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Editorial Foreword

Silviu Miloiu
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The inaugural issue of the fourteenth edition of the *Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* is devoted to perceptions, identity, and alterity, three visible stars in the modern sky. To paraphrase Zygmunt Bauman, who spoke of the unholy trinity of modernity, i.e., uncertainty, unpredictability, and insecurity, we may term our unholy trinity sinful when it is exploited to deprive others of their identity or impose one's dominance over another.

Referencing the British sociologist Gerard Delanty's concept of "boundary and identities of exclusion," the first research article examines the "hard borders" in the Baltic Sea Region between 1917 and 1922, concluding that in every instance in which war and violence were used in the Baltic Sea Region to award borders to one state over another or to settle accounts, the arrangements were not permanent and a cycle of warfare with devastating effects on local populations ensued.

Andreea Dahlquist also examines the scenario of geographically distant states, which can occasionally lead to the same outcomes. In such circumstances, the number of cultural hubs, mass media, and social mediators across societies is limited, and mutual understanding is incomplete and imbalanced. Analyzing Romanian-Swedish ties during the Second World War, the author also draws attention to the discrepancy between the nearly entirely favorable attitude of Romanians in Sweden and the more circumspect attitude of Swedish society toward Romania.

Costel Coroban's research on the Saga of the People of Laxárdalr through the lenses of historical and literary criticism in order to provide an account of how Norwegian kings or queens were

portrayed demonstrates conclusively that perception and representation are social phenomena and play a significant role in shaping the minds of historical figures and their decisions and actions. As in many other similar texts, he finds that the author of the tale either portrays the Norwegian monarchy in an extraordinarily favourable or highly terrible light.

According to Valerii Lastovskyi of the Kyiv National University of Culture and Education, the central question in Polish historiography is why the Rzeczpospolita eventually collapsed. The author examines Polish historical literature in order to explain how the function of the Orthodox Church has been viewed in this regard for the past half millennium and what has changed through time. In addition, Polish historians investigated the inner workings of Ukrainian churches and religious activities.

Finally, Mihaela Mehedinţi highlights the simultaneity and interdependence of identity and alterity formation among modern Romanians, demonstrating this vantage point with the perception of the British and the Americans in Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldova. Her conclusions warrant citation and attention from a theoretical and methodological standpoint:

„Despite the cultural and/or geographical distance between Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia, on the one hand, and Great Britain and the United States of America, on the other hand, towards the end of the 19th century average Romanians were able to interwove information gathered from a wide range of sources and to transform it into realistic depictions of these two countries and their inhabitants. This process of defining the Other combined diachronic and synchronous tendencies, fiction and facts, stereotypes and truth."

The editors hope that the journal's ideas, concepts, and case studies will inspire other academics and readers to reflect once more on perceptions, identity, and difference, and to produce new research for submission to the Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies.

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The „hard" borders in the Baltic Sea Region, 1917-1922

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Abstract

The British sociologist Gerard Delanty's conception of "boundary and identities of exclusion" in European history shall be remembered when approaching "hard borders." This concept takes into account the "cultural dynamics of self-identification through exclusion" and is germane when considering the interwar interactions between the countries of the Baltic area and Russia. The works of Reece Jones and Alec Murphy on "the hardening of borders" and "the fetishization of territory" as national traits are equally pertinent to the perception of frontiers during the duration of the 20th century, including the years 1917 to 1922. In every occasion in which war and violence (ultimatums, threats of force) were employed in the Baltic Sea Region to award borders in favor of one state or another or to settle accounts, the arrangements were not permanent and a cycle of warfare with terrible effects on local people followed. The combination of universalist ideologies (such as Communism) with imperial goals frequently resulted in both domestic and international conflicts. Civil unrest (sisällissota) *and clashes with and between foreign troops (Russian and German) marked Finland's journey to independence. Comparable conditions existed in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In each case, the upshot was not just an obsession with boundaries, but also an increase in otherness and loss of life.*

Rezumat

Concepția sociologului britanic Gerard Delanty despre „granițele și identitățile excluderii" în istoria europeană trebuie readusă în memorie atunci când este abordată problematica „frontierelor dure (hard)". Acest concept ia în considerare „dinamica culturală a autoidentificării prin excludere" și este relevant atunci când se analizează interacțiunile interbelice dintre țările din zona baltică și Rusia. Lucrările lui Reece Jones și Alec Murphy despre „întărirea granițelor" și „fetișizarea teritoriului" ca trăsături naționale sunt la fel de pertinente pentru percepția frontierelor pe aproape întreaga durată a secolului al XX-lea, inclusiv în anii 1917-1922. În fiecare caz în care războiul și violența (ultimatumuri, amenințări cu forța) au fost folosite în Regiunea Mării Baltice pentru a atribui granițe în favoarea unui stat sau a altuia sau pentru a regla conturile dintre acestea, aranjamentele nu au fost permanente și a urmat un ciclu vicios cu efecte teribile asupra civililor. Combinația dintre ideologiile universaliste și obiectivele imperiale a dus frecvent la conflicte atât interne, cât și internaționale. Tulburările civile (sisällissota) *și ciocnirile cu și între trupele străine (ruse și germane) au marcat drumul Finlandei către independență. Condiții comparabile au existat în Estonia, Letonia și Lituania. În fiecare caz, rezultatul nu a fost doar o obsesie pentru granițe, ci și o creștere a alterității și pierderi de vieți omenești.*

Keywords: Baltic Sea Region, 20th century, hard borders, hardening of borders, border and identities of exclusion, fetishization of territory
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Introduction

In the previous issue of the *Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, I debated the "soft" border approaches in the Baltic Sea Region between the breakup of the Swedish-Norwegian union and the upheavals of the Second World War, a time when many countries in this region lost their independence or large portions of their territories.[1] I looked into several occasions in which tensions erupted in the area but were resolved without resorting to violence and offered an explanation as to why this occurred in each of these situations. In this article I will examine the international crises that were handled by the use of threats and armed force. The cases that follow will also indicate that the likelihood of a repetition of a crisis scenario increases when ideological opposition or violent identity disputes are added to the territorial kernel that causes the conflict between nations. Staying in the Baltic Sea Region, I will first explore the conflicts which opposed Finland and the Baltic states to Soviet Russia in 1918-1920. Then, I will examine the interwar Vilnius crisis, which combined the characteristics of a territorial and an identity confrontation.

When dealing with „hard borders", we must not overlook the concept of "border and identities of exclusion" in European history that was proposed by the British sociologist Gerard Delanty. This notion takes into consideration the "cultural dynamics of self-identification through exclusion," and it is relevant when investigating the relationships between the nations of the Baltic region and Russia during the interwar period.[2] „How do we locate and conceptualize territory and borders in a world characterized by the conflicting, yet coexisting, phenomena of globalization, populist-nationalist movements, and de/re-territorialization?" is the central

[1] Silviu Miloiu, „The „soft" borders in the Baltic Sea Region, 1905-1940," *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies* 13, issue 2 (2021): 85-120.

[2] Gerard Delanty, " The Frontier and Identities of Exclusion in European History , " *History of European Ideas* , 22, no. 2 (1996): 93, 95-96.

question posed in a recent article co-authored by a number of distinguished specialists in border studies. The article alludes to Reece Jones and Alec Murphy's studies on "the hardening of borders" and "the fetishization of territory" as national characteristics.[3] In point of fact, „the hardening of borders" has been a more widespread phenomena in the Baltic Sea Region at least since the late 1880s, when the naval competition between Russia and Germany first got underway.[4] There were, however, deviations in this regard as a result of international and domestic circumstances.[5] This damaged - and continues to do so in light of the Russian attack in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 and Russia-Belarusian threats on the Baltic nations - the ideal of the cross-border mobility of goods, people, and ideas, which, twenty years ago, was still considered to be achievable.[6] Thus, "the hardening of borders" and "the fetishization of territory" should be recalled as crucial concepts to comprehending the situation in the Baltic Sea Area prior, during, and after the First World War.

After the First World War, when the region self-perceived itself as a European border zone, each newly established nation in the Baltic region attempted to construct the most impenetrable barrier possible between themselves and Russia (the Soviet Union). In the democratic quarters of Europe in the 1920s and later in the right-leaning circles, some elite groups

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[3] Anssi Paasi, Md Azmeary Ferdoush, Reece Jones, Alexander B. Murphy, John Agnew, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, Juliet J. Fall, Giada Peterle, „Locating the territoriality of territory in border studies," *Political Geography* 95 (2022).

[4] Michael Epkenhans, „1870–1914: A military empire turns to the sea," in *The Kaiser: New Research on Wilhelm II's Role in Imperial Germany*, eds. A. Mombauer & W. Deist, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 16-26; Idem, „Wilhelm II and 'his' navy, 1888–1918," 12-36.

[5] Karsten Brüggemann mentions, for example, the views of Russian nationals in the Baltic region, such as Anton S. Budilovich and Ivan Vysotskii, who, in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution, advocated for a hardening of Russian borders in the eastern Baltic and the need to tighten the grip in these areas by radical means that included colonization, Karsten Brüggemann „Defending the Empire in the Baltic Provinces: Russian Nationalist Visions in the Aftermath of the First Russian Revolution," in *The Tsar, the Empire, and the Nation. Dilemmas of Nationalization in Russia's Western Borderlands, 1905-1915*, eds. Darius Staliūnas, Yoko Aoshima, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022), 327–356.

[6] Marta Grzechnik, "Making Use of the Past: The Role of Historians in Baltic Sea Region Building", *Journal of Baltic Studies* 43, no. 3 (2012): 4.

attributed positive or even heroic connotations to belonging to a border region, sometimes emphasizing the characteristics of an outpost of European culture and civilization and other times emphasizing the position of a cordon sanitaire preventing the export of revolution.[7]

1. Finland: statehood, internal strife and the hardening of borders

Part of the Russian Empire since the 18th century and dominated by foreign elites (Germans in the case of Latvia and Estonia and Polish in the case of Lithuania), the three Baltic states declared independence from Russia in 1918 in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Civil War, the new concepts of self-determination heralded by Wilson and Lenin, and the emergence of their national consciousness in the second half of the 19th century. Finland had been the only province in Russia to enjoy real autonomy, and its separation from it on December 6, 1917, would be based on the already functioning institutions of the Grand Duchy. As a consequence, I will first analyze the situation in Finland, which is unique in terms of both its history and its institutions, before moving on to the other Baltic states.

Finland's independence must be viewed in the context of both the chaos in the Russian Empire and the schism between right-wing and left-wing ideology that almost cut Finnish society in half. When the Finnish Parliament (Eduskunta) gathered on December 6, 1917 to discuss the proclamation of Finland's independence, it had both the government's and the Social Democrats' pronouncements before them. The first was ultimately accepted by a vote count of 100 to 88.[8]

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[7]See also Iver B Neumann, "The Geopolitics of Delineating Russia and Europe." The Creation of the `Other 'in European and Russian Tradition", in *Is Russia a European power? The Position of Russia in a new Europe*, eds. Tomi Casier, Katlijn Malfliet (Leuven University Press, Leuven, 1998), 34-35; Kalervo Hovi, *Alliance De Revers: Stabilization of France's Alliance Policies in East Central Europe 1919-1921* (Turku: Turun Yliopiston julkaisuja, 1984); Kalervo Hovi, *Cordon sanitaire or barrière de l'est? : the emergence of the New French Eastern European alliance policy, 1917-1919* (Turku: Turun Yliopiston julkaisuja, 1975).

[8] Osmo Jussila, Seppo Hentilä and Jukka Nevakivi, *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State. A Political History of Finland since 1809* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), 103.

Since then, the Senate started working to secure international recognition for the country's new independent status. The governments to whom it had addressed, however, conditioned this decision on Russia's approval of Finland's independence. In this respect, the Nordic countries and Germany specifically asked that the Council of People's Commissars be approached. The Senate, despite its mistrust, resolved to send the head of the bourgeois group, Pehr Evind Svinhufvud (1861-1944), to Lenin to request the acknowledgment of Finnish state independence. Surprisingly, these efforts were successful, with the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party recognizing the independence of the new state on December 27. Willing to show the Soviet government's dedication to the principles of national self-determination, which it had formally declared soon after its installation, Lenin authorized the recognition of his new state as early as December 31, 1917. The Council of People's Commissars, as well as Commissioners Leon Trotsky or Joseph Stalin acknowledged Finnish independence "in full agreement with the principle of national self-determination." The practical steps arising from Finland's independence from Russia were to be dealt with by a special committee comprised of members from both parties.[9] The second document of recognition was dated January 5, 1918 (December 23rd, 1917, in the Julian calendar). It was signed by its chairman, J. Sverdlov, and validated the decision made by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies the day before. Stalin, the People's Commissar for Nationalities, was incensed when he told the Central Executive Committee that, due to the inactivity of the Social Democrats, Soviet Russia was forced to offer recognition of independence to "bourgeois parties." In the Soviet socialist ideology, accepting Finland's independence

[9] „In reply to the request of the Finnish government concerning the recognition of the independence of the Finnish republic, the Soviet of People's Commissars, in full agreement with the principle of national self-determination, has decided to present the Executive Central Committee with the proposal : (a) to recognise the political independence of the Finnish republic. (b) to organise, in agreement with the Finnish government, a special commission of representatives of both parties to deal with the practical measures necessitated by the separation of Finland from Russia", in D. G. Kirby, *Finland and Russia: 1808-1920-from Autonomy to Independence a Selection of Documents* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1976), 210-212.

had anti-revolutionary overtones.[10] As we will see, however, freedom of self-determination for Lenin meant that small nations would eventually voluntarily join the Russian Socialist Federation. Thus, Lenin expected the Finns would submit this application among the earliest.[11]

Despite the Diet's decision on January 8, 1918, to proclaim Finland neutral, the presence of Russian troops in Finland demonstrated that the country's future rested on both Russia's decisions and the ultimate fate of World War I.[12] In January 1918, around 40,000 Russian troops had remained in Finland. Midway through January 1918, the Bolshevik government informed the head of the military section of the Russian Regional Committee in Finland that this forum should continue to serve as the governing body for the Russians in Finland. As a consequence of Russian efforts to postpone its work, the Russian-Finnish Joint Committee tasked with addressing practical issues emerging from the split of the two nations was unable to commence its duties.[13]

In 1918, the Social Democrats alternated between intra- and extra-parliamentary methods of political struggle. Specifically, the dissolution of the Diet, which the Social Democrats deemed illegal and which was supported by bourgeois parties, radicalized the Social Democratic movement, which shifted its emphasis from the legalist to the revolutionary strife based on class consciousness.[14] Finally, by the end of January 1918, a deadly civil war between the right and the left broke out, claiming around 30,000 lives, including approximately 25,000 Social Democrats.[15] The Senate, the White Army of General Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, the young

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[10] Jukka Pastela, *Finnish communism under Soviet totalitarianism. Oppositions within the Finnish Communist Party in Soviet Russia 1918-1935* (Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2003), 62.

[11] „The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a small part of the general-democratic (now general-socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole: if so, it must be rejected", Marcel Liebman, *Leninism under Lenin* (London: Merlin Press, 1975), 271-272.

[12] Juhani Paasivirta, *Finland and Europe. The early years of independence, 1917-1939* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallainen Seura, Studia Historica, 1988), 131.

[13] Jason Edward Lavery, *The History of Finland* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2006), 86.

[14] Marvin Rintala, " The Problem of Generations in Finnish Communism," *American Slavic and East European Review* 17, No. 2 (Apr., 1958): 193.

[15] Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, 111-112.

Finnish volunteers (*jägers*) trained in Germany, and the German Ostsee Division of Brigadier General Gustav Adolf Joachim Joachim Rüdiger Graf von der Goltz led the right to victory in this war[16], while the left fought under the leadership of the Delegation of People's Commissars (*Suomen kansanvaltuuskunta*) and was supported by a portion of the Russian soldiers who were on the territory of Finland.[17]

During the Finnish Civil War (*Suomen sisällissota*), both sides concluded accords with surrounding great powers. The Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic and Soviet Russia reached a treaty on March 1, 1918, wherein Finland relinquished part of the Karelian Isthmus to Russia and guaranteed Russian connections with Sweden on its territory.[18] The pact was heralded by Bolshevik officials as the first of its kind to be ratified by two socialist republics, although discussions for its completion were not as simple as official speeches and press releases implied. Citizenship and the possession over the northern area named Petsamo (Pechenga), which allowed Finland access to the Arctic Ocean, were the two most obvious difficulties. In the end, the Finns decided to establish minimal requirements for awarding Finnish citizenship to Russians, while Russia returned Petsamo to Finland. Lenin expressed surprise that a revolutionary government displayed such bourgeois sensibilities.[19]

In response, the Finnish delegation in Berlin signed three agreements with Germany: a treaty, a commerce and marine pact, and a secret guarantee that Finland would compensate Germany for any military assistance-related expenditures. The March 7 pact prohibited Finland from granting advantages to other parties without prior consultation with Germany.[20] The commerce and navigation agreement stipulated that Finland would provide preferential commercial treatment for Germany. An exchange of diplomatic

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[16] Holger H. Herwig, "German Policy in the Eastern Baltic Sea in 1918: Expansion or Anti-Bolshevik Crusade?", *Slavic Review* 32, No. 2 (Jun., 1973): 341-343.

[17] Sirkka Arosalo. „Social Conditions for Political Violence: Red and White Terror in the Finnish Civil War of 1918", *Journal of Peace Research* 35, No. 2 (Mar., 1998): 147-166

[18] Paasivirta, 143.

[19] Pastela, 66-67.

[20]The content of the treatise in Kirby, document 139, 235-236.

notes was to facilitate the reimbursement of expenses. Finland was obligated to provide Germany, at its request, the possibility of establishing naval bases wherever in Finland, transforming it into a German military stronghold.[21] These documents were accepted by Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, the political leader of the Whites.[22] With the support of Germany, by article 6 of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, signed on March 3, 1918, Russia pledged to cease its agitation and propaganda directed against the Finnish government and public institutions. The Russian forces were to withdraw immediately from Finland and its territory.[23] Due to ice, only the Russian Baltic fleet was stuck in Helsinki.[24]

At the conclusion of the Civil War, the predominant view among bourgeois groups in Finland was that Germany would emerge triumphant in the global conflict, with the Finnish Whites eager to gain the confidence and sympathy of the continent's future rulers. Regent Svinhufvud initiated preparations for a military alliance with General von der Goltz. The Senate then requested German assistance in „crafting" the Finnish army. Approximately one hundred German officers participated in the formation of the Finnish military. Initially, a German commander, Colonel von Redern, and a Finnish officer, Colonel N.G. Procopé, shared leadership of the new army. In August, Redern took complete command of the force.[25] In addition, the nomination of a German prince to the office of King of Finland was proposed. One of the advantages of a monarch's position as an outsider was the capacity to serve as a mediator between opposing political groups, which added to the image that he was unbiased.[26] Initial plans considered Oscar, the son of the Kaiser. However, Wilhelm II's advisors believed that the

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[21] United States, *Proceedings of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference. The Peace Negotiations between Russia and the Central Powers. 21 November, 1917-3 March, 1918* (Washington: United States. Department of State, 1918), 27-41.

[22] Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, 117.

[23] John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Forgotten Peace, Brest-Litovsk, March 1918* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 271, 406-407.

[24] Tony Griffiths, *Scandinavia* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 1993), 137.

[25] Paasivirta, 153.

[26] Jason Lavery, " Finland 1917-1919: Three Conflicts, One Country." *Scandinavian Review* 94, No. 3 (Spring 2007): 13.

situation in Finland was too unstable to undertake such a step. Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse (who was given the name Väinö I) was requested to take the throne of Finland at the end of August 1918. The prince was chosen king of Finland on October 9, ironically the same day Germany initiated armistice negotiations with the Entente.[27] Soon, he became a liability for Finnish foreign policy. Prince Friedrich Karl understood Finland's sensitive position on December 14 and announced his resignation with dignity and discretion. Two days after his resignation, German forces departed Helsinki.[28]

In August 1918, Finland and Soviet Russia commenced peace negotiations in Berlin to discuss East Karelia and the Petsamo area. East Karelia had a population of 200,000 in 1897, of whom 60 percent were Karelians and 40 percent were Russians. Karelia was of symbolic and cultural significance to the Finns, but its idiosyncrasies made its incorporation into Finland challenging. According to Anatole Mazour, the most significant obstacle was the schism between Russian and Swedish influence. This province had been under the control of Russia for around eight centuries. In addition, Karelia was Orthodox, while Finland was Lutheran. Since 1809, West Karelia had been acquired by Finland, while East Karelia had remained a part of Russia.[29] Some Karelian groups resolved to separate from Russia on July 13, 1917, with the support of Finnish nationalists, while the Uhtua National Assembly chose to merge with Finland on March 17, 1918, an internationally unrecognized vote.[30] Three weeks of discussions resulted in a failure. A Finnish border battalion crossed the frontier into Russia in East Karelia at the end of August and arrived at Repola, whose inhabitants had opted to join Finland. A volunteer mission from northern Finland was organized to take over Petsamo in early April.

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[27] *Helsingin Sanomat* , special issue, http://www2.hs.fi/extrat/digilehti/kuukausiliite/arkisto/2002/08 (accessed 28.10.2010).

[28] Jussila, Hentilä, and Nevakivi, 124-125.

[29] Anatole Mazour, *Finland between East and West,* D. (Princeton, New Jersey, Toronto, London, New York: Van Nostrand Company, 1956), 62-63.

[30] Thorsten Kalijarvi, "The Question of East Karelia," *The American Journal of International Law* 18, No. 1 (Jan., 1924): 94.

However, upon encountering British forces in Murmansk, the Finns chose to withdraw. Finland had sent similar expeditions to Russian Karelia in the following months as well.[31]

The wartime defeat of Germany had a dramatic effect on the Finnish political landscape. Professor Lauri Ingman (1868-1934) formed a new pro-coalition liberal administration, and Regent Svinhufvud resigned and was replaced by General Mannerheim on December 12. The democratic triumph in the March 1919 elections convinced countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States to recognize Finland internationally. Despite the electoral setback of pro-German political parties, Finland was still awaiting approval from the European Great Powers to act militarily in Russia and conquer Russian Karelia. In April 1919, a 1,000-member Finnish volunteer army reached East Karelia at Aunus (Olonets). They arrived to the Syvävi River.[32] Mannerheim considered the liberation of Estonia necessary because the territory of Estonia, once in the hands of anti-Soviet forces, facilitated an assault on Petrograd, a policy that persisted with varying degrees of vigor throughout 1919.[33]

In the spring of 1919, Nikolai Yudenich, one of the leaders of the White Russians, settled in Helsinki to recruit Russian officers for his army. He sought to convince the Finnish government to use the 100,000 soldiers Finnish force to attack Petrograd. Yudenich even assured Mannerheim in June that Russia would be willing to acknowledge Finland's independence, grant the right of self-determination to East Karelia, and provide the region with cultural autonomy. In addition, the Yudenich promised Mannerheim that he would transfer command of the campaign to seize the old Russian imperial capital to the Finnish general. The regent of Finland had the opportunity to play a significant historical card. The majority of the new Eduskunta backed the annexation of East Karelia, while solely extreme nationalists supported the assault on Petrograd. The opposition believed

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Kalervo Hovi, *Interessenspharen Im Baltikum: Finnland Im Rahmen Der Ostpolitik Polens, 1919-1922* (Helsinki: SHS, 1984), 40-43.

[33] Heino Arumäe, *Eesti ja Soome suhted 1920-1925: dokumentide kogumik* (Tallinn: Eesti Riigiarhiiv, 1997), 12-70.

that Mannerheim would delay approval of the newly approved constitution, disband Eduskunta, and call new elections. In the meanwhile, the Finns would expel the Russians from Saint Petersburg. This was the coup plot planned by the so-called Activists in early July. Mannerheim endorsed the plan, but made it plain that he required the support of the Western countries prior to an invasion of St. Petersburg. The Finnish conservatives opposed the agreement, and Britain and France's assurances remained ambiguous. In addition, Alexander Kolchak, the supreme ruler of Russia, rejected the arrangements because he would not tolerate a partitioned Russia. Therefore, on July 17, 1919, Mannerheim approved the Constitution.[34]

At the moment, realistically, the non-socialist coalition headed by Rafael Erich of the National Coalition Party, which came to power in March 1920, saw the conclusion of peace with Russia as imperative. In June, peace negotiations with the Soviets started in Tartu. The Finnish delegation was led by Juho Kusti Paasikivi (1870-1956) and included delegates from each parliamentary party. Soviet Russian delegation was headed by Jaan Antonovich Bērziņš.[35] Finland made extensive territorial claims, demanding a boundary from Lake Ladoga to the White Sea through Lake Onega. This meant that East Karelia, Petsamo, and the Kola Peninsula would become part of Finland. As a concession, only the right to self-determination was required for East Karelia. The Finns looked in vain for assistance from the Western Powers and Poland in their endeavors. All of their requests were denied by the Russians. The Soviet delegation argued that the Karelian people had already been given sovereignty in the Karelian Workers' Commune, which was founded on June 8 under the leadership of Finnish communist Edvard Gylling (1881-1938).[36] On the Petsamo area and numerous islands in the Gulf of Finland, both of which were vital to the Russian defense of Petrograd, it

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[34] Laura Engelstein, *Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War, 1914-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 663; Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, 130-131.

