory from the survivors' perspective and rejecting commodified forms of entertainment, it forged a bridge between the shattered cultural landscape of the prewar period and the aspirations of a new, postwar Jewish artistic consciousness.

The IKUF Theater embarked on a national tour in over 25 cities in April-March 1946. While their Bucharest production *I Live* enjoyed great success for various Jewish communities of Holocaust survivors, the tour itself became a different kind of journey ("Turneul IKUF în Moldova", 1946). Iacob Mansdorf wrote a passionate letter to colleagues back in the capital. He described the tour not as a financial triumph, but as a "moral success" of profound connection with surviving Jewish communities. Mansdorf encountered devastation. In Cluj, he learned that only 1,500 Jews remained out of a pre-war population of 20,000. Educational institutions were gone, and the cultural life he cherished was shattered. He lamented the disconnect between Bucharest-based artists and these struggling communities. He urged colleagues to visit, share their artistic heritage, and offer solace to those "sick and soul-destroyed" by the horrors they endured. The tour was also a pilgrimage for Mansdorf. He visited the grave of Jehudith Lares, a pioneer of the famed Vilna Troupe, in Arad. Her broken tombstone stood as a stark reminder of a vibrant artistic tradition nearly erased (Kawa, 1946; Lukács, 2023). The performances brought joy and a sense of connection to those who desperately needed it.

The IKUF Theatre's *I Live* resonated deeply with audiences all over the country, formed mainly by devastated Jewish communities, trying to adapt to the new post-war conditions. In Brașov, for example, the show, performed for the local Jewish community still grappling with the wounds of war, offered a sense of comfort. The powerful response was evident when the curtain rose, when the audience erupted, demonstrating the play's significance for their process of dealing with the recent traumatic events: "Over the still unhealed wounds of the Jewish population of

Transylvania that suffered so much, the performances of the IKUF Theatre spread a soothing balm and constituted an incentive in the recovery work that this much-tried population is putting forth. The audience's reaction to the curtain raising of the show 'Ich Leb!' on which is printed the slogan 'Am Israel hai!' was tremendous." ("Turneul Teatrului IKUF", 1946).

Another representation of *I Live* in Oradea, part of the same tour, is described by B. Raluca in a review that captures the emotional intensity of the performance that depicted the horrors of the camps in Transnistria. Scenes of cruelty unfolded at the beginning of the performance, with a camp guard whipping innocent people and shouting commands. The audience reacted immediately with a mixture of breathless silence and clenched fists, expressing their hatred for the brutality they witnessed on stage. The women clung to the men beside them, and a single word filled with condemnation – "The beast!" – was shouted. After the short description of the first scenes and the initial shock, the audience connected to the revolt scenes and identified with the liberated prisoners: "And the scenes keep becoming more horrific and yet as real as the others. The play is a historical document of the contribution of the much-tried Jewish people to the fight against evil and darkness, to the fight for the emancipation of mankind." (Raluca, 1946).

The commitment to Holocaust themes continued after the nationalisation of the Barasheum Theatre in 1948, which led to the creation of the State Jewish Theatre in Bucharest. With the addition of the State Jewish Theater in Iasi (which operated between 1949 and 1963), Romania had two dedicated Jewish theatres. Mansdorf's efforts paved the way for the establishment of the State Jewish Theatre, marking a new era for Yiddish theatre under the socialist regime. While Mansdorf's tenure at the IKUF Theatre was brief (only two years), his legacy lies in his attempt to create a high-calibre, politically engaged Yiddish theatre that reflected the changing times.

Following the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, the two Jewish state-run theatres adopted a new approach heavily influenced by the IKUF Theatre's model. This shift, starting in 1948, emphasised "art" over entertainment, with a focus on cultural and educational themes. Productions followed the principles of socialist realism, taking inspiration from the Stanislavsky system of acting. These theatres featured a mix of experienced and young actors and actively toured the country with new technical and stage methods. The Bucharest State Jewish Theatre premiered *Night Shift* in October 1949 and marked a significant moment. Written

by Ludovic Bruckstein, a survivor of Auschwitz, it was the first locally written Yiddish drama about Jewish life under the new communist regime. The play centered on two Auschwitz survivors, Lana and Mira, awaiting their husbands' return from a factory night shift. The narrative interweaves memories of the concentration camp's brutality with the hope for a better future. Bruckstein drew inspiration from the 1944 Sonderkommando revolt at Auschwitz, a story he encountered during his imprisonment. Also, Bruckstein's experience attending IKUF Theatre performances in 1946 directly influenced *The Night Shift*. He was particularly impressed by Iacob Mansdorf's directing style and realistic acting. Bruckstein viewed the IKUF Theatre as a positive step towards a high-quality Jewish theatre and felt the existing Yiddish theatre scene lacked focus and substance. *The Night Shift* reflects the ideological framework of the time. The play emphasises class struggle rather than ethnicity, blaming the "barbaric bourgeoisie" for the Holocaust. This shift is evident in characters like Sacher, the Jewish collaborator, and Heinrich, the "good" German. The play portrays work as a symbol of liberation and integration for Jewish survivors, contrasting it with the forced labour of the camps. This perspective drew criticism from the writer and theatre critic Valentin Silvestru, who argued the play toned down the ongoing social struggles faced by Romania's Jewish population (Lukács, 2019). Despite these criticisms, *The Night Shift* became a model for socialist theatre, aligning with the regime's critique of the old order. While the play addressed the Holocaust within an international context, it did not spark a broader public debate in Romania due to persistent anti-Semitism, the government's efforts to deflect blame, and the Communist Party's increasingly dominant anti-Zionist stance, which soon became official state policy. Unlike in Western Europe, where public memory largely remained silent at that historical moment by focusing on postwar reconstruction, Romania publicly condemned the Antonescu regime and its alliance with Nazi Germany, using this as part of a broader political realignment under the new Communist power. However, the focus was on Nazi culpability, downplaying Romanian involvement in the Holocaust. Plays like *The Night Shift* could exist because they placed the blame on an external entity, Nazi Germany, rather than acknowledging Romania's role in the genocide. The State Jewish Theatre, influenced by the IKUF Theatre's model, proposed a new approach to Yiddish theatre under communist Romania. *The Night Shift* served as a groundbreaking Holocaust drama, albeit tinged by the limitations due to the political climate. While the play sparked dialogue within Jewish communities, the

broader Romanian public remained largely disengaged due to the state's efforts to control the narrative surrounding the Holocaust.

If thousands of performances about the Holocaust have been staged around the world since 1945, all these works functioned as a means for communities, artists, and audiences to make sense of the legacy of the Holocaust, as Erika Hughes (2024) observes. Not following a singular style or storytelling mechanism, "this incredibly diverse canon of plays, musicals, documentary and archival adaptations, applied theatre, pageants, ceremonies, and concerts reflects manifold ideas of what the Holocaust was, whom it affected, how it should be remembered, and why it should serve as a warning for the future." (Hughes, 2024, p. 1). This history of representation was extended to other art forms. Following this pattern, we already have an extended archive of representations of the Holocaust that were constructed in particular historical contexts and various forms of addressing a traumatic event that changed European communities in dramatic ways. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, in its Broadway adaptation by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, remains one of the most popular plays about the Holocaust. The figure of the most famous Holocaust victim established a specific popular approach that placed a young female protagonist at its center, offering an accessible identification model for young audiences in the context of Holocaust and anti-fascist education. In 2019, there were fifty-six current productions of the play in the original form and another fifty-five of Wendy Kesselman's revised version (Hughes, 2024, p. 8). Starting with 1955, the year of its Broadway premiere, *The Diary of Anne Frank* was seen in Romania as an international success in terms of Holocaust remembrance: "All over Germany, theatre lovers are talking about a theatrical event, meant to be seen as a stirring protest of people of good faith against the forces of darkness in our times, it is the German premiere of the staging of? 'The Diary of Anne Frank'" ("Jurnalul Annei Frank", 1955, p. 4). The same newspaper presented the German-language premiere as a monumental event that marked the post-war cultural life:

> The theatres of Aachen and Konstanz, of Düsseldorf, West Berlin and Hamburg, of Mainz, Karlsruhe, Munich, and Dresden, and even those of Vienna and Zürich have waived the right of the premiere, so long coveted for commercial reasons, by agreeing that the premiere of this play should take place on all stages on the same day and at the same hour. ("Jurnalul Annei Frank", 1955, p. 4).

The Bucharest State Jewish Theatre's 1957 production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, directed by George Teodorescu, offered a new and distinct perspective on the Holocaust within the Romanian theatre scene. Unlike many productions of the era, which often emphasized socialist ideology, *The Diary* focused on the personal journey of a young girl grappling with confinement and fear — a narrative that resonated widely with audiences. The innovative use of intermissions featuring narrated excerpts from Anne's diary deepened the audience's immersion into her world.

Theatre critic Ecaterina Oproiu praised the play's raw honesty and the strategic avoidance of graphic depictions of concentration camps, emphasizing instead the psychological and emotional landscape of Anne's experience. Oproiu noted that seemingly mundane details — such as the fear of forgetting how to dance or the theft of a cookie — carried greater emotional weight than sensationalized portrayals of atrocity (Lukács, 2019).

Director George Teodorescu's careful staging, supported by outstanding performances from Lya Koenig and Ophelia Strahl, further contributed to the production's impact. In a theatre culture dominated by ideological narratives, *The Diary of Anne Frank* stood out for its focus on personal resilience and the innocent, unfiltered perspective of a young girl facing unimaginable adversity.

*The Diary of Anne Frank* left an indelible mark on Romanian theatre and its success transcended cultural and political boundaries. Staged in other Romanian cities such as Iași, the play continued to resonate with audiences for a long time, offering a different, more personal perspective on the Holocaust. These types of productions of the State Jewish Theatres dealt directly and indirectly (in performances based on classical plays, for example) with the Holocaust until the early 1960s, when such plays became increasingly rare. Until the mid-1980s, the Jewish State Theater's repertoire became tokenistic, with only one play staged annually.

Miriam Bercovici witnessed the first staging of *The Diary of Anne Frank* in Bucharest, and she remembered how the audience raised and applauded Ana Pauker for her presence, even if she was already forgotten by the Party. Miriam Bercovici survived the camps in Transnistria while many of her relatives lost their lives. I asked her in 2022 and 2023 in two personal interviews how the Holocaust was represented in theatre, film, and literature in Romania and her answer was surprising. Her main issue with Holocaust representation was the focus on Auschwitz as the centre of suffering while Transnistria was forgotten. In trying to understand

the political context of not discussing the Romanian Holocaust, her explanation was also connected to the main forms of representing the Holocaust: "It was all about Auschwitz, everything. Auschwitz was the pinnacle and that's why it happened. Transnistria was nothing but epidemic typhus, typhoid fever, and other diseases and people dying of hunger." The focus on Auschwitz provoked a strong and constant feeling of exclusion, of suffering that was not recognized, and negative feelings towards the stories told in the well-known set-up. As she explained in the interview, the untold stories are marked on the body and are persistent even 80 years after the events:

> I can say this much: in fact, I was jealous of those in Auschwitz because they are being talked about because those in Transnistria died piece by piece. Those from Auschwitz solved the problem. Those who were burned, and those who were directly taken to the furnaces were happy, they did not know that they were going to the furnace. You know they were told that the Zyklon gas was a disinfectant while we from Transnistria were dying bit by bit, sick, hungry, parasitic, frozen. I can't stand being cold. I have to... When I see a heater... And today the electric heater... I can't help but shower at least every two days because I've been so dirty. Do you understand? That's my feeling. And that's why I envied the people in Auschwitz, I was jealous of them when people talked about them.

Aurel Baranga, a former surrealist poet, and journalist, one of the most important socialist playwrights and a key figure in the cultural structure of socialist Romania, published in 1945 a series of reportages written in the form of short stories mainly with a first-person narrator, about the camps in Transnistria in the daily *România Liberă*, that were collected the same year in a volume titled *Snowing over Ukraine*. Presented as "powerful reportage", the stories are a play between imagination and memory, even if the marketing campaign of the book strictly emphasised the aspect of the book as a crucial document: "Mr Baranga's testimonies are a humane and realistic document of the horrors committed by the fascists." The value of the book was considered in 1945 based on precisely the play between reality and fantasy, or more specifically, a reality that was presented as a fantasy: "the fact that its substance is derived from reality, a grim, unrelenting reality that seems the figment of a sick fantasy, but which nevertheless existed" (Ulysse, 1945).

In 1976, when he knew that his death was close, Baranga left a literary will with only 6 volumes to be republished, the last one on the list being

*Snowing over Ukraine*, with the mention: "A book that I love because it was the world's first account of Nazi atrocities in extermination camps: 'SNOWING OVER UKRAINE'. In 1948, in 'Națiunea', G. Călinescu wrote a shocking review. I would like to publish it as a preface. And that's that." After this mention, on the last page of his diary, Baranga gave an explicit description of how he burned over 1000 pages from his last 30 years, many of them written with coded inserts he no longer had the code for, "too many smouldering griefs, too many buried despairs to be entrusted to a foreign eye" (Baranga, 1978, p. 188). He took the notebooks to the bathroom, threw them in the bathtub, poured a bottle of medical alcohol on top, and set them on fire. The process was identical to burning his written papers during the Antonescu regime out of fear of being discovered.

Another major figure in postwar Romanian cultural life, Zaharia Stancu — former director of the National Theatre in Bucharest and a complex literary rival to contemporaries like Aurel Baranga — published his final novel, *Șatra* (*The Gypsy Tribe*), in 1968. Inspired by the plight of Roma communities during the Second World War, the novel integrates elements of oral testimony and myth, opening with the disclaimer: "Alimut told me what happened, Kera insisted I write it down" (Stancu, 1986, p. 15). Although based on factual experiences and interviews with Roma survivors of the Transnistria camps, *Șatra* was often promoted as Stancu's only "pure fictional work" (Simion, 1978) and regarded as his literary testament.

Even though it was inspired by facts and documents regarding the Roma deportations to Transnistria and their explicit atrocities, the novel's narrative, as noted by Iorgulescu, "meets mythology, not history, by being projected on a screen of senses that go beyond the concrete data" (Iorgulescu, 1986, p. 5). *Șatra* was a success and remains the only work by Stancu that continues to be republished and widely read today (see Manolescu, 2008, pp. 948–950). The novel's engagement with the Holocaust through non-historical artistic approaches — even if this is more reflective of its reception and critical interpretation than of Stancu's original intent — raises important questions about the role of fiction in processes of remembrance, imagination, and cultural memory.

In 2018, I wrote and directed *Kali Tras / The Black Fear*, co-produced by the Jewish State Theatre, based on the only autobiographical novel by a Roma Holocaust survivor from Transnistria, Valerică Stănescu. The novel is titled "Death in My Eyes". I had the chance to work closely with Mr. Stănescu. Unfortunately, he died suddenly, a few months after he saw the premiere of the performance. His novel was heavily influenced by

Stancu's novel, as an inspiration to connect to his own nomad family's deportation to Transnistria. To imagine the tragic events of Stănescu's real story, the writing of Zaharia Stancu proved to be an essential resource.

Zaharia Stancu's portrayal of the Roma genocide in *Șatra* aligns stylistically with the work of Mateo Maximoff, considered the "first Roma novelist." After 1947, Maximoff was introduced to Romanian readers through translations from French journals and was often presented in the cultural press as a literary curiosity. His novels, addressing the historical trauma of the Roma — from slavery to the Holocaust — employed oral history, autobiographical elements, and fantasy. A 1947 article in *Opinia* featured a profile of Maximoff, focusing on his personal experience as a member of a traditional Kalderash Roma community of 142 people in Montreuil, a suburb of Paris. He was portrayed as the historian of this group, writing about internal conflicts, rigid gender roles, interactions with French authorities, and the dramatic postwar transformations the community endured. His narratives chronicled his arrest, survival, and the impact of the Porajmos (the Roma term for the Holocaust), including the systematic killings of Roma in extermination camps. The article also offered historical data and emphasized Maximoff's role in shedding light on a silenced history:

> Who could have imagined that a people with such strange traditions could live near Paris in these times? It is to Mateo Maximoff's credit that he knew how to put them on paper and thus make them known to the general reading public. ("Mateo Maximoff primul țigan romancier povestește aventurile unor triburi din Franța", 1947, p. 2).

The article also compared the French Roma community to the Roma population in Romania, noting that the latter faced significantly harsher living conditions and was met with widespread indifference from broader society.

Stancu's *Șatra* functions as an epic narrative about the disappearance of a small Roma community — a community crushed by a brutal state and, in the words of Iorgulescu, by "a History that is cruel and uncaring of the lives of the people" (1986, p. 5), or as another critic puts it, by "the monsters of War and brute Force" (Damian, 1970, p. 70). Iorgulescu observes that the novel, though realist and at times

> heavily documentary, draws symbolic power from its grounding in authentic events and experiences during the Second World War — when "entire populations, considered to be of 'inferior race,' were condemned to extinction and subjected to a delirious program of mass slaughter by internment in industrial annihilation camps, and to mass deportations to remote barren wastelands where survival was virtually impossible. (Iorgulescu, 1986, p. 5).

*Șatra* is anchored in this traumatic memory, condemning the genocidal decisions of the Romanian state, rendered in the novel through absurd, dehumanizing laws blindly enforced by authorities. These regulations, often incomprehensible to the Roma characters, determine the community's tragic fate. Their impact is not limited to the protagonists: Romanian bystanders and officials, either as enforcers or passive observers, witness the deportation of the Roma as if they were "walking dead," bound for a place of no return. For Iorgulescu, the novel engages with the concept of absolute Evil — not as a force external to humanity, like natural disasters or pandemics, but as "the work of other people, who became mere instruments in the service of dark and summary ideologies, fanaticized, enslaved or frightened people to the point of being nothing more than docile executors of institutionalized death." (Iorgulescu, 1986, p. 5).

Nevertheless, *Șatra* does not function as an objective historical reenactment. Rather, it offers a reflective, poetic meditation on the erasure of an entire community — not merely the fate of isolated individuals.

Polish director Tadeusz Kantor's quintessential performance *The Dead Class* (1975) from Krakow focused precisely on a non-historic perspective on the forgotten past in life and art as a form of mass amnesia that functioned performatively as a stronger demand for the audience to put meaning where it was only suggested. As in the case of Stancu, this perspective is not necessarily a break with history, because as Noel Witts notices when discussing Kantor's performances, "it is impossible to understand any of his key performances without being aware of the historical events that shaped them" (Witts, 2010, p. 2). Viewers themselves restored the historical aspect of the Holocaust in various performances by releasing a personal wave of memories from personal experience, family stories, literature, or history lessons, that triggered metaphorical memory associations. The artistic process escapes the restrictions of the temporal boundaries of biography to move beyond simple texts anchored in specific locations and time frames, as in Kantor's case: "Any desire

to provide a historical and social map will immediately be ruptured by the thoughts, events, objects, and people who emerge, disappear, and re-emerge to present their conflicting claims, testimonies, and fragmented (his)stories" (Kobialka, 1993, p. xix). As Niziołek stated in his analysis of *The Dead Class* performance, "Kantor must have realised clearly that he could no longer count on the mechanism of oblivion" (Niziołek, 2014, p. 190). The presence of the director on stage during the performances, as a witness, can be compared to tragic characters such as Antigona, a criminal commander who orders destruction, or a mortician who is taking care of the killed victims, such as the actress who has fallen on the floor in his *Wielopole, Wielopole* (1980) performance, part of his Theatre of Death series.

In the Polish context, the combination of "dismantled symbolic means and extra-symbolic embodied tools and performative acts" (Sendyka, 2022, p. 523) was considered to be a form of non-memory that can still transmit an experience when that experience is difficult or impossible to be addressed within existing cognitive frameworks.

Concepts that frame artistic practice and production are essential for guiding trauma representation analysis toward the specific activities undertaken by artists. Contemporary scholar Lauren Fournier defines *autotheory* not merely as a creative act, but as a method and strategy employed by artists and writers. Focusing on performance, she argues that "performance foregrounds ideas of liveness and the artist's body, iterability and citation, the body in research and documentation" (Fournier, 2021, p. 29). Rather than centering the transcendental subject of aesthetic theory — and its dialectical function within or around the artwork — the notion of "auto" is reconfigured as a critical negation of the Cartesian "I." In Fournier's move away from the autonomous subject and toward poetic heteronomy, *autotheory* becomes a form of critique — and self-critique — that unfolds both within and beyond art.

As a method, autotheory resists traditional disciplinary boundaries. It merges autobiography, memoir, and critical theory to create a hybrid form of expression that challenges conventional literary and academic norms. Through the incorporation of diverse media — such as photography, music, and performance — into the writing process, autotheory expands the possibilities for both narrative and theoretical exploration. It offers a multidimensional and immersive experience that engages both the creator and the audience in rethinking the relationship between personal experience, theory, and artistic practice.

Reflecting on my personal trajectory as a theatre maker, my perspectives on how the Holocaust can be represented on stage have evolved over the years, influenced by new literature and emerging theoretical frameworks. *Mansdorf* — a performance based on the early years of IKUF, which I wrote and directed and which was co-produced by the Jewish State Theatre in 2023 — addresses the challenges and the urgent necessity for Yiddish theatre artists to confront the Holocaust immediately after 1945. The performance operates as a play of memory and imagination, shaped by the material conditions of its venue and ensemble.

Another recent project, *Acting Out* (2024), explores the fictionalized biography of choreographer Esther Magyar, who, in an interview, recounted that she could no longer dance on stage after surviving the Vapniarka camp in Transnistria.

To develop a conceptual orientation toward the difficulty of artistic representations of the Holocaust, it was necessary to construct a broader contextual framework addressing how issues of Holocaust representation have shifted in Romania both before 1989 and today. In comparison, examining similar time frames and theoretical debates in Poland has proven particularly productive, offering a richer understanding of how national contexts shape the evolution of Holocaust representation in performance.

The spark for the *Mansdorf* performance staged at the Jewish State Theatre in Bucharest ignited in an unexpected place: my research on Holocaust representations in Romanian theatre from 1944 to 1989. The prevailing narrative, which ignored Romanian state crimes in Transnistria and their role in the Holocaust, silenced survivors yearning to share their stories. This research, supported by the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, resulted in two articles published in *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*. Studying the Jewish press (1944-1950), I encountered a vibrant spirit of reconstruction. Despite a clear awareness of the tragedy, there was a strong desire for a new beginning. Artists, writers, and theatremakers spearheaded this renewal. Among them stood out Isaiia Răcăciuni, one of the characters in the performance, whose writings balanced the past, present, and future. His background, connected to the pre-war literary scene and the influential revue theatre run by his brother Stroe, provided context. But the story went beyond local figures. New arrivals, both Romanians and European personalities, sought to restart their artistic careers in Romania. The war's final stages offered a haven, a place where Jewish artists and others could rebuild their lives, albeit with

challenges (Lukács, 2023). Iacob Mansdorf, the visionary actor-director, emerged as a prominent figure. His Bucharest theatre company left a lasting mark on how surviving Jewish artists could create Yiddish theatre after the Holocaust. The *Mansdorf* show, staged in the building where Barasheum Theatre functioned (Mansdorf's former workplace), attempts to tell this story.

By consciously working with sharp contradictions, I created *Acting Out*, a performance that interlaces the life of Esther Magyar-Gonda — the Jewish-Hungarian choreographer who survived the Transnistrian camps and later became a key figure in Romanian dance education during the 1950s — with the personal and artistic journey of actress Katia Pascariu, who portrays Magyar-Gonda on stage. In one review of the performance, Székely Örs (Bíró et al., 2024) raised the question of Holocaust memory and representation on stage by focusing on the gestural quotation in *Acting Out*: "What is the truth of the data-centered form of historical memory, and how does it compare to the imprint-like outlines of the body, passed on through gestures? According to Walter Benjamin, Brecht's epic theatre is a tradition that sets itself the task of making the actor's gestures quotable, and the quotation is a strategic operation of taking them out of context, through which generations past and present give each other an unmarked, secret meeting."

Georg Lukács, the Hungarian philosopher of Jewish origin, reflected deeply on how historical tragedy can be represented in art. Although he did not directly address the Shoah, his thought resonates with the conceptual challenges of representing the Holocaust. Lukács identified a central paradox in the artistic treatment of trauma: the tension between the internal necessity of tragic action and the external, often arbitrary and meaningless, constraints imposed by historical reality. For him, the greater the distance between these two forces, the deeper and more compelling the narrative becomes. Tragedy, in his view, arises from a "categorical opposition" between pure will and pure compulsion.

Artists engaged with traumatic histories frequently confront this tension, seeking within the historical event not just realism but what Lukács called the "ultimate symbol of human limitation" — the stubborn resistance of material reality to the creative or moral will. In writing about tragedy, Lukács describes this dynamic as the brutal severance of action from intention, where "the power of what merely is" ultimately overwhelms "what should be" (Foster, 2022; Wetters, 2023). In this framework, trauma becomes legible as tragedy: not simply a record of suffering, but a structure

of profound ethical and ontological rupture — where meaning and agency are undone by historical violence.

The unselective force of brute reality, in Lukácsian terms, annihilates any intention held by the protagonist — as exemplified in the case of Anne Frank, the paradigmatic figure of Holocaust representation. Her intentions, marked by a certain purity and original aim, are violently interrupted by the antagonist force of historical reality. For Georg Lukács, the historical loss of a meaningful "closed totality" in human life and culture — a loss replaced by the alienation and fragmentation of modernity — was a key reason behind the philosophical and aesthetic interest in traumatic narratives, particularly those emerging from the catastrophic ruptures of recent history (Foster, 2022; Wetters, 2023).

Holocaust representation thus reveals the gap between individual consciousness and the objectified structure of the world — a world in which individuals can no longer take for granted a coherent or totalizing meaning. In engaging with traumatic histories, artistic works seek to express a deeper understanding of the human condition: a condition in which the creative will confronts the immovable constraints of material reality, leading not to resolution, but to the destruction of intention and the exposure of a darker, more elusive dimension of human existence. This tragic dynamic echoes Lukács's broader philosophical concern with the dissolution of cultural and social totality in the modern era.

The trauma of the Holocaust proved a challenging subject for Romanian playwrights not only with regard to the issues of the right form and concept of representation of recent trauma, but also in terms of integrating their writing in the ever-changing political landscape. Plays dealing with sensitive topics often faced rejection by the Ministry of Arts censorship board. The archives hold scripts like the anonymous *Arrested Woman no. 976: A Play in Three Parts* (rejected in 1947) and *Raisko, the Model Camp: A Dramatic Report in Seven Pictures* by Isaiah Răcăciuni and Maria Davidescu (rejected in 1950).

*Raisko, the Model Camp*, written in 1945, is particularly intriguing. A handwritten note on the first page reveals co-author Maria Davidescu's deportation to Auschwitz. The play, set in 1944 in Auschwitz and its satellite camp Raisko, features a cast of deported women from various backgrounds. The opening scene, set in a "jail wagon," showcases the play's potential to challenge anti-Semitism. Sarah, a Jewish character, declares, "Do you know what it means to be a Jew... to live with the difficult heritage... because one could not choose his or her parents?" This

line, underlined by the censor, highlights the play's exploration of Jewish identity and suffering (Lukacs, 2019). However, the play's focus on Jewish persecution and inter-ethnic unity against fascism clashed with the political climate. Anti-Zionist campaigns were underway, and highlighting Jewish experiences or resistance proved problematic. Consequently, the play, along with others, was deemed unsuitable for performance, effectively silencing these important narratives. In the *Mansdorf* performance, we addressed this particular situation and its staging possibilities as an open question regarding the material limitations of representation.

Silence was a long-term method of not addressing the traumatic memory, as in the case of Miriam Bercovici, who in a personal interview from 2023 mentioned the long period of silence in the Transnistria camp of Djurin, that she compared to Auschwitz. Her traumatic memories as a teenager influenced her long-time silence for over 50 years: "It was not Auschwitz, there were no extermination camps, but you felt that you were dying little by little. I had a period, I didn't know it was called depression, but I had a period when I didn't speak in Transnistria, I simply didn't speak."

Representing the Holocaust works dialectically with the two distinct concepts that affect the way we perceive and interact with the Holocaust, memory and imagination. Memory, the symbolic process that can anchor us to the past, is not a perfect recording but a reconstruction of past experiences based primarily on language, social codes, or cultural norms. Memories are retrieved by composing narratives, fragments, and interpretations, influenced by current contexts and desires. On the other hand, imagination allows us to create new scenarios, desires, or images that are not limited by the symbolic order, moving beyond the limitations of memory. The possibilities of imagination go beyond past experiences. Nevertheless, memory and imagination can slip into one another (Popescu, 2015), while memory depends on imagination in the commitment to remember the past in constructing the present but infusing the social codes of responsibility in symbolic demands such as "never forgetting" or "never again" (Keightley & Pickering, 2012).

As Popescu and Schult (2015) argue in *Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era*, scholarly discourse in the late 1990s and early 2000s emphasized a sharp opposition between imagination and the history and memory of the Holocaust. Within this framework, imagination was often viewed as a distortion of the idealized construction of the past — as it was and ought to be remembered.

More recently, memory itself has been critically reassessed by scholars such as Dorota Sajewska, particularly in relation to its dominant paradigms. For example, in the context of Polish theatre, Sajewska contrasts two influential models: the Romantic paradigm focused on the peripheral status of Polish theatre, as proposed by Leszek Kolankiewicz, and the model advanced by Grzegorz Niziołek, which identifies a structural parallelism between modernity and the Holocaust (Sajewska, 2016). Both models remain rooted in the testimony paradigm.

To move beyond the limitations of memory shaped by grand narratives, Sajewska proposes a turn toward the performativity of archives, grounded not in testimony but in evidence — remains, traces, and vestiges. Concepts such as the body-archive and necro-performance further complicate the relationship between the artist or researcher and archival material. As in autotheoretical approaches, this shift signals the need for concrete, embodied strategies for engaging with cultural history, where research becomes inseparable from artistic and performative practice.

The difficulty of finding a language to transmit the trauma of the Holocaust marked the early artistic endeavours. One of the earliest responses to the Holocaust trauma was provided by poetry, which, unlike prose, goes directly for the affective density necessary to get the attention not only through constative or documentary purposes and "is necessarily oriented toward aesthetic expression; poetry is primarily concerned not with what to say but with how to say it. Poetry, moreover, displaces the usual boundaries that divide the metaphorical and figural from the literal. This blurring of lines between the imaginary and the real produces a lyrical and often-associative semantics or, alternatively, graphically stark realism that shocks the reader into accepting the truth of the incredibly surreal reality of the Holocaust" (Feldman & Sicher, 2024, p. 10). Poetry had the potential to offer an epiphany in addressing the dead relatives or the horrible conditions of the camps and could also affect the reader more powerfully than what Feldman and Sicher called "the false objectivity of prose or photographs", while it could also resist "the denial or burying of testimony". This contradiction between "objective" proof and a speculative and imagined or metaphorical poem was a theme of reflection on the memory of the Holocaust immediately after 1945, as in the case of Robert Antelme: "Poetry did not, surely, run so great a risk of creating that naked, 'objective' testimony, that kind of abstract accusation, that photograph that only frightens us without explicitly teaching anything. It could, on the contrary, risk fleeing the reality of the camps, letting that

reality be glimpsed only through a melodic counterpoint, through themes of nostalgia that surround but never penetrate this reality of fog and words" (Antelme, 2003, p. 33).

The fundamental tension between *phantasy* and the *reality principle* can, according to psychoanalytic theory, be mediated through art. For Sigmund Freud, phantasy refers to unconscious mental processes that fulfill frustrated wishes — both conscious and unconscious — in a realm separated from the constraints of reality testing. These wish-fulfilling imaginings serve as compensatory mechanisms when reality proves unbearable. Melanie Klein later expanded the concept, understanding phantasies as innate, structural elements of psychic life, deeply tied to early object relations and bodily experiences, which gradually evolve into symbolic forms (Spillius, 2001).

Freud contrasted phantasy with the reality principle, the ego's capacity to engage the external world rationally, to delay gratification, and to mediate between inner desire and social norms. As the ego develops from the infantile "pleasure-ego" to the mature "reality-ego," it increasingly represses or channels unconscious drives. Yet Freud also believed that art offers a bridge between these opposing realms. Artistic creation allows unconscious fantasies to be expressed, not as raw instinct, but as sublimated forms that are culturally sanctioned. Art thus becomes a space where internal psychic conflict — between desire and prohibition — can be worked through symbolically.

In the context of Holocaust representation, this psychoanalytic framework takes on urgent significance. The trauma of the Holocaust presents a historical reality so overwhelming that direct representation often fails. In such cases, the space of phantasy — when mediated through art — can offer an oblique but powerful mode of engagement. Rather than denying reality, artistic phantasy may enable access to dimensions of suffering, memory, and loss that remain unspeakable within strictly documentary or realist frameworks. Through sublimation, fantasy becomes not escapism, but a method of returning to historical trauma by way of imaginative transformation — a process through which unbearable realities may be symbolically encountered and partially integrated.

As the last witnesses disappear, the scholarly focus is currently shifting from the ethics and limits of representation to the relevance of imagination in representing the Holocaust, as a form of working against closure (Popescu & Schult, 2015). The current process of representing the Holocaust through post-witness memory relies heavily on imagination.

The local histories of representing the Holocaust, through an extraordinary effort and difficult remembrance, are unremembered in an unassimilated way, a process that goes beyond Freudian repression or the simple act of forgetting. Ulrich Baer was writing in *Spectral Evidence* about unmarked sites of post-violence and trauma as they were photographed: "Landscape photographs produce the mild shock of recovering what seems to be an unremembered —rather than a forgotten— experience" (Baer, 2005, p. 78).

Beyond stylistic and artistic debates, the most significant challenge for Yiddish theatre creators or writers grappling with the Holocaust was navigating a rapidly shifting political landscape after 1944. Jewish communities themselves were undergoing dramatic changes, creating a stark contrast to pre-war life. Some artists, like Iacob Mansdorf, left the devastated landscape. Others, like those involved with the IKUF Theatre or Aurel Baranga, sought solace in optimistic humanism, a political stance that offered a bridge between darkness and hope. Their productions offered a specific style for confronting these difficult realities on stage, shaping the local culture through the lens of the Holocaust. Despite being largely forgotten by the theatrical world or even erased from memory entirely, the process of representing the Holocaust through Romanian Yiddish theatre or popular literature remains vastly unknown. Local archives hold a wealth of documents waiting to be unearthed, offering a fragmented yet powerful glimpse into the immense struggles to tell this critical story in a new cultural context.

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# WORLD BANK COMES TO UKRAINE: IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR RESULTS

Ararat Osipian

**Abstract**

Ukraine continues its struggle for independence. In order to strengthen its statehood and sovereignty, Ukraine has to make many steps, including forming world class universities. In addition to financial, technical and military aid, international help is needed to form autonomous world class universities in Ukraine. After many years of inaction, the World Bank finally comes to Ukraine's higher education sector. The World Bank comes with a large project, with an approved $200 million loan, announced in May 2021. The project begins in the fall of 2021 and will last until the end of 2026. The project, entitled "Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project," has the objective to improve the efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in Ukraine's higher education system. The project facilitates university mergers. However, there is no certainty regarding the understanding of the true magnitude of the problems on the ground. When it comes to the project implementation, the World Bank will unavoidably face the challenges of over-bureaucratization, institutional rigidity, Stalinist legacies, and corruption. Furthermore, a no less significant challenge — the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine that started in February 2014 and drastically amplified in February 2022 — makes the realization of the World Bank project even more difficult, if not impossible.

**Keywords**: corruption, higher education, Ukraine, university mergers, World Bank

## 1. Introduction

Ukraine continues to fight its war for independence, a war in which Ukraine will no doubt prevail. In order to strengthen its statehood and sovereignty, Ukraine has to take many important steps, including forming world class universities. It is hard to find a single country on the world map

that does not have world class universities, and yet enjoys the benefits of strong statehood and national sovereignty. Ukraine is not going to be an exception in this sense. In addition to financial, technical and military aid, international help is needed to form autonomous world class universities in Ukraine. The time has come for the international community to move from declarations to actions.

After many years of inaction, the World Bank finally comes to Ukraine's higher education sector. The World Bank comes with a large project, with an approved US$200 million loan, announced in May 2021. The project begins in the late fall of 2021 and will last until the end of 2026. The project, entitled "Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project," has the objective to improve the efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in Ukraine's higher education system. The project is also focused on increasing the relevance of Ukraine's higher education to the needs of the national and global labor market. However, there is no certainty regarding the understanding of the true magnitude of the problems on the ground, as corruption remains a serious problem in the post-Communist higher education sector. This paper presents major challenges that the World Bank project faces in Ukraine. These challenges include fierce opposition to university mergers, student and faculty protests, corruption, and the on-going full-scale military aggression.

## 2. Improving higher education in Ukraine

Ukraine has been a member of the World Bank since 1992. Over the last three decades, the World Bank realized around 70 projects and programs in Ukraine with a total of approximately $13 billion in loans and aid delivered to the country. Some of these World Bank commitments are completed while others continue. The World Bank's current investment project portfolio in Ukraine exceeds $3 billion. The nine ongoing investment projects support improvements in "basic public services that directly benefit ordinary people in areas such as water supply, sanitation, heating, power, energy efficiency, roads, social protection and healthcare, as well as private sector development" (Panajyan, 2021, p. 1). Clearly, education and higher education in particular was not on this list.

After many years of inaction, the World Bank finally comes to Ukraine's higher education sector. The World Bank comes with a large project, announced in May 2021. The Ukraine Improving Higher Education for

Results Project carries an approved $200 million loan. The Project will be implemented over a five-year period by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The Ministry will have overall responsibility for project coordination and monitoring of the implementation progress. The project begins sometime in the fall of 2021 with the effective date of December 2021 and will last until the end of 2026.

The World Bank Regional Country Director for Eastern Europe, Arup Banerji, says regarding the project that,

> The World Bank is pleased to partner with Ukraine to modernize teaching and learning in universities in line with European standards in order to equip young Ukrainians with the skills they need for the 21st century. As Ukraine recovers from the pandemic, we also strongly support Ukraine's higher education system in its efforts to be better technically and digitally equipped for providing learning in the post-COVID-19 world (Panajyan, 2021, p. 1).

The project development objective is to improve the efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in Ukraine's higher education system. However, there is no certainty regarding the understanding of the true magnitude of the problems on the ground, as corruption remains a serious problem in the post-Communist higher education sector, including that of Ukraine.

When it comes to the project implementation, the World Bank will unavoidably face the challenge of corruption and strong Stalinist legacies in dealing with the Ukrainian academic bureaucracy. Bureaucratic rigidity remains in place. Furthermore, a no less significant challenge — the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine that started in February 2014 and drastically amplified in February 2022 — makes the realization of the World Bank project even more difficult, if not impossible.

There are several questions regarding the World Bank project in Ukraine. Why higher education? The World Bank is usually more attracted to reforming elementary education, secondary schools, and improving literacy. How will university mergers bring "improvement of higher education for results"? Will the economy of scale principle be applicable to university enlargements achieved through mergers? It is not clear after reading all World Bank project documents, why and how the economy of scale principle will work in the case of Ukraine's higher education.

The title of the project itself — Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project — hardly conveys any real meaning. Are there any improvements anywhere that are done not for results? What kind of results does the World Bank anticipate to achieve in Ukraine? What does higher education for results mean in the World Bank understanding in general? It is also not clear how the higher education for results mode will be achieved in this specific project. At the extreme end, one may even argue that trying to reform universities in Ukraine is trying to reform something that does not exist. There are no universities in Ukraine, or at least there are no universities as they are normally perceived in the 21st century, no autonomous universities that would have a potential to be transformed into world class universities.

## 3. University mergers controversy

The World Bank loan will be spent on the modernization of teaching and research facilities and digital learning infrastructure of Ukraine's universities. This will be done in order to "ensure learning continuity through remote learning modalities and to support resilience and change management over the longer term" (Panajyan, 2021). The World Bank also promises to support the development of modern digital infrastructure for distance learning in Ukraine's universities. In addition, the creation of advanced teaching and research laboratories and learning support facilities is also anticipated in the course of the project realization. The major focus of the project appears to be on university mergers, also called restructuring and optimization.

It remains unclear from the project documents how and why university mergers are considered a center piece of the reform and the project. Was this project designed and launched at the initiative of the World Bank? Apparently, Ukraine's academic and political aristocracy wanted educational reforms to proceed this way in order to create new universities, lead them and de facto own them, or maybe even privatize them in the future, modernize them at the expense of the World Bank loan, and then have the state budget repay this loan with the Ukrainian citizens' tax money. A very smart scheme, one may say. However, replacing the prioritization of true university autonomy with politically motivated aristocracy and pseudo-public status will do nothing to improve education quality and transparency.

Thus far, the largest mergers - and the most scandalous ones - took place in Kharkiv, the second largest city in Ukraine. These mergers took place before the start of the full-scale military aggression. Karazin Kharkiv National University absorbed two small institutes in Kharkiv. Dokuchaev Kharkiv National Agrarian University, Kharkiv Petro Vasilenko National Technical University of Agriculture, Kharkiv State Zooveterinary Academy, and Kharkiv State University of Food Technology and Trade were merged in order to form the State Biotechnology University. In the fight for these universities, allegations of corruption, hostile takeover, political influence, and electoral fraud were all present (see, for instance, Simon, June 1, 2021).

The Kharkiv National University of Civil Engineering and Architecture is forced to become a part of Beketov Kharkiv National University of Urban Economy, while it would prefer to join National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" (Gorod X, December 3, 2021). No wonder, faculty and students staged protests, speaking freely of their dissatisfaction with the merger (YouTube, December 2, 2021a). Finally, Kharkiv Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education will be absorbed by the Kharkiv National Medical University (Objectiv, September 16, 2021).

Kharkiv is being heavily bombed by the invading troops. International students at the Kharkiv National Medical University spend terrifying days and nights in cold and crowded bomb shelters (Times of India, February 26, 2022). With the beginning of the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the academic life in the country is put on hold. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine recommended stopping the educational process initially for two weeks (Gordon.ua, February 25, 2022). However, the university mergers in Ukraine will unavoidably re-appear on the forefront of academic and public debate.

These university mergers are highly controversial in design, process, and preliminary results. Each merger involves a set of groups of interests, problems, scandals, and protests. The World Bank project aims "To develop a stakeholder's engagement process that gives stakeholders the opportunity to participate and influence project design and implementation" (Nellemann, 2019). However, the continuing protests point to the opposite. Clearly, there is no unity in Ukraine's academic circles on the issue of university mergers and the role of the World Bank in this process.

## 4. Justifying the World Bank presence

On May 7, 2021, Ukrainian media reported that the World Bank has supported a $200 million loan to Ukraine aimed to modernize Ukraine's higher education system (NIK center, May 7, 2021). This news is reported in reference to the announcement by the press service of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. The statement by the Ministry of Finance says that on May 5, 2021, the Board of Executive Directors of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development approves the project "Improving Higher Education in Ukraine for Results" to provide Ukraine with a $200 million loan. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is part of the World Bank Group.

According to the project, the funds allocated by the World Bank are used by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to purchase modern equipment, create laboratories for students and scientists. The loan will also be used to carry out repair work on university buildings in order to improve the efficiency of the universities' educational space and physical learning environment. The money will be used to purchase modern computer equipment and software to increase the use of information technology in universities, as well as to provide a high level of education, including through the distance learning mode.

The main objectives of the World Bank project are to increase the competitiveness of higher education recipients in the labor market by updating approaches to teaching, learning and research in accordance with modern challenges. In addition, it is equally important to restore the high reputation of Ukrainian higher education institutions among students, including at the international level, according to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine will be implementing the five-year project based on the agreement concluded between Ukraine and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is also charged with the development of criteria for the selection of higher education institutions that will participate in the project, funded by the World Bank.

The World Bank will conduct an audit of Ukraine's higher education institutions in order to examine the strengths and weaknesses of all of Ukraine's higher education. Based on the results of the inspection, the process of optimizing Ukrainian universities will begin. This is according to the announcement made by the then Minister of Education and Science of

Ukraine, Serhiy Shkarlet. Minister Shkarlet makes the announcement about the upcoming audit and optimization on July 7, 2021, in an interview with the national media (NIK center, July 8, 2021). According to the minister, the agreement with the World Bank, which provides for a $200 million loan, will be signed around October 2021.

The audit of Ukrainian universities by the World Bank is not the only surprising issue presented by the media. Another—perhaps even more surprising and controversial issue—is the planned optimization of the higher education sector. In this case, "optimization" means a significant restructuring of universities and the process of liquidation of some of the universities. After the audit, conducted by the World Bank, the number of state universities in Ukraine is expected to be reduced. This reduction is to be made by the Ministry of Education and Science as the officially designated project implementation agency.

Prior to the start of the optimization campaign, there were 140 public higher education institutions under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Science in Ukraine. Accordingly, the reconfiguration of these universities and their restructuring through mergers is the prerogative of the Ministry of Education and Science. Naturally, academics, including faculty, administration, and staff, would like to know which universities are going to be merged by the Ministry, and on what conditions. Similarly, the media is eager to learn this information in order to convey it to the public. Nevertheless, the target number of universities remains unknown as it is not decided upon by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The lack of a target number as well as all related numbers, such as the total planned university mergers, creates a sense of confusion and uncertainty. The media tries to resolve this issue with the help of interviews with well-informed educators and other interested parties as well as brief news posts. Some responses and clarifications from the Ministry of Education and Science are needed. The Ministry considers the possibility of reducing the number of higher education institutions under its authority from 140 to around 80. Minister Shkarlet puts this in the following way:

> Today, the Ministry has 140 higher education institutions. There are general trends regarding the number of residents studying at Ukrainian universities. I think 80-85 universities is enough. This is a certain optimal figure, but each university is unique. But I would not begin to talk about the figure of 80-85, but still need to wait for the conclusions of the World Bank experts (NIK center, July 8, 2021, p. 1).

