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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second issue of *Studia Territorialia* for 2023, entitled "The Uses of Nostalgia: Longing for the Past, (Re-)Imagining the Future."

Nostalgia is a common emotion, prompted by personal or collective memories of a lost and longed-for past. It can also be triggered by exposure to certain images and narratives about the past. Such images and narratives can induce feelings of warmth and well-being in the present, but also negative emotions at times. Political leaders often employ a nostalgic national narrative to exploit perceptions of a disconnect between their nation's past greatness and its dire present predicament. Nostalgic memories of a "golden past" are frequently instrumentalized in discourses that glorify former empires and colonizers. What are the salient features of nostalgic discourses? What cultural mechanisms do they rely upon and what are the various ways in which they can be politicized? To what political ends have nostalgic discourses been employed? These are some of the questions that the contributions included in this issue of *Studia Territorialia* seek to answer.

This special issue contains three original articles that deal with the topic of longing for the past. Each study covers aspects of nostalgic discourses from nations that fall within the regional scope of our journal. The first contribution is a study of nostalgizing practices in the development of archaeological museums in interwar Turkey and Germany. In his well-documented study, Sebastian Willert examines the personal histories and professional activities of the directors of the museums, which at the time were pre-eminent institutions in the formation of the two countries' respective national memories. He reveals continuities and disruptions in the museums' paths through their nations' transitions from imperial to post-imperial societies. He shows that after the establishment of the

post-World War I Turkish and German Republics, a specific discourse developed in each country that was highly influenced by recollections of their lost imperial grandeur.

The second article is a contribution to the study of memory production in the borderlands of Central Europe. The countries of the region have experienced numerous shifts in their borders in the recent past. Ondřej Elbel provides valuable cultural and geographic perspectives on the memory-scapes created when the borders of two Central European regions shifted: Cieszyn Silesia, located between today's Czechia and Poland, and Spisz and Orawa, located between Poland and Slovakia.

Finally, the third article, by Kapitolina Fedorova and Natalia Tšuikina, unveils the discursive elements that ethnic Russians use to strengthen their identity as a minority group in Estonia. The authors turn to the Facebook page "Sovetskaia Estoniia – Eesti NSV" as a case study to highlight the role of social media in shaping collective memory and challenging prevailing historical narratives.

We are tremendously pleased that we can now present you with this new issue of *Studia Territorialia*. We hope you will find the contributions published in it both thought-provoking and rewarding. We wish you a pleasant read.

On behalf of the editors,

Maria Alina Asavei, Lucie Filipová, Jan Šír

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ARTICLES

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE IMPERIAL PAST: "NOSTALGIZING" IN THE GERMAN AND TURKISH MUSEUMS OF THE INTERWAR PERIOD

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Abstract
Until 1918, representatives of the Königliche Museen zu Berlin (Royal Museums of Berlin, now State Museums of Berlin) and Istanbul's Müze-i Hümayun (Imperial Museum, now the Istanbul Archeological Museum) excavated, extracted, and exhibited antiquities as part of their countries' imperial projects. The material culture of past civilizations was used as a symbol of both empires' imperial grandeur and territorial power. With the end of World War I, German and Ottoman archaeologists lost access to territories where they formerly acquired objects for their collections while previously transferred artifacts remained in the collections. After the empires collapsed and republics emerged in their place, German and Turkish museums were still managed by directors who had entered the institutions during imperial rule. A longing for the past and specific imaginings of the future emerged in both nations after the war. Nostalgic discourses shaped the development of the museums in the

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interwar period. This article focuses on the activities of museum directors from both countries. It provides a comparative analysis of nostalgizing museum practices in each country marked by examples of longing for a real or imagined past and expectations for the future found in correspondence, publications, and the process of musealization.
Keywords: nostalgia; museum studies; colonialism; imperial archeology; Germany; Turkey
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2023.14

Introduction

On November 13, 1918, the archaeologist and director of the Department of Antiquities of the Königliche Museen (Royal Museums) of Berlin, Theodor Wiegand, returned from Ukraine to Berlin. He discovered "[r]ed flags (...) flying over the Royal Palace and the Old Museum," heralding political changes in the decaying German Empire. Four days before Wiegand's arrival, Prince Max von Baden announced the abdication of Wilhelm II as Emperor and appointed Friedrich Ebert as Chancellor. The collapse of the monarchy left marks on the museums of Berlin: the façade of the Old Museum showed "the traces of about a hundred bullets," while "red posters with the inscription 'National Property' hung on the entrance doors" in silent witness to the ongoing revolution.[1]

Simultaneously, a transformation took place in Istanbul. Allied with Berlin, Vienna, and Sofia during the First World War and for decades the hub of important Prussian-German excavation campaigns in the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish capital was occupied by the Allies on the day Wiegand reached Berlin. Greek, Italian, French, and British flags decorated the streets of Pera (now Beyoğlu). Halil Edhem, director of Istanbul's Müze-i Hümayun (Imperial Museum), watched as his colleagues from Austria-Hungary and Germany were expelled and replaced by British, French, and Italian archaeologists.[2] Caught up in a vortex of violence between 1912 and 1923, Halil Edhem continued working at the museum and eventually committed himself to the service of the emerging Turkish Republic.

The month of November 1918 was a turning point both in Berlin and Istanbul. Until 1918, representatives of the Königliche Museen and the Müze-i Hümayun excavated, extracted, and exhibited antiquities as part of their imperial

1 Carl Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand. Ein deutscher Archäologe 1864–1936* (München: C. H. Beck, 1944), 342.

2 Ceren Abi, "Cooperation and Contestation: Cultural Heritage in Occupied Istanbul," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 4 (2022), 121–126, here 121, https://doi.org/10.53979/yillik.2022.10; Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building. From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris 2014), 191–192.

projects. They appropriated the material culture of past civilizations and made them symbols of their Empires' grandeur.

Consistent with Foucault's idea of heterotopia, the establishment of national museums pursued the ideal of constructing a "general archive of culture."[3] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the institutions collected "objects to infinity" in order to "stop time, or rather deposit it to infinity in a special space." Archaeologists and museum representatives pursued a goal of "creating a space for all times" that would stand outside of time.[4] Museums stored and exhibited the material evidence of ancient cultures in encapsulated spaces. They served as centers of knowledge and became symbols of imperial civilization.

The end of World War I and the collapse of the monarchies in Germany and Turkey challenged those ambitions. The former imperial courts were replaced by republican governments. For German and Turkish scholars, the early 1920s were marked by relative isolation from the international scientific community and the loss of access to large territories supplying them with resources.[5] Objects appropriated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century remained in the collections, transforming the museums into monuments to archaeology's imperial past. For better or worse, the ancient artifacts in their collections reflected past acquisition practices. In the center of Berlin, the unfinished Pergamon Museum (intended to house objects uncovered by German-led excavations at Pergamon in Asia Minor) stood like a memorial to the reach of the former German Empire. It became a place of longing, where "a nostalgia that was widespread even in intellectual circles (…) was contrasted with a critical examination of the empire which aimed to trace the causes of the present catastrophe in the

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3 Michel Foucault, *Die Heterotopien. Der utopische Körper. Zwei Radiovorträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2019), 16.

4 Ibid., 16.

5 Theodor Wiegand became an honorary member of the Hungarian Archaeological Society and the Archaeological Institute in Sofia just after the war in the early 1920s. Both Hungary and Bulgaria had been allied with the German Empire during World War I and believed that the Paris Peace Treaties had "mutilated" their territories. This belief was a link that unified German, Hungarian, and Bulgarian scholars in the interwar period. Wiegand did manage to travel to Italy in the early 1920s to re-establish contacts with Italian scholars. In 1925, he reconnected with French colleagues in Tripoli. Regarding Wiegand's and other German scholars' isolation, see Lukas Cladders, "1919 und die Folgen. Europäische Museumsbeziehungen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Mars & Museum. Europäische Museen im Ersten Weltkrieg*, ed. Christina Kott and Bénédicte Savoy (Köln: Böhlau, 2016), 253–264, here 253. On Wiegand's honorary memberships, see Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 396. On his trip to Italy, see ibid., 358. On meeting French colleagues in Tripoli, see ibid., 404–405.

wrong course-setting of the preceding epoch."[6] Progressive voices of the republican-democratic milieu criticized museums, their self-perceptions, and nostalgia for imperialism. This involved questioning past networks, relations, and acquisition techniques that came to be perceived as problematic due to power asymmetries between scholars and collectors backed by imperial power and the localities in which their collections originated.

While the appropriation of cultural assets from colonies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has attracted increasing scholarly interest, critical research into the provenance of antiquities collections, revealing the complex and manifold power asymmetries inherent in imperial and colonial archaeology, is still in its infancy.[7] Studying the practices of antiquity museums and their roots in imperial archaeology is a desideratum.

Focusing on German and Turkish museums in the interwar period offers unique perspectives on the issue, especially because the same actors were in charge of them from the 1890s to the 1930s. The museum directors pursued both close cooperation and distinct rivalry with each other before 1918 and were subsequently confronted by two fading empires which turned into republics. In that context, the question arises as to what extent museum directors in Germany and Turkey, who were trained and equipped in the archaeological practices of the imperial era, became reactionary forces. Did they maintain their positions despite the changes in their political systems by relying on nostalgizing museum practices to continue traditions and avoid the external influence of republican governments? Did they evolve a nostalgic mindset that was aimed at preserving the *status quo ante* within the walls of their institutions? Did they wish not only to continue their existing plans for their museums into the future but also to heroize the acquisition and exhibition practices of the past, many of which remain influential today?

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[6] Alexis Joachimides, "Das Museum der Meisterwerke. Karl Scheffler und der 'Berliner Museumskrieg,'" in *Museumsinszenierungen. Zur Geschichte der Institution des Kunstmuseums. Die Berliner Museumslandschaft 1830–1990*, ed. Alexis Joachimides et al. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1995), 192–205, here 195.

[7] See for example Götz Aly, *Das Prachtboot, Wie Deutsche die Kunstschätze der Südsee raubten* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2021); Dan Hicks, *The Brutish Musuem: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2021); Bénédicte Savoy and Felwine Sarr, *Zurückgeben. Über die Restitution afrikanischer Kulturgüter* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2019); Bénédicte Savoy, *Afrikas Kampf um seine Kunst* (München: C. H. Beck, 2021); Sophie Schönberger, *Was soll zurück? Die Restitution von Kulturgütern im Zeitalter der Nostalgie* (München: C. H. Beck, 2021).

The meaning of the term "nostalgia" has changed since it first appeared in the seventeenth century, transforming "from a spatial longing for a place – homeland – to a longing for a time gone by."[8] In the German language, nostalgia has taken on a separate meaning since the 1960s. Nostalgia now means longing for the past, while homesickness means missing a place called home.[9] In the Turkish language, the past necessarily implies a loss. Therefore, the concepts of nostalgia and melancholy are closely related in Turkey. *Nostalji* implies "*hasret* (longing, ardent desire), *hüzün* (sadness, grief), and *kasvet* (depression and gloom)."[10] In this context, it seems noteworthy that the term *nostalji* was not used in the contemporary language of the 1920s and 1930s, at least with today's meaning. I use nostalgia in the context of imperial traditions as a concept for analyzing the attitudes of German and Turkish museum actors toward the transition from imperial to republican rule. This article understands nostalgia to be an attitude in which longing for the past becomes performative and dominates an actor's language and actions. Zygmunt Baumann has analyzed developments in modern societies in a similar way: what he calls "retrotopias"[11] developed as "[v]isions that, unlike their predecessors, no longer feed on a future that is still to come and therefore nonexistent, but on the lost/robbed/orphaned, in any case, undead past."[12]

In examining the activities of museum directors, this article discusses their mental anchoring in the past, including a nostalgia that mourned the "distances and disjunctures between times and spaces, never bridging them."[13] Against this background, the question arises: what position did German and Turkish museum representatives take on the immediate imperial past and republican upheaval? Did nostalgic discourses shape the development of museums and exhibitions in the post-war period, and if yes, to what extent? What turned German and Turkish museum directors into apologists for the imperial era and "retrotopia?" Did museums nostalgize the imperial past? Or were museums "opportunity spaces" for developing and experiencing "novel lifestyles and identities"[14]?

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[8] Tobias Becker, "Nostalgie," in *Handbuch Historische Authentizität, Wert der Vergangenheit*, ed. Martin Sabrow and Achim Saupe (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022), 320–327, here 321. See also Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 3–18.

[9] Ibid., 321. For a detailed analysis, see Tobias Becker, "The Meanings of Nostalgia: Genealogy and Critique," *History and Theory* 57, no. 2 (June 2018): 234–250, https://doi.org/10.1111/hith.12059.

[10] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Nostalgia for the Empire: The Politics of Neo-Ottomanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 2, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197512289.001.0001.

[11] Zygmunt Baumann, *Retrotopia* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2018).

[12] Ibid., 13.

[13] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 346.

[14] Yavuz, *Nostalgia*, 3.

This article focuses on discourses about the value of the past in the context of social and political transformation in a case study of archaeological museums in Berlin and Istanbul during the interwar period.[15] It compares and contrasts the nostalgizing practices of the museums, identifying continuities and disruptions in their practices and the valorization of their archaeological collections. After analyzing prewar conditions in Istanbul, the study examines the role archaeological museums played in the Republic of Turkey. Then, it gives examples of nostalgizing the past in the re-establishment of bilateral relations between German and Turkish museum actors. Finally, it analyzes the experiences of German archaeologists at the end of the war and the repercussions on museums in the interwar period.

Prewar Museum Practices in Istanbul

Kemalist nation-building was based on the suppression of Turkey's Ottoman heritage, but according to Hakan Yavuz, the "imperial ghost" haunted the new state and society. The roots of this specter lay in the transition from empire to republic, which was a "top-down initiative." Consequently, the metamorphosis of the state was based on a form of self-imposed amnesia. "The legacy of the Ottoman Empire, along with its cultural practices, was never fully debated due to the Republic's policy of 'forgetting the Ottoman past' to create a new national and secular (Turkish and Western) identity."[16] Although the secularization process had already begun in the museums of Istanbul during the Ottoman era of the İkinci Meşrutiyet (Second Constitution) after 1908, museum actors nevertheless opposed erasing Ottoman rule from Turkish memory.

Beginning in the 1890s, Halil Edhem expanded his responsibilities from protecting archaeological objects of Greek-Roman origin to preserving Islamic arts. He continuously demanded the enforcement of political and legal measures meant to preserve the heritage of the Islamic eras. In a series of articles entitled "Âsar-ı Âtika" (Antiquities) published in the Ottoman journal *Şehbal* (Swinging Feather, Wing),[17] Halil Edhem condemned the destruction of Islamic

[15] At this point, it should be noted that perceptions of the interwar period, the end of World War I, and the beginning of World War II were quite different in Germany and Turkey.

[16] Yavuz, *Nostalgia*, 6.

[17] Halil Edhem, "Âsar-ı Âtika. Âtika Milliyemiz Nasıl Mahv Oluyor?" *Şehbal* 2, no. 36 (1327/1911): 226–228; Halil Edhem, "Âsar-ı Âtika. Yine Konya," *Şehbal* 4, no. 59 (1328/1912): 212–213; Halil Edhem, "Âsar-ı Âtika: Sinan Paşa Köşkü," *Şehbal* 3, no. 60 (1328/1912): 224–225; Halil Edhem, "Âsar-ı Âtika: Kayıkhane Ocağı," *Şehbal* 4, no. 75 (1329/1913): 147–148.

architecture, monuments, and objects. The subtitle of the first article in the series reflected his proto-nationalist ideas influenced by political power struggles: “How Are Our National Antiquities Being Destroyed?”[18] Apparently, Halil Edhem also desired even more comprehensive protection for Islamic cultural property. Eventually, he turned to the task of constructing a national cultural heritage founded on secularization. Focusing on objects from Central Anatolia, he wrote an inventory of their loss, describing and reporting the destruction of artworks, sacral objects or architecture, and their transportation abroad. Photographs attached to the article showed objects in situ, the destruction process, and, finally, the empty spaces that remained after all parts of an object had been removed.[19]

During the First World War, Halil Edhem cooperated with the Ministry of Education on centralizing Islamic artifacts from regions perceived as Ottoman peripheries in the museums of Istanbul. Archaeological, cultural, and religious assets from Syria and from the Holy Sites of Mecca and Medina were added to the collections of the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi (Islamic Foundations Museum, now the Museum of Islamic and Turkish Arts) and the Müze-i Hümayun. A systematic reappraisal of Islamic art followed the founding of the Islamic Foundations Museum in 1914, which Halil Edhem perceived as Turkey’s first *national* museum. According to this new perspective, the Müze-i Hümayun, which exhibited ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Art, was demoted in importance but retained as a fading showcase of the pre-Islamic past. An emphasis on preserving Islamic art from specific periods – primarily those of the Seljuks and Ottomans – in the Evkaf-ı İstlamiye Müzesi was the first step in nostalgizing those and other historical periods of Islam in Turkey. Through the preservation and musealization of Islamic relics, Halil Edhem emphasized Islamic rule as the predominant and shared past of the Turkish identity. The focus on Islam in the *national* heritage served to construct and justify the power of Turkey’s Sunni elite over the diverse population of the Ottoman Empire’s territorial corpus. This included an increasingly open opposition to European influence in the Ottoman Empire on the eve of World War I.[20]

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[18] Halil Edhem, “Âsar-ı Âtika. Âtika Milliyemiz Nasıl Mahv Oluyor?” 226. See also Zeynep Çelik, *About Antiquities. Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011), 123–124.