[35] The first meeting of the negotiators, in which they expressed their views, took place on June 12, 1920, see Kirby, document 151, 253-255.

[36]This was exactly the day when the Finnish delegation had arrived in Tartu, Kalevi Holsti *The Origins of the Finnish foreign policy, 1918-1922. Rudolf Hoslti's role in politics* (Microfilm, Ann Arbor University Microfilms International, Stanford University, 1961), 233.

was almost impossible to strike an agreement. On August 12, an armistice agreement based on the status quo ante was signed.[37] President Kaarlo Juho Ståhlberg (1865-1952) opposed concessions to the Russians, although Paasikivi was ready to bargain. In July, the negotiations halted, but by August, both parties were eager to make compromises. Secret negotiations between the Social Democrat Väinö Tanner and the Soviet delegation's leadership were crucial to achieving a compromise settlement. On October 14, 1920, the peace treaty was signed in Tartu, Estonia.[38]

This treaty reaffirmed Finland's independence and provided it with Petsamo and an Arctic Ocean corridor.[39] Nonetheless, Helsinki was required to surrender the Repola and Porajarvi districts it had seized the year before (Article 10 provided for the withdrawal of Finnish troops within 45 days). On the other hand, Soviet Russia promised amnesty to the residents of these territories. They had one month to leave Russian territory, and those who remained were given certain rights and liberties (art. 11). Instead, Russia consented to Finland's acquisition of Petsamo. In addition, the Finnish government established the boundary barely 30 kilometers from Petrograd and Kronstadt - a provision that would cost Helsinki dearly in the future.[40] Although the Finns demolished some of the fortifications they had constructed in the area, this circumstance fueled a persistent (or at least potential) state of hostility with Russia. Moscow regarded this border as a danger to its security interests. The process, which was marked by unprecedented ideological and security tensions, led to the "hardening of borders" and to "border and identities of exclusion" largely known as *cordon sanitaire*.

The Social Democratic Party and the Progress Party, as well as individual members of the National Coalition Party and the Agrarian Party, supported the Tartu treaty in parliament. However, the far right opposed it.

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[37] Ibid., 246.

[38] The text of the treatise in Kirby, document 152, 256.

[39] Ståhlberg considered obtaining the Petsamo region to be of the utmost importance and had been willing to make concessions in Karelia, see Paasivirta, 150.

[40] Väinö Tanner, *Tarton rauha, sen syntyvaiheet ja-vaikeudet* (Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi, 1949).

The pact would be seen by the nationalist right as a sign of treachery against the legacy of 1918.[41] A former Repola police chief committed suicide after being ordered to withdraw within Finland's new boundaries.[42] This international legal document was ratified by a substantial majority of 163 to 27 on December 1, 1920, after a lengthy parliamentary deliberation.[43]

This pact represented the position of the two powers at the conclusion of the First World War, the time of its signature. On the one hand, Finland, having emerged from civil war and been internationally acknowledged, approached the bargaining table ready to make peace with the Soviets and establish a border that would be simple to defend. In contrast, Soviet Russia's maneuvering range was far shorter. The Soviet administration had crushed the whites in the civil war, just as the Finnish whites had defeated the reds. In contrast to Finland, Russia perceived itself to be encircled by foes and globally isolated. Despite the fact that the deal with Finland was deemed incapable of preserving Soviet security interests in the area, its completion resulted in a significant breach in the surrounding *cordon sanitaire*. Consequently, Kremlin was prepared to make concessions. In turn, Finland made compromises that were unpopular with its patriots. Long-term effects of this treaty were, on the Finnish side, the nationalist outbursts of youth aiming for the annexation of East Karelia, particularly those enrolled in the Karelian Academic Society (*Akateeminen Karjala-Seura*), the Lapua Movement (*Lapuan liike*). and in the Patriotic People's Movement (*Isänmaallinen kansanliike*). At the conclusion of the fourth decade, however, Soviet security concerns over the border route with Finland presented themselves with special severity. As we shall see in a future article, the end of Soviet isolation and the development of its power during this period made it intolerable for Moscow to abide by this deal. In less than two decades after the signing of the Treaty of Tartu, a new conflict broke out.

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[41] Lauri Karvonen, *From White to Blue-and-Black. Finnish Fascism in the Inter-War Era* (Helsinki, Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1988), 17.

[42] Jussila, Hentilä, Nevakivi, 138-139.

[43] Paasivirta, 226-227.

2. The emerging of Border States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the wake of World War I

The relationship between Soviet Russia and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania attributed a similar "hard" meaning to boundaries. The conditions surrounding Finland were to some extent analogous to those encompassing the Baltic states. After the Bolshevik takeover in October 1917, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia proclaimed their independence (Estonia on February 24, Lithuania on February 16, and Latvia on November 18, 1918), and they were at a crossroads where the interests of Soviet Russia and Germany overlapped. As a consequence of Finland's unique institutional setting inside the Russian Empire, there are several differences between these two regions. They enabled Finland to take advantage of a number of governmental institutions that did not exist in the Baltic republics. In addition, the Baltic republics endured a more threatening German occupation, open involvement by the Red Army in domestic conflicts, etc.

Latvia faced a peculiar circumstance. The German-Russian front was set on the Daugava River near Riga for two years (1915-1917). During the first weeks of the war, around 20,000 Latvian troops were recruited and transported to East Prussia. By the autumn of 1915, over 10,000 Latvians had perished in combat. The German army's occupation of the western Latvian region of Courland displaced 570,000 inhabitants, who sought sanctuary in Livonia, Latvia, Estonia, or even Russia. Numerous Latvians, along with Poles and Lithuanians, were among the approximately 3 million refugees that relocated in Russia. The Latvians established the Central Committee for Refugee Relief in September 1915. In March 1917, the number of Latvian migrants on the committee was at least one million.[44]

Following the declaration of independence, Estonians and Latvians were subjected to a German occupation that was equally grievous with the preceding Tsarist and Soviet occupations. The Germans, like the Russians, were unwilling to support the national aspirations of these nations. Under these conditions, the Baltic national forces decided to send emissaries to the

[44] Andrejs Plakans, *The Latvians. A Short History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), 115-116.

West in an effort to raise awareness of their right to self-determination among members of the Entente. In this respect, the most active Estonians were Ants Piip (sent to the United Kingdom), Kaarel R. Pusta (France), and Jaan Tõnisson (Scandinavia).[45] The German occupation of Estonia and Latvia depended on the support of local Baltic Germans and the new German military leadership contemplated Germanizing these newly independent republics. Among the measures taken were the reestablishment of the German domain police, the restoration of German dominance at the level of municipal administrations, the dissolution and disarmament of local military units, the closure of Baltic newspapers and associations, the persecution of local national leaders, etc. In the case of Estonia, the Maapäev (Estonian Provincial Assembly) set up a Committee of Seniors, which in turn chose a Rescue Committee consisting of three national members (Konstantin Päts, Jüri Vilms, and Konstantin Konik) deemed undesirable by the new regime. One of them, Jüri Vilms, who sought to join the Estonian delegation abroad, lost his life in still unclarified circumstances.[46] From June, Konstantin Pats was detained in Belarus until November.[47]

In April 1918, a Landesrat assembled by the military authorities in Riga (and composed of citizens of Livonia and Estonia) overwhelmingly advocated for a personal union with Prussia, despite concerns from Estonia and Latvia. The plan gained the support of the German emperor Wilhelm II. The Prussian Ministry of State strongly advocated for the incorporation of Courland, Livonia, Estonia, and Lithuania into the Reich. However, these policies were contested in Germany by the political centre and left wing, with the front reversals increasingly providing a rationale for the latter.[48] In spite of the fact that Soviet Russia ceded control of the governments of Estonia and

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[45] Jean-Jacques Subrenat, *Estonia: Identity and Independence* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 116.

[46] For a long time, the Germans were held accountable for his death, but fresh evidence appears to indicate otherwise, Seppo Zetterberg, *Jüri Vilmsin kuolema: Viron varapääministerin teloitus Helsingissä 13.4.1918* (Helsinki: Otava, 1997).

[47] Toivo U. Raun, *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), 104-106.

[48] John Hiden, and Martyn Housden, *Neighbours of Enemies?: German, the Baltic and Beyond* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 14-16.

Livonia at the end of August, it was not until November 1918 that the German authorities resolved to annex these provinces to Prussia.

Despite the negative effect played by the loss of revolutionary-era accomplishments, the German occupation paradoxically had a good function: it led to the total departure of Soviet armed troops and the elimination of the Communist organizational networks. This was highly relevant in Latvia, where Latvian internationalist communists like as Pēteris Stučka (1865-1932) initially enjoyed widespread support until a rift developed between them and the mass of the populace.[49] There were parallels and variances in the development of relations with Soviet Russia amongst the three Baltic nations, thus we will refer to them individually.

2.1. Estonia

In Estonia, both the Estonian interim government and the Tallinn Soviet government resumed their activities immediately after the armistice. The Estonian Communist leadership strongly supported the Red Army's attacks on Estonia, which began on November 22 in Narva.[50] The first assault was repelled by German forces remained in Narva. Later, the Germans abandoned the city to a feeble Estonian national army. As a consequence, on November 28, the Soviets captured Narva. The next day, an Estonian Workers' Commune headed by Jaan Anvelt was proclaimed (1884-1937). The Soviet military action, which demonstrated that Lenin's ideal of national self-determination was merely propaganda, may be seen in the light of Lenin's 12 May 1917 declaration: „we Russians must emphasise freedom to secede, while the Poles must emphasise freedom to unite."[51] This right could only be employed to achieve political independence from an oppressive regime (under the colonial control of the British, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian empires). Instead, independence from Soviet Russian territory was

[49] I. Ijabs, „The Nation of the Socialist Intelligentsia: The National Issue in the Political Thought of Early Latvian Socialism," *East Central Europe* 39, issues 2-3 (2012), 181-203.
[50] Hans Kruus, *Histoire de l'Estonie* (Paris: Payot, 1935), 258.
[51] Stanley W. Page, *The Formation of the Baltic States : A Study of the Effects of Great Power Politics upon the Emergence of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 58.

neither conceivable nor practical. In effect, the separation had to be "in the interests of the masses."[52]

The Estonian interim government, headed by Konstantin Päts, was faced with very tough tasks: essentially, it had to create a state from nothing. On December 23, the government started working toward the formation of an Estonian army under the direction of the exceptionally skilled Colonel Johan Laidoner (1884-1953), who had recently returned from Petrograd. In December 1918, the Soviet assault continued to advance. British sailors supplied Estonians with arms and ammunition and stopped a Soviet landing at Tallinn or on the north shore owing to the assistance of a fleet of 12 ships.[53] In exchange, the Finns supplied funds to the caretaker administration and permitted the recruitment of volunteers to aid the Estonian cause.[54]

Although by the end of December 1918 the Soviets had controlled half of Estonia and by the beginning of January 1919 they were just 35 kilometers from Tallinn, the Red Army's advance was stopped. The Estonian counterattack started on January 7. Soviet army swept the Estonian area in under one month The youthful Estonian army performed well despite numerical inferiority. On January 3, 1919, for instance, 4,800 Estonians engaged against around 6,200 Soviets, the majority of whom were not Estonians (only 4 regiments were Estonian, and the remaining 31 were Russian and Latvian). Both sides subsequently boosted their numbers. A 1,000-man regiment of Estonian communists fled at the end of May 1919, along with a division commander. In the meanwhile, the Estonian army had grown to 74,500, consisting of 2,750 white Russians, 1,500 Latvians (East Baltic warriors), 300 Hungarians, and 300 Finns (during the campaign about 3,700 Finns fought on the side of national forces). In addition to Swedes and Danes, 700 Baltic Germans fought against Russian Leninists.[55]

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[52] Rudolf A. Mark, "National self-determination, as understood by Lenin and the Bolsheviks," *Lithuanian Historical Review*, no. 13 (2008): 28-29.

[53] Donald Stoker, *Britain, France and the Naval Arms Trade in the Baltic, 1919 -1939. Grand Strategy and Failure* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2003), 21.

[54] Subrenat, 116.

[55] Raun, 107-108.

All through the spring and summer of 1919, sporadic combat persisted on the Eastern Front. In June, Estonian soldiers also had to contend with Baltic German armed formations known as the Landeswehr. On June 23 in Cēsis in northern Latvia, the Estonians defeated the Landeswehr and the Iron Division of the Baltic and Reich Germans headed by General Rüdiger von der Goltz.[56] Subsequently, the Entente countries exerted pressure on the Estonian government to assist white General Nikolai Yudenich in capturing Petrograd. In Estonia, there was little remorse for Yudenich, who continued to yearn for a complete restoration of Russia. Therefore, the Estonians merely provided him with symbolic assistance, and they were not particularly upset when he was defeated in November 1919 by the Soviets. By resolution of the Estonian Constituent Assembly, his soldiers that retreated to Estonia were disarmed and imprisoned. In July 1919, Viktor Kingissepp, the communist leader of Estonia, declared the dissolution of the Estonian Workers' Commune. The battle costed Estonia 2,236 lives, 13,775 injuries, and 178 million Estonian kroons.[57]

The Soviet-Estonian negotiations began in September 1919. As they led to the first treaty signed by Soviet Russia with one of the Baltic nations, we shall analyze in further depth how the agreement was achieved between the two countries. The Estonian delegation in these negotiations was led by Jaan Poska (1866-1920), along with Ants Piip (1884-1942) and Julius Seljamaa (1883-1936), and the Soviet delegation by Leonid Krassin (1870-1926), People's Commissar for Trade.[58]

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[56] Count Rüdiger von der Goltz left a recollection of this battle, empasizing that „The Iron Division's attack finally had to be given up, though, because no great restoration of the earlier position could be expected through the purely frontal advance it was making, and also because Estonian warships were threatening the mouth of the Daugava and the Rīga bridges, the only rearward connection that the troops had that were fighting east of the Daugava", Rüdiger von der Goltz, *My Mission in Finland and the Baltic* (Leipzig: verlag von K.F. Koehler, 1920), 207.

[57] A synthetic pictured account of the Estonian Army, in Nigel Thomas and Toomas Boltowsky, *Armies of the Baltic Independence Wars, 1918–20* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2019), 13-22.

[58] Evald Uustalu, *The History of the Estonian People* (London, 1952), 191.

The first Estonian and Soviet proposals regarding the delimitation of the border between the two states were presented on December 8, 1919. The Estonian proposal called for the strategic boundary to be situated to the east of the ethnic border. This proposal also included the decisions taken by the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian commanders-in-chief at their mid-September 1919 summit in Tallinn, when they urged their respective governments to demand the withdrawal of Soviet forces behind the line Petrograd–Dno–Veliki Luki–Vitebsk–Orsha as a condition for signing the peace treaty, the internment of the Russian Baltic Fleet in a neutral port or one of the Entente's harbors, and the establishment of a neutral zone between Russia and the Baltic states. Russia characterized Estonia's plan as a "strategic aggression completely unacceptable." Russian delegates objected that Russia ought to have relinquished 10,000 square kilometers of the Iamburg and Pihva regions, which are home to 250,000 Russians and 40,000 Estonians. The Estonians, for their part, rejected the Russian suggestions, which they termed "annexationist," but they accepted the idea to create a 10-kilometer-wide neutral zone and demilitarize Lake Peipsi. The Estonians were unwilling to accept the Russian plan in its entirety since it would have left Russia with all of the natural resources and industrial potential of the northeastern region, in addition to the Setumaa region south of Lake Peipsi.[59]

The next day, the Russian delegation presented a revised plan to extend the Estonian border to the east. It would have followed the Narva River (which was to be neutralized[60]), traversed the Peipsi and Pihva lakes, and proceeded 10-15 kilometers east of the original project till the Latvian border. This was unsatisfactory to the Estonians since it divided the city of Narva into two halves and left Russia with two-thirds of the Setumaa.[61] Both delegations offered revised boundary designs on December 10th. The Russian offer was quite similar to the previous day, however the Estonian proposal allowed a 10-15 km westward adjustment from the first draft

[59] Edgar Mattisen, *Searching for a dignified compromise. The Estonian-Russian border, 1000 years* (Tallinn: Ilo Print, 1996), 35-38.

[60] On the pledge to neutrality, Eero Medijainen, „Article 5: the permanent neutrality in the Tartu Peace Treaty, 1920," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41, issue 2 (2010): 201–214.

[61] Mattisen, 35-38.

proposed to the Soviets. After a meeting of the Council of People's Commissars attended by V.I. Lenin, L. Trotsky, Georgy Chicherin, and L. Krassin, the Russian side made further concessions on Narva and other disputed territories. Edgar Mattisen, a renowned expert on the subject, considers this fourth Soviet project to be the most suitable for Estonia, as the country could have retained Ivangorod and the territories between the Rosson River and the mouth of the Pliussa River, as well as the ethnic areas inhabited by the Setu and Estonians in the province of Petserimaa next to the city of Petseri. On December 31, a compromise between Estonian and Soviet desires was struck. On February 2, 1920, the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Soviet Republic signed the Tartu Peace Treaty.[62]

As Kaarel Piirimäe rightly suggests, the most significant benefit for Estonia was contained in Article 2, which stipulated that

> „On the basis of the right of all peoples to freely decide their destinies, and even to separate themselves completely from the state of which they form a part, a right proclaimed by the Federal Socialist Republic of Soviet Russia, Russia unreservedly recognises the independence and autonomy of the State of Estonia and renounces voluntarily and forever all rights of sovereignty formerly held by Russia over the Estonian people and territory of Estonia by virtue of the former legal situation, and by virtue of international treaties, which, in respect of such rights, shall henceforth lose their force. No obligation to Russia devolves upon the Estonian people and territory from the fact that Estonia was formerly part of Russia."[63]

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[62] "Peace Treaty of Tartu, 2 February 1920", *League of Nations Treaty Series*, Vol. XI, 51–52. The Estonian version of the treary at the Estonian National Archives, https://www.ra.ee/dgs/browser.php?tid=68&iid=110701832602&img=era0957_018_0000004_00001_t.jpg&tbn=1&pgn=1&prc=80&ctr=0&dgr=0&lst=2&hash=c91ed5da616cfbf3951255b17e5aa164 (accessed on 20 January 2022). Russia was pleased with the signing of the treaty, which Izvestia dubbed on February 3 the first breach in the diplomatic blockade put on Soviet Russia by the Entente and the bourgeoisie. Albert N. Tarulis, *Soviet Policy toward the Baltic States 1918-1940* (Paris: Notre Dame Press, 1959), 57.

[63] Kaarel Piirimäe, „The Peace Treaty of Tartu: The Postcolonial Situation 100 Years Later," *Ajalooline Ajakiri, The Estonian Historical Journal* 173/174, issues 3/4 (2020): 192.

Figure 1: The signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty by Jaan Poska, the head of the Estonian delegation, who stated: „ "Today is the most important day of the past 700 years for Estonia, because today, for the first time, Estonia alone will determine the future fate of its people.""
Source:The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://vm.ee/en/tartu-peace-treaty-2-february-1920 (accessed on 10 January 2022)

The boundary between Estonia and Russia was 276 kilometers long, including 129 kilometers on land and 147 kilometers along the Peipsi and Pihva lakes. In addition, the two governments agreed to establish a demilitarized zone that would avoid conflict between the two neighbors.[64]

2.2. Latvia

After the defeat of Germany in World War I, across the border to the south of Estonia, representatives of all Latvian parties (including the Social Democrats), excluding the Bolsheviks, met in secret on November 18, 1918, and declared the existence of the Republic of Latvia and the Latvian Provisional Government. Kārlis Ulmanis (1877-1942) presided over the

[64] Estonian National Archives, https://www.ra.ee/dgs/browser.php?tid=68&iid=110701832602&img=era0957_018_0000004_00001_t.jpg&tbn=1&pgn=1&prc=80&ctr=0&dgr=0&lst=2&hash=c91ed5da616cfbf3951255b17e5aa164 (accessed on 20 January 2022), Mattisen, 45-59, 119-121; Medijainen, 201-214.

Provisional Government and reinvented himself from an agronomist to a state figure.[65] Given that Riga remained under German control, the government's mission was challenging. In December, the government started operating, with a number of Baltic Germans assuming positions of authority. The regime also established an army.[66]

On November 13, 1918, the Soviet Russian government rescinded the treaty negotiated with Germany and began preparations for an attack to "export" the Communist revolution. However, the Red Army's commander-in-chief, the Latvian Jukums Vācietis, a former commander of the 5th Latvian Rifle Regiment, ordered that the Bolshevik advance be synchronized as closely as possible with the German withdrawal. Until May, the non-German-occupied Latvian lands (Letgalia and Vidzeme) were governed by an interim Soviet Latvian government led by Pēteris Stučka. Even Latvian Bolsheviks opposed the creation of this administration because they did not comprehend its relevance to the survival of Communist Russia. Pēteris Stučka used harsh measures against his political opponents: shutting and killing bourgeois adversaries and "counter-revolutionaries" was the most common method employed by the Communist regime.[67]

In the meanwhile, Ulmanis and his administration sought sanctuary in the German-held port of Liepāja (Libau). In these circumstances, Ulmanis proceeded to seek stronger internal and external support. However, the Germans desired control of the Latvian government, so in mid-April 1919 they established their own administration under the leadership of Andrievs Niedra. The new administration was most likely backed from behind the scenes by General Rüdiger von der Goltz, who aimed to damage the legitimacy of the Ulmanis government.[68] In late April, German and Latvian

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[65] Jordan Tyler Kuck, "“The Dictator without a Uniform: Kārlis Ulmanis, Agrarian Nationalism, Transnational Fascism, and Interwar Latvia”, (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2014), 202.

[66] T. G. Zazerskaiā̆, *Latvia's Ordeal: Nation Building in War and Revolution* (Washington: Academic Press, 2021), 45-46.

[67] Aivars Stranga, "Communist Dictato Rship in Latvia: December 1918 – January 1920. Ethnic Policy", *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 13, no. 1 (2008): 161-178.

[68] Hiden and Housden, 21. Gustav Noske (1868-1946), member of the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party, visited the Baltic countries in April 1919. On April 28, 1919,

soldiers seized Riga from the Communists. In addition, by the end of April, the Communists had been driven to Letgalia, where they stayed for an additional year. The Niedra administration established itself in Riga without much domestic backing, since it was seen as an appendage of the German troops. This helped Ulmanis in his attempts to establish a national army. On June 23, 1919, the Estonian triumph against the Germans provided relief. In October, the administration of Ulmanis already commanded 11,500 soldiers. The Latvian army was eventually able to mount a counteroffensive and clear Latvian territory of these forces in November.