Audit and optimization are just a good start to a plethora of questions regarding the World Bank project on reforming Ukraine's higher education, especially in its university mergers part. What universities will merge? How will these universities merge? When will they merge? How many total university merges will be done? How many new universities will emerge as a result of these mergers? Based on what criteria will universities be chosen for mergers by the state? What are the results of the audit? Who conducted the audit? Even this wide range of questions is just the beginning. Each university has a lot of property, including numerous buildings, land, and equipment. The issue with the property of universities that will be closed due to a merger will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Each Ukrainian university is unique and should be approached and considered individually. The Minister of Education and Science suggests that "It is possible that the State Property Fund will put the vacated premises up for sale" (NIK center, July 8, 2021, p. 1).

In 2019, the law that grants public universities the right to lease their premises came into effect in Ukraine (RBC UA, January 19, 2019). Ukrainian legislators do not stop at the threshold of leasing university premises for generating extra revenues. Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's Parliament, wants to allow the privatization of property of universities that is not used by these universities (Struk, 2021). Minister Shkarlet clarified that the process of enlarging universities in Ukraine has already begun. "The Ministry of Education and Science is doing this today. About four unification projects have already been launched in different cities. The last one is Kharkiv, four agricultural universities have been merged into one," the Minister added (NIK center, July 8, 2021, p. 1).

## 5. Social consequences narrative

One of the major ideas developed in the media is that Ukrainian youth leaves the country due to the lack of economic and social perspectives, career growth, poor living conditions, political instability, and the on-going armed conflict. In order to prevent Ukrainian youth from leaving the country, a priority for the authorities should be to work on creating such conditions for life, study and work, in which young people will not have a desire to go abroad. One of the media resources, *RBC-Ukraine*, writes about this issue with reference to the statement of the Ukraine People's Deputy, Tetiana Plachkova. Plachkova represents the Opposition

Platform - For Life in the Verkhovna Rada, *i.e.* the Ukrainian Parliament. According to the opposition MP, the Ukrainian government is destroying the education system. This destruction is done under the slogan of reorganizing and optimizing the system of higher education, including universities and vocational education institutions.

MP Plachkova emphasizes that if the country does not maintain and develop its own national higher education system, other universities will come as a replacement. These other universities will be financed by neighboring countries. She says so in the Odesa region that borders Romania, and sums up:

> Such conversations are already underway, but they will teach and train personnel not for work in Ukraine, but, for example, in Romania, and for some reason not all reformers understand this. In order to stop the outflow of people from the country, all of us, and first of all the state authorities, must prioritize not only the call to return to Ukraine for those who have already left the country, but also take care of creating such conditions for life and work in which the thought of departure abroad does not arise. The issue is especially acute for residents of villages where young people do not see prospects for themselves in work and normal conditions for building their families and their future (Gurkovs'ka, 2021a, p. 1).

Plachkova refers to her recent conversations with high school graduates in Odesa. In these conversations, high school graduates share their understanding of the future in Ukraine. Plachkova also refers to the situation with the Izmail State University of Humanities, located in the Odesa region, as an example. As of 2021, the university is under the threat of closure. According to the MP, "If such a decision is made, about 2,000 students of the only university in Bessarabia may lose the opportunity to study, and therefore will be a few steps closer to the decision to emigrate" (Plachkova, 2021, p. 1).

The leading role of the World Bank in the university mergers campaign conducted in Ukraine is acknowledged by many speakers and respondents, including administrators and academics. This role is usually being highlighted with a negative connotation. Mergers in higher education are rarely welcomed. There are several considerations here, including economic, social, legislative, and monetary components. Mergers — although conducted under the slogan of optimization — can cause problems in many respects. Such key terms and ideas as optimization

or restructuring are met by the academic community in Ukraine with suspicion and quite frequently with hostility. A good example would be an interview given by Yelena Goroshko, a professor at the National Technical University Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute:

> Moreover, there is no model for such a combination. There is an economic component, a social one, legislation on higher education and there is money - 200 million, which the World Bank gave to reform Ukraine's national state universities. This reform does not apply to private education. We now have 212 state universities and 74 private ones in Ukraine, a total of 286. Of course, for a country like Ukraine, 286 universities are a lot, optimization is needed, but it must be carried out competently (Strel'nik, 2021, p. 1).

Academics point to the social consequences of university mergers in Ukraine. There are some teachers that will be cut. Many of them are of senior age, and thus it will be quite difficult for them to retrain. There are students who can be transferred to another training program, but only with their consent. If there is no such consent, the question arises on how to do this legally. The legal grounds for such a transfer are also not clear. Another issue is the support staff. Their future also becomes unclear. If universities are merged, many administrative services will be duplicated and thus unnecessary. Such are the views of academics who discuss the university mergers publicly. A significant number of academics and support staff will enter the labor market with no clear perspective.

Professor Goroshko points out that all universities are separate legal entities. In her view, university mergers can be done with the loss or without the loss of a legal entity status (Strel'nik, 2021, p. 1). Mergers may cause economic problems for university employees. These include furloughs, layoffs, and terminations. During the mergers, it is not clear which offices and positions will be preserved and which ones terminated or closed. Faculty members serving in universities that close due to mergers feel economic insecurity. This insecurity feels especially urgently given the fact that most university employees receive salaries below what is considered the average in Ukraine.

Many rudiments of the old Communist system are present in Ukraine's universities and — not surprisingly — they find their way into the discourse on universities mergers as well. One such rudiment that has survived for over three decades of post-Communist transition is the staff position of

engineers in academic departments. These positions of engineers exist even in academic departments that have nothing to do with engineering, equipment, laboratories, production, or safety standards. For instance, the Department of General Economic Theory at the National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" has only ten faculty members and two engineers (Academic staff, 2021).

The resistance to the World Bank presence in Ukraine is growing. "Engineers of departments, for example, receive minimal salaries, and this is a very big problem," suggests Goroshko (Strel'nik, 2021, p. 1). This suggestion is apparently referring to the possible dismissals due to the university mergers. "I have the impression that this wave of mergers is all about pursuing some kind of private interests, these are some kind of private agreements – that's all," suggests Goroshko, while commenting on the recently planned and on-going university mergers in Ukraine (Strel'nik, 2021, p. 1).

## 6. Negativity of the World Bank

Overall, the expected impact of the World Bank project is portrayed as negative. Accordingly, perceptions about the World Bank formed by the general public under the influence of the media reports appear to be largely negative. The media is not in favor of the World Bank's actions in Ukraine. In their rhetoric, the World Bank is considered as a hostile, occupying force. It is not unusual for major US-based international organizations, such as the IMF and the World Bank, to be considered as occupying or even colonizing forces. This perception may be based not on their character or the nature of their intentions and actions, but on the social consequences for the general public.

The World Bank and the IMF generally produce a negative public and media reaction in Ukraine. At one of the most recent events, in late December 2021, about four thousand people were protesting in the center of the capital against Ukraine's cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Gurkovs'ka, 2021b). The protesters settled down under the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada, claiming that under pressure from the IMF, the government is adopting anti-social laws that destroy jobs and small businesses, making life unbearable for the poor and pensioners. The protesters held posters demanding that the state authorities refuse loans received from this international organization.

According to the participants of this protesting action, the conditions that accompany the IMF loans harm the national economy and lead to the impoverishment of the population. In particular, the protesters did not agree with the sale of land, the privatization of state banks and state monopolies, fearing that this will lead to an increase in tariffs and prices.

In a similar manner, another protesting action was held near the President of Ukraine's Office in downtown Kyiv on the eve of the New Year celebration, in late December 2021. The protesters demanded an end to cooperation with the IMF. Approximately 7 to 8 thousand people took part in this political action, which was quite a score for Ukraine and its capital city in particular. Protest participants declared that regularly received foreign loans worsened the external and internal political, social, and financial situation of Ukraine. They also pointed out that the recommendations of the IMF were acquiring the format of an undisguised blackmail. The protesters believed that by cooperating with the IMF the state authorities were pursuing an anti-people policy in Ukraine.

The protesters were demanding to introduce a moratorium on the increase in public utility tariffs, and to stop the sale of strategically important objects of the economy. The protesters also demanded the disclosure of the content of loan agreements with the IMF and other international financial organizations, concluded by the Ukrainian government. According to the protesters, these posed a direct threat to the existence of the state and dragged the country into a new poverty trap. The authorities were urged to curtail the economic reforms promoted by the IMF, since these reforms, according to the participants in the action, turned ordinary people into beggars. The protesters demanded the abolition of the natural gas and electricity market together with the establishment of economically justified tariffs not only for electricity, but also for the services of other natural monopolists, such as regional gas companies, and national railways (Gurkovs'ka, 2021c).

Ukrainian media coverage is quite extensive when it comes to reporting on educational reforms in the country. The World Bank project and changes in Ukraine's higher education sector are not an exception in this sense. Judging by the content of news reports and the views expressed in these reports, Ukrainian media appears to be against the course of reforms suggested by the World Bank and taken by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Such is the generally accepted media discourse, as follows from numerous media reports.

The national media highlights the issue of university mergers in Ukraine as directly linked to such negative economic and demographic processes as brain drain and outmigration. According to the media discourse, there is hardly any justification for the World Bank to be present in Ukraine's higher education system. While not necessarily compared to a colonial force, the World Bank is perceived as something alien to the system, while the World Bank's demands appear to be confronting structures and values of the academy. This narrative is supported by some academics who openly express their views.

## 7. Is corruption a target?

One of the objectives of the World Bank project is to improve transparency in Ukraine's education sector through the modernization of the Higher Education Management Information System, the establishment of a National Student Survey and a unified information system on competitive research funding of universities (Panajyan, 2021, p. 1). That different approach or understanding of transparency does not abolish or nullify the paramount problem of corruption in Ukraine's higher education sector. There is only one paragraph allocated to the issue of corruption in the Project:

> Corruption, including a mass disregard for academic integrity and a high tolerance for academic violations, also poses an ongoing challenge to education quality and the signaling power of Ukraine credentials. Although corrupt access to the higher education system has diminished since the introduction of the External Independent Test (EIT) in 2008, other issues persist, such as academic dishonesty and systematic violations of academic integrity principles, including cheating during exams and plagiarism. These instances are commonplace and are not perceived as abuses. Different estimates indicate that at least 25–30 percent of students have directly engaged in academic misconduct or bribery, with a much larger share exposed to and familiar with such practices. Given that higher education is central to public and private sector development and is a primary driver of social mobility, this challenge remains a major concern for the higher education system (Gresham and Ambasz, 2019a, pp. 6-7).

The corruption that characterizes Ukraine's higher education sector in its entirety takes a little bit more space in the World Bank Flagship

Report, being expanded to a modest three pages (Gresham and Ambasz, 2019b, pp. 130-132). This is surprising given that corruption in Ukraine's higher education is a paramount problem. Without tackling corruption, Ukraine's higher education sector is unlikely to move in a new direction or undergo any meaningful changes. This is even more surprising given that the production of the Final Report entitled "Ukraine - Resume Flagship Report (Vol. 2): Review of the education sector in Ukraine: Moving toward effectiveness, equity and efficiency (RESUME3)" involves well over two dozen authors, consultants and aides from both the World Bank and Ukraine.

In the small section titled "Corruption and Academic Integrity in Higher Education," the authors acknowledge that corruption and academic integrity violations in higher education remain endemic and of major concern. These academic and legal violations inhibit opportunities for knowledge acquisition and training, which are essential factors for social mobility and economic development (Gresham and Ambasz, 2019b, pp. 130). Referring to works by Denisova-Schmidt and Prytula (2017), Osipian (2017), Artiukhov and Liuta (2017), as well as some reports (OECD, 2017a; OECD, 2017b; KAS, 2017) and other publications (De Waal, 2016; Hallak and Poisson, 2007; Sherstjuk and Zharikova, 2017), the authors acknowledge that the Ukrainian higher education sector faces significant and persisting challenges in the form of academic misconduct and integrity violations.

While briefly discussing the problem of corruption in Ukrainian higher education sector, the Flagship Report by the World Bank team mentions a set of very standard clauses. One such passage is that,

> integrity is vital to good governance and institutional trust, and a high-performing education system must have policies and structures in place to safeguard integrity. Integrity is one of the key pillars of political, economic and social structures. It is essential to the economic and social wellbeing and prosperity of individuals and society as a whole (Gresham and Ambasz, 2019b, pp. 130).

Other standard clauses presented in the Flagship Report include points that, "At the higher education level, corruption and academic violations have the additional harmful effect of normalizing corrupt practices among young people," and that "Corruption in higher education also increases social inequality, because people from poor families cannot pay bribes to

get into prestigious universities or pass exams, and hence they miss their opportunity to use education for social mobility" (Gresham and Ambasz, 2019b, pp. 130). Although necessary as an introduction, these statements contribute little to understanding the problem of corruption in Ukrainian higher education.

According to the Flagship Report produced by the World Bank team, the dominant problems of Ukrainian colleges and universities in terms of corruption include a mass disregard for academic integrity. Academic violations are well-tolerated as they are considered a norm. Referring to the report on academic integrity in Ukraine done by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017a) the authors point out many forms of integrity violations. These forms range from misuse of resources, assets and authority, to bribery, cheating, plagiarism, and undue recognition of academic achievements. More references to academic works (Osipian, 2009, 2017) and reports (Sondergaard at al., 2012; KAS, 2017), make Gresham and Ambasz (2019b, pp. 130) conclude that, in regard to higher education in Ukraine, "tolerating mediocrity seems common, and systemic violations of academic integrity principles (for example, cheating during exams, or plagiarizing master's and/or doctorate theses) are not perceived as abuses."

Although just 3 pages out of the book-size 177-page document, it is obvious that the Flagship Final Report by the World Bank Group pays attention to corruption in Ukraine's higher education sector. The Report acknowledges the existence of corruption in higher education and that it constitutes a serious problem. Moreover, corruption and other breaches of academic integrity in higher education remain endemic and of major concern for possible reforms. These academic and legal violations have far-reaching negative consequences, blocking or narrowing opportunities for knowledge acquisition and training. These are universally recognized key determinants for high social mobility and economic development. The significance of the problem of corruption in Ukraine's higher education sector is acknowledged as well. The challenge of dealing with and tackling corruption remains a major concern for the higher education system.

Despite all of these considerations, there is no mention of corruption in the official project document, produced by the World Bank Group. Certainly, there is no mention of any measures to be taken within the project to curb corruption in Ukraine. There appears to be no intent to do anything about higher education corruption within this project's action frame. Obviously, when it comes to the World Bank project on Ukraine's

higher education sector, corruption is not a target. The key question is: How does the World Bank expect to improve Ukraine's higher education results, while understanding the seriousness of corruption problem and yet not planning on doing anything about corruption in the Project?

## 8. Humanitarian crisis in education

The Karazin Kharkiv National University, ranked highest among Ukrainian universities by world university rankings, suffers from the full-scale military aggression. The School of Economics at the Karazin Kharkiv National University that enrolls thousands of students, including many international students, was damaged beyond repair in the course of the full-scale military aggression. The historical building of the school was destroyed by missile strikes. Reports by the Ukrainian news show the true degree of devastation suffered by the School (Abrashina, 2022). The main building of the University, located at Kharkiv's central square, also suffered significant damages, including numerous shattered windows from the previous missile strike that destroyed the Regional Administration building.

The Donbas armed conflict that started in 2014 made several universities from Donetsk and Luhansk regions homeless. A handful of humanitarian organizations stepped in to help. Unfortunately, the World Bank was not among those helping the forcefully relocated higher education institutions. Some of them have already disappeared or are about to disappear. Others, such as the Donetsk National Medical University, have no true home even 10 years after the start of the Donbas armed conflict. The World Bank indicated no interest in helping restore higher education in Ukraine-controlled parts of Donbas, in eastern Ukraine, over this period. This approach would have to change. The international community should call the World Bank to focus on Ukraine's educational reform, and more specifically, to the crisis and post-crisis restoration of the higher education sector.

For Ukrainian universities, being closed temporarily with the educational process put on hold is nothing new. Many Ukrainian colleges and universities were closed for different periods of time due to the virus-born health and safety concerns in 2020, 2021, and 2022, trying to organize on-line courses and distance learning. Before that, Ukrainian universities were closed due to the inability of the state to pay their utility bills, especially for heating during winter months. However, the present

situation is different. The full-scale military aggression brought a true humanitarian crisis to Ukraine's higher education.

Kharkiv, Ukraine's major hub for international students, was heavily bombed during the first days of the full-scale military aggression, in late February 2022, and is still being bombed regularly in 2023, 2024, and 2025. Many international students managed to escape the bombarded Ukrainian cities and evacuate, and many more are still under fire. They are simply trying to survive under the conditions of the full-scale military aggression and continuous intense bombardments. While international students in Ukraine's largest cities spend terrifying days and nights in cold and crowded bomb shelters, universities do not function (Times of India, February 26, 2022). The academic life in Ukraine was stalled, as the Ministry of Education and Science had to order to stop the educational process in schools, colleges and universities throughout the country due to the full-scale military aggression. Some students even had to walk on subway railway tracks in underground tunnels in order to leave their dormitories and reach a safe shelter (Kharkiv Today, March 2, 2022).

Following the full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the World Bank project was restructured at the request of the Ukrainian government. The restructuring was done in order to reallocate funds to finance scholarships for university students during the time of this acute crisis. The agreed restructuring allowed the World Bank to reallocate US$100 million from Components 2 and 3 to the newly created Component 5, called "Support to Academic and Social Scholarships for Higher Education Students." Components 2 and 3 were reduced in scope according to this new reconfiguration of funds. Despite the restructuring, the project development objective to improve the efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in Ukraine's higher education system has not been changed.

Under the Support to Academic and Social Scholarships for Higher Education Students component, the World Bank paid for academic and social scholarships to students in professional pre-higher and higher education institutions in Ukraine during the 2021-2022 academic year. Academic scholarships cover an estimated 172,000 students, and social scholarships cover approximately 50,000 students (Gresham, 2022). The restructuring also established a Contingent Emergency Response Component in the project in order to finance emergency expenditures if requested by the Ukrainian government. This is done in order to mitigate the on-going humanitarian crisis in education.

Neither the financier—the World Bank — nor the implementing agency — the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine — give up on the project, despite the crisis. In June 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science confirmed all relevant documentation to allow for verification of achievement of Performance-Based Condition (PBC) 4 on entrance into at least 50 performance-based contracts, including key performance indicators with higher education institutions (Gresham, 2022). Thus far, the Ministry of Education and Science has been unable to produce a staffing capacity necessary to implement the planned project investments under Component 3. The Ministry also attempts to assess the current needs of higher education institutions and to create an assessment survey of higher education institutions (HEIs) for that matter. Following steps include finalizing selection of key consultants for the Project Implementation Unit, launching the project's communications campaign, and revising investment needs of public HEIs in line with the latest assessment of needs.

Both the World Bank and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine acknowledge the need to revise the project's results framework in order to accommodate the changes in the scope of its components. The two agencies also acknowledge that the situation in Ukraine has changed significantly since the onset of the full-scale military action, and priorities continue to shift. Many HEIs have been damaged, and the needs of HEIs are also shifting. The World Bank and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine try to ensure that the project's investment activities can be flexible and aligned to the changing needs in the country's higher education sector. Despite this claim on flexibility and adaptation, it is not at all clear what the World Bank project implementation status and results may be. The planned Mid-Term Review date for Ukraine Improving Higher Education for Results Project was scheduled for February 12, 2024. Given the instability and uncertainty in Ukraine, the Actual Mid-Term Review date for the project has yet to be determined.

## 9. Uncertainty as a defining factor

The full-scale military aggression against Ukraine is in full swing, and the scale of destruction is very significant. If this unfavorable military, political, and economic situation persists, uncertainty regarding the realization of the World Bank project will continue to increase. Repayment of the World Bank's educational loan may become a problem. The World Bank project

as an attempt at modernization and westernization has a very unclear future. The data on the annual and cumulative expected disbursements of the World Bank project for the period of 2021 to 2026, expressed in US$ millions, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Expected Disbursements (in US$, Millions)

| WB Fiscal Year | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual | 0.00 | 55.20 | 53.60 | 43.30 | 25.80 | 21.50 | 0.60 |
| Cumulative | 0.00 | 55.20 | 108.80 | 152.10 | 177.90 | 199.40 | 200.00 |

Source: World Bank Group, IBRD, 2021, p. vii.

The data on the financial transactions of the World Bank project prior to the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, expressed in US$, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Financial Transactions prior to the full-scale military aggression

| Period | Financier | Transaction Type | Amount (US$) |
|---|---|---|---|
| May, 2021 | IBRD92380 | Commitment | 200,000,000.00 |
| December, 2021 | IBRD92380 | Disbursement | 10,500,000.00 |
| December, 2021 | IBRD92380 | Fees | 500,000.00 |

Source: World Bank, 2021, p. 1.

The data on the financial transactions of the World Bank project after the start of the full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, expressed in US$, is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Financial Transactions after the start of the full-scale military aggression

| Period | Financier | Transaction Type | Amount (US$) |
|---|---|---|---|
| October, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Interest and Charges | 1,986,792.61 |
| October, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Fees | 101,484.75 |
| August, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Disbursement | 35,049.00 |
| June, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Disbursement | 20,000,000.00 |
| May, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Disbursement | 11,352,890.57 |
| April, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Interest and Charges | 46,198.19 |
| April, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Fees | 202,763.70 |
| April, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Disbursement | 88,647,109.43 |
| October, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Total | 122,372,288.25 |
| October, 2022 | IBRD92380 | Grand Total | 133,372,288.25 |

Source: World Bank, 2023, p. 1.

More recent data on major financial transactions made by the World Bank within the Project's frame after the start of the full-scale military aggression is not available. The Summary Status of World Bank Financing (US$ Millions) as of May 31, 2024 is stated as "No data available." The Detailed Financial Activity as of May 31, 2024 is also stated as "No data available" (World Bank, 2024, p. 1). Some expenses are listed under the Project Procurement Plan (Artemenko, 2024).

As follows from the data presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, financial transactions after the start of the full-scale military aggression differ significantly from what was initially planned in the project. The changes due to the March 2022 amendment are drastic, indeed. The grand total of the project disbursements reached US$133,372,288.25 in October, 2022. According to the initial project plan, that level of disbursed funds should have been reached by the World Bank project only around October, 2024. This is explained by the emergency relief funds of US$88,647,109.43 disbursed in April 2022. The funds were channeled to cover stipends for higher education students in Ukraine. Ukrainian students' finances were negatively affected by the full-scale military aggression. At the same time,

no data is available on Summary Status of World Bank Financing (US$ Millions) as of January 31, 2023.

Components of the World Bank project after the March 2022 restructuring were reset as follows: Sector-Wide Improvements to Governance, Financing, Quality and Transparency: (Cost US$54 million), Alliances and Partnerships for Improved Efficiency and Quality: (Cost US$3 million), Capacity Building and Education Environment Enhancement: (Cost US$39 million), Project Management, Monitoring & Evaluation: (Cost US$4 million), Support to Academic and Social Scholarships for Higher Education Students: (Cost US$100 million), Contingent Emergency Response Component (Gresham, 2022). There is less than US$70 million left in the project budget to achieve the project goals.

The World Bank considers the progress towards achieving the project development objective to improve the efficiency, conditions for quality, and transparency in Ukraine's higher education system as satisfactory. Surprisingly, overall progress in the project implementation was considered as satisfactory as well. On May 8, 2024, the most recent available report produced by the World Bank shows more realistic estimates, downgrading the overall progress in the project implementation from satisfactory to moderately satisfactory. At the same time, the World Bank estimates the overall risk rating as high. However, looking at the finances of the project, one may develop an impression that the World Bank is trying to disburse all the project money as soon as it can through emergency relief funding in order to deplete the projects' total budget and by doing so to achieve the de facto end of the project. Needless to say, the results of such actions will not bring any positive results, proclaimed in the initial project. The goals of the World Bank project may not be achieved. Thus, supplemental funding may be needed and should be approved by the Board of Directors.

The "Improve efficiency in higher education" component that involves a performance-based funding formula (PBF formula) is marked as "In progress". The World Bank Group (2024) acknowledges that, "The PBF formula was used to allocate public funding in 2021. Following the Russian military invasion to Ukraine in February 2022, the PBF formula has been temporarily suspended for the duration of the martial law. However, it was reinstated in January 2024." Apparently, the World Bank has optimistic views regarding the project, hoping to stabilize the entire enterprise, and thus reinstating the PBF formula. This update comes from May 8, 2024, the most recent available report. The PBF formula is used to allocate public funding to HEIs during at least two consecutive fiscal years. This indicator

measures implementation of the performance-based funding formula for the allocation of public funds to HEIs for at least two consecutive years during the project period. The indicator is met when performance metrics are used as part of the formula for allocating funds to HEIs, as envisioned in the higher education reform and legal and regulatory changes that are anticipated (World Bank Group, 2024).

## 10. Conclusion

During the times of military action, scholars and international organizations should think of restoration. This should be characteristic of the World Bank too. The World Bank was founded in 1944 with a core mission to help "rebuild countries devastated by World War II" (World Bank, 2023). Ukraine is a country of many colleges and universities, and these institutions of higher education suffer immensely from the full-scale military aggression. Buildings, infrastructure, research laboratories, scholarly cooperation, projects, financial and other assets, international reputation, and, most importantly, lives of faculty and students, are in immediate and grave danger. Given the level of devastation caused by the military aggression, Ukraine higher education sector's reconstruction and reform appear to be the World Bank's return to its original mission.

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# EINS NACH DEM ANDEREN. DER EINHEITSCHARAKTER DER PLATONISCHEN IDEEN*

Gheorghe Pașcalău

**Abstract**

In diesem Aufsatz soll der Versuch geleistet werden, den Einheitscharakter der Idee in Platons Philosophie aus einigen Dialogpassagen herauszuarbeiten und diesen im Licht der Referate zu Platons „ungeschriebenen Lehren" zu verstehen. Besondere Wichtigkeit wird der Interpretation von *Phaidon* 100e-101e zukommen, wo Platon die Zahl als Idee versteht. Platon bestreitet, dass eine Zahl das Ergebnis einer Operation (in diesem Fall einer Addition) ist und betrachtet sie als eine Einheit, in demselben Sinne, in dem auch eine Idee eine Einheit ist, die sich nicht aus Teilideen zusammensetzt. Für die Interpretation dieser Passage soll ein wenig beachteter Aufsatz von Taylor (1927) fruchtbar gemacht werden, der, in Anlehnung an die Philosophie der Mathematik seiner Zeit, einen Unterschied zwischen mathematischer Operation und mathematischer Definition macht und Platons Methoden im Licht dieser Unterscheidung verstehen will. Ein Vergleich mit einem Referat des Aristoteles aus *Metaphysik* M und einem Zeugnis Alexanders von Aphrodisias zu Platons „ungeschriebener Lehre" soll die Bedeutung des Einheitscharakters der Ideen in Platons Philosophie in ein klareres Licht stellen. Ziel der Analyse ist es, das Wesen der Idee und ihre Funktionalität in Platons Philosophie besser zu verstehen.

**Keywords:** Idee, Zahl, Metaphysik, Esoterik.

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## 1. Einleitung

Der neuplatonische Philosoph Plotin, der im 3. Jh. n. Chr. für ein adäquates Verständnis der Philosophie Platons sorgen wollte, schildert in einer seiner Abhandlungen eine Vision der Ideen (der nur mit dem Intellekt erfassbaren Entitäten), in der jede Idee nicht nur mit sich selbst identisch ist, sondern auch alle anderen Ideen enthält. Dieser Vision zufolge bilden alle Ideen zusammen eine einzige Idee:

> ...Denn alles ist dort durchsichtig und es gibt kein Dunkles, Widerständiges, sondern ein jeder[1] und jedes ist für jeden sichtbar bis ins Innere hinein; denn Licht ist dem Lichte durchsichtig. Es trägt ja auch jeder alle Dinge in sich, und sieht andererseits auch im anderen alle Dinge, überall sind daher alle Dinge da und jedes ist Alles, das einzelne ist das Ganze, und unermeßlich ist das Leuchten. (*enn.* V 8,4-8. Übers. R. Harder, R. Beutler und W. Theiler)[2]

Diese Vision der Einheit aller Ideen, bzw. der vielheitlichen Abspiegelung aller Ideen in jeder einzelnen Idee, durchzieht mit einigen zusätzlichen Nuancierungen die platonische Tradition der Spätantike. Sie ist von Proklos im 5. Jh. n. Chr. unter der Formel axiomatisiert worden: „Alles ist in allem, doch in jedem Einzelnen auf eine eigene Weise".[3] Unter der Hegelschen Bezeichnung „konkrete Totalität" ist diese Anschauung als inhaltlich angemessenes Deutungsmuster bisweilen auch für Platons Ideenlehre geltend gemacht worden (Halfwassen, 1999).

Kehrt man allerdings zum ursprünglichen Nährboden der Ideenlehre zurück, zumal zu jenen Passagen der Platonischen Dialoge, in denen die Ideentheorie eingeführt wird, sieht man sich mit einer Betrachtungsweise konfrontiert, die mit der Konzeption einer „konkreten Totalität" nicht immer zusammenpasst, ja ihr bisweilen diametral entgegengesetzt ist. Die *loci classici*, in denen Platon die Ideenlehre präsentiert, geben nicht nur keinen Anlass zu einer Lektüre von der eben beschriebenen Art, sondern scheinen sogar, durch ihren Inhalt und ihre argumentativen Implikationen, eine solche Lektüre problematisch zu machen oder vollends zu verhindern.

So spricht Platon gerade da, wo er im Kontext eines dialogischen Geschehens die Ideentheorie zum ersten Mal einführt, von der Idee als von einem „Etwas" (τι). Er bezieht sich auf die Idee mit dem Ausdruck: „jedes Einzelne" (ἕκαστον, *Phaidon*). Im *Timaios* (52a) bestreitet er ausdrücklich, dass die Ideen in Inklusionsverhältnissen zueinander stehen und im *Philebos* (15a-b) nennt er sie „Henaden" oder „Monaden", was offenbar

die jeweilige Einheit der Idee zum Ausdruck bringen soll. Die Konzeption der Einheit der Idee ist implizit mit mindestens zwei Problemen verbunden: Will man die Idee, so wie sie in solchen Passagen präsentiert wird, mit dem Konzept der „Gattung" (γένος) der Platonischen Spätdialoge *Sophistes* und *Politikos* identifizieren, so führt das zur Frage: Wie lässt sich noch die als Einheit gedachte Idee in Teilideen analysieren, die sich zur ursprünglichen Idee wie die Spezies zur Gattung verhalten sollen? Will man ferner in der Platonischen Idee eine Vorform des Aristotelischen Universals (τὸ καθόλου) sehen – und tatsächlich hat Aristoteles die Argumente der Alten Akademie für die Existenz der Ideen teilweise als bloße Argumente für die Existenz von Universalien verstanden[4] –, so entsteht wiederum die Frage: Wie wird die Einheit der Idee es noch zulassen, dass die Idee (als Universal, in diesem Fall) von mehreren Subjekten prädiziert werden kann?

Die Einheit der Idee und ihre Bezeichnung als „Henade" oder „Monade" werfen die Frage auf, in welchem Verhältnis die Idee bei Platon zum Begriff der ‚Zahl' steht.[5] Es ist auffällig, dass in der *Politeia*, da, wo im Verlauf des Dialogs die Ideen zum ersten Mal diskutiert werden (im 5. Buch), ihre Einführung am Leitfaden des Zahlbegriffs geschieht. Das Zählen fixiert die Idee als Subjekt der Zahl und soll dadurch die reale Existenz der Idee beweisen. Wenn ferner im 7. Buch der *Politeia* die Wichtigkeit der Arithmetik demonstriert werden soll, schickt sich Sokrates an zu zeigen, dass die Zahl die Wahrnehmungsdaten entwirren hilft und zwar dadurch, dass sie das Abzählen der Eigenschaften ermöglicht, die an einem bestimmten Träger in Erscheinung treten. Durch das Abzählen der Eigenschaften werden diese in ihrer Realität fixiert. Das Zählen bestimmt also die Eigenschaften als einheitliche Entitäten und schlägt die Brücke zum Intelligiblen. Das, zusammen mit einigen Ausführungen des *Phaidon*, beweist, dass schon in den Dialogen die Ideen in eine besondere Verwandtschaft mit den Zahlen treten. Darüber hinaus ist für die „ungeschriebenen Lehren" Platons die enge Verbindung zwischen Ideen und Zahlen hinreichend bezeugt. Viele Zeugnisse sprechen für eine Identifikation von Ideen und Zahlen, in der Form von ‚Idealzahlen' oder ‚Ideenzahlen', in jener ‚Doktrin', die Platon in seiner Akademie offenbar zur Diskussion stellte.

Dass im *Philebos* die Ideen als „Monaden" bezeichnet werden und dass Platon ihnen im *Phaidon* und in der *Politeia* einen einheitlichen und diskreten Charakter zuschreibt, verbindet die Ideenlehre der Dialoge mit den Aristotelischen Referaten der *Metaphysik* über die Idealzahlenlehre. Die Bücher M und N der *Metaphysik* enthalten u.a. eine Darstellung der

altakademischen Theorien bezüglich der Ideenzahlen, also jener Ideen, die engstens mit der Zahl zusammenhängen und offenbar erst aufgrund dieses Zusammenhangs eine kausale Kraft in der Welt entfalten können. Das Besondere der Aristotelischen Darstellung besteht in einer Koordination von mathematischer Theorie und Eidos-Lehre. Da gerade der Begriff der „Monade" oder „Einheit" in den Büchern M und N der *Metaphysik* eine zentrale Rolle spielt, bietet es sich an, die Dialogpassagen, die die Einheit der Ideen thematisieren, im Licht der Aristotelischen Referate zu lesen. Der Fokus soll dabei auf dem Begriff der „Monade" oder „Einheit" und auf dessen Verhältnis zur Ideenzahl liegen.

Hinzu treten noch wichtige Zeugnisse aus den von Gaiser (1998) gesammelten *Testimonia Platonica*, die die Einheit der Ideen direkt oder indirekt thematisieren. Aus dem Reichtum dieser Zeugnisse zu Platons „ungeschriebenen Lehren" soll ein besonders interessantes *Testimonium* herausgewählt und diskutiert werden. Es handelt sich um einen Ausschnitt aus dem *Metaphysik*-Kommentar Alexanders von Aphrodisias[6], in dem der Einheitscharakter der Idee besprochen wird. Gerade ihre Einheit lässt, laut Alexander, die Idee in eine Wesensgemeinschaft mit der Zahl treten. An einer früheren Stelle bemerkt Alexander, dass die Einheit der Idee die Bedingung dafür ist, dass sich der sinnenfällige Gegenstand an die Idee, an der er teilhat, überhaupt angleichen kann.[7]

Die oben erwähnten Dialogstellen, Aristoteles' Referate in den Büchern M und N der *Metaphysik* sowie einige der *Testimonia Platonica* belegen die Wichtigkeit des Themas des Einheitscharakters der Idee in der Einführung und Entwicklung der Platonischen Ideenlehre. Diese knappen einführenden Bemerkungen wollten genau das nahelegen: dass die Einheit der Idee, ihr „monadischer" Charakter, in der Artikulation der Platonischen Ideenlehre eine maßgebliche Rolle spielt. Dies macht ihre spätere Ausdeutung im Sinne einer „konkreten Totalität" (nach der Interpretationsabsicht Plotins und Hegels) problematisch, wirft aber auch die Frage auf, wie eine als „monadische" Einheit konzipierte Idee an ein gattungsbegriffliches Verständnis der Ideenlehre angepasst werden kann. Scheint doch Platons Ideenlehre von vorneherein und nicht erst in den Spätdialogen den Anspruch zu haben, das Verhältnis zwischen Gattung und Spezies, bzw. die ontologische Realität der Gattung und ihrer Teilgattungen (Spezies) zu erklären (*resp.* V,454a1-455e1).[8]

Im Folgenden soll also der Versuch geleistet werden, den Einheitscharakter der Idee aus einigen Dialogpassagen herauszuarbeiten und diesen im Licht der Referate zu Platons „ungeschriebenen Lehren"

zu verstehen. Besondere Wichtigkeit wird der Interpretation von *Phaidon* 100e-101e zukommen, wo Platon die Zahl als Idee versteht. Es wäre nicht verfehlt, an dieser Stelle von einer ‚Zahl-Idee' zu sprechen. Platon bestreitet, dass eine Zahl das Ergebnis einer Operation (in diesem Fall einer Addition) ist, und betrachtet sie als eine Einheit, in demselben Sinne, in dem auch eine Idee eine Einheit ist, die sich nicht aus Teilideen zusammensetzt. Für die Interpretation dieser Passage soll ein wenig beachteter Aufsatz von Taylor (1927) fruchtbar gemacht werden, der, in Anlehnung an die Philosophie der Mathematik seiner Zeit, einen Unterschied zwischen mathematischer Operation und mathematischer Definition macht und Platons Methoden in der Ideenzahlenlehre im Licht dieser Unterscheidung verstehen will. Taylor ist es, glaube ich, gelungen, die Stoßrichtung der Platonischen Ideenzahlenlehre plausibel zu erklären. Allerdings ist sein Ansatz meines Wissens nach für die Erklärung der schwierigen Stelle *Phaidon* 100e-101e noch nicht fruchtbar gemacht worden. Das soll im vorliegenden Aufsatz geleistet werden.

Die wichtige Ausführung über die Zahl in *Phaidon* 100e-101e kann als Hintergrundtheorie für das Verständnis auch der anderen Dialogpassagen gesehen werden, in denen der Einheitscharakter der Idee thematisiert wird. Diese Ausführung ist allerdings nur im Licht der Zeugnisse zu Platons „ungeschriebener Lehre" angemessen zu würdigen, wie ja auch Taylor selbst zu seinen bahnbrechenden Einsichten nur dank seiner Hinwendung zu Aristoteles' Referaten der Platonischen Ideenzahlenlehre gelangen konnte. Allgemein gilt, dass die Zeugnisse zu Platons innerakademischer Lehre zum besseren Verständnis jener Dialogpassagen, in denen Platon für die Einheit der Idee argumentiert, beitragen können. Der umgekehrte Weg, der in der Forschung ebenfalls betreten wurde (z.B. von Steel, 2012), demzufolge die Aristotelischen Referate zu Platons Theorie der Ideenzahlen bloße Verzerrungen von Dialogpassagen sind, ist aus sachlichen Gründen unangemessen. Die philologischen und hermeneutischen Gründe hierfür sollen in diesem Aufsatz nicht wiederholt werden. (Siehe dafür die knappe und programmatische Darstellung bei Szlezák, 1993, die kontrovers geführte Diskussion in Brisson, 1998, und neuerdings die Stellungnahmen in Rashed und Auffret, 2018.) Dass gewisse Zeugnisse zu Platons „ungeschriebener Lehre" weiterführend sind und das Thema der Einheit der Idee tatsächlich besser zu verstehen helfen, soll sich im Folgenden in der konkreten Interpretationsarbeit zeigen.

Der vorliegende Aufsatz wird zunächst die Einführung der Ideen im *Phaidon* besprechen und daselbst das Aufkeimen eines Einheitskonzeptes

nachweisen (2.1-2.3). Der größte Nachdruck wird dabei auf der Aporie der Konstruktion der Zahl Zwei liegen (2.3). Eine Untersuchung zur Einführung der Ideen in der *Politeia* wird zeigen, dass auch in diesem Dialog die Ideen anhand des Einheits- und Zahlkonzeptes präsentiert werden. Wie in der Aporie der Zwei des *Phaidon*, wird auch in der *Politeia* betont, dass die Seele die unmittelbare Intuition der Zahl hat, die jeweils als Einheit genommen wird (3.1 und 3.2). Im Unterkapitel 4 soll versuchsweise ein Zusammenhang zwischen diesen Dialogpassagen und der Idealzahlenlehre der Alten Akademie hergestellt werden, so wie sie sich in Aristoteles' *Metaphysik* M widerspiegelt. Abschließend (5) soll an zwei Zeugnissen aus dem *Metaphysik*-Kommentar Alexanders von Aphrodisias gezeigt werden, dass die Einheit der Idee ein zentrales Strukturmerkmal der Platonischen Ideenlehre war und dass sie die Grundlage für die Explikation des Phänomens der Teilhabe lieferte.

## 2. *Phaidon*

### 2.1. Die „Reinigung" der Seele und das τι und ἕκαστον der Ideen (64a-69e)

Im *Phaidon* wird die Einheit der Idee schon im ersten Anlauf der Seelentheorie thematisch. Zwar kann Sokrates' Begründung seiner Vorfreude auf den nahenden Tod (63e-69e) noch nicht als Beweis für die Unsterblichkeit der Seele gelten, doch werden in seiner Ausführung die wichtigsten Anhaltspunkte schon gesetzt, auf denen die darauf folgenden Unsterblichkeitsbeweise aufbauen. Allen voran wird festgestellt, dass die Seele erst dann einen vollgültigen Zugang zur Realität der Dinge erlangt (zur „Wahrheit", 65b), wenn sie alleine vor ihrem Gegenstand zu stehen kommt. In einem zweiten Schritt wird gerade dieser Gegenstand in den Fokus genommen und in einem dritten Schritt wird die Affinität der Seele mit diesem Gegenstand geltend gemacht. Das Ziel der Ausführung ist der Nachweis, dass die Seele eines Menschen, der sich aufrichtig für die Wahrheit interessiert, den Tod als Mittel zum Zusammenschluss mit dem Gegenstand des Denkens begrüßen wird. Im zweiten Schritt der Ausführung, in dem sich, wie gesagt, der Fokus der Darstellung plötzlich auf den Gegenstand der Erkenntns verschiebt, erwartet Sokrates unvermittelt von seinem Gesprächspartner, dass er von der Existenz „eines gewissen Gerechten an sich" (τι...δίκαιον αὐτό) sowie von „einem

gewissen Schönen und Guten" (καλόν...τι καὶ ἀγαθόν, 65d) Bescheid weiß. Dem schließen sich sogleich auch andere Dinge an (Größe, Gesundheit, Stärke), die offenbar gleichfalls ‚Bestimmtheiten' ausmachen. „Jedes" (ἕκαστον) davon hat ein bestimmtes „Sein" (οὐσία) und ist ein „Seiendes" (ὄν). Der, der sich in Stand setzt, „jedes Einzelne an sich selbst zu denken" (αὐτὸ ἕκαστον διανοηθῆναι), wird auch „der Erkenntnis jedes Einzelnen" (τοῦ γνῶναι ἕκαστον, 65e) am nächsten kommen.

Es werden hier also von Sokrates Gegenstände angeführt, die die Bestimmung αὐτό erhalten. Ausdrücke wie „das Gerechte selbst" u.ä. werden anschließend als αὐτὸ ἕκαστον („jedes Einzelne an sich selbst") formalisiert. Das Ziel der philosophischen Lebensweise wird sodann darin gesehen, „mit dem Verstand selbst auf jedes Einzelne hin" zuzugehen (αὐτῇ τῇ διανοίᾳ ἴοι ἐφ' ἕκαστον). In diesem Kontext taucht das Attribut εἰλικρινής („rein, lauter, absolut, echt") auf, das den Ideen und dem sie denkenden Verstand zugeschrieben wird. Unter Rückgriff auf „den *reinen*, auf sich beruhenden Verstand selbst", versucht der Philosoph „jedes einzelne Seiende selbst, das *rein* ist und auf sich beruht" zu erkennen (αὐτῇ καθ' αὑτὴν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ χρώμενος αὐτὸ καθ' αὑτὸ εἰλικρινὲς ἕκαστον ἐπιχειροῖ θηρευεῖν τῶν ὄντων, 66a).

Angesichts der Reinheit „jedes einzelnen Seienden", das den angestrebten Denkgegenstand der Seele ausmacht, wird an die Seele selbst die Forderung adressiert, sich vom Körper freizumachen und genauso rein wie ihr ideales Denkobjekt zu werden. Das ist nicht unbedingt als Körperfeindlichkeit zu verstehen, wenn auch Akzente in dieser Richtung in der Tat nicht fehlen (vgl. 66b5-6). Das eigentliche Problem ist, dass sich der Seele etwas Fremdes beimischt. Problematisch ist nicht die Gemeinschaft der Seele mit dem Körper, sondern die mangelnde Konzentration der Seele auf den reinen Denkgegenstand. Daraus wird die radikale Schlussfolgerung gezogen, dass nur der Tod eine derartige Fokussierung auf das einzelne Seiende ermöglicht oder, als zweitbeste Option, eine ‚todesartige' Lebensführung noch im gegenwärtigen Dasein, die eine eindeutige Koordination zwischen Seele und Einzelgegenstand etabliert. Thematisch ist dabei allenthalben die Ausrichtung der Seele „auf die Untersuchung von *etwas*" (εἰς τὸ σκοπεῖν τι) und unser Anspruch, „*etwas* sauber zu erkennen" (καθαρῶς τι εἴσεσθαι, 66d). Erst nach dem Tod und *dank* dem Tod „werden wir durch uns selbst alles, was rein ist, wissen" (γνωσόμεθα δι' ἡμῶν αὐτῶν πᾶν τὸ εἰλικρινές, 67a-b).