[19] Halil Edhem, “Âsar-ı Âtika. Âtika Milliyemiz Nasıl Mahv Oluyor?” 228.

[20] Sebastian Willert, “The Invention of ‘National Antiquities’ in the Late Ottoman Empire: Archaeological Interrelations between Discourses of Appropriation, Preservation and Heritage Construction,” *Diyâr* 2, no. 2 (2021): 304–328, here 317–320.

When Halil Edhem prepared his speech for the opening of the Evkaf-ı İstlamiye Müzesi in April 1914, he stated that "Museums are one of the most important symbols of civilizations."[21] He contended that "[t]he diversity and richness of museums in a country correspond to the level of education and progress in that country."[22] He continued by saying that the museums of Istanbul would contribute to the importance of the city and drew on European centers such as London, Paris, Munich, or Berlin for comparison. He directly criticized the representatives of Wilhelmine Germany for seizing Islamic art and transporting it out of Ottoman territory.[23] The transfer of objects abroad and the resulting voids in mosques, mausoleums, shrines, and palaces made "the inauguration (...) of the museum founded under the name of 'Evkaf-ı İstlamiye Müzesi'" necessary.[24]

Halil Edhem's criticism of his German counterparts decried the significant loss of Islamic art and was accompanied by calls for its protection. The director disapproved of malpractice by Prussian-German archaeologists on Ottoman soil. His condemnations indicated a new self-confidence after a German delegation under the guidance of Theodor Wiegand had tried to take advantage of the Sublime Porte's precarious financial situation during the Balkan wars and acquire the quintessential pieces of the Müze-i Hümayun collection.[25] The negotiations failed but they led to diplomatic intervention to enforce the export of archaeological objects from the ancient Assyrian capital of Ashur to Berlin. Halil Edhem cut off official relations between the Müze-i Hümayun and the Königliche Museen in July 1914, stressing the need for Ottoman archaeology to develop independently and to preserve antiquities on Ottoman territory. He strove for an autonomous future, but he also longed for the acceptance of Ottoman archaeologists and cooperation on an equal footing with their Western counterparts.[26]

The opening of the Evkaf-ı İstlamiye Müzesi underlined a new appreciation of the Islamic past and its grandeur, with an emphasis on Turkish-Sunni Islam.

21 Halil Edhem's notes quoted in "Interlude: Halil Edhem on the Museum of Pious Foundations," in *Scramble for the Past. A Story of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire, 1753–1914*, ed. Zainab Bahrani, Zeynep Çelik, and Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: SALT, 2011), 417–421.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Sebastian Willert, "German-Ottoman Negotiations for the Sale of the Müze-i Hümayun, 1913–1914," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2022): 267–273, https://doi.org/10.2979/tur.2022.a876791.

26 Sebastian Willert, *Kulturbesitz. Archäologische Objekte in der deutsch-osmanischen Politik, 1898–1918* (Göttingen: Wallstein, forthcoming 2024), 558.

This manifested itself in resistance to foreign appropriation of the country's heritage. Objects were collected and exhibited in the premises of the Imperial Museum at the same time as a shift in Turkish identity occurred. That shift culminated on November 1, 1922, when the Kemalists announced the abolition of the Sultanate and made Ankara the new capital of the Republic of Turkey, proclaimed the next year on October 29, 1923.[27] Turkish nationalists considered the abrogation of the Treaty of Sèvres, which ended World War I for Turkey, a fundamental step toward independence and also celebrated the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne as a national triumph that restored large areas to Turkish control. Following that victory, the reorganization of the state proceeded apace with the musealization of the Ottoman past in Istanbul's museums.

A Past for the Nation's Future

The nation-state of Turkey emerged in the early 1920s. According to Stéphane Yerasimos, Istanbul fell into "lethargy"[28] as the new capital, Ankara, gained in importance.[29] However, the former Ottoman capital showed a lively vitality in the field of museums that contrasted with the sleepiness diagnosed by Yerasimos. As member of the Müze-i Hümayun's directorate, Halil Edhem had witnessed significant transformations in the way his fatherland was ruled and in geopolitics: the decline of the authoritarian reign of Abdülhamid II after the 1908–09 revolution, the warring period that witnessed the Italian invasion of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in 1911, the First and Second Balkan Wars in 1912–13, World War I, the Allies' occupation of Istanbul, and the Greek-Turkish War of 1919–23.[30] Despite the various changes in political systems, Halil Edhem managed to maintain his position in the Museums and became "a prominent figure for archaeology during the first decades of the Republican era."[31]

The political and geographic framework was transforming, but exhibitions of prestigious objects continued to emphasize the cultural significance of various cities and regions of the former Ottoman Empire. Halil Edhem and his longtime colleague Aziz Ogan maneuvered within the new political landscape to

[27] Stéphane Yerasimos, *Konstantinopel. Istanbuls historisches Erbe* (Potsdam: Ullmann, 2009), 377.
[28] Ibid., 377.
[29] Mesut Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present: Archaeology in Turkey from the Nineteenth Century to the 1940s," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 22 (2018): 728–745, here 738, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-017-0446-x.
[30] Ibid., 737.
[31] Ibid., 738.

maintain their agency. Together with other Turkish scholars and intellectuals, they "embarked on a quest to discover [Turkey's] ancient history"[32] and raised the profile of Turkish archaeology as a pivotal contributor to the creation and glorification of national history.[33] Although Ankara was in control, these former Ottoman officials submitted to the "socio-political agenda of creating a national identity from the outset"[34] for the Turkish Republic. What Baumann later identified as the aim of nationalism in general[35] was realized in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s: legitimizing the nation's claim to territorial political sovereignty with the help of the politics of memory practiced in Turkey's archaeological museums. In the words of Selahattin Kandemir in the introduction to his work *Etiler* (The Hittites), published in Ankara in 1933, "A tree that does not have its roots deep in the soil cannot grow. The root of national power is national identity. What creates national identity is national history."[36]

Turkish archaeologists collaborated with scholars from other disciplines and other intellectuals to construct a national history and visualize it. They combined their efforts in the Türk Tarih Kurumu (Turkish History Society), founded on June 4, 1930.[37] One aim of early republican nationalism was avoiding the exclusion of even one single culture or historical lineage from the national narrative. The publication *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (Outline of Turkish History) (1930) adopted an "inclusive concept" and delineated an extensive territory as *the* fatherland of all Turks: "The homeland of the Turks is Asia. Asia, from the Aegean Sea to the Japan Sea; it is a vast landmass stretching from the Indian Sea to the Arctic Ocean."[38] Building on this thesis, the publication addressed the influence of "Turks" on various civilizations of the continent and its neighboring communities.[39]

The archaeologists also contributed to the *Türk Tarih Tezi* (Turkish History Thesis), which found its way into school textbooks. Succinctly summarized,

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[32] Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 31, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 381–393, here 381.

[33] Ibid., 381; Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 730. For examples of "nationalist archaeology," see Bruce G. Trigger, "Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist," *Man* 19, no. 3 (1984), 355–370, here 358–360.

[34] Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 382.

[35] Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 80.

[36] Selahattin Kandemir, *Etiler (Hititler)* (Ankara: Köyhocası, 1933), 3. Quoted in Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 382.

[37] Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 382.

[38] *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1930), 275.

[39] Ibid. For a short discussion of its content, see Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 382.

the Tezi nostalgized and heroized Turkish history, describing the Turks as an ancient people whose actual home region was Central Asia. In a series of migrations, they inhabited various territories between their original location and present-day Turkey. They nurtured the development of civilization in areas from China, India, the Middle East, and North Africa to the Balkans and parts of Europe. The Tezi identified the Turks as direct descendants of the Hittites and Sumerians who had influenced many civilizations and territories, e.g., those of the Aegean.[40] The Outline of Turkish History boasted that "[t]he first inhabitants of the civilization of the Sea of Islands [the Aegean] were the Turks who came from Inner Asia. The civilization of the Turks, who had settled in the basins of Central Russia and the Danube in ancient times, had penetrated as far as Macedonia, Thessaly, and the region of Corinth 3500 years before Christ."[41]

The Tezi provided a justification for maintaining control over all of Anatolia. In a nostalgizing moment that indicated a longing for a homogenous society, it presented the Turks as the "legitimate heirs (and, indeed practically the progenitors) of all civilizations that had existed on the soil of the new Turkish Republic."[42] The document was presented in 1932 at the Birinci Türk Tarihi Kongresi (First Turkish History Congress), which lasted nine days. The importance of the Congress was enhanced by the presence of Cumhurbaşkanı (President of the Republic) Mustafa Kemal at every session.[43] The Tezi was intended to justify Turkey's rightful place in the changing power constellations of the twentieth century, especially as concerned its territory. "Through the thesis, firstly, it was possible to claim links with the Anatolian heritage covering all layers of the territory (including the prehistoric ages), secondly, it included Islamic heritage without compromising the secularization goal, and thirdly, it has established connections with Central Asia through Turkic precursors."[44] Turkish archaeologists searched for material evidence to verify the theses. Between 1933 and 1937, several archaeological excavations were conducted on what was defined as Turkish soil, for example, in Göllüdağ, Alacahöyük, Ankara, and Sarayburnu (Istanbul).[45]

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[40] Ibid., 382; Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 739.
[41] *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, 275.
[42] Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 382.
[43] Ibid., 383.
[44] Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 740.
[45] Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 384. See also Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 741.

National Narratives and Nostalgizing the Past

Mesut Dinler says that the transfer of the capital from Istanbul to Ankara not only "helped to gain distance from Ottoman memories" but also enabled the new Turkish Republic "to eliminate the old Ottoman intellectual community from the decision-making process to a certain extent and to form a central community in Ankara."[46] However, the museums were a decentralized space of opportunity for the elite museum representatives, who were trained and already well-established under the Ottoman Empire, to continue their work under republican rule. Not only did Halil Edhem and Aziz Ogan manage to remain in charge, but they also worked to energize and expand the museum heritage and legacy of the Ottoman Empire, secure a relative autonomy for the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul, and create employment possibilities for former colleagues.[47] Museums such as the Müze-i Hümayun in Istanbul were used to preserve ancient objects and material evidence of Turkish influence and civilizational force. In 1922, Halil Edhem entrusted his longtime collaborator Aziz Ogan with managing the Administration of Antiquities in Smyrna (İzmir). One of Aziz Ogan's tasks was establishing a local archaeological museum, which opened in 1924. One of Halil Edhem's first projects in Istanbul was the conversion of Topkapı Sarâyı, the former palace of the Sultans, into a museum in 1923.[48] This was, according to Mesut Dinler, "the most symbolic act of the republic's efforts to tear down Ottoman identity."[49] Tahsin Öz, a colleague of Halil Edhem's in Ottoman times, became the director of Topkapı Sarâyı Müzesi and created a "narrative arrangement of the objects of imperial life by their aesthetic and historical value."[50] Halil Edhem was interested in Turkey's Islamic heritage and focused on Seljuk and Ottoman objects and architecture. However, after 1923, as prehistoric periods became

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46 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 738.

47 Ibid., 737. Correspondence between the refugee scholars Benno Landsberger and Fritz Rudolf Kraus indicates that conflict simmered between Istanbul and Ankara about the Ministry of Culture's order that Kraus be employed by the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul. Letter from Fritz Rudolf Kraus to Benno Landsberger, Istanbul, August 10, 1937, in *Dreizehn Jahre in Istanbul (1937–1949)*, ed. Jan Schmidt (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 65; letter from Benno Landsberger to Fritz Rudolf Kraus, Ankara, May 14, 1942, Ibid. 828.

48 Selvihan Kurt, "Aziz Ogan ve Yabancı Bizantologların Yazışmaları Işığında İstanbul'da Bizans Mirası Tartışmaları," *Toplumsal Tarih* 308 (2019): 62–69, 63; Selvihan Kurt, "The Founding of the İzmir Museum: A Preliminary Narrative Based on Aziz Ogan's Archive" (M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2015), 1, 3, 50–65.

49 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 738.

50 Ibid., 738. See also: Semavi Eyice: "Tahsin Öz (1887–1973)," *Belleten Türk Tarih Kurumu* 38, no. 152 (1974): 709–732.

more important to the nation's retro-utopian national project, he expanded his research in that direction.[51]

Based on the efforts of the Directorate of Culture and its representative Mübarek Galip Eldem, a cousin of both Osman Hamdi and Halil Edhem, a museum was established in the Castle of Ankara in 1921.[52] The foundation of the museum's collection was Roman objects from the region. Later, after Mustafa Kemal's request to create a Hittite museum in the city center, ancient objects related to the Hittite civilization were collected from neighboring provinces and sent to Ankara.[53] Since new exhibition space was needed, Hamit Zübeyir Koşay, Director of Culture, and Saffet Arıkan, Minister of Education, proposed a new museum building in the existing Mahmut Paşa Bazaar in Ankara. This was done under the guidance of Hans Gustav Güterbock, a refugee who was forced out of Nazi-ruled Germany due to his Jewish descent.[54] A small section of this museum, which later became the Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi (Museum of Anatolian Civilizations), opened in 1943.[55] Before that, in 1927, Hamit Zübeyir Koşay had become the director of Ankara's Etnoğrafya Müzesi (Ethnography Museum). The building of the Ethnography Museum was finished that same year and put 1,250 artifacts, mainly secularized religious objects, on display in 1930.[56] In Ankara, the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations served the purpose of creating and defining the "national identity – 'the race' – of the Turkish nation."[57] In Istanbul, the Topkapı Sarâyı museum and the deconsecrated Hagia Sophia

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51 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 737.

52 The family connections between the museum directors in Istanbul and Ankara raise the question of nepotism, which cannot be examined here but which demands further research.

53 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 739.

54 Tahsin Özgüç, "Prof. Dr. Hans Gustav Güterbock'un Anısına," *Belleten Türk Tarih Kurumu* 64 (2000): 671–672, here 671. For further research on refugee scholars in Turkey in the 1930s and 1940s, see Corry Guttstadt, *Turkey, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); *Haymatloz. Exil in der Türkei, 1933–1945*, ed. Verein Aktives Museum Berlin (Berlin: Verein Aktives Museum, 2000); Azade Seyhan, "Exile in a Translational Mode: Safeguarding German Scholarship in Turkey and the United States during Nazi Reign," in *Academics in Exile. Networks, Knowledge Exchange and New Forms of Internationalization*, ed. Vera Axyonova et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022), 33–58; Regine Erichsen, "Vom Nationalsozialismus vertriebene Wissenschaftler auf dem Markt. Die Arbeitsvermittlung des englischen Academic Assistance Council am Beispiel von Türkeimigranten," in *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 19 (1996): 219–234; Sebastian Willert, "Geflüchtet und (Vor-)Verurteilt. Die Migration jüdischer Wissenschaftlerinnen in die Türkei in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 64 (2024, forthcoming).

55 Canan Dural Tasouji, "Bir Hafıza Mekânı Olarak Müze: Ankara Etnografya Müzesi," *Araştırma Makaleleri* 3, no. 1 (2013): 129–143, here 139.

56 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 738.

57 Ibid, 739 and 743.

mosque supported the republican cause by increasing the nation's "distance from Ottoman identity without completely rejecting it."[58]

These events coincided with the emergence of the Turkish Republic during the Turkish-Greek War, the creation of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara in 1920, and the election of Mustafa Kemal as the Republic's first president. Extensive reforms were enacted as part of a project to modernize Turkey. These included the abolishment of the Sultanate in 1922, the Caliphate in 1924, and the religious lodges (*tekke*), shrines (*türbe*), and fraternity meeting places (*zaviye*) in 1925. The Latin alphabet was introduced in 1928, and the Republic granted women the right to vote in 1934. Eventually, Hagia Sophia was deconsecrated and turned into a museum in 1934–35. That step furthered the intent of "a modernist project to create a secular, modern nation-state out of a centuries-old Islamic dynasty."[59] Various publications supported the narrative and the process of constructing a new national identity. News reports, descriptions of archaeological excavations and discoveries, and essays on ancient cultures such as the Hittites, Sumerians, and the Indus civilizations appeared regularly. At the same time, the ideas of the Tezi were promoted by means of the "description of an ancient and distinguished past,"[60] while "[t]he prehistoric civilizations (Hittites and Sumerians) were suggested to be the ancestors of the Turkish nation."[61]

Synergy Between Past and Present

Halil Edhem essentially perceived museums in the Foucauldian sense of "archives of culture." In a speech to the First Turkish History Congress, he described museums as being "mostly dedicated to the conservation of movable objects."[62] He pointed to museums' role in "public education and knowledge," storing and exhibiting artifacts from different regions to enable visitors to study them without traveling abroad.[63] Referring to European institutions like the Louvre and the British Museum, Halil Edhem returned to a topic he had publicly addressed in 1914: the activities of foreign archaeologists on Turkish soil and

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58 Ibid., 738.
59 Ibid., 738.
60 Tanyeri-Erdemir, "Archaeology as a Source of National Pride," 384.
61 Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 729.
62 Halil Edhem, "Müzeler," Birinci Türk Tarihi Kongresi, Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabitlari (Ankara: T.C. Maarif Vekâleti, 2–10 Temmuz 1932), 532–566, quoted from *Halil Edhem. Modern Sanat Müzesinin Tasarimi. Müsecilik Yazilari, Iletisim*, ed. Ali Artun (Istanbul: Iletişim 2019), 121–159, here 132.
63 Halil Edhem, "Müzeler," 132.

their compliance with the existing antiquities legislation. The formerly Ottoman and now Turkish museum director introduced his summary of his successful effort to force an equitable division of finds in Ashur with the Germans in 1914 by saying: "I will never forget that under pressure from the government, the *hafir* [foreign archaeologist] was able to keep only half of what he had taken out of Assyria in Mesopotamia." He added that since then, "our Republic has strongly prevented antiquities abuses," making it altogether impossible for foreign archaeologists to export antiquities.[64] The museum director presented this success as a purely republican accomplishment, although the antiquities law had already been introduced in 1906.