Figure 2: Soldiers of the Latvian forces from the 2nd Regiment who participated in the Battle of Cēsis, Latvian War Museum

Source: https://www.dveseluputenis.lv/lv/laika-skala/notikums/109/nodibinata-ziemellatvijas-brigade (accessed 20 November 2018)

On 3 January 1920, Latvian national troops headed by General J. Balodis and backed by a corps of 20,000 Poles led by General Rydz-Smigly

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he attempted to convince the Cabinet that the new administration was legitimate. „Bericht Noskes über seine Reise im Baltikum. Kabinettssitzung vom 28. April 1919, 11 Uhr," https://www.bundesarchiv.de/aktenreichskanzlei/1919-1933/0000/sch/sch1p/kap1_2/kap2_61/para3_5.html (accessed on 22.01.2021).

launched a new attack. The cities of Daugavpils, Abrene, and Rēzekne were liberated one by one. By the end of January, the whole region of Letgalia was freed. Latvia and Russia signed an armistice in Moscow on February 1, followed by peace negotiations between the two countries.[69]

On August 11, 1920, Adolf Jofe and Jakov Haniecky of Soviet Russia and Jānis Vestmanis, Pēteris Berģis, Ansis Buševics, Eduards Kalniņš, and Kārlis Pauļuks of Latvia signed the Treaty of Riga.[70] It resembles the Estonian-Soviet one in terms of both the negotiating procedure and the legal consequence. In the treaty, Soviet Russia vowed to maintain Latvia's independence and sovereignty "without reservations," with the boundary between the two countries being established in accordance with the ethnic map and with adjustments that did not prejudice the Latvian state. The most significant accomplishment was Latvia's recovery of Latgale (Latgalia), a province from which it had been separated for centuries (art. 2). At the request of the Russian side, the two nations agreed not to permit foreign troops at war with the other state to enter their territory or to establish governments claiming to be the rightful leaders of the other state. Different sections accounted for the transfer of prisoners of war, the resolution of financial issues, the citizenship choice, the expansion of the economic, commercial, and transit relations, etc.[71]

Similar to the Finnish-Soviet pact, the Estonian-Soviet and Latvian-Soviet treaties provided the signing governments with relatively brief gratification. Soviet Russia saw a path out of isolation and Estonia and Latvia were satisfied with ensuring the integration of the majority of their citizens into their national boundaries and obtaining borders that were simpler to defend. A consequence of several open conflicts, these accords had not survived the power dynamics of international relations, and Moscow had

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[69] Silviu Miloiu, Edgar Pleȓiens, Krīstine Ante, Valters Sčerbinskis, *Istoria Letoniei* (București: Eikon, 2018), 277-279.

[70] No. 67 Traité de Paix entre la Latvie et la Russie, fait à Moscou, achevé et signé à Riga, le 11 août 1920 - Communiqué par le Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de Latvie - Enregistré le 16 décembre 1920 (Recueil des Traités, Vol.II no.3).

[71] Ibid.

called them into question when it believed it had earned sufficient might to enforce its viewpoint. The outcome was catastrophic for two little nations.

2.3. Lithuania

Unlike Finland, Estonia and Latvia, which first appeared on the world's political map as independent states in 1917-1918, Lithuania kept the legacy of a recognized Middle Ages regional power. On this bases, Lithuanians aspired to the re-creation of an independent Lithuanian state as a result of the revolutionary changes in Russia and the revival of nationalist aspirations. This desire was articulated by the National Council (*Lietuvos Taryba*), the entity that declared Lithuania's independence.[72]

According to the stipulations of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (3 March 1918), which was reinforced by the Treaty of Berlin in August, the Soviets were compelled to accept the loss of almost one million square kilometers, including Courland and Lithuania.[73]

After the signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, Lithuanians realized that independence could only be achieved under German conditions. The Kaiser acknowledged the independence of Lithuania on March 23, 1918, but under the provisions of the proclamation of December 11, 1917, which turned the nation into a German protectorate, and not the conditions of the Act of Independence of February 16, 1918, which allowed for complete independence. On September 22, 1918, Germany, which had already acknowledged the independence of the Duchy of Courland, sanctioned the independence of what remained of the province.[74]

The Lithuanians quickly mastered the art of diplomacy on the run and were able to use dynastic rivalries in the Reich to counter German

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[72] Joachim Tauber, „Stubborn collaborators. The politics of the Lithuanian "Taryba", 1917-1918," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 37, issue 2 (2006): 194-209.

[73] Trotsky accused Germany and Austria-Hungary of violating the idea of national self-determination in the specific examples of Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Latvia, and Estonia in a press interview on January 2, 1918., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy , Vol. 1 1917-1924* , Selected and edited by Jean Degras, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1951), 21-22.

[74] Kinga Dudzińska, and Renata Runiewicz-Jasińska, "The Development of Lithuanian Statehood in Years 1918-1940," *Polish Political Science* 36 (2007): 233-254.

annexationism. Similar to what the Finns had done, the Conservative wing of Taryba declared the Catholic Duke Wilhelm von Urach as king of Lithuania in July 1918. He was to be known as Mindaugas II. As with Finland, the conclusion of the war rendered this arrangement obsolete. In November 1918, Taryba renounced the monarchical experiment and reverted to the republican constitution paradigm.[75]

The nationalist scholar Augustinas Voldemaras (1883-1942) was chosen prime minister by Taryba on November 5. The new government assumed office on the day Germany capitulated. Already on November 2, Taryba enacted a temporary constitution that delegated administrative authority to the Taryba Presidium headed by President Antanas Smetona (1874-1944) and the Cabinet of Ministers while retaining legislative authority.[76]

Stalin ordered the Lithuanian Bolsheviks to organize a Lithuanian communist government on November 13, 1918, after the Soviets proclaimed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty null and void. On December 8, a temporary revolutionary government chaired by Vincas Mickevičius-Kapsukas was installed in Lithuania (1880-1935). On December 16, the Soviet regime was established in Lithuania. The Mickevičius-Kapsukas government advocated moderate policies comparable to those of Finland's *Kansanvaltuuskunta*. In February 1919, the Bolsheviks created the Soviet Republic of Lithuania-Belarus (Litbel), a buffer state whereby the Soviets attempted to earn Berlin's assistance. The Bolsheviks upheld their "mass revolution" strategy until the second half of 1919, when the "export of revolution" to the West failed and territorial ties with Lithuania were severed.[77]

On Voldemaras's instructions, on November 23, 1918, a Lithuanian national army consisting of Russian-returned troops and commanders was

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[75] Wilhelm von Urach was a relative of the King of Württemberg, and had been recommended by Mathias Erzberger, the leader of the German Catholic Party, see Alfonsas Eidintas, Vytautas Žalis, and Alfred Erich Senn, *Lithuania in European Politics. The Years of First Republic, 1918-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 31.

[76] Ekaterina Makhotina, "Die Nähe Smetonas: Nationale Identitätskonstruktion und Demokratie in Litauen," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 66, no. 2 (2018): 326-328.

[77] Česlovas Laurinavičius, "Once again on Soviet statehood in Lithuania in 1918-1919", *Lithuanian Historical Studies* , no. 13 (2008): 179-189.

formed to fight against the Soviets. As the Red Army approached Vilnius one month later, Smetona and Voldemaras fled to Germany in pursuit of financial assistance.[78] Mykolas Sleževičius (1882-1939) seized government leadership and urged all people to protect the government. It relocated its headquarters to Kaunas. On January 5, 1919, the Red Army entered Vilnius, but the Lithuanians were able to convince five German battalions, fearful of the Soviet advance in East Prussia, to stop their withdrawal and join the Lithuanian war effort. In the summer of 1919, the Lithuanians defeated the Soviets in a series of victories after being supplied with between 5,000 and 6,000 troops in April 1919. In August, the Red Army abandoned the last occupied city. The Soviet leadership proposed to negotiate a peace settlement with Lithuania on September 11.[79]

The peace treaty between the two countries was signed in Moscow on July 12, 1920, and it served as the basis for good relations between the two parties throughout the interwar era. Lithuanians believed they secured Soviet Russia recognition of their rights to the Vilnius area, together with the namesake city, the ancient capital of the Grand Duchy. However, as Loreta Daukšytė points out, the text of the treaty is unclear on this issue. Vice-Foreign Minister Petras Klimas (1891-1969) was the primary architect of the Lithuanian border. According to article 2 of the treaty, the border between the two countries began at Druja on the Daugava River, continued south along the river and Lake Naroch (Narach), circled Maladetchna, and then headed southwest along the Nemunas, leaving Grodno on the Lithuanian side and ending at Sztabin on the Polish border. Therefore, it is not at all evident from the terms of the treaty that Vilnius belonged to Lithuania, and the boundary with Poland had to be decided by the two surrounding governments, Lithuania and Poland. We can detect no ambiguities in the treaties of Finland, Estonia, or Latvia with the Soviet Union. Russia also drafted the contents of this international legal document, including an addendum that permitted the Red Army to use sections of Lithuanian

[78] Vasilijus Safronovas, „Who fought for national freedom? On the significance of the great war in interwar Lithuania," *Acta Baltico-Slavica*, 42 (2018): 197.
[79] Eidintas, Žalis, and Senn, 34-36.

territory during the conflict with Poland, beginning with Vilnius, which had been re-occupied by July 14.[80]

In order to govern the status of the Lithuanian areas occupied by the Red Army, officials of the two armies signed an agreement on August 8 dividing them into three districts. The Red Army was to depart the first territory immediately, the second, which contained Vilnius, by September 1, and the third upon the signing of an additional agreement. The loss at the gates of Warsaw compelled the Soviets to abide by their agreements, restoring Vilnius to Lithuania on August 28[81] and sowing the seeds of conflict between Poland and Lithuania.

Each of the three situations described above entailed several stages. The declaration of independence in 1918 was the first step. They were however not acknowledged by Germany or Soviet Russia. Each of the two great powers attempted to further its own agenda in this area, notably Germany's territorial and imperial expansion and Soviet Russia's export of revolution accompanied by a disguised form of imperialism and economic and commercial interests. The defeat of Germany and the isolation of Soviet Russia was an unanticipated turning point for the nationalist governments of these small nations, who were able to prevail over their internal and foreign opponents (Germans, Soviets) and harvest unexpected benefits from the 1920 treaties with Russia. Soviet. At the time of the signing of these accords, Soviet Russia was eager to make substantial concessions in order to break out of its international isolation, as it was ideologically disdained owing to its regional wars and previous imperial history under Russian dominance. Even greater success was achieved by Soviet diplomacy in bringing Lithuania to its side without paying a significant price. If, in the short term, the Soviet Russia was ready to accept some aspects of an agreement that were detrimental to its security interests, it would subsequently strive to abolish them, first by diplomatic methods then, beginning in the late 1930s, through political and military pressure. As we

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[80] Loreta Daukšytė (ed.), *The borders of Lithuania. The history of a millennium* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 2010), 109-110.
[81] Ibid.

will see in a future article, the re-annexation of these provinces will be guided by a combination of territorial imperialism, ideological ambitions, ideological missionaryism, and security concerns.

3. The Golden Apple of Discord: the ownership of Vilnius and the Polish-Lithuanian strife

The case of Vilnius is distinctive due to its multicultural identity. Vilnius (Vilnius after its Russian name and Wilno after its Polish name) was founded formally in 1323 by Gediminas (the Grand Duke between 1315 / 1316 and 1341), who constructed a fortress and made it the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Gradually, the strong Polish culture tempted a portion of the urban people of Vilnius to forsake the Lithuanian language.[82] After the third partition of Poland in 1795, Russia acquired the city, which thereafter became the province capital. Under Russian administration, the city drew an increasing number of Jews, who established the groundwork for a vibrant culture in the area. Thus, Vilnius became the epicenter of the Haskalah Jewish renaissance movement. In Vilnius, Jews inhabited many streets in the 18th century, and their synagogues and places of worship were located alongside their Christian neighbors. Anti-Semitic outbursts did not become severe until the 19th century. By the end of the 18th century, the ratio of Jews in the general population[83] was remarkably high[84], and on the eve of the First World War, there were around 60,000 Jews in the historic Lithuanian capital. According to the 1897 census, the population of Vilnius consisted of 40% Jews, 30% Poles, 20% Russians, 4% Belarusians, and 2% Lithuanians. [85]

Based on its prominence in the history of the Grand Duchy, Vilnius

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[82] Robert I. Frost, *The Oxford History of Poland-Lithuania Volume 1: The Making of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, 1385-1569* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2018).

[83] John D. Klier, "Traditions of the Commonwealth: Lithuanian Jewry and the Exercise of Political Power in Tsarist Russia," in *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*, eds. Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Stefan Schreiner, and Darius Staliūnas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 10.

[84] Eliyahu Stern, "Genius and Demographics in Modern Jewish History," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* , Vol. 101, No. 3 (Summer 2011): 358-366.

[85] Saulius Žucas (editor), *Lithuania: Past. Culture, Present* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 1999), 82 and 142.

was chosen as the capital of the new state at the time of Lithuania's independence proclamation. After failing to sway Poland to its side, Germany was ready to back some of Lithuania's imperial ambitions within the constraints of its imperial interests.[86]

However, Poland never came to terms with the circumstances. Marshal Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935), born in Lithuania, was descended from a Lithuanian aristocratic family; he considered himself a "son of Lithuania" throughout his life and learned Lithuanian from an early age; he supported the restoration of the old Polish-Lithuanian Rzeczpospolita founded in 1569. As a consequence, Polish forces invaded Lithuania in the spring of 1919 from the directions of Bialystok, Lida, Vilnius, Augustov, Suwałki and Sejny, spurred to fight against the Bolsheviks and accused Lithuania of being a German puppet. In this setting, Lithuania appealed to officials of the Entente, who established a preliminary line of demarcation between Lithuanian and Polish forces on June 18. After leaving Augustow to Poland, it followed the southern line of the Suwałki government, proceeded along the Nemunas River to Drunskininkai, and then ran in a straight line 5 kilometers west of the Grodno-Vilnius-Daugavpils railway. Poland was particularly angry with the delineation that left Vilnius as the capital of Lithuania. Therefore, on July 26, a new demarcation line (the "Foch Line") was sketched, leaving Suwałki, Sejny, and Punsk in Poland. Lithuania emphatically rejected these provisions. On December 8, six months later, the Supreme Council of the Entente drew the Entente's interim boundary. It began at Lake Vištytis, following the Foch Line to the Nemunas, crossed the Nemunas at Grodno, and then proceeded south to Galicia. Once again, Vilnius was ceded to Lithuania. However, the tensions caused by territorial and identity issues between Lithuanians and Poles endured, with Vilnius having a high potential to evoke "pools of emotions, anxieties, and memories." The combat did not begin until the spring of 1920, when the conflict between Poland and Soviet Russia erupted. They continued "after the Vistula miracle" after the Polish army had advanced into Russian territory. On September 22/23, 1920,

[86] Joachim Tauber, "German eastern policy, 1917-1918", *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, no. 13 (2008): 71.

the Polish army crossed the Entente's provisional border to pursue the Red Army and repel Lithuanian soldiers. The Suwałki Accords of October 7, 1920 called on both sides to halt hostilities and set a demarcation line that returned Vilnius to Lithuanian control.[87]

Two days later, under the orders of Józef Piłsudski, Polish soldiers commanded by General Lucjan Żeligowski (1865-1947) captured Vilnius. The general declared the establishment of the Republic of Central Lithuania, which had an area of 13,500 sq.km. and a population of 500,000 people. Nevertheless, the Polish government denied culpability for the incident. The official stance of Warsaw was that Żeligowski led a rebellion of Vilnius residents. Nonetheless, the general resumed his campaign in an attempt to seize all of Lithuania and unite it with Poland. On November 19 and 21, 1920, during the engagements of Širvintos and Giedraičiai, the Lithuanian army was able to halt Żeligowski's soldiers and compel them to retreat. The general himself was on the verge of being captured.[88]

The League of Nations' Military Control Commission intervened and demanded a cessation of hostilities. The armistice was struck in a train car between Kaunas, Lithuania and Poland on November 29, 1920. A neutral zone of 12 kilometers has been created between the two countries. It began on the right bank of the Nemunas and followed the December 8 line. It proceeded along the Grodno-Vilnius railway, which at this point had left Poland, from the left bank of the Nemunas. The boundary line then moved towards the Vilnius-Daugavpils railway.[89]

The League of Nations attempted mediation in the spring of 1921, delegating the task to Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Hymans (1865-1941).[90] His first plan was to divide Lithuania into two cantons, Vilnius and Kaunas, and to conclude an agreement between that country and Poland, which was

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[87] Daukšytė, 108-109.

[88] Theodore R. Weeks, *Vilnius between Nations, 1795-2000* (Ithaca, NY : Cornell University Press, 2021), 119-123.

[89] Žucas, 163.

[90] The Ph.D. thesis of Chiara Tessaris discusses at lenth the activity of the Hymans Commission, Chiara Tessaris, *Peace and Security Beyond Military Power: The League of Nations and the Polish-Lithuanian Dispute (1920-1923)* 2014, <https://doi.org/10.7916/D81G0JXW>.

to be Lithuania's guarantor. As a reward for Lithuania, Klaipėda was to be attached to the canton of Kaunas.[91] However, neither side was satisfied: Poland because Vilnius was attributed to Lithuania, and Lithuania because of the excessive decentralization of the country and the ties it had to maintain with Poland. A second plan was drawn up by Hymans in the autumn of 1921 and provided for the incorporation of the Vilnius region into Lithuania as an autonomous territory and its guarantee by the League of Nations. Poland rejected the plan and conflicts erupted between the two states.[92] Finally, on January 13, 1922, the League of Nations declared itself incapable of resolving the dispute. Further negotiations planned by the League of Nations in Brussels in May 1920 and later under the mediation of Hymans failed to compromise the two sides.[93]

Under these circumstances, Poland instigated the annexation of the Republic of Central Lithuania, a decision voted in Vilnius by the Polish-dominated Sejm on February 20 and ratified by Warsaw on March 24, 1922. Following the annexation of Memel by Lithuania, the League of Nations abolished on February 2, 1923 the neutral zone between Poland and Lithuania. Lithuania did not recognize this decision, and Poland took advantage by occupying that part of the territory as well. The new border line was recognized by the Council of Ambassadors, a body of the Entente powers, on March 15, 1923.[94]

The border between the two countries was sealed[95], and Kaunas was only regarded the interim capital of Lithuania and the frozen war lingered

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[91] Vilma Bukaitė, „Pamirštos Paulio Hymanso derybos: Vilniaus krašto klausimas Briuselyje ir Ženevoje 1921m.," *Lituanistica* 64. Nr. 1/111 (2018): 14–20.

[92] Ibid., 22-24.

[93] United Nations Library & Archives Geneva, „Le différend polono-lithuanien - Conseil de la Société des Nations - Les gouvernements polonais et lithuanien sont invités à engager entre eux des négociations directes sur la présidence de M. Hymans à Bruxelles. Résolution adoptée par le conseil. XIIe Session, Paris, 3.03.1920, Dossier R588/11/11397/11397.

[94] Daukšytė, 112-114.

[95] Estonia tried to mediate between Lithuania and Poland, gaining the gratitude of Warsaw, Philip V. Cannistraro, Edward D. Wynat, Jr., Theodore P. Kovaleff (editors), *Poland and the Coming of the Second World War. The Diplomatic Papers of AJ Drexler Biddle Jr., United States Ambassador to Poland 1937-1939* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1976), document 4, Report of Drexler Biddle Jr. to State Department, 19 June 1938, 213.

on until March 1938. Therefore, the scenario in interwar Vilnius may be compare to that of Jerusalem. Declared the capital of a state, Vilnius was a significant cultural hub for another state as well as the world's most renowned minority: the Jews.

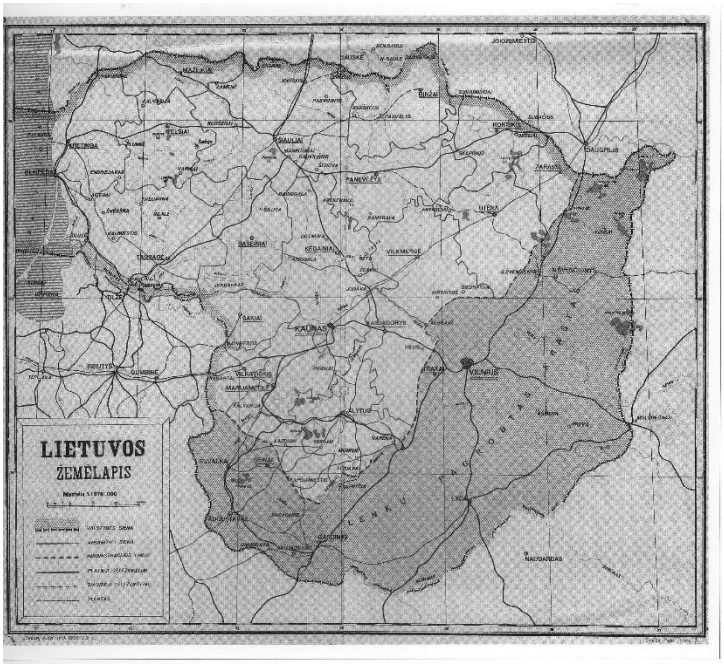

Figure 3: Lithuania and the contested region of Vilnius in the interwar period
Source: *The Borders of Lithuania. The history of a millennium* (Vilnius Baltok lankos, 2010), 135

However, conflicts over the area and city of Vilnius continued, with events from 1938 to 1940 shifting its formal control first "definitively" to Poland, then "definitively" to Lithuania, and eventually to Kremlin, along with the remainder of Lithuania and Poland. Everything looked to be a reversed reenactment of events from the start of the interwar era. Thus, on March 17, 1938, the Polish plenipotentiary minister in Tallinn issued a 48-hour ultimatum to his Lithuanian counterpart, demanding that Lithuania immediately establish unrestricted diplomatic relations with Poland. Lithuania, understanding it could not expect support from a foreign power, bowed down, so ending the legal state of war and resuming diplomatic

relations.[96] This did not imply that Lithuanian dreams of ownership of Vilnius had ended. This ultimatum gravely wounded Lithuanian nationalism, which will seek the earliest chance to reclaim a land that struck a powerful chord of identification in the Lithuanian psyche.

Figure 4: Scandinavia and the Baltic Lands. Copyright, The New Matthews-Northrup Global atlas of the World at War. Cartography and manufacturing by J. W. Clement Co., Matthews-Northrup Works, Buffalo, N.Y. Published in the United States of America..

[96] Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor, "The Polish-Lithuanian Crisis of March 1938. Some Romanian and Western reactions," *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2010): 83-92.

Conclusions

The situations addressed in this article and the empirical examples it contains originate from a specific geographic region and a single historical five-year period in the aftermath of World War I (1917–1922); consequently, the conclusions that may be drawn must be generalized with some caution. Nonetheless, we recognize that some of these assessments deserve reflection from scholars of these phenomena as well as politicians, diplomats, strategists, and other decision-makers in international relations.

We began with the premise that borders are not merely imaginary lines that separate one state from another, but rather are discourses, practices, symbols, institutions, and processes related to power; that they are local, regional, state, and supranational; and that they involve collective actions such as "acquisition, exclusion, protection," as well as decisions based on feelings such as "love, hate, and violence." We therefore emphasized the significance of their historical perspective in addressing the difficulties of the present.

The consistency and regularity of the conclusions based on these examples are particularly startling. In every instance in which war and violence (ultimatums, threats of force) were employed to grant boundaries in favor of one state or another or to settle accounts, the treaty settlements were not long-lasting, and a cycle of conflict with devastating consequences for local communities ensued. Of course, it might be argued that this was owing to the fact that we dealt with small nations dealing with great powers during a period of weakness. When big powers overcame their position of powerlessness, boundaries had to be redrawn. Every new change of frontiers resulted into „identities of exclusion" and „fetishization of territory". This is undeniable, but we must not lose sight of the reality that states are analogous entities while having distinct demographic, military, and economic capabilities. Even at the height of their subjugation as a consequence of annexation and deportation, the Baltic nations conserved the concept of statehood, which they restored when offered the opportunity.

We may hypothesize on what would have happened if the Soviet Union had behaved reasonably towards them between 1918 and 1920 and

1939 and 1940. Despite their ideological abhorrence of communism, it is plausible that these nations would have had no interest in hardening their borders, but rather in softening them in order to promote the growth of trade and commerce. A genuine collaborative connection might have evolved from this situation.

Excluding conjecture, one of the findings of this study is that when geographical, economic, geopolitical, and ethnic incentives are added to ideological or identity motivations, the stakes of the clash grow and the cycle of violence becomes more uncompromising. In this regard, the examples of East Karelia, Narva, and Vilnius are compelling. In the latter instance, the border remained closed to people, businesses, and even correspondence for almost two decades.

The combination of universalist ideologies with imperial objectives often leads in both internal and international confrontation. The Finnish path to independence was characterized by confrontations with and between foreign troops (Russian and German), as well as civil strife (*sisällissota*). The situation in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was comparable. In all of these instances, the result was not just a fixation with boundaries, but also an increase in otherness and loss of human lives.

Thus, we land on the "cultural dynamics of self-identification through exclusion," one of the distinguishing features of the interwar period with its *cordon sanitaire*, Border States, and export of revolution. As a result of Russian aggressions in the Ukraine, the illusionists of war have resurrected the skeletons from the closet, and borders are once again fraught with hatred and yearning.