Diese Ausführungen wurden deswegen so eingehend referiert, weil der *Phaidon* den ersten Vorstoß Platons in die Ideenmetaphysik zu

repräsentieren scheint. Dass schon in der ersten oder in einer der ersten ausgiebigen Darstellungen der Ideentheorie die Einheit der Idee im Aufbau der Argumentation eine eminent wichtige Rolle spielt, ist bezeichnend für die Formulierung der Ideenlehre auf dieser Stufe. Das Argument der Reinigung der Seele, das letztendlich die Todesangst bekämpfen soll, ist nur dann schlagkräftig, wenn das Denkobjekt der Seele, mit dem sich die Seele zusammenschließt, als Einheit genommen wird. Die These einer „konkreten Totalität" der Ideen, also eines Konglomerats von Idealformen, kommt nicht nur nicht zur Sprache, sondern würde das Argument auch stören.

Freilich könnte man entgegnen, dass die Reinheit der Idee, die in diesem Argument thematisch ist, nicht die Abgesondertheit der Idee von anderen Ideen meint, sondern die Separierung der Idee von Wahrnehmungsgehalten. Ihr entspricht die Separierung der Seele von den körperlichen Funktionen, die zeit des menschlichen Lebens nur relativ erreichbar ist und erst nach dem Tod in vollem Umfang gelingen kann. Dass die Idee als „das Reine" (τὸ εἰλικρινές) *per se* verstanden wird, bedeutet nicht (oder zumindest nicht primär), dass die Idee von anderen Ideen, sondern von Wahrnehmungsgehalten geschieden ist. Mit dieser Unterscheidung der Idee von Wahrnehmungsgehalten ist die Unterscheidung des Verstandes von jeglicher Wahrnehmung koordiniert.

Trotzdem ist die Inflation der Termini „etwas" und „Einzelnes", kulminierend in der generalisierenden Formel „das Einzelne selbst", in diesem Argument bezeichnend für die Stoßrichtung der Platonischen Ideenontologie. Es gibt im weiteren Verlauf des Dialogs ein zusätzliches, wenn auch nur implizites Argument dafür, dass „die Reinheit" im Sinne der Unterschiedenheit von Ihresgleichen ein wichtiges Merkmal der Idee ist.

### 2.2. Das Argument aus der Nichtzusammengesetztheit der Ideen und der Seele (78b-80d)

In der Reihe der Argumente für die Unsterblichkeit der Seele beruht das dritte auf dem Nachweis der Nichtzusammengesetztheit der Seele. Dieses Argument geht von den Ideen aus. Anlass der Reflexion ist die Befürchtung, die Seele könne nach der Trennung vom Körper sich auflösen und verschwinden. Dagegen stellt Sokrates zunächst axiomatisch fest, dass nur das, was zusammengesetzt ist, sich auflösen kann. „Das Nichtzusammengesetzte" (τὸ ἀξύνθετον) kann derartiges nicht erleiden (78c). Sokrates erklärt das Nichtzusammengesetzte als das, was „stets

nach denselben Verhältnissen und ohne ein Mehr oder Weniger besteht". (So ungefähr ließe sich der Ausdruck ἅπερ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχει übersetzen.) Welche Dinge sind damit gemeint? Sokrates erinnert an die Dinge, die er im ersten Anlauf der Unsterblichkeitsthese als die Denkobjekte der Seele bestimmt hatte. (Siehe oben 2.1.) Er fasst sie zusammen als „das Sein selbst, von dessen Existenz wir in Fragen und Antworten Rechenschaft ablegen" (αὐτὴ ἡ οὐσία, ἧς λόγον δίδομεν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἐρωτῶντες καὶ ἀποκρινόμενοι, 78c-d). Gemeint sind offenbar die Ideen.

Weiter fasst er die Ideen als „das, was jedes Einzelne selbst ist – das Seiende", zusammen (αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι, τὸ ὄν, 78d), und sagt, dass solche Dinge keine Veränderung durchmachen. Ein neues Attribut taucht in diesem Kontext plötzlich auf, um „jedes Einzelne, das ist"[9], zu charakterisieren: „Das Einzelne, das ist", ist „*eingestaltig*" (μονοειδές). Jede Idee erhält dadurch das Gepräge einer einzigartigen Form. Eine Form lässt sich nicht in Teilformen derselben Art zergliedern, ohne dabei aufzuhören, dasjenige zu sein, was sie ursprünglich war. Als eine bestimmte Wesensform ist jede Idee unteilbar.

Um diesen Gedanken besser zu verstehen, könnte man an folgendes Beispiel denken: Ein Kreis lässt sich nicht in ‚Teilkreise', etwa in Halbkreise, zergliedern, die gleichzeitig weiterhin genau dasselbe, nämlich Kreise, blieben. Zwar ist es denkbar, dass die Gattung ‚Kreis' in Teilgattungen analysierbar ist. Doch bedeutet das keineswegs, dass die Wesensform ‚Kreis' aufgrund der Dihärese der Gattung ‚Kreis' ihre Einheit verliert. Die Wesensform ‚Kreis' bleibt immer „eingestaltig" (μονοειδές), denn eine bestimmte Form lässt sich nicht differenzieren, ohne sich als jene bestimmte Form gänzlich aufzulösen.

Daraufhin stellt Sokrates fest, dass die Seele dem „Intelligiblen" (νοητῷ), „Eingestaltigen" (μονοειδεῖ) und „Unauflösbaren" (ἀδιαλύτῳ) – um nur drei Attribute aus einer langen Reihe zu zitieren – „am ähnlichsten" ist (80b). Dagegen führt er den Körper mit dem „Vielgestaltigen" (πολυειδές) zusammen. Die „Ähnlichkeit" der Seele mit dem „Eingestaltigen" begründet die Nichzusammengesetztheit und folglich die Unauflösbarkeit der Seele. Weil die Seele unauflösbar ist, ist sie unsterblich.

Es ist einleuchtend, dass von einer Komposition der Ideen im Kontext eines derartigen Beweisschlusses keine Rede sein kann. Es kommt ja gerade darauf an, dass die Seele einem Ding gleichen soll, das einheitlich ist und sich nicht zergliedern lässt. Würde Platon in diesem Zusammenhang die Möglichkeit einer „konkreten Totalität" der Idee, d.h. einer Zusammensetzung der Idee aus anderen Ideen[10], zulassen

wollen, verlöre das Argument seine Beweiskraft. Wäre nämlich die Idee etwas Zusammengesetztes, ließe sie sich in Teilideen zergliedern. Da aber die Seele der Idee gleicht, würde sie sich gleichfalls in Teilseelen oder Seelenteile zergliedern lassen. Das Argument ginge dann zunichte. Die Idee muss also im Rahmen dieses Argumentes etwas „Eingestaltiges" (μονοειδές) sein, so wie sie im Rahmen des anderen, oben referierten Argumentes (2.1), etwas „Reines" (εἰλικρινές) sein musste.

Freilich bleibt auch hier eine Tür zum Konzept der „konkreten Totalität" offen, insofern man sich die Idee zwar als etwas Zusammengesetztes denken kann, jedoch so, dass ihre Teile wesentlich zusammengehören. Die Folge wäre, dass solche Teile niemals auseinanderfallen, selbst wenn sie sich abstrakterweise als separat denken lassen. Die Idee wäre dann bloß insofern „eingestaltig", als ihre Teilideen zu einer nur potentiell auflösbaren Einheit zusammengeschweißt sind. Gleich im Anschluss des Argumentes ist vielleicht ein Hinweis auf die bloß relative Einheit der Seele und, rückschließend, auch der Idee zu lesen: Während der Körper sich nach dem Tod schnell auflöst, „kommt es der Seele zu, gänzlich unauflösbar *oder irgendwie nahe daran zu sein*" (ψυχῇ δὲ αὖ τὸ παράπαν ἀδιαλύτῳ εἶναι ἢ ἐγγύς τι τούτου, 80b).

Systematisch gesehen kann dieser Einwand in der Tat Geltung beanspruchen. Allerdings ist er mit dem Wortlaut des *Phaidon* unvereinbar, weil die Aufgabe der Argumentation im Nachweis besteht, dass die Seele nicht zusammengesetzt und folglich überhaupt nicht auflösbar ist, nicht einmal *potentialiter*. Ausdrücklich ist am Anfang des Argumentes davon die Rede, dass nur zusammengesetzte Dinge zergliedert werden können (78b-d). Das Argument nimmt sich dann vor, zu zeigen, dass die Seele nicht zusammengesetzt ist. Das wird aufgrund der Wesensverwandtschaft der Seele mit den Ideen nachgewiesen. Anders wäre das Argument für die Unauflösbarkeit der Seele nicht stichhaltig.

Dass also die Idee eine absolute Einheit ist, trägt das ganze Argument. Das wird zunächst sprachlich-suggestiv aufgezeigt: Die Idee ist nämlich „das Einzelne, das ist" (ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι). Die ‚Einzelheit' ist Teil ihrer Beschreibung als Idee. Dies kann allerdings auch so verstanden werden, dass die Idee genau das ist, was jedes einzelne (sinnenfällige oder nicht sinnenfällige) Ding ist. Als identifizierendes Prädikat eines Subjektes (im logischen Sinne) und als Wesensform eines Gegenstandes (im ontologischen Sinne) kann die Idee nicht anders als einheitlich sein.

Trotzdem bleibt der oben formulierte Einwand aus systematischer Sicht bestehen: Ist es nicht denkbar, dass die Idee aus wesentlich

zusammengehörigen Teilideen besteht? Die Idee wäre dann eine aktual unzergliederte Einheit und könnte als Modell der Seele gelten, die gleichfalls unzergliedert wäre. Dem Argument wäre in diesem Fall Genüge geleistet. (Idee und Seele blieben aber weiterhin latenterweise oder *potentiell* auflösbar.) Diesem Einwand kann man allerdings mit einem stärkeren Argument begegnen. Das Argument ist abermals im *Phaidon* zu lesen.

### 2.3. Der Konflikt zwischen Zusammensetzung und Einheit (96e-97b und 100e-101e)

Zwei grundlegende Einwände seiner Gesprächspartner Simmias und Kebes sind für Sokrates die Veranlassung, seiner Enttäuschung gegenüber der Naturphilosophie Ausdruck zu verleihen und seine (vermeintliche) Entwicklung vom Naturphilosophen zum Ideentheoretiker zu schildern. (Das Problem der historischen ‚Echtheit' dieser Schilderung sei hier ausgeklammert.) Sokrates verleiht seiner Unzufriedenheit mit der Naturphilosophie durch vier Verlegenheitsfragen Ausdruck, die eigentlich zu zwei Aporien gruppiert werden können. Die erste Aporie bezieht sich auf das Problem der körperlichen Größe. Zwei Verlegenheitsfragen spiegeln diese Aporie wider: Wie ist das Phänomen der körperlichen Zunahme zu erklären? Und darf man sagen, dass ein Körper aufgrund einer geringen Länge größer ist als ein anderer Körper? – Diese erste Aporie zielt darauf ab, die Selbstwidersprüchlichkeit des landläufigen Verständnisses von körperlicher Größe nachzuweisen. Ein kleiner Körper kann durch Infinitesimalzunahmen niemals den Zustand der *Größe* erreichen. Und ein großer Körper kann nicht dank einer *kleinen* Länge *groß* sein (im Vergleich zu einem als ‚klein' bezeichneten Körper).

Diese zwei Verlegenheitsfragen werden sodann durch eine weitere Aporie „explizit" gemacht (ἔτι γε τούτων ἐναργέστερα, 96e). Es folgt die Formulierung einer mathematischen Aporie. Auch diese Aporie findet in zwei Verlegenheitsfragen Ausdruck. Ist die Zehn aufgrund der Zwei größer als die Acht und die doppelte Größe um ihre eigene Hälfte größer als der zugrundegelegte Maßstab? (Ich fasse hier die zwei Fragen als eine einzige Frage auf.) Auch hier soll offenbar ein Selbstwiderspruch daraus gezogen werden, dass ein mathematischer Gegenstand aufgrund von etwas ‚Kleinem' größer ist als ein anderer.

Doch erst die zweite Verlegenheitsfrage konfrontiert uns mit einem gravierenden philosophischen Problem. Im Prinzip können die obigen

Fragen auch als eine bloße Einleitung zu dieser letzten Frage gelten. Der Fokus der Interpretation soll infolgedessen auf dieser Frage liegen. Wie man die obigen drei Fragen genaugenommen zu verstehen hat, kann im Rahmen dieser Arbeit nicht diskutiert werden. (Siehe dazu Menn, 2010). Die zweite Verlegenheitsfrage der mathematischen Aporie ist allerdings zentral für Platons Konzeption der Ideeneinheit.

Die zweite Verlegenheitsfrage konfrontiert uns bei eingehender Analyse mit einem fundamentalen philosophischen Problem. Sie hat nicht denselben Status wie die obigen drei Fragen, sondern greift tiefer als sie. Da Sokrates gerade auf diese Frage keine Antwort zu geben weiß, kann er auch zu den bisherigen Fragen keine Lösung liefern. Worin besteht nun diese Frage?

Sokrates setzt in aller Einfachheit bei einer Additionsaufgabe an (96e). Wenn man eine Eins zu einer Eins addiert, was genau „wird" zur Zwei: die erste Eins, die zweite Eins[11] oder beide zusammen? Sokrates zeigt sich darüber verwundert, dass, während doch jede einzelne Eins vor der Addition jeweils eine Einheit war, irgendetwas dazu führt, dass nach der Addition irgendetwas an diesen Einsen Zwei wird. Er kann nicht recht glauben, dass das Zusammenkommen der beiden Einsen die Zwei hervorbringt. Wie könnte doch das Zusammenkommen der Einsen aufgrund der bloßen Nebeneinanderstellung der Einsen die Zwei produzieren (ἡ ξύνοδος τῷ[12] πλησίον ἀλλήλων τεθῆναι)?

Das Problem wird noch dadurch verschärft, dass dieselbe Zwei, die angeblich als Ergebnis der Addition fungiert, zugleich auch das vermeintliche Ergebnis einer Teilung sein soll, nämlich der Teilung einer Eins (97a). Vorher erzielte man die Zwei durch „Hinzufügung" (Addition). Jetzt erzielt man sie plötzlich durch Division oder – wenn man an die „Wegnahme" einer Eins denkt – durch Subtraktion, die Umkehropperation der Addition (ἀπάγεται καὶ χωρίζεται ἕτερον ἀφ' ἑτέρου, 97b). Was das eigentliche Problem des Sokrates ist, werden wir noch sehen. Auf alle Fälle verschärft er noch ein zweites Mal die Problematik, indem er vorgibt, nicht verstehen zu können, wie überhaupt etwas zu einer Einheit werden könne.

Sokrates' Fragestellung entwickelt sich durch progressive Vertiefung der Problematik. Das zeigt sich auch am wiederholten Οὐδέ γε („Nicht einmal", 97a6 und b3).[13] Wie ein Körper wachsen, wie er größer als ein anderer sein kann, wie überhaupt eine mathematische Größe größer sein kann als eine andere, versteht Sokrates umso weniger, als er „nicht einmal" weiß, was genau bei der Addition 1 + 1 die 2 hervorbringt. Ja, er weiß nicht einmal, wie dieselbe 2 zugleich auch die Anzahl der Hälften in der

1 bezeichnen kann. Das Schlimmste ist zweifellos, dass er letztendlich „nicht einmal" weiß, wie etwas eine Einheit ist oder werden kann (οὐδέ γε διότι ἓν γίγνεται). Ihm sind überhaupt in jeder Hinsicht Werden, Vergehen und Sein fraglich geworden.

Diese Probleme klären sich erst dank der Annahme der Ideen auf (100c): Ein Körper ist groß, weil er an der Größe teilhat. Eine Zahl ist größer als eine andere, weil sie an der Vielheit teilnimmt. Zwar lässt sich Sokrates noch nicht darauf festlegen, wie man genau das Verhältnis zwischen Gegenstand und Idee beschreiben soll, aber eins ist für ihn sicher: Jede Eigenschaft kommt einem Ding durch dessen Teilhabe an einer Idee zu. Nach demselben Muster lässt sich auch das früher angesprochene Problem der Zwei ausbuchstabieren: Es sind nicht die Addition oder die Division, die die Zwei hervorbringen, sondern die Teilhabe an der Idee der Zwei (ἡ τῆς δυάδος μετάσχεσις, 101e).

Diese Lösung der Aporien enthält mehr, als sie beim ersten Blick durchscheinen lässt. Menn (2010) wollte die vier Verlegenheitsfragen des Passus 96e-97b im Ausgang von der ersten Frage erklären, nämlich aus dem Blickwinkel des Problems, wie ein Körper im Wachstum seine Identität noch bewahren könne. (So legt Menn im Anschluss an ein Epicharm-Fragment das Problem aus.) Ohne die Legitimität seiner Interpretation in Frage stellen zu wollen, müssen wir doch bemerken, dass Sokrates offenkundig die mathematischen Beispiele als die „klareren" ansieht (ἐναργέστερα, 96e) und die Frage nach der Zwei als das grundsätzliche Problem versteht. Hier aber macht es wenig Sinn, das Problem darin zu sehen, wie die Einsen ihre Identität noch bewahren können, wenn sie in der Addition zu einer Zwei werden. So freilich will Menn das Problem auffassen. Das ist offenkundig ein *contresens*. Mag Menns Interpretation für das Beispiel der Gewichtzunahme stimmen, das Problem der Zwei wird durch seine Auslegung nicht eingefangen. Er reduziert die mathematische Aporie zu „Problemen des Wachstums" („problems about growth", 2010, 42) und Identitätsbewahrung in der Veränderung, die m.E. den Sinn der Aporie verfehlen.

In der Auslegung der Frage und ihrer Tragweite muss von der ‚plumpen' Lösung ausgegangen werden, die Sokrates selbst zu bieten hat. Aus dieser Lösung ist zunächst festzuhalten, dass die Zwei eine Idee ist. Mag der Begriff der Zwei für uns das Vorstellungsbild zweier Objekte mit sich bringen, an sich selbst ist die Zwei doch *eine* Idee, d.h. eine ideelle Einheit. Die Idee der Zwei, die verschieden von der Anzahl zweier Objekte ist, ist im Grunde genommen *Zweiheit*. (Siehe dazu auch Călian, 2014.)

Diese Auslegung der Lösung versteht sich von selbst. Sie kann allerdings auf der Grundlage der Einsichten von Taylor (1927) noch weitergeführt werden: Womit wir in dieser Aporie und ihrer Lösung zu tun haben, ist recht besehen eine implizite Unterscheidung zwischen Operation und Definition. Es stimmt natürlich, dass Eins und Eins Zwei ergeben, aber die Zwei kann nicht als ‚Eins und Eins' definiert werden. Denn auch andere Operationen ergeben das Resultat ‚Zwei', weswegen man dann konkurrierende Definitionen derselben Entität erhalten würde. (Sokrates suggeriert diesen Sachverhalt dadurch, dass er auf die Zwei als Resultat einer Division oder Subtraktion anspielt, 97b). Das wäre an sich nicht undenkbar. Man kann ja auch vom Menschen verschiedene Definitionen geben. Doch während die Definitionen des Menschen einander ergänzen, ist die Zwei das Ergebnis einer unendlichen Vielzahl möglicher Operationen. Versteht man die Operation zugleich auch als Definition der Zahl (die Zwei *ist* 1 + 1), erhält man eine schiere Unendlichkeit von ‚Definitionen' der Zahl (die Zwei *ist* auch 4/2, 3 – 1, usw.). Wie könnte aber eine Unendlichkeit von Definitionen den Wesensbegriff eines Gegenstandes vervollständigen?

Aber noch eine andere, ernstere Schwierigkeit ergibt sich, wenn man im Fall der Zahl Operation und Definition nicht unterscheidet. Sokrates suggeriert diese Schwierigkeit schon durch die Art, wie er die Frage nach der Zwei formuliert: Ist es etwa die Eins, „zu der hinzugefügt (oder addiert) worden ist", die zur Zwei wird (96e)? Mit anderen Worten: Ist es die *zweite* Eins in der Addition, die zur Zwei wird? Offenkundig ist die Zwei schon da, noch bevor das Resultat der Addition 1 + 1 erreicht wird. Die Zwei ist also nicht erst das Ergebnis der Addition, sondern ihre Voraussetzung. Die „Hinzufügung", die Addition kann nur auf der Grundlage der Zwei geschehen.

Der Zahl Zwei kommt folglich eine ontologische Priorität gegenüber den Operationen zu, in die sie eingebunden wird. Aber auch in epistemologischer Hinsicht ist sie nicht ‚Resultat', sondern Voraussetzung: Wir müssen sie von Hause aus mitbringen, um allererst so etwas wie ‚Operation' denken zu können. Dies führt dazu, dass man die Zwei als Idee, d.h. als eine ‚apriorische' Denkgrundlage anerkennen muss. (Vgl. Radke 2003, 487.)

Die Zahl Zwei und jede andere Zahl muss also als Einheit definiert werden, so wie auch die Gerechtigkeit, die Schönheit und alle anderen ‚Wesenheiten' definiert werden. Darum geraten die Zahlen in eine Verwandtschaft mit solchen ‚Wesenheiten' und werden, aus der Sicht

Platons, zu Ideen. Die Zahlen sind nicht Resultate von Operationen, sondern als ideelle Einheiten zu definierende Entitäten, genau wie ‚Schönheit', ‚Gerechtigkeit', ‚Größe'. Das von Sokrates angesprochene Problem betrifft also gerade nicht die Frage, wie die Eins oder die Einsen als Eins, bzw. Einsen, in der Zwei, zu der sie addiert werden, noch enthalten sein können – wie das Menn zu glauben scheint, wenn er das mathematische Problem aus der Sicht der Frage nach der Selbstidentität des Körpers in der Gewichtzunahme interpretiert. Sokrates will sagen, dass zwischen dem Denken der Eins und dem Denken der Zwei ein qualitativer Unterschied liegt, den keine mathematische Operation vermitteln kann. (Vgl. auch Gallop, 1975, 173-174.) Man muss die Zwei von vorneherein ‚haben', noch bevor man irgendeine Operation mit zwei oder mehreren Gliedern betätigt.

Diese Auslegung wird durch eine antike Interpretation des Problems unterstützt. Der skeptische Philosoph Sextus Empiricus hat – mit ausdrücklichem Verweis auf den *Phaidon* – diese Problemstellung aufgegriffen, um die Irrealität der Zahl zu beweisen. (Siehe Corti, 2015, mit den Belegstellen.) Die vermeintliche Absurdität der Denkaufgabe sieht Sextus darin, dass man das Resultat der Addition zu der Addition selbst hinzudenken muss. In der Addition 1 + 1 tritt das Ergebnis 2 *hinzu*, so dass letztendlich diese Operation vier mathematische Gegenstände einbindet: die erste Eins, die zweite Eins und die zwei Einheiten, die die Anzahl 2 bilden und die als Resultat der Addition hinzukommen. Das Resultat der Addition 1 + 1 ist eigentlich, recht gedacht, nicht 2, sondern 4. Das Räsonnement ist spitzfindig und macht einem skeptischen Schlaumeier alle Ehre. Als Interpretation von *Phaidon* 96e-97b ist es gewiss untauglich. Doch immerhin zeigt Sextus' Verständnis dieser Dialogstelle, wie man schon in der Antike Platons Absicht in der Formulierung der Aporie auslegte: Die Zwei muss zur Operation 1 + 1 *hinzutreten*. Sie kann nicht *aus* dieser Operation entstehen. Die Zwei muss schon bereitliegen, *bevor* die Addition in Angriff genommen wird. Sie ist die ‚apriorische' Grundlage der Addition, könnten wir modernisierend sagen, und wird zur Operation 1 + 1 ‚synthetisch' hinzugedacht.

Das Argument des *Phaidon* gibt uns zugleich einen wichtigen Hinweis darauf, wie man eine Idee zu verstehen hat. Die Idee der Zwei enthält nicht die Eins oder die Idee der Eins (vgl. Taylor 1927, 24). Verallgemeinernd lässt sich sagen: Keine Idee enthält irgendeine andere Idee. Sie ist eine unteilbare Einheit und gerade die unteilbare Einheit der Idee muss in der Definition der Idee ihren Ausdruck finden. Für die Auslegung dieses

Sachverhaltes kann die von Strobel (2007) von Aristoteles übernommene und in der Platon-Interpretation eingesetzte Unterscheidung zwischen „Dieses (etwas)" (τόδε τι) und „So etwas" (τοιόνδε) fruchtbar gemacht werden. Die Zweiheit ist demnach *so etwas, als was zwei Dinge, insofern sie zwei sind, charakterisiert sind*. Ein Objekt vom Typus „So etwas" – wie es die Idee der Zweiheit ist – kann unmöglich in Bestandteile zergliedert werden, sondern muss als Einheit betrachtet und definiert werden.

Das Bahnbrechende der oben referierten Überlegungen Platons besteht darin, dass von der Zahl eine Definition verlangt wird, die unabhängig von den mathematischen Operationen, deren Ergebnis die Zwei ist, Geltung haben soll. Eine solche Definitionsweise zeigt, dass die Zwei letztendlich eine Entität vom Typus der Größe, Gerechtigkeit, Schönheit und anderer dieser Art ist. Die Zwei und die anderen Zahlen erhalten dadurch den Status von Ideen. Diese Einsicht kann durch zwei weitere Argumente aus Platons *Politeia* ergänzt werden.

## 3. *Politeia*

### 3.1. Die Ideen zählen (476a)

Eine besonders interessante Passage über das Verhältnis zwischen Ideen und Zahlen ist im 5. Buch der *Politeia* zu lesen. Es handelt sich um die allererste Einführung der Ideenlehre in diesem Dialog (475e-476a). Umso erstaunlicher ist es, dass diese Einleitung in die Ideentheorie am Leitfaden des Zahlbegriffes geschieht. Die Passage steht im Kontext der Bestimmung dessen, was es heißt, ein wahrer, kontemplativer Philosoph im Unterschied zu einem Schaulustigen zu sein. Sokrates will den ‚Philosophen' ausgehend von den Gegenständen seines Erkenntnisinteresses definieren. In diesem Zusammenhang stellen Sokrates und sein Gesprächspartner fest, dass das Schöne dem Hässlichen entgegengesetzt ist und dass deswegen Schönes und Hässliches zwei sind. Sind Schönes und Hässliches zwei, so ist jedes der beiden jeweils eins. Und so lautet die Schlussfolgerung:

> Von dem Gerechten, Ungerechten, Guten, Schlechten und von allen Ideen gilt dasselbe Argument, nämlich dass jede jeweils eine ist, dass aber jede einzelne durch ihre Gemeinschaft mit den Handlungen, Körpern und miteinander[14], indem sie allenthalben in Erscheinung tritt, Vieles zu sein scheint. (476a)

Bemerkenswert an diesem Abschnitt ist, dass die Ideen zunächst paarweise, nach Gegensätzen, auftreten. Was eine Idee ist – scheint Sokrates anzunehmen –, begreift man am leichtesten, wenn man die Idee zusammen mit ihrem Gegensatz nimmt. Die Idee und ihr Gegensatz sind offensichtlich zwei. Erst diese Zweizahl leitet zur Bemerkung über, dass die Glieder des Paares jeweils eins sein müssen. Man könnte natürlich sagen, dass uns Sokrates hier mit einem Sophismus versorgt. Um sicherzustellen, dass man die Hypostasierung allgemeiner Gegenstände wie „das Schöne", „das Gerechte", „das Gute" in Kauf nimmt, stellt er uns zunächst die unverfängliche Ansicht vor, dass diese Wörter zusammen mit ihren Antonymen Gegensatzpaare bilden. Wenn aber ein Gegensatzpaar eine Zweiheit darstellt, dann sind die Glieder des Gegensatzpaares jeweils eine Einheit. Auf diese Weise scheint Sokrates von seinem ‚naiven' Gesprächspartner die Zustimmung dafür zu erzwingen, dass es substantielle Entitäten ideeller Art gibt. Sokrates hat offenbar durch diese Argumentation das erreicht, was er im *Phaidon*, viel leichter, mit der Frage erreicht hatte: „Sagen wir, dass das Gerechte selbst *etwas* ist oder nichts?" (65b), Frage, die Simmias ohne Bedenken bejaht hatte.

Dieses Problem hängt mit der Frage zusammen, ob Platon Ideen von negativen Sachverhalten angenommen hat (von Hässlichem, Ungerechtem, Schlechtem; vgl. auch 402c und Wilpert 1948, 66-68). Ohne im vorliegenden Aufsatz auf diese Frage eingehen zu können, wollen wir hier nur darauf hinweisen, dass bemerkenswerterweise die Zweiheit in diesem Argument einen Vorsprung gegenüber der Einheit hat. Der Gegensatz der Werte (schön – hässlich, gerecht – ungerecht, gut – schlecht) verweist unmittelbar auf die Existenz von Zweiheiten im ontologischen Bereich. Die Zweiheit ist demnach leichter einzusehen als die Einheit. Erst aus der Existenz der Zweiheit wird nachträglich die Existenz von Einheiten deduziert. Dass die Existenz der Zweiheit an der Existenz eines Gegensatzes abgelesen wird, unterstreicht die konzeptuelle Einheit der Zweiheit. Die Zweiheit des Gegensatzes *verweist* auf die Einheiten, die diesen Gegensatz bilden. Die Zweiheit selbst *ist nicht* aus diesen Einheiten gebildet. Unterschwellig also führt Platon in diesem Argument die Überlegungen weiter, die er im *Phaidon* angestellt hatte.

### 3.2. Wofür die Zahlen gut sind (520c-526c)

Die Einführung der Ideenlehre am Leitfaden der Zahlen im 5. Buch der *Politeia* wird durch die Darstellung des Fachs Arithmetik im 7. Buch

ergänzt. Die Ausführung über die große Bedeutung der Arithmetik steht im Kontext des Bildungsgangs, dem sich die „Wächter" von „Kallipolis" (527c) zu unterziehen haben. Sie wird von der Metaphorik beherrscht, die durch das Höhlengleichnis vorgegeben worden war. So wird zu Beginn der Ausführung danach gefragt, welches Wissen die Wächter des geplanten Staates vom Dunkeln zum Licht führen und zum „Sein" aufsteigen lassen kann (521c). Schon die umständliche Einleitung zur Darstellung der Arithmetik macht deutlich, welche herausragende Bedeutung dieser Wissenschaft zukommt. Doch worin besteht ihre ausgezeichnete Rolle?

Die Funktion der Arithmetik tritt zutage, wenn gewisse Wahrnehmungen nicht unmittelbar deutlich sind, sondern zum Nachdenken anreizen. Unentschiedene Wahrnehmungen verlangen spontan nach der Intervention der Zahl. Das Beispiel, das Sokrates gibt, ist anschaulich – im Wortsinne. Er zeigt Glaukon drei Finger einer Hand und lässt ihn bemerken, dass der Sehsinn daran nicht zweifelt, ob das Gesehene Finger sind oder nicht (523c). Wenigstens dies ist untrüglich. Wenn es aber darauf ankommt, sich die Eigenschaften der Finger bewusst zu machen, liefert die Wahrnehmung ein Bündel ungeordneter Wahrnehmungsdaten: Derselbe Finger ist groß und klein oder weich und hart. Das bringt die Seele in Verlegenheit, denn wie kann dieselbe Sache gegensätzliche Eigenschaften annehmen? Die amphibolischen Wahrnehmungen veranlassen also die Seele „die Überlegung und das Denken" (λογισμόν τε καὶ νόησιν) zu Hilfe zu „rufen". Unter Rückgriff auf „die Überlegung und das Denken" kann sie „überprüfen, ob jedes Einzelne der angezeigten Daten eins oder zwei ist" (ἐπισκοπεῖν εἴτε ἓν εἴτε δύο ἕκαστα τῶν εἰσαγγελλομένων, 524b). Wenn die „angezeigten Daten" (τὰ εἰσαγγελόμενα) zwei sind, dann ist jedes der beiden eins und verschieden vom anderen. Wenn aber wiederum jedes eins ist und beide zusammen zwei, dann denkt die Seele die zwei getrennt. Wären sie nicht getrennt, würde die Seele sie nicht als zwei, sondern als eines denken (524c).

Während also die Wahrnehmung in solchen Situationen Bündel von zusammengeschmolzenen Gegensätzen an die Seele weitervermittelt, bringt das Denken Ordnung in diese Konglomerate hinein, indem es sie separiert. Das ist laut Sokrates der Ursprung dessen, dass wir sagen können, „was eigentlich das Große ist und was das Kleine" (524c). Das Große, das Kleine und Ähnliches sind aber, wie Sokrates bemerkt, „das Intelligible". Einheit und Zweiheit sind also offenbar die Hauptinstrumente des Denkens, anhand deren es Ordnung in den Wahrnehmungen schafft und zur Feststellung des Intelligiblen gelangt. Wie im fünften Buch spielen

auch hier die Zahlen eine eminente Rolle im Übergang zum Denken der Ideen. Man gelangt zu den Ideen dadurch, dass man Eigenschaften zählt und durch das Zählen vereinheitlicht und bestimmt. Wie im oben diskutierten Passus des 5. Buches scheint auch hier die Zweiheit einen gewissen Vorsprung vor der Einheit zu haben. Zunächst stellt die Seele fest, dass die Wahrnehmung Gegensätzliches verkündet, also etwas, was das Denken als „zwei" zählt. Erst durch die Analyse der Zweiheit wird ein Bewusstsein dafür erlangt, dass jeder Bestandteil dieser Zweiheit jeweils eine Einheit ist.

Mit einem Begriff aus Aristoteles' *Physik* könnte man die Zahl, die der Seele verhilft, Zugang zu den Ideen zu erlangen, „zählende Zahl" nennen (*phys*. IV 14, 223a22-29). Die Ausführung zur „zählenden Zahl" ist für unsere Darstellung deswegen von Bedeutung, weil sie beweist, dass schon der Platon der Dialoge und nicht nur der Platon der ungeschriebenen Lehren eine besondere Beziehung zwischen den Ideen und den Zahlen hergestellt hat. Die erste Hinwendung zum Seienden, heißt es in diesem Kontext, wird durch die Arithmetik erwirkt (521d, 523a, 525a) und zwar dadurch, dass sie die Eigenschaften der Dinge zählt und im Zählen als Einheiten hinstellt. Dabei kann es paradoxerweise geschehen, dass „die Seele" einen unmittelbaren Zugang zur Zweiheit hat und zur Einheit erst durch die Vermittlung der Zweiheit gelangt.

Das erinnert uns zugleich an die Aporie des *Phaidon*, dernach die Konstruktion der Zwei aus einer Addition von Einheiten zu einer Denkunmöglichkeit führt. Die Zwei ist, laut der „sicheren" Hypothese an der Sokrates auf Gedeih und Verderb festhalten will, eine Idee und kommt Paaren von Dingen durch Partizipation zu. Eine Sache ist zwei – in diesem Kontext ist der Solözismus inhaltlich gerechtfertigt –, wenn sie an der Idee der Zweiheit teilhat.

Der Anstoß, den Platon an der Konstruktion der Zahl durch eine Operation zu nehmen scheint, wird durch eine Bemerkung im 7. Buch der *Politeia* in ein helleres Licht gestellt. Nach der Darstellung der Arithmetik wird die Rolle der Geometrie unter die Lupe genommen (526c-527c). So wie er es auch hinsichtlich der Arithmetik gemacht hatte, fragt sich Sokrates, inwiefern die Geometrie zur Schärfung des geistigen Auges beiträgt. Die Geometrie soll letztendlich die Kontemplation der Idee des Guten erleichtern. Nun sieht Sokrates den Beitrag der Geometrie in dieser Hinsicht darin, dass sie zwar zeitliche Begriffe für ihre Methoden gebraucht, es jedoch auf unzeitliche Verhältnisse abgesehen hat. Unter den Zeitwörtern, die in der Sprache der Geometer in uneigentlicher

Bedeutung herumspuken, ist auch das Verb „hinzufügen" (προστιθέναι, 527a). „Hinzufügen" ist aber auch das Wort, das im *Phaidon* die Aporie der Konstruktion der Zwei bewirkt. So stimmen recht eigentlich Geometrie und Arithmetik darin überein, dass zu einem Gegenstand – egal ob geometrischer oder arithmetischer Art – nichts „hinzugefügt" werden kann. Eine „Operation" (πράξις, 527a) im Sinne einer „Konstruktion" hat in der Geometrie nur aus didaktischen Rücksichten einen Sinn. Genauso wenig lässt sich eine „Operation" in der Arithmetik konsequent denken. (Vgl. *resp.* 476a: Die πράξις gehört zu den Ursachen der Vervielfachung.) Die Addition und die anderen arithmetischen Operationen müssen also ihrer Prozessualität entkleidet werden und anders als durch „Hinzufügung" oder „Wegnahme" definiert werden. Platon wird in seinem Konzept der „Teilhabe" den Schlüssel zu einer vollgültigen Definition arithmetischer Operationen sehen.

## 4. Platons Ideenzahlen in den Referaten des Aristoteles. Die Ideenzahlen und die „unkombinierbaren" Einheiten („Monaden")

Nun wollen wir die Frage stellen, wie sich die oben referierten Passagen zu den Aristotelischen Berichten über Platons Lehre von den Ideenzahlen verhalten und ob sich die obigen Textstellen und die Referate des Aristoteles gegenseitig beleuchten können. Aristoteles verweist mehrmals in der *Metaphysik* auf eine These der „ungeschriebenen Lehren" Platons, dergemäß die Ideen mit Zahlen zu identifizieren seien, so zuerst in *met.* A 6, 987b21-22.[15] Weitere Stellen, die mit ziemlicher Sicherheit auf Platon bezogen werden können, sind *met.* M 6, 1080b11-14 und N3, 1090b32-1091a5.[16] (Zu den Ideenzahlen siehe die *Testimonia Platonica* 56-63 bei Gaiser, 1998.) Freilich kann im Kontext dieser Arbeit nicht auf alle hochkomplexen Gedankengänge der Bücher M und N der *Metaphysik* eingegangen werden. Es soll ein einziges Problem herausgegriffen werden, das die oben dargestellten Ausführungen über die Zahl aus dem *Phaidon* und der *Politeia* erhellen kann.

Laut *met.* M 6, 1080b11-14 und N3, 1090b32-1091a5 hat Platon – der hier freilich nicht namentlich erwähnt wird – die Ideenzahlen von den arithmetischen Zahlen und geometrischen Figuren, also von den Gegenständen der Mathematik, unterschieden. Dass Platon die Gegenstände der Mathematik als Mittelstufe zwischen den Ideen und den sinnenfälligen Dingen annahm, ist in *met.* A 6, 987b14-18

sicher belegt, weswegen alle Stellen, an denen eine Unterscheidung zwischen Ideenzahlen und mathematischen Gegenständen *stricto sensu* vorgenommen wird, mit einiger Gewissheit auf Platon bezogen werden können. Hinzu tritt noch eine systematische Bemerkung des Aristoteles, dass die Ideen entweder Zahlen sind oder gar nicht existieren (*met.* M 6, 1081a12-17). Er bezieht sich hier auf die Deduktion der Ideen aus zwei höheren Prinzipien, dem Einen und der „unbestimmten Zweiheit", die ebenfalls in den „ungeschriebenen Lehren" thematisiert wurde (*met.* A 6, 987b18-22). (Siehe dazu die *Testimonia Platonica* 49-55 bei Gaiser 1998.) Aus dem Einen und der „unbestimmten Zweiheit" müssen aber notwendig Zahlen entstehen, so dass sich dadurch Aristoteles' Bemerkung, dass die Ideenlehre mit der Gleichsetzung Ideen = Zahlen steht und fällt, vollkommen rechtfertigt. Für die Ideenzahlen gebraucht Aristoteles die Ausdrücke: ὁ εἰδητικὸς ἀριθμός („die eidetische Zahl")[17], ὁ πρῶτος ἀριθμός[18] („die primäre Zahl"), ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν εἰδῶν[19] („die Zahl der Wesensformen"), ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἰδεῶν („die Zahl der Ideen").[20] Im Folgenden werden wir den Terminus „Idealzahl" gebrauchen, weil wir den Aspekt der „Idee" vorläufig zurückstellen und die Zahlhaftigkeit dieser Wesenheiten untersuchen wollen.

Nun richtet Aristoteles in den Kapiteln 6-9 des Buches M und im Buch N einen vernichtenden Angriff gegen die Idealzahlenlehre Platons und der Alten Akademie. In M 6 präsentiert er die Systematik der Idealzahlenlehre, die teilweise von ihm selbst konstruiert ist.[21] Die Idealzahlen können zunächst an sich betrachtet werden (I): Sie stehen in einer Reihenfolge und sind durch ihr Eidos (Wesensform) voneinander verschieden (1080a17-18). Man kann aber auch auf die Einheiten („Monaden") bedacht sein, die diese Idealzahlen zusammensetzen. In diesem Fall (II) ergeben sich drei Möglichkeiten:

1. Jede Einheit ist von jeder anderen Einheit durch ihr Eidos verschieden. Das hat zur Folge, dass „keine" Einheit mit irgendeiner anderen Einheit „kombinierbar" ist. Jede „Monade" oder Einheit ist „unkombinierbar" (ἀσύμβλητος). Damit meint Aristoteles, dass die Einheiten, selbst innerhalb ein und derselben Idealzahl, in keine Operationen eingebunden werden können. Sie können „nicht" miteinander „verglichen" werden – eine andere Bedeutung von ἀσύμβλητος – und stehen jeweils alleine für sich da, auch wenn sie zu zweit, zu dritt, zu viert usw. jeweils eine Idealzahl bilden.

2. Jede Einheit ist mit jeder anderen Einheit „kombinierbar" (συμβλητός). Von diesem Typus ist die Einheit, die die mathematische Zahl zusammensetzt.
3. Nur innerhalb *einer* Idealzahl ist jede Einheit mit jeder anderen Einheit „kombinierbar". Die Einheiten innerhalb der Zweiheit haben ein anderes Eidos als die Einheiten innerhalb der Dreiheit, Vierheit usw. Innerhalb *einer* Idealzahl sind die Einheiten „kombinierbar", von Idealzahl zu Idealzahl dagegen, „unkombinierbar".

Es besteht (III) auch die Möglichkeit, dass es Zahlen jeder dieser Art gibt (wobei unklar bleibt, ob die Möglichkeit [I] mitberücksichtigt ist oder nicht), keiner dieser Art oder mancher dieser Art.

Im vorliegenden Unterkapitel wollen wir uns auf die Option II.1 konzentrieren, dergemäß „keine" Einheit mit irgendeiner anderen Einheit „kombinierbar" sei. Diese Option kann uns wertvolle Hinweise zum Verständnis der Platonischen Theorie der Zahl geben. Von ihr sagt Aristoteles paradoxerweise, dass sie nur in gewissen Schranken vertreten wurde (M 6, 1081a35-36). In der Kommentarliteratur zu dieser Stelle heißt es, dass die Option der gänzlich unkombinierbaren Einheiten gar nicht vertreten worden ist (vgl. Ross, 1924, *ad loc.*) und dass Aristoteles nur der Vollständigkeit halber diese Option eingehend referiert. Tatsächlich aber sagt Aristoteles nur, dass *eine gewisse* Variation dieser Auffassung keine Vertretung fand, nämlich die Auffassung, dass es primär bloß eine Reihenfolge von Einheiten gibt, die erst im Nachhinein, durch Gruppierung, die Idealzahlen ergeben. Das wäre, bemerkt Aristoteles, logisch unmöglich, da ja die Einheiten als „unkombinierbar" gelten sollen. Vor allem aber ist das deswegen unmöglich, weil die zweite Einheit schon gegeben wäre, bevor durch Gruppierung der zweiten und der dritten Einheit die Zahl Zwei entstünde. Wir müssten also die zweite Einheit als *zweite* Zählen, noch bevor es die Zahl 2 überhaupt gibt. „Nun hat zwar niemand von ihnen *auf diese Weise* die Einheiten für unkombinierbar erklärt, aber aus den Prinzipien jener Denker folgt logisch auch diese Konsequenz, die freilich an sich genommen unmöglich ist" (M 7, 1081a35-1081b1).

Was allerdings offenbleibt, ist die Möglichkeit, dass die Idealzahlenreihe primäre Geltung hat und dabei trotzdem die Einheiten in jeder Idealzahl eidetisch voneinander verschieden sind. In der Tat muss die Zahl Zwei schon gegeben sein, bevor die zweite Einheit in der Zahl Zwei eben als *zweite* Einheit gezählt werden kann. Das führt uns zurück zur oben

diskutierten Konzeption des *Phaidon*, dass eine Zahl nicht als Summe ihrer Einheiten definiert werden kann. Im Prinzip lässt sich das Argument des *Phaidon*, wie wir schon gesehen haben (siehe 2.3), auch folgendermaßen formulieren: Um eine Einheit zu einer anderen Einheit zu addieren, muss man das Konzept einer *zweiten* Einheit schon von Hause aus mitbringen. Man greift also in der Operation auf das Ergebnis der Operation schon voraus. Freilich ergeben 1 + 1 die Zahl 2. Allerdings kann die 2 nicht als 1 + 1 definiert werden.

Aristoteles scheint also in der Tat in seiner Kritik an der innerakademischen Idealzahlentheorie Ansätze zu reflektieren, die schon in der Idealzahlenlehre der Dialoge angelegt sind. Die schon besprochenen Stellen aus der *Politeia* legen die Annahme nahe, dass wir eine Sache unmittelbar als „Zwei" denken, ohne den Umweg über das 1 + 1 zu nehmen. Eine Sache ist doppelt, eine Sache *ist* zwei – um den schon oben gebrauchten Solözismus noch einmal zu verwenden –, wenn sie an dem Eidos Zweiheit teilhat. Freilich ergibt die Analyse im Nachhinein, dass es in einem Paar eine erste und eine zweite Einheit gibt. Die zweite Einheit ist eidetisch von der ersten Einheit verschieden. Auch die *Politeia*-Stelle sprach von der Verschiedenheit der Einheiten, die die Zwei zusammensetzen. Die zweite Einheit kann es aber nur geben, weil es die Zwei als *Eidos*, die *Zweiheit*, im Vorhinein schon gibt.