Next Halil Edhem said, "It's time to talk about our own museums," beginning with the Imperial Museum – the Müze-i Hümayun – which he defined as "purely an archaeology museum."[65] As the Turkish Republic was financially unable to acquire "paintings and medieval foreign artifacts," it would "therefore [be] necessary to devote all our strength to the archaeological and ethnographic field of our country."[66] He defined two options for expanding the Museum's collection: Turkish and Islamic objects or artifacts from the Hittite civilization. Objects from the first group were already on display in the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion), drawn from the collections of the Müze-i Hümayun and the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi.[67] Halil Edhem did not lose sight of the objectives he had been pursuing since the 1910s. He again lamented the deterioration and destruction of "many of our national buildings" in Turkey.[68] He described the conversion of Topkapı Sarâyı into a museum as a "gift of the Republic to the nation."[69] Although his museum administration had taken over the palace in a desolate condition, it initiated restorations and classified the objects transferred to it. [70] Additionally, the Istanbul government preserved some compounds in the city, turning them into museums.[71]

In the 1910s, Halil Edhem had referred to Islamic art as the national heritage and he picked up that thread in his speech to the congress. He insisted upon "the preservation and conservation of these national artifacts."[72] The museum

64 Ibid., 133.
65 Ibid., 141, 150.
66 Ibid., 150.
67 Ibid., 150–151.
68 Ibid., 151.
69 Ibid., 154.
70 Ibid., 154–155.
71 Ibid., 151.
72 Ibid., 154.

director emphasized that it was the Imperial Museum that had pioneered collecting and preserving the objects of the Hittite period.[73] He declared that the "world's largest and most important museum for this period" would be constructed in Ankara, exhibiting artifacts collected from across Central Anatolia, Iraq, and Northern Syria. Noting Mustafa Kemal's interest in Hittite archaeology, the museum director claimed: "Today, Ankara has already become the research center of the new science called 'Hittitology,' confirmed by the whole world."[74]

Halil Edhem's rhetoric revealed his commitment to Turkey's new republican orientation and the objective of constructing a national narrative to serve the national project. In conclusion, he emphasized that museums are a "necessity of today's civilization," because they both display and constitute "national wealth."[75] The museum director ended his speech by stressing the great value of the material remains of past civilizations and admonished his audience that "in the name of our culture and civilization, we are obliged to preserve the artifacts left behind by our predecessors."[76]

Turkey struggled during the 1920s and 1930s to create a politically independent, sovereign state on its territory. A national narrative had to be devised as a foundation for this project. The Tezi, the musealization of Ottoman heritage, and the recognition of the importance of objects of Hittite and Sumerian origin all supported the republic's claim to territorial sovereignty. The transformation of palaces into museums confirmed the transition from imperial to republican rule. Solid territorial claims guaranteed a minimum of political stability and, therefore, allowed for self-assurance about the past and the future.[77] This was the beginning of a national process of "selective memory formation" – which, according to Baumann, also includes "selective forgetting."[78] One example of this process was the introduction of the Latin alphabet, which deprived young Turks who could no longer read Arabic script of the opportunity to learn about their past for themselves. In Turkey as elsewhere, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose land, his religion), "changed to *cuius regio, eius natio* [whose region, his nation] for practical reasons."[79]

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[73] Ibid., 151.
[74] Ibid., 153–154.
[75] Ibid., 157.
[76] Ibid., 159.
[77] Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 17.
[78] Ibid., 18.
[79] Ibid., 81. See also, ibid., 193.

Turkish archaeologists and museum representatives of the Ottoman period were committed to the new republican project, even though the former museum elite of the Ottoman era still tried to force their old agenda forward. In contrast, longing for the immediate imperial past among German archaeologists determined their vision for the future.

A Nostalgic Rapprochement

During the Allies' occupation of Istanbul, Theodor Wiegand strengthened his existing ties with former representatives of the Ottoman Empire. In April 1920, a former member of the Ottoman government, Ahmed Cemal, who fled the Ottoman Empire in 1918, spent two weeks in Wiegand's house in Berlin-Dahlem before he continued his journey in exile to Afghanistan via Russia.[80] When Ahmed Cemal was shot dead in Tbilisi two years later, Wiegand, who had worked with the former Ottoman governor of Syria on protecting monuments in 1917, wanted to "erect a special memorial to him, but this intention was soon eclipsed by growing political concerns."[81]

When a period of German-Turkish rapprochement was ushered in in 1924, Wiegand revived his connections with former colleagues on the territory of the Republic of Turkey. He nostalgized their relationship, leaving past conflicts between the museum representatives unmentioned, and constructed a bond of tradition between the two nations' archaeologists. Aziz Ogan, who like Ahmed Cemal had worked with Wiegand on the protection of ancient monuments in Syria in 1917–18, was elected a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute in 1925. Wiegand saluted him at the time, "Not only do we regard you as our valuable official aide, we also esteem and love you as a representative of the glorious tradition of the great Hamdi Bey and as a sincere and enlightened friend, full of zeal for science and the fatherland."[82] For Wiegand,

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80 Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 361.

81 Ibid., 361. See also Sebastian Willert, "Zwischen deutsch-osmanischen Kriegszielen und Museumsinteressen. Das Deutsch-türkische Denkmalschutz-Kommando im Ersten Weltkrieg," in *Renationalisierung oder Sharing Heritage? Wo steht die Denkmalpflege im Europäischen Kulturerbejahr 2018?* ed. Stephanie Herold, Anneli Randla, and Ingrid Scheurmann (Holzminden: Jörg Mitzkat, 2019), 42–49, https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.496; Hasan Kayalı, *Imperial Resilience: The Great War's End, Ottoman Longevity, and Incidental Nations* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), 40–43.

82 Theodor Wiegand to Aziz Ogan, letter, Berlin, May 25, 1925, OGNIZM0400503, n. p., Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi, Aziz Ogan Koleksiyonu (BÜADM-AOK), Istanbul. See also Gerhart Rodenwaldt to Aziz Ogan, letter, Berlin, June 9, 1925, OGNBIO0500102, n. p., Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi, Aziz Ogan Koleksiyonu, Istanbul.

the shackles of international politics had been cast off. He immediately devoted himself to the challenges of excavation projects in Turkey.

However, the political tensions of the past years did have some influence on traditional ties. Relations between Ankara and Berlin differed in one fundamental aspect: on March 3, 1924, a "German-Turkish Treaty of Friendship" was signed, which was ratified on May 16 of the same year. The Treaty stated that both states were "inspired by the desire to establish and strengthen the bonds of sincere friendship between the German and Turkish Republics."[83] Until the spring of 1924, Sweden had represented Berlin diplomatically in Istanbul while Switzerland represented Ottoman and Turkish interests in Germany.[84] Thereafter, the German and Turkish diplomats' task was to build their bilateral relations on a new foundation. Article Two of the Treaty stipulated that Berlin and Ankara "shall establish diplomatic relations between the two States based on the principles of international law."[85] The restoration or continuation of already existing nondiplomatic relations was not mentioned. The treaty's signing was preceded by complicated negotiations that focused on whether or not it represented a new beginning under international law supplanting former German-Ottoman relations and whether ambassadors should be exchanged.[86] The Kemalist representatives insisted on a symbolic act to emphasize that the new relationship was one between two newly created entities and avoid any impression that past imperial relations were being continued.[87]

There was no such attempt to construct a totally new relationship in museums and archaeology. A positive appraisal of past connections was accompanied by a nostalgic undertone. In early April 1924, Wiegand wrote to Wilhelm von Bode, the former Director General of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and

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83 "Bekanntmachung über den am 3. März 1924 in Angora unterzeichneten deutsch-türkischen Freundschaftsvertrag. Vom 23. Februar 1926," in *Reichsgesetzblatt* 1926, vol. 2, 175–176, here 175.

84 Sabine Mangold-Will, "Von der Funktion einer Freundschaft – Die Aufnahme der diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und der Türkischen Republik 1924," *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte*, 2011, https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1544, accessed on October 10, 2023. See also: Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame. War, Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908–1923* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), 393–411; Hans Werner Neulen, *Feldgrau in Jerusalem. Das Levantekorps des kaiserlichen Deutschland* (München: Universitas, 2002), 260; Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy*, 188–191.

85 "Bekanntmachung über den am 3. März 1924 unterzeichneten Freundschaftsvertrag," 176.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.; Florian Riedler, "Transnationale Akteure und die deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen der Zwischenkriegszeit," in *Aufbruch ins postkoloniale Zeitalter. Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren*, ed. Sönke Künkel and Christoph Meyer (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2012), 251–274, here 261.

the Prussian Minister of Culture, Otto Boelitz, that "diplomatic and economic relations have been resumed, and in scientific relations, Turkey is one of the few countries in the world which has expressed a desire for the closest connection with German science."[88] German scholars were again present in Asia Minor.[89] According to Wiegand's biographer, Carl Watzinger, Wiegand kept the "work begun in Turkey firmly in mind"[90] and organized the reopening of a museum office in the building of the German Embassy under the leadership of Martin Schede. Wiegand himself set foot on Asia Minor's soil for the first time since World War I on August 30, 1924, returning to the site of excavations in Didyma.[91]

When they resumed cooperation on archaeological fieldwork in Turkey, the Turkish and German archaeologists did not overly emphasize a new beginning in bilateral relations. Instead, they nostalgically renewed their traditional bonds from the German and Ottoman imperial pasts. In his reply to a letter from Wiegand, Aziz Ogan referred to the long-lasting relationship between German and Ottoman archaeologists. He reacted to an official notification of his appointment as a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute with the following: "May, moreover, through this election, be added another firm link in the chain by which our two countries have been connected for years in friendly cooperation."[92] Like Wiegand, Aziz Ogan fondly recalled the friendship between archaeologists of both states since imperial times.[93] In their correspondence, the two archaeologists portrayed their relationship as symbiotic, characterized by mutual respect and willingness to cooperate. Germany's restitution to Turkey of a statue of a sphinx in 1924 symbolized both the conflicted bilateral past and the archaeologists' desire to continue their relationship.[94] In that sense, no formal celebration

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[88] Theodor Wiegand to Wilhelm von Bode and Otto Boelitz, letter, Berlin, April 7, 1924, I/ANT 08, fol. 170–171, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Zentralarchiv (SMB-ZA), Berlin.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 396.

[91] Ibid., 397.

[92] Aziz Ogan to Gerhart Rodenwaldt, letter, Didyma, July 28, 1925, OGNBIO0500102, n. p., BÜADM-AOK, Istanbul. For the notification of his election see: Gerhart Rodenwaldt to Aziz Ogan, letter, Berlin, June 9, 1925, OGNBIO0500102., n. p., BÜADM-AOK, Istanbul.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Excavations near the village of Boğazkale, formerly Boğazköy, began in 1906 under Théodore Makridi, representing the Müze-i Hümayun, together with Hugo Winckler, who worked on behalf of the German Oriental Society (Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft). Excavation campaigns in 1907 and 1911–12 led to the discovery of several thousands of cuneiform clay tablet fragments. The fragments were sent to Berlin for restoration during World War I, along with two sphinx statues found in 1907 during the excavation of the "Sphinx Gate" at Hattuša. One sphinx was returned to Turkey as early as 1924. In 1987, a representative of the Turkish government presented the United Nations General Assembly with a progress report on Ankara's twelve years of negotiations with the German Demo-

of a new beginning was necessary. The archaeologists and museum representatives were continuing the cooperation they had started in Ottoman times.

Wiegand had long awaited a political rapprochement between Ankara and Berlin. He immediately began to emphasize the old ties between archaeologists of both nations. The Berlin museum director eagerly looked forward to resuming the German excavation projects in Turkey. For their part, the German archaeologists were happy to move on from the traumatic experiences of their return to Berlin, their loss of professional opportunities at the end of the war, political turmoil, and their isolation from the world scientific community.

Tempora Verti – Leaving into a New World

"Early in the morning, one last nice dip in the sea," wrote German archaeologist Georg Karo (1872–1963) in his diary for October 24, 1918. He had just read a telegram from the German Consulate in Smyrna that ordered him and his colleagues back to the city.[95] The group had traveled to Asia Minor during World War I to preserve monuments there.[96] Based on the telegram, Karo anticipated the withdrawal of German troops from Ottoman soil and prepared himself for his departure. A friend joined the archaeologist as he left Bodrum. "Finally, around nine o'clock, we set off, Rifaat Bey accompanying us for another hour on the way to the ridge north of Bodrum. We have a last view of the bay, city, castle, islands, and mountains in the brilliant morning light. Goodbye! When will we

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cratic Republic for the return of the Sphinx that remained in Berlin after 1924, as well as 7,400 of the cuneiform tablets from Boğazköy. Turkey and the GDR had agreed to continue negotiations for the return of the Sphinx, while the cuneiform tablets were restituted by November 15, 1987. After heavy pressure from Ankara, the Federal Republic of Germany finally restituted the second Sphinx in 2011. Provisional Verbatim Record of the 47th Meeting Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 22 October 1987: General Assembly, 42nd session, 1–37, 18, United Nations Digital Library, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/146483?ln=en. Regarding the excavation campaign in Boğazköy, see Hugo Winckler, *Nach Boghasköi! Ein nachgelassenes Fragment* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913); Edhem Eldem: "Theodor Makridi Bey ve 1907 Boğazköy Kazısı," in *The Discovery of an Anatolian Empire/Bir Anadolu İmperatorluğunun Keşfi*. A Colloquium to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Decipherment of the Hittite Language (November 14th and 15th, Istanbul Archaeological Museum – Library), ed. Meltem Doğan-Alparslan et al., (İstanbul: Bilnet Matbaacılık ve Ambalaj San. A.Ş., 2017), 159–192.

[95] Manuscript by Georg Karo, Folder 2: Stories and Reports, October 24, 1918, fol. 3, Georg Karo Collection, Central Archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin.

[96] Georg Karo, "Deutsche Denkmalpflege im westlichen Kleinasien 1917/18," in *Kunstschutz im Kriege. Berichte über den Zustand der Kunstdenkmäler auf den verschiedenen Kriegsschauplätzen und über die deutschen und österreichischen Massnahmen zu ihrer Erhaltung, Rettung, Erforschung. Zweiter Band: Die Kriegsschauplätze in Italien, im Osten und Südosten*, ed. Paul Clemen (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1919), 167–173.

return?"[97] Karo's words expressed his affection for the region and his feelings of uncertainty as he was forced to leave the Ottoman shores of the Aegean. Along with other archaeologists leaving the Ottoman realm, Karo traveled to Istanbul and then to Ukraine by ship, followed by a train journey from Mykolaiv via Kyiv and Warsaw to Berlin. His roundabout route revealed the war and political upheavals to which Central and Southeastern Europe and the Middle East were being subjected.