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Alterity and identity: Romanian-Swedish mutual perceptions during The Second World War

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Abstract

The geographic distance between Romania and Sweden influenced the creation of mutual imaginary. However, it wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that inhabitants of the two nations were interested in discovering each other. Therefore, Romanian-Swedish mutual impressions were mostly based on the accounts of tourists who had visited both nations. During the interwar era, direct contact between Romanians and Swedes was infrequent. The news about Romania was disseminated by the Swedish press, which played a significant part in the formation of hostile sentiments. On the other side, the Romanian diplomats who ran the Stockholm-based Legation had nothing but admiration for Swedish society. During the Second World War, the situation improved as more Romanian and Swedish intellectuals traveled to Scandinavia and the Balkans. However, these interactions did not alter how Romanians and Swedes viewed one another.

Rezumat

Distanța geografică dintre România și Suedia a influențat formarea imaginarului reciproc. Locuitorii celor două țări au devenit interesați să se descopere relativ târziu, la începutul secolului XX. În consecință, percepțiile reciproce româno-suedeze s-au bazat în mare măsură pe mărturiile călătorilor care au vizitate aceste țări. Contactul direct dintre români și suedezi a fost unul sporadic și în perioada interbelică. Știrile despre România au fost diseminate cu ajutorul presei suedeze, care a jucat un rol esențial în formarea opiniilor negative. De cealaltă parte, diplomații români care au condus Legația din Stockholm au avut cuvinte de laudă la adresa societății suedeze. Situația s-a mai îmbunătățit în perioada celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial, când intelectuali români și suedezi au avut oportunitatea să viziteze Scandinavia și regiunea balcanică. Cu toate acestea, contactele stabilite nu au reușit să schimbe în mod esențial felul în care românii și suedezii s-au perceput reciproc.

Keywords: mutual perception, alterity, Second World War, society, culture, Romania, Sweden
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Introduction

The geographic constraints had significance in creating the Romanian-Swedish mutual imaginary. The distance of approximately 2 000 km between Romania and Sweden decisively influenced the evolution of their bilateral relations. Because the two countries were located in distant

geographical regions (North and South) and belonged to different cultural spaces, the image of `the other` was created mainly based on indirect perceptions and sporadic contacts. Accordingly, with the principles of imagology, the more a group creates an in-depth image of a distant nation, the more ambiguous and fantasy-influenced the conception will be. On the other hand, when two distant nations do not share a common border and a controversial history, the inhabitants of these territories create mutual perceptions free of conflicting elements[1]. However, the citizens of Romania and Sweden became interested and curious to discover each other relatively late, as they were mainly concerned with strengthening their relations with the countries in the region in which they were located. As a result, for an extended period, the Romanian-Swedish mutual perceptions were based on the testimonies written by the travelers who visited Scandinavia, respectively, the Balkans. The image of Romanian society circulating abroad at the beginning of the 20th century was that of indolent, apathetic and resigned people. There was also a more favorable image, the one of "good savages", thanks to the peasant's ability to combine irony with enthusiasm[2]

In contrast to such images, the Swedish society was perceived as organized, solidary, peace-loving and trusting of its own rulers[3]. These images of "the other" contributed to the creation of mutual perceptions and stereotypes that influenced the development of different domains, such as trade, between Romania and Sweden. The situation started to change once the two countries opened legations in Stockholm and Bucharest. Then a permanent team of diplomats and experts was actively involved in popularizing the Romanian and Swedish culture, society and economy in their regions.

The purpose of this research is to examine how Romanians and Swedes regarded one another during World War II. As is well known,

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[1]Ion Chiciudean, Bogdan-Alexandru Halic, *Imagologie. Imagologie istorică*, (București, 2009), 7.
[2]Dennis Deletant, "Romanians", in Manfred Beller, Joep Leerssen *Imagology. The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey* (Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2007), 224.
[3]Jenny Andersson, Mary Hilson, "Images of Sweden and The Nordic Countries" in *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2009, 220.

Romania abandoned its neutrality and joined the Axis during World War II, whereas Sweden stayed neutral. Has this aspect influenced the alterity and identity between the two nations? Which were the core elements of the Romanian-Swedish mutual perceptions? Has mutual perception evolved or stayed mostly unchanged since the turn of the 20th century? To answer these questions, we focused our research on primary sources identified at the Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania and the Swedish National Archive, on the articles published in Swedish mass media and on the accounts of Romanian and Swedish travelers who visited the regions during the war.

Romanian-Swedish mutual perception during the interwar period

During the interwar era, direct contact between Swedes and Romanians was infrequent. The news and information concerning Romania were disseminated across the whole Scandinavian Kingdom through the press. The Swedish press was also an instrument for German, Soviet, Hungarian and Romanian propaganda to spread their convictions and form beliefs. It was common practice for Swedish tabloids such as *Aftonbladet* and periodicals such as *Norrskensflamman* to write critical pieces on Romanian politics marred by corruption, the dictatorial reign of King Carol II, anti-Semitism, and rural poverty. As a result of these revelations, the Swedes had a poor impression of Romania, which they deemed "instable and inconsistent as a state." They considered Romanians to be "unserious and rude"[4]. In contrast, Nicolae Iorga, a historian, described the Swedish society he encountered throughout his travels. He used the following phrases: "The Swedes did not build a governing class as we did (...) the bourgeoisie in Sweden maintains its position, thus there is no need to borrow (money) from other individuals. And the peasant, the stalwart and proud peasant (...) is a pillar of the nation and the monarch."[5]

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[4]Arhivele Diplomatice ale Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al României [The matic Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, hereafter AMAE], Fund 71/Sweden, vol. 25, 26-27.

[5]Nicolae Iorga, *Sfaturi pe întuneric. Conferințe la radio, vol. II, 1936-1938* (Bucharest: Fundația Pentru Literatură și Artă "Regele Carol II", 1940), 278-279.

Swedish and Romanian ministers who led legations in Stockholm and Bucharest respectively recorded their observations on the countries where they were appointed by the government. In his memoirs, Einar Wirsén, the Swedish Minister Plenipotentiary who oversaw the Swedish diplomatic mission in Romania between 1924 and 1925, portrayed Romanian society. The Swedish diplomat examined each social category's features with careful dedication. According to his perspective, one of Europe's wealthiest nations, Romania, had a population predominantly composed of peasants who lived in difficult circumstances and often went hungry. Wirsén emphasized that the majority of the country's population was illiterate. In addition, he emphasized the vast difference between these folks and the aristocracy, who stood out with their fine attire and magnificent homes. In addition, the majority of Romanian nobility studied overseas. Wirsén also noted that Romania lacked a robust middle class, which may have contributed to the development of commerce, manufacturing, and artisanal companies[6].

Even though Wirsén did not identify with the Romanian politicians with whom he had poor connections[7], the Minister's description of the situation was not far from the reality. The First World War had a massive effect on Romania. The lack of workers hampered agricultural productivity. This phenomena had a significant impact on the national economy, since Romania was mostly agricultural and 80% of the active population was engaged in agriculture.[8] Industrial growth did not begin until 1923, after the recovery process, and the effects did not become apparent until investors provided funds for industrial businesses.[9] Despite advances in society and the economy, the level of life in Romania in 1938 remained modest, according to official statistics. Meat intake per capita was much lower than the Western norm. The average amount of meat consumed by Romanians

[6]Einar Wirsén, *Från Balkan till Berlin*, (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1943), 9–21.

[7] See Andreea Dahlquist, "The Activity of the Swedish Legation in Romania from Its Founding in 1921 to World War II", in *Balkanistica*, vol. 35, 2022, 28-31.

[8]Ioan Scurtu (coord.), *Istoria Românilor. România întregită (1918-1940)*, vol. III, (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2003), 102.

[9]Ibidem, 89.

was 18 kilograms per year, which is significantly less than the average amount of meat consumed by Britons, who consumed roughly 60 kilograms per year.[10]. The social indicators were also very modest and placed Romania not only behind the states of Western Europe but also behind Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. This situation is reflected in the high illiteracy rate, which reached 54.3% in 1938[11].

Another essential testimony about interwar Romania came from Jonas Alströmer, the Minister Plenipotentiary in Bucharest between 1925-1933. He had a generally favorable view of Romania, which he considered as one of the richest nations. Alströmer admired the country's natural riches, such as salt, oil, and gold, but he lamented the impoverished and uneducated peasants. The Swedish envoy was startled that the farmer still lived with his animals in a modest dwelling. In his autobiography, Alströmer reflected: "In villages, neither radio nor electricity nor a cinema existed. A little inn where the men spent their nights and a football field were all that existed".[12] Alströmer's remarks also had a correspondent in reality. According to statistics, the electricity consumption per capita was only 58 Kwh/year in 1938, while the radio subscribers reached 13.9/ 1 000 inhabitants the same year[13]. Alströmer's remark was natural since, in Sweden, 90% of households had access to electricity by the mid-1930s[14].

Dimitrie Pennescu, the Romanian minister plenipotentiary in Stockholm, offered the Swedish perspective on Romania. He reported to Bucharest that the Swedes' attitude towards us was "less sympathetic," but Romania was not one of the nations on which they often exhibited animosity. The majority of Swedes viewed this faraway nation with indifference since they knew little about it, while the majority of journalistic coverage was negative. Pennescu called attention to a crucial point, namely that the

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[10]Bogdan Murgescu, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500- 2010)*, (Iași: Polirom, 2010), 218.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Jonas Alströmer, *Diplomat minnen (1908–1933)*, (Stockholm: Tryckeriaktiebolaget Epege, 1951), 214–253.

[13]*Anuarul statistic al României 1939-1940*, (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1940), 569.

[14]Håkan Heden, *Energimarknadsinspektionen. En sekellång historia*, (Borås: Elanders Sverige AB, 2012), 19.

Swedes' "less sympathetic" approach did not stem from problems in bilateral relations, as is often the case with neighboring nations that share a common past, but rather from a lack of in-depth understanding about Romania. Pennescu emphasized the need of expanding cultural contacts between these two remote nations.[15]

Barbu Constantinescu, the Romanian Minister in Stockholm from 1933 to 1940, stated in an interview with Aftonbladet that he traveled to and visited other nations, but "none of them were so harmoniously structured."[16] In the early 20th century, Sweden intended to become a "nation of the future." The conditions were favorable to attain this objective. Sweden had already achieved a high level of industrialisation, electricity, and economic growth, according to Romanian diplomat[17]. All the investments and social policies created the harmonized society Constantinescu described.

Romanian society described by Swedish citizens during the Second World War

On November 10, 1940, a catastrophic earthquake struck Romania, causing major material damage and killing around 1,000 people. In this context, the Swedish tabloid *Aftonbladet* conducted an interview with Bruno Alm, the Swedish director of STAB[18] in Bucharest. The journalists sought information about the situation of the members of the Swedish community from Romania. After assuring the reporter that no one was wounded by the earthquake, Alm discussed the experiences of the Swedes from Bucharest.[19]. According to the director, his compatriots successfully assimilated into

[15]AMAE, Fund 71/Sweden, vol. 25, 61-62.

[16]Ibid., 98.

[17]Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy. Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), 47.

[18]Svenska Tändsticks Aktibolaget (STAB) is a Swedish company founded in 1917 by Ivar Kreuger. Ten years later, STAB became the world's most significant match producer after Kreuger monopolized the match market by lending money to governments worldwide, including the Romanian one, in 1929. During the Second World War, STAB owned two match factories in Romania, one in Filaret and the other in Timișoara. (See Andreea Dahlquist, "Economic Relations between Sweden and Romania during the Second World War", in *The Romanian Journal for Baltic and Nordic Studies*, vol. 12, Issue 1, 2020, 81-112).

[19]*Aftonbladet*, November 12, 1940, 8

Romanian culture and regarded this Danubian nation as their second home. They spent time with the Romanians and picked up their language quite fast, since they saw Romanian as a relatively simple tongue. There was not a single Swedish school in Bucharest, which was Alm's sole complaint. Therefore, members of the Swedish community were required to enroll their children in French and German schools. Alm also emphasized that Queen Victoria of Sweden often provided financial assistance to the German school and church in Bucharest. The Queen's gesture may be explained by the fact that she had German ancestry, having been the Princess of Baden before becoming the monarch of Sweden. Queen Victoria's policies and popularity during the First World War were impacted by her heritage. She opted to demonstrate a pro-German stance despite Sweden's professed neutrality. According to the registry found in the Swedish National Archives, roughly forty Swedish people were resident on Romanian soil at the time of the earthquake. There were those who resided in Ploiesti, Codlea, Sibiu, and Timisoara in addition to Bucharest and Brasov. [20] Bruno Alm and his family immigrated to Romania in 1930 and settled in Bucharest, where he began working as an engineer for STAB.[21]

During the Second World War, a number of Swedish citizens traversed Europe to reach Romania. This was the case of *Aftonbladet* columnist Carl Kreuger, who was notorious for his support of Hungarian propaganda in Sweden. He recorded his observations of Oradea, a city he visited in June 1940 following the Hungarian army's conquest. According to his information, an identical picture could be seen in Oradea as in the whole of northwestern Transylvania. People might see pictures of Horthy and Stephan I and Hungarian flags everywhere on buildings and squares, for instance. Kreuger remarked that the residents of this area lived simple lives. Kreuger remarked that Oradea seemed to be a little town while having twice the population of Uppsala and Gävle. The buildings were in poor condition, and there was no tram, but buses sometimes drove through. Kreuger was

[20]Riksarkivet, Utrikesdepartementet [The National Archive of Sweden, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hereafter Riksarkivet, UD], Beskickningsarkiv Bukarest, Nationalitetsmatrikel, 1936–1946, unpaged.
[21]Ibid.

used to a much higher degree of cleanliness in hotels and restaurants. The journalist from Sweden noticed that the level of living was much lower than in his own nation. Many of the folks he encountered were unshod and wore torn clothing. This sight struck the journalist, who wrote in *Aftonbladet* that throughout the economic crisis, Swedes did not live in comparable circumstances. Kreuger was astounded by the savage existence of the Romanian peasants. Villagers still lived in homes with two rooms, one for the family and one for their livestock.[22].

The Swedish writer and pedagogue Allen Degerman[23] expressed a similar perception of Romanian society. In an article dedicated to Greater Romania published in *Jönköpings Posten*, he specified that "the Romanian agriculture was primitive, and the progress was stopped for a long period by poverty and serfdom"[24]. In addition to the consequences of World War I and the post-Greater Unification reform process, Degerman cited the effects of World War I and the beginning of the reform process as factors that had influenced economic advancement. The Romanian government has granted agricultural land to 69.47% of the rural population as a result of the agrarian reform. Despite the division of property, some peasants lacked the appropriate equipment to cultivate their farms. In addition, land fractured throughout time owing to the large number of children a peasant family used to have and for whom dowries were required. Population growth lowered grain production per capita. The decline in wheat prices in Europe and the persistence of antiquated latifundia methods contributed to the stagnation of agricultural productivity.[25]

Karl August Modén, a Baptist missionary pastor, journeyed to Romania during the Second World War to assess and address the Baptist community's condition with Romanian authorities. Later, he published an

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[22]*Aftonbladet*, November 2, 1940, 6.

[23]Allen Degerman (1901-1980) led several folk universities and taught about global issues. He also wrote books about general history. Degerman was involved in the pacifist movement and introduced UNESCO's activity in Sweden. In 1975, University of Linköping distinguished him with "Doctor Honoris Causa". (*Vem är det? Svensk biografisk handbok*, (Stockholm: P A Norstedt & Söners, 1977), 210).

[24]Riksarkivet, UD, Tidningsklipp, Serie 4, Rumänien, 1940, unpaged.

[25] Murgescu, 226–227.

article in Svenska Morgonbladet in which he condemned the ruling elite's treatment of all minorities existing in Greater Romania. He stated that "the intolerance and persecution of political and religious minorities by Romanians marks a tragic chapter in this country's history."[26] Moreover, a topic frequently debated in Swedish newspapers, which significantly helped to shape public opinion regarding Romanian politics and society during the Second World War, was the situation of the Jews during Ion Antonescu's regime.

Gustav Bolinder was another Swedish citizen who traveled into Romania during the Second World War. Professor Bolinder did not see the sedentary lifestyle of Romanian peasants as a negative, but rather as an effective means of preserving their language and culture in spite of the influx of migrants and foreign domination.[27] Together with the linguist and scholar Alf Lombard, Bolinder labored ceaselessly to build a distinct picture of Romania in the collective Swedish psyche. Lombard was a friend of Romania, and he began to advocate openly for Romanians after learning about the Second Vienna Award in the summer of 1940, when Northern Transylvania was granted to Hungary. His Romanian friend Sextil Pușcariu wrote Lombard a letter informing him that the Museum of Romanian Language had to be relocated from Cluj to Sibiu after the Award. This news compelled Lombard to take a stance, despite his lack of interest in politics. He authored the piece *Några ord om den transsylvanska frågan* (*A Few Remarks on the Transylvanian Issue*), in which he discussed why Transylvania should be a part of the territory of Romania without addressing any political matters. Instead, he utilized geographical and demographic factors to bolster his argument. Transylvania, according to Lombard, formed a genuine territorial unit of the Romanian state. Lombard challenged Hungarian language philologist Arvid Fredborg, who argued that the Carpathian chain constituted the natural boundary between Romanians and Hungarians. The Swedish linguist illustrated the multitude of mountain crossings that

[26]Riksarkivet, UD, Tidningsklipp, Serie 4, Rumänien, 1944, unpaged.

[27]See Andreea Dahlquist, "Romanian Propaganda in Sweden under the Second World War", in *Analele Univeristății "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași*, no. LXVII, 2021, 459-474.

connected Moldova and Wallachia with Transylvania. According to Lombard, the Tisa River created a more impenetrable barrier. Thus, only two bridges were constructed over this body of water: one in Seghedin and the other in Solnica. According to the demographic data, Romanians comprised the majority of the population of Transylvania. He noted that just three of the eight counties taken by Horty's troops were mostly populated by Hungarians. Fredborg himself agreed with this position.[28] Even while the Swedish professor did not specify the source of his information, census statistics from 1930 showed that 3.2 million Romanians resided in Transylvania, accounting for 57.9% of the entire population, while 1.35 million Hungarians stood for 25% of the overall population. Transylvania was split into 23 counties, of which only three possessed an absolute majority of Hungarians, forming the Szekerland. Four additional counties had a proportionate distribution of the two nationalities, but the other 16 counties were dominated by Romanians.[29]

Brita Wrede, a Finnish-Swedish journalist and author, conducted a radiography of Romanian society. Upon the outbreak of war between Finland and the Soviet Union, she traveled to Romania on assignment to discuss the military situation in Karelia. In addition, Wrede was given the charitable purpose of negotiating the passage of meat from Romania to Finland. Wrede decided to keep a diary during her time in Bucharest since Romania was little-known in Northern Europe. The majority of the material reached the Scandinavian Kingdom via political reports or newspapers and bemoaned the unfortunate circumstances of the Romanians.[30] Her 1944 book was released with a propagandistic intent. She provided a concise overview of Romanian history, beginning with the merger of Moldova and Wallachia in 1859. Wrede respected both Queens Elizabeth and Maria for their vigor and commitment to humanitarian causes. After meeting Nicolae Caranfil, the architect who renovated Bucharest and other districts of Romania, Wrede

[28]AMAE, Fund 71/Romania, Propaganda, vol. 490/1940-1944, 169-171.
[29]Andreas, Hillgruber, *Hitler, regele Carol și mareșalul Antonescu. Relațiile germano-române (1938–1944)*, (București: Humanitas, 1994), 144.
[30] Brita Wrede, *Rumänien i ofredens år*, (Stockholm: Lindfors Bokförlag AB, 1944), 9.

came to the conclusion that "a leader in Romania should be like dynamite"[31]. This affirmation could suggest that Romania needed an active leader willing to do more for the country's well being .

Brita Wrede, echoing the sentiments of many tourists, characterized Bucharest as a city of contrasts, where peaceful areas with an oriental flavor blended with raucous ones. Tiny lanes such as Calea Victoriei crossed broad boulevards where people of various types, from sophisticated ladies to bear-footed youngsters, officers to peasants in national costumes, could be seen. Similar to other Swedish individuals who backed Romanian propaganda, Wrede attempted to blur the distinction between "we and them" by highlighting commonalities between Sweden and Romania. During the Winter War, the Swedish society became recognized for its sympathy with Finland. Under the motto "Finland's cause is yours," Swedish citizens participated in campaigns to collect finances, medications, food, and military equipment. Sweden intervened and rescued Finnish youngsters transported by boat across the Bothnia Bay. On the other side, the Romanians Wrede encountered were hospitable and prepared to offer all they had to assist, despite their little means and war-ravaged lives.[32] According to Wrede, the Romanians' friendliness assisted Swedish people in adjusting to the nation in which they had chosen to reside. Even though the majority of Swedes had decent employment and lived in opulent homes constructed near Snagov Lake, the manner in which they were greeted by Romanians caused them to see Romania as their second home. Among them were the children of Stig Hägglöf, the administrator of STAB industries, who "adored Romania and returned to Bucharest with joy."[33] Brita Wrede ended her journal by sending a message that impacted the reader: "Romania's destiny to endure, suffer and be reborn is boundless"[34]. Thereby, the Swedish journalist manifested her trust that at the war's end, Romania would be reborn despite all the destruction caused by the bombings.

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[31]Ibid., 30.
[32]Ibid., 72.
[33]Ibid., 80.
[34]Ibid., 149.

After the publication of her book in 1944, Brita Wrede received both positive and negative reactions. She received positive critics for her picturesque and original way of describing places and tourist attractions entirely unknown to the Scandinavian Kingdom's inhabitants[35]. The differences between Romanian and Swedish societies had widened throughout time for a variety of reasons. Some of these were discussed earlier, but also because of the idealization of the inventive Swedish country, which was more receptive to modernity than other countries, particularly "peripheral" nations in the far distance. Thus, Swedes often viewed foreigners, including Romanians, with superiority. Through the material provided in her book, Wrede challenged her audience to reconsider the common mental picture of Romania. Swedes could now have a better understanding of Romanian history and peasant life in order to see Romania as an honorable nation that did not merit arrogance and disdain.[36]. In an *Aftonbladet* article, Wrede was criticized for her prejudiced portrayal of Romanian people, notably King Charles II. The journalist who authored the piece deemed Wrede's tone to be disagreeable and naïve, since her political opinions were woven throughout her observations.[37].

Another Swedish journalist who traveled to Romania during the war used the alias of "J v L". He was employed by *Aftonbladet* and arrived in Bucharest after Allied bombardment. He later detailed the attitude he experienced in the Romanian capital and other rural regions he visited in an essay. He saw Romania as the "El Dorado" of the Balkans, despite all of the war-related problems. According to his evidence, "people still live a good life in so-called Paris of the Balkans" since nutrition was not yet rationalized and there was sufficient food. Moreover, owing to German investments, Romania did not experience a severe shortage since manufacturing increased and was more efficient. He recalled that on certain days the restaurants did not provide bread, but instead served polenta cakes. On the other hand, fashion galleries in central Bucharest still carried catalogs of

[35]AMAE, Fund 71/Romania, Propaganda, vol. 490/1940–1944, 300.
[36]Ibid., 297–298.
[37]Ibid., 302.

Parisian attire. "J v L" explains how the Romanian peasant differs from his Swedish counterpart. In other articles, the peasant was described as primitive, impoverished, uneducated, and of low social standing; yet, "J v L" believed the rural populace to be speculators. The peasants could ask for eggs and dairy foods as much as they wanted because the Romanian state had no fixed prices for these products by law. Consequently, the peasant was held accountable for the growth of the illegal market.[38]

The article published by "J v L" in a periodical devoted to Nazi propaganda altered the perception of Romania. This nation fought with the Axis for almost three years. Prior to the tremendous bombardment of Bucharest by the Allies, it was true that life in the city was rather peaceful. Through interviews with Romanian figures and conferences conducted in the Scandinavian Kingdom during the war, the Swedes were also aware of this aspect. Nonetheless, the reality did not appear the same over the whole nation's area. The delivery of crops and animal goods to the Reich left the Romanians with few dietary alternatives. One of the reasons why peasants became speculators was a scarcity of food. They attempted to sell their goods at a high price in order to secure their survival. The Swedish journalist praised the improvement of the Romanian economy as a result of German investments. We should be wary of such an assertion. It is true that enhancing oil production efficiency helped to the modernisation of this sector, but the Romanian economy maintained a respectable level not simply due to Romanian-German cooperation. The Romanian government did not fully comply with Berlin's demands because it was unwilling to place the whole national economy under a German monopoly. The Romanian leaders devised a strategy to rescue the economy so that the state could survive after the war. Several times, the Romanian opposition to Germany's entire control of national industry made Romanian-German economic discussions contentious.[39]

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[38] *Aftonbladet*, May 07, 1944, 12.
[39] Hillgruber, 247-248.