Man kann also die Vermutung anstellen, dass Aristoteles in seiner Kritik der Idealzahlenlehre Diskussionen der Alten Akademie reflektiert, die ihrerseits Echos aus den oben besprochenen Platonischen Dialogen festhalten. Der Rahmen dieser Diskussionen ist viel zu komplex, um als bloße Verzerrung der Dialogpassagen zu gelten (*pace* Steel, 2012). Vielmehr belegt die Konkordanz zwischen M 7 (als Beispiel genommen) und den Problemstellungen im *Phaidon* und in der *Politeia*, dass die Aristotelische Kritik und die Dialogpassagen auf innerakademische Debatten verweisen. Die Einheiten der idealen Zwei sind in der Tat eidetisch voneinander verschieden. Sie sind „unkombinierbar" oder „unvergleichbar", wie es in *Metaphysik* M heißt. Weil die Zahlen Eide (Wesensformen) sind, deswegen ist die erste Einheit von der zweiten Einheit in der idealen Zwei eidetisch verschieden. Sie sind auch „unkombinierbar", weil sich die ideale Zwei nicht als Addition von zwei Einheiten definieren lässt. Der Primat gehört der Zahl an und nicht den Einheiten. Deswegen ist es auch absurd, die Idealzahlenfolge als Reihenfolge der in den Idealzahlen enthaltenen Einheiten zu missdeuten, so wie Aristoteles dies in *Metaphysik* M 7 tut. Wie schon Sokrates im *Phaidon* bemerkte, kann man die Zwei nicht durch

eine Addition von *zwei* sukzessiven Einheiten erreichen. Schon das hier hervorgehobene Wort unterstreicht den Zirkelschluss, in den wir uns durch eine solche Auffassung verstricken würden.

## 5. Alexanders Zeugnis über den Einheitscharakter der Platonischen Ideen

Abschließend sollen noch zwei Zeugnisse über die Einheit der Ideen diskutiert werden, die im *Metaphysik*-Kommentar Alexanders von Aphrodisias zu lesen sind. Diese Zeugnisse vervollständigen das Bild, das wir uns von der Bedeutung dieses Merkmals der Ideen gemacht haben, und bringen zugleich neue Aspekte ans Licht. (Zu Alexander und der „ungeschriebenen Lehre" Platons siehe jetzt auch Granieri 2024.) Im Kommentar zu Aristoteles' Ausführung über die „unbestimmte Zweiheit" (*met.* A 6, 987b33-988a1) ergänzt Alexander die von Aristoteles' gelieferten Informationen um Einzelheiten, die er vielleicht aus Aristoteles' Nachschrift der Platonischen Vorlesung *Über das Gute* entnimmt. Unter diesen Einzelheiten findet sich auch die Abstufung der „Seienden" in der Dimensionenfolge Körper-Flächen-Linien-Punkte. (Siehe dazu Gaiser, 1998, 41-89 und passim.) Sonderbarerweise behauptet Alexander, dass „sie" (offenbar Platon und die Mitglieder der Alten Akademie) die Punkte als „Monaden" („Einheiten") bezeichnet hätten. Unter den Seienden gäbe es nichts Fundamentaleres als eben diese „Einheiten". Die Einheiten aber sind Zahlen, so dass die Zahlen den Seienden vorrangig sind und ihre Prinzipien ausmachen (αἱ δὲ μονάδες ἀριθμοί, οἱ ἀριθμοὶ ἄρα πρῶτοι τῶν ὄντων) – so der Bericht Alexanders. Dass die Punkte mit den „Monaden", also den arithmetischen Einheiten, enggeführt werden, ist bemerkenswert. Wenn Alexander nicht irrt, bestand somit in der Alten Akademie das Bestreben, die Geometrie auf die Arithmetik zurückzuführen. Der geometrische Punkt, als reines Denkobjekt verstanden, wurde offenbar zugleich auch als arithmetische Einheit begriffen. Ja letztendlich, sagt Alexander, sind solche Einheiten Zahlen, so dass die Zahlen die Grundbausteine der Wirklichkeit darstellen.

Ohne der Frage hier nachgehen zu können, wie genau die Gleichsetzung von Punkt, arithmetischer Einheit und Zahl erfolgte, soll im Folgenden die Gleichsetzung der Zahlen mit den Ideen im Bericht Alexanders unter die Lupe genommen werden:

> Und da, ihm (Platon) gemäß, die Wesensformen und die Ideen den Dingen, die auf sie bezogen sind, vorausgehen und ihre Existenz separat von den Dingen haben [...], bezeichnete er die Wesensformen als Zahlen. Denn wenn das Eingestaltige (τὸ μονοειδές) den Dingen, die darauf bezogen sind, vorausgeht, nichts aber der Zahl vorausgeht, sind die Wesensformen Zahlen. Aus diesem Grund sagte er (Platon), dass die Prinzipien der Zahl zugleich auch Prinzipien der Wesensformen und das Eine Prinzip von allem sind.[22]

Nachdem einmal Alexander festgestellt hatte, dass für Platon die Einheiten die Fundamente der Dinge ausmachen und dass diese Einheiten Zahlen sind, kann er nun die Zahlen mit den Ideen identifizieren. Das metaphysische Axiom, das diese Identifikation ermöglicht, besagt, dass „das Eingestaltige" (τὸ μονοειδές) das Prinzip der nachgeordneten Dinge ist. Alexander gebraucht also jenen Terminus, der in der Ideenlehre des *Phaidon* eine zentrale Rolle spielte (siehe oben 2.2). Es ist sehr unwahrscheinlich, dass Alexander den *Phaidon* nachgeschlagen hat, um diese Stelle der Aristotelischen *Metaphysik* zu kommentieren. Wahrscheinlicher ist es, dass der Terminus „das Eingestaltige" (τὸ μονοειδές) schon in Alexanders Vorlage, also in der früharistotelischen Schrift *Über das Gute* vorkam. Das würde bedeuten, dass Aristoteles' Berichte nicht etwa Verzerrungen von Dialogpassagen sind, sondern die gemeinsame terminologische Grundlage der Dialoge und Platons ungeschriebener Lehren offenbaren. Denn es ist höchst unglaubwürdig, dass Aristoteles' *Über das Gute*, das Alexander hier vermutlich vor Augen hat, Verzerrungen des *Phaidon* enthalten haben soll.

Wir haben hier also einen Beleg dafür, dass Platon einen Begriff, der ihm im *Phaidon* zur Begründung der Ideenlehre diente, in seiner innerakademischen Lehrtätigkeit dafür gebrauchte, um die Identifizierung der Ideen mit Zahlen zu rechtfertigen. Aufgrund ihrer *Ein-förmigkeit* sind die Ideen das unhintergehbare ontologische Fundament der Dinge. Aufgrund ihrer jeweiligen Einheit sind aber auch die Zahlen das allererste Fundament der Dinge. Ideen und Zahlen schließen sich also zu einer wesentlichen Einheit zusammen.

In einem anderen Zeugnis zu Platons Metaphysik, das allerdings eher eine eigenständige Überlegung Alexanders selbst zu sein scheint, hebt der Kommentator die Rolle der Einheit der Idee für die *Teilhabe* hervor. Die Teilhabe ist die – in vielerlei Hinsicht problematische – Relation, die das sinnenfällige Ding mit der ihm entsprechenden Idee hat. Laut Alexander

ist gerade die Einheit der Idee dasjenige, was dem sinnenfälligen Ding die Teilhabe an der ihm entsprechenden Idee ermöglicht. „Denn wenn der Mensch-an-sich eine einfache Wesensform ist (εἶδός τί ἐστιν ἁπλοῦν), ist es klar, dass das, was sich ihm anähnelt, sich ihm wohl gemäß der Wesensform anähnelt".[23] Gerade weil die Idee nichts anderes als einfache Wesensform ist, kann sich das sinnenfällige Ding der Idee nur gemäß der Wesensform angleichen, weil es keine anderen Hinsichten gibt, nach denen das Ding und seine Idee in ein Verhältnis treten können. Gewiss kann dieses Argument nicht als Argument für die Existenz der Idee gelten. Dass dem sinnenfälligen Ding eine Idee entspricht, wird bereits – aufgrund anderer Argumente – vorausgesetzt. Ist das aber einmal festgelegt, so vermittelt die Einheit der Idee zwischen der Idee und dem sinnenfälligen Ding, dessen Wesen sie ‚repräsentiert'. Die Dinge einer Klasse sind ihrem Wesen nach der Idee dieser Klasse ähnlich, weil die Idee nichts anderes und nicht mehr ist als eben jenes Wesen (κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ὅμοιοί εἰσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῇ ἰδέᾳ οὐδὲν ἄλλο οὔσῃ).[24] Die Einheit der Idee ermöglicht also die Teilhabe des Dinges an der Idee. Die ontologische Grundlage und Bedingung für das eindeutige Verhältnis zwischen sinnenfälligem Ding und Idee ist die Einheit, die *Ein-förmigkeit* der Idee. Die Einheit der Idee ermöglicht die Einsicht in die ‚Funktionsfähigkeit' des vielumstrittenen ‚Prozesses' der *Teilhabe* an der Idee. Nur auf der Grundlage der Einheit der Idee kann die Teilhabe nachvollzogen werden. Zwar ist das offenbar eine eigenständige Reflexion Alexanders selbst, aber sie trifft die Sachlage genau und deckt höchstwahrscheinlich einen von Platon selbst intendierten Zusammenhang auf.

Die zwei Zeugnisse Alexanders zeigen beide die Schlüsselrolle, die der Einheit der Idee in der Konstitution der Platonischen Ideenzahlenlehre sowie in der Begründung des Konzeptes der ‚Teilhabe' zukommt.

## 6. Fazit und Ausblick

Die obigen Ausführungen haben gezeigt, welch eminente Rolle den Konzepten von ‚Einheit' und ‚Zahl' schon von Anfang an in der Konstitution der Platonischen Ideenlehre zukommt. Die Betonung der Einheit der Idee und der ideellen Einheit der Zahl, die von Anfang an die Ideentheorie begleiten, macht deutlich, dass der Begriff der „konkreten Totalität", durch den der Neuplatonismus und der deutsche Idealismus die Platonische Ideenlehre umformulieren, zu einem Verlust des

„monadischen" Deutungsmusters der Ideen geführt hat (*pace* Halfwassen, 1999). Gewiss ist der „monadische" Charakter der Idee mit dem Konzept der Ideendihärese nicht unvereinbar, wie der *Philebos* (15a-c) das deutlich zeigt. Jedoch wird die Relation der Ideen untereinander nicht mehr, wie im Konzept der „konkreten Totalität", als Komplex von Inklusions- und Exklusionsverhältnissen gedeutet werden können. Die Interpretationen, die wir hier vorgelegt haben, weisen entschieden in eine andere Richtung. Sie deuten auf eine hierarchische Anordnung der als Einheiten konzipierten Ideen hin, indem die höhere Idee (die Zwei, z.B.) fundamentaler ist als die untergeordnete (die Eins, z.B.), ohne *aus* ihr und Ihresgleichen zusammengesetzt zu sein. Dieser Komplex von als Einheiten begriffenen Ideen trug in der Alten Akademie die Bezeichnung ἔκθεσις („Anordnung")[25], die der Sprache der Mathematik entlehnt ist. Das verweist noch einmal auf die Kommunikation von Metaphysik und Mathematik in Platons Akademie.

## Endnotes

1 Die Maskulinform ist dadurch zu erklären, dass Plotin die Idee zugleich auch als einen „Gott" auffasst.

2 Für die griechischen Quellenautoren und ihre Werke werden die Abkürzungen des Franz Joseph Dölger-Instituts zur Erforschung der Spätantike verwendet. Das Abkürzungsverzeichnis ist einsehbar unter: www.antike-und-christentum.de/rac/abkuerzungen (letzter Zugriff 13.07.2024). Sofern nicht anders vermerkt, stammen die Übersetzungen der Zitate von mir.

3 Procl. *inst. theol.* prop. 103, p. 92,13.

4 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 66,19-22 Golitsis = 79,16-19 Hayduck und 67,22-24 Golitsis = 81,8-10 Hayduck. Siehe frg. 3 Ross aus *De ideis*.

5 Für gnomische Hervorhebungen werde ich im Folgenden immer die einfachen Anführungszeichen ‚' gebrauchen.

6 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 55,20-56,5 Hayduck = 45,22-32 Golitsis = frg. 2 Ross (p. 113-114), vielleicht aus Aristoteles' *De bono*.

7 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 51,19-22 Hayduck = 42,20-24 Golitsis.

8 Ein Problem der Ideenlehre und der Gattungsdihärese ist, ob der Teilgattung, die man durch die Dihärese erzielt, auch eine φύσις entspricht (hier am besten mit „Realität" o.ä. zu übersetzen), ob also die Teilgattung wirklich auch ein εἶδος ausmacht. Siehe *resp.* V,454a6, b6-7, d7-8.

9 Man könnte den Ausdruck ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστι (78d) auch übersetzen als: „Das, *was* jedes Einzelne ist".

10 Vorausgesetzt natürlich, dass ‚konkrete Totalität' mit ‚Zusammensetzung' gleichbedeutend ist. Plotin würde gewiss bestreiten, dass die Idee in demselben Sinn wie ein Verstandesbegriff zusammengesetzt ist. Wir fassen hier aber ‚Zusammensetzung' auch in jenem weitesten, spekulativen Sinn auf, in dem eine Idee bei simultaner Selbstidentität zugleich alle anderen Ideen ist. Unsere These ist, dass die hier referierten Platonischen Argumente auch einer so weit gefassten Konzeption von ‚Zusammensetzung' widersprechen.

11 Die griechischen Handschriften enthalten diese zweite Möglichkeit nicht. Sie ist eine Ergänzung J. Burnets: ἢ τὸ προστεθέν (sc. ἕν), „oder die hinzuaddierte (sc. Eins)". P. Vicaire sieht von der Ergänzung ab.

12 Anstatt des irreführenden τοῦ, das in den Handschriften überliefert ist, lese ich hier die Korrektur τῷ des Arethas (*ut videtur*) sowie einiger *manus recentiores*. Siehe den kritischen Apparat in der Ausgabe Vicaires.

13 Beide sind ein Echo des οὐδὲ ὡς in Zeile 96e7.

14 Überliefert ist ἀλλήλων. Badham dachte an ἄλλῃ ἄλλων und Slings erwägt ἄλλου ἄλλων. Zu dieser Stelle siehe Strobel (2007), 195.

15 Steel hat mit guten Gründen den Zusatz τοὺς ἀριθμούς („Zahlen") an dieser Stelle verteidigt (Steel, 2012, 187).

16 Siehe auch N 2, 1090a4-6 im Vergleich mit A 6, 987b24-25. Höchstwahrscheinlich ist auch hier Platon gemeint.

17 *Met.* N 2, 1088b34.

18 *Met.* M 7, 1081a4-5. (Wenn hier nicht etwa bloß auf seine anfängliche Klassifikation zurückgegriffen wird. Der Zusatz ἑκάστῳ scheint dafür zu sprechen, dass der Ausdruck doch mit inhaltlicher Gewichtung gebraucht wird.)

19 *Met.* M 7, 1081a21.

20 *Met.* N 3, 1090b37.

21 Schon die Einleitung zu dieser Systematik (1080a12-16) stimmt mit dem überein, was wir aus *met.* A 6 wissen. Platon muss also notwendigerweise hier mitberücksichtigt sein.

22 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 45,28-32 Golitsis = 56,1-5 Hayduck. Siehe *frg.* 2 Ross aus *De bono*.

23 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 42,21-22 Golitsis = 51,19-20 Hayduck.

24 Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 42,23-24 Golitsis = 51,21-22 Hayduck.

25 Aristot. *met.* A 9, 992b10-11 und N 3, 1090a2-3, mit Al. Aphr. *in Aristot. met.* 100,1-16 Golitsis = 124,12-125,5 Hayduck.

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# URBAN PATTERNS IN TRANSITION. STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL LAYERS OF MODERNIZATION IN 19TH CENTURY WALLACHIAN TOWNS

Irina Popescu

**Abstract**

The paper is focusing on the development of five Wallachian towns, aiming towards understanding and explaining how their urban form morphed from pre-modernity to modernity during the 19th century. It discusses the actual structure of the settlements, its main areas and elements and the relations established between them. This paper represents a first step in a broader research interest aiming towards identifying recurrent patterns or principles of development in Romanian towns, both in pre-modern and modern era. The plans I publish in the paper are graphical representations that depict in a conclusive way the information I include in the text. They are the result of the interpretation of the cartographic sources, that comes from the graphical georeferenced superimpositions of all available analyzed documents, doubled by the redrawing of the plans, with adjustments, where needed.

**Keywords:** history of urban form, medieval Romanian towns, modern urban development in Romania, urban depvelopment patterns

## 1. Introduction

This paper is a first step of a broader research that aims towards identifying and understanding the various urban development patterns or recurrent principles followed by the evolution of Romanian towns throughout the centuries. It also pursues the objective of unweaving the way these towns transitioned from pre-modernity to modernity, how, whether, or to what extent their medieval heritage shaped their modern development or, on the contrary, how the modern development erased some core attributes of the pre-modern towns.

Nowadays Romania is composed of different provinces with distinct history and evolution and, moreover, with medieval boundaries which do not necessarily overlap modern ones. Therefore, this study required setting territorial limitations, since this first stage of the research focuses on towns developed in the historical province of Wallachia, leaving aside the provinces of Transylvania and Banat (included in the Hungarian Kingdom since the beginning of the second millennium), Dobruja (part of the Byzantine Empire and included in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 14th century, after being part of Wallachia for only a couple of decades) and Moldavia.[1]

Furthermore, the towns in Wallachia do not exhibit similar conditions of development or similar general evolutions: for instance, there are towns which ended up under direct foreign control during the medieval period (the case of Giurgiu, Turnu and Brăila, occupied by the Ottomans in the 15th and 16th century), whereas some medieval towns significantly regressed or even completely disappeared (for example, Târgșor, Gherghița or Floci). All these instances were excluded from this stage of the research, as I chose to focus on towns evolving under Wallachian rule that had an important pre-modern evolution, and which continued to evolve as important urban settlements during modern times. Out of the 12 resulting towns, I chose to focus in this study on the evolution of five: Buzău, Craiova, Pitești, Ploiești, and Târgoviște. All of them are settlements that had a significant spatial development (as they are not small towns – Craiova and Ploiești are actually large settlements[2] among Wallachian towns at the beginning of the 19th century) and all of them exhibit a complex structure, based on different functional and structural axes (as shown by some preliminary studies I conducted).

From a chronological point of view, my investigation into the transition from the premodern to the modern city will stop at the end of the 19th century. For Romanian extra-Carpathian principalities, the year 1831 is widely accepted (in a conventional way) as representing the beginning of the modern age. The period preceding that moment is considered as an extension of the medieval age or, in other words, pre-modern.

A study focusing on the overall modernization process of the urban fabric in Wallachian towns is yet to be published, therefore still leaving room for new research to be conducted, in several areas and domains; this study focuses on the physical configuration of urban fabric and on the relations established between its main elements and areas.

The available scholarship lacks consistency from several perspectives: many of the studies were written by historians, mainly focusing on events and historical facts and less on the evolution of the urban structure, lacking planimetric interpretations and representations; for the premodern period, most of the research focused on the 14th-16th centuries,[3] often neglecting the subsequent period; even if a few studies on premodern evolution were written by architects, they are generally lacking thematical consistency and failing to address the topic in an unitary and comprehensive way;[4] on the urban development of the 19th century, most of the available studies address modernization from various single perspectives, far from being comprehensive (especially as most of them focus on the development of Bucharest, or on architectural aspects);[5] many monographic studies were published but, on one hand, they are qualitatively uneven[6] and, on the other hand, as they focus on one single town, they are addressing the general topic or urban development in a disconnected and inconsistent way.

When it comes to other kind of sources, for the pre-modern stages of development important impediments show up. On one hand, few of the medieval documents were preserved, most of them being lost during wars or hazards, which often and repeatedly destroyed the towns. What's left is only able to partially depict the history of the settlements and other related topics. On the other hand, the general stage of the archaeological research is not sufficient to provide answers to many questions historians raised decades ago, if not even before. In addition, the situation of cartographic sources is also far from optimal – as I will discuss below.

Major destruction of the historical urban fabric took place during modern times (especially in the 20th century), when successive interventions reshaped the image of the city centers and peripheries. The greatest demolitions took place during the late stages of the communist regime, even if several types of interventions altering the image of the cities and dealing with the pre-existing urban fabric in an artificial way also happened during the previous decades. The assertion that Romanian towns are supposedly chaotic and lack any type of visible structure and identity became the claimed reason for the major interventions the regimes undertook in the historic fabric of Romanian cities, aiming towards redesigning city centers according to the ideology and the general context of the period. Consequently, aside from the shortage of sources mentioned before, in many cases, even the urban fabric itself does not exist anymore.

Although this urban modernization process represented a sudden shift towards a development based on new Western modern principles, it nevertheless remained mainly gradual and "quiet", only accelerating towards the year 1900. Both the premodern and the modern layers held a certain degree of organicity, with the latter being linked to – and even constrained by – the former, subsequently raising the bigger question of what were, in this case, the paths of the modernization process and where the limit between tradition and modernization lies. Given the specificity of Romanian towns, finding the answer to this question requires a sensitive and careful read of the urban fabric, at different scales, going beyond the greater interventions and outstanding development (which are usually the focus when it comes to discussing modernization) and starting from the minor transition processes - many times underestimated in their importance and even ignored and dismissed from the investigations. I uphold that the key for understanding the specific early modernization of Romanian towns stands first and foremost in understanding these minor processes, and only subsequently in the more obvious and remarkable urbanistic gestures.

From a methodological point of view, I chose to focus on the physical configuration of the analyzed urban settlements, on their main areas and elements and on the relation established between them. Given the specificity of the research, I start the investigation from the cartographic sources, integrating previous scholarship and aiming towards an innovative interpretation, looking at how pre-existing urban patterns have been integrated into the new, modern city of the 19th century.

In general, the main available scholarship was extremely important for the pre-modern times, in order to identify and map different elements (as, for example, the market places or, in some cases, the boyar streets or the different changes of use of some ensembles etc.). For modern times, as the data resulting from cartographic sources is far more relevant than for the previous periods (because of the shortage of maps or plans before 19th century – see below), the main available scholarship was used to clarify chronological issues, to back up the information provided by the plans or to provide information that they do not contain or, sometimes, to explain some contextual issues, if needed.

As a general objective, I focus on the articulation of the premodern and the modern layer (not prioritizing the latter one, but taking both into consideration, in a balanced way, and aiming to emphasize how the transition process took place). On one hand, I am interested in identifying relevant patterns (or development principles) in the premodern

layer focusing on the specific elements and structure of the towns at the beginning of modernity and going backwards to understand their configuration in connection to landscape or infrastructure (e.g., main roads, rivers and other landforms) and their historical development. I focus on the general configuration of the settlements and on their main urban elements and areas – such as the commercial area, the market square, the administrative court, inns, fairs, boyar residences, churches, monasteries (and their settlements of dependent or enslaved people). On the other hand, I am interested in unveiling 19th century layers of modernization by identifying and mapping specific interventions for all the analyzed cases. I will focus both on the more visible processes and on what happens to the pre-existing fabric, urban areas and amenities, in order to also identify and understand the more hidden layers of a modernization taking place at the smaller level of the minor fabric, slowly transforming and following the general modernization of urban life. For the first category, I will consistently follow the emergence and development of the new headquarters of administration (town administration, county administration and the court house), education infrastructure (modern elementary schools, gymnasiums, high schools), hospitals, military amenities, railway stations, boulevards, parks and public gardens.

Last but not least, I am interested in how these two layers interacted, this actually being the main goal of the study - how the urban fabric morphed from premodernity to modernity, how the medieval inherited patterns shaped modern development in its early stages, and how modern development erased or, on the contrary, enhanced some of the core specific attributes. This will be based on the analysis conducted during the first two steps, linking them together and approaching the modernization process at different urban scales.

The plans I publish in this paper are graphical representations that depict in a conclusive way the information I include in the text. They are the result of the interpretation of the cartographic sources, that comes from the graphical georeferenced superimpositions of all available analyzed documents (doubled by the redrawing of the plans - including with adjustments, where needed). On the other hand, another kind of interpretation was often needed, especially in those instances when the depicted fabric presented errors or when the superimposition proved to be impossible because of major deformations that the plans presented. The information available in the plans were subsequently enriched with

important data resulting from the bibliographical research, that was fully integrated to the cartographic investigation.

### 1.1. Cartographic Sources

As stated before, the cartographic documents represent main sources for this study, as it focuses on the physical configuration of the urban fabric. The sources I used are both already known plans and maps and some newly available ones. However, when we examine these sources more closely, it becomes clear that there are no realistic representations of the urban fabric in extra-Carpathian towns (including Wallachia) before the late 18th century. The cartographic documents that do exist from that time depict the settlements during a period of major destruction and decline - due to military conflicts, earthquakes, fires, or epidemics - showing towns that were depopulated and physically damaged. Consequently, even if they provide some information, they cannot represent reliable sources, especially if used alone and with no additional information that comes from other sources.

The next comprehensive document on all Wallachian settlements is the "Second Military Survey of the Habsburg Empire" (ca 1855-1857) which represents the first detailed and conclusive map that depicts the towns in a unitary and detailed way. Even if it also presents some additional and important disadvantages, such as lacking accuracy and not always providing all the information needed (due to the interests of its financers), it still remains one very important and reliable document, especially when corroborated with other local representations. Even if it is a late map, we can still consider it relevant for the pre-modern development of towns, given the fact that in the mid-19th century Romanian towns were still at the dawn of the modern ages and, therefore, still evolving in a more or less traditional way, with no major modern interventions and expansions.

Other cartographic sources from before or during the first decades of modern times are available only for some towns. Craiova - as being a big and important settlement - represents an exception, because it benefits from a detailed plan from 1790, depicting the main urban fabric elements (streets, buildings and plots) and the landscape in a sufficiently comprehensive manner. Additionally, a plan from 1830 also exists, recently made available by Mihai Anatolii Ciobanu and Laurențiu Rădvan, as well as another one from the early modern decades (1845). The latter is a very detailed and trustworthy representation of all the main urban

elements (and with additionally written information on the plan regarding some main amenities). Târgoviște also benefits from an 1831 Russian plan, which provides important information regarding the expansion and the characteristics of the urban fabric, similar to the 1830 plan of Craiova. They both depict the built and unbuilt environment in a conventional and somehow simplified manner (alongside some written data regarding amenities), but still provide important information about a moment in time that is not usually depicted by the available common cartographic sources. Additionally, the town of Ploiești also benefits from a mid-19th century plan, showing the expansion of the settlement, the street network and information on some important amenities and landowners.

Starting with the final decades of the 19th century, valuable military maps are available for the whole Romanian territory; they generally depict the towns in a detailed (though not complete) way. There is a collection available online (the so-called "Planuri Directoare de Tragere" collection, c. 1890-1920) and, additionally, the collection available at the Archives of the National Geographical Institute of the Army. The latter was the one that I used most - as it contains more information and is also of higher graphical quality – for the towns of Buzău (1895), Pitești (1900) and Târgoviște (probably c. 1902); the town of Craiova is poorly depicted on the map, focusing only on its main streets, as it was a developed settlement and the detailed representation of the urban fabric did not represent a priority in this case, given the efforts it would have required; for Ploiești I had access to a more detailed plan from 1902-1904 (see below), that made the use of the military plan unnecessary. These plans share the advantages of depicting urban fabric in a unitary way and, furthermore, of providing information not only about the street network, but also about the plots and the built fabric, alongside some data on land use inside and outside of the towns and about property owners outside the settlements. On the downside, they depict the configuration of the minor fabric (buildings, plots) in a simplified way, therefore not being able to actually provide typo-morphological information on these elements, other than the distribution of different categories of buildings inside of the towns, based on some conventional way of representation. For the town of Ploiești, a very detailed plan from 1902, drawn by the Geographical Institute of the Army at the request of the City Hall is also available. It depicts the urban fabric in a detailed way, at all its levels and in all its elements, providing accurate information about the configuration of the minor urban fabric,

alongside data regarding some types of land use inside the settlement (but no information about the surrounding settlements and areas).

Besides the aforementioned sources, I based my research on some additional street-plan-type of cartographic documents, that provide information only about the position (sometimes also configuration, in a more or less accurate way) of some main urban amenities (administrative, educational, military, medical, religious etc.). The accuracy of these plans varies a lot, therefore many times a precise superimposition over other more accurate sources proved to be a real challenge, if not even impossible.

### 1.2. Towns, Territory, and Landscape

Before starting the main part of the study, some general consideration must be stated, in order to set the grounds of a better understanding of the topic I will detail in the rest of the paper. I will start with the ones regarding the relation between the settlements and their territorial and landscape context.

At a territorial scale, the map presented below already points out that all five analyzed towns emerged at the intersection of two main landforms - the Sub-Carpathian Hills and the plains – benefiting from access to different types of products, coming from both regions. Moreover, all of them developed at the intersection of multiple commercial roads and in the proximity of a main river or of an important tributary. Usually, the commercial roads followed the direction of the rivers, therefore they both have to be taken into consideration together, as they are susceptible to generating a development axis in the settlement.

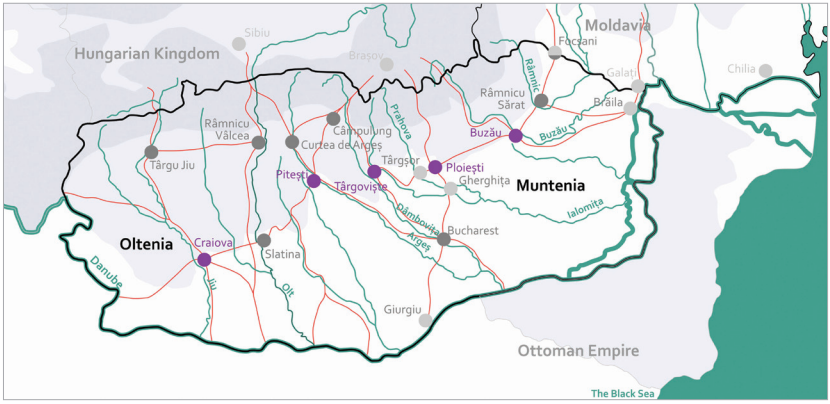


**Fig. 01.** Map of Wallachia, depicting the towns included in this study, alongside the main landscape, important rivers and main commercial routes (the latter, after Gheorghiu & Bica, 2015, pp. 30-31) [drawn by the author].

Pitești developed along the Argeș River between the hills and the waterway. Craiova developed on the high cornices of the large riverbed formed by the Jiu in that region. Both Târgoviște and Buzău evolved next to some artificial waterways deviated from the main rivers (Iazul Morilor, deviated from Ialomița for Târgoviște and Vadu Morilor, deviated from Buzău for Buzău), but still next to the main rivers. Ploiești emerged on the Dâmbu River, a tributary of the more important Prahova River. For all five towns the rivers or the riverbeds represented limits for the expansion of the settlements both in premodern times and during the 19th century (sometimes with suburban settlements developed over the watercourse, as it happened with the Mahalaua village next to Târgoviște).

Both Ploiești and Buzău developed on mostly flat terrain, for the former its configuration being irrelevant, as it lies mostly in the fields, but still close to the Sub-Carpathian Hills, to its north. The others developed on more hilly landscape, all of them emerging on the higher and more flat cornices in order to both prevent floodings and to provide the better landscape for an efficient physical development of the settlement. Their configuration follows the direction of the river in different ways: a clear development along the river for Pitești; the development of the older part of the settlement along the river, and of a main axis along it during the later centuries, as the town expanded, in the case of Târgoviște; for

Craiova, the landscape played a more complex role – on one hand the main north-south axis of the settlement follows the direction of the river and the town is mostly limited by the high cornices, with only some local expansions towards the riverbed; on the other hand, two small tributaries flowing perpendicular to the River Jiu divided the urban settlement in three main terraces – the middle one was occupied by the main part of the settlement and the roads to Râmnicu Vâlcea (and Transylvania) and to Bucharest followed (completely or partially) the valleys created by these tributaries.

For those towns where the position of the princely court is known, the ensemble emerged next to the river, on the cornice. Among the analyzed cases, the commercial area sometimes followed the direction of the river, as it happened in the case of Pitești and Ploiești (for both, on the direction of the road towards Transylvania), and in the case of the old commercial area of Târgoviște (re-located – see below; at first on the direction of the road towards Moldavia, in the opposite direction from the princely court). In the other instances, the commercial area develops on a direction perpendicular to the river, as it happened for Buzău and for the second commercial area of Târgoviște, both following the direction towards Bucharest. In Craiova, it also developed perpendicular to the river, but following the landscape configuration, as it evolved on the main terrace between the tributaries, on a direction between the one towards Râmnicu Vâlcea and Transilvania and the one towards Bucharest.

### 1.3. Some Considerations on the Development of the Towns

Besides the topic tackled above, there are also others that need to be briefly discussed. The first one refers to the fortifications, because most of the Wallachian towns evolved without them. Except for Târgoviște (with the defensive enclosure built at the middle of the 17th century), all the other towns developed, after the 16th century, without fortification walls. It is not even known if the towns had general enclosures during the early centuries or not.[7] Besides the late walls of Târgoviște, if the fortifications existed in other towns, they took rudimentary forms, such as earth embankments, moats and maybe wooden palisades. The defensive role was taken by some urban ensembles (monasteries, courts), alongside an underground network of shelters (Gheorghiu, 2017, p. 18). Without the physical limitations of the enclosures, Wallachian towns expanded almost freely towards the surroundings, their expansion being limited by other

factors, such as the landscape, or connected to a certain status enjoyed by the surrounding territories (for example, the case of the monasteries and their estates limiting the expansion of the towns in certain situations; see also below in the study). In any case, a significant degree of freedom in expansion existed, which resulted in a specific image of the towns, with a low density of buildings, spreading over large areas (in comparison to other medieval towns with enclosures, and relative to their number of inhabitants) and including large areas used as gardens, orchards and vineyards (Rădvan, 2011, p. 202). Except for some dense fabric (erected especially in connection to the commercial function), the residential areas had an extremely low density, as did the street network in the peripheral area. This reality was still visible until at least the last decades of the 19th century, leaving an obvious mark upon the development of the urban fabric during modern times.

As for the urban expansion, by superimposing the consecutive maps of the analyzed towns, we can observe that they didn't exhibit major territorial expansion during the 19th century. In all analyzed settlements we can notice some new urban fabric emerging along some pre-existing streets – a way of expansion that prolongs some pre-modern urban practices, along the main roads connecting the settlement with the territory – and a certain densification, within the already developed structure. In general, the situations of real expansion - generating more than some fabric emerged strictly along a pre-existed street or densification in a new direction - are rare and they are mostly illustrated by Ploiești and Buzău. Nonetheless, the new fabric holds a certain degree of modernity in comparison to the more organic one previously developed by the towns. It is more geometrical, with more or less rectangular plots and more unitary in its features. Nevertheless, it also presents some less modern features: the plots are narrow and long and are usually occupied by small houses, that turn narrow facades towards the street and are placed near or on one side of the property (typically oriented towards the south). Commonly referred to as "wagon-houses" (because of their elongated configuration, which results from rooms being added over time), they create a modest appearance from the street. This type of urban fabric (that starts to emerge in the second half of the 19th century and spreads rapidly, mostly in the peripheral areas of the towns) will be widely criticized by administrations, architects, urban planners and theorists during the next century, because of its lack of modernity, in a context in which the aspiration towards

providing a new modern image in Romanian towns was seen as a major necessity (the topic is widely debated in Calotă, 2017).

One final topic I will address in this part of the study concerns the suburban settlements. In Buzău, Bulgarian population was colonized starting in the 18th century. They settled in the western part of the town, initially forming a suburban settlement called Sârbăria (which could be translated as "Serbian area"), which was included in the urban settlement in the following century. Although Bulgarian neighborhoods also existed in other cases, they remained outside of the towns during the 19th century. In Târgoviște, a Bulgarian population settled along the road to Buzău, around 1850, in an area that had begun to develop in the previous decades and remained a suburban area until the end of the century, referred to as the Serbian neighborhood ("Mahalaua Sârbească") (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 444; see also the plans of 1831 and c. 1902). In Ploiești, in 1829, a Bulgarian population settled down across the river, to the north-west, forming the settlement of Slivna Nouă. It existed for about a decade, as in 1838 the population moved within the city limits and the suburban settlements disappeared (Debie, 1969, pp. 92, 95). Other suburban settlements also emerged in connection to the towns, as it will be discussed later in the study (such as Mahalaua in Târgoviște and Simileasca in Buzău). For Buzău, the development of the Sârbărie settlement had an important outcome on its elongated configuration in an east-west direction. From a morphological point of view, the 1895 plan clearly depicts a different kind of urban fabric, with larger plots than in the rest of the town, still showing its distinctive origins and evolution.

## 2. The Medieval Administrative Ensembles

Since early times, administrative courts (princely, boyar etc.) were fortified ensembles, enclosed by stone walls or by simple wooden palisades, surrounded by a ditch (moat) and earthen embankments. Therefore, they were separated from the rest of the settlement. The urban fabric developed next to them, as commercial suburbs, served the needs of the court and of the inhabitants of the surrounding region (Rădvan, 2011, p. 140). The courts were complex ensembles, containing, aside from the residence itself (solid stone building, sometimes – in the early stages – built as a donjon) and its outbuildings, also the court chapel – often an important,

prominent church within the settlement, which was placed next to the residence, but in a separate enclosure, attached to the main one.

Historians uphold that all important towns emerging during the first centuries after the formation of Wallachia must have had a princely residence. They also show that, from the 16th century onwards, rulers started to be less mobile, preferring longer stays in the capital city (or in other newly formed towns - see below, for example, the case of Ploiești), some of the courts being thus abandoned or turned into monasteries (including into Metropolitan and Bishopric ensembles) (see, for example, as reference Rădvan, 2011, pp. 136, 138). Even if the administrative ensemble was an important factor in triggering the development of a settlement, there is not enough information about its position and evolution for many towns in Wallachia – among the researched settlements within this study, the position of the court is known for sure only for the towns of Târgoviște and Craiova.

In Târgoviște – a town that played the role of capital city starting with the first half of the 15th century – the princely court was built around the year 1400 and it partially overlapped a pre-existing one, established at the end of the 13th century or at the beginning of the 14th. The princely court was built as a fortified ensemble, surrounded, in the beginning, by earth ramparts and wooden palisades and by a moat (Rădvan, 2011, p. 305). More recent archeological investigations[8] showed that the court was rebuilt as a fortified ensemble with stone walls and towers after the middle of the 14th century and went through several interventions of modernization and expansion over the pre-modern centuries. The position of the court is in the proximity of the river Dâmbovița, on its right side (the higher side of the valley).

The town of Craiova depicts a different administrative and political situation, as it developed in the 15th century on boyar land and in connection with the existence of a boyar court, which was transformed into a local administrative court (the headquarters of the regional institution called "Bănie", controlling the territories of Oltenia, subordinated to the princely administration) (Rădvan, 2004, pp. 420-422). In the second half of the 16th century, the land of the settlement became princely property, and it was only after this moment that Craiova was recognized as a town (and the inhabitants received the usual privileges, including the holding of a permanent market). This change in status triggered an important development, Craiova becoming the second largest urban center in Wallachia (after Bucharest) at the beginning of the 18th century (Rădvan,

2004, pp. 426-427, 428-429). The court was positioned on the high cornice of Jiu River, along the road linking Transylvania to the Danube, close to its crosspoint with the one leading to the towns of Pitești and Bucharest. Towards the middle of the 17th century, after Craiova became a princely town, prince Matei Basarab replaced the first boyar church with a new one, perhaps as a gesture reflecting the new status of the settlement.

For Pitești and Ploiești the existence of a princely court is documented, but no precise location is known. In addition, there is also the case of Buzău, where some historians suppose there was such an administrative ensemble (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 103), but no documents certify its existence so far.

The town of Ploiești developed in direct connection with the establishment of a new princely court by Prince Michael the Brave in the last decade of the 16th century (Sevastos, 1935, p. 3). Some sources state that the settlement evolved within a few years from the moment when the court was established, developing a permanent market, and gaining specific town privileges (Zagoriț, 1915, pp. 29, 33), which were recognized in 1597 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2011, p. 140). The location of the princely court is unknown. It is known that the medieval village of Ploiești (out of which the town developed) lay in the eastern part of the modern settlement, towards the river (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2011, p. 119). In the same area two princely churches were built, one at the end of the 16th century and the other one in 1639 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2011, p. 119; Stoicescu, II, 1970, p. 496). Additionally, some foreign texts from that time seem to indicate that the court was not far from the market square (the old one, located towards the east of the town, see below), but also not in its direct vicinity (see the reproduction of the text in Zagoriț 1915, p. 31). Although all this information might suggest a possible location of the court in this area, a solid hypothesis has yet to be formulated, as no other relevant data is currently available.

In the case of Pitești, the existence of a princely court is confirmed by documents, but there are still controverses about when it was built, due to some unclear and interpretable mentions within these medieval documents. Anyhow, it certainly existed at the beginning of the 16th century, being built or rebuilt by prince Neagoe Basarab at that time. Even if the privileges of the urban community were confirmed by the documents only starting with the second half of the 16th century, historians uphold that most probably the settlement had already had this status since the end of the 14th century (Rădvan, 2004, p. 468) or since the following

century (Greceanu, 1982, p. 26-27). Regarding the position of the princely court in Pitești, there are two main hypotheses. One of them places the court outside the settlement, to the south-east (Greceanu, 1982, p. 30), where documents repeatedly mention the existence of a princely property (therefore similar in terms of position to the hypothesis formulated for the other two towns, where the princely ensemble was also placed outside of the settlement, but on the site later occupied by the Bishopric, and predating it). The second hypothesis places the court in the commercial area, where a princely church was built in the mid-17th century, possibly on the site of a pre-existing, older one (Rădvan, 2011, p. 291; Gheorghiu, 2017, p. 153).

Although the existence of a princely court in Buzău is not proven by the documents, historians lean towards believing it existed (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 93, 103) and do not exclude the hypothesis of a preceding court, which may have been overlain by the princely one (Rădvan, 2011, p. 264). Although the documents certify the privileges of the urban community only in the 16th century, the town most likely existed earlier, as suggested by the establishment of the Bishopric headquarters here, around the year 1500 by Prince Radu the Great (Rădvan, 2011, p. 264). As for the presumed princely court, two hypotheses were formulated: it could either lay under the Bishopric ensemble (if the princely court had been transformed into a Bishopric at the beginning of the 16th century), or where the eastern church of the commercial area was placed (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 103). Regarding the latter hypothesis, there is no information indicating that any of the two churches limiting the trading area was a princely intervention, but some medieval documents indicate the existence of two princely churches in the vicinity of the nearby commercial area. The current ones might have superimposed both or one of the old princely churches (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 93).

## 3. The Commercial Area, the Market Square(s), and the Fair(s)

All Wallachian towns developed with at least one market square, around which a specific commercial area emerged. The latter expanded over time, including during the 19th century. This commercial fabric came to resemble, in its main attributes, similar areas in the *intramuros* areas of central and western European towns – high density of mixed use buildings (dwellings with shops / workshops, with the latter being placed on the

ground level, towards the street), built on narrow plots and forming a continuous street frontage (terraced houses). Other commercial fabric can also be found in the more peripheral parts of the towns, in general without forming any continuous areas. In this case, the buildings are usually only one story high, with the shops or workshops positioned towards the street and the dwelling extending towards the back of the plot.

Alongside the inner market squares, inside the towns or in their vicinity other kind of markets – bigger ones – emerged. These generally functioned until the first decades of the 20th century and were referred to by several names. When located outside the towns, they were often simply called "The Outer Fair". These were not permanent markets but were organized with a specific frequency, a fact sometimes reflected in their names – for example, the "Weekly Fair" in Craiova. If linked to a certain celebration, they were named accordingly, such as the "Drăgaica Fair" in Buzău. The cattle market (usually named "Obor") could be accommodated by the outer fair or, in later periods (see below), could form a distinct market, sometimes located within town limits, as in Târgoviște and Pitești.

The main commercial area in Buzău depicts an elongated configuration, on the east-west direction. The main axis developed between two churches mentioned by medieval documents but only hypothetically identified by historians (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 94). The area expanded during the 19th century to a more irregular one, "opening up" towards the fair and expanding towards the Bishopric ensemble, to the north.

The market square was located next to the commercial axis, on its southern segment, and was mentioned by the documents as a permanent market since 1571 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 69, 93). During modern times, in 1874, a second marketplace was established. It was meant for vegetable trade and was named "Sf. Îngeri", taking after the nearby church. In the structure of the urban fabric, this square is positioned at the eastern end of the commercial fabric.

The documents from 1624 prove the existence of the fair ("The Lower Fair" or the Cattle Fair) located in the northern part of the settlement (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 73), between the commercial area, the Bishopric and the Vadu Morilor waterway. In the second half of the 18th century, a second fair emerged south to the town, on the direction to Bucharest and close to Poșta village (a small settlement that began to form around the middle of the 19th century outside the limits of the town; Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 78, 130). Up until the middle of the 18th century, the fair was held in another location (in the northern hills) and its relocation to Buzău

was first mentioned in 1778 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 78). The 1892 plan of the town indicates its location and shows that it was still in place at that time (with some unstructured urban fabric emerging next to it), as was also the Cattle Fair from the northern part of the settlement.