Between 1916 and 1918, Wiegand had failed to accomplish his aim of acquiring archaeological objects in the Ottoman provinces of Sinai, Palestine, and Syria.[98] Ahmed Cemal had engaged the archaeologists in wartime Syria to establish the Nineteenth Bureau within his headquarters, from which he was to survey ancient sites in the operational area of the Fourth Ottoman Army.[99] Wiegand worked on the protection and accessibility to Ottoman heritage sites. In this period, it became obvious to the German museum representative that his aim to acquire objects for the Berlin Museums from the Ottoman Empire was impossible. The ceasefire with St. Petersburg opened new fields of activity in Ukraine and Georgia. Wiegand traveled to Kyiv in search of new excavation sites and to convince German and Ukrainian representatives to sign an agreement on the partage of archaeological finds.[100] Ukrainian resistance to his efforts and doubts within the German Foreign Office toxified these new relations and they failed. It was impossible for Wiegand to return to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, he left Odessa on a train to Warsaw on November 7, 1918.[101] When Polish troops disarmed German soldiers in Warsaw, he managed to find a hospital train to take him out of the city on November 11. In retrospect, he noted: "Everyone felt that we had lost something irreplaceable and that we were no longer alone in determining our fate."[102] In his diary, Wiegand described his loss. He defined the expulsion of Germans from Ottoman and Polish territory as a sign of defeat symbolizing Germany's disappearance of power in those parts. The termination

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97 Manuscript by Georg Karo, Folder 2: Stories and Reports, October 24, 1918, fol. 3–4, Georg Karo Collection, Central Archive of the German Archaeological Institute, Berlin.
98 Willert, "Zwischen deutsch-osmanischen Kriegszielen und Museumsinteressen," 49; Willert, *Kulturbesitz*, 650–713.
99 Willert, *Kulturbesitz*, 671.
100 Gabriele Mietke, "'Die Funde der class[ischen]. Epoche für uns, die slav[ischen]. Epochen den Ukrainern.' Auf der Suche nach neuen Ausgrabungsstätten für die Antikensammlung 1918," in *Zum Kriegsdienst einberufen. Die Königlichen Museen zu Berlin und der Erste Weltkrieg*, ed. Petra Winter and Jörn Grabowski (Köln: Böhlau, 2014), 115–131; Willert, *Kulturbesitz*, 685, 718.
101 Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 338.
102 Ibid., 342.

of German and Ottoman diplomatic relations meant that the German archaeologists lost their privileged positions on Ottoman soil and their access to excavation sites. For the German archaeological community, leaving Ottoman soil meant a retreat into isolation.

The writings of Karo and Wigand bear witness to the moment when they began to experience a nostalgia provoked by memories of a now lost and longed-for past. Karo anticipated the withdrawal of German troops from the Ottoman Empire and the equally dramatic changes in the geopolitical landscape. The archaeologists were forced to leave Asia Minor without knowing whether they would again see the territory where Prussian and German archaeology had been investing massively for several decades. Returning to isolation and political turmoil, they re-entered a Germany, what was, as Baumann put it, "formerly a natural habitat of hope and legitimate expectations" and became "a horror scenario of impending nightmares."[103] On October 30, 1918, six days after Karo began his journey home from Asia Minor, the Mudros Armistice ended hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and the Entente.[104] Istanbul severed diplomatic relations with Berlin even as the archaeologists worked to maintain good relations with representatives of the fallen Empires, both Ottoman and German. Bilateral relations between the Weimar Republic and the Turkish Republic were established after the Treaty of Lausanne. Wiegand did not expect the change in regimes, but he soon discovered that the red flags on top of Berlin's Museum Island symbolized the disappearance of the monarchy that had for decades supported Prussian-German archaeological endeavors. Wiegand's return to Berlin meant he had to deal with an emerging political system that was hostile to previous museum management practices.

Inheriting the Past

The political upheavals between 1918 and 1924 ended imperial rule in Germany and the Ottoman Empire. While the Müze-i Hümayun and the Königliche Museen zu Berlin stood as symbols of a professionalization of archaeology, their collections of ancient art in Berlin and Istanbul now turned into loci of an imperial past. Both institutions represented hegemonic aspirations in the field of archaeology before 1918.

[103] Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 14.

[104] Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy*, 188–194; Sean McMeekin, *The Ottoman Endgame. War Revolution, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 1908–1923* (New York: Penguin, 2015), 393–411.

The geopolitical transformations of the post-World War I period challenged the self-image of the directors of Berlin's Royal Museums. The archaeologists came from a bourgeois background. Prior to 1918, they supported the Wilhelmine imperial and nationalist effort to generate the most prestigious collection of cultural assets in the world, in competition with the other colonial powers. Norbert Elias contends that the relative weakness of the small German states vis-à-vis the other European powers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was resolved with the unification of Germany in 1871. Germans' profound feeling of humiliation was replaced by the conviction that their national greatness and power was reflected in their determined "struggle for hegemony in Europe, if not in the world."[105] This development affected Germany's domestic politics and society. It increased the power of the military and the nobility at the expense of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the bourgeoisie began to adopt military values. The scientific elite of the Wilhelmine Empire soon desired to contribute to the success of the national project and join the vanguard of the nobility.[106] Scholars of archaeology tried to advance Germany's geopolitical and potentially hegemonic position with their efforts to expand the museums' collections. They formed "collectives" with their colleagues that discussed and devised strategies for the museums and justified the appropriation of objects from abroad.[107] When the war ended in 1918, the archaeologists' self-image began to lose its luster. It did not fit into republican-democratic ideas of good museum practice. Nevertheless, the leading museum officials in Berlin, who had not only begun their careers in the Wilhelmine era but already achieved prominence before 1914, retained their high positions.

After losing his access to Ottoman territory, Wiegand tried to gain control of museum science in the Weimar Republic. In the spring of 1921, he was appointed to chair the Special Committee for Art Science (Vorsitz für den Fachausschuß Kunstwissenschaft) of the Emergency Association of German Science (Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft).[108] Besides holding advisory positions in Bonn and Trier, the director joined the board of the Roman-Germanic Central Museum (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum) in Mainz· He continued to support excavations in Asia Minor through intermediaries.[109] His biographer

105 Norbert Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen: Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 233.
106 Ibid., 82–83, 114, 119, 123–124, 233–238, 271–273.
107 Willert, *Kulturbesitz*, 30–31.
108 Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 356–357.
109 Ibid., 357–358.

Watzinger says, "Just as he had finally supervised all German archaeological work in Turkey from Constantinople, so he now saw it as his main task to get archaeological undertakings that had been endangered or interrupted by the hardships of the time back on track."[110] To assist him in this task, he called on prewar structures for support, among them the Association of Friends of Ancient Art (Vereinigung der Freunde antiker Kunst) that Wiegand himself had founded in 1913 to fund and support the extension of the antiquity collections in Berlin.

One of the projects Wiegand pursued was the completion of the Pergamon Museum building, planned by architect Alfred Messel. Wiegand was one of the most impassioned advocates for its completion. The building would provide exhibition space for the objects excavated in Bergama in the 1870s and 1880s and display other objects from the Berlin museums' collections. Before 1914, only part of the building had been completed. Construction work on Museum Island had been suspended during the war and still had not been resumed in the early 1920s. Inflation hampered its progress, and the Weimar Republic's precarious financial situation made funding the museum operations difficult.[111] As early as June 1, 1919, Wiegand and his fellow museum directors, Otto Weber and Heinrich Schäfer, petitioned the government to expand the south wing of the Pergamon. That attempt failed, but the shell of the museum building provoked further discussion of how to deal with that relic of the Wilhelmine era. Negotiations in the Reichstag on the project's future failed, despite criticism of Berlin's cultural policy by the still influential Wilhelm von Bode.[112] Eventually, the Ministry of Finance provided the necessary funds for completing the Pergamon Museum. Nevertheless, public opposition to further construction increased and progressive voices called for a general change in museum practices. For example, the art critic and publicist Karl Scheffler criticized the plans for the Pergamon. He perceived the project as evidence of "Wilhelmine *Großmannssucht* [boastfulness]" and an unnecessary concession to nostalgia for the imperial past.[113]

From Wiegand's point of view, abandoning the building project would have reduced the imagined heroic imperial past to a phantom, whereas its completion would materialize its presence in the future. Nevertheless, Wiegand left the ultimate decision up to Berliners, asking the "judgment of the public" to

[110] Ibid., 357.
[111] Ibid., 364.
[112] Ibid., 351–352.
[113] Theodor Wiegand, "Die Denkmäler in Syrien," *Der Sammler. Wochenschrift für alte und neue Kunst* 1, no. 38 (Sonderheft: Anläßlich des 14. Tages für Denkmalpflege in Münster i.W., 21.–24. September 1921) (1921): 181–183, here 183.

decide the building's fate.[114] Furthermore, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Wiegand's predecessor Carl Humann's death, he stressed the importance of "Humann's precious inheritance, the sculptures of the Pergamenian altar, [which] had been on public display for only five years in the forty-four years since they had been in Berlin."[115]

On January 9, 1922, on behalf of the Association of Friends of Ancient Art, Wiegand submitted a request to the Minister of Culture, Otto Boelitz, asking "not only to support the implementation of the reconstruction but later also to advocate in the same way for the internal arrangement of the Pergamon Museum."[116] Wiegand referred to a memorandum written by Wilhelm von Bode in 1910, in which the latter had stated "that the Pergamon altar, as one of the most important monuments of Greek art and as the most imposing work of art that our museums have so far possessed and will probably ever possess, must form the prominent center not only of the new museum but of the entire complex of museum buildings."[117] Seconded by newspaper articles, Wiegand urged the Central Directorate of the Imperial Archaeological Institute and the Minister to "oppose all attempts to postpone the completion of the Pergamon Museum."[118]

On November 11, 1923, Wiegand celebrated the Association of Friends of Ancient Art in a ceremony attended by an audience of 500 persons in the Academy's ballroom. The steady increase in the association's membership to about 800 people in 1932 brought joy to the museum director's heart. He interpreted the growth of the association as a sign of resistance to the "new artistic movements with their excesses and extravagances." Wiegand considered ancient art to be a salvation that had a calming effect on society and condemned art forms he called "explosion painting."[119] To support his demand for completion of the Pergamon Museum, Wiegand organized a special exhibition of the Collection of Classical Antiquities in 1923, which underlined "the importance of the museum's office in Constantinople (...) because most of the acquisitions were due to the collecting activities carried out there."[120] Politically, however, perceptions of the museums and their role in a democratic society were changing.

[114] Ibid., 183.
[115] Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 354.
[116] Ibid., 355.
[117] Ibid., 355.
[118] Ibid., 355.
[119] Ibid., 362.
[120] Ibid., 362–363.

From Storehouses of Imperial Archaeology to Places of Republican Edification

In response to Wiegand, Otto Boelitz wrote a "Memorandum on the Planned External Design of Berlin's Museum System" (Denkschrift über die geplante äußere Gestaltung des Berliner Museumswesens) dated January 30, 1922.[121] Addressing the President of the Prussian Parliament, he recapitulated the task assigned to the Königliche Museen in the past. "The Museum Island was to unite the collections of the Fine Arts of Europe and the Mediterranean area, starting with the works of the Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians and ending with the creations of our own time."[122] The old museum buildings had simply become too small for the collections. Boelitz said, "The great Pergamenian altar" together with the "other finds from the great German excavations in Asia Minor (...) first established the world reputation of the Antiquities Department of our museums." They "required a decent accommodation."[123]

Boelitz agreed with Wiegand that the archaeological finds housed in Berlin justified the collection's importance and world reputation. However, he warned that the "yard-like halls" that were planned to house the objects were no longer viable. Although the external framework had already been created before the war, "[t]he upheaval of our political, social, and economic situation brought about by the lost war (...) could not remain without decisive influence on the further shaping of our museum system."[124] Before he set about proposing changes, however, Boelitz recognized the achievements of key figures in the past of German archaeology: "The nation will always gratefully remember men like Richard Schöne, Alexander Conze, Wilhelm von Bode and their numerous collaborators who brought about this extraordinary achievement. The nineteenth century was a period of great collecting activity."[125] Boelitz thought of the past as a time when museum collections expanded with the generous support of the state and ultimately, the emperor. He subtly rued the end of that support. In doing so, he struck a chord with the archaeological guild. In his memorandum, Boelitz addressed future challenges:

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[121] Otto Boelitz to Robert Leinert, Memorandum, Berlin, January 30, 1922, I. HA Rep. 90, Nr. 2402, fol. 156–158, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

[122] Ibid., fol. 156.

[123] Ibid., fol. 156.

[124] Ibid., fol. 156.

[125] Ibid., fol. 156.

Further growth, continued increase at the same pace, is neither possible nor desirable. Our generation, in which many eyes from a new, promising strata of the population want to investigate the museums, not with the eye of a trained connoisseur but with a desire for [public] improvement and instruction, demands that the accumulated treasures now also take root in the consciousness of larger strata of the population. In any case, the focus of our inner attitude toward our future work will have to be sought here: the collections should grow less in breadth than in depth.[126]

To popularize the museum collections, Boelitz called for better exhibits as well as a "clear separation of the immediately visible from the merely instructive [and] frequent stimulation by changing exhibitions and guided tours."[127] Although Boelitz emphasized that more frequent exhibits and guided tours were being provided, he still perceived a core problem: many archaeologists continued to dream of moving objects from excavation campaigns abroad into Berlin. Boelitz felt that "prewar plans were partly based on completely different premises than those that are valid today and in the future." He observed before the war, "[t]he major new buildings (...) were designed in dimensions that assumed further very substantial growth of the collections in the coming decades."[128] However, in the 1920s this growth was not expected. Consequently, Boelitz considered the "unrestricted continuation of the great building plans of the prewar period" to be unjustified. Finally, he said, the state's spending on museums "should meet a real need."[129] Boelitz did not foresee any damage to or restriction of the existing collections, he simply urged the government to refrain from constructing more buildings. If needed, additional space could be achieved by roofing over a courtyard in the Neues Museum and remodeling some halls in the south wing of the Pergamon.[130]

Wiegand continued to demand completion of the Pergamon Museum building, deeming it necessary "not only out of respect for the great heritage of antiquity but also out of the deepest reverence for the memory of the subtle master [Alfred Messel]."[131] In the summer of 1926, the museum battle seemed to have been won at last in favor of Messel's plans. Wiegand "could (...) finally return to Alexander Conze's legacy and bring the excavation of Pergamon to

[126] Ibid., fol. 156.
[127] Ibid., fol. 156v.–157.
[128] Ibid., fol. 157.
[129] Ibid., fol. 157.
[130] Ibid., fol. 157–157v.
[131] Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 383.

a conclusion."[132] Republican elements in the government bowed to the nostalgia of the museum directors. In reaction, Scheffler, the art critic, derided the plan to complete the museum as a concession to "the archaeologists' expansionist urges."[133] Simultaneously, the Berlin museums began planning larger excavation projects in the former territory of the Ottoman Empire. On March 31, 1927, Wiegand and his wife restarted excavation work at Pergamon.[134] The work was completed in 1934. Carl Watzinger writes in Wiegand's biography that Wiegand finished the excavation plans that Alexander Conze had held in his heart until the last years of his life, "thus setting up a permanent monument to his attachment and inner bond with the master of excavation, whom he revered."[135]

Karl Marx said, "The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living."[136] As German imperial rule declined, archaeologists like Wiegand invoked the "spirits of the past"[137] against progressive ideas for reforming museum practice. The archaeologist's anti-democratic attitudes found expression outside the museum. After a festival of his Corps Suevia fraternity in Munich in July 1923, Wiegand joined his young students to listen to a speech by Adolf Hitler. Wiegand not only expressed admiration for Hitler but expressed hope for the future based on the "national attitude" of the young men around him.[138] The archaeologist supported the antidemocratic and antisemitic German National People's Party (Deutschnationale Volkspartei) and before that, advocated for the Freikorps, which opposed the communists in Berlin. However, Wiegand refused an opportunity to work as a diplomat for the Weimar Republic.[139] When Hitler and his Nazi party seized power in 1933, he welcomed the opportunity "to work for the new organization of his homeland with all his strength."[140] This was the first indication that the museum directors were willing to subordinate themselves to National Socialist guidance.

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[132] Ibid., 412.
[133] Ibid., 382.
[134] Ibid., 413–414.
[135] Ibid., 418.
[136] Karl Marx, "Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte," in *Werke* (=MEW), ed. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, vol. 8 (Berlin: Dietz 1972 [1872]), 115. Quoted in Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 74.
[137] Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 74.
[138] Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 365.
[139] Ibid., 343–345.
[140] Theodor Wiegand to Aziz Ogan, letter, Berlin, August 7, 1934, n. p., OGNIST0301503, Aziz Ogan Koleksiyonu, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi, Istanbul.

Conclusion

According to the French historian and archaeologist Alain Schnapp, "The world empire needs ruins, but not half-ruined monuments that point back to the most ancient times, rather an imaginary topography based on a memory that contrasts with the present."[141] The immediate post-World War I period was a time of ruptures and dissonances in the fading German and Ottoman Empires. Artist and writer Svetlana Boym says that "outbreaks of nostalgia often occur after revolutions."[142] The attitude of the German and Turkish museum directors toward the changes in regimes between 1918 and 1939 is of particular interest. After the collapse of imperial rule, museums in the Weimar and Turkish Republics were run by directors who had entered the institutions before the imperial dusk. Many of the directors succeeded in holding on to their positions through a period of intense geopolitical transformation, regime change, and the disintegration of transcontinental empires. The process of adapting museum institutions established during imperial rule to the new republics reflected the directors' nostalgic entanglement with the imperial past in the republican present. While archaeology and the exhibition of archaeological objects helped to define the two national identities, the role of museums in the interwar period differed in Berlin and Istanbul.[143] Both nations worked on constructing new archaeological museums to exhibit their inherited relics of ancient civilizations. Ideas rooted in the imperial past dominated museum practices in the republics that emerged from the ashes of the two empires and influenced various ways in which nostalgia and retrotopia were expressed.