Swedish society reflected in Romanian collective mentality during the Second World War

Romanian intellectuals have traditionally admired and studied Scandinavian nations and cultures with great interest. Some of them, such the historian Nicolae Iorga and the ethnologist Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas, believed that the Romanian government should adopt the so-called "Swedish model." This sociopolitical framework was built on national principles, which identified Swedes as pragmatic, reformist, inventive, and more prone to modernity than other people.[40] Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcas was inspired by Arthur Hazelius' idea of Skansen[41] and inaugurated in 1906 the National Museum, which would become the Romanian Peasant Museum. He attempted to include in his museum actual dwellings from all places inhabited by Romanians, even those located beyond the country's boundaries. In his turn, Nicolae Iorga was impressed by the Scandinavian way of educating its people in "folkskolor"[42] and organized starting with 1908 a popular summer school in the city Vălenii de Munte.

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[40]Jenny Andersson, Mary Hilson, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[41]Skansen is the first open-air museum created by the Swedish professor and folklorist Arthur Hazelius. He considered that people would never get to know themselves if they did not know their history. The history Hazelius was referencing to was on its way to disappearing. The industrialization and mechanization of agriculture had affected the old rural society. To keep this consistent part of Sweden's history alive, Hazelius started moving to Skansen old houses from all Swedish regions. He decorated these buildings as the peasants used to live. Next, he moved into the so-called `alive museum` of plants and animals from Sweden. After Hazelius's death, the Skansen concept spread and inspired other mimeographs from Europe and USA. (*Om Skansen*, on-line: https://www.skansen.se/sv/skansens-historia).

[42]Folkskola was the basic compulsory public school introduced in Sweden in 1842. However, long before the Swedish authorities opened this school, there was statutory folk education in this country organized by the church. According to the 1842 public school law, at least one school with one qualified teacher was established in each parish and each city assembly. The concept of class was not used, so the teacher had to educate all the pupils at once. This is why there was a single category of educators: public school teachers. Even if the church, the peasants and some politicians criticized *Folkskolan*, the number of pupils learning in these schools increased. According to the official records, in 1850, there were enrolled 270 000 students, which increased significantly to 702 000 students in 1900. The folk school's development was marked by the decline of the old agrarian society and the rise of the industrialized world. (*Folkskola*, on-line: https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/folkskola).

Another factor that intrigued Romanian educators was the use of film in teaching foreign languages in Swedish schools. The instructors used a novel technique. First, they provided their students with the movie scripts so that they could concentrate on the dialogue. After seeing the film, the students were required to reread the same material in order to examine its pronunciation and intonation.[43]. It seemed that the method gave positive results as Fredric Nanu, the Romanian minister plenipotentiary named to head the Legation in Stockholm in 1943, characterized the Swedes as "quiet, polite and good speakers of English language"[44].

During his tenure in Stockholm, Nanu wrote on his impressions of Swedish culture and society. The Romanian ambassador emphasized in his dispatches the significance of Sweden's neutrality during the First World War for environment and heritage protection. In addition, Sweden might was able to construct the most dense rail network in Europe. Nanu also noted that the residents were very protective with their nature, their most valuable asset. They carefully used the woods and maintained the rivers since they were the major source of energy production.[45] This method was crucial for the country's economic and technical modernisation. The topography of Sweden presented certain obstacles for hydropower plant construction and energy transmission. However, respecting the idea of environmental preservation, the Swedes refused to meddle and alter the natural flow of rivers in order to meet their energy generation demands.[46]

According to Nanu, the Swedes surmounted perilous historical circumstances by learning to maintain their composure. The Romanian envoy remarked, "In truth, the Swedes take pleasure in their ability to balance opposites or what seem to be opposites, a talent shown by the cordial relationship between the monarch and the republican government."[47] Nanu was referring to the social-democratic government, which succeeded for

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[43]*Revista Generală a Învățământului*, XXVIII, 1-2, January-February 1941, 76.
[44]Frederic Nanu, *The land and people of Sweden*, (Philadelphia & New York: J P Lippincott Company, 1949), 4.
[45]Ibid., 47.
[46]Francis Sejersted, *op. cit.*, 31.
[47]Frederic Nanu, *op. cit.*, 113.

many years in leading the society without getting into conflict with the Royal house's politics. Petre Constantinescu-Iași, a co-founder of the Romanian Communist Party, was opposed to this tactic. He believed that Hjalmar Branting's strategy to reforming Swedish society quietly was inappropriate. Constantinescu-Iași said, "Instead of directing workers' frustrations towards the revolutionary road, to which they are called, social-democratic leaders sought reforms to lull the audience to sleep and collaborated with monarchist capitalists' representatives."[48]

There were no notable distinctions between socioeconomic classes in Sweden, but the middle class, comprised of merchants, manufacturers, and industrialists, was well defined. According to Minister Nanu, developing such a peaceful society was only feasible due to the government' years-long commitment to achieving progress. Therefore, it was difficult for other nations to replicate and apply the "Swedish model." Nanu stressed that the hard labor of the Swedes was evident in everything, including canals, roads, bridges, forts, and all the ancient and imposing churches, palaces, and castles constructed by a tiny people occupying a huge country.[49]

Victor Brabețianu, the Romanian Envoy and Plenipotentiary Minister in Stockholm between 1941-1943, produced a different vision of the Swedish political landscape. The Romanian envoy argued that the military victories of the Allies over Nazi Germany produced a wave of congeniality among the Swedes and helped the communist cause to expand and acquire more followers. In one of his reports delivered to Bucharest, Brabețianu argued that in the Scandinavian Kingdom, "a type of collective political blindness" hindered Swedes from seeing the imminent communist threat to their nation. He emphasized that the Swedish socialist policy was substantially different from Soviet communism. Still, the number of individuals interested in communist ideology rose, while resentment against Germany and her supporters emerged among the populace.[50]

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[48] Petre Constantinescu-Iași, *Unde duce colaborarea? Pagini de istorie contemporană*, (București: Ed. Cercul de Cultură Socialistă, 1921), 98.

[49] Nanu, 88.

[50] AMAE, Fund 71/Sweden, vol. 5.

Brabeţianu was expressing the collective mentalities and interests of the Romanian authoritarian administration he served, which was in alliance with Nazi Germany. The communist menace was not as severe as Brabeţianu had anticipated. Despite the fact that the first Swedish communist party, Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Vänsterparti, was founded in 1917, before the Third International (Comintern), the communist movement did not gain traction in Sweden. In addition, there were misunderstandings and disagreements inside the Swedish communist organization in the time that followed. As a consequence, Karl Kilbom and Nils Flyg created the Swedish Communist Party (SKP) in 1929 and extended its activities into Norrbotten, a remote and sparsely inhabited area. Neither of these organizations shown their cohesion, and in 1937, Kilbom expelled Flyg from SKP. SKP's highest performance in parliamentary elections occurred in 1932 and 1936. The party subsequently gained six of the 230 seats in the Swedish Parliament. During the 1940 and 1944 elections, SKP received less than 4% of the total vote. The party was thus expelled from Parliament.[51]

In his turn, Camil Demetrescu[52] traveled to Sweden in the spring of 1943. Demetrescu was astonished that the traditional, impoverished proletariat did not exist in Sweden, despite the SKP's efforts to gain more supporters. During his time in Uppsala, Demetrescu witnessed a communist demonstration. He saw that all of the participants, like the other individuals he encountered in the capital city, wore good attire. Moreover, Demetrescu

[51]See Per Meurling, *Kommunismen I Sverige*, (Copenhaga: Saga Egmont), 2018.

[52]Camil Demetrescu was born in Braila on July 5, 1913. He attended the courses of the Faculty of Law at the University of Bucharest. In 1937 he made his debut in diplomacy occupying the post of legation attaché in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1942/1945, Demetrescu worked for the Directorate of the Ministry and Cipher. During the negotiations between Romania and the Allies (1943-1944), he was tasked to transmit the instruction verbally from Bucharest to the Romanian legations in Lisbon, Madrid, and Stockholm (capitals where the Romanian Ministers tried to get in contact with the Allies' representatives and negotiate the armistice). After the end of the war, Demetrescu chose to stay in Romania and ended up being convicted by the communist regime that took over power and served 15 years of hard prison. He was released in 1962 but was found guilty in another process and imprisoned again. Demetrescu was pardoned in 1976 and acquitted of all charges only in 1998, too late since he died on August 7, 1922, in Bucharest. (See Camil Demetrescu, *Note – Relatări*, (București: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2001)).

was amazed with the cleanliness of the streets and the honesty of the Swedes. He noted that in this "ultra-civilized" nation, there was no specific lost-and-found service since individuals recovered their belongings from the same location where they had forgotten them.[53] These elements were stunning to foreigners who visited Sweden during the war, but they were commonplace for Swedes as a result of the government's successful social reforms in the 1930s. The measures taken aided in enhancing the lives of employees and ordinary citizens, propelling Sweden to the forefront of global wellbeing. The social-democratic administration backed laws that offered people with adequate pensions, guaranteed acceptable allowances for families with children, and provided employees with equitable compensations and health insurance. All of these choices, together with the effort to establish universal equality, became the defining features of Swedish social policy.[54] Such a policy was reflected in the excellent level of life of the residents of the Scandinavian Kingdom, which Demetrescu appreciated greatly. The Romanian diplomatic also reflected on the Swedes' enmity against the Germans, whom they dreaded. Despite the fact that many of them studied German, they refused to speak it publicly. Demetrescu and other Romanians who traveled to Sweden during the Second World War emphasized that: "the immediate impacts of the war were absent (...), destructions, calamities of all types, and piled worries which were burdensome in all war-torn nations, whether triumphant or defeated, free or occupied ".[55]

The visit of a group of journalists to Stockholm in the autumn of 1942 was a pivotal milestone in the development of Romanian-Swedish cultural interactions. This team featured the bureau head of the Ministry of the Press, Oskar Walter Cisek, as well as the journalists Ioachim Botez of the daily *Curentul*, Valeriu Măgureanu of *Timpul*, Valeriu Mardare of *Universul*, and George Sbârcea of the newspaper *Viața*[56]. On their way back from Finland, the delegation stopped in Stockholm to tour various printing firms and get

[53]Ibid., 175.
[54]Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity. Class Bases of the European Welfare State 1875-1975,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 134-135.
[55]Camil Demterescu, *op. cit*., 175.
[56]*Dagens Nyheter*, September 7, 1942, 28.

inspiration. Even though the Romanian Legation in Stockholm had planned a large banquet with 1,000 guests, Minister Brabeţianu was forced to abandon this plan and instead hold a small ceremony. The Finnish authorities were dissatisfied with the objectives of the Romanian Legation since the struggle with the Soviet Union had a significant influence on Finland, and the Finnish government could not afford to treat Romanian visitors equally well. Thus, the reception scheduled for Romanian media was far more modest than the one planned by Romanian officials in Stockholm.[57].

The delegation came to Stockholm on September 6, 1942, and spent four days in this Scandinavian country[58]. The next day, the journalists visited the editorial office of *Dagens Nyheter*, one of the most read newspapers in Sweden. They were struck by the Swedish journal's enormous page count.[59] That year, for example, *Dagens Nyheter*'s issues had between 24-26 pages. During that period, Romania faced a lack of paper, and the newspapers had no more than 12-14 pages. Another innovation from Swedish media that surprised Romanian journalists was the possibility of receiving phone announcements for publicity. A day later, the delegation visited the power plant owned by ASEA (Allmänna Svenska Elektriska AB), the company that also had businesses in Romania[60]. Afterwards, the guests visited and admired the little houses from Åkeshov, built by the Swedish authorities to solve the lack of housing. They got deeply impressed by the peaceful and decent life enjoyed by the inhabitants of Sweden, despite the world war[61].

Ioachim Botez, a journalist who represented the right-leaning and often far-right daily *Curentul*, granted an interview to the liberal weekly *Stockholms Tidningen*. He expressed admiration for the Swedish society, which was characterized by cohesion, punctuality, and hard work. A salesperson startled the Romanian journalist by leaving him alone in the shop for a few minutes without concern of a potential robbery.[62].

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[57]AMAE, Fund 71/Sweden, vol. 26, 40-41.
[58]Ibid., 69–70.
[59]*Dagens Nyheter*, September 8, 1942, 11.
[60]See Dahlquist, *Economic Relations between Sweden and Romania*.
[61]*Svenska Dagbladet*, September 8, 1942, 9.
[62]AMAE, Fund 71/Sweden, vol. 26, 88.

On September 9, 1942, Valeriu Mărgineanu, a colleague of Botez and editor for Timpul, gave an interview to the social-democratic daily Svenska Dagbladet. Mărgineanu had visited Stockholm seven years before and was astonished by the great living standards Swedish employees had attained meanwhile. The publication for which Mărgineanu worked was founded by the Romanian diplomat Grigore Gafencu. Even though the newspaper attempted to maintain its independence, journalists with center-right views, like Mărgineanu, served in the editorial office. Due to the Scandinavian Kingdom's advanced degree of social development, Mărgineanu said that Romania had much to learn from this nation. However, his conservative and national-liberal views did not align with Sweden's social-democratic government. Therefore, Nicolae Iorga's concept of transferring the "Swedish model" to Romania was evoked once again, despite the fact that the Romanian society had to wait for development since all the human and material resources were engaged in the war economy. Mărgineanu concluded his interview by stating that even if the government had rationalized the food, Romanians were not experiencing food shortages.[63] The situation was not as serene as Mărgineanu described because he referred only to the citizens of Bucharest. The rural population struggled to obtain food, as the majority of grain output was shipped to Germany. In addition, the crop was negatively influenced by lengthy winters, flooding in the spring, and dry summers.[64]

Conclusions

During the time period under study, the Swedish and Romanian perceptions may be characterized as practically polar opposites. While citizens of Scandinavian countries viewed Romania with suspicion or indifference, Romanians held a favorable view of Sweden. Individuals of high culture and diplomats who visited and settled in Sweden discovered intriguing and beneficial features that they want to introduce into Romania. It was believed that these loans would help alleviate a few of the issues facing

[63]*Svenska Dagbladet*, September 10, 1942, 9.
[64]Riksarkivet, UD, 1920 års doss., HP 2804, vol. X, September-November 1942, unpaged.

Romanian society. In contrast, Romania's reputation in the Scandinavian Kingdom was not set in stone. However, it was mostly based on claims made by Swedish diplomats staying in Bucharest and media reporting. During the Second World War, the prevalent image established during the interwar period did not change much. Cultural exchange was the sole area of progress. During the war, contact between the Romanians and Swedes intensified, resulting in a deeper knowledge of each culture's past. Despite this, a large proportion of Swedes often condemned the corrupt politicians that controlled Romania and sympathized with the difficult living conditions of the ordinary people. In the collective consciousness of Sweden, the image of the Romanian peasant was that of an uncultured but diligent individual who was used to enduring daily challenges. Swedes found it difficult to grasp how Romanians could continue to live on the edge of subsistence in a country with plentiful and varied natural resources. For these Scandinavians, who laid the groundwork for an innovative social system, Romania was a country governed by antiquated conventions. Lombard and Wrede were among the Swedish scholars who contributed significantly to the formation of the Swedish outlook. They praised Romania's cultural and economic accomplishments and spread propaganda in Sweden. On the other hand, Swedish society was considered an outstanding model for Romanians to emulate.

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The image of the Norwegian monarch in Laxdæla saga. Historical and philological remarks

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is that of exploring one of the most valuable sources from Iceland's golden age of sagas, the Saga of the People of Laxárdalr through the lenses of historical as well as literary criticism in order to provide an account of the ways in which Norwegian kings or queens were portrayed. The research methodology includes primary and secondary source analysis and qualitative analysis, as well as the comparative method, as the results are compared with similar findings from secondary literature. The edition of Laxdæla Saga that was used in the analysis is Muriel A. C. Press's translation from 1999 and the main secondary sources used include works such as those of Ármann Jakobsson and William Ian Miller. The main findings are that, like in many other similar sources, the Norwegian monarchy is represented either in an either extremely positively or extremely negatively fashion by the author of the saga.

Rezumat

Scopul acestui articol este acela de a explora una dintre cele mai valoroase surse din epoca de aur a saga a Islandei, Saga poporului din Laxárdalr, prin prisma criticii istorice și literare, pentru a oferi o relatare a modalităților în care au fost înfățișați regii sau reginele norvegiene. Metodologia cercetării include analiza surselor primare și secundare și analiza calitativă, precum și metoda comparativă, deoarece rezultatele sunt comparate cu constatări similare din literatura secundară. Ediția Laxdæla saga care a fost folosită în analiză este traducerea lui Muriel A. C. Press din 1999 și principalele surse secundare utilizate includ lucrări precum cele ale lui Ármann Jakobsson și William Ian Miller. Principalele constatări sunt că, la fel ca în multe alte surse similare, monarhia norvegiană este reprezentată fie într-un mod extrem de pozitiv, fie extrem de negativ de către autorul sagăi.

Keywords: Laxdæla Saga, Norway, Iceland, ideology and power, monarchy

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Introduction

Laxdæla saga[1] or *The Saga of the People of Laxárdalr* was written in Western Iceland by an unknown author during the period from 1230-1260[2]. The manuscripts where the saga is preserved are numerous, the oldest ones being AM 132 fol or *Möðruvallabók* (*Laxdæla saga* is included from pages 156r to 198r) from the middle of the 14th century, which resides in the Arnamagnæan Manuscript Collection in Copenhagen from 1690 until 1974 when it was returned to Iceland [3].

It has been speculated that the author of *Laxdæla saga* may have been a woman because the saga's protagonist is a woman, Guðrún Ósvífursdóttir[4]. It is therefore beneficial to include this source into our analysis of the ideology of power in Icelandic sagas from the 12th and 13th centuries in order to offer a more complete view of the representations of different aspects of kingship and chieftainship.

The saga follows the story of the descendants of Ketill flatneft's (Flatnoose's) family through eight generations. One decade before the turn of the millennium Ketill went to Scotland, where he and his family lived for a quarter of a century before moving to Iceland[5]. Unnr, daughter of Ketill, succeeded in gaining control over the Breiðafjǫrðr district with the help of her family. Hǫskuldr Dala-Kollsson, the great-grandson of Unnr, and his

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[1] The translation used here is the one of Muriel A. C. Press, *Laxdaela saga*, Old Norse Series (Cambridge, Ontario: In parantheses Publications, 1999).

[2] Einar Ól. Sveinsson (ed.), *Laxdœla saga,* Íslenzk fornrit V (Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1934), xxv; The saga is available in many translated editions into English: Margaret Arent (transl.), *The Laxdoela Saga* (University of Washington Press, 1964); Guðbrandur Vigfússon (transl.), *Sturlunga saga* (Clarendon Press, 1878); Keneva Kunza, *The Saga of the People of Laxardal and Bolli Bollason's Tale* (Penguin Books, 2008); Thorstein Veblen, *The Laxdoela Saga* (University of Washington Press, 1964); For a critical view see Ármann Jakobsson, "*Laxdæla* Dreaming: A Saga Heroine Invents Her Own Life" *Leeds Studies in English*, XXXIX (2008): 33-51; Daniel Sävborg, "Kärleken i Laxdœla saga--höviskt och sagatypiskt" *Alvíssmál* 11 (2004): 75-104.

[3] Sarah M. Anderson, "Introduction: 'og eru köld kvenna ráð'", in *Cold Counsel: The Women in Old Norse Literature and Myth*, eds. Sarah M Anderson, Karen Swenson (New Jersey: Taylor and Francis, 2000), xi-xiv.

[4] See Ármann Jakobsson, „Konungasagan Laxdæla," *Skírnir* 172 (1998): 357–383.

[5] Joseph R. Strayer (ed.), *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987), 528.

son, Óláfr Pái (Peacock), are important characters in the first chapters. Eventually, Óláfr Pái married Þorgerðr, daughter of Egill Skalla-Grímsson[6].

Most of the action of the saga is placed during the seventh generation of descendants of Ketill flatneft when the protagonists were Guðrún Ósvífursdóttir and her childhood friends, Kjartan Óláfsson and Bolli Þorleiksson. All three of them later formed a love triangle as Guðrún was left undecided whom to marry. Guðrún would have preferred to marry Kjartan but, believing that he was betrothed to another woman (no other than Ingibjörg, sister of King Óláfr Tryggvason), chose Bolli[7]. The love affair resembles that of the *Nibelungenlied*, namely the fate of the Sigurd-Brynhild-Gunnar love triangle. Eventually, Bolli was slain in an act of revenge of Guðrún's son[8].

What makes *Laxdæla saga* different from the other sagas and what recommends it for our research purpose? As mentioned earlier, the fact that the author may have been an educated woman adds to the diversity of our study material. The approach of providing a feminist reading of this source, or other, shall be left aside as, given the multitude of important contributions in this matter, it could easily make the subject of an entire dissertation. Other peculiarities of *Laxdæla saga* are that it does not include as many skaldic verses as, for example, *Egils saga*. Discussing *Laxdæla saga* on a thematic level reveals a focus on bloody feud and retribution, as is common to all feud sagas. The fact that the work evinces detailed descriptions of clothing and comportment has been thought to indicate that the author, whether it was a he or a she, was familiar to the style of continental romances[9], which often celebrated an idealized, noble, code of behaviour and dress[10]. Similarly, the importance of women and marital endeavour is remarkable extensive in this source, which a fact which further supports female authorship. *Laxdæla saga*

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[6] *Laxdœla saga*, chapter 22.
[7] Joseph R. Strayer 1987, 528.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] See, for example, Angela Jane Weisl, „How to be a Man, Though Female: Changing Sex in Medieval Romance" *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 45, 1 (2009): 110–137.

has been considered by some "one of the first secular women's biographies in European medieval literature"[11]. At the end of her life, the hero Guðrún Ósvífursdóttir comments on her own life: "*þeim var ek verst, er ek unna mest*" ("To him I was worst, whom I loved most"), thus sparking a dilemma that saga scholars have yet to settle[12].

The Image of Norwegian Monarchs

Laxdæla saga contains descriptions of King Haraldr gráfeldr ("Grey-cloak", regnant 961–970), who ruled Norway together with his mother, Queen Gunnhildr konungamóðir ("Mother-of-kings", floruit 931-934). In most sagas, Queen Gunnhildur was described in a negative manner, both dreaded and venerated for her: "power and cruelty admired for her beauty and generosity, and feared for her magic, cunning, sexual insatiability, and her goading"[13]. However, in *Laxdæla saga,* both the king and her mother seem respectable and commendable leaders, which is surprising given the rather negative reputation of Queen Gunnhildur for most saga-writers. Again, this may be considered an argument towards female authorship of the saga, as a female writer – of relatively good standing in Icelandic society – would have probably been more considerate towards Queen Gunnhildr, whose role in other sources is that of a scapegoat, considered guilty for the evils of Haraldr gráfeldr's rule (especially in *Egils saga*).

The Queen and King Haraldr greet the protagonist of the first chapters, Óláfr Pái (Peacock), with very kind words and appeared as the best lords an adventurer would have wished for. At the departure of the protagonist towards Ireland, both the King and Queen Gunnhildr lead him to the ship to say farewell and to bless him with their good fortune (*hæmingja*) in his exploits. On his return voyage, the hero stopped in Norway and was invited by the King to become part of his court (*hirð*), after which he was

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[11] Joseph R. Strayer 1987, 528.

[12] Phillip Pulsiano, *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993): 388.

[13] Jenny Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women. (Cornell University Press, 1995), 180.*

richly gifted with scarlet garments (worthy of people of notability) and equipment for his sojourn[14].