In Pitești, the main commercial area has a clear elongated shape, starting from the market square and the princely church, and unfolding towards the north, along the road to Curtea de Argeș and, further on, to Transylvania. A secondary axis (shorter and with lower density) developed towards the east, also starting from the market square and following the street leading, in medieval times, towards Câmpulung and Bucharest, after bifurcating on the other side of the river. The main commercial area depicts a lenticular shape, as it unfolds on two quasi-parallel streets, that bifurcate in front of the market square and reunite again, where the dense specific fabric ends.

The existence of a weekly cattle fair in Pitești is known since the 17th century. The commercial function was still in place at the beginning of the 19th century, being known as the Upper Fair ("Târgul din Deal") (Popa et al., 1988, pp. 70-71) and located outside the settlement, on the road to Topana and Râmnicu Vâlcea (Greceanu, 1982, p. 63). On the other side of the river, on the road to Bucharest, another fair functioned, called the Hill Fair ("Târgul Dealului") (Greceanu, 1982, p. 63), but which was only held once a year, in the fall, whereas the Upper Fair had a weekly activity (Popa et al., 1988, p. 71). It is known that, starting with 1833, various actions were taken to relocate the fair, but the process unfolded over the following decades. In 1863, the fair was functioning in its new location, in the south-eastern part of the settlement, close to the river.[9] It also accommodated the cattle fair, and it was called either the Lower Fair ("Târgul din Vale" – in opposition to the former Upper Fair), or the Outer Fair (or sometimes only as the Cattle Fair). Some new commercial fabric emerged along the street linking the new fair to the market square. Even if it is not depicted by the 1855 plan of the town and neither in the one from 1900 (at least not in a clear way), it is visible nowadays, depicting obvious attributes consistent with the ones of a typical 19th century (or early 20th century) commercial fabric. Nonetheless, the reposition of the fair in this part of the town induced a typical evolution, triggering the emergence of the commercial fabric and of a short secondary commercial axis.

In Craiova, the boyar court on the cornice of Jiu River served as the nucleus of the future town, as the market square and the commercial area developed in front of it (Joița 1977, p. 19; Rădvan 2004, p. 427). A

plan of the central area of the town was published by G. Croitoru (2011, p. 209), with the market square positioned north-east of the court, in its direct proximity and with the Hurezi Inn on its northern side. The 1845 plan shows that a second square emerged before that time, in the area mostly occupied by high-class residences and which is depicted with the name of "Boyars' Square". Towards the end of the century, another market square emerges (Piața Marșeu or Piața Nouă – The New Market) (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 139), on former estates of Gănescu Church.

As the 1790 map of Craiova depicts, by the end of the 18th century the commercial area developed mainly in a linear way on a long axis heading eastwards from the market square, and it illustrates an interesting situation, with a certain degree of complexity. This development of the commercial area was strongly informed by the position of the weekly fair (mentioned in documents starting with the 17th century; Rădvan 2004, p. 426; see also Joița 1977, p. 34), as it developed as an axis unfolding between these two main functions of the pre-modern town: the market square (alongside the administrative ensemble next to it) and the fair. On one hand, being an outer fair, it developed at the limit of the settlement. On the other hand, taking into consideration the landscape (depicted by the historical plans and maps), one main direction of expansion of the settlement was towards the east, as the main part of the town evolved on a higher cornice, limited to the west by the large river bed of Jiu and towards north and south by smaller valleys of some minor tributaries (but yet important in shaping the urban fabric – as it will be discussed also bellow) of the main river. The relation with the territory also played its part in this direction of development, as the road to Bucharest was heading towards the east. Therefore, as the town developed, it expanded towards the east, also prompting the relocation of the fair. In this way, its constant replacement also triggered the development of the commercial area, along a clear axis.[10]

The later map of 1845 depicts some expansions of the commercial fabric beyond the axis mentioned before, on the quasi-parallel street unfolding to the north. The commercial area expanded also during the next decades, mostly to the north, but still mainly following the direction towards the fair, established since the medieval period.

In Ploiești, the first market square emerged in the eastern part of the settlement. Around 1800 the commercial activities were moved towards west - closer to the shepherds' road ("Drumul Oii") - where a new

marketplace started to function, at first as an outer fair (Debie, 1969, p. 83). The old market square kept on sheltering some temporary commercial activities for a while,[11] but during modern times it was superimposed by residential fabric. This new market already existed in 1825, and the commercial fabric was forming around it (Debie, 1969, p. 91). At the beginning of the modern era, the town already developed in connection with this new commercial area, as it is shown by the reconstruction of the 1830-1840's urban fabric done by C. N. Debie and published by Tomozei (2024, p. 294). Around this time, another bigger marketplace also emerged to the north – the cattle fair. The market square kept on being called, for a while (before 1852), the Outer Fair (because it originated in this kind of commercial amenity) and after the emergence of the bigger market place (the fair to the north) it began to be referred to as the "Lower Market" ("Târgul de Jos", in opposition to the on-going developing Upper Market ("Piața de Sus" or the Big Square - "Piața Mare") (see these references at Debie, 1969, p. 96).

Together – the Lower and the Upper Market (or Fair) – triggered the development of the commercial fabric towards north-west and along the newly established – in 1840-1847 (Debie, 1969, pp. 95, 97) - important road connection on Prahova valley, towards Brașov (Transylvania). Even if the commercial area in Ploiești depicts a more irregular configuration, developed around the market square and the fair, with a density that gradually decreases from the market square towards north-west, we can still consider that it generates a commercial axis, based on its clear orientation and expansion.

The first market square (the one located to the east of the settlement) leaves almost no traces in the urban fabric of the late 19th century, as it was superimposed by residential fabric. Even so, a certain type of densification is still visible on the plan from 1902, with some of the proximities occupied by long "wagon-houses", therefore depicting a kind densification that is not visible (in this way) in other parts of the town.

The town of Târgoviște shows a special situation, as both the market square and the fair moved in time. The settlement developed an early permanent trade area (14th century), located on the commercial road along the river, in the southern part of the first Saxon settlement (Diaconescu, 2009, p. 64, pl. 53). South of it, superimposing some built fabric, the first court was built, which was subsequently replaced by the first princely residence in town (Rădvan, 2011, p. 305). Due to the increasing importance of the trade activities with the Balkan Peninsula, in the second

half of the 15th century, the importance of the commercial road towards Giurgiu also starts to increase (Diaconescu, 2009, p. 25). This will trigger the development of the settlement along this road, heading south-west from the princely court. Around the middle of the 16th century, a second market square emerged along this road (Diaconescu, 2009, p. 73, pl. 57), which encouraged the development of some commercial fabric around it. At first, most probably, this commercial area was mainly a linear one, unfolding from the market square towards the Metropolitan Ensemble (established here at the beginning of the 16th century), along the street linking it to the princely court. The 1831 plan of the town states the existence of some shops or workshops along this axis, in the next proximity of the market square and some more dense fabric southern from it. After the emergence of this second market in the area – referred to as the "Lower Market", while the old one was known as the "Upper Market" (as it was laying on the higher terrains along the river and in opposition to the new one). In the 17th century both market squares were still functioning (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 289, 466).

Initially, the fair developed as an outer one and its existence was mentioned at the beginning of the 18th century. The 1831 plan of the town provides its exact location, right outside the ramparts, next to the Câmpulung gate, and, therefore, on the direction heading towards this important Wallachian town and Transylvania. In 1834 a church was built next to the fair. At the end of the same decade the idea of changing the location of the fair was raised (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 466), the commercial activities being moved inside the town in 1847 (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 456). The 19th century plans indicate that the new fair (also accommodating a cattle fair) was placed next to the Metropolitan Ensemble, and thus in the proximity of the commercial area the town developed starting with the 16th century onwards. The cartographic sources also indicate that between 1831 and 1855 the built fabric expanded towards the Metropolitan Ensemble and the newly established Weekly Fair, and until the beginning of the 20th century they also went through a process of densification, as specific commercial fabric emerged in connection to the fair activities. In 1902, the expanded commercial area has an irregular shape, straying eastwards from the initial axis and opening towards the fair (as the plan of that year indicates).

## 4. Monasteries and Other Main Religious Ensembles

In the early centuries, monasteries did not appear inside the towns and neither in their proximity. They only started to arise in the proximity of the urban settlements in the 16th century, only to be later admitted inside towns. The princes started to endow them with parts of the towns' estates (previously in the free usage of the urban community), mills along the rivers, properties in the market area and even to allow them to collect the market custom taxes in some cases. The princes themselves also started to own more and more property both inside towns and on communal estates (Rădvan, 2011, pp. 195, 202-203, *passim*). This attitude of the prince regarding the monasteries and their rights reflects a change in the involvement of the central authority in town's affairs, as the autonomy of the urban settlements progressively diminished starting with the 16th century, a process which peaked in the 18th century (Greceanu, 1982, p. 25).

From an economic point of view, this situation had a clear effect upon the incomes and revenues of the urban community. An additional major consequence came with this change of status of some large estates in the proximity of the towns: by not being at the disposal of the urban community anymore, they started to represent limitations for urban growth, the town not being allowed to expand on those properties.

Moreover, settlements of dependent people or even slaves were often established around the monasteries, the latter category usually being represented by the gypsies ("țigani"; the princely or boyar courts were also served by gypsy slaves, and sometimes so were some members of the urban community). When monasteries started to emerge in the vicinities of towns, they also developed this type of settlements around them (called "Țigănii") (Rădvan, 2011, pp. 212-213), which imposed a similar physical limit for the town.

The Bishopric Ensemble in Buzău was founded around the year 1500, north of the settlement and, only some short decades afterwards, the sources also show that a settlement of dependent people ("Țigănia") was already in place (even the documents mention this area as a neighborhood – "Mahala" – in 1679) (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 67-68, 75). Later, in 1571, another religious ensemble was built in Buzău – the Banu Monastery – (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 69), placed towards the south, outside the limits of the settlement at that time. By analyzing the expansion of the town at the middle of 19th century, it shows that these ensembles

represented a limitation for the urban fabric, as they still appear at or towards the extremes of the built environment.

In Târgoviște, the Metropolitan ensemble was founded at the beginning of the 16th century (Stoicescu, 1970, p. 643). It was built along the road heading towards Bucharest, on its eastern part, and it owned land in this area. Stelea Monastery was built at the end of the same century (Stoicescu, 1970, p. 648), along the road heading towards Buzău (and Moldavia), but in the proximity of the Metropolitan properties. Judging on the development of the town at the beginning of modern times, besides the clear expansion of it along the road following the river, we can easily observe that the urban fabric had minor expansion in the area occupied by these two religious ensembles. It developed primarly on the other side of the road heading towards Bucharest, where the street network depicts a concentric pattern of development, originating from the main intersection of the roads (close to the princely court) and gradually expanding across four concentric streets. The fabric here exhibits smaller dimensions of the blocks (therefore with higher density of the street network) and higher density of churches. On the other hand, the presence of the Metropolitan ensemble there triggered the development of the main commercial axis on the direction of Bucharest (as mentioned above).

The monastic ensembles in Craiova and Pitești were built in later periods, around the middle of the 18th century. The Obedeanu Monastery in Craiova was built in 1748-1753 (Stoicescu, 1970, 222). As the 1830 plan of the town shows, at that time it was still at the limit of built fabric, even if close to it. There is information about another monastery, containing the Gănescu Church (built in 1757; Stoicescu, 1970, p. 220). This one is located in a denser fabric, as the 1830 plan of the town indicates. Both of them emerged outside the commercial area, and at the limit of the area occupied by the boyar residences (as the information resulting from superimposing the several plans of the town indicates; see below about the boyar area). There is information about other two important monasteries that emerged in the vicinity of Craiova – Coșuna-Bucovăț Monastery and Jitianu Monastery – but their position far outside the settlement makes them be less relevant for our interests.

In Pitești, the most relevant religious ensemble (for the goals of this study) is Buliga Monastery, built in 1745 (Stoicescu, 1970, p. 487), between the commercial area and the western hills unfolding along the town, therefore having a peripheral position during premodern times. As the town grew at the beginning of modern times, this ensemble came to

some importance in the positioning of some new central modern amenities (as it will be shown below). Another monastery emerged outside the town – Trivale Monastery, built at the end of the 17th century, along the road towards Craiova and Oltenia, on which the Upper Fair also functioned. Some leisure activities appeared around it, in connection to the interventions aimed at transforming the Trivale Forest into a leisure area (see below).

As far as available scholarship indicates, there were no monasteries built in Ploiești.

## 5. Boyar Residences

There is some available information on the location of the boyar courts for all the towns included in this study. The archaeological investigations and the scholarship show that since before the middle of the 16th century the boyar courts in Târgoviște were already grouped north to the first market square of the settlement, along the main street following the commercial road towards Brăila. Up until the 18th century other boyar residences emerged southern to the princely residence (Diaconescu, 2009, pl. 54, 57), following the same general direction, but towards the south-east, therefore creating a residential axis along the river, and which remained also during modern times one of the main development axes of the settlement.

In Craiova there are some documented boyar courts north of the administrative court and the market square, but more information is available by studying the map of the town from 1790. Through morpho-typological research, we can identify a large number of ensembles with a configuration consistent with the characteristics of a residential ensemble: enclosed ensembles, developing on large plots, with a building positioned more or less in the central part of the plot (and which shares the specific characteristics of boyar houses of 17th-18th centuries)[12] and some outbuildings usually positioned towards the limits of the plot. In Craiova, this type of ensembles occupies large areas, mostly along the cornices – some of them followed the main direction of the high cornice of River Jiu, both towards the north and the south. But the majority of them were located north of the commercial area, on both sides of the northern tributary (nowadays drained) and expanding towards the west along its cornices.

In Pitești, the boyar residences developed mainly on a street parallel to the commercial area, heading towards the north (Greceanu, 1982, pp. 34-35), also inducing a residential axis in the structure of the settlement. A similar situation can also be found in Buzău, where the boyars built their courts on an axis south to the commercial street, and more or less parallel to it (as the information on the plan published in Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 115 indicates).

Boyar residences were also localized in the proximity of the old market square in Ploiești and along an axis heading towards the west and the location of the new market square (see above), as the reconstructive plan elaborated by eng. N. Debie (and published in Tomozei, 2024, p. 294) is showing. After the repositioning of the market square, the area inhabited by boyars remains as a residential development axis in the structure of the settlement.

Some other towns besides Ploiești exhibit similar situations, with boyar properties positioned in the central part of the town, in the vicinity of the market square. It is the case of Craiova, as the plan published by Croitoru shows (2011, p. 209), and also the situation of the town of Buzău, where a boyar court is mentioned west to the market square, in its vicinity [13] (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 76).

## 6. The Education Infrastructure

I chose to tackle the topic of the development of education infrastructure next because it represents a clear case of an urban amenity that starts in pre-modern times and continues to develop during the 19th century in a modern way. The education function appears inside the towns since pre-modern decades, functioning in connection to a religious ensemble or a church. In Buzău, a Greek school was functioning in the Bishopric ensemble since 1775 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 136). In the first half of the same century a school was functioning at Sf. Gheorghe princely church in Pitești and, starting in 1751, another one started its activities at Buliga Monastery (Popa, 2014, p. 137). At the middle of the same century, a school also started its activity at Sf. Dumitru princely church in Craiova and another one was functioning at Obedeanu Church (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, pp. 25, 135). In the 1820s schools were also founded at Sf. Gheorghe and at Buna Vestire churches in Ploiești (Debie, 1969, pp.

89, 92). In Târgoviște, the school was functioning at Stelea Monastery (Stoicescu, 1970, p. 648).

After the reforms that accompanied the Organic Regulations from 1831, elementary public schools started to function in all Romanian towns, as education became a legally assumed duty of the administration (even if private schools continued to exist). In several cases, they continued to function for some years (or even decades) in rented (sometimes owned) existing buildings, which were not designed to accommodate educational activities.

In 1832, national schools were founded in Ploiești and Buzău. They former functioned in a rented house until 1834, when it was moved to a bigger residential building; afterwards, it moved in another rented house, where it remained until 1905, when the new school building was constructed on the same site (Debie, 1969, p. 94). In Buzău the school first functioned in an inn, but received its own new building early, as one was provided in 1833 or 1839. It was located next to the commercial area and close to the market square, and it was superimposed by a new educational building in 1865, which sheltered the Gymnasium after the latter was founded in 1867, and has since been demolished (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 125, 127, 148). In 1833, the first national school started to function in Pitești, in different locations (in a private house, and then in some annexes owned by the Bishopric; Popa, 2014, p. 140). A new modern building was also provided early (in 1841), placed on the boyars' street (Popa et al., 1988, p. 186), close to the commercial area, to its north-eastern extremity, as the 1885 plan of the town is showing. The school in Târgoviște was founded in 1833, and it also had an early designated building, as it was built during the first half of the 19th century (and rebuilt in 1882) in the center of the town, next to the commercial area (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 226). In Craiova, the building of the first national school starts as early as 1833. It was a classical monumental building[14], located close to the commercial area, to its north-west, within the area that was mainly occupied by boyar residences. The building was demolished in the 1890s to make room for the new building of the high school (Georgescu, 1977, p. 162).

For the three decades that followed, I came across the following information about schools founded in: Buzău, in 1852, functioning in a rented house, as it also did in 1858 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 131-132); Pitești, where the first girls' school started its activities in 1860, in a rented house, and then functioned for a while at Buliga Monastery, and

had its own designated building starting only in 1894 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 188); Craiova, where a girls' school was founded in 1858, followed by two others, and also a boys' school in 1860 (Georgescu, 1977, p. 164).

The Education Act of 1864 represented a strong incentive for the emergence of new schools in towns, but usually the new modern buildings were provided only later, during the last two decades of the century. Although not efficient, from an economic perspective, to use rented buildings, for the first decades after the reforms, the administration had to focus on other major investments in the country, and therefore did not intensively deal with the education infrastructure (Caramelea, 2020, pp. 35-36).

Boys' School no. 2 was founded in Pitești right after the Education Act of 1864 - it functioned in rented premises and had its own building starting with 1884 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 188), located in the same building as the Gymnasium (according to the plan of 1885), built along the western street following the direction of the main commercial axis. Boys School no. 3 was founded in 1882 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 188) and it had its own building on the boulevard (as the 1885 plan is depicting). Girls' School no. 2 was founded in 1867 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 188), having its own designated building after 1885, superimposing the site it occupied until that year (as the plans from 1885 and 1943 are showing). Girls School no. 3 was founded before 1885, functioning in a rented house (as the plan from that year seems to be showing). In Buzău, a mixed modern school was built in 1888 in a peripheral area of the town, towards the south-east, but within the already urbanized perimeter of mid-19th century (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 152; see also the 1892 plan; it was rebuilt after 1944). Another mixed school emerged on the boulevard heading towards Crâng Park (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 154; see also the plan mentioned above), whose modernity stands not only in the building itself and its attributes, but also in the fact that it was designed with a green in front of it, part of the boulevard landscaping composition. In Târgoviște, more designated educational buildings also started to appear in the 1880s (Boriga et al., 2012, pp. 449-452), positioned along the boyar axis (Calea Domnească) south of the princely court, or close to it towards the north. For Craiova, there are mentions of six schools that started their activities by the end of the 19th century (Georgescu, 1977, pp. 164-165). As the plans of the town indicate, most of the new modern schools emerged north of the commercial area, within or right next to the area occupied by boyar residences; another one was placed towards the fair and another one south

of the commercial area, along an important axis. Ploiești represented a special case, as it developed an extensive network of modern educational buildings, with many new schools built in the peripheral neighborhoods (mostly the northern ones). It also depicts in a clear way a specific habit of the 19th century, with mirrored buildings – one for boys and one for girls – built across the street one from another or back-to-back on the same plot (as the 1902 plan of the town clearly shows).

A distinctive topic is represented by the gymnasiums and high school buildings, as they are generally thought to have been designed as monumental, impressive buildings, with clear modern urbanistic and architectural attributes. During the first decades after the education reforms of 1864, many of them did not function in specially designed buildings, but being sheltered in a classroom of one of the elementary schools or even in the buildings of the local administration (Ilie, 2008, p. 38).

Both in Târgoviște and Buzău, the Gymnasium was sheltered by modern buildings, but which were initially designed to accommodate elementary schools. The Gymnasium in Târgoviște was founded in 1874 and it started functioning in the school, placed at the extremity of the commercial area, on the other side of the street from the church built there in pre-modern times (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 236). The school, rebuilt in 1882, has a symmetrical composition, it is a standalone building, positioned in the middle of the plot and is detached from the street, thus providing an ample garden in front of it (and, consequently, not following the morphological rules of the surrounding fabric). In Buzău, the Gymnasium (founded in 1867) was accommodated in a modern educational building from 1865 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 125, 148; nowadays demolished), positioned at the limit of the commercial area, to its south-east. A similar situation might have occurred also in case of the Gymnasium in Pitești, as the plan of 1885 presents its building as also sheltering the Boys' school no. 2. Nonetheless, the building site was along the boulevard, right next to the public garden to its south-east. In Ploiești, the Gymnazium was built in 1865 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661), between the commercial area and the river, along the old direction towards Buzău and Moldavia. The first gymnasium in Craiova was founded in 1854, followed by the second one in 1882, and which was transformed into a high school in 1901 (Georgescu, 1977, pp. 162, 165).

High schools were built in towns only towards the turn of the century. In Craiova, it was founded in 1885 and it had its own designated building starting with 1895, superimposing the first modern school in Craiova

(1842), demolished to make room for this new educational building (Carol I). The second high school of the town (Frații Buzești) was founded in 1901, taking over the activities of the gymnasium established in 1882 (Georgescu, 1977, p. 165), and located at the end of the boulevard heading towards Mofleni Park, inside the town. The high school in Târgoviște was built in 1892 (Boriga et al, 2012, p. 166) on the main axis of the town, along the river, south of the princely court (as the plans of the town show). It is a monumental symmetrical building with an inner courtyard, positioned on a large plot and with the main façade towards the main street. In Pitești, the high school was founded in 1894 (Popa, 2010, p. 209) and built in 1897-1899 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 160) on the former properties of Buliga Monastery, towards the north-west of the settlement. Even though it was not placed on the boulevard, we can consider its position in connection with the boulevard, as the new modern axis triggered the modernization of the fabric in this area. The building is a modern one, symmetrical and monumental, and deeply detached from the street, making room for a green area in front of its main façade. Both in Buzău and Ploiești, the high schools were built at the beginning of the boulevard heading towards the railway station. The one in Buzău was finished in 1891 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 152) and – because of its architectural composition in connection with its localization – it marks the intersection from where the boulevard starts. The one in Ploiești was built in 1895-1899 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p, 671), along the boulevard towards its northern end, as a monumental building with the main symmetrical façade facing the public space.

## 7. The Hospitals

Like the schools, the hospitals also had an early development, at the beginning functioning in relation to religious ensembles. At the middle of the 18th century a hospital was functioning at Obedeanu Church in Craiova (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 135)

At the end of the 18th century a hospital starts to function at Gârlași Church in Buzău, which was built a couple of decades before (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 79, 97). The hospital was closed between 1828 and 1865, when it was reopened in some residential buildings (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 99). In Târgoviște a hospital was also established in an early period, in 1822, built by the inhabitants (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 433), but about whose location I have no information.

The 19th century is a period marked by the appearance of new "secular" hospitals, distancing themselves from the religious function. We have information about the "Filantropia" Hospital built in Craiova in 1811 (Popescu-Criveanu, 2020, p. 31) and, according to the 1845 plan of the town, the building that was sheltering it at that time was a modern building, and not a re-used one. It was located in the area mainly occupied by boyar residences, on the other side of the northern valley from the commercial area. At the dawn of modern times, in 1831, a hospital was built in Ploiești by boyar Boldescu[15], on its properties located in the northern peripheries of the town (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661).

Scholarship shows that after the Organic Regulations, the healthcare institutions entered a completely new stage, as they started to take over the responsibility of dealing with public health in general. Before that, hospitals were founded by monasteries and churches or by private persons, and they were mainly dedicated to poor people (more as a social welfare service) or to sheltering the ones excluded from society (such as population with mental or sexually transmitted diseases, with leprosy etc.). For the rest of the population, healthcare was provided at home and within the families (Trăușan-Matu, 2011, pp. 27, 46-47, 52).

In Târgoviște, the modern institution was founded in 1833, and it functioned in different locations (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 433), one of them being indicated by the 1886 plan of the town, although it is not clear if it was a modern designated building or a rented one. As this cartographic source depicts, it was a two-story high building, located on Calea Domnească, in the proximity of the princely court and next to the ruins of catholic church (nowadays demolished). Between 1886 and 1899, a new hospital was built on the perimeter of the princely court (Boriga et al., 2012, 433) right next to the ruins of the first church of the ensemble. It was demolished during the interwar period, but the satellite view of the area depicts its traces, indicating a symmetrical building, positioned in a random way in connection with the surrounding fabric (therefore not presenting any compositional relation to it).

Filantropia Hospital in Craiova was rebuilt starting with 1845 (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 137), as a symmetrical building with an open courtyard towards the street. In 1852 a mental care hospital was founded by the Madona Dudu Church (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 69). The T.I. Preda Hospital was built in 1870 towards the town limits, along the road to Bucharest and, in 1896, the Hospital for Contagious Diseases was built along the same street, more in the outskirts

(Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 69; see also the plans of 1906 and 1916 of the town).

The first national hospital in Pitești started to function in 1833-1838[16] (Popa et al., 1988, pp. 124, 208), most probably in a rented location (yet unknown). The modern hospital is built in 1886 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 210) and, as the 1900 plan of the town shows, it was placed outside the town, on the road to Curtea de Argeș, and was built as a pavilion-based ensemble.

In Buzău, a modern ensemble started to be built in 1895, integrating the residential building in which the first hospital was moved from Gârlași Church in 1865 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 135, 153). It developed into a pavilion-based ensemble, positioned towards the south, in an area undergoing rapid development and adopting more modern urbanistic features (see below, in connection to the railway boulevard). The County Hospital in Buzău was founded 1872, started its activity in rented houses and, since 1896, functioned in the newly built hospital, placed on the boulevard heading towards Crâng Park (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 149, 154).

Besides Boldescu Hospital, mentioned before and which continued its activity during the 19th century, two new other hospitals were built in Ploiești. One of them was placed in the denser area of the town, south-east from the commercial area. It was built in 1893-1895 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661) as a single volume building, with its symmetrical main façade turned towards the street. By the beginning of the next century, another hospital emerged in the peripheries. It was built as a pavilion-based ensemble, in the southern part of the settlement, but in no connection to any major development axis (pre-modern or modern), as the 1902 plan of Ploiești is showing.

Judging on the information provided above, the hospitals emerged inside the settlement and closer to the center are single volume buildings (Craiova, Ploiești, Târgoviște). They are subordinating from different points of view to the features of the urban fabric, but as they incorporate modern architectural compositional attributes, they also induce a more modern image in the urban fabric when it comes to how they are perceived from the public space. Regarding the ones that emerged in the lower-density peripheries or outside the towns, we can easily observe that they occupied larger plots and were designed as pavilion-based ensembles (Craiova, Pitești, Ploiești, and even in Buzău) based on geometrical rules of composition and sometimes even on symmetry (as in Pitești and Ploiești).

## 8. The New Headquarters of Administration

The basis of the new administration was set by the Organic Regulations, founding the new - and modern for those times - institutions, starting with 1831. They went again through a restructuring process in 1857 and then again in 1864, in the years that followed the first unification of the country in 1859. Even if the name and attributions changed over the 19th century, I will not get into the topic of the administrative reforms themselves, focusing only on the new administrative headquarters and their position inside the towns.

According to sources, for most of the 19th century, the majority of the administrative headquarters did not function in new modern buildings, designed and built with this purpose, but instead they conducted their activities in rented (sometimes, owned) previously existing buildings. This kind of information is repeatedly available within the scholarship, for all the analyzed towns.

For the municipal administration in Buzău, we have information that in 1857 and 1887 it was sheltered in rented houses (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 132, 152); in Ploiești, it was in an inn in 1831, then in a residential building next to the cattle fair in 1832, in a rented house in 1837, from where it moved to another rented residential building in 1847 (Debie, 1969, p. 94); in Târgoviște it was sheltered by various residential buildings until around 1870, when a two story high building was bought in order to accommodate it (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 376); in Craiova it functioned in rented or owned houses for the whole 19th century and also until the end of the interwar period (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 136). The 1845 plan of Craiova provides the location of the institution, next to the commercial area of that time, to its north.

In a similar way, the county administration in Buzău was accommodated by a rented house in 1831, by some shops in the commercial area (owned by Gârlași Hospital) in 1861 and then again by a rented house in 1872 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 124, 134); in Ploiești it functioned in a boyar house next to the first market square of the town until around 1850, when it moved to another rented or bought building (Debie, 1969, p. 96) and after 1868 it was sheltered by another boyar house, in front of the first modern City Hall (see below) (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661); in Târgoviște, it functioned in rented buildings until 1886, when a pre-existing building was bought in order to accommodate it (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 236).

The courthouse in Buzău functioned in various rented houses in 1831, 1836, 1866, 1879 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 124, 126, 131), and after that in a building in the southern part of town, close to the hospital from where it was moved in 1912 (Brăcăcescu & Mirea, 2017, p. 72) to the new headquarters of the City Hall (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 150); in Ploiești it was accommodated by an inn in c. 1850, as it was also in Târgoviște (Boriga et al., 2012, pp. 474-475), from where it moved to a house (as the 1886 plan of the town is showing); in Pitești it started functioning in an owned building in 1892, after being accommodated by rented houses (one of them located at the northern end of the commercial area, along the main pre-modern axis of the town, as the 1885 plan of the town is indicating).

Before 1874, the Fire Department functioned under the authority of the municipal administration[17] (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661), therefore it is common to find it next to or included in the City Hall for that period. It is the situation of Buzău (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 131) and also of the new modern building of the City Hall in Ploiești, which included the headquarters of the Fire Department and also had a fire tower. In other cases, they functioned on a different site, like it happened in Târgoviște, with the Fire Department that was accommodated by the cells of Stelea Monastery, but the first project for the City Hall in 1866 (remained unbuilt) also included this function (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 415).

In general, only after the administrative reforms that followed the unification of 1859 (and mostly towards the end of the century), towns started to have modern administrative headquarters, built specifically to shelter this function. Taking after the 19th century terminology, I will refer to them as: the Communal Palace, for the headquarters of the municipal administration (the City Hall); the Administrative Palace, for the headquarters of the county administration; and the Palace of Justice, for the judicial activities.

According to scholarship, the first to be built was the Communal Palace in Ploiești which has existed since 1868, but for which a project was drafted two decades before (Debie, 1969, p. 96). It was located close to the commercial area, to its east, and it also accommodated the Fire Department. A small green area was built in front of it, therefore adding to its modern image for that time. By the end of the century, in 1894, a new Communal Palace was built, located in the market square, inserted in its northern façade (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661). In Târgoviște, an early project was also developed for the Communal Palace, as in 1866 it was supposed to be built next to Stelea Monastery, but the

new headquarters were actually built towards the end of the century, in 1896, and in a different location (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 376). The Communal Palace in Târgoviște overlapped the site of the upper market square, therefore being located in the center of the town. It was designed as a stand-alone building, detached from the limits of the plot (therefore, different from a typo-morphological point of view than the usual fabric of the commercial area) and exhibiting a small green area in front of it. Similarly to the case of Târgoviște, these new modern headquarters were usually built only during the last quarter of the century, as it happened in the case of the Communal Palace in Pitești, built in 1886 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 160) along the boulevard, to its north, and the one in Buzău, built in 1899 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 154) in the heart of the commercial area, superimposing previously-existing commercial fabric. Both of them are modern and stand-alone buildings with the main façade turned towards the street.

Modern Administrative Palaces were built in Târgoviște in 1894 (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 236), on the old boyar street, next to the princely court, and in Pitești in 1898-1899, on the former Buliga Monastery properties, right after the religious ensemble was demolished in 1898 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 160), therefore being located in front of the public garden of the town and, as such, connected to the boulevard (see below about the garden and boulevard).

The Palace of Justice in Ploiești was built in 1879, and it was located next to the first Communal Palace (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 661). The Palace of Justice in Craiova was built in 1890-1894, after the Gănescu Church (or Monastery?) was demolished in 1884, superimposing it. It is a stand-alone monumental building, placed in the center of a whole block (therefore completely detached from the rest of the fabric), next to the commercial area to its north and right next to the new marketplace which was built on the lands of the church in 1890 (Popescu-Criveanu, 2020, pp. 136, 140). In Târgoviște, the Palace of Justice was built in 1902, on the boyar street, next to the Administrative Palace (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 475), with its symmetric main façade turned towards the street.

## 9. The Military Amenities

The most important modern military amenities built in towns were the barracks, usually occupying large plots and being localized in the

periphery of the settlements. Sometimes they could also be accommodated in more central parts of the towns.

In Craiova, cartographic sources indicate the existence of a military barrack built in pre-modern times. It is depicted by the 1830 plan (but not by the one from 1790) as a detached building in the middle of an unbuilt area that we can consider a square. It was positioned in the south-east periphery of the settlement. The function remained in place during the whole 19th century, even though the building went through modernization interventions. Besides this one, the other military buildings or ensembles we know about developed during the modern period. Some single buildings emerged in that area of the town that was widely occupied by the boyar courts, superimposing previously existing residential fabric. The most important military ensembles were grouped in the south-east part of the town, starting in 1881-1885 (Popescu-Criveanu et al., 2020, p. 139), next to Bibescu Park (as the plans of the settlement indicate). Because of the concentration here of several big barracks and military headquarters, storage facilities and the military hospital, this can be considered, from a zoning point of view, a military area inside the town. As the plans of the settlement show, other military barracks were built before 1905, in the northern periphery of the town.

The first modern military amenities in Târgoviște were built next to the Metropolitan ensemble, superimposing their previous gardens and some private plots that were expropriated. The actions started in 1864 and took place over the next two decades (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 66). The plan of 1886 shows that some military barracks were functioning inside a residential building, on the main street passing in front of the old princely court (Calea Domnească). By the end of the 19th century, a large ensemble of barracks was built outside the town, along the main road heading north-west (as the c. 1900 plan of the town shows).

The barracks in Pitești were also developed early, starting in 1868 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 148), in the north-west part of the settlement, in an unbuilt outer area, and in the proximity of the former Upper Fair. In Buzău, a similar large ensemble was built outside town in 1892 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 153), on the road towards Ploiești and Bucharest, as the plan from the same year indicates.

A similar kind of ensemble was also built in Ploiești by the end of the century, at the edge of the mid-19th century town, between the road to Târgoviște and the one heading towards the former town of Târgșor (as the 1902 plan is showing). Another military ensemble, built as a pavilion-based

one, also existed within city limits since before 1870, in the proximity of the old market square (translocated, see above). The barracks superimposed a previously existing boyar court, that also used to shelter the administration during late pre-modern times (the institution of "Isprăvnicat").

## 10. Railways and Some Considerations Regarding Industrial Amenities

An important new modern urban amenity in the 19th century was the railway station (and, in general, the railway infrastructure). It had significant influences upon the configuration of the towns because they triggered the emergence of new urban axes (and, sometimes, also the emergence of the station square), but this topic will be discussed below, in a designated chapter. In this part of the paper, I will limit myself only to providing some chronological information regarding these interventions and to discussing some aspects of the presence of the industry in the analyzed towns.

As the railways were built at the edge of the towns (because of obvious financial reasons), the stations were also placed in the peripheral areas of the settlements. Moreover, the railways represented limits for the expansion of the towns in the next decades after they were built, many times the urban fabric emerging beyond this limit only after World War II.

In Ploiești, the railway was built in the southern part of the town, cutting into some low-density pre-existing urban fabric (therefore depicting an unusual situation, as in general the railways were built outside the built environment). The station was inaugurated in 1872 (Popescu, 2014, p. 122) and was placed in a median area in comparison to the development of the town at that time.

In Pitești, the railway follows the direction of the river, placed between the urban fabric and the riverbed. The railway station, also inaugurated in 1872 (Popescu, 2014, p. 147), was built downstream from the settlement, therefore to its south-east, along the river but at a significant distance from it.

In Buzău, the railway was built in the southern part of the settlement, disconnecting the town from a sub-urban settlement - the Poșta village - that started to emerge at the middle of the 19th century (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 130). The station was built in 1874 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 149), in relation to the direction of a pre-existing street of the town.

In Craiova, the railway unfolds on the east side of the town, therefore limiting it on the side opposite to the riverbed and to the first development nucleus of the settlement. The station was built in 1875 (Popescu, 2014, p. 145), on the north-east limit of the town.

In Târgoviște the railway crosses the river and limits the town along the direction of the north-east side of the fortification and then it surrounds it at a certain distance from the limit of the pre-modern walls, also including the fabric emerged in the proximity of the outer fair (see above) and continuing more or less along the main direction of development of the settlement, parallel to the river. The railway station was inaugurated in 1884 (Popescu, 2014, p. 141) and was located near the road to Bucharest, but south-east from it.

In case of the town of Ploiești, the railway had an important influence on the emergence and localization of industry inside the town, as the 1902 plan of the settlement depicts. The industrial ensembles (the great majority of them, oil factories) emerged only in the southern part of the town, inside its 1900's administrative limit, on both sides of the railway (but with a majority situated south from the lines, towards the limit of the town).

I cannot point out similar situations for the other analyzed towns, though I can provide two different, but recurrent situations for the position of industry within the urban fabric, both illustrated by Târgoviște and Buzău. On one hand, for both towns, the corroborative information provided by the plans (and some bibliographical sources) indicate the emergence of industrial ensembles outside the settlements, along important roads linking them with the territory: on the old roads towards Câmpulung, Bucharest (modern – Pitești) and Buzău / Moldavia (modern – Ploiești, București) in Târgoviște; and on the roads towards Brașov / Transylvania, Râmnicu Sărat / Moldavia and Brăila / Danube for Buzău. On the other hand, for both towns we cand observe some concentration of the industry in suburban villages with pre-modern development: the Mahalaua village in Târgoviște (emerged over the river) and the Simileasca village in Buzău (emerged along the road to Brașov).

## 11. The New Parks and Public Gardens

Among the analyzed towns, modern public parks (in the true sense of the word) were built only in Buzău and Craiova (the latter actually developing

two of them). In the rest of the towns, we can identify smaller green areas or public gardens, alongside some interventions made in nearby forest, to transform them into leisure amenities for the inhabitants, as it will be shown below.

In Buzău, the initiative of creating Crâng Park arose in 1850, when the forest was designated by the prince for this new public use. Even if the first minor interventions took place in 1852, the real transformation of the forest into a modern park will have been the accomplishment of the year 1887 (Gheorghiu, 2019, pp. 129, 131, 151). The park is situated outside the town, at a certain distance, towards the west. In Craiova, the external park of Mofleni was also situated towards the west, outside the town (in the large riverbed of Jiu), but its project was designed at the end of the century, in 1898. The project for Bibescu Park was made in the same year and the park was built until 1903 (Popescu-Criveanu, 2020, p. 140). It is situated at the southern end of the town, superimposing the previously existing Bibescu Residence's private gardens (of much smaller dimensions). As it will be shown below, in the case of both towns, the emergence of the modern parks has triggered other important interventions upon the urban fabric.

In Pitești, some interventions took place during the 19th century in Trivale Forest next to the town, to its north-west, in order to transform it into a leisure place for the inhabitants (Popa et al., p. 163). In Craiova, some similar interventions also took place in the second half of the century, in a forest outside the town (in the place called "Hanul Doctorului") where the inhabitants were already gathering for leisure activities since the middle of the century (Popescu-Criveanu, 2020, p. 138). None of them trigger any other major transformations upon the urban fabric, or at least not ones that fall within the objectives of this study.

No major modern parks were built in Ploiești, but it still represents an interesting case, as the railway boulevard (see below) was doubled by significant green strips on both sides (towards the south, so in the part that was not crossing the denser fabric of the town), which received the role of public gardens to the benefit of the settlement. The public garden in Pitești also appears in connection to the new modern boulevard, but in a completely different way. The first actions towards establishing a public garden started in 1859 and they gained more importance after the expropriations of the monasteries' estates in 1863, as it was designated to be built over the Buliga Monastery properties inside the town, located between the main commercial area and the western hills. The new

public garden was set up in 1869-1870 (Popa et al., 1988, p. 147), simultaneously with the emergence of the modern railway boulevard (see below). Therefore, it was designed in connection with the new modern axis, being an integrative part of it, this relation being clearly shown by the compositional relations between them.

Other green spaces also appeared in Ploiești, Craiova and Buzău. For the latter, a public garden was created in front of the Bishopric Ensemble, which became the first public garden in Buzău (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 134). During the second half of the century, the Mihai Bravu Public Garden was built in Craiova, superimposing the Boyar Square seen in the 1845 plan. In a similar way, in Ploiești, a green area also superimposed a previously existing square – the Vegetable Square, which remains mentioned by this name on the plan from the beginning of the 20th century. Because of its position within the urban fabric, we have to take it into consideration as being in connection with the new boulevard towards the railway station, as it represents its starting point. In this way, by building this green area, it provides a more representative image for the starting point of the new modern axis of the town. In a similar way we can also discuss the public garden in front of the Bishopric in Buzău, as it was built at the northern end of an important axis of the town – the one that links the religious ensemble to the railway station, but which was, in this case, mostly a pre-existent axis, which mainly only went through modernization interventions.

In a narrow consideration, these green areas superimposing previous squares had less important effects inside the towns. In a broader perspective, we should consider them alongside other interventions that used green areas, such as the use of plantation on the modern boulevards, on other streets or even roads (for the latter, see for example the new road heading towards Dealu Monastery, close to Târgoviște – as the plans depict it). Together they emphasize another specific topic of 19th century modernization – the use of vegetation with an aesthetic role in the public space and its effect upon the image of the towns – which should subsequently be taken into account alongside the modern aesthetics brought by the new public gardens and parks, in general under a classical or romantic stylistic influence.

## 12. The New Boulevards

The boulevards represented new modern and monumental streets, that were built throughout European towns mostly starting with the 19th century. In Romanian towns, their emergence was made possible by the new expropriation legislation issued in 1864, when works regarding the street network were declared as being of public utility.[18] Even though the needed legislation existed, building activities often faced delays, some of the new boulevards being completed only in the last years of the 19th century. There were two main types of boulevards that commonly appeared in the towns: the boulevard linking the centers of the towns with the newly built railway stations and the one linking the town to the new public parks, where such amenities were provided by the administration. As both of these urban functions were of great modernity for the 19th century towns all over Europe, they had the power to trigger the emergence of new modern axes in the structure of the towns, which were not built only for answering a functional need (infrastructure) but were also perceived as tools in providing a new and modern image in Romanian urban settlements. They were straight and wide streets, designed with green areas in the middle and/or on the sides. In case they were crossing the towns' centers, building prescriptions were impelling several stories high buildings, placed on the frontal property limit and many times forming continuous facades towards the public space. The buildings that were to be built on the boulevards in the center were either the ones accommodating the new modern urban functions (such as administration, financial institutions, hotels etc.), or apartment buildings. In the periphery, they had a different configuration, becoming the so-called "residential boulevards", accommodating urban palaces and other upper-medium and upper-class single-family houses.

As the railways were built at the edge of the towns, the stations were also placed in the peripheral areas of the settlements. The parks were also placed at the limits of towns or even at a distance outside them, where there was plenty of land available.

Park boulevards were only built in Craiova and Buzău, as these were the only towns where new, modern parks were developed (the other analyzed settlement depicting other situations, as shown above). Craiova illustrates a special case, as in 1898 these two boulevards were designed as part of a belt road, completely integrated within it (like the boulevard towards Bibescu Park) or only partially (as it was the case of

the one linking the town with Mofleni Park, for which only the eastern segment was limiting the urban fabric). Because of this, these new axes were built at the limit of the town, but distanced from it, leaving some unbuilt terrains between them and the already existing built fabric. At the beginning of the 20th century the terrains along these two boulevards were used as orchards and grasslands, as the 1916 plan town shows. In Buzău, the park boulevard cuts instead through the fabric, therefore illustrating a more common situation. Although a link between the town and Crâng Park already existed, the boulevard was built in 1881-1887 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 151). By the end of the century, a modern school was built along this boulevard (as shown above), where a small square was also designed. Both the modern architecture of this building and its relation to the public space make up for a localized modern image along this new axis. The new building of the Communal Palace was erected in 1899, at the end of the boulevard, thus providing an important modern architectural element in its axis.

The towns of Craiova and Buzău share another common feature in connection with the topic of this chapter, as the railway boulevard built in both of them partially superimposed previously existing streets. In Craiova, the link with the railway was made through a main street developed in the direction of Râmnicu Vâlcea (and Transylvania). A completely new segment of only 500 meters was built at the end towards the station (Popescu, 2014, pp. 145-146). Modernity is noticeable only at the scale of the street itself (wider and with plantations along the axis) but does not trigger any major functional changes in the fabric along the street, as it is mainly composed of traditional houses (wagon-houses, alongside some simple urban boyar houses and even some rural-like houses, for the more peripheral area) with only very few other modern insertions. By the end of the century, no modern fabric emerged along the newly constructed segment of the boulevard either. The aerial photography of 1944 still depicts unbuilt areas and some urban fabric that follows the orientation of the surrounding one, previously developed, which indicates that no systematization interventions took place along this segment of the street.

A project for the railway boulevard had existed in Buzău since 1870. The expropriations started during the following year and the first segment was built in 1873, but the construction process unfolded over the next two decades, until 1893 (Gheorghiu, 2019, p. 148). As the railway station was placed in the southern part of the settlement, the boulevard also extends in that direction, mainly following a street that already existed, whose

trajectory was somehow modified and straightened. The boulevard is narrower than others built in the same period and with minor plantation along it, therefore with a less modern image. Besides the high school that was built right at its starting point towards the center of the town, the fabric along it is the common peripheral one. As it will be shown below, more modern fabric did emerge in the surroundings, as an expansion of the town towards the railway, but the one along the boulevard remained mainly a traditional one (both in terms of type of houses and shape of the plots). This axis did not develop as a "residential boulevard", therefore further reducing the modernity of this axis.