Baumann says that retrograde tendencies contribute to the retrotopian idea that an original and uncorrupted national identity is a "sine-qua-non condition for a civilizational order."[144] In Turkey, the national territory came to be essential to the Turkish Republic's identity. Archaeology provided and nourished an ideological basis for seizing and maintaining the soil on which the new republic was to be built. Scholars drew on "different pasts"[145] to construct a Turkish cultural heritage. Simultaneously, the material relics of past civilizations that constituted that heritage were an "integral element for enacting the change" to the new

[141] Alain Schnapp, *Was ist eine Ruine? Entwurf einer vergleichenden Perspektive* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014), 75–76.
[142] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xvi. Quoted also in Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 18.
[143] Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 740.
[144] Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 18.
[145] Dinler, "The Knife's Edge of the Present," 741.

order.[146] The musealization of sites of Ottoman rule and magnificence, such as the palace of the Sultans and Hagia Sophia, deconstructed the symbols of imperial power and transferred the legitimacy they represented onto the republican Turkish state. At the same time, the museums and other actors reconstructed parts of Turkish history[147] by inventing narratives and traditions.[148] Museums were important instruments for constructing the "collective consciousness" of a common identity based on the myth of a homogenous Turkey. The museum representatives worked to promote belonging and coherence among the Turkish inhabitants of Turkey with a narrative of a shared, common history so that past, present, and future came together in support of the national project. Consciously entangling current and past rulers stimulated a perception of cultural continuity. In the words of Alain Schnapp, "It is necessary to recover the traces of the ancient temples and palaces to construct new buildings that are at the same time identical and yet different."[149] Schnapp identifies various strategies of memorializing ancient civilizations to provide "remedies for trepidation and the danger of loss of continuity" in society.[150] A paradox arose in interwar Turkey: while attempts were made to secularize the material cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire through musealization of its palaces, the museums already established in Istanbul represented a form of continuity with empire themselves. The exhibitions of archaeological collections, including those of Islamic art, were based in Ottoman-era archaeology. Ankara did not renounce the continuity of Turkish civilization altogether. The new political leadership preserved important spaces and objects as nostalgic loci for their imperial heritage. As for Halil Edhem and Aziz Ogan, they devoted their professional lives to the new national cause despite their wariness of Ankara's influence. Both of them frequently employed Kemalist rhetoric in their public pronouncements.

In Germany, the reaction of the Berlin Museum's directors to an order to decorate the museum buildings with flags to celebrate the return of frontline troops in December 1918 was symbolic of their orientation. "When the Ebert-Scheidemann government ordered that flags be flown in honor of the returning front formations, the university and museums used the opportunity to replace the red flags [of the Revolutionaries] with white Prussian flags with

[146] Ibid., 743.
[147] Ibid., 743.
[148] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
[149] Schnapp, *Was ist eine Ruine?* 32–33.
[150] Ibid., 117.

the black eagle."[151] The museum directors sought to continue their practice of exploiting the imperial heritage in the time of intense geopolitical and domestic political transformation that was the interwar period. Archaeologists and museum staff who had begun their careers in the period of transcontinental empires still played a leading role after World War I. "Retrotopia" dominated the mindset of the directors managing the museums in Berlin, like Theodor Wiegand. They feared that the disintegration of the German empire threatened the loss and theft of its undead past, which they desired to preserve in the public memory or even actively recover. To them, the Weimar Republic represented a future that they found difficult to endure. In their nostalgic approach to the Berlin museums, they critiqued the deficiencies of the present and created a superior imagined past.[152] In the new Weimar Republic, the representatives of Wilhelmine archaeology heroized the appropriation of foreign patrimony and the museum practices of the past. They displayed an anti-republican attitude marked by their longing for the imperial era. This was the retrotopia of Wiegand and his colleagues: "Instead of investing in an uncertain and all too untrustworthy future, all hopes for social improvements were now invested in a (…) yesterday whose imagined stability, and consequently its trustworthiness, were valued above all."[153]

Contrasting Turkish and German museum practices and their imperial archaeological traditions in the context of the new republics formed in each country illuminates how the museum elites used their different positions to promote their views of the value of preserving their respective "national" pasts. Nostalgizing museum practices were "memory aids (…) [and] tools of forgetting and remembering."[154] The museum directors commemorated lost imperial grandeur, but their nostalgia for it allowed them to ignore, if not altogether forget, conflict-laden relationships, questionable means of appropriating objects for their collections, and asymmetries of power. Their refusal to critically reflect on their archaeological traditions still has impact on museum narratives today and influences the reluctance to take a critical look at the origins of their collections.

151 Watzinger, *Theodor Wiegand*, 342–343.
152 Becker, "Nostalgie," 320.
153 Baumann, *Retrotopia*, 14.
154 Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 346.

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STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

MEMORY ASSAULTS AGAINST OBLIVION: CONTRASTING THE MEMORY OF BORDER SHIFTS IN CIESZYN SILESIA, ORAWA, SPISZ

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the memoryscapes of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa and Spisz in a context of the border conflicts of the twentieth century. The regions located on the current Czech-Polish and Slovak-Polish border have lived through paralleled histories of the border demarcation after WWI, which was unprecedented there. In both cases the national minorities were left behind the border, outside of their home states. Their stories and memories are, however, not being researched together. This paper contrasts the patterns of memory production related to the border shifts in the landscape in both regions. Emphasis is placed on the memory sites, their narratives and memory activism related to the conflicting past. The results show that the main axes of both memory debates are contrasting. While the conflict over Cieszyn Silesia was most shaped by the short war in 1919, the lesser-known dispute over Orawa and Spisz was marked by numerous smaller incidents, assimilation efforts and a layer of post WWII violence. This has important consequences for the memory production. The other important differentiating factor is the scope of memory activism inside of the national minority group.
Keywords: border studies; borderlands; memoryscapes; national minorities; Czechia; Poland; Slovakia
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1 Introduction

The village of Chyżne in southern Poland and the town of Český Těšín in the eastern part of Czechia have at least three characteristics in common. Both lie next to the state border (Chyżne borders Slovakia and Český Těšín borders Poland). Both are parts of the formerly compact regions divided in 1920 by the border (Chyżne belongs to the Slovak-Polish region of Orava/Orawa, Český Těšín and its Polish counterpart Cieszyn were the historical capital of the region Cieszyn Silesia).[1] Finally, both have their own monument dedicated to the state border. The one in Chyżne stands next to the Roman Catholic church, and the one in Český Těšín is located in front of the Museum of Cieszyn Region (Muzeum Těšínska).

Even though the monuments represent the state border through their inner meaning, they do not have a function of a border stone. The distance between the monuments and "their" border is 2 kilometers in the case of Chyżne and 300 meters in the case of Český Těšín. The state borders have never been demarcated through the current location of the monuments. Therefore, the border stones are used artificially here as self-reliant symbols. The quarrel caused by the unveiling of the "border monument" in Český Těšín shows that such a step is rarely value-neutral due to the semiotics of border.[2]

Taking into consideration that both monuments commemorate a border which has been shifted under a tense international atmosphere, then both memory sites (understood as the places that elicit or retell memories of past events as the result of some activism) are part of the narratives the nation-state or other actors (e.g., museums, ethnic minority groups) are promoting.[3] Their location

1 For sake of terminological coherence, the region of Těšínské Slezsko (in Czech)/Śląsk Cieszyński (in Polish) is here referred to with an international version "Cieszyn Silesia." This linguistic solution was not possible in the case of the regions Orava (in Slovak)/Orawa (in Polish) and Spiš (in Slovak)/Spisz (in Polish), which do not have a single name in English. Therefore, this article chose one variant: the Polish one (Orawa and Spisz) is used throughout whole article. The reason is that the disputed areas are nowadays part of Poland.

2 Ondřej Elbel, "Border-Crossings as Memory Sites? The Case Study of the Czech-Polish Border in Cieszyn Silesia," *Pogranicze. Polish Borderlands Studies* 10, no. 3 (2022): 145–170, doi: 10.25167/brs4689. Christophe Sohn, "How to Brand a Border Despite Its Wall? A Social Semiotics Approach to Cross-Border Place Branding," *Geoforum*, no. 135 (October 2022): 82–92, doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2022.07.016; Raffaele De Luca Picione and Jaan Valsiner, "Psychological Functions of Semiotic Borders in Sense-Making: Liminality of Narrative Processes," *Europe's Journal of Psychology* 13, no. 3 (2017): 532–547, doi: 10.5964/ejop.v13i3.1136.

3 Annika Björkdahl, Susanne Buckley-Zistel, Stefanie Kappler, Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, and Timothy Williams, "Memory Politics, Cultural Heritage and Peace: Introducing an Analytical

is not without significance due to the relation of time and space. The landscape can record situations and experiences.[4] The observer may recall memories or contextual associations there and the landscape may work as an anchor for memories that have their geographical dimension.[5] Both sites in Český Těšín and Chyżne are, therefore, structuring their symbolic landscapes, in other words, "memoryscapes."[6]

This paper analyzes the memoryscapes of two borderland regions that experienced several shifts of the border over the course of the twentieth century. The conflicts (either armed or diplomatic) over Cieszyn Silesia (nowadays the Czech-Polish borderland), Orawa and Spisz (the Slovak-Polish borderland) stem from the post-World War I dilemma of how to divide the former Austro-Hungarian Empire into nation-states.[7] As the boundaries between ethnic groups were often blurred, such a step was difficult to manage.[8] The cases analyzed in this piece had different socio-economic positions and demographic situations around 1920. However, they were contested by Czechoslovakia and Poland at the same time and the borders were shifted again around the time of the Second World War, which makes them comparable.

Although the state of the art in the historiographical research on the division of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa and Spisz in the 1920s and around the Second World War is steadily developing, comparative approaches are, in essence, lacking.[9] If debated, the memory issues of Cieszyn Silesia or Orawa and Spisz are taken individually. In the field of border studies, the Cieszyn Silesia region is very often debated in the context of other border-twin cities, cross-border

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Framework to Study Mnemonic Formations" (Research Cluster on Peace, Memory and Cultural Heritage Working Paper No. 1, 2017), doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3206571.

[4] Jan Skaloš and Ivana Kašparová, "Landscape Memory and Landscape Change in Relation to Mining," *Ecological Engineering* 43 (June 2012): 60–69, doi: 10.1016/j.ecoleng.2011.07.001.

[5] Peter H. Hoffenberg, "Landscape, Memory and the Australian War Experience, 1915–18," *Journal of Contemporary History* 26, no. 1 (2001): 111–131, doi: 10.1177/002200940103600105.

[6] Stefanie Kappler, "Sarajevo's Ambivalent Memoryscape: Spatial Stories of Peace and Conflict," *Memory Studies* 10, no. 2 (2016): 130–143, doi: 10.1177/1750698016650484.

[7] Orawa and Spisz are, from the ethnographic and historical perspective, two separate regions. However, their "Polish parts" are located close to each other and both are under the strong cultural influence of the "Podhale" region, which is located between them. Also, both Polish Spisz and Upper Orawa share the history of the division by the state border after WWI and historians very often make parallels between both regions and narrate their histories together. Therefore, Spisz and Orawa are considered in this paper as one case.

[8] Tadeusz Siwek, "Otázka vnitřních hranic v návrhu federalizace Rakousko-Uherska Aurela Popoviciho," in *Hranice v krajinách*, ed. Eva Semotanová (Praha: Academia, 2020), 134–158.

[9] The thin brochure of Žáček and Borák is often quoted as an exception: Rudolf Žáček and Mečislav Borák, *Ukradené vesnice. Musí Češi platit za osm slovenských obcí?* (Ostrava: Sfinga, 1993).

Figure 1: Map of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz Source: Ondřej Elbel

cooperation or cross-border work and compared with the regions around Frankfurt an der Oder/Slubice (DE/PL) or Komárno/Komárom (SK/HU).[10] In the case of Orawa and Spisz, the interest of border scholars is lower, probably due to the absence of strong urban centers and low population density resulting in sparse network of cross-border bonds.[11]

[10] Jarosław Jańczak, "Cross-Border Cooperation across Polish Borders: Thirty Years of Cross-Border Eldorado?" Észak-Magyarországi *Stratégiai Füzetek* 18, no. 2 (2021): 5–14, doi: 10.32976/stratfuz.2021.30; Justyna Kajta and Elżbieta Opiłowska, "The Impact of Covid-19 on Structure and Agency in a Borderland. The Case of Two Twin Towns in Central Europe," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 37, no. 4 (2022): 699–721, doi: 10.1080/08865655.2021.1996259; Wojciech Opioła and Hynek Böhm, "Euroregions as Political Actors: Managing Border Policies in the Time of Covid-19 in Polish Borderlands," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 10, no. 6 (2022): 896–916, doi: 10.1080/21622671.2021.2017339.

[11] Marián Halás, "Development of cross-border cooperation and creation of Euroregions in the Slovak Republic," *Moravian geographical reports* 15, no. 1 (2007): 21–31; Justyna Pokojska, "Recreating the local community – the process of reconstructing Polish-Slovak cross-border relations after 1989: The case of the villages of Sromowce Niżne and Červený Kláštor," *On-line Journal Modelling the New Europe*, no. 39 (2022): 69–99.

The overall research question of this paper is focused on the interaction of memoryscape with cultural memory production in the borderlands: What are the representations of memoryscape related to the border shifts in the previously contested territories of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz? To answer this research question, field trips to all three regions were organized with the aim to analyze the memory traces connected to the issue of border contestation and also conduct research interviews with experts (regionalists, historians, anthropologists; the methods are more deeply discussed in Chapter 4). The aim of this paper is to contrast between two cases of memoryscapes shaped by the same phenomenon (border demarcation after WWI) in a similar geographical context. The findings should illustrate which role the memory issues have in the local identity, symbolics, and heritage which is a prominent research topic for borders in Central and Eastern Europe.[12] Apart from filling a research gap, the paper also sheds light to the current echoes of old historical conflicts that are time to time revoked and revived in the regional political context which has however international dimension due to the presence of national minorities.

The paper proceeds as follows. In the next chapter the theoretical considerations are debated. Then the context of border conflicts in Cieszin Silesia, Orawa and Spisz is introduced. The methods, sampling and structure of interviews are described afterwards. These chapters aim to form the terminological and geographical anchor for the Findings and Discussion.

2 Remembering and Forgetting in the Landscape

The process of remembering and forgetting is inseparable from space.[13] The collective memory is connected to the public space because the events or actions being remembered originally took place there or are believed to be anyhow connected with the particular site. The markers of memory are encoded into the visual and literary cultures of a space.[14] This spatial dimension of

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[12] Vladimir Kolosov and Marek Więckowski, "Border changes in Central and Eastern Europe: An introduction," *Geographia Polonica* 91, no. 1 (2018): 5–16, doi: 10.7163/GPol.0106.

[13] Stephen Legg, "Contesting and Surviving Memory: Space, Nation, and Nostalgia in *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23, no. 4 (2005): 481–504, doi: 10.1068/d05.

[14] Anouk Bélanger, "Urban Space and Collective Memory: Analysing the Various Dimensions of the Production of Memory," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 11, no. 1 (2002): 69–92.

remembering is also supplemented by the variable of time.[15] Together, they comprise the hermeneutics of place where experience or past events are constantly re-narrated.[16]

The palimpsest of memories is materialized by the monuments,[17] the commemorative plaques,[18] the street names,[19] the urbanism and the architecture,[20] the graffiti,[21] or the museums.[22] The cemeteries are also vocal sites of remembering, as the names and epitaphs on the tombstone may witness lost linguistic or religious diversity.[23] Due to their usually visual character, these sites need material and ideological maintenance. If the responsible actor is not able to cultivate the site and talk about its heritage, the plaques fade, and the meanings are slowly disappearing.

When the memory issues become part of the political agenda, they may work as the identity-makers influencing the perception of the border and mutual relationships between groups.[24] As Yi Fu Tuan argues, monuments, temples,

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15 For the context of the temporal dimension of "borderscape," see Alena Pfoser, "Memory and Everyday Borderwork: Understanding Border Temporalities," *Geopolitics* 27, no. 2 (2022): 566–583, doi: 10.1080/14650045.2020.1801647.

16 Forrest Clingerman, "Memory, Imagination, and the Hermeneutics of Place," in *Interpreting Nature*, ed. Forrest Clingerman et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 245–263, doi: 10.1515/9780823254286-014.

17 Wojciech Opioła, "Pamięć zbiorowa i tożsamość historyczna lokalnej społeczności pogranicza," in *Pograniczność i pogranicza w perspektywie nauk społecznych*, ed. Wojciech Michał Chlebda and Ivana Dobrotová (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2015), 81–91; Ágnes Erőss, "Living Memorial and Frozen Monuments: The Role of Social Practice in Memorial Sites," *Urban Development Issues* 55 (2017): 19–32, doi: 10.2478/udi-2018-0002.

18 Bélanger, "Urban Space and Collective Memory."

19 Přemysl Mácha, Horst Lassak, and Luděk Krtička, "City Divided: Place Names and Nationalism in the Czech-Polish Borderlands," *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft* 160 (2018): 303–329, doi: 10.1553/moegg160s303; Přemysl Mácha, "The Symbolic Power of Place Names: The Case of the River Olše/Olza/Łolza in Northeastern Czechia," *Names. A Journal of Onomastics* 68, no. 3. (2020): 169–184, doi: 10.1080/00277738.2020.1786925; Ulrike Capdepón, "Challenging the Symbolic Representation of the Franco Dictatorship: The Street Name Controversy in Madrid," *History & Memory* 32, no. 1 (2020): 100–130.