In *Flóamanna saga*[15] and *Harðar saga*[16] King Haraldr gráfeldr is also generally described as a beneficent king. In the first example, the King favours the protagonist, Þorgils, even after he had wronged Queen Gunnhildr. In the second mentioned saga, King Haraldr becomes angry at Geir when the murder of one of the King's men occurs, but accepts compensation, *wergild*[17], for the crime, at the same time cautioning that his mother, if she were to meet the wrongdoers, would not be as conciliatory as he had been. Other sagas depict her in a negative manner, most notably *Egils saga*, where, as wife of King Eiríkr blóðøx, she is the one causing more harm to the protagonist that her husband [18]. This negative image mixed with some reverence for the Queen consort is maintained in the kings' sagas as well[19]. *Heimskringla* treats Gunnhildr rather fairly, condemnation of her being mixed with admiration of her determination[20].

These observations on the treatment of King Haraldr gráfeldr in *Laxdæla saga* and some other sagas challenge the hypothesis that the Kings of Norway were represented in a negative manner in the family sagas[21]. In *Laxdæla saga*, Queen Gunnhildr appears as distinguished as befits a royal

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[14] Ármann Jakobsson, "Our Norwegian Friend: The Role of Kings in the Family Sagas" *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 117 (2002), 150.

[15] A family saga from the late 13th century which features Þorgils Þórðarson „Örrabeinsstjúpr" (937 – 1022), a famous Viking who goes on raids throughout Scandinavia, the British Isles and Greenland. See Jonathan Grove, "The Place of Greenland in Medieval Icelandic Saga Narrative", Norse Greenland: Selected Papers from the Hvalsey Conference 2008, *Journal of the North Atlantic*, Special Volume no. 2, (2008), 34.

[16] Harðar saga ok Hólmverja („Saga of Hǫrðr and of the people of Hólmr") is a late 14th century composition detailing the adventures of the Viking Hǫrðr. It may be considered one of the few „outcasts' saga" (*skógarmanna sögur*). See Sture Hast (ed.), *Harðar saga* (Munksgaard, Copenhagen: Editiones Arnamagæanae, series A, 6), 1960.

[17] See, for example, William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking. Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press), 1990.

[18] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 151.

[19] Årmann Jakobsson, *Í leit ad konung,. Konungsmynd islenskra konungasagna* (Reykjavik: Háskólaútgáfan, 1997), 118, 205, 220.

[20] Sigurður Nordal, "Gunnhildur konungamóðir", *Samtid og saga* 1 (1941), 135-155; Jenny Jochens 1995, 180-182.

[21] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 151.

person and equally benevolent to the hero as King Haraldr, her son; furthermore, according to her well-known liking of men, the Queen took a fancy to Óláfr Pái and even more to his uncle, Hrútr, who entered the Queen's graces, her majesty even manifesting fits of jealousy when other men were being compared to him[22]. In *Brennu-Njáls saga* ("Saga of Burnt-Njal") the Queen appears as a powerful and, despite her middle-age, beautiful woman who uses magic curses and heathen sorcery (cursing him to be unable to reproduce with his fiancé) to take vengeance upon Hrútr for not revealing to her that he was betrothed to a woman back in Iceland. This truth was revealed after Queen Gunnhildr had appointed Hrútr at the court in exchange for him giving in to her advances and becoming her "sex slave"[23] – something scandalous for Christian ethics but not so much in the context of the ethical norms of the Old Norse society, in which, anyway, women enjoyed more freedom and more consideration of their role[24].

The successor of King Haraldr gráfeldr and Queen Gunnhildr was Earl Hákon (Hákon jarl hinn ríki, "Earl Hákon the Powerful", c. 937 – 995), a warlike character generally described in a positive way in the kings' sagas. In *Laxdæla saga*, the earl received the visit of the ancestor of Guðrún, Óláfr Pái, and bestowed useful gifts upon the visitor, considering him his friend[25]. According to the saga, Hǫskuldr Dala-Kollsson also met Earl Hákon and had good dealings with him, obtaining timber for house building[26]. Jarl Håkon is described in the same manner in *Viga-Glúms saga*[27] and *Hallfreðar saga*[28]. Still,

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Jenny Jochens 1995, 77-78.

[25] *Laxdœla saga*, chapter 32.

[26] *Laxdœla saga*, chapters 11-12.

[27] A saga written in the first half of the 13th century. The protagonist, Vigfús Glúmsson, though strong-willed, appears almost like a lawless person. See G. Turville-Petre, *Viga-Glúms Saga*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, Clarendon, 1960, repr. 1967).

[28] The main character of this saga, Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld („Troublesome poet"), deals with many dilemmas in his conversion from paganism to Christianity as well as in his relations to Óláfr Tryggvason and some other Norwegian rulers. See „Die Saga von Hallfreð dem Schwierigen / Hallfreðar saga vandræðaskálds" Klaus Böldl, Andreas Vollmer, Julia Zernack (eds.), *Die Isländersagas in 4 Bänden mit einem Begleitband (*Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2011).

not all family sagas maintain this positive image[29]. In *Eyrbyggja saga* [30], Vermundr was warmly welcomed by the Earl who appreciated the Icelandic visitor's family and even agreed to his guest's wish that he be gifted with two berserkers. Earl Hákon provided Vermundr with the berserkers he asked for but at the same time counseled him that they would not be of any luck. The association between the Earl and that ferocious archetype of pagan warriors had been noted by Ármann Jakobsson, who likens it to *forneskja* (witchcraft, sorcery)[31]. Again, almost similarly to the case of Queen Gunnhildr, the ruler of Norway is imagined as being able to control supernatural forces, bringing us close to our supposition that the perception of the Icelandic saga-writers of the Norwegian Kings bordered the supernatural as the monarch was perceived as an Outsider, whose power could have had both angelic and demonic influence.

To illustrate this hypothesis with one more example, in *Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls*[32] and *Finnboga saga ramma*[33], the Icelandic hero that arrived at the court of Earl Hákon was forced to battle a *blámaðr* (a "Black man", literally "blue-man"). No reason was given in the sagas for this trial set forth by the King, except his spite of the hero's strength[34]. In Old Norse society, the *blámaðr* can be interpreted in an ethnic way, simply referring to inhabitants from the south, or, as it probably was the case here in the saga, as demonic characters, who are fierce opponents and make loud, terrifying

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[29] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 152.

[30] *The Saga of the People of Eyri*, dating from the middle or later part of the 13th century, tells the story of the people of Þórsnes and Alptafjörðr, focusing on the conflict between the protagonist, Chieftain Snorri Þorgrímsson (Snorri goði, or Snorri the priest) and Arnkel Goði. See Paul Schach, *Eyrbyggja saga (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959).*

[31] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 152.

[32] A saga written in a later period (probably the 14th or even the 16th century) in which Greenland was presented as a land of opportunity. See Jóhannes Halldórsson (ed.), *Kjalnesinga saga. Jökuls þáttr Búasonar. Víglundar saga. Króka-Refs saga. Þórðar saga hreðu. Finnboga saga. Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls* (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1959), 343-379.

[33] *The Saga of Finnbogi the Strong*, recounts the story of a northern Icelander from the 10th century who travels through his country and through Norway and overcomes unfavourable odds in fulfilling his fate. See W. Bryant Bachman, Jr., Guðmundur Erlingsson (transl.), *The saga of Finnbogi the Strong* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1990).

[34] Phillip Pulsiano 1993, 250.

noises in battle, have yellow cat eyes and manifest various features of monstrosity or animal-human hybridity identifiable in descriptions of the *Stranger* [35]. The keeping of the *blámaðr* as a sort of the house-pet by Earl Hákon in *Gunnars saga* offers an exotic representation of the King, who is not simply acting evil but is able to do so by exerting control over such fiendish minions.

Returning to the role of Earl Hákon in other sagas, it is much more important in *Brennu-Njáls saga*, where he appears in the hypostasis of quest-giver and luck-bearing ruler[36]. In the first position, he sends Þráinn to exercise vengeance for him on a lawless Viking, while in the second position, he receives Gunnar with such extraordinary friendship and admiration that the Earl even offers his sister's hand in marriage to the guest[37]. In many sagas, there is this minor recurring motif of the Icelandic guest to the Norwegian court who is so charismatic that he/she becomes either involved in an affair or in a marriage proposal. In *Brennu-Njáls saga*, when Þráinn forsakes the friendship offered by the Early by protecting an enemy of the court, luck leaves him and his fate takes a turn for the worse[38].

To offer a general view of the Kings in the Icelandic saga, in regards to *Laxdœla saga* it may be asserted that monarch did occupy a central role. This is unlike family sagas written in the eastern parts of Iceland[39], where Kings were only briefly mentioned in the sagas[40]. In *Laxdœla saga*, just like in the case of the other family sagas, the role of the Kings was to confirm – in some way – the heroism or the noble lineage of the Icelandic hero. The leaders of Norway appear as sources of great honour for the Icelandic travellers who visit them and offer them their service. *Laxdœla saga* also stands out because its heroes do not have to perform any kind of task or quest for the King (which are usually not hard to achieve in the other sagas).

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[35] Richard Cole, „Racial Thinking in Old Norse Literature. The Case of the Blámaðr" *Saga-Book* 39 (2015): 5-24.
[36] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 152.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Such as *Víga-Glúms saga*, *Ljósvetninga saga*, *Valla-Ljóts saga*, *Hænsa-Þóris saga*, *Reykdœla saga*, and *Fljótsdæla saga*.
[40] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 154.

The men and women of *Laxdœla* are showered with honours and gifts by the King simply because of their superior "pedigree"[41]. The importance of the interaction with the Kings of Norway appears significant in *Laxdœla saga,* and in the older *Egils saga* and *Hallfreôar saga* as a general feature of the older family sagas[42]. Although Haraldr hárfagri appears as a tyrannical ruler in many family sagas, where his harsh policies are considered the reason why many families left for Iceland, no general tendency can be identified towards the negative depiction of Norwegian kings. King Haraldr hárfagri's campaign of terror against various chieftains is the exception to this rule, as generally the person of the monarch is an angelic one (with the few exceptions mentioned above), who bestows good fortune and treasures to the intrepid Icelandic adventurer. The King is not subject to critical scrutiny as happens in the Kings' sagas[43]. In the words of Ármann Jakobsson:

> "The Kings' Sagas are concerned with the idea of kingship. This makes their authors critical of individual kings, who clearly fall short of the ideal. The Icelandic Family Sagas, as a rule, do not judge kings so harshly. There, the kings usually appear as patrons of the Icelandic protagonists and thus confirm their worth. This is evident in *Laxdœla saga* where the kings welcome all members of the Laxdælir as equals. *Hallfreðar saga* may be seen as a large *þáttr*[44] about an Icelander and his service to a noble king. This can also be said of *Fóstbrœðra saga*, while the protagonists of *Grettis saga* and *Harðar saga* are not favoured enough by fortune to enjoy the respect of the king. This is indeed a harsh fate, as the favours of kings seem to be a coveted prize in the Family Sagas"[45]

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[41] Ibid., 154-155.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 157.
[44] "Strand" (of rope). The term refers to a short story genre, similar to a saga as subject but different in breadth.
[45] Ármann Jakobsson 2002, 157.

Therefore, the presentation of different icons of kingship in *Laxdœla saga* coupled with references to *Egils saga* and other family sagas has been connected to the hypothesis that in this *genre* the Icelandic authors portray the King either in an extremely positive or in a very negative manner. Arguments and examples have been brought to suggest that this duality in the representation of the monarch stems from the perception of the King of Norway as a *Stranger* or an *Outsider* to the Icelandic society. Some examples have been identified where the deeds of the Kings or of the Icelandic heroes bear similarity with elements from the chivalric culture in mainland Europe[46].

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[46] Ármann Jakobsson, "Royal Pretenders and Faithful Retainers: The Icelandic Vision of Kingship in Transition" *Gardar* 30, (1999), 51.

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A view from Poland: the state and the Orthodox church in the Ukrainian lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as reflected in the Polish historical research

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Abstract

This article explores the shifting perspectives of Polish academics about the role of the Orthodox Church in domestic and interstate relations within the Commonwealth and the Russian Empire. Why Poland's sovereignty crumbled at the end of the 18th century was one of the most critical questions Polish historians sought to explain. Since Bohdan Khmelnytskii's uprising, Moscow's geopolitical objectives had placed the Ukrainian territories in the forefront of their attention.

It has been documented that the nineteenth-century Polish scientific research was more concerned with the social and political impact of Orthodox Churches in Commonwealth regions than any other aspect of its history. However, this scenario has altered through time. Since the eighteenth century, the viewpoints of Polish historians have changed drastically. Additionally, they investigated the inner workings of churches and religious activity in Ukraine.

Rezumat

Articolul examinează dinamica opiniilor savanților polonezi cu privire la rolul Bisericii Ortodoxe în relațiile interne și interstatale din cadrul Commonwealth-ului și al Imperiului Rus. Unul dintre subiectele cheie la care istoricii polonezi au încercat să răspundă a fost motivul pentru care statalitatea Poloniei s-a dizolvat la sfârșitul secolului al XVIII-lea. Problematica teritoriilor ucrainene, care erau în interesul geopolitic al Moscovei începând de la insurecția lui Bogdan Hmelnițki, s-a aflat în prim-planul atenției lor.

S-a stabilit că istoriografia poloneză din secolul al XIX-lea a fost mai preocupată de consecințele sociale și politice ale Bisericilor Ortodoxe asupra Commonwealth-ului decât de orice alt aspect al istoriei sale. Acest scenariu a evoluat însă de-a lungul timpului. Perspectivele istoricilor polonezi s-au schimbat dramatic după secolul al XIX-lea. Ei au analizat, de asemenea, funcționarea internă a bisericilor și activitățile religioase din Ucraina.

Keywords: Ukraine, Poland, historiography, Orthodox Church, church-state relations

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Introduction

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Polish historians have developed a keen interest in the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Since then, it has remained constant, although there have been periods of twists. It gained the most focus in the second half of the nineteenth century, then throughout the Interwar period, somewhat in the second half of the twentieth century, and more actively at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Jozef Szujski, Tadeusz Korzon, Franciszek Gawronski-Rawita, Edward Rulikowski, Władysław Andrzej Serczyk, Andrzej Gil, Antoni Mironowicz, Maria Papeżyńska-Turek, Marek Melnik, Norbert Morawiec, Rafal Dimchik et al. are only few of the Polish historians who have written about the connections between the Church and the two states (Poland and Russia) in the Ukrainian lands. The 2019 establishment of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its recognition by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in the person of Bartholomew I have reignited interest in this topic.

There have been three waves of interest in religious, social and church-state relations in the territory of Ukraine in Polish science:

1) the first wave, from the 1830-40s to the early 1900s; this wave was undoubtedly triggered by the defeat of the Polish uprising, which raised the issue of the role of the Orthodox Church as an institution and the Ukrainian clergy in the destruction of Polish statehood; during this time, there was a debate between Poles and Ukrainians, as well as Russian scientists;

2) in the 1920s and 1930s, the second wave culminated in the restoration of Polish sovereignty (1918) and the establishment of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church (1924);

3) the third wave, which began in the 2000s and lingers on, was triggered by the revolutions in Ukraine in 2004 and 2013-2014, as well as Russian aggression, which began in 2014 and continues to this day.

Political interests of Polish historians

The rise of interest in the Orthodox Church's activities was conditioned mostly by political factors rather than strictly scientific ones

from the outset. One of the primary questions that Polish historians have attempted to solve is the reason why the Polish state was destroyed at the end of the 18th century. The Ukrainian lands, which have been in the realm of geopolitical interests of Moscow since the Khmelnytsky Uprising in 1648, were at the center of their attention.

Indeed, as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, two conflicting approaches to the portrayal of the function and place of the Orthodox clergy in the events of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Right-bank Ukraine were formed:

- According to Polish history and certain Ukrainian historians, the Russian authorities and Ukrainian clergy were the source of conflict on the Right Bank;

- Russian historiography and some Ukrainian researchers attributed all blame to the Orthodox clergy. Both of these perspectives were essentially ideological. Then, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, a third approach began to emerge, the primary goal of which was to collect reliable information and clarify the actual situation in the Ukrainian regions. This paradigm has been confined to Ukrainian historiography. Mykhailo Maksymovych (1804-1873), the first rector of the University of St. Volodymyr in Kyiv, was the first to voice these ideas.

Polish historians have highlighted the bond between the state and the Church as one of the decisive elements that contributed to the disintegration of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. According to Polish historians of the 19th century, the Orthodox Church was one of the factors that hindered the development of Polish statehood. At the same time, the Church appears to be at the core of the conflict between the two governments, Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, serving as a finger tip for both sides. The operations of church institutions and clergy in Ukrainian territory were analyzed within the perspective of the history of the Russian Orthodox Church and, therefore, Russian statehood. According to Polish history, the religious aspect in the regions of Ukraine, together with the corresponding deterioration of sociopolitical ties, has historically been viewed as one of the determining reasons in the demise of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The vast majority of Polish historians adhere to this approach. This is especially true of Teodor Morawski, Jozef Szujski, Tadeusz Korzon, Franciszek Gawronski-Rawita, and many others' scholarly outputs. Modern Polish historians, on the other hand, express themselves more cautiously on the matter, although it is evident to them that the religion issue was employed by Russian authorities in their foreign policy towards the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the sole goal of subjugating the latter.[1]

Polish historical study has progressed along a difficult path since the end of the 15th century, then following the loss of Polish sovereignty and its restoration at the turn of the twentieth century under diverse political and ideological settings. At the same time, Polish historical science is as closely tied to Ukrainian historical science as Russian science, and concerns about Ukrainian history have long worried it as much as concerns about Polish history, since the two have long been intertwined. As a result, the seventeenth and fifteenth-century Ukrainian topic was, and continues to be, one of the most difficult in Polish history. And, first and foremost, it concerns people's movements, the Khmelnytsky Uprising, Koliyivshchyna, and Orthodox Church activities in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth territory. Many scientific and popular works reflect this. At the same time, Polish historical science cannot be faulted for constantly being one-sided and biased in its analysis. Researchers have voiced a variety of viewpoints and used a variety of data to support their positions. Furthermore, the evolution of historical theory in Ukrainian, Russian, and Soviet historiography has been influenced by Polish historiography. The strategy taken by Polish scientists in dealing with a specific issue has sparked a lot of debate (for example, the participation of the Orthodox clergy in the political situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 1760s or 1790s). Nonetheless, it is Polish historiography's achievements that have inspired a more serious examination of interfaith relations and the sociopolitical situation on the Right Bank. It may even be said that, in terms of the study of Ukrainian

[1] See e.g.: Serczyk W., *Katarzyna II – carowa Rosji*, Wrocław, 1989, s. 176-177.

history, Polish historiography has been ahead of the development of Ukrainian historical science at times.

Polish historical science, its development and formation of concepts, respectively, were of interest to many Ukrainian and Russian scholars who left behind a number of studies, which, in particular, considered the attitude of Polish historians to Ukrainian history in various aspects (Mykola Karieiev, Volodymyr Zavitnevych, Dmytro Doroshenko, Leonid Dobrovolskyi, Zenon Kohut, Leonid Zashkilniak, et al)[2]. However, it should be emphasised that national researchers do not yet fully pay attention to Polish historical science in relation to its attitude to Ukraine, in particular, its approaches to evaluating the activities of the Orthodox Church.

Because of the events of 1760-1790, the perception of the Orthodox Church's negative participation in the disintegration of Polish sovereignty became entrenched in Polish historical thinking. Polish historians feel that the Church was merely exploited in the interests of the Russian government to meddle in the internal affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a result of those occurrences. As is well known, it was at this time that Empress Catherine II's diplomacy executed the "dissident issue," which was nominally aimed at resolving the problem of the Polish Orthodox population's religious and civic rights. Thus, the historian Jozef Szujski wrote in 1866 that "the case of dissidents was a philanthropic cape for Europe"[3]. Furthermore, he believes that this is precisely what sparked an upsurge in religious extremism in Poland[4]. The Orthodox bishops Hervasii Lintsevskyi and Hryhorii Konyskyi, according to the researcher, were the primary executors of tsarism's will, inciting religious hatred.

Teodor Morawski also dislikes Russia's policy on the "dissident issue", including Catherine II's requests that Bishop Hryhorii Konyskyi be given a Senate seat, although even "biscupi unicci" did not have it. Teodor Morawski resents her threats to resort to various means to execute her will,

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[2] Ластовський В., *Між суспільством і державою. Православна церква в Україні наприкінці XVII – у XVIII ст. в історії та історіографії*, Київ, 2008, 496 с.

[3] Szujski J., *Dzieje Polski*, t. IV, Lwów, 1866, s. 410.

[4] Ibid., s. 439.

as well as Prince Nikolai Repnin's pressure on the senators.[5]. As a result, the historian defends the Bar Confederation, claiming that it was only a reaction to the Sejm's illegal actions taken under political duress.[6]. He is also convinced that the Haydamak Uprising of 1768 was organised by the Russian authorities[7]. According to him, the Orthodox clergy in Ukraine followed Moscow's orders, which were passed through Bishop Hryhorii Konyskyi, the abbot of the Motronyn Saint Trinity monastery Melkhisedek Znachko-Yavorsky, and finally Bishop Viktor Sadkovskyi. The researcher exclusively considers the latter's nomination to the office of bishop of Pereiaslav and Boryspil in the context of Catherine II's policy. As a result, he portrays Bishop Viktor Sadkovskyi's complete reliance on her, believing that one evidence of this is the fact that Bishop Viktor Sadkovskyi swore an oath before the Polish king with the Empress's consent[8].

Bishop Viktor Sadkovskyi is also chastised by historian Henryk Moszczycki. The researcher focuses on the fact that this hierarch had long-standing political and religious practices before his appointment, and he hated Poles and Catholics for personal reasons; he was always a faithful servant of the imperial house, despite being a subject of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; that is why Viktor Sadkovskyi prepared a catechism for the parishioners with words about loyalty to Russian interests and allegiance to Catherine II, so he contributed to the preparation of the uprising in Ukraine in 1789, "in which he could play the role of Melkhisedek Znachko-Yavorsky". Henryk Moszczycki emphasises the bishop's close ties with the Russian government and the latter's interest in his actions. That is why Viktor Sadkovsky was released from custody "under the strong influence of the Russian ambassador"[9].

Another Polish historian Władysław Grabenski had a negative attitude towards all Orthodox Ukrainians who were "a dark, poor and contemptuous part of the population". Accordingly, he evaluated the active

[5] Morawski T., *Dzieje narodu polskiego*, t. V, Poznań, 1877, s. 42-43, 74.
[6] Ibid., s. 78.
[7] Ibid., s. 87.
[8] Ibid., s. 216.
[9] Mościcki H., *Dzieje porozbiorowe Litwy i Rusi*, zeszyt XII, Wilno, 1912, s. 365-366.

actions of Orthodox church hierarchs sequencing them in a certain way: from politics and ideology to the practical implementation of plans. Therefore, the activity of Bishop Hryhorii Konyskyi is nothing but intrigues against the republic; Bishop Hervasii Lintsevskyi is credited with starting Orthodox agitation among the Ukrainian population with the support of the Holy Synod and Orthodox monasteries; and Melkhisedek Znachko-Yavorsky performed more lowly tasks – luring the Uniates to Orthodoxy and galvanising coreligionists against the Catholic gentry and the Latin clergy[10]. The researcher also considered the development of the domestic political situation in the country and therefore saw the decisions of the Polish Sejm in February 1768, which had granted some rights to the Orthodox, doomed to stagnation and legal dependence on Russia, as they had been taken by delegates terrorised by the representative of Catherine II in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Prince Nikolai Repnin[11]. Vladislav Grabensky accused Otto Stackelberg, another Russian envoy in Warsaw, of trying to turn almost all Orthodox Christians into Russian subjects ruled by the Holy Synod after the first partition of the Polish state (1772), and as a result of his policy "actually obtained supreme power in the republic"[12]. In return, the Russian ambassador agreed in 1775 to the elimination of those provisions on the "dissident issue" by the Sejm that had been adopted in 1768: "... as dissidents were important in the process of strengthening Russian influence in Poland, so too they lost their previous value in the eyes of the St. Petersburg cabinet after its actual acquisition. In addition, by restricting the rights of dissidents Stackelberg payed for the delegation's compliance with the matters more important to Russia"[13].