Both for Craiova and Buzău, the squares built in front of the stations are more modern because of the juxtaposition of an urban square and a modern building – the station. Moreover, the former was designed in direct compositional relation to the latter (symmetry, axiality in connection to the building of the station) and, therefore, is emphasizing its importance and monumentality.

In the case of Buzău, the development of the railway triggered an expansion of the town towards it. Even if it was a direction in which the town had already started to develop, the new fabric holds a certain degree of modernity, as being a result of a planned intervention, that generated the trident of streets emerging from the railway station square and some additional subdivisions of the land towards the east. Besides this, and even if the built fabric is the common peripheral one (based mainly on wagon-houses), the configuration of the fabric is geometric (therefore with a certain degree of modernity), in terms of street network, shape and orientation of the plots and orientation of the buildings.

In the other three towns the boulevards were built as new axes, cutting into pre-existent fabric. In Ploiești, the boulevard unfolds towards the south, crossing some of the marginal fabric of the late-medieval settlement and continuing in a very low-density area, towards the station. On the segment towards the center (the one that crosses the late-medieval fabric), some modern residential buildings of the upper-class were built, alongside the high school building and the headquarters of the National Bank in Ploiești, triggering the emergence of some new modern amenities along it. Even if the building of this boulevard began in 1878, the process unfolded over the next two decades, being completed only in 1900 (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, pp. 676-677). But there was not enough time for it to trigger any development of the fabric along those segments, located in periphery of the town. The 1902 plan of the town clearly depicts this

situation, showing the plots maintaining the elongated configuration and the previously existing orientation, with no significant buildings emerging in this area (besides an oil factory and some minor common residential fabric).

From a morphological point of view, the modernity of the intervention consists mainly in the look of the street itself, with its straight orientation and an ample width, with vegetation along it and green areas at intersections, which took the role of public gardens in that period and the one that followed. Besides this, it should also be pointed out that, as the boulevard unfolds towards the south, it does it in an opposite direction to the main development the town had during the rest of the 19th century. Even if it did not trigger a new development axis during this period of time, it would do so in the next century.

The preparations for building the railway station boulevard in Târgoviște started in 1884, but the project was approved only 11 years later, and the works were completed in 1898 (Boriga et al., 2012, p. 116). The new modern axis continues the direction of the main commercial axis, cutting through the town fabric on the direction of the old road to Bucharest (to Pitești, in modern times), which represented an axis of development since pre-modern times (as the urban fabric depicted by the 1830 plan indicates). It was built both through the fabric inside the medieval fortifications and outside them, crossing the line of the previous walls next to where the Bucharest Gate existed (as the information resulting from the superimposition of the plans of the town shows).

By the end of 19th century some residential fabric emerged along the segment that was built inside the old limits of the settlement. It presents characteristics consistent with the ones of the modern 19th century residences – bigger in dimensions, with the main façade turned towards the street, positioned more or less in the median part of the plot, at a distance from all its sides – starting to contain the usual attributes of a residential boulevard. The segment developed outside the former walls remained completely unbuilt until the end of the century, as the plan of 1902 depicts.

In Pitești the boulevard cuts through the whole town, from the north-west to the south-east – so along the direction of the river and of the main commercial axis – between the denser area of the town and the south-west hills along it. If we analyze the position of the new modern amenities (researched in this study) we can easily observe that they emerged on the stripe between the main axis of the town (containing also

the commercial area) and the hills. They were positioned either along the boulevard (the Communal Palace, the Gymnasium and two other modern schools, the public garden), or along the pre-existing street that unfolds to the south-east, under the hills, parallel to the boulevard (the Highschool and the Administrative Palace). Several factors contributed to this situation: the proximity to the main commercial area and the town center; the early emergence of the boulevard (as it was completed between 1870 and 1874; Popa et al., 1988, p. 146); the existence of the Buliga Monastery in this area, whose lands were subsequently used in order to accommodate new modern amenities inside the town (as shown above) after the reforms of 1863. Nonetheless, even though the boulevard follows in a clear way the main development direction of the town, its emergence had turned the development of the settlement towards the area along the hills, therefore in the opposite direction to its pre-modern secondary direction of expansion, which was mainly towards the river, perpendicular to the main direction.

## 13. Conclusions: a becoming based on adapting

I will conclude by revisiting the information in three main terms – *lost-use*, *maintained-use* and *new-use* – and I will discuss them taking into consideration mainly two analytical topics – *location* and *function*. Additionally, I will also take into consideration *urban morphology*, in order to discuss the degree of modernization from a compositional standpoint and to emphasize its outcome upon the urban image. I will not consider the architectural level, because the topic of the modernization of the architecture itself did not represent a focus of this study.

At the intersection of these terms (*lost-use*, *maintained-use* and *new-use*), another important one emerges – *re-use* – as towns often exhibited situations of maintained-use and new-use at the same time, from distinctive points of view, therefore exhibiting situations of adapting and reusing elements or patterns from the past. All these situations will be considered instances of re-use, as will be those ones for which we can argue partially maintained-, lost- or new-use in at least two out of three analytical topics (location, function, morphology). Some situations represent only partial instances of lost-, maintained- or new-use (or, in other words, a partial re-use) of one or more of the analytical topics listed above. If this partial re-use can be observed only in one of these three analytical topics, I will not consider that situation an instance of re-use.

Opposed to that, if that partial re-use can be proven for at least two of the analytic topics, I will consider that situation as one of re-use (even if it does not exhibit a total re-use on at least one topic, but partial ones on two of them instead).

The pre-modern period also exhibited all the instances mentioned above. Like everywhere and at any time, some functions were maintained inside the towns (even keeping their original location), some functions disappeared over time and some new functions emerged. Additionally, there also were instances of re-use. The relocation of the market squares, for example, is an instance of functional re-use; the hypothesis of lost princely courts laying under the religious ensembles could also be an instance of functional lost-use and of maintained-use in terms of location (as they keep on being representative ensembles inside the towns), but with a new functional use (and therefore, a re-use). Of course, many other examples could be provided, but it is not the aim of this part of the study, as its focus is on the transition from the pre-modern configuration of towns to the modern one, discussing the four instances listed above – maintained-, lost-, new- and re-use – applied in a synthetic manner on the characteristic of the urban fabric.

### 13.1. *The maintained-use*

In general, one recurring instance of *maintained-use* inside towns during the 19th century is represented by the religious buildings and ensembles (churches, monasteries, metropolitan and bishopric ensembles), as the majority of them remained and kept on being used by the town inhabitants during the 19th century. It is true that many times the churches as such (or other buildings, part of the same ensemble) were rebuilt or modernized, but they did not change in their other attributes, besides the architectural ones. Beside some particular instances that I will point out below, the churches usually represent instances of maintained-use from a functional, locational and also morphological point of view. In a similar way, the Metropolitan Ensemble in Târgoviște and the Bishopric one in Buzău are also instances of maintained-use.

There are also other instances that we can classify as maintained-use, even if the function itself goes through a process of modernization. On one hand, it is the obvious situation of those schools that keep on being accommodated by the religious ensembles in which they started functioning, or of those early hospitals founded in towns, which

maintained their function during modern times (it is the case of Filantropia Hospital in Craiova, 1811, and also of the Boldescu Hospital in Ploiești, built as early as 1831). These two functions – schools and hospitals – depict another instance of maintained-use: the new amenities are built during modern times but take after pre-modern habits, as they are still accommodated sometimes inside of monasteries or churches (the school at Obedeanu Church in Craiova and the one at Buliga Monastery in Pitești, 1860; or the hospital at Madona Dudu Church in Craiova, in 1852). They are neither instances of new-use, nor of re-use, because they maintain a certain pre-modern pattern of localization in connection to the religious ensembles (even if they might be accommodated by more modern buildings, inside of the ensemble), not changing the relation with the town and the urban fabric.

In a similar way, we can also include the small industries that emerge inside the commercial area of towns, as this kind of urban fabric also used to accommodate productive activities in pre-modern times (workshops). Therefore, it is a maintained-use from a functional point of view (the modernization of the production process is less important for the interests of this study, as long as it does not affect the urban structure in a significant way), from a location point of view, because they keep on existing in this type of fabric, and also from a morphological point of view, as they do not alter the pre-existent urbanistic rules of the fabric, subordinating to them instead.

The commercial areas can also be considered instances of maintained-use, given that they remained in place. During the 19th century they evolved out of the ones developed during the previous period, also taking after some morphological attributes, even if the urban fabric went through both architectural modernization and some expansions into the close surroundings (which could be considered instances of re-use – see below). The market squares and the fairs often indicate as well a maintained-use, when they were kept on their pre-modern positions and as they kept on accommodating commercial activities in a traditional way. At a bigger scale, but in a similar way, a great part of the street network (of course, excluding the boulevards) also represents an instance of maintained-use. The plans that I publish within this paper depict a superimposition of the urban fabric in the last years of the 19th century or during the first ones of the 20th century (depending on the available cartographic sources) over the one the towns had at the middle of the 19th century (based either on plans dating from that period of time – the

case of Craiova –, or on an interpretation of the information provided by the representations of the towns included in the map of Wallachia from 1855-1857). In all cases, the analysis shows that towns grew little or almost not at all during this period of time, going mainly through a process of modernization and densification within the existing structure that was already in place (I will discuss below the other instances of expansions and their interpretation). The maintained streets conserve their location and function. From a morphological point of view, both the market squares and the streets represent instances of partial new-use, since they went through some urbanistic intervention (of straightening and geometrization), municipal works (pavement and other) and the fabric along them changed and modernized (but maintaining at least some of its functional and morphological attributes), but these interventions are not relevant enough (in the context of this argument) to classify them as instances of re-use.

### 13.2. *The lost-use*

In an obvious way, all those cases in which the urban fabric disappeared and was replaced by new functions, while the previous use left no traces in the urban fabric, are instances of lost-use. It is not possible however to accommodate in this study all the minor changes that took place in the urban fabric.

A clear situation of lost-use is represented by the princely courts with unknown location (Ploiești, Pitești, Buzău). It is an obvious lost-use of the location, as they completely disappeared, leaving no traces in the urban fabric and (at least for now) not even from an archeological point of view. From a functional point of view, the princely courts were ensembles that contained several functions: residential, administrative, religious, military, etc. Even if, obviously, these functions kept on existing in the towns, they are no longer connected during modern times, therefore the complex function of the courts becomes a lost-use as well.

Another instance of lost-use is the one of the inns in the market square in Craiova (the Hurezi Inn) and in Pitești (the Bishopric's Inn), as they were both demolished and replaced by a different kind of fabric, leaving no visible morphological trace inside the towns. Somehow similar was the situation of Buliga Monastery in Pitești and Gănescu Church in Craiova. Both of them were demolished and their properties were used to provide new amenities inside the towns: a public garden, the Administrative

Palace, the high school and also the fire department barracks in Pitești; the Court House and a new market square in Craiova. Additionally, I can mention the situation of the Metropolitan Gardens in Târgoviște, where, even if the religious ensemble was maintained as an important function inside the town of Târgoviște, its gardens were superimposed by the military ensemble. As they did not leave any physical trace in the fabric (given the fact that the area went through restructuration in order to accommodate the new function), this situation also becomes one of lost-use.

### 13.3. *The new-use*

This section is the one directly dedicated to modern changes in towns and to those instances in which the changes represented truly modernizing interventions, without taking after attributes of the past.

From a functional and morphological perspective, the new headquarters of the administration seem to be instances of new-use, as are the boulevards and all the other new modern amenities, but not all of them represent, in the end, complete instances of new-use because of the partial maintained-use (morphological and locational) that some of them illustrate. I will discuss these instances below, starting with the situations in which these new interventions do represent clear cases of new-use.

Boulevards represent instances of new-use from a functional point of view, as they were new modern axes of the towns; they did not respond just to the direct use of circulation, but they also represented instruments of modernization and for providing new modern images at the level of the urban fabric. In those situations in which they do not superimpose a previously existing street, they also represent a new-use from a locational point of view, as they cut through the urban fabric providing a new function in that place and establishing a new relation with the surrounding fabric. From a morphological perspective, they also are instances of new-use because of their straight axis, their wide dimensions, the use of vegetation along their axis (as simple linear plantations or as small green areas, like in Ploiești) and the use of squares along they course.

A complex instance of new-use is exhibited in Ploiești, with the railway that was built south of the settlement, therefore emerging in the opposite direction of the expansion the town exhibited during the first decades of the 19th century (direction established in pre-modern times and additionally developed during the rest of the 19th century). The railway

station was also positioned in the south, with no direct connection to any of the pre-existing streets. The railway and the station itself represent clear instances of new-use, as does the boulevard linking the town center to the station. Additionally, the industries that mostly emerged in the south part of the town – in connection to the presence of the railway here – represent instances of new-use from all points of view, as does the high school, due to its location along the boulevard. Another instance of new-use is also exhibited by the green area superimposing over the former vegetable market square, which served as starting point of the new modern axis.

Another complex situation of new-use can be found in Pitești, with the railway station also positioned in the opposite direction of the development exhibited by the town during pre-modern times, with the boulevard cutting through the fabric along the whole settlement from its north-western end to its south-eastern one. Both of them represent instances of new-use, as do all the new modern amenities that emerged along the boulevard – the public garden, the Communal Palace, the Gymnasium and the two new schools. Additionally, the building of the boulevard in this part of town triggered the densification and the development of the fabric between the main traditional axis and the hills along town. Therefore, we can also consider those modern amenities built along the pre-existing street under the hills as instances of new-use, even if they are not facing the boulevard. This is also the situation of the high school and, even more importantly, the one of the Administrative Palace built symmetrically with the public garden and therefore establishing a new modern compositional relation both with the green area and the boulevard.

We can also discuss the case of Târgoviște in a similar way, with the railway station and the boulevard itself as instances of new-use (because of the same specific reasons). Additionally, the emergence of some modern residences along the boulevard also represents a case of new-use, in terms of new modern function, location (along the boulevard – therefore starting to provide the features of residential boulevard) and morphology. The boulevards heading towards Bibescu and Mofleni Parks in Craiova and the one towards Crâng Park in Buzău also represent instances of new-use. For the ones in Craiova, we should additionally take into consideration their function as town limits (by being part of the project for the belt road). In case of the one in Buzău, the emergence of the school along it, with the green area / square in front, also represents an instance of new-use, as does the Communal Palace that was built right at the end of the axis, in the center of the town.

The public parks also represent instances of new-use, because of their function (new modern amenity), location (as they were placed outside the settlements, but in connection with them) and morphological characteristics (due to their dimensions and general landscaping composition). Bibescu Park in Craiova can be considered an exception as it exhibits an instance of re-use that I will discuss below.

In a similar way, the pavilion-based ensembles positioned at the far outskirts or outside the settlements depict instances of new-use, in terms of function (new military ensembles and modern hospitals), location and morphology. We can find this kind of military ensembles in all five towns, but probably the most interesting situation is illustrated by Craiova, which developed a military area in the south, next to Bibescu Park. Additionally, we can also identify some industries nearby, to the north. Therefore, in this case we can talk about major functional and morphological changes in the southern part of the settlement, transforming large areas.

Besides these peripheral ensembles, the pavilion-based one developed next to the Metropolitan ensemble (and superimposing its previous gardens) in Târgoviște is also worth mentioning. It emerged close to the commercial area of the settlement and it represents an instance of new-use on all the criteria. Moreover, it did not subordinate to the pre-existing morphological rules of the area, changing the relation between the urban elements.

The expansion of Buzău towards the south (and the railway station) also represents an instance of new-use, because of the modern composition of the street network and because of the fact that it emerged triggered by (and in direct connection with) the truly modern function of the railway. Additionally, the new squares (non-commercial ones) are also new-uses – the most typical one being the railway station square, seen in Buzău, but also in Craiova, Pitești, Ploiești. They represent new-uses in terms of function (as towns generally had only market squares during pre-modern times), location (as they are positioned at the edge of the towns) and morphology (see above the discussion regarding the compositional modernity of this type of urban elements).

### 13.4. *The re-use*

Even if churches were presented before as typical instances of maintained-use, there are also some situations in which they illustrate cases of re-use. One of them is depicted by those churches which were

initially built as court chapels (of a boyar or a princely court) or as part of a monastery, and were converted to parish churches during the 19th century. All of them maintained the religious function but lost the attribute of being part of a complex and multi-functional ensemble and, therefore, lost part of the initial functional use. Additionally, the ensemble also went through morphological changes, as some buildings were demolished or replaced. Thus, by being instances of partial lost-use from both a functional and a morphological point of view, they become situations of re-use. The church of the former Hrisoscoleu Court in Buzău (situated over the river, to the north) is an appropriate example for this, as is the church of the former Banu Monastery in Buzău and the one of the former Obedeanu Monastery in Craiova. Additionally, the situation of the two court-chapels in Târgoviște can also be mentioned, where they were kept as town churches, while the court itself completely lost its use and fell into ruins.

Another situation is illustrated by the churches emerging in commercial areas, as they included wooden shops on the plot – towards the street or the market square – during pre-modern times and which were demolished everywhere during the 19th century (for example, the case of the Sf. Gheorghe church in Pitești and of the Adormirea Maicii Domnului church in Târgoviște, both next to the market square). Because of this kind of intervention, they lost the commercial function accommodated before, therefore representing instances of partial functional lost-use. Additionally, the demolition of the shops resulted into opening up the churches towards the surroundings and, therefore, establishing a new and more modern relation between the churches and the nearby urban fabric – thus, representing a new-use from the morphological point of view.

The princely courts in Târgoviște and Craiova also illustrate instances of re-use. In the case of the former, even if the court remained in ruins until contemporaneity, at the end of the 19th century the new modern hospital of the town was built on its perimeter (right next to the remains of the first princely church). It is a new-use in terms of function, but a maintained-use in terms of location – as an important modern urban amenity overlapped the site of a major element of the pre-modern settlement. Additionally, the new building does not establish any modern relation with the surroundings from an urbanistic point of view. By prolonging some already existing characteristics of the ensemble – the ones of developing in time and in a gradual and organic way –, it represents an instance of maintained-use in terms of urban morphology. In Craiova, the old main boyar court (transformed into a princely court at the end of the 17th century) also

represents a case of re-use. The houses were rebuilt several times during the centuries and accommodated different functions during the 18th century (including sheltering foreign administration – Austrian, Ottoman), only to return to boyar property at the beginning of the 19th century. By the end of it, it started sheltering some administrative functions and then, at the beginning of the 20th century, educational ones.

All the cases in which new market squares were founded inside towns are clear instances of re-use, as they exhibit a situation of maintaining a specific function of pre-modern times in modern towns, but on new additional locations and even with some modern characteristics from a morphological point of view. It is the situation of Craiova, with the two new market squares that were built, of Buzău, with the second market square built west of the first one, and of Ploiești, with the new vegetable market square. The boyar square in Craiova (the one depicted by the plan of 1845) also represents an instance of re-use because it exhibits situations of maintained-use from a location point of view (as it kept on existing in place as a square), partial lost-use from a functional point of view (because it lost the commercial activities it used to shelter, but it kept on being an unbuilt area inside the town, that could accommodate some leisure activities), and a partial new-use from a morphological point of view (because it prolonged some attributes of the pre-existing fabric – subordinating to the pre-existing urban configuration –, but it also benefited from the new modern interventions that transformed it in a small green area with modern composition). In a similar way, the green area built over the vegetable market square in Buzău also represents a case of re-use for the same reasons.

The fairs that are commonly moved from outside the town to the inner fabric also represent instances of re-use, because they illustrate a situation of maintained function on new locations (like it happened in Târgoviște and Pitești). In a similar way, the constant repositioning of the outer fair in Craiova represents a case of re-use as well. Furthermore, the newly established "Drăgaica Fair" in Buzău (the second fair of the town, to the south) illustrates the same category – as it is an instance of maintained pre-modern function in a new location.

All the expansions of the commercial areas also represent instances of re-use, as they prolong a specific kind of fabric (both from a functional and morphological point of view), but on expanded areas. Furthermore, they maintain that kind of fabric in place, not emerging in completely new areas of the towns. In a somehow different (but related) way, the

newly-emerged commercial fabric that was triggered after the reposition of the fair inside the town in Pitești also represents an instance of re-use, because the process took place based on an already existing type of pattern – the market place (square or fair) that triggers the emergence of commercial fabric next to it or in connection to it.

As a more or less disconnected topic, the new commercials halls build inside or over a market place also indicate instances of re-use, as they were superimposed over the same main function, also maintaining the location (they did not emerge in other parts of the town), but with new-uses from a morphological point of view (and also – at least partially – from a functional point of view, as the commercial function also changed and modernized).

I will also mention a singular situation, the one depicted by Bibescu Residence gardens in Craiova. They can be considered a form of partial functional and locational re-use, as they were superimposed by the new and modern Bibescu Park. The function of the green areas used as leisure areas was maintained, even if there was an important functional change, from private to public gardens. The new park was much larger, and based on a modern Romantic style inspired configuration. It therefore represents a new-use from a morphological point of view.

Regarding the new 19th century amenities, all the cases in which they found shelter in already-existing buildings – a recurrent situation, as shown before – represent obvious instances of re-use. Furthermore, the modern headquarters that were built can also show instances of re-use. In general, it is the situation of all amenities that were built in the already urbanized fabric. It goes without saying that they illustrated a definite modernization from an architectural point of view, and some clear modern features when it comes to the visual and compositional relation established with the street and the public space in general. But, once we take into consideration other morphological attributes and the main macro-areas of the towns, subsequent arguments emerge. On one hand, as the fabric already contained some pre-existing rules and structure, and if these interventions were not accompanied (or preceded) by restructuring interventions, they had to adapt to some of the pre-existing features of the fabric (for example, the shape of the plot, that resulted from previous subdivisions, or the subordination to the pre-existing traditional street network). In this way, they exhibit only a partial morphological new-use, and not a complete one. On the other hand, they can be instances of a (partial) maintained-use from a location point of view, in those situations

in which these new representative amenities found their place in a main and representative area of the towns, enhancing it in its some of its core attributes.

This instance can be clearly observed in the case of Ploiești, with the first Communal Palace built next to the commercial area, followed by the Palace of Justice, built right next to it. The second Communal Palace follows the pattern of location, as it was built on the north side of the market square. These amenities emerged in the center of the town, within the most representative fabric of the urban settlement, therefore enhancing its centrality and representativity by providing it with a functional and architectural new modern layer. Regarding the morphological aspects, the second Communal Palace of Ploiești is one of the best examples to depict the instance of morphological re-use I was mentioning before. It was inserted in the already-configured fabric that limited the market square to the north and it occupied several adjacent plots. Even if the intervention required the joining of some plots, their outer limits remained in place and dictated the shape of the building. Furthermore, even if the building turned a wide symmetrical façade towards the square, it was only two stories high and it was attached on both sides of the plot, therefore taking after some of the pre-existing rules of the fabric and providing an image that is not that much different from the usual one in this type of fabric. I would also add the fact that the building included shops at the ground level, therefore maintaining not only a morphological relationship between the built environment and the public space specific to the commercial area, but also a mixed function, one that includes the commercial activities alongside other main functions (in general, residential; in this instance, administrative).

Târgoviște also exhibits a similar instance of re-use, with the Gymnasium and the Communal Palace built at the extremity of the commercial area (the latter superimposing the market square), enhancing its centrality and its representativity. Furthermore, it exhibits another interesting feature, as most of the other modern amenities were placed along the main axis of the town, developed along the river (the one that developed as the boyar axis inside the town, and also containing the princely court). Along this axis, the County Hospital (on the plot of the court), the Administrative Palace, the Palace of Justice, the highschool and another two schools emerged, alongside many upper-class residences that were rebuild during the 19th century, taking after modern rules of composition. Because of all these interventions, this axis not only remained an important one inside

the settlement, but it was also enhanced by gaining this new modern and representative layer. In this context, we cannot overlook the case of Craiova, where the fact that many of the new modern amenities found their place in the main area that was previously occupied by the boyar courts (or right next to it) is not coincidental, but surely another instance of re-use.

Remaining at the grater scale of the settlement, other instances of re-use can also be identified. One of them refers to some of the pre-existing suburban settlements – such as Mahalaua in Târgoviște and Simileasca in Buzău – that developed important industries during the 19th century. They maintained their role of suburban settlement, but as they accommodated these modern amenities, they developed into what we can call industrial suburbs. In a somewhat similar way, those industries that emerged along roads that followed important pre-modern directions are also instances of re-use, as they did not appear in connection to any other layer of modernization. They followed a pre-existing pattern of development – as the roads linking the towns with the territory always represented places where the settlement was susceptible to grow – but filling it with truly modern amenities of the 19th century.

When it comes to the street network, the railway boulevards of Craiova and Buzău represent instances of re-use, as they followed pre-existing streets, which were only subject to some modernizing interventions (as I discussed above).

Regarding the expansion of the towns, it must be first stated that the settlements did not exhibit major territorial growth during the 19th century, and neither major processes of densification of the pre-existing street network. Ploiești could be considered an exception, because of its clear development towards north during this period. The new resulting fabric was one with a certain degree of modernity, as it was clearly configured in a more geometric way. Besides this, this development took place along a direction of expansion that existed since pre-modern times, therefore also depicting a situation of re-use – new morphological use, but maintained-use in terms of location and function. In a similar way, the minor expansions that took place along pre-existing territorial directions or along more minor already-existing streets are also instances of re-use, as they take after a pattern of development already in place (see such situations in Ploiești, along the directions towards Târgoviște or the old one towards Târgșor; in Buzău towards Galați; some minor expansions following pre-existing streets in Târgoviște and Craiova).

Besides these situations – and excluding the new-uses I explained in the previous sub-chapter – the towns went through a process of densification and quiet modernization within their pre-existing main guidelines of the urban fabric. As the plans show, it is extremely visible when it comes to the street network and the degree to which it represented a maintained-use during the century. But it happened also at the level of property limits. Despite recurrent subdivisions or even fusions, the limits of the plots are lasting elements within the fabric, that still stand at the basis of their minor structure, even if in a partial way (as they might have been maintained only in a partial way). In the absence of restructuring interventions (not a common and recurrent situation, as the study showed), they represent strong guidelines for the development of the fabric, that also informs the built layer in its morphological attributes.

As was expected, there are important instances of new-use and lost-use, the end of the 19th century being a period of important general modernization and general changes. But alongside them, as this study repeatedly showed, we can also identify a significant number of maintained-uses and, even more important, many re-uses, that show that the modernization process was subordinated in a significant way to the major principles that came from the past, being significantly informed by them. The 19th century urban development in the analyzed Wallachian towns – although containing obvious layers of modernization – kept on unfolding on patterns of re-using the pre-existing fabric, morphology, functions, principles of development, therefore exhibiting an urbanistic becoming based mostly on the idea of adapting.

# Appendix

## *Appendix A. The Towns in Pre-modern Times*

This section contains the maps of the five towns included in this study, depicting their fabric in pre-modern times and showing their relations with the territory (landscape, rivers, commercial routes) and the location, configuration and evolution (if known) of the main urban functions analyzed above. The plans were drawn by the author, using the cartographical sources listed in the "References and Sources" list and presented briefly in the introduction.

Besides the additional information provided as text on the drawings, all the maps follow the same legend, as shown in Fig. 02.

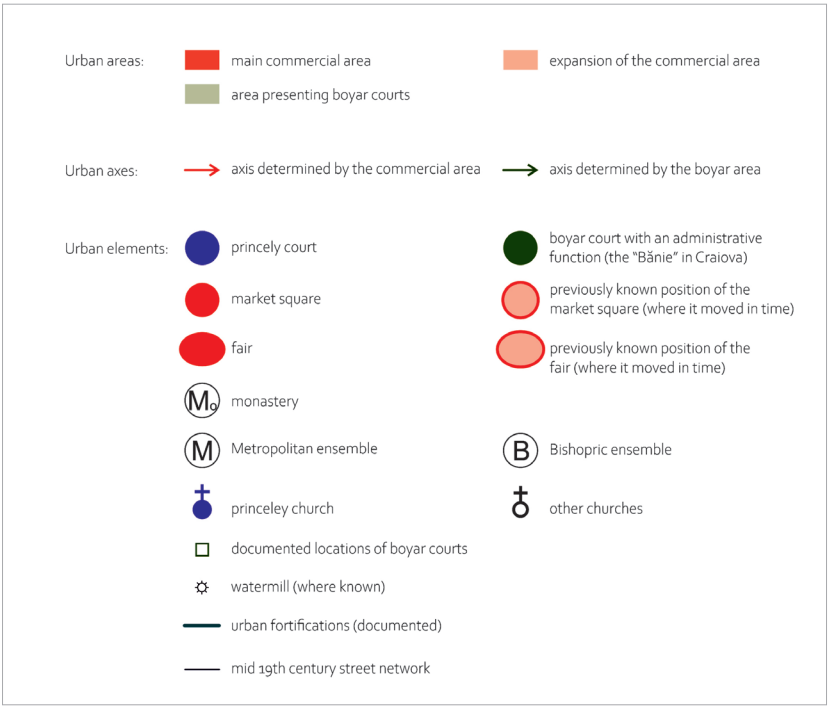


**Fig. 02.** The legend for the recurrent information depicted by the maps of the towns in pre-modern times (Fig. 03-07)


**Fig. 03.** The town of Buzău in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

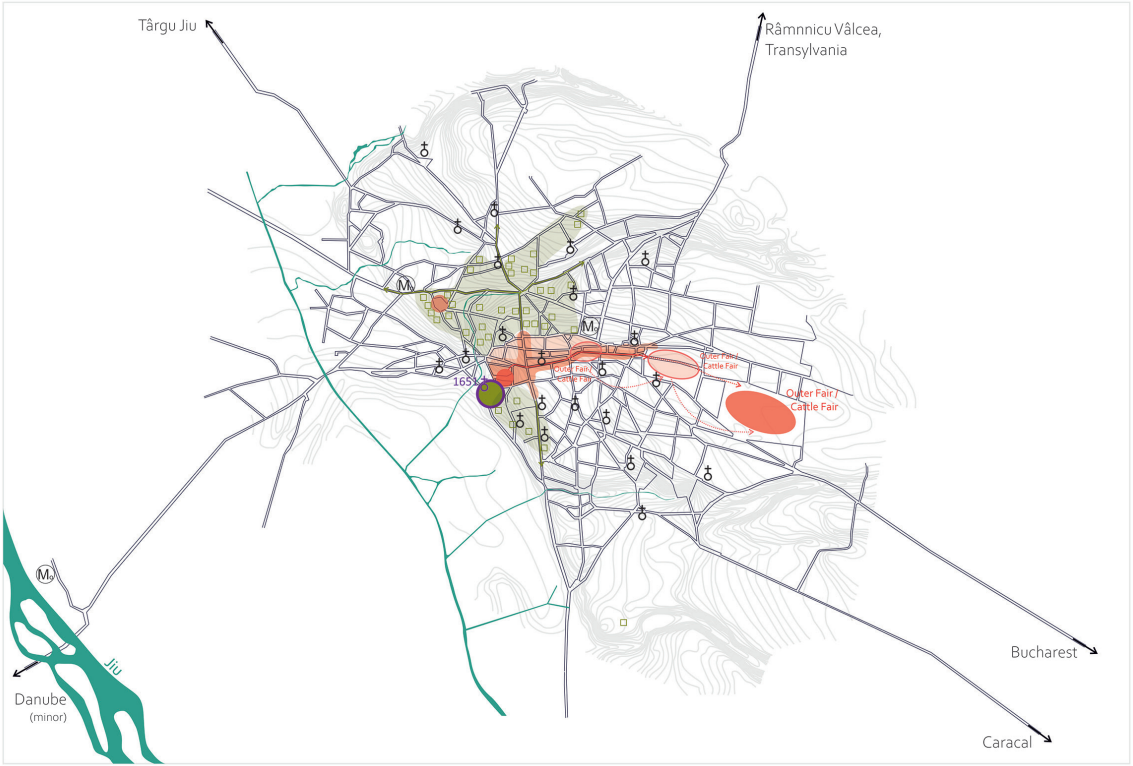


**Fig. 04.** The town of Craiova in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]


**Fig. 05.** The town of Pitești in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

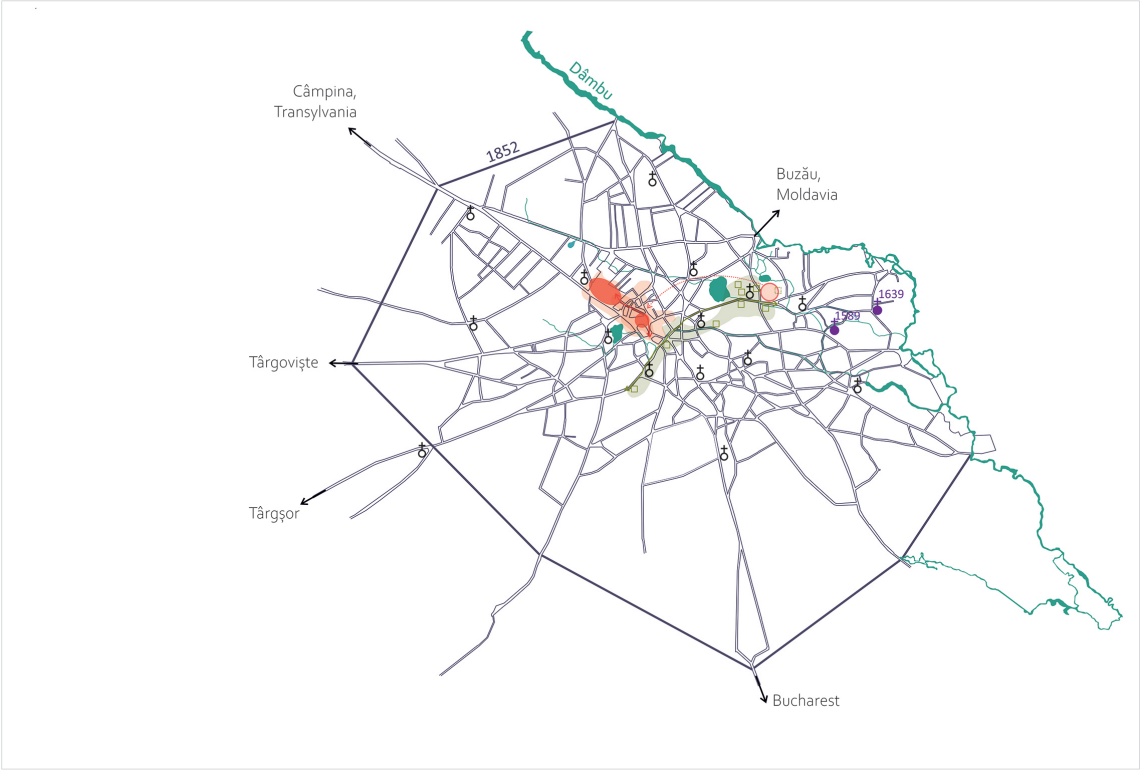


**Fig. 06.** The town of Ploiești in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

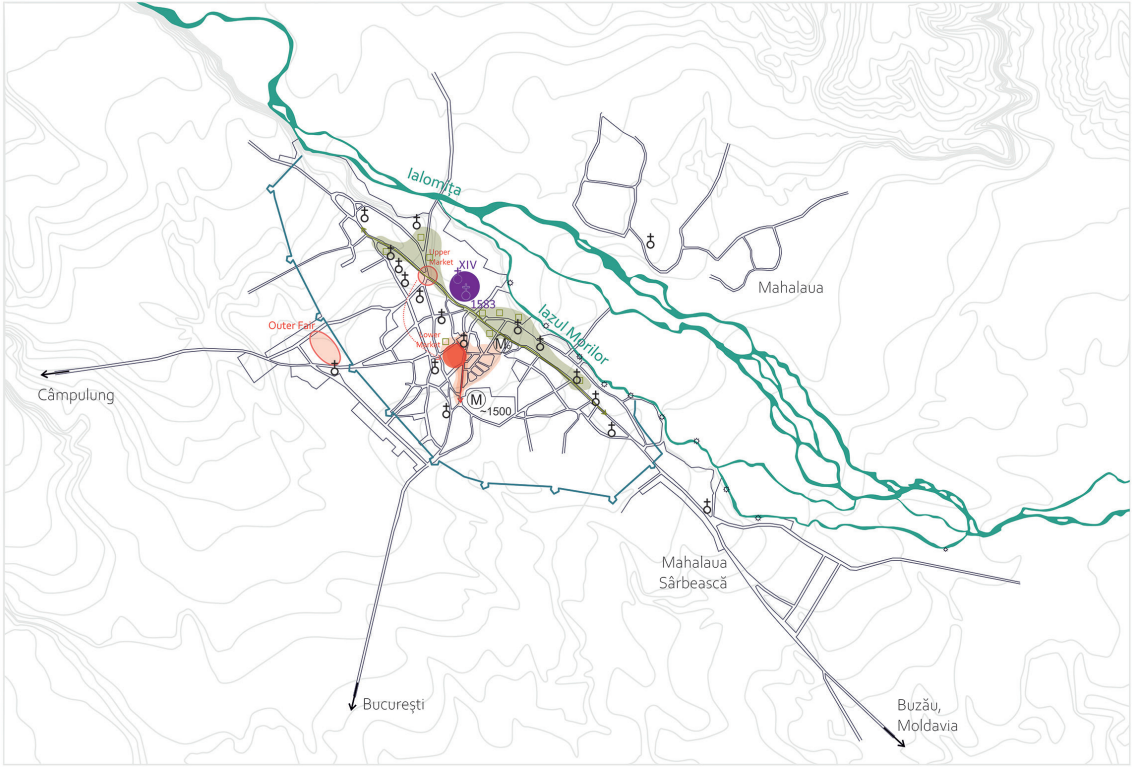


**Fig. 07.** The town of Târgoviște in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

### *Appendix B. The Towns in Modern Times*

This section contains the maps of the five towns included in this study, depicting their fabric in modern times, and showing their relation with the territory, the main pre-modern functional areas, the location of their main modern amenities (for the bigger ensembles or elements, also the configuration) and the relation with the urban fabric. The plans were drawn by the author, using the cartographical sources listed in the "References and Sources" list and presented briefly in the introduction.

Besides the additional information provided as text on the drawings, all the maps follow the same legend, as shown in Fig. 08.

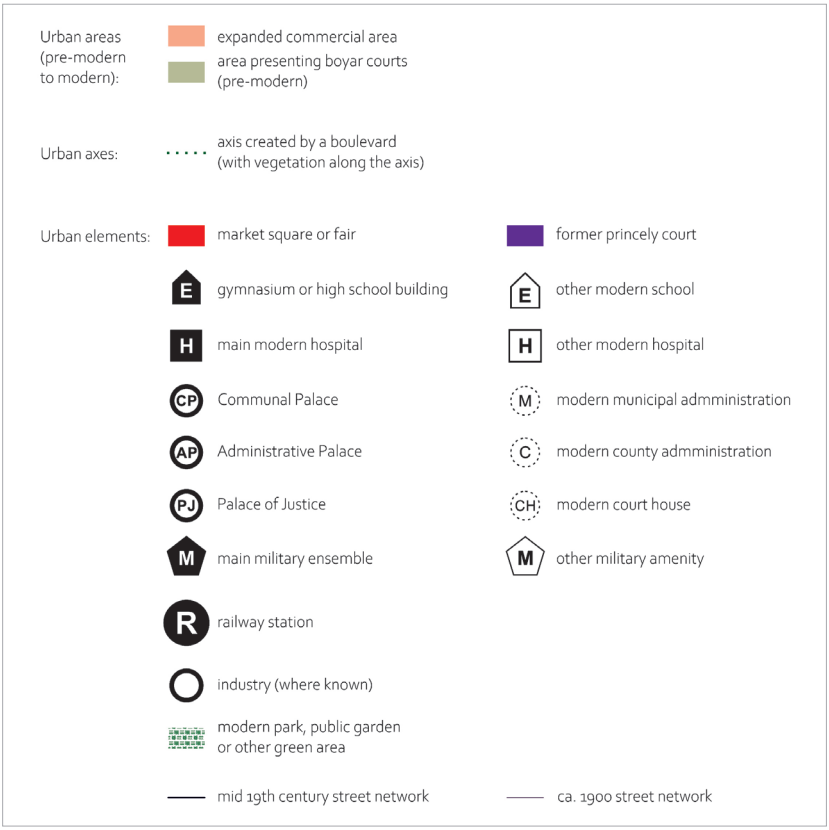


**Fig. 08.** The legend for the recurrent information depicted by the maps of the towns in modern times (Fig. 03-07)


**Fig. 09.** The town of Buzău in modern times [drawn by the author]


**Fig. 10.** The town of Craiova in modern times [drawn by the author]


**Fig. 11.** The town of Pitești in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]


**Fig. 12.** The town of Ploiești in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

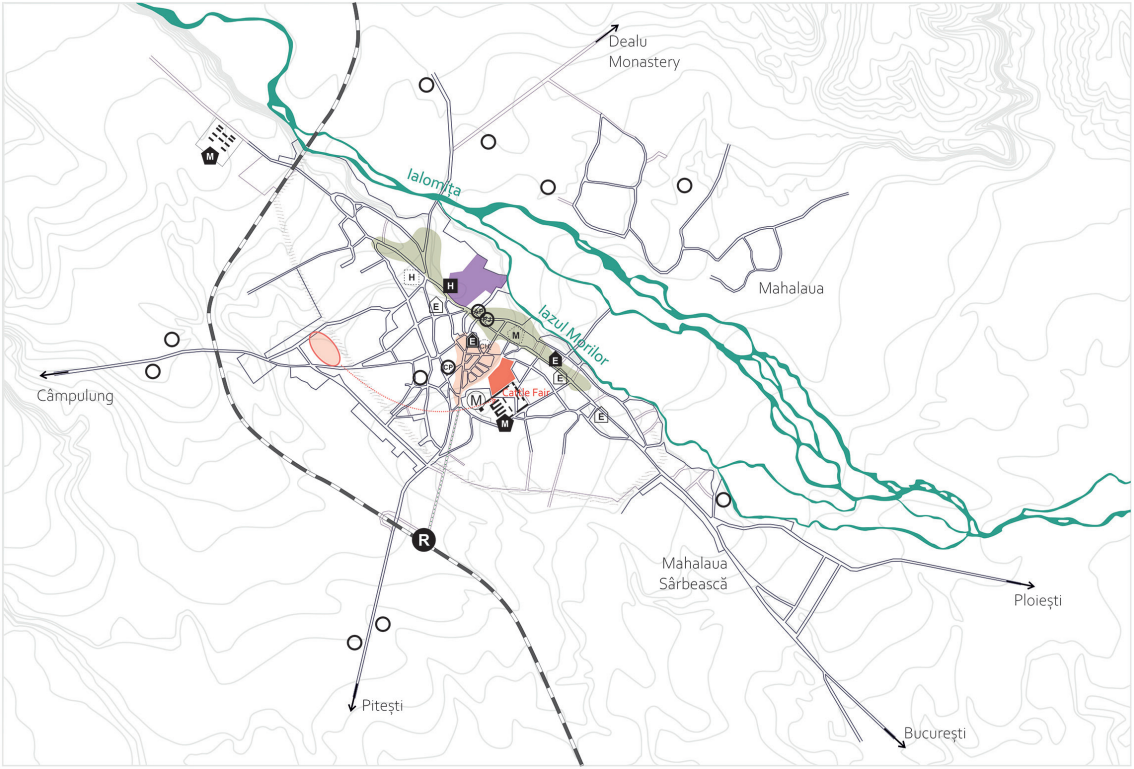


**Fig. 13.** The town of Târgoviște in pre-modern times [drawn by the author]

## Endnotes

1 Even if Moldavia represented a principality that evolved with a certain degree of independence throughout the medieval centuries (therefore representing a case similar to Wallachia), it is holding its own specificity. Therefore, researching the Moldavian towns should represent a distinctive study, focusing on their own particularities, in a consistent and comparative approach.

2 As expected, the biggest one of them was (and still is) Bucharest, but which I had to exclude from the purpose of this project exactly due to its very complex development, making it a unique case, requiring a dedicated, distinctive research.

3 It is important to mention the very relevant work of hist. L. Rădvan, following the history of urban settlements in Romania in a unitary and consistent way throughout centuries of development.

4 Even so, the work of arch. T. O. Gheorghiu on premodern urban development remains important and useful. The same author published in 2017 an analysis on the development of the extra-Carpathian towns, 18th to 21st century; it focuses extensively on communist interventions, missing to provide a new comprehensive approach on the 19th and early 20th century development.

5 All in all, very few studies following one or another topic at a territorial level are available; the research by arch. T. Popescu on how the railway development influenced the evolution of the urban fabric in Romanian towns remains one of the few exceptions.

6 For some towns, such as Buzău (T. O. Gheorghiu, 2019) or Pitești (E. Greceanu, 1982), valuable monographs including analysis on the urban fabric evolution are available; for others, only works depicting the general history of the settlements (many of them, outdated) do exist.

7 There is information about the existence of some defensive lines built around Bucharest during the next centuries, but not yet localized (Gheorghiu, 2017, p. 17), and hypotheses regarding the existence of a fortification around Câmpulung in the early stages, before the 16th century (Gheorghiu, 2000, p. 114; Gheorghiu & Bica, 2015, p. 124)

8 See the archaeological reports of the campaigns from 2015-2020, published in *Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România*, edited by the National Heritage Institute, volumes from 2016-2021, available online at www.patrimoniu.gov.ro.