20 Alena Pfoser, "Between Russia and Estonia: Narratives of Place in a New Borderland," *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 2 (2014): 269–285, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2013.774341.

21 Alessandra Miklavcic, "Slogans and Graffiti: Postmemory among Youth in the Italo-Slovenian Borderland," *American Ethnologist* 35, no. 3 (2008): 440–453, doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.00045.x.

22 Grzegorz Studnicki, "Prywatne i społeczne muzea na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w kontekście tożsamości regionalnej," *Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Muzealnej*, no. 5 (2018): 157–176.

23 Krystian Puzdrakiewicz, "Cemeteries as (Un)Wanted Heritage of Previous Communities. An Example of Changes in the Management of Cemeteries and Their Social Perception in Gdańsk, Poland," *Landscape Online*, November 20, 2020, article no. 86, doi: 10.3097/lo.202086.

24 Tatiana Zhurzhenko, *Borderlands into Bordered Lands: Geopolitics of Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Hannover: Ibidem, 2010).

battlefields or cemeteries are amplifying the sense of belonging, construct identity, and build awareness and loyalty towards a place.[25] The aim is to re-construct myths that the groups share about themselves in specific places and times.[26] The formation of public memory is a dynamic process, which impacts the identities that are symbolically coded in the monuments.[27] The mobilizing potential of these symbols helps construct an imagined community of nation.[28] The dynamics of the construction and demolishing of monuments can unveil which topics are promoted or silenced.[29]

Together, the memorial imprints and practices in the landscape form a "memoryscape."[30] These clusters of spaces are defined by the significance of the narratives about the past.[31] From them, the public imagination and interpretations of the landscape stem.[32] The meanings of the memoryscapes are, however, not stable. They acquire content through social discourses.[33] According to Kappler, the main characteristics that influence the shape of the memoryscape are *the design of memory sites* (what is narrated, depicted, and arranged), *their location and size* (what is visible, which audiences are targeted), *their timing* (temporal context) and *the memorial practices* (the behavior of visitors, public understanding of the message of the memoryscape).[34]

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25 Yi-Fu Tuan, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective," in *Philosophy in Geography*, ed. Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1979), 387–427.

26 Karen E. Till, "Staging the Past: Landscape Designs, Cultural Identity and Erinnerungspolitik at Berlin's Neue Wache," *Cultural Geographies* 6, no. 3 (1999): 251–283, doi: 10.1177/096746089900600302.

27 Nuala C. Johnson, "Mapping Monuments: The Shaping of Public Space and Cultural Identities," *Visual Communication* 1, no. 3 (2002): 293–298, doi: 10.1177/147035720200100302.

28 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso books, 2006).

29 Tatiana Zhurzhenko, *Memory Wars and Reconciliation in the Ukrainian-Polish Borderlands: Geopolitics of Memory from a Local Perspective. History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013), doi: 10.1057/9781137302052_11.

30 Christine Lawrence et al., *Global Memoryscapes: Contesting Remembrance in a Transnational Age* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011).

31 Kappler, "Sarajevo's Ambivalent Memoryscape," 131.

32 Toby Butler, "'Memoryscape': Integrating Oral History, Memory and Landscape on the River Thames," in *People and their Pasts*, ed. Paul Ashton and Hilda Kean (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 223–239.

33 Lawrence et al., *Global Memoryscapes*.

34 Kappler, "Sarajevo's Ambivalent Memoryscape," 132.

3 Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz between the 1920s-1950s: Parallel Worlds?

When looking from the capital cities of Prague, Bratislava, and Warsaw, the regions under scrutiny may be considered distant peripheries. Orawa and Spisz on the one side and Cieszyn Silesia on the other side are located on the Polish southern Carpathian border defined after the Second World War. As Musil argues, the southern border of the Polish state was contested since the Middle Ages. However, in the course of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, Polish territory was divided, unified, reduced, and enlarged again in the East-West perspective.[35] The border with Czechoslovakia was also not as strategic in the inter-war period when the main concern of the Warsaw government was to defend its Eastern border against Soviet armies and later to find some security guarantees being straddled between Nazi Germany and the communist Soviet Union. After the Second World War, the Polish state moved westwards and this decision was accompanied by major population shifts from the Eastern territories (*kresy wschodnie*). These areas are, therefore, more present in the Polish collective memory of border shifts.[36] However, the demarcation of the Carpathian border also produced tensions with some consequences, at least for local memory politics.

The conflicts over Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz succeeded after the First World War and the dissolution of the Austrian-Hungarian empire. The establishment of new states in Central Europe (Poland, Czechoslovakia) was accompanied by border disputes over the industrial region of Cieszyn Silesia and the mountainous and scarcely populated Orawa and Spisz. Although the socio-economic characteristics and strategic value of both regions were different, what they share is the temporal coincidence of both border disputes and the same political context. The knowledge about both border conflicts is reproduced mainly in their region and is not as often reproduced beyond the borders of borderlands.[37]

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[35] František Musil, "Pronikání moci raně středověkých Uher na území dnešního Slovenska v 11. století a Anonymova bitva o Nitru – legenda vs. skutečnost ve světle historické geografie," in *Hranice v krajinách*, ed. Eva Semotanová (Praha: Academia, 2020), 46–115.

[36] Zhurzhenko, *Memory Wars*, 177.

[37] Marcin Dębicki, "Cieszyn jako wyspa mnemoniczna / w paradygmacie kultury pamięci zbiorowej i socjologii pogranicza," in *Lokalne polityki pamięci w mieście podzielonym granicą państwową: Cieszyn – Těšín – Teschen*, ed. Radosław Zenderowski (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 2021), 57–74.

3.1 Cieszyn Silesia

The case of Cieszyn Silesia is probably more famous in public awareness due to the short war that accompanied the division of the territory as Cieszyn Silesia was rich in coal resources and contained strategic steelworks and a railway connecting the Czech and Slovak part of the young Czechoslovak Republic.[38] The Czechoslovak part, therefore, highlighted its historical rights over the territory as the Duchy of Cieszyn had been previously part of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown. The Polish side was referring to the national identity of the population.[39]

The previously unified territory was divided by the Beskydy mountain ridge and Olza River, which created a completely new border tearing apart existing social networks. The Polish side was especially dissatisfied with such a solution and started to undermine the provisory regime by calling elections and recruiting inhabitants to the military service. In January 1919, Czechoslovakia reacted with an offensive that lasted eight days (this conflict is often called The Eight-day War or mistakenly The Seven-day War) and left behind dozens of casualties and hundreds of injured persons.[40] The military campaign stopped with the battle around the town of Skoczów when the Polish army successfully built a defensive line. The conflict was interrupted after the diplomatic intervention of Western countries. After that, the promised plebiscite which should have decided about the territory did not take place. According to the Spa Conference in July 1920, the border was anchored at the Beskydy mountain ridge and Olza River.[41] The Olza River also gave the name Zaolzie (literally, "behind the Olza River") to the territory with a Polish population that was attributed to Czechoslovakia. What remained was a latent sense of injustice from the Polish side for several reasons: Czechoslovakia obtained municipalities where Poles were in the majority (these areas were populated by 48.6% by Poles, 39.5% by Czechs, and 11.6% by Germans), those hoping for the plebiscite were disenchanted, and the negative

[38] Rudolf Žáček, "The Czecho(slovak)-Polish Relations until 1945," in *Conflict – Competition – Cooperation in Central Europe in the 20th and 21st Centuries. The Intricacies of the Polish-Czech Relations*, ed. Dušan Janák, Tomasz Skibiński, and Radosław Zenderowski (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 2020), 57–88.

[39] Marek Olszewski, "Cieszyn/Czech Cieszyn (Český Těšín)," in *Critical Dictionary on Borders. Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*, ed. Birte Wassenberg and Bernard Reitel (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020), 177–179.

[40] Daniel Korbel, "Walki o Stonawę 26 stycznia 1919 roku," *Pamiętnik Cieszyński* 23 (2019): 29–56.

[41] Žáček and Borák, *Ukradené vesnice*.

emotions towards Czechs were strengthened by the narrative about alleged Czechoslovak crimes against Polish captives and civilians.[42]

The inter-war period in Zaolzie was marked by the subliminal and often disguised efforts of the Czechoslovak administration to assimilate the Polish minority.[43] Also, the landscape was conversed by the border demarcation that led to the disruption of the town of Cieszyn into two parts divided by the river. That impacted not only the networks and infrastructure of the town but also its symbolical landscape.[44] Czechoslovakia also tried to furnish its new territory with its standards of urbanism, official architecture, schools, and monuments.

Before the outburst of the Second World War, the Polish side took advantage of the international situation of the Munich Agreement which considerably weakened Czechoslovak positions. The Polish army marched into Zaolzie in October 1938 and the border was pushed eastwards which caused a refugee wave of Czech inhabitants as the Polish administration wanted to cut off the traces of Czech influence at Zaolzie. The situation did not last, however, for more than one year as a result of the German occupation of Poland in 1939. After the Second World War, the borders were returned to the scope of 1920 and the Polish minority at Zaolzie entered the second half of the 1940s with the reputation of traitors.[45] The complicated relationships between the Czechoslovak and Polish states were silenced by the Soviet surveillance which resulted in the politics of amnesia towards the conflict that was almost impossible to research or commemorate.[46]

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[42] Daniel Korbel, "Śmierć kapitana Cezarego Hallera," *Wadoviana. Przegląd historyczno-kulturalny* 24 (2021): 19–55.

[43] Grzegorz Gąsior, *Polityka narodowościowa państwa na czechosłowackim Śląsku Cieszyńskim w latach 1920–1938* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2020); Halina Rusek, "Granica: portret antropologiczny," *Studia Etnologiczne i Antropologiczne* 11 (2011): 77–88.

[44] Katarzyna Kulczyńska and Roman Matykowski, "Images of the urban spaces of Cieszyn," *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series* 15 (2011): 83–94.

[45] Jiří Friedl, "Češi a Poláci na Těšínsku během parlamentních voleb v roce 1946," *Slovanský přehled* 98, no. 3–4 (2012): 273–291.

[46] Jaroslav Drozd, "The Czechoslovak-Polish Relations in 1945–1989," in *Conflict – Competition – Cooperation in Central Europe in the 20th and 21st Centuries*, ed. Dušan Janák, Tomasz Skibiński, and Radosław Zenderowski (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 2020): 159–174; Tadeusz Siwek, Stanislav Zahradník, and Józef Szymeczek, *Polská národnostní menšina v Československu 1945–1954* (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2000); Jan Kajfosz, "Magic in the Social Construction of the Past: The Case of Teschen Silesia," *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 183 (2013): 351–367.

3.2 Orawa and Spisz

Similarly, the historical border between the Hungarian kingdom and the Kingdom of Galicia was questioned after the First World War with a reference to the ethnic composition of the territory. However, in the case of the peripheral rural regions of Orawa and Spisz, the level of national self-identification was not as developed as in the case of the industrial region of Cieszyn Silesia. Therefore, both sides – Czechoslovak and Polish – claimed the populations of Orawa and Spisz as undoubtfully Slovak, respectively Polish. The Polish administration endeavored to enlarge its southern territory and get some territories of Spisz and Orawa which were inhabited by the "highlanders" – "Goral" population. In the Polish narrative, the Goral people were "Slovakized" during the Hungarian rule over Spisz and Orawa.[47] The result of the First World War was, according to them, a welcomed opportunity to return to Poland.

Jakubec points out that such an effort was a consequence of the long-time mythologization of Goral people as the bearers of Polish national awareness in times of the partition of Poland.[48] The romanticizing interpretation admired the purity, self-esteem, and bravery of the highlanders which should have been a model for the rest of Poland.[49] The popularity of the neighboring High Tatras mountains contributed to the prominence and symbolic value of the terrains under the mountains.[50]

Before the Spa Conference in 1920, the regions of Orawa and Spisz experienced several propaganda campaigns from both sides intending to reawake the national awareness of the local population before the promised plebiscite. This period was also accompanied by some violent clashes (without direct military confrontation between Czechoslovakia and Poland). The result of the Spa Conference partly accommodated Polish territorial demands and the previous Hungarian-Galician border was pushed to the south. The conference of ambassadors

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47 Andrzej Tłomacki, "Powrót do Polski w latach 1945–1948 północnych rejonów Spiszu. Przyczynek do dziejów sporów granicznych między Polakami, Czechami i Słowakami," *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka*, no. 1 (2011): 95.

48 Pavol Jakubec, "Formovanie československo-poľskej hraničnej čiary (s dôrazom na jej spišský úsek) počas Parížskej mierovej konferencie, 1919–1920," *Slovanský přehled* 96, no. 5 (2010): 578.

49 Maria Małanicz-Przybylska, "Góralszczyzna istnieje?" *Konteksty*, no. 1 (2013): 172–177; Joanna Dziadowiec and Elżbieta Wiącek, "Góralszczyzna, góralskość: konstruowanie i funkcjonowanie podhalańskiego mitu," in *Semiotyczna mapa Małopolski*, ed. Elżbieta Wiącek (Krakow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015), 251–354.

50 Pavol Jakubec, "Javorina v (česko)slovensko-poľských vzťahoch medzivojnového obdobia ako symbol," in *Nepokojná hranica*, ed. Milica Majeriková-Molitoris (Kraków: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2010), 25–51.

in Spa did so without consulting the population in the plebiscite. The Slovak population became a target of Polonization campaigns in schools, churches, and administration. These efforts proved to be successful for Poland as some local inhabitants chose to emigrate to Czechoslovakia while others cultivated the Slovak language only in the private sphere. [51]

In 1939, the army of the Slovak Republic supported the German offensive in Poland and Slovak troops also actively participated in the occupation of Spisz territory. While the Slovak minority welcomed them with relief, the Polish population perceived this as a neuralgic point in mutual relationships, the act of betrayal.[52] During the Second World War, the regions of Orawa and Spisz were incorporated into the Slovak Republic which tried to convert this territory into the showcase that overscores neighboring Polish regions under Nazi occupation in the quality of life and food supplies.[53] An important part of the ideological fight for the identity of the region was the return of Slovak-speaking priests, teachers, and administrative officials. As a result, the memories of the WWII period in the Orawa and Spisz regions are mixed. There is a sense of nostalgia from the side of the Slovak minority while the Polish audience emphasizes the Slovak alliance with Nazi Germany and the annexation of the territory.

Likewise Cieszyn Silesia, the post-war order opened the field to the restoration of the pre-WWII borders leaving an important part of the population with a newly awakened Slovak identity in the Polish territory. In contrast with the period between 1918–1920, the replacement of administration was accompanied by violent conflicts which the Slovak minority tends to perceive as ethnic-motivated violence.

4 Methods

One hundred years after the division of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz (1920), it is relevant to ask which memories are remaining and which stories are present in the memoryscape referring to the border shifts. Kajfosz discusses the case of Cieszyn Silesia as an example where the Czech and Polish states

[51] Jozef Čongwa, "Krakovská církev a jazyková práva slovenskej národnostnej menšiny na Spiši v rokoch 1920–1945," in *Nepokojná hranica*, ed. Milica Majeriková-Molitoris (Kraków: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2010), 77–80.

[52] Pavol Matula, "Slovak-Polish Relationships in 1938–1947 in the Context of Border Disputes," *Studia Humanistyczne* 12, no. 1 (2013): 57–65.

[53] Milica Majeriková-Molitoris, *Vojna po vojne: severný Spiš a horná Orava v rokoch 1945–1947* (Kraków: Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku, 2013).

successfully converted borderlands into two separate nation-states and the border seems to be something "natural" there.[54] The following question, therefore, is, whether any actors or spaces problematize this assumption. If so and the cultural memory is materialized in the memoryscape, then, the contrasting analysis reconstructs the similarities and contrasts of the local memory politics and consequences of memory production. To achieve this, two research phases are conducted, which assure triangulation that anchors the findings from different angles.[55] The main data sources are qualitative expert interviews and observation during the field research.

Firstly, several expert interviews were undertaken. The sampling procedure was non-probabilistic.[56] The informants were either historians or anthropologists researching the respective regions, regionalists, civil society actors, or representatives of Euroregions. In other words, they were chosen for their insight into the post-conflict relationships and the production of memory in the societies of the borderlands of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz. In the first stage, the researchers based at universities, museums, or other professional institutions were approached. The procedures of purposive and chain-referral sampling allowed that some of the experts provided contacts to other colleagues with professional experience in that field.[57] In several cases, the experts served as gatekeepers to some local activists and regionalists. Some informants work in public administration or serve as mayors. In total, 26 research interviews were conducted between March and June 2022. Between 26 informants, there was a balanced proportion of the regions under scrutiny. Some of them debated both cases, as their knowledge and experience covered not only Czech-Polish but also Slovak-Polish borderlands. The meetings organized both online (ZOOM) and on-site took 30-80 minutes each. The semi-structured interviews were thematically based on the following questions:

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[54] Jan Kajfosz, "Euroentuzjastyczni demarkatorzy, czyli o najnowszych strategiach politycznego kształtowania pamięci o Śląsku Cieszyńskim," in *Lokalne polityki pamięci w mieście podzielonym granicą państwową. Cieszyn – Těšín – Teschen,* ed. Radosław Zenderowski (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 2021), 75–87.