The situation in the Right Bank Ukraine was most fully considered by the famous Polish historian Franciszek Gawronski-Rawita. In his opinion, it was here, in the Right Bank Ukraine, that the interests of Russia and Poland intersected. The researcher tries to describe all aspects of the socio-political life of both countries in relation to Ukraine. And in general, he followed the

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[10] Grabienski Wł. [Smoleński Wł.], *Dzieje narodu polskiego*, cz.2, Kraków, 1898, s. 42-43.
[11] Ibid., s. 39.
[12] Ibid., s. 67.
[13] Ibid., s. 61.

ideas expressed by his predecessors. As a result, he considered that the dissident situation was primarily political and national in origin, rather than religious[14]. Describing its examination during the Sejms of 1766, 1767 and 1768, he points primarily to the pressure of the Russian authorities on the course of events in the Polish parliament, which he interpreted as nothing short of legalising Russian protectorate over Poland[15]. At the same time, the Polish historian significantly deepened the views expressed against him, not only by factual material but also analytical. Thus, he came to the conclusion that the basis of Russia's interference in the internal affairs of Poland was the idea of religious cohesion from which the idea of tribal cohesion was artificially created by court scholars[16].

Franciszek Gawronski-Rawita also integrated his views on Koliyivshchyna's history in his artistic prose, in which he represented the artificiality of the religious strife between Ukrainians and Poles in Right Bank Ukraine. Amid the artistic images, he claimed that Bohdan Khmelnytsky was the first to fly the flag of religious struggle, and this tradition had continued for a long time; Russia, taking advantage of this factor, made the weakening of Poland its central aim[17].

The belief that the Constitution of 3 May had achieved full equality between non-Catholics and Catholics was a prevalent theme in all of the works of Polish historians.

The 20th century: a change in rhetoric

Political issues related to the religious situation in Right Bank Ukraine in the fifteenth century were also crucial to postwar Polish historical research, but they were no longer as nuanced as they had been. This was obvious in Maria Bogucka's, Wadysaw Andrzej Serczyk's, and other historiographic works. Despite the fact that charges against the Russian government and its actions have remained, the Polish nobility and Catholic church have not been absolved of blame for the situation. At the same time,

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[14] Rawita-Gawroński Fr., *Historya ruchów hajdamackich*, t. II, Lwów, 1901, s. 24.
[15] Ibid., s. 79.
[16] Ibid., s. 81.
[17] Rawita Fr., *Na kresach. Opowiadanie historyczne z XVIII wieku*, Warszawa, 1886, s. 196-198.

the historiography of the recent period has reflected the continuation of Polish science's traditions and general perspective.

Modern Polish historiography, on the other hand, has attempted to distance itself from prior Polish historiography by referring to it as "nationalist historiography."[18]. However, attempts to subordinate historical research to the ruling Communist Party defined this approach, not the historical science's growth in Poland. Nonetheless, there was a degree of consistency in Polish historiography. For example, in the 1950s, Emanuel Rostworowski suggested that non-Catholics seeking assistance overseas gave Russia more opportunity to meddle in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's internal affairs, particularly during Empress Catherine II's reign.: "Moreover, the patronage of Orthodoxy beyond the borders of the Empire was designed to serve the Russian policy in the Balkans and in Poland"[19]. At the same time, Russia gave the dissident case a strong political tone by asking that the Orthodox nobles be granted political rights. In general, Emanuel Rostworowski regarded the problem of Poland's division and statehood liquidation through the lens of the crisis of its internal order[20].

Maria Bogucka already accused the Polish gentry and the Catholic clergy of intolerance and religious fanaticism[21]. However, she believes that assessing the Bar Confederation of 1768 is more difficult and equivocal since religious fervour was paired with patriotism oriented "against Russian meddling in Polish affairs."[22]. According to Juliusz Bardach it was this anti-Russian statement that provided grounds for Russia's armed intervention[23].

Among modern Polish historians, Wadysaw Andrzej Serczyk is most known for his insights on Ukraine in the 17th and 18th centuries. His scientific legacy includes a large number of publications that have become a

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[18] Podraza A., Rostworowski E., "Materiały do sytuacji na Ukrainie Prawobrzeżnej i ruchów hajdamackich lat 50-tych i 60-tych XVIII wieku z korespondencji Jerzego Wandalina Mniszcka", *Przegląd Historyczny*, t. XLVII, zeszyt I, Warszawa, 1956, s. 146.

[19] *Historia Polski*, pod red. S.Kieniewicza i W.Kuli, t. II, cz, I, 1764-1795, Warszawa, 1958, s. 57.

[20] Rostworowski E., *Historia Powszechna: Wiek XVIII*, Warszawa, 1984, s. 703-705.

[21] Bogucka M., *Dzieje Polski do 1795 r.*, Warszawa, 1964, s. 250.

[22] Ibid., s. 260-261.

[23] Bardach J., "Konstytucja 3 Maja i zaręczenie wzajemne obojga narodów 1791 roku", *Konstytucja 3 Maja 1791*, wprowadzenie naukowe J. Bardach, Warszawa, 2001, s. 5.

unique "middle ground" in Polish history. As a result, his writings were well-received in both Ukrainian Soviet and Ukrainian foreign historiography.

This historian connects the evolution of Russian interference in the internal affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth only with the coming to power of Empress Catherine II (1762) and the election of King Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764) as a candidate from St. Petersburg, whereas he emphasises that the central focus of that policy was "the case of dissidents (adherents of a different faith)"[24]. However, he was convinced that Emperor Peter I was the one who set this policy in motion when he forced King Augustus II to allow the establishment of the Orthodox Mogilev diocese, which was subordinated to the Moscow Patriarch, and it was at this point that "Russia's dominant position became apparent."[25] In this regard, it is worth noting that Wadysaw Andrzej Serczyk's opinions on the subject remained constant from the 1960s to the beginning of the twenty-first century. He expanded on them in a special monograph on Catherine II's actions, in which he suggested, among other things, that the conflict between Catholic and Orthodox populations in Right Bank Ukraine was totally orchestrated by her government[26]. When it comes to the country's domestic political predicament, the historian is hesitant to place all of the blame for its complexity on the external opponents' devious operations. He considered that the biggest threat to Orthodoxy in Poland was not the king, senate, or sejm (and this was his way of justifying the state's supreme bodies), but the gentry and Uniates, who utilized different forms of coercion.[27]. At the same time, the historian believed that the concept of the independence of the Orthodox Church was a political novelty for the 1790s and its purpose was to create an independent church entity "in the Polish lands from Russia"[28].

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[24] Serczyk W., *Historia Ukrainy*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk, 1979, s. 190; Serczyk W, *Historia Ukrainy*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 2001, s. 151.

[25] Serczyk W., *Koliszczyzna*, Kraków, 1968, s. 48.

[26] Serczyk W., *Katarzyna II – carowa Rosji*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódż, 1989, s. 178.

[27] Serczyk W., *Koliszczyzna*.., s. 48-49.

[28] Serczyk W., Historia Ukrainy, Wrocław, 1979, s. 193; Serczyk W, *Historia Ukrainy*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków, 2001, s. 154.

Volodymyr Potulnytskyi, a contemporary Ukrainian researcher who studies Ukrainian history from a Polish perspective, raises a number of questions for which he believes a scientific search for answers is still needed, in particular, to reflect in Polish historical science the idea of "Ukrainians' ability to become a nation," the solution of "Ukraine's problems separately from the solution of the problem of Polish national identity," and the interrelation of the Ukrainian and Polish histories.[29]. The above-mentioned evidence, in my opinion, demonstrates that, at the very least, we can claim the Ukrainian influence in Polish historiography as one of the requirements for the "formation of Polish national identity". Furthermore, it is a necessary condition because, in the face of the 15th-century Ukrainian problem in Russian-Polish interstate relations, Polish historical science has attempted to demonstrate the historical injustice of depriving one of the largest Slavic nations of statehood and the necessity of restoring it.

Conclusions

From the above, it is clear that the history of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was primarily viewed through the prism of political considerations in Polish historiography of the 19th and early 21st centuries. Furthermore, practically all Polish academics agree that the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy did not behave as an independent entity in political internal and external affairs, but rather as an obedient instrument in the Russian government's hands.

It should be noted that historical science in Poland was not isolated. It actively replied to Russian and Ukrainian historical science's significant subjects. Russian experts are the most conservative in this regard because, in my opinion, they purposefully overlook the entire corpus of scholarly material produced by Ukrainian and Polish historians.

Furthermore, another issue that has yet to be considered in Ukrainian historical science – the demythologisation of church-state and interfaith ties in Ukraine – emphasizes the relevance of Polish scholarship. After all, even

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[29] Потульницький В., *Україна і всесвітня історія: Історіософія світової та української історії XVII – XX століть*, Київ, 2002, с. 34.

in the nineteenth century, all of these processes were seen only from an ideological standpoint in Russian historical science. Soviet and later contemporary Russian historical science followed this technique. At the same time, it was Polish historical science that challenged it for a long time.

Under the influence of Polish and Russian historical science methodologies, Ukrainian historical science in the study of church history arose, allowing it to take its own positions aimed at defending its interests and highlighting the unique characteristics of historical processes in the development of church institutions, church-social, and church-state relations in Ukraine.

Overall, we have every reason to anticipate that the study of the Orthodox Church's history in Ukrainian regions will become a distinct research field in Polish science.

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Great Britain and the United States of America as alterity figures for Romanians in the modern epoch: Ethno-cultural images and social representations

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Abstract

The main characteristics of any given social group are defined through comparisons with members of other communities and result from a complex interplay. Identity and alterity are thus constructed simultaneously and interdependently in accordance with group representations emerging from various sources: direct contact through travelling, mere legends or more verifiable accounts, scientific or fictional works, press articles tackling diverse topics, school textbooks, almanacs, etc. The British and the Americans were not identified as the most noteworthy alterity figures by the Romanian mentality of the modern period, but they were surely perceived distinctively from other foreigners. Despite the cultural and/or geographical distance between Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia, on the one hand, and Great Britain and the United States of America, on the other hand, towards the end of the 19th century average Romanians were able to interwove information gathered from a wide range of sources and to transform it into realistic depictions of these two countries and their inhabitants. This process of defining the Other combined diachronic and synchronous tendencies, fiction and facts, stereotypes and

Rezumat

Principalele caracteristici ale oricărui grup social dat sunt definite prin comparaţie cu membri ai altor comunităţi şi rezultă în urma unor interacţiuni complexe. Identitatea şi alteritatea sunt astfel construite simultan şi interdependent, în conformitate cu reprezentările de grup care reies din diverse surse: contactul direct prin călătorii, simple legende sau relatări verificabile, opere ştiinţifice sau de ficţiune, articole de presă tratând tematici diverse, manuale şcolare, almanahuri etc. Britanicii şi americanii nu au fost identificaţi drept cele mai remarcabile figuri ale alterităţii de către mentalitatea românească a epocii moderne, dar au fost cu siguranţă percepuţi în mod distinct faţă de alţi străini. În ciuda distanţei culturale şi/sau geografice dintre Transilvania, Valahia şi Moldova, pe de o parte, şi Marea Britanie şi Statele Unite ale Americii, pe de altă parte, spre sfârşitul secolului al XIX-lea românii de rând au fost capabili să îmbine informaţii provenind dintr-un spectru larg de surse şi să le transforme în descrieri realiste ale acestor două ţări şi ale locuitorilor acestora. Procesul definirii Celuilalt a combinat tendinţe diacronice şi sincronice, ficţiunea şi faptele, stereotipuri şi adevăr. Sintetizând munca realizată de

truth. By synthesising the work done by previous researchers, the present study provides an overall image of the ways in which Great Britain and the United States of America were perceived by Romanians throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

cercetători precedenți, prezentul studiu oferă o imagine de ansamblu a modurilor în care Marea Britanie şi Statele Unite ale Americii au fost percepute de către români pe parcursul secolelor XVIII-XIX.

Keywords: imagology, ethnic representations, alterity figures, Great Britain, United States of America, 18th-19th centuries.

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Reciprocal images and alterity figures

Imagination has always played a very important part in the interactions between different communities, irrespective of the relative geographical or mental distance between them. Given that all social contacts rely on (mental) images, the way(s) in which the Other is perceived deeply impacts upon the qualities and defects attributed to any alterity figure.

Information that serves as a basis for the formation of opinions about the Other can be gathered in various manners, but usually foreign travellers' accounts and figurative depictions predate direct contacts. Consequently, accuracy and objectivity can be considered desiderata rather than accomplished facts and yet images formed on such shallow data can prove to be very influential and durable. Notably, although geographical proximity facilitates contacts and should thus generate images that are situated closer to reality, it can also result in disputes and conflicts that lead to the demonization of the enemy and hence alter the proportion of truth to fiction in the representation of the Other.

From this viewpoint, Romanians' contacts with the Anglo-Saxon environment benefited from what could be labelled as distance-related objectivity, given that neither the Englishmen nor the Americans were considered "mirrors" in the identity formation process by Romanians in the modern epoch. For example, as will be detailed below, it was only during the 19th century that information about the American continent began to be largely available to literate Transylvanians, Wallachians and Moldavians. By contrast, facts about the British Empire had reached Romanians sooner, but

the English were viewed as cold, distant and separated from the rest of the European continent.

The present paper emphasises a number of aspects related to the manner in which the British and the Americans were perceived by Romanians during the modern epoch. This represents a synthesis of the work previously done by other researchers, my intention being that of unravelling the diachronic evolution of these ethno-cultural images and of pointing out some of the noteworthy moments characterising this process. The sources used by the already mentioned previous imagological studies were press articles, school textbooks, travel literature, diplomatic reports, private correspondence and other types of writings (as for example, popular anecdotes and proverbs), each with its respective potential to influence public opinion, depending upon its broader or more restricted circulation. Within this context, it should be noted that the importance of periodical publications during the 19th century was overwhelming from an imagological viewpoint particularly in Transylvania, as here it was mostly newspapers that ensured the dissemination of encyclopaedic (i.e. geographical, historical, economic, statistical, etc.) information, of political news, of diverse everyday facts, of travel literature, of translations from foreign works and of original articles written on numerous relevant topics by Romanian authors[1].

The following pages will reveal the clichés and stereotypes associated with the British and the Americans and the way(s) in which information about and/or contacts with these two alterity figures influenced Romanians' manner of defining the Other, whilst also implicitly illustrating the process leading up to the creation of two ethnic images which, with only a few minor revisions, were able to survive for decades as social representations.

Great Britain and the Englishmen: proximate and yet so distant

Clearly, the reciprocal images of two peoples are influenced by the political, social and/or cultural connections between them. In what regards

[1] Gheorghe Lascu, *Imaginea Franței la românii din Transilvania până în anul 1918* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Ştiință, 2000), 50.

the relations between the British and the Romanians during the 18th and 19th centuries, it is relevant to mention that these were, naturally, highly dependent upon the international context and rather sporadic, particularly given the Romanian provinces' feeble presence as relevant actors on the European political scene. For Wallachia and Moldavia these unfavourable conditions were maintained until late in the 19th century, namely until the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 (known as the War of Independence in Romanian historiography), when Romania gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire. For Transylvania the situation persisted well into the 20th century, as the province was removed from under the tutelage of the Austrian Empire only in 1918, through the Great Union.

Given these circumstances, the British knew very little about Transylvanian Romanians, who were not perceived separately from the other ethnicities that comprised the Habsburgs' Monarchy, while the Romanians from the Principalities represented only a minor part of the problems that defined the Ottoman Empire and were echoed in London during this period. This state of affairs was mirrored by Romanians' perceptions of the large and still influential British Empire, as the English did not represent a convincing ally neither for the Transylvanian Romanians in their struggle for gaining political rights within the Austrian/Austro-Hungarian (from 1867) Empire, nor for the Romanians living in Wallachia and Moldavia, where, although the British Empire was recognised as one of the great powers, its stance with regard to Romanians' goals on the international stage did not reach the state of benevolent neutrality and was rather unclear or visibly unfavourable.

As a consequence, in spite of the fact that the British were considered European, as they actually were from geographical and generally cultural viewpoints, they were nevertheless viewed as significantly different from the other defining European nations. In fact, this was a pose long cultivated by the British (and still in use, as the recent developments regarding the European Union reveal) and to which Romanians responded accordingly. Thus the British were seen as distant and unwilling to be of any help to small nations that pursued their independence, which was clearly in accordance

with the former's historical experience as the dominant people of a very large empire.

In fact, this type of perception was not a novelty of the 19th century, as similar attitudes could be observed earlier during the modern epoch. One such telling incident is William Paget's visit to Constantin Brâncoveanu's court at the very beginning of the 18th century, namely in 1702. What is striking about this event is that, although the new British ambassador to Constantinople was greeted and treated as his peers from other foreign countries, nothing more than mere deference can be revealed from the accounts referring to this encounter between this English diplomat and the Wallachian ruler. This obvious lack of interest towards an at least unusual presence can only be explained through the fact that the representative of the British Empire was not considered worthy of note in relation to Brâncoveanu's scopes and was probably viewed only as an exotic and passing presence that was hardly mentioned in Radu Greceanu's chronicle[2]. Such an attitude was hardly to be blamed, given that British envoys which showed any interest towards the Romanian provinces in any other manner than just as a complication concerning the Ottoman Empire represented *rara avis* in the 18th-19th centuries.

However, during the first half of the 19th century, some aspects of British culture and civilisation such as the English contredanse were adopted by Romanians alongside other types of influences, although this was highly risky for the ones open to innovation: wearing Occidental clothes could be interpreted as an attempt of political emancipation by the Ottomans, as the English Physician William Mac Michael correctly observed during his visit in the Principalities in 1817[3].

Nevertheless, historical developments were unfavourable to the old state of affairs and Romanians became more and more attached to Occidental values, some literary works going as far as mentioning the existence of phenomena labelled as „Anglomania"[4]. This happened in spite of the fact

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[2] Dan Horia Mazilu, *Noi despre Ceilalți: Fals tratat de imagologie* (Iaşi: Polirom, 1999), 7-8.
[3] Ștefan Cazimir, *Alfabetul de tranziție* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2006, Second revised edition), 27.
[4] Cazimir, 16-17.

that the English language was considered peculiar and lacking musicality (especially when compared with Romance languages), its short words being perceived as better suited to precise naval commands than to cultural purposes. Interestingly enough, this opinion was shared even by those who were able to understand and speak English, one such example being Ion Codru Drăguşanu[5].

Great Britain's geographical positioning harboured a series of peculiarities in what concerns political organisation, for example, but also favoured an openness towards the positive reception of other cultures, even (or particularly?) of those situated far away. Chinese, Japanese or Hindu elements of civilisation were greeted and met with understanding by the inhabitants of "the Empire on which the sun never sets", a striking attitude particularly when taking into consideration the numerous and long-lasting conflicts with other European states during the modern period. Romanians who set foot on British soil could not disregard a certain tendency for combining tradition and innovation that was visible in gestures, fashion or architecture, but also "a profound and unostentatious attachment to everything that the people of Great Britain has accomplished in the cultural domain, either we are referring to Shakespeare, to Newton or to Turner"[6].

Even the British Museum spoke and still speaks volumes about this tendency to bring together cultures and civilisations otherwise situated far away from each other and about the desire to learn from each and every one of them. Some pertinent observations concerning Great Britain's relations with other nations were made as early as 1840 by Ion Codru Drăguşanu, who noted that "England is the mother of political freedom", which was preserved through the possession of a very large number of battleships[7]. The Romanian traveller was also aware of the fact that the English showed deference towards his compatriots only because (or when) they considered the latter as potential buyers of industrial products, this conclusion being

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[5] Cristian Moroianu, "Peregrinul" ("The Pilgrim") by Ion Codru Drăgușanu: A multicultural synthesis of Europe", in *Discourse as a form of multiculturalism in literature and communication*, Coordinator Iulian Boldea (Tîrgu Mureș: Arhipelag XXI Press, 2015, Literature Section), 659.
[6] Alexandru Duțu, *Călătorii, imagini, constante* (Bucureşti: Editura Eminescu, 1985), 56.
[7] Moroianu, 658.

expressed without resentment: it was only natural that they would place their own interests above anything else.

As already mentioned, bilateral relations between Great Britain and the Romanian Principalities were established rather tardily and, as it usually happens in such circumstances, cultural contacts predated political connections. Thus, the first scientific work concerning the Romanian language was written by Max Müller in 1854 at the express request of the British ministry for foreign affairs[8], while E. C. Greenville Murray recorded in writing his travelling impressions through Wallachia in 1854-1855, alongside composing an anthology entitled "*Doine or the National Songs and Legends of Rumania*", an example that was followed in 1856 by Henry Stanley[9].

However, from a political viewpoint, Romania became relevant for Great Britain only after it gained its independence in 1877, an event that was well reflected by the British media and which was followed by the appointment of an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of Great Britain to Romania in the person of William Arthur White in 1880. His Romanian homologue was Nicolae Callimachi-Catargi, who traded his post in Paris for the one in London during the same year. In 1917 the first English-Romanian Society was born in Great Britain, its counterpart being established somewhat later, namely in 1922, in Cluj[10]. Moreover, Romanian traditions and culture became increasingly known to the British, particularly given that Romanians' history, language and literature started being taught in London after the end of the First World War and also because over the years they were served by such capable minds as those of Robert W. Seton-Watson, Denis Deletant and Alex Drace-Francis, to name only three of them.

As for the Romanians' perception of British realities in the same period, it is interesting to note that travelling accounts represent the most valuable and detailed source of information, although Great Britain was not a favourite destination neither for journeys of pleasure nor for those with educational purposes. Political reasons (which sometimes motivated

[8] Duțu, 145.
[9] Duțu, 62.
[10] Duțu, 60-61.

Transylvanian Romanians to temporarily leave the Habsburgs' Monarchy and to seek refuge or asylum elsewhere) did not habitually dictate the choice of the British Empire as a destination either. Romanians who preferred exile to imprisonment usually departed for places that were perceived as being situated closer to home, at least from a cultural viewpoint, if not geographically.

One of the first Transylvanians who travelled to England was Paul Iorgovici, but his journey was one forced by events and, unfortunately, did not result in a written account of the time he spent in London. He arrived in Great Britain from France, where he had lived for three years in order to complete his studies, after being a witness to Louis XVI's decapitation in 1793[11]. For a year he fulfilled the role of a minor functionary in London, before returning within the borders of the Austrian Empire and continuing his intellectual work[12].

As for leisure journeys, Ion Codru Drăguşanu, the most famous Transylvanian traveller of the modern period, remarked in 1840 Great Britain's high level of civilisation compared to other foreign countries he had seen and affirmed that "The originality of English clothing, lifestyle and products is [given by] simplicity combined with solidity", everything perceived as being simple and elegant being considered "*á l'anglaise*"[13]. The tendency to gather, through various means, valuable goods from foreign countries and to carefully preserve them in museums, particularly in the British Museum, is also noted by the Transylvanian voyager, alongside a series of observations concerning London's parks and green areas or English culinary habits. Regarding this last aspect, Ion Codru Drăguşanu considered that "the Englishman is the most voracious nation on earth. As soon as he wakes up in the morning he drinks tea or coffee, at ten hours a.m. he eats a beefsteak and drinks beer, he lunches in trim at two, repeats the tea at five

[11] Lascu, 71.
[12] For more details about Paul Iorgovici's activity as a linguist and philologist, see Ion Medoia, 'Paul Iorgovici, lingvist și învățat de talie europeană', *Philologica Banatica,* I (2014): 68-80.
[13] Duțu, 60.

p.m. and does not miss the occasion of a proper dinner at nine in the evening, while afterwards a punch often follows"[14].

On other occasions, the Transylvanian pilgrim remarked that the British tend to consider themselves at home no matter where they found themselves, quickly adding however that they are entitled to such an attitude because "I don't know which country would not be indebted to the English"[15]. Moreover, Codru Drăguşanu is able to extract and express the essence of the moral portraits of the various nations he encountered in his journeys, the British being characterised by faith in money and in their diplomats, who deceive the entire world with finesse. They are also speculative (in a positive manner), highly aristocratic, punctual, skilful and industrious, these last qualities being supported by such arguments as the fact that in England one does not encounter houses with cracked windows or broken doors.

Other famous Romanian travellers to England were Alexandru Odobescu, who was impressed by Westminster Abbey's gothic architecture and by the Egyptian, Etruscan and Greek antiquities of the British Museum, which he visited in 1852[16], Gheorghe Bariţ, who considered that in London positive aspects were paralleled by negative ones, without providing too many details in this respect, whilst revealing some signs of admiration, and Alexandru Şterca-Şuluţiu, for whom London is cold and prudent[17]. Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Brătianu and Ion Ghica devotedly pleaded the cause of the Romanian Principalities in front of the British officials during the second half of the 19th century[18], while at the end of the seventh decade of the 19th century, Iacob Negruzzi voluntarily mixed truth and fiction and portrayed the British Isles and its inhabitants in a deeply humorous manner. For him, the British are stiff, uncommunicative, vexatious, dull and obsessed with speed not only

[14] Moroianu, 652.
[15] Moroianu, 654.
[16] Florin Faifer, *Semnele lui Hermes. Memorialistica de călătorie (până la 1900) între real şi imaginar* (Bucureşti: Minerva, 1983), 240.
[17] Lascu, 72-73, 145, 176.
[18] Duțu, 59.

in manufacturing and technological innovation, but in all aspects of life, up to the point where they comprise a particular human race[19].