9 A comparison between the urban fabric depicted by the 1855 plan and by the 1900 one shows that some restructuring interventions did take place in that area, in order to make room for the commercial fabric.

10 A similar and complex situation is also exibited by the town of Bucharest, with the fair changing position because of the expansion of the inhabited area and, therefore, triggerig the development of a long commercial axis

(a secondary one, in case of Bucharest) in that direction. I uphopld no information regarding such a development in other Wallachian towns.

11 The sources indicate that in 1810 the old market square was still sheltering an annual fair, kept in spring (Debie, 1969, p. 84).

12 A complex and detailed study on the evolution of the princely and boyar courts (including a morpho-typological approach), is provided by Brătuleanu, 1997, *passim*.

13 A similar situation can be noticed also in Râmnicu Vâlcea, where the archaeological reports elaborated for the research in the area of Mircea cel Bătrân Park in front of the Socoteanu-Lahovary House, that was in boyar property at least since the 18th century.

14 The building was depicted in Theodor Aman's painting, "Hora Unirii la Craiova", 1857.

15 During the same period of time, Boldescu also undertook other social initiatives, as he allocated 62 plots to poor families and helped them build houses on his estates from the north part of the town (Marinică & Trestioreanu, 2016, p. 100).

16 Before this, in 1829, during the Russian occupation, it is known that a hospital was arranged in Ion Socolescu inn.

17 In 1874 the Fire Department started functioning under the authority of the Ministry of War, therefore being assimilated as a military amenity and developing its own barracks ensembles.

18 See some discussion about this legistative measures in connection to Bucharest in Lascu, 2011.

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# THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW RUSSIA GOVERNORATE: AMBITIONS, CONFLICTS, AND COMPROMISES (1764-1765)

Nataliya Sureva

**Abstract**

The establishment of the New Russia Governorate in 1764 marked a pivotal attempt by the Russian imperial government to standardize the administration of the Black Sea steppe frontier lands. This effort, from the perspective of St. Petersburg, aimed to bring order and control to the region, while for the local population, it represented their first encounter with systematic, all-encompassing state governance. The plan, crafted by Mel'gunov and sanctioned by the Russian Senate, envisioned the area as a largely uninhabited territory, save for previously established Balkan settler regiments and the Ukrainian fortified line. The goal was to populate the region with foreigners and former Russian subjects who had fled to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, these plans clashed with the reality of a highly unstable geopolitical situation and limited Russian resources. Local resistance emerged, particularly from Cossacks and large landowners who saw the spread of the New Russia Governorate as a threat to their traditional rights and privileges. Despite the central government's concern over public reactions and a subsequent halt to Mel'gunov's activities, the approach of integrating local privileges to attract settlers was adopted by future administrators.

**Key Words:** Russian Empire, Hetmanate Ukraine, Sloboda Ukraine, Black Sea Steppe frontier, New Russia Governorate, colonization.

## 1. Introduction

By the mid-18th century, controlling the southwestern steppe frontier presented a significant challenge for the authorities of the Russian Empire. Hetmanate Ukraine, Sloboda Ukraine, and the Zaporozhian Sich remained autonomous territories within the empire, governed by their own elites and legal systems. Their armies were recruited independently and commanded by local leaders. The Zaporozhians had only recently accepted Russian

protection (in 1734), which raised doubts about the reliability of their loyalty. The use of these armies for state-wide objectives, as envisioned from Saint Petersburg, was only possible to a limited extend within the existing arrangements.

Under these conditions, the main points of support for imperial authorities in the region became the Kyiv Governor-General, the Ukrainian Line, regular regiments of the Russian army, and a network of fortifications to the south. Military garrisons in several Ukrainian cities, and outposts along the Ukrainian Line with its system of Land Militia, were all subordinated to or supervised by the Kyiv Governor-General.

The Ukrainian line represented a series of military-defensive fortifications, similar to other Russian border lines formed as the empire expanded its borders eastward and southward in the 17th and 18th centuries[1]. Initially, the Russian government attempted to assign the task of constructing and maintaining such a line to the government of the Hetmanate but failed. Subsequently, the Hetmanate's Cossacks were employed as laborers for pay. The Ukrainian Line was never perceived as their own protective measure in the historiographic tradition of the Hetmanate but rather as a burden. The imperial government had to assign military service duties along the Ukrainian Line to the single-homestead class (*odnodvortsy*) from the nearby Belgorod, Kaluga, and other inner Russian provinces.

Overall, the Russian imperial military presence in the southwestern borderlands was relatively small, constrained by the limited resources of the imperial military forces and treasury. Until the mid-18th century, the Russian government favoured the strategy of advancing fortified lines, using this approach to prevent its own population from spontaneous resettlement. As Brian Boeck demonstrates in his work, the Russian government primarily focused on migration control and border patrolling between the internal regions and the privileged Ukrainian Cossack communities (2007, pp. 55-56).

## 2. Evolving Frontier Strategies

Attempting to control the frontier with minimal resources, the Russian government decided in the early 1750s to rely on military settlers from the Balkan Peninsula willing to perform border service. Balkan military settlements such as New Serbia and Slavo-Serbia were established. The

initial design of New Serbia and Slavo-Serbia, similar to the fortified Ukrainian Line, was strategically planned not only for defensive purposes but also to control population movement and to ensure the stability of the region.

New Serbia was settled on lands previously developed by the inhabitants of the southern regiments of Hetman Ukraine. The former population was to be forcibly resettled. The resettlement of the Ukrainian population from the lands allocated to New Serbia began in 1753. Out of the 3,828 households of Cossacks and commoners designated to return to their old places, only 992 families agreed to relocate within the borders of the Myrhorod and Poltava regiments of Hetmanate. To prevent the remaining families from moving to Zaporozhzhia, especially in the territory then forming under Crimean supremacy in the interfluve between the Bug and Dniester rivers, known as "Khan's Ukraine," the Russian Senate decided on August 18, 1753, to allocate a zone to the south of New Serbia for them and to form the New Sloboda (*Novoslobids'kyi*) Cossack Regiment. The population quickly arrived from the lands of both Left-Bank and Right-Bank Ukraine. If on January 1, 1759, 14,220 men lived in its territory, by the same date in 1763, their number had increased to 19,625 (Pirko, 2004, p. 55).

In this evolving landscape, the Ukrainian Line and the Balkan regiments failed to fulfill their intended roles. The number of Balkan settlers and Russian settled military garrisons was insufficient to sustain demographic, military, and economic goals for which these settlements were created. This inadequacy was compounded by the ongoing diverse migration of people from the Hetmanate, Sloboda Ukraine, Right-Bank Ukraine, and Zaporozhzhia, which the Russian authorities were unable to control. The military settlement formations, whose task was to delineate and control the state border on the steppe frontier, instead transformed into zones of contact rather than barriers. The lands south of them were actively settled, further blurring the dividing lines they were meant to enforce. Russian military authorities were forced to act on a local level more as arbiters than principal actors. Instead of serving as strict boundaries or effective deterrents, imperial frontier structures evolved into a kind of "middle ground" where various groups fostered their own forms of interaction, exchange, and joint management[2].

In the mid-1760s, the Russian imperial government demonstrated its intention to shift from a policy of population containment and border control to a policy of active settler colonization in the Black Sea steppe

frontier. By the end of 1762, the government began to depart from restricting settlers based on religious affiliation, allowing all foreigners except for Jews to settle in the Russian Empire (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, p. 126). Despite these measures, the expected mass relocation of foreigners to southern Ukraine did not occur. It was also impossible to expect people to move from inner Russia due to serfdom and the landowners' complete lack of interest. Foreign colonization also remained negligible. It is possible to agree with Brian Davies (2016, p. 63), the reason for such attention to the imperial Black Sea frontier lay more in geopolitics than economics. The fertile soils did not attract landowners because there was no market for their products – rivers flowed south, and the primary sea for exporting agricultural products from Russian Empire was the Baltic until the 1810s.

On June 11, 1763, Empress Catherine II issued a decree allowing the settlement of refugees from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth of Ukrainian, Russian, and other origins, as well as all willing individuals, including serfs who had lived with their landlords for less than ten years, in New Serbia. This decree effectively removed all legislative restrictions on the migration of the Ukrainian population to the southern regions, including Left-Bank and Sloboda Ukraine In reality, while the decree introduced a new law, it merely aligned formal legislation with already existing practices, acknowledging long-standing patterns of spontaneous migration. This step was justified by the Russian authorities' recognition of the insufficient number of Balkan settlers and the urgent need to populate "those steppe areas, as they are crucial due to their border proximity, as much as possible, with a real cordon" (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, p. 297).

Simultaneously, Catherine II's new imperial government attempted to strengthen control and Russian military presence by implementing a series of administrative reforms on the empire's peripheries, appointing governors with extensive powers. This involved a reevaluation of the governor's role, with centralized regional authority and responsibility for regional development gaining new ideological justification. In the official directive to governors dated April 21, 1764, the governor is referred to as the "master of the region," indicating a trend towards the concentration and personification of regional power. The governors' powers were extensive and undefined, determined by the central authority's assessment of the region's problems and the need for intervention (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, pp. 716-717).

The Russian government embarked on these transformations without a clear action plan for each province. The strategic goal was unification and

integration, understood as the comprehensive civilization of the territory in line with Enlightenment ideas. Governors were tasked with developing tactical steps and practical measures within the defined strategy. Catherine II selected proactive, pragmatic, and ambitious individuals for local leadership positions, strongly recommending reliance on consensus with local elites rather than confrontation. She and her government succeeded in forming a pool of effective, long-serving governors: Siberian Denis Chicherin, Novgorod's Iakov Sievers, and Riga's George Browne. Governors Piotr Rumiantsev and Evdokim Shcherbinin also proved capable of successfully fulfilling their duties as leaders of the newly created imperial administrative units in Ukrainian lands.

The administrative career of the first New Russia (*Novorossiya*) Governor Alexei Mel'gunov (1722-1788) also initially seemed promising. His project for creating the New Russia province on New Serbia's lands was supported with minimal changes, and within a few months, the territory along the Ukrainian Line and the disbanded Slavo-Serbia was placed under his administration on the same basis. A decade later, the settlement project he authored - the Plan for the Settlement of New Russia Province – became the legal foundation for settlement policy and land use organization over vast territories acquired by the Russian Empire following the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardzha in 1774 and the abolition of the Zaporozhian Sich in 1775.

However, despite designing the legal framework and planning the province, the first New Russia governor did not join the ranks of long-term, successful, and effective rulers from the center's perspective. Merely two years after his appointment, he was hastily removed from office and transferred to another position. The New Russia province then reverted to the *de facto* administration of the Kyiv governor for about a decade. Moreover, in the late 1760s, Russian officials seriously considered a project to eliminate the right-bank half of the New Russia province by completely relocating its Elisavetgrad province from the right to the left bank of the Dnipro River (Pyvovar, 2021, pp. 22-28).

Mel'gunov's administrative fate as the New Russia governor and his colonization project vividly illustrate the challenges, dilemmas, and uncertainties of Russian inner policy in the Black Sea Steppe.

## 3. General-Lieutenant Alexei Mel'gunov

By the same decree that lifted restrictions on the movement of the Ukrainian population, all Russian military-administrative units in the region – the New Serbia Corps, the New Sloboda Cossack Corps, and the Fortress of St. Elizabeth – were unified under the command of General-Lieutenant Alexei Mel'gunov, under the supervision of Kiev Governor General Ivan Glebov. Mel'gunov was also appointed head of the commission investigating the abuses of General Horvat, his predecessor as commander of the New Serbia Corps. In the preamble of the decree, Mel'gunov was tasked with consulting with the Kiev Governor General and local senior officers to develop a plan for reforms in the region. The main goal of these proposed reforms was declared to be "the increase of settlements, as the primary objective of all this." (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, p 297).

General-Lieutenant Alexei Mel'gunov was one of the most influential figures in the Russian Empire during the reigns of Peter III and Catherine II. Prior to his appointment in the region, he led the Landed Gentry Corps (*Sukhoputnyi Shliakhetskyi korpus*), the premier military educational institution of the Russian Empire. Mel'gunov gained a reputation as a highly educated and enlightened nobleman with liberal views. He founded a theater and a printing house within the Corps, where he published his own weekly magazine and translated works from German and French authors. He consistently advocated for transitioning the Corps' instruction into the Russian language, and to this end, he established the printing house, which was intended to publish textbooks among other materials. In the conflict between Gerhard Friedrich Miller and the Russian Academy of Sciences, he supported Miller and, in 1760, initiated the printing and distribution of a questionnaire composed by Miller to be sent to the provinces with the aim of preparing a comprehensive geographical description of the Russian Empire. Mel'gunov participated in the development of key legislative acts under Peter III, such as the Manifesto on the Abolition of the Secret Chancellery and the Decree on the Liberties of the Nobility. Similar to Piotr Rumyantsev, the future governor of Little Russia, he distanced himself from affairs after the palace coup in St. Petersburg in the summer of 1762. However, a year later, he energetically responded to Catherine II's offer to reorganize the Russian military-administrative structures in the southwestern borderlands.

Thus, the selection of Mel'gunov for the post was not accidental. Catherine II saw him as a statesman with progressive views, sharing the

Enlightenment ideas and principles of state administration as understood by the Russian elite at the time. Mel'gunov endeavored to meet the expectations of the Empress. He did not treat his role as a formality, as evidenced by his original reform projects and his regular, extensive reports to Catherine II, preserved in the archives of the Russian Senate.

Mel'gunov, like other Russian governors in the empire's peripheries at the time, was granted extensive executive powers and the right to initiate legislation. His task was formulated as follows:

> to devise a plan [...] on how to reform the New Serbia Corps and bring it to a better state, to increase and maintain proper living conditions, with the advantage of increasing settlements as the main objective, as well as increasing Sloboda settlements and Old Believer communities, and taking measures to attract runaways from Poland, including Little Russians, Old Believers, and other subjects of Your Imperial Majesty. (Polnoe sobranie, vol.16, p. 297)

Mel'gunov first arrived in the region in the summer of 1763 and, as the sources indicate, launched a flurry of activities. He initiated the excavation of a Scythian burial mound near the Fortress of St. Elizabeth. He established a printing house in the fortress, with its first publication being the "Russian Alphabet Book" (*Rossiiskaia azbuka*). He also accelerated the construction of a church within the fortress. Moreover, he initiated the demarcation of lands with the Zaporozhian Cossacks along a new boundary, leading to active correspondence with the Sich and facing resistance from some Zaporozhian commanders (Syniak, 2010, pp.13-14).

## 4. "Plan for the New Russia Governorate"

By the end of 1763, Mel'gunov had transformed his accumulated experience in the region into a substantial legislative project, as he had been tasked to do. This project became known as the "Plan for the New Russia Governorate." This document, along with the staffing schedule of the newly formed regiments and maps, formed the basis for the Panin brothers' report on the creation of the New Russia Governorate, which was approved on March 22, 1764 (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, pp. 657-667). Mel'gunov's "Plan," with minor adjustments, would serve as the primary legal framework in the region for decades. Later, in the second half of

the 1770s, the incorporation of the population of the former Zaporozhian Lands into the social and administrative structures of the empire would occur in the manner proposed by Mel'gunov[3].

During the review of New Serbia's organisation, it was found that it had cost too much (700,000 rubles), and the funds spent on it did not correspond to the benefits it provided to the state. There was no reason to expect that the situation would improve in the future. Therefore, it was proposed to create a governorate, to expand its territory by including the triangle of land between the Inhul and Oril rivers, which belonged to the Zaporozhian Cossacks, and to add the New Sloboda Regiment and Slavo-Serbia. The territory of the New Russia Governorate was not limited to these areas, which were dispersed significantly.

Naturally, the question of their unification arose. The Ukrainian line was already becoming redundant, as settlements had moved far beyond it, and it had ceased to serve as protection from the steppe. Moreover, it was built in an area lacking water and forests, making it less suitable for border defense. Therefore, the Russian Senate concluded that the Ukrainian line needed to be transferred to the jurisdiction of the New Russia Governorate. Along with it, the places located "behind the Ukrainian line" would also be transferred to the New Russia Governorate. All these lands had been spontaneously colonized by residents of the southern regiments of the Hetmanate and included about 40,000 people (Miller, 1889, p. 302).

The New Russia Governorate had a semi-military character. The entire territory of the governorate was divided among regiments, both hussar and pikemen. The regiments were settled, meaning they combined military service with farming; each hussar or pikeman was allocated a plot of land. The territory where the settled regiments were located was under the authority of the regiment commander, and this authority extended to both military and non-military populations.

In his "Plan," Mel'gunov attempts to encompass all aspects of the region's life and subject them to the demands of colonization, starting from the allocation of land and ending with issues of upbringing and education. It is noteworthy that the "Plan" envisioned the region as a desert, devoid of people, customs, or laws, where everything needed to be created anew.

The "Plan" stipulated that foreigners of any nationality could join settled regiments without restrictions, receiving 30 rubles "without return." All Russian subjects living abroad, as well as Zaporozhians who enlisted in the hussar and pikemen regiments, would receive 12 rubles. The same amount was given to all settlers, both foreigners and Russian subjects, who

did not enter military service. The territory of the new governorate was divided into separate districts for military personnel and other population groups. The former New Serbia was divided into 70 districts, of which 62 were allocated for military personnel, 2 for townspeople, and 16 for state peasants, Old Believers, and foreigners. If the allocated land was settled according to the established quota, the land was granted in full ownership. There were no class restrictions for acquiring land; anyone could receive land as long as they had the means for settlement.

The Mel'gunov's Plan introduced norms that significantly differed from those existing in other parts of the Russian Empire[4]. The "Plan" provided everyone with the opportunity to acquire large landholdings and populate them with peasants. For anyone who brought a certain number of settlers, there was a path to nobility and promotion to officer ranks. Residents of the New Russia Governorate enjoyed even more rights than "longtime Russian subjects": they could not be forcibly conscripted into military service, anyone was allowed to trade in salt and vodka, and they could export and import agricultural products and various goods from abroad without paying duties. Norms of the "Plan" were closer to the principles and norms familiar to settlers from the nearby Ukrainian lands. Among the most important were personal freedom for peasants, household taxation[5], and the freedom to distill and sell wine. It is therefore crucial for us to reconstruct the logic and foundational premises of the author of the plan, as well as the circumstances that shaped this logic. What led this imperial dignitary to significantly deviate from the general legislative norms and propose a fundamentally new and unprecedented legal framework within the Russian Empire?

For our analysis, we will draw upon a range of reports and notes submitted by Mel'gunov to Empress Catherine II in 1764-1765, as well as petitions and appeals to various authorities by local groups affected by Mel'gunov's reforms.

Interestingly, in his communications, Mel'gunov writes extensively about the desirability of legislative, administrative, and cultural unification. In the opening lines of his notes, dated January 27, 1764, which accompany and comment on the provisions of the "Plan for the New Russia Governorate" submitted for Senate approval, Alexei Mel'gunov proposes appointing the chief commander, or governor, "for no less than three years and from among the Russians, as the common people, being of the same faith, place greater trust in such a person" (Sledsvennoe delo, sheet 118).

Mel'gunov further proposes renaming New Serbia and the New Sloboda Cossack Regiment as a governorate and giving the companies of the newly settled regiments within that governorate "Russian names." He strongly recommends that at least one-third of the officer corps of the newly created settled regiments be drawn from the Russian army regiments. Otherwise, he fears:

> […] these regiments will never improve, and the rank-and-file soldiers will not quickly become accustomed to proper service and will not become diligent in it. They will always consider themselves a separate nation. Current officers not only fail to eradicate this notion but, on the contrary, some out of foolishness and others out of malice instill and affirm among the common people that they are Serbs destined to form a distinct nation forever. For the rank-and-file hussars, who consist of different nationalities, it does not matter what nationality the officers are, as long as they are orderly and just. They will even prefer Russian officers over the current ones. If we were to appoint officers who understand their language, every hussar officer would need to know more than ten different languages, which is impossible. Therefore, it is more practical to appoint Russians or those who know the Russian language and require that the rank-and-file learn Russian, which can be achieved without difficulty. It is even desirable that they forget their previous language and customs altogether, as this will more reliably integrate them into the settlement and unify them into the Russian nation (Sledsvennoe delo, sheet 119).

This excerpt clearly shows that Mel'gunov considers administrative russification his direct task and welcomes the potential assimilation of local Balkan settlers. Concluding his notes in January 1764, Mel'gunov revisits the theme of Russification ("obrusenie"), proposing to station the Carabinier Perm Regiment and two Land Militia Infantry Regiments in permanent quarters at the Fortress of St. Elizabeth, the administrative center of the planned governorate. He believed that this measure would both strengthen border defense and create conditions for "the diverse peoples coming to New Serbia to Russify ['*obruset'*] more quickly" (Sledsvennoe delo, sheet 119 verso).

In the first point of the first chapter of the Plan, the author included a declaration about the fundamental uniformity of the legal status for all who find themselves in the newly created governorate: "In all settlements, people of all ranks from all places who have come or will come for service, settlement, or other purposes, as soon as they register where they desire,

shall from that moment enjoy the privilege of being considered and treated equally with all long-standing subjects, and obey the State laws just like everyone else" (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, p. 663). In his report to Catherine II dated August 21, 1764, he writes about his expectations: "Little Russia, seeing this example, will ask, sotnia[6] by sotnia and town by town, to be united under a single law. Then it will naturally follow that the entire land can be divided into provinces and governorates as needed, and the Brandenburg and Saxon rights currently existing there will disappear on their own. Thus, there will be one flock and one shepherd" (Doneseniya Alekseya Melgunova, sheet 13 verso).

In Mel'gunov's accounts from late 1764 to early 1765, faced with opposition and complaints from major landowners in Left-Bank and Sloboda Ukraine about their peasants moving to the New Russia Governorate, Mel'gunov, seeking to justify his actions to Catherine II and senior officials, presents additional arguments. He draws on historical information and demonstrates his reasoning based on a critical reflection of the Russian Empire's experience in Ukrainian lands. The governor refers to the history of the Sloboda regiments and discusses the mistakes of previous leadership in matters of cultural assimilation:

> Although the residents of the Sloboda regiments have long been equated with other Russian people by courts and administration in the Belgorod and Voronezh governorates, there was no need to make any distinction in their designation or use... If every resident were called by the name of the governorate where they live, their previous designation would naturally disappear, and they could no longer be considered free Little Russians, and therefore would not have the right to free movement. Throughout the world, a group of newcomers does not bring rights to the whole; whoever arrives somewhere is subject to the laws of that land (Doneseniya Alekseya Melgunova, sheet 13 verso).

In doing so, Mel'gunov formulates an entirely new objective for Russian administration in the entire southwestern borderlands of the empire, including the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine. All inhabitants, regardless of their origin and previous status, should ultimately be declared equal to "long-standing" Russian subjects. This means they would unconditionally belong to the empire, rather than to Ukrainian Cossack corporations, which were part of the empire based on contractual principles and had a special, privileged legal status. In Mel'gunov's view, which, unlike

that of his predecessors, is based on the principles of cameralism and rational administration, the main goal can only be achieved by extending a unified legal system: "the extensive border will be protected by military personnel, all sustained by their own revenues." In other words, only then will the local Russian administration be able to guarantee effective border protection based on taxes collected locally.

## 5. Practical Strategies vs. Initial Intentions

Upon arriving in the south and closely acquainting himself with the situation in the summer of 1763, Mel'gunov realized that the primary population of the lands entrusted to him, as well as potential settlers "from Poland" and other places capable of military service, were mostly descendants of privileged Ukrainian Cossack corporations with strong and stable notions of their origins and rights. There were no other social groups that the Russian government could rely on as settlers in the region, and Mel'gunov was well aware of this. It is no coincidence that in his reflections, he recalls the unsuccessful experience of resettling single-homestead peasants to the Ukrainian Line:

> More than thirty years ago, the previous government, for this necessary purpose, did not take people from Little Russia to cover it but instead populated it with single-homestead peasants from the interior of the state. As a result, over one hundred thousand souls, forcibly relocated to those places, died prematurely. This border, in comparison to others, is incomparably more dangerous. All others lose only during wartime, but here, in addition to the proximity to Crimea, there is the constant, inevitable danger of the plague. Therefore, is it not better to settle such a region with volunteers rather than with forced labor (Reskript, sheet 5).

Mel'gunov faced the task not of populating the empty lands of the territory entrusted to him with "foreigners from Poland," as initially envisioned from St. Petersburg, but rather of attracting the Ukrainian population that had already settled or had economic interests in the territory of the newly created New Russia Governorate, as well as potential settlers dissatisfied with their current situation.

At the same time, unifying legal status – thus, equalizing the rights of the Ukrainian population with those of "native Russian subjects" –

entailed a significant reduction of the existing privileges of the Ukrainian population, which was unlikely to attract many volunteers. Mel'gunov understood that his project for the new governorate needed to appear attractive to the "Little Russians," as he generally referred to the people from Left-Bank and Sloboda Ukraine. He argues:

> Throughout the state, a law has been established and affirmed by custom over many years, according to which peasants are deprived of the freedom to move from one owner to another and are thus bound to their owners. In return, the owners are obliged to pay all state taxes for their people according to the census, supply the army and navy with recruits, and purchase wine and salt from the treasury rather than selling their own for profit. Consequently, landowners strive to encourage their people to engage in agriculture, thereby ensuring proper tax payments. Failure to comply with this law results in landowners losing their rights to serf ownership and being deprived of their lands.
>
> In this part of the state[7], which contains at least around a million souls, none of these conditions exist to this day. It is highly desirable for the increase of state power and revenues to bring this region under the same law as the rest of the state. It might seem that a decree would be the shortest way to achieve this, but it is necessary first to consider the nature of the people, the condition of the land, and the neighboring regions, and then determine whether the law can be enforced.

To support his point, Mel'gunov cites the unsuccessful experience of the Smolensk Governorate, from which people are fleeing *en masse* from serfdom to the neighboring Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The New Russia governor further questions why people actively migrate from the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine to the south:

> In this region, where none of those measures [referring to the binding of peasants to landowners] have been implemented, a great many people move to Poland, the Tatar lands, and the Sich with their wives and children. In the first two places, it is a total loss for the state, and in the third place, it is equally disastrous and additionally harmful. The more populous the Sich, the more dangerous and audacious it becomes (Reskript, sheet 6).

Finding an answer to this question is key for him. At that time, the local Russian administration lacked the means to stop or effectively control these migrants. However, understanding the motives behind this migration could

enable the Russian administration to offer an attractive alternative to the settlers. According to Mel'gunov, people from Little Russia and the Sloboda regiments flee due to excessive exactions by the senior landowners, the disenfranchisement of the Cossacks, exploitation by the ever-growing sotnia and regimental administration, and the upbringing in the customs of "illusory freedom." (Reskript, sheet 6).

Since prohibiting free movement would only increase emigration and relocation to the Zaporozhian Sich, "which no barriers can prevent," Mel'gunov proposes:

> […] allowing anyone from Little Russia and the Sloboda regiments who wishes to move to the New Russia Governorate for service and settlement, provided they continue to pay the same taxes there as they did in their previous locations, and likewise allow people to move from the governorate to the mentioned areas.

In the author's opinion, this is the only way to retain people within the state, populate the New Russia Governorate, and strengthen the borders: "If not by this method, then no other can be found to cover such a vast and empty border without burdening the entire state" (Reskript, sheet 8 verso).

In addition to the rights of free movement and choice of residence, the "Plan for the New Russia Governorate" proposed a regimental structure (settled Pikemen Regiments), land-based rather than poll taxation, the right to freely sell wine, and several other provisions that closely resembled what was known in the Russian Empire as "Little Russian law." For Mel'gunov, including these norms was a necessary compromise between the ideal and the reality. The local administration could not rely solely on coercion. The borders were easily penetrable, and dissatisfied individuals could easily move to Zaporozhian lands, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, or territories controlled by the Crimean Khan. Mel'gunov decided to create an attractive alternative for discontented peasants and Cossacks, as well as for lower-ranking sotnia officers, capable of competing with options like moving to the Zaporozhian Lands or the Khan's Ukraine.

Notably, Mel'gunov's project for the New Russia Governorate was, in practice, an open spatial concept: according to the Russian Senate reports approved on March 22 and June 11, 1764, the governorate included the territories of the former New Serbia and Slavo-Serbia, the former New Sloboda Cossack settlement, the area between the Inhul and Oril rivers belonging to the Zaporozhian Lands, and lands along and inward from

the Ukrainian Line extending over 40 kilometers, including the southern sotnias (administrative units) of the Poltava and Myrhorod regiments of Hetmanate Ukraine. These were the legislatively fixed geographic boundaries in 1764 (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, pp. 297, 663)

However, the administrators of the New Russia Governorate began incorporating residents of the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine along with their lands, regardless of their location. The local administrations were not informed about the transfer of lands from their control to the jurisdiction of the New Russia Governorate. Mel'gunov addressed the local offices directly, instructing them to offer all Cossacks the option to enroll in the New Russia Regiments under the threat of land confiscation. In this manner, he seized about 30 sotnias from the Poltava, Myrhorod, Lubny, and Pereyaslav regiments. In the summer and autumn of 1764, the events also covered the Kharkiv and Izyum regiments of Sloboda Ukraine.

The incorporation into the New Russia Governorate appeared voluntary: Mel'gunov and his close associates collected signatures from the population expressing their desire to come under the jurisdiction of the New Russia Governorate and to enroll in the Pikeman Regiments. At the same time, the senior officers were immediately promised officer ranks, granting them the right to Russian nobility; the lower ranks and commoners who enrolled as pikemen received land plots.

Mel'gunov actively worked on integrating new settlements into his governorate and filling the newly established Elisavetgrad, Dnipro, and Luhansk Settled Regiments with people[8]. The promised living conditions in the new governorate were highly enticing. The main conditions included: granting land ownership to each individual, the free sale of wine and salt, the freedom to enlist in or leave military service, no payments to the treasury except an annual land tax, and the status of state peasants for those not wishing to serve in the military, ensuring they would never be bound to landowners.

New Russia governor identified the sotnia-level officers as his main potential supporters and allies, directing all his persuasive efforts towards them. While composing his "Plan," he requested the authority to recommend these officers for military ranks in recognition of their contributions to settlement efforts (Sledstvennoe delo, sheet 117 verso). Obtaining Russian officer ranks provided the Ukrainian officers with a path to the desired Russian nobility status, including the right of hereditary ownership over peasants. In his report to Catherine II dated November 17, 1764 (Doneseniya Alekseya Melgunova, sheets 3-8) Mel'gunov,

requesting the swift promotion of Kremenchuk sotnyk Gavrilov, Belytsky sotnyk Troinitsky, and Keleberda sotnyk[9] Florinsky to the rank of captain in the active Russian army, writes:

> By this means [i.e., through the granting of ranks], through a few sotniks and other minor individuals, Little Russia can soon be brought to any desired state. The local officials are very eager for these genuine ranks, and without such rewards, I do not expect others to follow. Moreover, these pioneers would be held in extreme contempt by all their former compatriots.

The sotnia-level officers who decided to join Mel'gunov's newly created settled regiments became the main organizational driving force, using persuasion, intimidation, and coercion on the local population, both Cossacks and peasants, in the drafting of supposedly voluntary collective petitions. However, the Cossacks who had their own lands viewed this reform very negatively, and only the threat of losing lands forced them to enlist as pikemen. The higher-ranking officers also reacted negatively, as they had large estates and risked losing their peasants[10].

## 6. Mel'gunov's Attack on the Hetmanate and the Brewing Conflict

As we have seen above, Mel'gunov's reform proposals and considerations encompassed all Ukrainian lands within the Russian Empire, not just the territory directly under his control. This was because the rapid success in managing the entrusted New Russia Governorate and establishing settled regiments there directly depended on the cooperation and involvement of the Ukrainian population. Mel'gunov was undoubtedly aware that throughout 1764, the higher echelons of the Russian government were preparing to reform the administration in the Hetmanate and Sloboda regiments. The decision to dismiss Hetman Kyrylo Razumovs'ky and abolish the hetman's office was made in February 1764, initiating the process of drafting provisions for the new Little Russian Collegium and selecting candidates for the position of the Little Russian governor (Hal', 2008; Kruglova, 2010). At the same time, in Sloboda Ukraine, a commission led by the future governor Shcherbinin was investigating the activities of the local military command and officers. This commission was laying the groundwork for the abolition of the Cossack military-administrative system

and the establishment of the Sloboda Ukrainian Governorate (Masliichuk, 2007; Sklokin, 2019).

Taking control sotnia by sotnia, village by village, Mel'gunov interacted exclusively with the sotnia-level officers, and it seems he did not fear conflict with the Cossack regimental administrations or their direct superiors. The General Military Chancellery in Hlukhiv was inundated with inquiries from the regimental leadership in Poltava and Myrhorod, and petitions from dissatisfied sotnias. However, it did not know how to respond and limited itself to sending reports to Hetman Razumovs'ky, who spent all of 1764 in St. Petersburg.

However, by the autumn of 1764, the wave of discontent stirred by the actions of the New Russia governor reached the Russian capital. This wave had two main causes: first, the dissatisfaction of some sotnia-level officers and Cossacks who found themselves incorporated in the New Russia Governorate against their will, and second, the negative reaction of large landowners in southern Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine to the loss of their dependent peasants who chose to register in the New Russia Governorate.

In October 1764, the ataman of the Orlyans'ka sotnia, Fedir Bairak, arrived in St. Petersburg, bringing with him several dozen petitions and collective grievances addressed to Hetman Razumovs'ky and Catherine II, from the sotnias of the Hetmanate affected by Mel'gunov's recruitment activities (Reshennye, sheets 22-43 verso). Fedir Bayrak specifically protested against the actions of the sotnyk Ivan Osovets'ky. In addition to the petitions brought to the imperial capital, he submitted a personal petition to Empress Catherine II, detailing the violent actions and robberies carried out by Osovets'ky, who had been appointed by Mel'gunov as the *rotmistr* of the Dnipro Regiment, forcing the Cossacks to register in the New Russia Governorate. It is worth noting that historical sources record these two individuals in other conflict situations several years before this incident. Fedir Bayrak served as the ataman of the Starosamars'ka Sotnia of the Poltava Regiment, located beyond the Ukrainian Line, until 1762. After a conflict with the Zaporozhians led to the disbandment of this sotnia, he became the ataman of the Orlyans'ka Sotnia (Repan, 2017, p. 53). Meanwhile, Orlyans'ka sotnyk Ivan Osovets'ky was arrested in 1759 by the commandant of Fort St. Elizabeth, Muravyov, due to a dispute over the lands of the Orlyans'ka Sotnia, which had been allocated for New Serbia (Delo ob areste, sheets 1-22). This previous experience evidently convinced these men to choose different strategies. Bayrak, seeing the

inability of local Russian authorities to resolve disputes between the Hetmanate and the Zaporozhians on lands beyond the Ukrainian Line, preferred to choose the jurisdiction of the Hetmanate. In contrast, the loss of the lands beyond the Dnipro due to their inclusion in the newly organized New Serbia by the Russian government seemingly convinced Osovets'ky of the inevitability of expanding Russian control over the region and the corresponding changes. This likely led him to choose the New Russia Governorate.

On November 4, 1764, Hetman Razumovs'ky submitted a letter (*gramota*) to Catherine II, attaching all these petitions and outlining the complaints from the Poltava and Myrhorod regiments about their unwillingness to be part of the New Russia Governorate and the violent actions of Mel'gunov's appointed officers, including beatings and robberies (Reshennyie, sheet 21). Among the various collective petitions were those submitted by the officers, as well as by two separate groups of 47 and 60 Cossacks from the Kremenchuks'ka sotnia, complaining about the violent actions of Kremenchuks'ka sotnyk Iakiv Gavryliv and expressing their unwillingness to be in the pikemen regiment of the New Russia Governorate. This Kremenchuk sotnia, along with the neighboring Vlasivs'ka sotnia, had already been officially included in the New Russia Governorate by a decree of Caterine II on September 6, 1764, based on collective petitions, orchestrated by Gavryliv (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, p. 894).

In Razumovsky's letter, he also mentioned a complaint from the estate manager of the General Military Treasurer Semen Kochubey regarding the migration of more than 200 peasant households from his villages in the Poltava Regiment to the New Russia Governorate. Other documents reveal that similar actions were taken by the subjects on the lands of Roman Vorontsov, also in the Poltava Regiment, and the subjects of Ivan Gendrikov in the Kharkiv Regiment – all influential Russian officials who had acquired extensive holdings through their friendship with Hetman Razumovs'ky. Mel'gunov, who had learned about the discontent of the large landowners, concluded his report to the Empress on October 27, 1764, with the following:

I expect that the Little Russian landowners and those who need them will not refrain from lodging complaints against me under various pretexts. However, my hope is encouraged by the wise discernment of Your Imperial Majesty in human affairs. I strive solely to increase the people

and the land under Your Majesty's unified rule by all appropriate means (Doneseniya, sheet 15).

In his final report from the region on November 17, 1764, before his return to St. Petersburg, Mel'gunov was particularly verbose, engaging in polemics with imagined critics. He mocks the local landowners worried about losing their peasants, pointing out that the Little Russian privilege of free movement has turned against them:

It is somewhat unpleasant for the Little Russian landowners that, through the current establishment in the Catherine's province, their Little Russian liberty is observed by allowing anyone to move there for settlement and to return if they do not wish to stay. This privilege is burdensome for them because, even though this permission was published only a month ago in the Poltava regiment, it has not yet been announced in other regiments. This was done intentionally to let the opportune time for transition pass (Doneseniya, sheets 4 verso - 5).

Mel'gunov goes on to describe how the landowners spread false rumors about upcoming conscriptions in the New Russia Governorate, provoking fears and concerns among the people. Despite this, Mel'gunov boasts that in October 1764, he managed to enlist 200 men into the pikemen regiments and three thousand people as settlers (Doneseniya, sheet 5). Defending his approach regarding the Little Russian landowners, the New Russia governor appeals to the legal foundations of the Ukrainian Line, according to which private landowners have no rights to own land there. He also reproaches the major Little Russian landowners for the excessive exploitation of their dependent peasants:

> Many compelling reasons force simple peasants to leave their old homes, buildings, plowed fields, lush meadows, sometimes livestock, grain, and belongings, and flee to those empty lands. What is most regrettable is that, as we hear, they irrevocably move to the Khanate's territory beyond the Perekop in Crimea, settling there and paying the Khan about two kopecks per plot. What causes this? Certainly, it is because, first, no peasant has his own clearly defined land; second, the sotnia-level officers are oppressed by the regimental officers, the regimental officers by the general officers, and in general, all by the prominent landowners. Therefore, every peasant, being restricted and oppressed in lands and resources, is forced to seek better opportunities due to the freedom of movement.

Concluding his report, Mel'gunov insists on his urgent return to St. Petersburg, emphasizing the impossibility of fully conveying all the circumstances he has uncovered about Little Russia in writing (Doneseniya, sheets 11-12).

It seems that the situation and sentiments in the higher circles of the Russian government regarding Mel'gunov's creeping transformation of the Hetmanate and Sloboda regiments into the New Russia Governorate were becoming increasingly tense. As long as the New Russia governor managed to create the impression of social consensus and the voluntary transition of people under his jurisdiction in his personal reports, Catherine II remained patient. However, the substantial volume of petitions and requests that reached the capital, transmitted by Hetman Razumovs'ky along with his letter, as well as personal appeals made directly to the monarch, indicated a growing social tension in the region and demanded a response. The irritation of influential high-ranking officials of the empire, such as Senator Vorontsov and the head of the Chevalier Guard Corps, Gendrikov, who were close to the disgraced Hetman Razumovs'ky, was a cause for concern. It is well known that just over two years earlier, Catherine II came to power as a result of a noble conspiracy; she understood her risks well and could not allow any grounds for the resurgence of opposition sentiments.

## 7. Compromise and Control: The Downfall of Mel'gunov

It was necessary to rapidly strengthen imperial administrative control over the Ukrainian lands. In the realities of that time, this meant introducing direct gubernatorial rule. As mentioned earlier, within the Russian high bureaucracy, there was an ongoing search for an optimal new arrangement for the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine. The conflict surrounding the actions of the New Russia governor appears to have acted as a catalyst for final decisions to be made.

On October 30, 1764, Catherine ordered her secretary to urgently draft instructions for the Little Russian General Governor, without mentioning him by name (Pis'ma, 1863, p.190). The letter addressed to Catherine II from November 4, 1764, outlining complaints against Mel'gunov, was apparently the last one signed by Razumovs'ky in his capacity as Hetman. On November 10, 1764, a whole set of documents was dated, regulating the dismissal of the Hetman, the powers of the Little Russian

Collegium, and the appointment of the new Little Russian Governor, P. Rumyantsev. The next day, November 11, the Senate considered the collective complaints forwarded by the Hetman and decided to investigate the actions of Kremenchuk sotnyk Gavriliv and Orlyans'ky sotnyk Osovets'ky. All complaints against Mel'gunov and petitions were sent to Piotr Rumyantsev, the new Little Russian Governor, with orders to investigate immediately in coordination with Mel'gunov. For any matters that could not be resolved, he was instructed to report to the Senate with his opinion (Reshennyie, sheet 44).

The reforms also affected the Sloboda regiments. On December 16, 1764, a special Senate commission reviewed Shcherbinin's report on the inefficiency of the Sloboda military-administrative system and decided to abolish the Sloboda Cossack regiments. In their place, they established the Sloboda Ukrainian Governorate, appointing Shcherbinin as the governor (Polnoe sobranie, vol. 16, pp. 1003-1007).

On January 21, 1765, the Little Russian and New Russia governors met in Moscow to resolve the contentious situation. In his report to the Senate dated January 31, Rumyantsev stated that he informed Mel'gunov of all the complaints and discontent regarding the incorporation into the New Russia Governorate. However, Mel'gunov responded that he could not reverse what had already been initiated without higher authority's sanction, as he was acting according to the monarch's decrees. Meanwhile, Rumyantsev stated that he continued to receive numerous appeals from many Little Russian officers. He expressed concern that the loss of human resources could impact tax collection and proper military service. Therefore, he intended to thoroughly investigate the matter (Reshennyie, sheet 68).

On February 2, 1765, Catherine II forwarded to the Senate a detailed report from Mel'gunov, which included an extensive preamble where Mel'gunov attempted to justify his actions with historical references and a critical overview of the current state of the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine (it was previously mentioned here). In the final sections, he proposed practical steps to resolve the tension he had caused. Along with Mel'gunov's text, Catherine II also sent Rumyantsev's report, which contained his responses to each of Mel'gunov's proposed points (Rescript, sheet 2).

The Senate commission, consisting of Ia. Shakhovsky, P. Panin, and A. Olsufiev, was tasked with quickly reviewing the issue in a confidential manner. The commission prepared its conclusion by February 10, and their report was approved on February 21. It was decided to allow only

those settlers who had lived under their landowners for less than 10 years to remain in the New Russia Governorate. However, it was ordered that "no further settlements should be accepted, and the migration of all these people should be halted until further notice." Furthermore, it was mandated that the New Russia Governorate should not expand further into the Little Russian Governorate. A separate point specified that, apart from the Catherine Province, the New Russia Governorate should only accept "foreigners of all ranks and nations from all free places for settlement, but not accept Cherkasy, Little Russians, and Russians from any other places except those coming from lands not belonging to the scepter of Her Imperial Majesty" (Rescript, sheet 12).

In response to Rumyantsev's query about whether the Little Russian and Sloboda Governorates should remain intact or be divided to form the New Russia Governorate, the senators decided to exclude only the village of Vodolaga and the landowners' peasants, who had already been removed from the tax register, from the jurisdiction of the Sloboda Governorate. No significant changes were to be made otherwise. The villages of the Hetmanate already brought under Mel'gunov's authority were to remain in the New Russia Governorate, as reversing this would undermine imperial dignity, which was deemed unacceptable. However, Mel'gunov was ordered not to expand beyond this boundary. The three governors – of New Russia, Little Russia, and Sloboda Ukraine – were instructed to meet and discuss how to regulate the free movement of residents while considering the interests of each governorate. It was also ordered that the borders between the New Russia, Sloboda Ukraine, Little Russia, and Voronezh Governorates be marked without delay (Rescript, sheets 13-18 verso; Senatskii arkhiv, p. 50).

Thus, according to this decision, the activities of New Russia Governor Mel'gunov were abruptly halted, and the results of his actions were not reversed, as the senators explained, solely "to preserve imperial dignity." On February 20, 1765, a Senate decree reassigned Mel'gunov to the Land Survey Commission, a demonstrative demotion in status. Although he was later reinstated, eventually heading the Kamer-Collegium and serving for a long time as the governor of Yaroslavl, Mel'gunov suffered a clear and public defeat as the governor of New Russia[11]. The governorship of Alexei Mel'gunov vividly highlights the limited circumstances and complex compromise-driven logic of the Russian government's administrative decisions.

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From the vantage point of St. Petersburg, the establishment of the New Russia Governorate in 1764 marked the Russian imperial government's initial endeavor to standardize the administration of the Black Sea steppe frontier lands. For the local population, it was their first encounter with systematic, all-encompassing state control. To accurately reconstruct the development of events, it is essential to adopt this dual perspective.

Designed by Mel'gunov and sanctioned by the Russian Senate, the "Plan for the Settlement of the New Russia Governorate" treated the region as uninhabited, acknowledging no population except for the Balkan settler regiments and the Ukrainian fortified line previously initiated by the Russian authority. According to the plan, the region was to be populated by foreigners and former Russian subjects who had previously fled to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In the logic of the Russian lawmakers, no other population or legal system was recognized in this territory.