[55] Roberta Heale and Dorothy Forbes, "Understanding Triangulation in Research," *Evidence Based Nursing* 16, no. 4 (2013): 98, doi: 10.1136/eb-2013-101494.

[56] Stephen Rice, "Sampling in Geography," in *Key Methods in Geography,* ed. Nicholas Clifford et al. (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 230–252.

[57] Charlie Parker, Sam Scott, and Alistair Geddes, *Snowball Sampling*, ed. Paul Atkinson et al. (London: SAGE Publications, 2019), doi: 10.4135/9781526421036831710.

- What place does the conflict over Cieszyn Silesia/Orawa/Spisz have in the collective memory of the region?
- Which meanings and symbols are associated with these events?
- What is remembered and what is forgotten?
- How is it evolving over time?
- Is this memory associated with the particular sites?
- What are the most characteristic materializations of memory in the landscape?

A preliminary analysis of data from interviews consisted of the identification of possible sites that form the memoryscape. Special attention was paid to the locations that represent some symbolic value for memory production and were mentioned during the interviews. To avoid possible bias, this list of places was combined with the sites derived from the literature review and research in the maps of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz. Such a basis served as a guide for the second pillar of the study: the set of field trips to the regions under scrutiny. The main interest during the field research was to inspect the museum expositions, monuments, or information panels that relate to the border dispute in the respective regions. If there were such sites, then their content was analyzed in concordance with the attributes of memoryscape. According to Kappler, the shape of the memoryscape is influenced by the design of memory sites, location and size, and memorial practices (as mentioned above).[58]

Then, in the third step, the data gathered during the field trips were combined with the evidence from the expert interviews. In a hermeneutical circle through the observation analysis of the memoryscape, the interviews on memory production were approached again to reread them. Together, they are used for the analysis of contrasts of two memoryscapes formed by the various patterns of memory production. The information picked up during the interviews was analyzed using the methods of discourse analysis.[59] Identifying the categories behind the corpus of answers, the meanings and patterns in memory production are reconstructed.[60] As the sites of memory are not isolated from the social

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[58] Kappler, "Sarajevo's Ambivalent Memoryscape," 132.

[59] Vít Beneš, "Diskurzivní analýza," in *Jak zkoumat politiku: kvalitativní metodologie v politologii a mezinárodních vztazích*, ed. Petr Drulák et al. (Praha: Portál, 2008), 92–124.

[60] Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, "Unfolding Discourse Analysis," in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, ed. Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon J. Yates (London: SAGE publications, 2001), 198–209.

structures, people, and landscape, there is a goal of a double interpretation.[61] This is a way how to analyze the social context where the memory actors, their narratives, and the landscape interact.

The overall research question stated above (What are the representations of memoryscape related to the border shifts in the previously contested territories of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz?) can be divided into two sections:

Q1: Where is the memory about border shifts in the borderlands produced?

Q2: Which symbols and narratives are associated with these sites?

5 Findings

When you meet someone after twenty years, you notice – that he/she has changed. If you observe him/her instead every day, you will not notice the contrast as easily. And with the borders – it works the same.[62]

One hundred years after the division of Cieszyn Silesia, Spisz, and Orawa, the regions live in a paradoxical situation. The national borders are naturalized by the century of separateness and in an everyday life as noted the informant in a motto of this part. The old conflicts are not vivid and heated on a daily basis. However, from time to time, the latent rivalry may be awakened capitalizing on old symbols and seemingly forgotten wounds.

5.1 Minorities and Their Positions

As mentioned, both border disputes left some national minorities behind the new state border. However, their numeral strength is contrasting which also has consequences for memory production and politics. In the Czech region of Zaolzie, there are approximately 38,000 people that identify themselves with the Polish nationality, which forms 10–30% of total inhabitants in certain municipalities.[63] In Polish Orawa and Spisz, the numbers of those who register Slovak

[61] Ken Taylor, "Cultural Landscape as Open Air Museum: Borobudur World Heritage Site and Its Setting," *Humanities Research* 10, no. 2 (2003): 51–62.

[62] Interview with a Polish regionalist, ZOOM, May 12, 2022.

[63] "Polská národnostní menšina," Vláda České republiky, https://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/rnm/mensiny/polska-narodnostni-mensina-16124/, accessed January 5, 2023.

nationality are much lower (around 3,000, which forms less than 5% of the total population in the municipalities).[64]

The contrast in numbers was also due to the more restrictive policy towards minorities in inter-war and post-war Poland. That meant a ban on the Slovak language in schools and churches and, according to the Slovak interpretation, the result was a Polonization of the region. Although nowadays in Orawa and Spisz the Slovak language is taught in some schools as an optional subject, the decreasing trend of Slovak presence in Polish Orawa and Spisz is continuing, as illustrates one Polish regionalist from Spisz:

> It is evident when we look at how many children choose the Slovak language in schools. Today we should decide whether to merge all the Slovak-speaking from all classes into one course. Two pupils in one school, two pupils in another. (…) The same in the churches, there is a long-ago settled proportion: on the weekday, we sing the first half of the Holy Mass in Slovak and the second half in the Polish language. The next day vice versa. Why is it fifty-fifty? The proportion in the population is not the same.[65]

The presence of a minority can also be considered part of the memoryscape because it problematizes the narrative of the nation-state that acquired the borderland territory. The Slovak minority in Spisz and Orawa tries to cultivate its memory of border shifts as it is their *raison d'être* and the group protagonists feel threatened by Polish narratives, groups, and outnumbering. It is the minority who bears the signs of Slovakness in the public space of Orawa and Spisz and the Polishness of Zaolzie.

In the Polish Orawa and Spisz borderlands, the imprints of Slovakness can be found in the churches. The Slovak language in the liturgy is a sign that there are at least some believers who cultivate the Slovak language in worship. The second "Slovak" parts of the memoryscape are the cemeteries: in villages like Kacwin, Niedzica, or Rzepiska, there are some gravestones that also contain epitaphs in the Slovak language. It is not exceptional that both languages meet on the tomb. Some family members were closer to the Slovak identity, some felt Polish.

[64] "Mniejszości Narodowe i Etniczne: Słowacy," Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, https://www.gov.pl/web/mniejszosci-narodowe-i-etniczne/slowacy, accessed January 5, 2023.

[65] Interview with a Polish regionalist, Łapsze Niżne, June 21, 2022.

Apart from the optional lessons in the Slovak language in schools, there are no other signs of Slovakness in the public space. The Slovak language is not used in the daily conversations as the people of Spisz and Orawa – no matter of national identity – communicate in the dialects *gwara spiska/orawska*.

There are at least three conceptions among the Polish population of Spisz/ Orawa regarding the identity of the region. The first trend emanates from the cultural influence of the near region of Podhale, which is prominent in Polish ethnography and national identity also due to the myth of highlanders (Gorale). This was an important theme for more informants; one of them, a Polish anthropologist, has defined it as follows: "There is a powerful national narration making the sign of an equation between highlander identity and Polish identity."[66] This trend pushes away the regional uniqueness of Spisz and Orawa and replaces them with the unambiguously Polish highlander folklore and identity from Podhale.

Secondly, there is an effort to build the regional, e.g., "Spisz" identity over the national ones. It is typical of folklore ensembles that are promoting the multicultural character of the borderland as something positive, overarching the national camps. "The melodies are the same in the whole Polish Carpathians. The csardas dances are, however, unique for us in Spisz – these are the Hungarian influences. Our dances are different than those of Gorals-highlanders. Our traditional costumes and those of Slovak Spisz are the same," explained one Polish regionalist from Spisz.[67]

Thirdly, there are the migration dynamics contributing to the demographic changes. Young people from Slovak families sometimes choose schools in Slovakia and do not return. Instead, there is a migration into Spisz/Orawa from more distant Polish regions due to the nature and closeness to the High Tatra mountains. New incomers often neither speak the dialect nor emphasize the regional "Spisz" identity.

In comparison to the hardly noticeable Slovak traces in Spisz, the presence of the Polish minority in Cieszyn Silesia is more apparent. The guests from outside are welcomed in the cities and villages with a Polish minority with bilingual signs in streets and the railway station. The Polish language is also present in the liturgy and schools (often as the language of instruction). Regarding communication, the local dialect of Zaolzie (*po naszymu*) stems from the Polish language which secures the Polish presence in the landscape and can automatically raise

[66] Interview with a Polish anthropologist, Cieszyn, April 4, 2022.
[67] Interview with a Polish regionalist, Jurgów, June 18, 2022.

questions about the history and memory of the Polish minority in the region. The representatives of the Polish minority, however, do not behave as memory activists and concentrate more on the quality of life and the rights of Polish citizens.

Nevertheless, what connects both minorities is silent isolation from their nation-states. The awareness about their existence is not well developed. Slovak historian defined the situation in Spisz and Orawa followingly: “Polish officials claim that the policy towards minorities is their inner issue. Slovak politicians seem to be uninterested.”[68] The feeling of forgotten minority corroborates one Polish regionalist from Spisz: “In the 1970s and 1980s, when someone from the Slovak community came to Slovakia to work there, he/she was often disappointed. Everyone thought they were a Pole.”[69] The similar notion fits for the Polish community in Zaolzie, as one Polish sociologist states:

> It is a forgotten minority and the Polish community in Zaolzie knows it. We remember the Polish fade in Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. From the perspective of Warsaw, the border in Cieszyn is also a border of Polishness. The people behind the border there are often considered Czechs that may have a Polish origin.[70]

Memory issues and other topics, therefore, do not have an impact on mutual relationships at the level of countries and governments. Outside of the region, the interest is raised only in times of anniversaries of the border division.

5.2 Symbolics of Borderscape

An important variable in the memoryscape of the borderland is also the border itself, its role in the landscape, and the symbolics of its surroundings. This is also a source of contrasts between cases of Orawa/Spisz and Cieszyn Silesia. In Orawa/Spisz, the border runs primarily in unpopulated areas, through watersheds or rivers. In the border section of Orawa, there is only one prominent place on the border – Babia Góra mountain peak, which was, however, also the border in the pre-WWI period. That presents a possible barrier that was even reinforced by the strict border regime of the pre-1989 period. “For many years,

68 Interview with a Slovak historian, ZOOM, April 5, 2022.
69 Interview with a Polish regionalist, Jurgów, June 21, 2022.
70 Interview with a Polish sociologist, Cieszyn, April 6, 2022.

the Polish and Slovak Spisz stood back-to-back with each other," assesses Polish regionalist from Spisz.[71]

The Spisz section of the border is defined by its two edges that have their symbolic value. On the western edge, there is a Slovak municipality Tatranská Javorina that was demanded by Poland during the inter-war period. With the holiday residence of Slovak presidents and tourist trails, it is a lucrative address. However, it is located on the periphery of the Slovak High Tatras "behind the mountains." That decreases the symbolic value of the site which does not bring any decisive opportunities for cross-border interactions. Then, for the next 20 kilometers, the border runs through mountains far from the populated settlements. The only exception is a small border crossing between the villages Veľká Franková (SK) and Kacwin (PL), which was re-opened at the initiative of the Slovak minority.

The most symbolic site on the "Spisz" section of the Polish-Slovak border is a canyon of the Dunajec River, which is famous among tourists and paddlers. The memoryscape there is shaped to some extent by the monument dedicated to the two Czechoslovak officials murdered by a commando of Spisz Poles in June 1920, in the context of the tense atmosphere around the planned plebiscite. The monument, erected in 1928, was destroyed ten years later during the Polish occupation of the canyon and the village of Lesnica. In 2020, the monument on the border arose once again at the initiative of two cooperating institutions – the Association of Slovaks in Poland (Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, Spolok Slovákov v Poľsku) and the Historiographical Association of Spisz (Spišský dejepisný spolok). However, the text on the stone does not mention Polish perpetrators, and the conflicting potential of the site is minimal.

In contrast, the Czech-Polish border through Cieszyn Silesia is richer in meaning and symbols. It is partly due to the different characteristics of the landscape and settlement. The border is demarcated partly by using the Olza River, which flows through the town Cieszyn/Český Těšín and other populated areas. The opposite side of the border has been visible even in times of restricted border regimes. The loss of Zaolzie has been, therefore, more tangible for the Polish population and the border and Olza River are still an important identity-maker of border twin-town Cieszyn/Český Těšín. The informants mentioned that a sole look into the cityscape of Cieszyn/Český Těšín with three bridges provokes questions about the reasons for division. "The consequences are visible

[71] Interview with a Polish regionalist, ZOOM, May 12, 2022.

until now. The Polish part of the site has the main square, and the Czechs have a railway station," retells a Polish historian.[72]

The mnemonic potential is also actively employed by various municipal projects. Czech and Polish town halls, for example, reconstruct the streets, where the city tram operated before 1920. To remember the former common public transport, the pieces of rails are symbolically put into the pavement on the streets. The common history of the town is also remembered on the various information panels and through the events of town cultural centers. Around the Bridge of Friendship, on both banks of the Olza River, an Open-Air Museum narrates the stories of the town, as a representative of Euroregion explains:

> This exhibition was part of the project "Garden of both banks" which was inspired by the Euroregion Kehl-Strasbourg. The project was carried out by the Cieszyn and Český Těšín town halls. Each event that we create together may contribute to the goal, that history does not affect how we perceive our neighbors.[73]

Apart from Cieszyn/Český Těšín, there are other important sites conversing borderscape into the memoryscape. The southern part of the state border through Cieszyn Silesia is delineated on the ridge of the Beskydy mountains with popular hiking trails that lead almost exactly along the borderline. Dozens of meters from the Czantoria Wielka/Velká Čantoryje peak, which the local legends touch upon, there is a monument commemorating the victim of a criminal act which was similar to the one in Canyon of Dunajec. In 1920, during the delimitation of the border, the commission of representatives of both states – Czechoslovakia and Poland – was attacked there under the peak of Czantoria by a Polish paramilitary organization that did not want to accept the new border. Czech historian comments it: "The dead official Klement Šťastný was buried in Bohumín. In 2017, a monument was erected under Czantoria. However, someone has destroyed it several times, although nothing sensitive is written there."[74] The grave of Klement Šťastný in Bohumín is today furnished by the plate: "murdered by the militant nationalists."

[72] Interview with a Polish historian, ZOOM, March 30, 2022.
[73] Interview with a representative of Euroregion, Cieszyn, April 6, 2022.
[74] Interview with a Czech historian, Bohumín, April 13, 2022.

5.3 (Non-)controversial Monuments

The materialization of some narrative into the monument may become a weapon or a target of various counter-initiatives. One informant, a Czech historian researching the past of Cieszyn Silesia labeled it during the interview as a "monument assault."[75] He referred to the initiatives imposed by radicals from both national groups. An example may be a monument dedicated to the Czech general Josef Šnejdárek who led the Czechoslovak troops into the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919). Czech historian states:

> The monument is situated on the Polední Hill. For Poles, it is a controversial site. When they are writing about the war crimes of the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919), they personalize them with General Šnejdárek. It is a few kilometers from the border next to the village Bystřice/Bystrzyca where there is a large share of the Polish population. That was perceived as a monument assault. Several times, the monument was destroyed, or the information plate was removed. Instead, gallows or crooked crosses were scribbled on them. Some Czech activists organize trips to Polední. Luckily, the speeches today are not as controversial as in the past. The most radical activists have passed away.[76]

With time, the event on Polední transforms into the gathering of the army fans who typically come from more distant regions, not from Zaolzie.