Other characterisations of Englishmen pertaining to Romanians view the former as inseparable from a travel guide (Vasile Alecsandri) or as being eccentric (Dimitrie Ralet), particularly when they function as tourists[20]. Similarly, Ion Codru-Drăguşanu considered that, for the serious, taciturn, egotistical, pragmatic and clockwise-exact British, travelling represented a very efficient manner of avoiding spleen[21].

Nicolae Iorga provided an even more detailed portrait of the English tourists, which simultaneously intrigued and amused him through their physical appearance (tall and lean, wearing checkered jackets and bouffant pants) and which were phlegmatic, puritanical, rigid and patient, acting like they fulfilled a duty even when travelling, causing Iorga to label them as "the Wandering Jews of the modern world"[22]. Ioan Russu-Şirianu visited London in 1895, his impressions about the Englishmen being similar to those of other Romanians who were struck by the former's seriousness and lack of expansiveness[23]. From a physical viewpoint, most British were tall and well-built, but their preference for beer predisposed them to "fat bellies, rosy cheeks and a rather feeble mind" (at least in the opinion of Ion Lapedatu[24]), although taken as a group they comprised a strong people, which, in alliance with the French, was not only capable, but entitled to rule the entire world.

A very thorough account of a visit to Great Britain at the end of the 19th century was signed by Victor Ardeleanul and was published in a widely circulated Transylvanian periodical[25]. According to the already established model, the Romanian traveller resorted to comparisons with other European countries in order to paint a picture of a nation that was highly advanced and worthy of admiration. The author seemed to discover a tight connection

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[19] Faifer, 269.
[20] Faifer, 313.
[21] Moroianu, 658.
[22] Faifer, 315.
[23] Lascu, 84.
[24] Lascu, 144.
[25] Victor Ardeleanu, 'Englezii și capitala lor', *Tribuna*, XIII (1896), No. 235: 937-938, No. 236: 941-942.

between the qualities of the British people and its achievements on economic, urban, technological or cultural levels. He considered that London was "the capital of the world, at least from a commercial point of view" and particularly admired its "large streets, spacious dwellings" and reduced noise, which was highly discordant with the frenzied activity characteristic of such a large city, but explicable given the British' seriousness, discipline, common sense and lack of the exuberance that was typical of Latin peoples.

Means of transportation represented another domain in which the English clearly surpassed other European nations, regardless if we are referring to trains (which were fast, noiseless and comfortable), to "cabs" (available in sufficient numbers and characterised by fast horses, polite coachmen, two wheels and a size fitted for narrow streets), to "underground trains" (which were widely used, particularly as they passed at every five minutes in either direction, but had the disadvantage of soiling the passengers with coal fumes and particles) or to the underwater electric train (that was built under the Thames in 1892 through a collaboration between a British and a French engineer as proof that the two sides of the English Channel could be connected via train).

The geometrical regularity of the streets, the houses aligned on them and an overall lack of monumentality represented other aspects that clearly differentiated London from other European capitals, given that the buildings which served as homes resembled one another up to the point where you could confuse them and also because very few institutions were worth mentioning from an architectural viewpoint (such as Crystal Palace, the British Museum or Buckingham Palace). One obvious exception from this unwritten rule was "commercial London, called the City, having in its centre the Bank of England and the Stock Exchange", because here buildings had up to seven floors and were furnished with elevators. The low frequency and doubtful quality of monuments, the inexistence of coffee houses, the rather reduced number of theatres, which was however compensated by the number and quality of music-halls and ballets, the lack of proper boulevards and a striking cease of activity on the streets after six p.m. complete the picture of a town and of a people centred around commerce.

According to Victor Ardeleanul, the British devoted their entire spare time to their home-life, were conservatory in their mores, possessed a typical self-confidence, did not seek to imitate other peoples and customs, were somewhat selfish (but in an honest and open manner) and were extremely pious. The Romanian traveller also remarked a few signs of women's emancipation, which were noted rather open-mindedly, the only truly negative aspect that characterised Great Britain being the climate, which included extensive periods of dense fog and temperatures situated around the freezing point and which was considered responsible for the proverbial English spleen and for the associated high number of suicides or suicide attempts (that were harshly punished by law).

The first half of the 20th century is characterised by an even higher number of Romanians who travelled to Great Britain in various circumstances, such as Mihai Ralea, Alexandru Rosetti, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Zoe Dumitrescu Bușuleanga, Alexandru Balaci or Adrian Marino, all of them carefully noted by Alexandru Duțu[26]. However, the impressions left by London on these intellectuals' thoughts cannot serve the scope of the present study, as they are not characteristic of the period of formation and consolidation of British images in the Romanian imaginary.

The United States of America and the perils of overgeneralization

The continents beyond the Atlantic Ocean entered Romanians' imagination rather tardily, as information about the Americas became available on a large scale only during the 18th and 19th centuries. This occurred although the first pieces of news about the New World reached Transylvania during the 16th-17th centuries through foreign books and cosmographies, but these had a very limited spreading amongst the members of the intellectual elite[27]. It was only towards the end of the 18th century that world history books written in Latin, German, Hungarian or even Romanian, as well as school textbooks and almanacs started to reach

[26] Duțu, 59, 64.

[27] Alexandru Vári, "Imaginea Statelor Unite ale Americii în paginile „Gazetei de Transilvania" (1838-1848)", in *Convergențe europene: Istorie şi societate în epoca modernă*, Eds. Nicolae Bocşan, Nicolae Edroiu, Vasile Vesa (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1993), 106.

an ever broader audience and to really contribute to the emergence of an informed opinion about the state of affairs and the events from this faraway land, this happening in close conjunction with a shift of focus from the entire Western hemisphere to the most developed of its political elements, namely the United States of America.

At first, it was mostly geographical and historical information that became known to the Romanian public, which was informed about a series of facts characteristic to these lands surrounded by water on all sides, as, for example, their climate and their old inhabitants (mistakenly called "Indians" and treated very badly by the new arrivals) or that this territory had apparently been discovered in Antiquity and then forgotten. However, with time, other types of news started being circulated and created the image of a "land of opportunity", such as the manner in which the United States of America gained their independence from Great Britain, the results of the industrial revolution, the economic advancements that characterised North America, religious freedom and seemingly endless possibilities of becoming rich. However, all these positive traits stood in stark contrast to the shamefully retrograde situation of Black slaves.

As a result of this evolution, this unusual and exotic continent that was opposed to Europe from almost every viewpoint conceivable started being perceived by Romanians less as an enigma and more as a political unit with characteristics that individualised it and that were worth replicating (with the obvious exception of slavery). Consequently, throughout the 18th and particularly during the 19th century, the stereotypes and clichés that were intrinsic to an image based almost entirely on infrequent direct contacts and mediated information of a bookish nature were gradually replaced by descriptions that were closer to reality and that included positive and negative aspects, garnished with exotic elements such as the Indians' lifestyle or the gold rush.

Almanacs usually provided Romanians with (more or less accurate) factual data about the New World. For example, in the *Calendariu... făcut spre întrebuinţarea norodului... rumânesc* [*Almanac... made for the use of the... Romanian people*] printed in Vienna in 1794, one of the historical events that was mentioned was America's discovery that had occurred 303 years ago,

namely in 1492[28]. The same piece of information was included without additions in subsequent almanacs, such as the one published in Buda in 1814 and referring to the past 100 years.

Geography books encompassed the widest collection of general, historical, geographical, ethnographic and, at times, political knowledge about the New World, this statement being also applicable to the first textbook in the Romanian language, namely *Geografia istorică, astronomică, naturală şi civilă a continentelor în general şi a României în parte* [*The historical, astronomic, natural and civil geography of the continents in general and of Romania in particular*], written by Ioan Genilie and printed in Bucharest in 1835[29]. In this work destined to be used by students in the humanities the author included numerous notes about the discovery of the New World (mentioning Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, John Cabot and Francis Drake), about the importance of this event in humankind history and about the continent's physical characteristics, riches and populations, whilst the United States of America were merely deemed the best example of the civilisation level that could be reached by Europeans.

The textbook written by Ioan Rus and entitled *Icoana pământului sau carte de geografie* [*The earth's icon or geography book*] was by far the most comprehensive and widespread work containing information about the New World that was available to Romanians during the 19th century. Published in Blaj in 1842, this geography textbook contained over 100 pages devoted to America and provided its readers with facts presented with a touch of the author's personal opinions, such as when mentioning how the indigenous people, mistakenly called Indians, were wiped out owing to Europeans' swords and alcoholic drinks or when treating the matter of commerce with Black slaves brought from Africa. Religion also occupied an important place amidst the pieces of information provided by Ioan Rus about the United States of America and he mentioned the fact that Lutheranism and Calvinism were dominant. As for trades and crafts,

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[28] Paul Cernovodeanu and Ion Stanciu, *Imaginea Lumii Noi în ţările române şi primele lor relaţii cu Statele Unite ale Americii până în 1859* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1977), 48.

[29] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 85.

American colonists had at least matched, if not yet surpassed, their European peers, this accomplishment being paralleled by the attention given to education, as proven by the approximately 700 journals printed each year. Statistics accompanied Ioan Rus's description of the Unites States of America's population, industry, agriculture and commerce and one of the conclusions reached at the end of this overview regarded the political regime, which was "very different from European countries, only the republic of Switzerland bearing a small resemblance" with it[30].

Romanians' interest towards the world beyond the ocean was proven by the fact that geography professors also had access to *Harta ghenerală a Americei* [*The general map of America*] lithographed at Jassy in 1840[31], whilst for less specialised readers, press articles covering a large area of topics represented the main source of information. Consequently, average Romanians could learn about a new means of transportation (the train) and about its benefits or about the Americans' attempts at creating a set of laws against alcoholism, an endeavour that was highly praised. Moreover, data comprised in such works was soon enriched with knowledge that could serve economic purposes, such as details about the possibilities of using some species of plants typical of the New World in Europe, whether in nutrition or in the textile industry[32]. And theory soon turned into practice, as proven by the mere enumeration of the plants included in these writings: cotton, maize, field maple, tobacco, potato, sun flower or American beans.

Translations and adaptations of American literary works were also introduced to the public in the columns of the newspapers issued in the Romanian Principalities and in Transylvania during the 19th century or in the form of books. An analysis of early translations reveals that Benjamin Franklin was Romanians' favourite American author, the biographical information that usually accompanied his texts having much to do with the renown he gained so far away from home. Transylvanians' relation with Benjamin Franklin was multilayered and took the form of both direct contacts and of mediated and delayed reception of his works. The first type

[30] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 87.
[31] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 88-89.
[32] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 55.

of connection was surely feebler than the latter, but it included the interesting story of Samuilă Dămian, an Orthodox priest eager to travel and expand his knowledge, whose passion for experimental physics turned him into Franklin's disciple on the realm of electricity[33]. As for the second type of connection, the reach of the texts written by this outstanding American personality was surely superior to those of other of his compatriots. Understandably, works on electricity became known to Romanians soon after they were published in America, through French and German translations. However, a few decades later, Transylvanians also began to make contact with Franklin's literary, didactical and moralistic texts, particularly given that he had already proven himself as an important diplomat and politician during the American War of Independence. Both his life and his work demonstrated that Benjamin Franklin represented the very essence of Enlightenment and thus he was greatly respected by Transylvanian scholars and his writings were repeatedly translated into Romanian during the first half of the 19th century[34].

Romanians' growing interest towards the New World coincided with an increase in the intensity and frequency of political and economic contacts between other European countries and the Unites States of America. Consequently, although the old image of a Colonial America which was extremely rich in natural resources persisted until the end of the Phanariot epoch, beginning with the third decade of the 19th century it was replaced with a view of a political unit that was able to set aside the centuries-old yoke imposed on it by one of the planet's greatest powers, The British Empire, and thus serve as an example for other of the latter's colonies[35]. However, the tales of the great sailors and of the geographical discoveries that took place

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[33] Sorin Mitu, *Transilvania mea. Istorii, mentalități, identități* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2013), 615. Another Romanian that distinguished himself in the United States of America was Gheorghe Pomuț, commander of a Northern regiment during the American Civil War, later on appointed as consul general in Russia; for details, see Mircea Popa, 'Imagini şi aspecte americane în mentalul românesc de până la Primul Război Mondial', *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai. Historia*, XXXI:2 (1986): 44-45.

[34] Sorin Mitu provides a very well documented and detailed analysis of how Benjamin Franklin and his work were received in Transylvania in Mitu, 614-622.

[35] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 49.

in the 15th-16th centuries continued to kindle Romanians' imaginations even after the northern part of the American continent took on new meanings for them and the United States of America were clearly separated from an imagological viewpoint from Latin America.

As for politics, in Romanian eyes, the largest power from across the Atlantic Ocean was often compared with Imperial Rome, given some resemblances between the two in the governing manner[36]. It seems that the first piece of information about the American War of Independence that reached Romanians was comprised in a world history book written by the German historian Julius August Remer and published in Vienna in 1785-1786 under the title *Handbuch der allgemeinen Geschichte*. This work was anonymously translated and it circulated as a manuscript in Moldavia in two copies, one dating from the end of the 18th century and another that was composed at the specific request of a boyar named Tudurache in 1813-1814[37]. Some details about the political developments from the United States of America after they declared their independence were also included in *Courier de Moldavie* in 18 February 1790 in the context of the Russo-Austro-Turkish War of 1787-1791.

Political news regarding the United States of America was also received in the Romanian Principalities by means of the foreign press and excerpts from French and Austrian publications were brought to the Sublime Porte's attention by Alexandru Nicolae Şuţu in 1808. During the summer of 1812, the same ruler also informed its suzerain power about the war that had broken out between the United States of America and Great Britain and presumably about its evolution, although subsequent correspondence concerning this issue was not preserved[38].

As already mentioned, until the third decade of the 19th century news about what happened across the Atlantic Ocean travelled in the Romanian area only (or, at least, mostly) through manuscripts and as part of private correspondence. However, printed works devoted to the American republic started to be more widespread after this date, thus proving a growing

[36] Vári, 109.
[37] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 70.
[38] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 74-75.

interest in this regard, particularly as advancement in general knowledge was paired with an interest for a potentially mirroring political destiny and spiced up by the first direct contacts[39].

The representatives of the 1848 generation were the ones truly responsible for seeding information about the United States of America into Romanians' imaginaries through their utter admiration for the Declaration of Independence and for the principles it stood for. Simion Bărnuţiu's translation of the American document greatly contributed to the propagation of democratic ideas that were synchronous with the developments from within the Austrian Empire, such as national independence and self-determination[40]. Religious freedom also kindled the imagination of some Romanians, particularly Transylvanians, and transformed the United States of America into a Land of Promise, as proven by the migratory wave that was to characterise the turn of the 20th century.

During the second half of the 19th century, press articles continued to polish the image of the United States of America as a land governed by rapid economic development, by territorial growth, by technological progress and by a continuous increase in the number and performance of communication routes and means. American politics and other minor events that entered the sphere of sensational news (domestic incidents, epidemics, devastating fires, shipwrecks, Indian attacks, etc.[41]) also filled Romanian newspapers' columns[42]. The Black slaves' fight for emancipation represented a particularly ardent topic for Romanians, given that a number of parallels between the former's situation and that of Gypsies from Wallachia and Moldavia could be drawn and, unsurprisingly, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe received two translations into Romanian only a year after it was published.

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[39] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 83.
[40] Cernovodeanu and Stanciu, 130-131.
[41] Vári, 113-114.
[42] Mircea Popa mentions other types of news about the United States of America that could be included in the "Various" category, such as information about women's education, about Fridays in American history, about marriage in America, about who discovered America and the origin of its name, etc. See Popa, 42.

In the same vein, journalists sometimes also reported that religious freedom was tainted by Anglicanism's predominance, whilst national equality was by no means real since English was deemed the country's only diplomatic language[43]. Moreover, as the migratory wave accelerated[44], newspapers placed an emphasis on the fact that those who travelled for the United States of America exposed themselves to a number of perils, not only during their trip, but also when they arrived at their destination, because ruthless capitalists tried to turn them into modern-day serfs[45].

The last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century brought about an increase in the number of Romanian literary works translated and published in the United States of America, as well as recognition of the rather large Romanian community which was already living across the Atlantic Ocean[46]. As a result, numerous on-the-scene accounts about life in America not only reached the Romanian public, but also served as a source of inspiration for some Romanian authors. The first scientific reports written by Romanians about the United States of America also date back to the beginning of the 20th century[47], as well as a rather peculiar and unusual text describing a trip across the Atlantic Ocean made by an anonymous Wallachian woman, presumably during her honeymoon[48]. The author, writing some time after returning to Europe, remarked the apparently limitless possibilities that New York provided to the ones who decided to make a living there, a fact that revealed itself during the six days she spent in the American metropolis[49].

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[43] Vári, 110.

[44] Some details in this respect are provided by Popa, 47.

[45] Vári, 111. Similar conclusions were drawn at the beginning of the 20th century by V. E. Moldovan, a Romanian publicist who spent 5 years in America; details in Popa, 48-50.

[46] Popa, 42-43.

[47] Popa, 45.

[48] For details, see Alin Ciupală, "Rediscovering the New World. An anonymous Romanian traveler in the two Americas in the early 20th century and her diary", in *Călători români în Occident: secolele XVII-XX*, Eds. Nicolae Bocşan, Ioan Bolovan (Cluj-Napoca, Institutul Cultural Român: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2004), 203-210.

[49] A more detailed account of New York was provided for those contemplating emigration across the Atlantic Ocean by publicist V. E. Moldovan; Popa, 48-49.

As the amount of direct contacts and indirect information increased, Romanians' image of the inhabitants of this extraordinary land became clearer and closer to reality. Americans thus started being perceived as people with qualities and faults, similar to Romanians in some respects, but very different in others. For example, they were prone to revolt, impulsive, temperamental, grandiloquent, careless, fashionable and easily steered by anger or admiration towards reckless acts. Moreover, they did not pay too much attention to ranks, as money decided the winner(s) of the day, although the tables could very easily turn, as financial tumult and resounding bankruptcies demonstrated[50]. Equally relevant for Romanians was the fact that immigrants were treated as a labour force that had to be used to the highest degree, without any concerns about the men's physical and psychological health and/or welfare, something that was noted by several authors[51].

Concluding remarks: A similar substratum, different materialisations

Ethnic representations are created during a complex process that combines top-down and bottom-up influences, the elites and the commoners reciprocally influencing their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards members of other groups than their own. Moreover, the resulting images are based on various sources of knowledge, as alterity is experienced both directly and in more mediated manners.

Meeting a foreigner, either by travelling to his/her country or by receiving him/her as a guest at home, represented merely one of the ways in which the Other became known to Romanians during the modern epoch. Somewhat unexpectedly, particularly as they were usually hosts, not visitors[52], the number of Romanian travellers that crossed the English Channel to Great Britain or even the Atlantic Ocean to reach the United States of America was rather large for the analysed period. However, given

[50] Vári, 111-113.
[51] Popa, 50-51.
[52] Marian Popa, *Călătoriile Epocii Romantice* (Bucureşti: Univers, 1972), p. 458.

their isolated nature, such contacts were habitually not decisive in establishing ethnic images, but had the potential of becoming more powerful when they acted as sources of inspiration for fictional and non-fictional works able to propagate and perpetuate certain (positive or negative) stereotypes and clichés. Fortunately, some of these travellers were talented and authored detailed and well-documented accounts of their journeys, accounts which shed light on a number of peculiarities and less-known facts through an in-depth and on-the-spot understanding of the alterity and which thus earned their place beside school textbooks and press articles as the chief sources of information about the Anglo-Saxons available to average Romanians.

Throughout all these depictions of the Other, the natural environment and the urban areas represented the most important scenes on which the British or the American actors revealed their defining traits, from phenotype[53] and clothing to main occupations, patterns of behaviour and moral codes. In fact, humans and their surroundings were usually inseparable, as exemplified by most descriptions of towns, particularly in the case of London (usually compared to Paris or Vienna) or New York (which stood in stark contrast to any European city).

In general, Romanians' impressions about London were unique and characteristic to each traveller, the British capital usually being portrayed with curiosity and in all its greatness, although it did not particularly struck a chord with them[54]. This occurred mainly due to the fact that they habitually arrived in Great Britain after their perception was profoundly influenced by French texts about the latter's neighbours.

For the British, the English Channel represented (and is still considered) a borderland that distinctly separated them from the rest of the continent. They felt that they were situated "overseas" and their identity as islanders was viewed as one of the elements that defined them the most[55]. Customarily they were positioned and positioned themselves amongst the

[53] The typical physical traits usually represent one of the first clichés circulated in relation to foreigners; Lascu, 16.
[54] Duțu, 65.
[55] Duțu, 56.

continent's "Nordic" countries, an opinion shared by many Romanians who reached the British shores during the 19th century, Titu Maiorescu being one such example[56]. Other clichés of the same period depicted the Englishmen as aristocrats or as bad cooks[57], whilst the British women were considered beautiful in an imposing, statuary manner, but were cold and lacked passion, as both Ion Codru Drăguşanu and Ioan Russu-Şirianu discovered[58].

As opposed to these images of members of a European nation who were striving to emphasise their peculiarities, Romanian stereotypes about the United States of America focused upon broader topics, better suited to describe a rather exotic faraway territory. Similar to other European peoples, during the 19th century Romanians viewed this foremost representative of the New World as a realm of political, religious, economic, individual or even moral freedom and independence, as a land of endless possibilities, a country in which liberties could be theorised, proclaimed and embodied (as in the noteworthy case of Benjamin Franklin), a place in which they could project all their dreams, hopes and expectations for the future. The United States of America were considered the quintessential exemplification of the idea of progress and overall development (with the striking exception of Black slaves), a model to be followed not only by Romanians, but also by old Europe.

These exaggerated representations were undisputed until the large (mostly Transylvanian) migratory wave from the beginning of the 20th century, which permitted a more thorough knowledge through direct contact. This revealed what I labelled "the perils of overgeneralization", a phrase intended to illustrate the fact that the United States of America was (and still is) a country of contrasts, with enormous differences between the rich and the poor, with large gaps between theory and practice, particularly for recent immigrants, which found here unimagined hardships and utter misery and which had to work extremely hard for a meagre living[59]. The positive traits associated with the United States of America were generally

[56] Ciupală, 204.
[57] Lascu, 17-18.
[58] Lascu, 146-147.
[59] Popa, 51.

overrated, whilst the numerous social, cultural, religious or even economic problems were underestimated, habitually owing to the precarious political situation that characterised Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia during this period.

A comparative analysis of Romanian views on Englishmen and Americans reveals that the relevant sources were interpreted using separate paradigms, in the sense that realities from across the English Channel and those from across the Atlantic Ocean were passed through different filters of perception, the resulting images thus being governed by distinct rules. Consequently, in the case of Great Britain Romanians operated with a set of representations that synchronously depicted the political regime (through information about the Empire, the monarch and/or the capital, about relations with other European countries/nations, but also about the standard of living of ordinary people), the natural or the manmade surroundings (particularly in the case of urban areas), the typical British features (related either to physical appearance or behaviours) and/or certain cultural peculiarities (such as the famous five o'clock tea). On the other hand, Romanians' image of the United States of America was constructed diachronically and it evolved from a rather mythical and exotic representation of the New World to a more realistic depiction of a country that caught up with and then swiftly surpassed the standards of the European civilization and ultimately to a land that provided the chance to a better life to those willing to sacrifice their youth and sometimes their health through hard work in a very dynamic environment.

However, a common trait characterising the construction of Romanians' alterity images of Great Britain and the United States of America was the use of data provided by various sources (school textbooks, almanacs, press articles, travel accounts, translations of foreign scientific or literary works, etc.) in the elaboration of informed and sometimes of ill-formed opinions, both tendencies being typical of any social representation, due to the unavoidable mixture of truth and stereotypes that underlies all ethno-cultural interactions.

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