These deliberations clashed with the local reality. At that time, the geopolitical situation on the Black Sea steppe frontier was highly unstable, and the financial and logistical capacities of the Russian Empire to expand its military presence were quite limited. In the views of the Russian administrative elites, a crucial condition for the success of the Russian state in this territory was the settlement of a sedentary agricultural population capable of performing military service while sustaining themselves from the land rather than relying on the state treasury. Such a population, consisting of migrants from Sloboda and Left-Bank Ukraine and Zaporozhzhia, was already partially present in the New Russia Governorate and could be readily attracted. There were no other practical sources for organizing settler colonization available to the Russian authorities at this time.

Becoming acquainted with local migration flows, as well as the reactions and expectations of the local population, the first governor of New Russia was compelled to adapt. Despite the declared principles of equalizing the legal status of the New Russia Governorate with the general Russian norms, in practice, Mel'gunov was forced to make significant concessions and essentially reproduce the main "Little Russian privileges" within the governorate under his command. This was necessary to create attractive conditions for the existing local population and potential settlers. This approach would be adopted by subsequent administrators of Southern Ukraine.

The mid-level administrators of the southern sotnias of the Hetmanate largely chose to follow Mel'gunov. Groups of peasants from the Hetmanate

and Sloboda Ukraine, faced with the threat of losing personal freedom under increasing economic pressure from major landowners, also preferred the status of state settlers in the New Russia Governorate over that of private serfs. However, the governor's efforts to transfer more people and territories from the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine to the New Russia Governorate sparked significant opposition from the Cossacks and major landowners. The latter were losing their workforce, while the former perceived the expansion of the New Russia Governorate as an assault on their traditional Cossack rights and privileges. They feared being subjected to the poll tax or conscription into the regular Russian army, despite all declarations and assurances from Mel'gunov and his associates about preserving their previous status, personal freedom, freedom of movement, and the freedom to choose whether or not to serve.

The central Russian government was deeply concerned about the public reactions to Mel'gunov's actions in creating the New Russia Governorate. Fearing a loss of control over the frontier, at the turn of 1764-1765, St. Petersburg abruptly halted the activities of the New Russia Governor and prohibited further expansion of the New Russia Governorate. Simultaneously, in the adjacent Ukrainian territories that previously held the status of privileged Cossack corporations, direct gubernatorial rule was hastily introduced – leading to the establishment of the Little Russia and Sloboda Ukraine Governorates. Ultimately, addressing the organization of governance in the Black Sea steppe frontier proved impossible without simultaneously resolving the status and administration of the Cossack Hetmanate and Sloboda regiments – contrary to the initial expectations of imperial officials.

## Endnotes

1 The Ukrainian line stretched along the territory of the Poltava and Kharkiv regiments on the border with Zaporozhzhia for a distance of about 300 km. Starting from the bank of the Dnipro (at the confluence of the Oril' River), it extended along the Oril', its tributary Berestova, and the Bereka, a tributary of the Sivers'kyi Donets'.

2 Regarding fortified lines as a kind of middle ground see Ricarda Vulpius (2020). Original concept comes from Richard White (1991).

3 The regulations of the Plan extended beyond the newly established New Russia Governorate. For example, in the instructions to the governor of the Sloboda Ukraine dated July 6, 1765 it was prescribed to follow the standards adopted in the neighboring province when distributing vacant lands (Polnoe sobranie, t. 17, p. 185).

4 On the forced compromises the Russian government made in extending "Little Russian" law to the territories of southern Ukraine, see also Boyko (2021) and Le Donne (2014).

5 Unlike the poll tax in the inner Russian governorates

6 A *sotnia* was both a military unit (company) and a territorial division within the regiment system of the Cossack Hetmanate in 17th-18th century Ukraine.

7 Here and henceforth, Mel'gunov refers to the Hetmanate and Sloboda Ukraine, as well as the lands designated for the Novorossiysk Governorate all together.

8 Sometimes this looked like the resettlement of people to a new place, sometimes it simply meant a declaration of the new legal belonging of people to the New Russia province. Those who decided to join New Russia governorate received "tickets" (*bilety*) - special documents from Mel'gunov or the commanders of the settled regiments about their new status.

9 A *sotnyk* was the commander of a sotnia, responsible for military leadership and administrative duties within the sotnia's territory.

10 Regarding the circumstances of the Pikiners' recruitment, see Miller (1889), Vyrs'kyi (2019).

11 Mel'gunov formally performed the duties of the Governor of New Russia until September 1765. In reality, since the winter of 1764-1765, and officially from September 12, 1765, these duties were actually carried out by Yakov von Brandt, who was a member of the Little Russian Collegium at that time.

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**Biographical note**

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# TRAVELING TIBET: THE CASE STUDY OF ONE FILM'S TRANSLOCATION

Kristina Tanis

**Abstract**

This paper performs a case study on the film *Secret Tibet* (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1943). The footage was filmed during the German expedition to Tibet in 1938–1939, and the first version was released on German screens in 1943. However, in 1945, the Soviet troops transported the film as part of the Reichsfilmarchiv in the USSR, made significant changes, and re-issued it as a Soviet documentary. The distributional history of *Secret Tibet* provides a fruitful platform for juxtaposing the film cultures and cultural policies of both states. Applying a comparative approach to the goals, features, and historical contexts of the film releases in both cases, it is possible to reveal German and then Soviet imagination on Tibet.

**Keywords**: translocations, Tibet, cultural transfers, Kulturfilm, USSR, Germany

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## 1. Introduction

In 1938–1939, a group of German scientists under the direction of Ernst Schäfer conducted an expedition to Tibet. These were the first Europeans who received the Tibetan government's official invitation to visit forbidden city of Lhasa. They spent in Tibet six months, visiting not only Lhasa but also Yarlung Valley, Tibet's largest cities and fortresses. As Ernesto Milá argues, "No expedition to Tibet so captured public attention with its plans

than a group of five German researchers shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War" (Milá, 1990). Despite taking place many years ago, the expedition has since become surrounded by myths and legends.

Crypto-historians and conspiracists represent the history of the expedition in the context of Himmler's interest in occultism (Trimondi, 1999). From this perspective, its mission aimed to discover links between the Aryan race and Tibetan mysticism, thereby legitimizing Nazi ideology (Caron-Belloni, 2021). However, academic discussions primarily focus on two aspects of the expedition. Some scholars approach it from political history, arguing that one of its main aims was to establish contacts with the regent of Tibet, Réting Rinpoche, and incorporate Lhasa into the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis (Андреев, 2006; Hauner, 1981). Others, in contrast, emphasize the scientific objectives of the expedition (Detlev, 2006). As German Tibetologist Isrun Engelhardt suggests, Schäfer organized the expedition with purely scientific goals but found himself drawn into the processes of big politics (Engelhardt, 2003; Engelhardt, 2007; Engelhardt, 2008).

However, what remains largely unexplored is the afterlife of the film footage shot during the journey, despite the fact it served as the basis for different films. The first version of the film, *Secret Tibet* (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1943), was released in Nazi Germany in 1943. After the Second World War, the film was transported to the Soviet Union, re-edited, and reissued as a Soviet documentary. This is the second version. Finally, the third version, based on the film footage, was created in the American occupation zone of Germany in 1950. The afterlife of the expedition's footage provides a platform for juxtaposing the versions of one film. Applying a comparative approach, this paper examines the goals, features, and historical contexts these releases. Due to the inability to access sources, in this article I analyze only two versions: the original German version and the postwar Soviet one. They highlight the particular points of convergence between German and Soviet political imagination and cinematic cultures that allowed seeing and presenting Tibet as a mute object of dissection and influence. Certainly, each version resulted from a particular political situation and cinematic cultural traditions. A common element is that the nature of the documentary footage itself allowed multiple manipulations, masking the provenance and imposing the stories on the images by voice-over. The case of *Secret Tibet* sheds some light on how displaced archival footage was re-circulated in different contexts, actualizing the differences and

similarities between cultures and political regimes and expanding the understanding of cinema's flexibility as a medium.

## 2. Historiography and structure

In a broader sense, the case of *Secret Tibet* is embedded in several overlapping historiographical fields. The history of the expedition constitutes a part of historiography dedicated to European engagement in Tibet and the issue of Western Imagination. Closely connected with the mechanisms of power, exploitation, and domination, the latest contributes to the construction of images of the Other (Said, 1978). Nevertheless, as Mary Louise Pratt has shown, European encounters with other cultures were heterogeneous and often included improvisation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Tibet was a "blank canvas" for Europeans, as it was most geographically and politically isolated space, unknown and entirely unexplored, from the Western perspective (Neuhaus, 2012). Tom Neuhaus stresses that this mixture of remoteness and exoticization of ancient civilization fascinated Europeans, while the lack of information offered a considerable degree of freedom in Tibet's representation and at the same time served as a mirror.

The film footage's afterlife in Germany and its re-use in the Soviet Union refer to the issue of seizures and war spoliations. From this point of view, the paper follows in the footsteps of such an approach as patrimonial translocations, introduced by Bénédicte Savoy (Terroni, 2016). Taking into account that terms in the research field of war pillage and confiscations encapsulate the perspective of the victors and retrospectively legitimize the seizures, Bénédicte Savoy proposed this new concept, which, on the one hand, excludes additional political implications inherent to such terms as seizure, looting, trophy, spoliation, or salvation. On the other hand, the semantic contours of the term cover the whole range of practices associated with the object of displacement (Savoy, Bodenstein, Lagatz, 2024). The concept of translocation is borrowed from genetic chemistry and refers to the process of exchange between chromosomes caused by DNA damage. As a result of breakage and chromosomal rearrangement, a cell can mutate and acquire new properties. In the same way, a cultural object is transformed and simultaneously brings with it the transformation of the societies that lost the object and the societies that gained it through displacement. The process of fracture and recovery raises the question of

individual and collective trauma. Finally, the definition of translocation also puts the concept of place at the forefront. In this particular case, these are the place of shooting, the place of film production and exhibition, the place of exile and the place of storage, the place of mutations, and the place depicted on the Soviet screens. These travels raise the question of transnational spaces, as they witness the intellectual, aesthetic, and symbolic dynamics of states, regimes, and cultures. As Benedict Savoy argues, "the articulation of these three elements: place, wounds and transformation — is crucial in terms of understanding the logic of patrimonial appropriations and their effects" (Terroni, 2016).

Relying on archival research in Russia and Germany, this paper combines a visual analysis with the study of textual archives on the fabrication of the cinematic products. In 2015, I discovered the file on the Soviet film release in the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art and published the archival document on re-editing ("Tibet". *Perepiska s Kinostudieĭ im. M. Gor'kogo o dubliazhe nemetskogo dokumental'nogo fil'ma* "Tibet". *Diktorskiĭ tekst. Obieiasnitel'naia zapiska o peredelkakh fil'ma. Nadpisi k fil'mu*, 1948; Tanis, 2018). However, the juxtaposition of the two versions of the film has not yet become the focus of an analysis. The paper has the following structure: firstly, it presents a brief introduction to the history of the expedition based on the already published studies. However, the expedition is only of interest to this study insofar as it relates to the released film. Secondly, this study focuses on the film *Secret Tibet*, screened in Germany during World War II. Analyzing the film as a part of German popular culture, I also will pay close attention to the public narratives that accompanied its release. The latest is reconstructed based on archival sources, such as advertising booklets and press clippings preserved in *Bundesarchiv*. Finally, the last part is dedicated to the Soviet re-use of the film. The analysis mostly concentrates on the Soviet modifications of the film structure, as well as the documents that instructed the film's remaking. As I noted earlier, the paper adopts a comparative approach, but at the same time, it seeks to draw out the links between German and Soviet representations of Tibet. Further research could benefit from integrating the study of archives kept in the USA: files stored in the Library of Congress contain a third version of the film created by Ernst Schäfer in the American occupation zone of Germany after the Second World War.

## 3. German expedition to Tibet, 1938–1939: a very short history

For ornithologist and Tibetologist Ernst Schäfer, the 1938–1939 expedition was his third journey to Asia but his first as the head of the group. In the early 1930s, Schäfer visited Eastern Tibet twice under the guidance of American Brooke Dolan. The success of Dolan's expeditions attracted the attention of Heinrich Himmler, who, upon learning of Schäfer's plans to organize an independent research expedition to Tibet, decided that it should take place under the auspices of the *Ahnenerbe* (Detlev, 2006; Engelhardt, 2007). The *Ahnenerbe*, Ancestral Heritage, was engaged in research on occult topics, ranging from the interpretation of runes to the search for evidence supporting the superiority of the Aryan race. To achieve these goals and legitimize the outcomes, *Ahnenerbe* sought to attract scientists and experts. According to Heinrich Himmler, who was fascinated by the ideas of Asian mysticism, Schäfer had to go to Tibet in search of confirmations of Hanns Hörbiger's World Ice Theory. As it follows from the American Intelligence Report on Schäfer's expedition, "Himmler believed that ancient emigrants from Atlantis had founded a great civilization in Central Asia, the capital of which was a city called Urbe" (Engelhardt, 2007). To find evidence of this, Himmler wanted to include Edmund Kiss, a proponent of the Hörbiger doctrine, writer, and archaeologist. However, Schäfer, focused purely on scientific goals, rejected Kiss's inclusion (Mierau, 2006). Thus, the final expedition team comprised five members: Ernst Schäfer (zoologist and ornithologist), Ernst Krause (entomologist, cameraman, and photographer), Karl Wienert (geophysicist), Edmund Geer (responsible for the technical part) and Bruno Beger (anthropologist).

In January 1938, *Ahnenerbe* refused to finance the expedition, declaring that its focus "has diverged too far from the targets of Reichsfuehrer-SS [Himmler]". However, "[Himmler] complied with Dr. Schäfer's request to be permitted to conduct negotiations himself concerning the expedition's financing and organization" (Engelhardt, 2007). As a result, neither Himmler nor *Ahnenerbe* financially sponsored the expedition, though they did provide political support[1]. This support included assistance in obtaining passports, acquiring foreign currency, and securing permits to enter Tibet through India. Schäfer was aware of his dependence on Himmler and had to make certain compromises. One such condition was that all members of the expedition had to join the SS.

This nexus resulted in a complex relationship between politics and science, which influenced both public and practical aspects of the expedition. The 1938–1939 expedition became known as the "SS-Expedition" or the "Nazi-Expedition." Initially, British authorities suspected the expedition's members of espionage, causing issues for Schäfer in obtaining entry permits for Sikkim and Tibet. However, after three attempts, Schäfer was able to secure an official invitation from the Tibetan government, and all the members arrived in Lhasa in January 1939. They spent almost six months in Tibet and established contacts with the ministers of the Kashag (the Tibetan governmental body), the regent, and many aristocratic families (Neuhaus, 2012; Engelhardt, 2007). This led to rumors suggesting that the expedition had political and military objectives, including establishing German representation in Tibet to potentially launch an attack on British troops stationed in India. Nevertheless, recent studies suggest that

> there is also nothing to confirm that Schäfer acted in any way as a political intermediary between the German Reich and Tibet. We know only of one courtesy document from the Tibetan regent to Hitler, which Schäfer brought back to Germany together with a present, with which Hitler is supposed to have been disappointed. The document gives expression, completely noncommittally, to the wish to intensify the at present friendly relations between our two capitals. (Brauen, 2000)

In all of his multiple public speeches, Schäfer emphasized the scientific focus of the expedition. "The main purpose of my third Tibet expedition — he argued. — was to give an overall biological picture of this enigmatic country in the broadest sense" (Engelhardt, 2007).

Indeed, the scientific output of the expedition encompassed the study of the region from various perspectives including botanical, geological, anthropological, zoological, and cultural points of view. As it follows from the report, presented by Schäfer on 25 July 1939 at the Himalaya Club Calcutta, they conducted photogrammetric measurements for map-making, carried out meteorological measurements, and documented exact altitudes of all significant locations, camps, mountain passes, contact zones, timberlines, and changes in fauna and flora. During the expedition, they amassed a collection of minerals, petrofacts, 400 anthropological measurements of the local population, cultural artifacts, about 2000 samples of wild flower seeds, several hundred dried and pressed flowering

plants that were assembled in herbariums, 3500 bird skins, 2000 bird eggs, and 400 mammals and other domestic animals. Additionally, more than 20,000 black and white photographs of the landscape, people, animals, and plants were taken, along with about 2000 colored still pictures and 40,000 ft. of motion pictures (*ibid.*). Although there was much discussion of the political and cultural aspects of the expedition itself, many items were forgotten or overlooked, with some only receiving attention years later. For example, the birds were initially cataloged by the Naturkundemuseum Berlin in 2010, and extra footage remains unprocessed in the Library of Congress. Nevertheless, the film's fate stands out in this context.

## 4. *Secret Tibet* (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1943): artificial "occultization" of Tibet

*Secret Tibet* was released in 1943, four years after the expedition's return to Germany. The film premiere took place on January 16, 1943, and prefaced the opening ceremony of the Sven Hedin Institute for Inner Asian Research. The foundation of this institute was the next big deal for Ernst Schäfer, as he was appointed as director. The institute was tasked with researching the materials and objects collected during the exhibition and furthering the study of the Caucasian and Asian regions, which was meant to constitute a part of *Lebensraum im Osten*. The film's release almost four years after its completion can be explained by the geopolitical context of the war years. It is worth noting that the success of the German army in the East and the countries of Hitler's coalition led to common interests in Asia. The German media during these years wrote extensively about Japan, China, India, Mongolia, and Tibet. In the spring of 1942, Himmler ordered that the Tibetan and all the Asian research should be very strongly reinforced (Detlev, 2006). As a result, *Secret Tibet* fit well into this cultural policy. Additionally, it provided an opportunity for German propaganda to present Tibetans as potential allies against Britain. Taking into account the situation in January 1943, when the Germans were suffering defeat under Stalingrad, the film suggested a positive view on the possibilities for collaboration in the East.

The film's importance in German propaganda policy is confirmed by its unique distribution history during the war. Upon release, the film received the highest distinction mark, known as *Prädikate*, as politically, artistically, and culturally valuable. The term "Prädikate" was first

introduced in Weimar Germany, where it was awarded to a few films for exceptional artistic merit, providing certain tax benefits to distributors and thereby giving the film additional advantages in distribution. In Nazi Germany, under the pretext of supposedly raising the overall artistic level of films, *Prädikate* was given to all films. Furthermore, a film that did not receive *Prädikate* could be accepted by distributors only with special permission. In other words, in the Third Reich, the rating system became a form of negative taxation. The following scale of film distinction marks was established: Instructional (1920); National education (1924); Politically and artistically especially valuable (awarded from 1933); Politically especially valuable (1933); Artistically especially valuable (1933); Politically valuable (1933); Artistically valuable (1933); Culturally valuable (1933); Valuable for youth (1938); Nationally valuable (1939); and Film of the Nation (1939) (Winkel, Welch, 2011). Based on these *Prädikate,* tax benefits were determined. As historians R. V. Winkel and D. Welch note, "The system not only produced certain financial advantages but also helped to establish the appropriate expectations and responses on the part of cinema audiences" (*ibid.,* 6).

In this context, "politically valuable" meant that the film reflected the goals of the NSDAP. This distinction mark for example, was awarded to Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. The combination of "politically and artistically especially valuable" indicated special quality and documentary value, and finally, a "culturally valuable" film was considered one produced in the context of cultural propaganda. The last status was granted only to particularly prestigious films intended also for export. As we have seen, the film received all the highest ratings, was distributed not only in Germany but also in occupied territories, and was an important part of German cultural diplomacy. For instance, in 1943, Ernst Schäfer presented it as a gift to the Bulgarian king[2].

The screening of *Secret Tibet* also emphasized its special status among other *Kulturfilms*. It was shown as a separate screening, whereas *Kulturfilms* generally preceded feature films. The *Kulturfilm* is a specifically German film genre, which appeared in the first years after the First World War. It referred to documentaries that included any component of education or instruction. In other words, it was a German version of so-called useful cinema, dedicated to different, non-aesthetic, and practical purposes (Sarkisova, 2017; Thomson, 2018). Probably, the single screening might also be explained by the film's length, as its running time was 107 minutes (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1920–1945). The promotional campaign had

a strikingly multimedia character, similar to the expedition in employing different devices. It included a range of publications in central and local newspapers, consisting mostly of a limited variety of centrally distributed texts. The film was presented in the press as "a biogenetic total show (…), which sees the cosmos as a whole" (*Richtlinien für die Propaganda für den Tibet-Expeditions-Film*, 1942). There were also several dioramas including original Tibetan artifacts to accompany the premiere. In big cities, Schäfer himself gave public talks before the premiere; in the smaller towns, local speakers were appointed. The film was presented to the public as visual evidence of "the mysterious world of Asian mysticism with its mysterious rites" (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1920–1945).

What is the structure and content of the movie? It consists of footage filmed during an expedition, accompanied by a voice-over narration. None of the actors in the movie, including the members of the expedition and the local population, utters a single word. The voice-over narration is the only source, encapsulating the main narratives and messages of the film. The sequence of the scenes follows the expedition's path to Tibet. The film starts with a scene, explaining the geographical position of Tibet in the background of graphic mapping. The voice-over highlights the state's isolationism caused not only by geographical remoteness but also Britain imperialism, and the local political and cultural traditions. Then, it discusses how the German scientists managed to reach the country.

In some scenes, the film explicitly promotes Nazi ideology. The latest was included through the depiction of the swastika. It covered a prayer carpet in a scene as a symbol of the power of the Lamaist state. However, the most famous scene included the sculls' measurements of the local population made by the anthropologist Bruno Berger. After the Second World War, Berger was the only one of the expedition members whose reputation could not be "cleaned up". In 1943, he got involved in the measurements of prisoners in Auschwitz for the notorious "Jewish skeleton collection," all the measured prisoners had been killed in the gas chambers). In the episodes, when Berger measures skulls the local population, they appear as objects, deprived of agency. This representation is supported by other film episodes, the Tibetan people did not say a single word in the film. The only way they express themselves is through dances and songs, which are also interpreted by the voice-over. This observation character of the film shots and the complementary voice-over also contributed to the ability to be reedited and used by seemingly opposite powers.

However, in general, the film shows the expedition's journey in more or less chronological order. Starting with a journey from India through the Himalayas, the documentary continues with mountain nature, animals, and unusual features of local life, mostly connected to religion: ritual processions, prayers, funerals, and exorcism. That means that despite the statements about the comprehensive and complex scientific coverage of Tibetan life, there is a shift towards cultural exotica.

The film highlights Tibet as a mystical land and the last stronghold of ancient culture. This discursive narrative is expressed at various levels, from the very film's title *Secret Tibet* to specific scenes. For example, a widely discussed scene in the German press depicts a burial ritual where human bodies are offered to be eaten by vultures, and the bones are milled for the vultures to consume. This ritual is based on the belief that these sacral birds carry the remains to the gods, and only then can reincarnation occur. The film's final scene shows the Tibetan priest performing a ritual to banish evil spirits and demons. According to cameraman Ernst Krause, the film is "Asia's magic conjuration (...). Of all the countries on earth, the closed land of Tibet is most filled with visions of mysterious gods and sinister demons" (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1938–1939).

This artificial occultization and highlighted mysticism of Tibet lead us to a paradoxical conclusion. It makes visible a certain degree of the German film industry's independence and its functioning as part of mass culture. Despite the speculative interpretation of the Nazi regime through its connection with occultism, Hitler was actually skeptical of occultism (Burleigh, 2000). According to Corinna Treitel's recent study, "the larger story of the Nazi regime and the occult movement is one of escalating hostility," and state officials "did not hesitate to oppress the occult movement brutally." And "an official decree in July 1937 dissolved Freemasonic lodges, Theosophical circles, and related groups throughout Germany. Occult action now became illegal. Then in 1941, in the wake of Hess's flight to Britain, police action against occultists rose to fever pitch" (Treitel, 2004: 211, 224). With regards to the persecution of occultism in Germany, Isrun Engelhardt also has noted, "the subject of Tibet and its religion appeared alien and irrelevant to Hitler" (Engelhardt, 2008).

From this perspective, the propagandistic purposes of the film opened to debates. Engelhardt argues that the content of the film was even not presented to Hitler as a propaganda film. As evidence, she refers to the remark made about Hitler in 1942:

> At lunch, the boss [Hitler] was told about the film about Tibet made by the SS Schäfer expedition. The boss said that if anyone tried to criticize a Tibetan priest, the whole of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church too would scream blue murder. (*ibid.*)

However, just because the film was not presented to Hitler as propagandistic does not mean it was not. Tom Neuhaus, in contrast, interpreted the film as a part of a holistic approach to the expedition promotion. The main film's aim, according to the scholar, was the depiction of "*Gesamtlandschaft*, a total landscape, it was claimed, would demonstrate how superior the filmic material was over that of previous expeditions" (Neuhaus 2012). Neuhaus also stresses the fascination with Tibetan exoticism and the romanticization of its landscape. Recalling that the Universum Film AG (UFA) studio served as one of the expedition's financial sponsors, I urge not to reduce, in the words of Eric Rentschler, the film solely to an ideological container (Rentschler, 1996) but to consider it as part of popular German, and more broadly European, culture.

The ambivalence inherent to the Third Reich cinema has already been at the center of scholarly attention (Hake, 2001; Rentschler, 1996). In identifying multidiscursivity as the basis of National Socialist film texts, Linda Schulte-Sasse highlights the borrowings of narrative paradigms and semiotic configurations from Enlightenment literature (Schulte-Sasse, 1996). Reflecting on the multi-discursive nature of German cinematic culture, which consisted of numerous continuities and asynchronies of different cultural origins, Antje Ascheid questions why was it necessary to mobilize such a wide range of cultural means in the first place. Does this mean that National Socialist rhetoric alone was not enough? (Ascheid, 2003). The answer seems to be paradoxical — the fragmentation, eclecticism, and heterochronicity of Nazi culture make visible the very impossibility of maintaining power any other way. In other words, the opportunistic tolerance of ideologically alien elements and tendencies within entertainment practices indicates a desire to maintain power at all costs. From this perspective, the artificial "occultization" of the expedition's footage followed the prevailing not only German but also Western cultural trends of fascination with Inner Asia and its exotics. Thus, UFA studio was attempting to fit it into the contours of popular culture and acted similarly to Hollywood, which sought to make exoticism and ethnic differences the source of revenue (Rony, 1996).

In the film reviews, the press portrayed the country as "the realm of gods and demons, and woe to the mortal who dares to cross their domain. Thus, only rare and inaccurate information about the magical land, which in its seclusion became a repository of ancient mystical rules, penetrated into the world" (*Geheimnis Tibet*, 1938–1939). In the film's propaganda instructions, the first item emphasized sensation, something "that European eyes could hardly see before" (*ibid.*). The film was also presented as a cinematic document, evidence reflecting the first visit of Europeans to the closed city of Lhasa. To highlight the film's actual significance, *Secret Tibet* was promoted as part of the expedition's *Beute*, a kind of trophy. This advertising metaphor was accomplished, as the film literally turned into a trophy.

## 5. *Tibet* (*Тибет*, 1949): Sovietization of the footage

In 1945, *Secret Tibet* was transported to the USSR as a part of the German State Film Archive. After the collection arrived in the Soviet Union, the Soviet authorities decided to launch some of the translocated films in cinema theaters, selecting for screening the movies of popular genres such as musicals, operettas, biopics, and comedies. From 1946 to the end of the 1950s, around 130 movies, mostly German and American, circulated in Soviet cinemas. In the history of Soviet culture, they are known as *trophy films* (Tanis, 2020).

Scholars indicate three key reasons for the distribution of trophy films in the USSR: firstly, the exploitation of these movies provided the Soviet government with a valuable source of revenue (Pozner, 2012); secondly, their screening compensated for the lack of movies in film distribution under the postwar poor local film production, so-called policy of *film famine* in the USSR (Laurent, 2000; Kapterev, 2009); thirdly, trophy films served as an instrument of Soviet propaganda, illustrating the flaws of capitalist society (Knight, 2017).

The main part of the film collection seizures took place from June 9 to July 4, 1945. A decree issued by the State Defense Committee on June 8, 1945, authorized the confiscation and transportation of "6,000 of the most valuable artistic and documentary films from the film storage in Berlin to Moscow" (*Postanovlenie GKO* № 8998, 1945). According to Iosif Manevich's report, who was responsible for confiscation, a total of 7,000 films were sent to Moscow during this period, including 3,700

feature films, 2,500 short films, and 800 newsreels (Manevich, 2006). However, the indicated quantity may vary as different sources provide different data. Archival documents from 1945 contain two summary lists showing that Colonel Alexander Kalishkin, the authorized representative of the Cinema Committee, sent two shipments to Moscow between April 1 and December 1, 1945. These shipments included 227 boxes of films and photographic paper weighing 8,863 kilograms, as well as 381 boxes of films weighing 25,606 kilograms (*Nakladnye, spetsifikatsii, kopii gruzovykh kvitantsiī, otgruzochnye vedomosti, svodnye vedomosti, opisaniia gruzov, otpravlennykh iz Berlina samoletom*, 1945–1946). The documents do not specify the exact number of films but indicate substantial volumes of collections being transported. Additionally, films were not only confiscated from the German State Film Archive but also from its surroundings, and the confiscation practices continued beyond 1945.

The translocation of film collections was part of the large processes of the equipment and technology requisitions. Some of them were made under the reparation policy of the Soviet Union. Others were made illegally with regard to international law, as they commenced before the Crimean and Potsdam conferences, the result of which was the plan for reparations adopted by the allies in March 1946 (Boldyrev, Nevskiī, Plumpe, 2019; Pozner, Tcherneva 2025). It is known that when patrimonial translocations are integrated into a new context, they both influence and enrich the cultural environment around them, while also being transformed by foreign aesthetic and ideological discourses. The Soviets' seizure of the German film industry led to a transformation of the Soviet cinematic landscape on various levels. From the perspective of institutional history, the translocation of a thousand movies placed the film storage near Moscow at the same level as the prominent film archives of the world, as well as led to the re-organization of film storage to the research institution State Film Archive Gosfilmofond. In the light of the Soviet film industry, the seized film equipment and the seizure of Agfacolor technology served as a basis for Soviet color film production. The most known of them, such as the episodes of *Ivan the Terrible* by Sergeī Eisenstein and the other Soviet films of the 1950s were filmed on the base of German Agfacolor technology. Finally, as foreign movies offered Soviet people other types of emotional interaction, as well as other models of living in, or feeling, the world, this different pattern usually is defined in memoirs of the Soviet people as a transformative point of self-orientation to the Western culture (Turovskaīa, 2015; Tanis, 2020).

*Secret Tibet*'s afterlife in the USSR demonstrates the reverse side of translocations. It presents a unique example of how a film, once in a different cultural zone, undergoes such changes that it becomes a completely new cultural product. It was the only film from the German collections that underwent such radical changes. While only individual scenes that contradicted Soviet ideology were cut from other foreign films, *Secret Tibet* was completely re-constructed from documentary footage. Due to these radical changes, this movie was totally appropriated by the Soviet culture. In particular, it lost all marks of its trophy, or even foreign, status. To the Soviet public, it was presented as a Soviet documentary. The afterlife of *Secret Tibet* in the USSR raises questions about why so much effort was put into releasing this particular film. The Soviet film collections included thousands of popular foreign films. From the economic perspective, it would have been much easier and profitable to release another musical or operetta. Further, I will attempt to show that the answers may lay in two contexts — cultural-political and purely cinematic.

Initially, the film was included in the "list of foreign films that should not be released on the Soviet screen" *(Proekty postanovleniī TSK VKP(b) i Soveta Ministrov SSSR*, 1948–1953). According to the Soviet censors' explanatory report from early 1948, "the film provides a distorted view of the mores and customs of the local population. The life of Tibetan tribes is portrayed from the standpoint of racist ethnography. All attention is paid to the demonstration of religious rituals. The fanaticism of Tibetans, their detachment from life, their powerlessness in the face of nature, and their complete submission to the lamas are insistently emphasized. The film shows various experiments by the expedition participants in Tibet, measuring the skulls and faces of the local population to establish the Aryan origin of the Tibetans. Based on the presence of swastika in folk ornaments, the authors of the film conclude that swastika appeared in Tibet many centuries ago" (*ibid.*).

However, a new text for the voice-over had been written by September 20, 1948. According to the document, it provided "a correct scientific interpretation of the material" (*Postanovleniia Politbiuro-Prezidiuma, Sekretariata TSK VKP(b)-KPSS*, 1936–1962). The consultant of the text served Sergeī Tokarev, anthropologist and professor of the Ethnographic Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The director of the re-edited version, was Vladimir Sukhobokov. In the same year, he received an honorary diploma from the Central Committee of the Komsomol for editing the Soviet blockbuster *The Young Guard*. Before the film's release,

the creators reduced it almost in half, from 2800 meters to 1500 meters. By November 1948, the dubbing was completed, and the film received a distribution license № 966/48 (n.a., n.d.). It was approved for screening from 11 November 1948 to 31 December 1951. However according to the resolution of the Central Committee, the film was launched on the screens only three months later, on March 21, 1949, under the title *Tibet* (*Materialy o sostoianii trofeĭnogo fil'mofonda*, 1947–1949). The introduction credit title presented it as a Soviet documentary created "based on foreign newsreels".

Why was the film finally issued? The new version was a component of the Soviet policy of that period. In the early 1920s, the Soviet Union sought to exert influence over Inner Asia. Tibetan students were trained at Soviet schools, and Soviet missions were sent to Tibet (Neuhaus, 2012). After the United Kingdom diplomatically recognized the USSR, Soviet interest in Tibet waned in the 1930s and early 1940s, as the situation there was not favorable to the Soviet Union (Andreev, 2006). However, the onset of a Civil War in China brought Asia to the forefront of international relations. By the spring of 1949, it became clear that the Communists and Mao Zedong, who enjoyed Soviet support, would emerge victorious from the war. Consequently, the release of a film in March, 1949 aligned with the overall cultural policy of the USSR, which was heavily influenced by international situations.

Since the late 1940s, the Soviet media renewed the interest in Tibet. This led to the republishing of works by famous Russian travelers to Tibet and Central Asia. For instance, in 1947–1948, the works of Przheval'skiĭ were republished (Przheval'skiĭ, 1947; Przheval'skiĭ, 1948; Przheval'skiĭ, 1948a). The film opened a series of movies on Inner Asia. According to the production plan for feature documentaries for 1949, the films *China* and *Przheval'skiĭ* were planned for production. As noted in the annotations to the films, *China* is "a film about the struggle of the People's Liberation Army against the reactionary Kuomintang and American imperialists, about the new life in the liberated democratic regions of China" (*Perepiska po obshchim i organizatsionnym voprosam Ministerstva kinematografii SSSR*, 1948). *Przheval'skiĭ* was planned to portray "the scientific feat of the Russian scientist-patriot, about the priority of Russian science" (*ibid.*). *Przheval'skiĭ* was conceived as a film "about the life and scientific activity of the Russian geographer-traveler N. M. Przheval'skiĭ, whose expeditions in Central Asia brought world fame to Russian geographical science" (*ibid.*).

The new version of the film implicitly promoted Soviet support of China. For instance, the opening episode reproduces the logic of the original version: the voice-over explains the geographical location of Tibet while graphics depict the state on the map. However, the Soviet version emphasizes that "formally, Tibet belongs to the Republic of China, but in reality, it is governed by an autocratic monarch who has minimal regard for the Chinese government but is obedient to the will of the British" (Tanis, 2018). Nevertheless, the political status of Tibet was ambiguous in those years; de facto, Tibet functioned as an independent state. The film reflected the official Soviet position on Tibet's status. For instance, the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1946 advocated for the same idea: "According to the Chinese constitution, Tibet is part of China (...) At present, Tibet enjoys internal independence under the nominal Chinese suzerainty and the actual influence of England" (Andreev, 2006). Yet, the political dimension is not the sole explanation for the film's release. The purely cinematic context is equally important. To focus on it, we should take a closer look at the film's structure and genre.

The film, as the original, consists of original film footage, accompanied by a voice-over narration. However, all the episodes depicting the expedition members were cut from the Soviet film. The explanatory report of the film's re-establishing explains these cuttings the following way:

> all materials showing the history of the expedition, its participants, their daily life, equipment, and so on were removed; shots of endless processions of German travelers under the fascist flag in the mountains of the Himalayas and the steppes of Tibet, their campsites, and amusements were taken out. As a consequence, the scenes savoring the 'racial' research of German scientists measuring the skulls, hands, and feet of the natives, as well as the footage depicting the behavior of Germans in Tibet among the local population, were removed. (Tanis, 2018)

By cutting out the storyline of the German expedition, Soviet censors used the remained episodes to create an impersonal documentary about Tibet. The structure of the new movie included a consistent set of scenes, depicting the geographical location of the state, vegetation, wildlife and climate, the population of Tibet and its occupation, daily life, rituals (including the famous scene of burial), and culture, religion and political regime, Lhasa, its architecture, a celebration of the New Year, a parade of carnival and modern Tibetan troops.

Along with the change in the film's structure, the film puts different accents, supporting Soviet discursive narratives. For example, in the original version, there is a scene depicting the punishment of thieves. However, in the Soviet version, the thieves are portrayed as impoverished peasants, with a voice-over suggesting that the rich can evade punishment. The film consistently highlights the poverty and hardships faced by the Tibetan people, indirectly attributing it to British influence and Lamaism, as the main causes of the country's "political and economic backwardness". This Soviet version paradoxically intertwined anti-colonial rhetoric with the colonial logic of civilizing missions. Despite the film supported the political and ideological agenda, the way of its re-edition was created by cinematic traditions. The very sequence of scenes and discursive accents refer to Sovietized versions of *Kulturfilm*.

The German genre of *Kulturfilm* appeared in the USSR in the 1920s. One of the agents of this cultural transfer was Vladimir Erofeev, a journalist and the director. Having first seen *Kulturfilms* at the UFA film studio in the 1920s, he promoted the genre in the USSR as a successful example of enlightenment and entertainment that Soviet cinema culture was striving for (Erofeev, 1926). In the Soviet Union, *Kulturfilms* formed the "cinematographic atlas" between 1926 and 1940, "a series of films showing the various, particularly little known, regions of the Soviet Union" (Sarkisova, 2017). According to Oksana Sarkisova, these documentary travelogs about the Soviet republics "shared with their Western counterparts the 'surplus pleasure' from the sights of 'exotic' cultural others" (*ibid.*). At the same time, the Sovietization of nations and small nationalities was equated with modernization and progress.

> Understood as didactic films implying the status of objective truth, *Kulturfilms* were made with the primary aim of supplying new knowledge and ordering the audience's ideas about the world". Thus "ethnographic perspective turned films into a 'useful' entertainment. (*ibid.*)

From this perspective, *Tibet* followed the canons and visual formulas of the Sovietized version of the genre. Structured as *Kulturfilms* about the Soviet republics, it fulfilled several functions. First, it served as a tool for enlightenment and learning about the world, which was an important feature of the genre. Second, under limited mobility, it provided the audience with a new spatial experience, expanding the boundaries of an imagined geography. Third, by showing the country's "backward", poverty,

and poorness on the threshold of the Chinese communist revolution, the film also provided viewers with a new temporal experience, temporally localizing the depicted on the line of imagined historical progress.

Thus, the metaphor of translocation in the Soviet context was acquiring additional connotations. The prefix *trans-* was becoming no less significant, as it made visible the very process of movement and crossing of space (through), indicates a border state (inter-), or fixes a boundary, indicating something beyond the known. All three of these dimensions came to the fore with the Soviet version of the film. Therefore, in the case of patrimonial translocations in the USSR, it is worth looking not only at the place of origin and the place of movement of objects but also at the place of non-motility and the place of the audience's imaginary journey. The metaphor of translocations in this context was literally realized: the films helped the viewers to make an imaginary journey and move to the other side of the border (*trans- location*), to look at this territory with a Soviet gaze and, disappointed, to return.

## 6. Conclusions

The production and afterlife of *Secret Tibet* demonstrate that not just political but also cultural factors play a decisive role in shaping a film's final form. The original German version constructed Tibet as a mystical, exotic land steeped in occult symbolism, aligning with broader Western fascinations with Inner Asia. In this light, the film functioned within the commercial and cultural logic of mass entertainment, capitalizing on exoticism to appeal to audiences. The film's emphasis on Tibet's "otherness" thus reflects not just Nazi ideology but also a wider European cultural trend that commodified exoticism for mass consumption. Once in Soviet culture, the film framed Tibet as a space in need of liberation, both from British influence and its own feudal structures. This version juxtaposed Tibet's poverty and Lamaist traditions with implicit promises of modernization under communism. Yet, despite its political messages, the Soviet version also catered to audience curiosity about distant lands, offering an imaginary journey that reinforced the USSR's self-image as a progressive force. The result of the film's cultural transfer was a new hybrid product, straddling the line between entertainment and political education, foreign cinematic product and Soviet useful cinema, Western ideological subversion and the Soviet tool for discrediting opponents. The irony lies

in the fact that the final product emerged from a doubling of German cultural transfers into Soviet cinematic culture. In the 1920s, the German concept of *Kulturfilm* showed Soviet filmmakers how a didactic function could be transformed into a distinct cinematic genre. By the 1940s, Soviet cinematic culture put this knowledge into practice, repurposing German entertainment cinema into its own version of the *Kulturfilm*.

## Endnotes

1 Official sponsors were UFA Film Studio, DFG, the Public Relations and Advertising Council of German Business (Werberat der deutschen Wirtschaft), the Foreign Office, Eher Verlag, and other private donors including Brooke Dolan.

2 We discovered this fact together with Oksana Maistat, doing research in the Bundesarchiv in 2017.

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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 Pleșu (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.

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 that 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.

**Academic programs organized and coordinated by NEC in the academic year 2023-2024:**

- ***NEC Fellowships (since 1994)***
  Each year, the NEC Fellowships are open to both Romanian and international outstanding young scholars in the humanities and social sciences.

- ***Ştefan Odobleja Fellowships (since 2008)***
  The fellowships awarded in this program are supported by the National Council of Scientific Research and are part of the core ***NEC Fellowships*** program. They target young Romanian researchers.
  Project number PN-III-P1-1.1-BSO-2016-0003, within PNCDI III

- ***The Gerda Henkel Fellowships (since 2017)***
  The 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 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 will have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

- ***The Spiru Haret Fellowships (since 2017)***
  The *Spiru Haret* Fellowships target young Romanian researchers/academics in the humanities and social sciences whose projects address questions relating to migration, displacement, diaspora. Candidates are expected to focus on Romanian cases seen in a larger historical, geographical and political context. The Program is financed through a grant from UEFISCDI (The Romanian Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding).
  Project number PN-III-P1-1.1-BSH-3-2021-0009, within PNCDI III

- ***Porticus N+N Fellowships (since 2020)***
  The 'Nations and Nationalisms' (N+N) Program, developed with financial support from the Porticus Foundation, aims to approach one of the main challenges faced by societies, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe: a growing tension between nationalizing and globalizing forces in a world dominated by migration, entanglement, digitization and automation. The *Porticus N+N* Fellowships are open to international candidates working in all fields of the humanities and social sciences with an interest in the study of nations, varieties of nationalism and/or populism, and the effects of globalization on national identities.

- ***AMEROPA Fellowships (since 2020)***
  Organized with financial support from Ameropa and its subsidiaries in Romania, and with academic support from the Centre for Government and Culture at the University of St. Gallen, this program aims to investigate the conditions and prerequisites for democratic stability and economic prosperity in Romania and the neighboring region. The *Ameropa* Fellowship Program is open to early career Romanian researchers in history, anthropology, political science, economics or sociology. Each year, an annual workshop will be organized in the framework of the *Ameropa* Program.

- ***DigiHum Fellowship Program (since 2021)***
  The *Relevance of the Humanities in the Digital Age* (DigiHum) Fellowship Program is proposed jointly by the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia and the New Europe College Bucharest, and is developed with the financial support of the Porticus Foundation. The program is intended to accommodate a broadest range of themes pertaining to Humanities and Social Science, provided that they link up to contemporary debates about major challenges to the human condition stemming from the technological advances and 'digital modernity'. The program addresses international scholars.

- ***GCE St. Gallen (since 2022)***
  The *GCE St. Gallen* Fellowship Program, supported by the University of St. Gallen's Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE), targets Ukrainian and Russian scholars in the humanities and social sciences whose academic careers have been affected by the current war in Ukraine

- ***TANDEM, Author with Translator – Translator with Author (since 2022)***
  *TANDEM, Author with Translator – Translator with Author* is a program exclusively dedicated to literati, writers and translators, with the aim to promote authors from the Black Sea Region by encouraging the translation of their work into the local languages. The program is supported by S. Fischer Stiftung, Germany.

- ***Mattei Dogan (since 2023)***
  The fellowship program targets early career scholars (within five years of receiving their doctorate) from Central and East European (CEE) and Black Sea states (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Belarus, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Georgia, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), affiliated with an academic institution in these countries at the time of application. The program is open to all academic disciplines in the social sciences; candidates are expected to propose projects in comparative social science. The selected post-doctoral researchers have the opportunity to work on their projects for one or two semesters in Bucharest.

- ***Sustaining Ukrainian Scholarship (SUS-VUIAS) (since 2023)***
  The fellowship program, run jointly by the New Europe College (Bucharest) and the Centre for Advanced Study (Sofia), aims to support scholarship in the regions affected by Russia's war against Ukraine. It targets qualified researchers (post-doctoral level) in the humanities and the social sciences, including law and economics, who wish to work on a project of their own choosing. Selected applicants are offered the opportunity to spend an extended period (ideally one or two semesters) as Fellows, residents in either Bucharest or Sofia, where they enjoy all the benefits associated with a fellowship (stipend, accommodation, academic and administrative assistance, integration into international academic networks).

- ***IWM for Ukrainian Scholars (2023-25)***
  After Russia's brutal full-scale invasion in Ukraine, the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna made special funds available to New Europe College to invite further Ukrainian researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

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