The feelings of the Polish minority towards the site were described in one of the interviews by the Polish historian: "General Šnejdárek has never been to Polední Hill and did not have any relation to the village Bystřice/Bystrzyca. Therefore, the Poles have considered the monument as a gesture of evil nationalistic intentions of the fans of legionaries who had built the monument."[77]

Other controversies in Zaolzie are associated with the monument of border stone erected in 2020, to remark a centenary of the town of Český Těšín. The monument in the colors of the Czech national flag (design of Czechoslovak border stones in the 1930s) is located in front of the Museum of Cieszyn Region (Muzeum Těšínska). Temporal coincidence with covid fencing measures restricting cross-border mobility even extrapolated the negative reactions of Poles. Some of them saw in the monument a totem of Czech dominance in

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Interview with a Polish historian, Ostrava, March 24, 2022.

the town, as one Polish historian points out: “This was a *faux pas*. I do not want to judge if it was an intentional gesture. In any case, it was miserable. We live in Schengen, cooperate and suddenly the Czech neighbors are building the border stone and the symbol of division is back.”[78]

The fact that the monument stands in front of the Museum of Cieszyn Region was not ignored by some informants. Czech historian comments it: “The museum on the Czech bank of the Olza River is strengthening the traditional nationalist narrative. I think that the director of the museum knew very well what he was doing. There was a wave of Polish resentment because the stone refers to the tragic episode when the beautiful town was torn apart. And there is no reason to celebrate it.”[79]

Next to the stone, there is an information panel in the window of the museum with commentary about the division of the town. However, the museum does not mention the short war between both countries in this small open-air exhibition. Inside, there is a large exposition about the history of the Cieszyn Region in the twentieth century. However, there are almost no references to the Polish minority in Czechia after 1920. Polish historian was disappointed about it:

> It is a big mistake that the Polish history of Zaolzie is silenced at the exhibition. It looks like a car that has only two wheels. Yes, it looks like a Škoda car, but without two wheels, it is immobile. The Polish minority is not irredentist, they are paying taxes, and are involved in politics. I do not understand why the perception there is in a hundred-year-old style.[80]

Only 400 meters from the Museum in the Polish part of the town, another important memory venue is located. Next to the Bridge of Friendship, the Monument of Silesian Legionaries commemorates the inhabitants of Silesia who fought and died for Poland (typically against Germans; the obelisk was erected in 1934, then again in 2008). On the pedestal, there are several plates with the names of important battles in which the Silesians took part. On the back side of the obelisk, one also mentions the Battle of Skoczów from the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919). The nickname of the monument is “Niké of Cieszyn” as on the top of the obelisk, there is a sculpture of a woman holding a saber. The weapon is heading in the direction of Czechia which can be read as a symbol, explains

[78] Interview with a Polish historian, ZOOM, March 30, 2022.
[79] Interview with a Czech historian, Bohumín, April 13, 2022.
[80] Interview with a Polish historian, Ostrava, March 24, 2022.

a Czech historian: "The message of Niké of Cieszyn is quite clear: once we will come on the bridge again to fight to get the Zaolzie back. It is also a site of commemoration with wreath laying. The Battle of Skoczów is on the opposite side. The reason is probably to hide the controversy."[81]

"The reconstruction of the monument elicited the fantasies of Czech nationalists," recalls one Polish historian about the development in the years 2004–2005.[82] Back then, to appease the tensions, the Polish side tried to present the site as a non-revanchist or non-assault monument, narrates a Polish geographer: "Poles ordered an expert reference from the fencer who explained that the gesture of the sculpture is not attacking but defending."[83]

Apart from the symbolic borderscape of Cieszyn, the second important part of the Polish memoryscape related to the conflict is the town of Skoczów, where the Czechoslovak offensive in 1919 stopped. The conflict is commemorated there with a mural on a façade of a house next to the main square and a set of information panels. From the symbolic point of view, the most interesting site is a monument dedicated to "Our Heroes," which is located in the wider center of the town.

The monument with a sculpture of a Silesian Eagle on the top contains a relief where a young fighter beats a lion (a symbol of Czech lands), the year 1919 is marked below. A short patriotic poem is added with the verses about "our blood," that made the freedom of Silesia possible. The reconstruction of the monument was unveiled in 2015 on Poland's Independence Day.

The specific cases in the Czech-Polish borderlands' memoryscape in Cieszyn Silesia are cemeteries. The Polish victims of the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919) are buried in several cemeteries. Some of them are part of a network of National Memory Sites – for example, a tombstone of soldiers in Skoczów has this label. The same sticker can also be found on the cross of Mayor Cezary Haller, one of the commanders of Polish troops, who died in the village Kończyce Małe during a Czechoslovak offensive. The most symbolic site is, however, a cemetery in the Czech village Stonawa/Stonava, which was traditionally remembered as a site of Czechoslovak war crimes (approx. 6 out of 21 soldiers buried there were murdered), Czech historian tells:

[81] Interview with a Czech historian, Bohumín, April 13, 2022.
[82] Interview with a Polish historian, Ostrava, March 24, 2022.
[83] Interview with a Polish geographer, Ostrava, March 24, 2022.

> There is a headline: "20 murdered and killed." It is the biggest and almost dogmatic legend, sometimes labeled as Silesian Golgotha. The Polish ministers or important army officials are attending the commemorative events. The Czech side does not want to take part as it does not like the one-sided narrative.[84]

The Czech casualties of the conflict were exhumed in the interwar period and transferred to the cemetery in Orlová. The monument to the victims of the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919) was first built in 1928 then damaged during the Polish invasion of Zaolzie in 1938 and renewed again. Renovated in 2022, the monument contains a motto: "The Division of Cieszyn Region" and the names of more than 50 victims from the ranks of legionaries. However, there are a few other Czech casualties buried in different cemeteries, for example, two Czechoslovak legionaries in the Polish municipality of Goleszów. Polish historian states: "Both graves are maintained by the Polish local community in the village. This should be a model example of how to deal with the conflict after one hundred years."[85]

In Orawa and Spisz, when looking for the monuments or other sites that elicit the memory of border shifts, the Slovak part of the regions does not propose almost any cases to compare. More numerous are the examples from the Polish side of the region, where a memory battle between the narrative of the Polish majority and the Slovak minority occurs.

The most prominent site of this battle is paradoxically located outside of the Spisz and Orawa region – in the center of Zakopane town. In 2006, in one of the city parks, the Polish president Lech Kaczyński inaugurated the monument of Józef Kuraś – Ogień (1915–1947). The historical record of this man is controversial and as one informant (Polish historian) summarized it, "it is the main axis of the memory conflict."[86]

While the Polish right adores him as a fighter against communism, the Slovak minority and other groups consider him a looter and murderer. Given the controversies, the monument made headlines when someone poured red color on the monument in Zakopane. Even fifteen years after the inauguration, the monument with the Eagle (Polish symbol and also one of the Kuraś's nicknames) on the top still sparks emotions as can be seen from quotations from interviews. The first is from Slovak historian: "The Polish historians present him

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[84] Interview with a Czech historian, Bohumín, April 13, 2022.
[85] Interview with a Polish historian, ZOOM, March 30, 2022.
[86] Interview with a Polish historian, ZOOM, April 29, 2022.

as a partisan. That is not true! He was partisan only before 1943, then he became a bandit and criminal."[87] A Polish anthropologist explains it:

> The affaire of Ogień is impossible to discuss without emotions, that stops rational debate. Those who initiated the monument in Zakopane have their truth and do not accept the other perspectives. It is however interesting that the monument emerged in Zakopane where the locals know about Ogień only from legends. They created their picture of him. In Nowy Targ, closer to Spisz, there is no monument of Kuraś. They know that the memory is not as unambiguous.[88]

The commemoration of Kuraś is guided by the figures from the Polish right political camps and also the Institute of National Memory (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN). The Slovak minority, on the other hand, inaugurated a monument to the victims of Kuraś – in the village of Nowa Biała, which is traditionally associated with the Slovak minority.

An important role in commemoration efforts is also played by Polish municipalities. One of the villages in the Polish Spisz Łapsze Niżne built 2018 a monument to celebrate the anniversary of 100 years of Polish independence. In 2020, the municipality added to the stone the sculpture of the book to commemorate "the anniversary of the return of Spisz to Poland" – as the mayor describes:

> It was an initiative of our municipal council. We successfully obtained a subsidy from the program Niepodległa (Independent). Thanks to this money, we could organize the festivity to celebrate the anniversary of our return to Poland. There was a cycle of programs for two years. We held a competition of patriotic songs, dedicated one internet site to the anniversary and we bought one hundred Polish flags which we installed on the streets.[89]

For the representatives of the Slovak minority, it is controversial to evaluate the border shift in 1920 as a return to Poland; rather they speak about the incorporation of Spisz and Orawa into Poland. This language and also the fact that someone celebrates the anniversary of the division are met with the disapproval of the Slovak minority. It is parallel to the borderstone issue in Cieszyn.

[87] Interview with a Slovak historian, ZOOM, April 5, 2022.
[88] Interview with a Polish anthropologist, ZOOM, May 9, 2022.
[89] Interview with a Polish mayor and regionalist, Łapsze Niżne, June 21, 2022.

Between 2018 and 2020, related to the anniversary of the "return" of Spisz and Orawa to Poland also in connection to the program Niepodległa (Independent), other memory sites arose, dedicated to the figures that campaign for the Polishness of Spisz. Apart from Łapsze Niżne, it was also the municipality Lipnica Wielka in Orawa, that initiated a patriotic project – www.orawa2024.pl. In the vicinity of the village, the authors are identifying the sites connected with Polishness and Polish patriots. Among others, the emphasis is put on the border stone in Chyżne (mentioned in the introduction), graves, and memory panels. The municipality also organized a "patriotic show" in the summer of 2021 with local music, dances, poetry, and the exhibition "Does Orawa remember?" As a parallel to the campaign in Łapsze Niżne, the Association of Slovaks in Poland protested against the content of the exhibition, accusing the municipality of Lipnica Wielka of manipulation with historical evidence.

6 Discussion: Memory Production in the Contested Landscape

Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz are examples of borderland regions rich in memory traces. At the same moment, all three regions became victims of power politics, which disrupted the patterns of everyday life. The dispute over the border in Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz forced their inhabitants to emphasize their national or ethnic self-identification and othering from the opposite group. As a consequence, the violent clashes, conflicts, and mutual harms have complicated the reconciliatory resolution of the conflict and good neighborhood policy for the rest of the twentieth century.

The complexity of memory production is given not only by the conflicting past but also by the presence of ethnic minorities that are to some extent forgotten by the population of their "motherland."[90] The monuments and other parts of the memoryscape in their essence support the narratives of nation-states. Either Czechia in Cieszyn Silesia or Poland in Orawa and Spisz tried converting the landscape into "their" territory with characteristic symbols (flags, architecture, language).

The presence of the counterculture in memory issues is visible thanks to the national minorities in the contested border region. The nation-states may proudly present the multiculturality and uniqueness of their border regions

[90] Christian Promitzer, "Small is Beautiful. The Issue of Hidden Minorities in Central Europe and the Balkans," in *Hidden Minorities: Language and Ethnic Identity between Central Europe and the Balkans*, ed. Christian Promitzer, Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik, and Eduard Staudinger (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009), 75–108.

(as Poland does with Spisz), but without the minority actors, the polyphony becomes sooner or later monophony. Especially in the case of Orawa and Spisz where the numbers of Slovak minorities are narrow, their visibility is anchored by the cemeteries, church timetables, and community houses.

This article also supports the note that borders themselves can play a role as a memory-site as they may bring about associations about past events with historical significance coined by the presence of museums or memory plaques.[91] This observation is valid for Cieszyn Silesia where the border itself is a prominent bearer of meanings. The demarcation of the border in Cieszyn Silesia meant an intervention into the landscape that forcibly divided one town and several villages. This characteristic is not as important for the division of Spisz and Orawa.

How does the shape of the memoryscape contribute to the patterns of memory production in the borderlands? It should be acknowledged that the conflicts over the border are not topics for everyday discussions and their relevance for the general population cannot be exaggerated. Young people, especially those coming from the national majority, usually do not seem that interested in the historical episodes from the childhood of their great-grandparents. However, the conflicts over monuments in Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz indicate that the scars of the history are not yet healed. The monument dedicated to Józef Kuraś in Zakopane still has an unpleasant taste for the Slovak minority. Some proponents of the Polish minority in Zaolzie guard the commemoration of Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919) victims in Stonawa and the memoryscapes of Cieszyn and Skoczów are still developed by new installations, exhibitions, and events. As this paper shows, the memoryscape still provokes questions about identity and connects the past with the present. What are the possible scenarios for further memory production?

The first option is an oblivion of the past. The Schengen Agreement and the following de-bordering processes in the European Union lowered the importance of borders as the security procedures for border crossings were canceled. With a so-called "green border," the border became permeable and the relevance of the exact territorial delimitation (which had been a *casus-belli* in 1919) decreased. Using the terminology of Baud and van Schendel, the borderland regions in the Schengen Area become *declining*, because new cross-border

[91] Elżbieta Opiłowska, "Borders and Memory," in *Critical Dictionary on Borders. Cross-Border Cooperation and European Integration*, ed. Birthe Wassenberg and Bernard Reitel (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020), 115–117.

networks emerged and transcended the nation-state logic of the borderlands.[92] Nevertheless, there are at least three obstacles to oblivion. Firstly, the division of the territory in 1919 had not been only an administrative task and in the case of Cieszyn Silesia, there were numerous victims of the Polish-Czechoslovak war (of 1919). Their tombs and related ceremonies witness that the conflict brought not only territorial losses but also losses of human lives. This makes the history of the border shift more sensitive. The other and already mentioned factor is the presence of national minorities. Thirdly, the covid-fencing measures adopted on the national borders during the pandemic revived the old world of border controls.[93] In 2020 and 2021, the cross-border regions of Cieszyn Silesia, Orawa, and Spisz were once again divided by the police and army patrols and mobility was strictly restricted. Especially the case of Cieszyn is illustrative as it had been considered a show-example of successful cross-border contacts before the pandemic. The pandemic nationalism however reopened prejudices when some Czech politicians presented Poles as the bearers of the virus.[94] In this atmosphere, a monument of a border stone was erected in front of the Czech Museum of Cieszyn Region, which sparked the controversies discussed above.

A second possible way for memory management in the future is an intensification of the memory battle. This scenario is hardly probable as the concerned states (Czechia, Poland, and Slovakia) cooperate within the framework of European Union and NATO and declare themselves as close allies. That decreases the chance of negative escalation in mutual relationships which could have also been accompanied by the emphasis on the territorial gains and losses and the harms from the past. Also, patriotic narratives of the Polish government led by the Law and Justice party do not directly influence neighborhood policies. Moreover, neither the Polish minority in Cieszyn Silesia nor the Slovak minority in Spisz and Orawa question the border demarcation today.

The third thinkable way for memory production in the borderlands lies in between the previous two. In this concept, the memory sites stay in the

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92 Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 2 (1997): 211–242.

93 Eduardo Medeiros, Martín Guillermo Ramírez, Gyula Ocskay, and Jean Peyrony, "Covidfencing Effects on Cross-Border Deterritorialism: The Case of Europe," *European Planning Studies* (2020): 1–21, doi: 10.1080/09654313.2020.1818185; Ondřej Elbel and Vincenc Kopeček, "'I Thought That Everyone Perceived the Situation Similarly to Me.' The Czech-Polish 'Cieszyn Silesia' Region as a Case of a Polysemic Border?" *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft* 165 (2022): 145–168. doi: 10.1553/moegg164s145.

94 Florian Bieber, "Global Nationalism in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Nationalities Papers* 50, no. 1 (2020): 1–13, doi: 10.1017/nps.2020.35.

landscape as self-standing symbols. Their meanings are, however, reserved for those who are aware of the past – being under the influence either of schooling, communicative memory in their community, or campaigns instigated by various memory actors (municipalities, museums, public and private institutions). Their strategies and steps will be decisive for the future development of the memoryscape. They have an opportunity to moderate the discussion and to promote potentially reconciling narratives. The frontrunner in this sense is a body of the Euroregion of Cieszyn Silesia and the common projects of Cieszyn and Český Těšín. This can serve as a possible inspiration for the Slovak-Polish cases where the cross-border ties are not so intense. One can think of a parallel between obstacles in cross-border cooperation including missing public transport and complicated way towards cross-border interpretation of common history.

If the other actors can heat the discussion with traditional (friend vs. foe) interpretations, they should have also the power to convert the memory sites into spaces of mutual friendship and understanding. In other words, there is still a potential for saying sorry on both sides, either in Orawa and Spisz or in Cieszyn Silesia.

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STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

NOSTALGIA FOR SOVIET ESTONIA: DISCURSIVE ELEMENTS OF SHARED MEMORY IN THE FACEBOOK GROUP "SOVETSKAIA ESTONIIA – EESTI NSV"

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Abstract
This paper explores the role of online platforms in shaping a nostalgic discourse around Estonia's Soviet past, focusing on the Facebook group "Советская Эстония – Eesti NSV" (Soviet Estonia). Despite official condemnation of the Soviet legacy, this bilingual Russian-Estonian group fosters a positive representation of the era through shared photos and personal memories. Utilizing sociolinguistic methods, the study examines posts and comment threads, unveiling discursive mechanisms employed to reinforce group identity and leverage nostalgia. Members engage in discussions that not only counter the official narrative regarding the past but also extend to contemporary political issues. The research highlights the impact of digital tools and social media in facilitating the construction of collective memory and challenging dominant historical perspectives.
Keywords: nostalgic discourse; online social groups; group identity; social media; memory studies; Estonia
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Introduction

Sharing memories and narratives focused on an imagined past is a process important for creating and maintaining new – even if they are seen as being "old" – group identities. According to Ron Eyerman, memory is important both to individual and collective identity construction, as it "provides individuals and collectives with a cognitive map, helping orient who they are, why they are here and where they are going."[1] Following Alon Confino and Allan Megill, Kerwin Lee Klein promotes the idea that "memory has become the leading term in our new cultural history."[2] Modern technologies, including the digitalization of archive documents and photos and online communication with strangers via social media, provide many new opportunities for such practices.[3] They can be studied both as a source of data on public memory and as a means to develop and maintain cultural memory, to create, in Jan Assmann's terms, "diachronics identities."[4]

In many post-socialist countries, the phenomenon known as "nostalgia for communism" is quite common.[5] The Soviet past and its legacy there is quite often condemned by state officials who try to distance their countries both from the Soviet Union and from Putin's Russia. On the other hand, the same past can be represented favorably in many public discussions and in interpersonal everyday interaction, including online communication. This is especially true among the members of the Russian-speaking population in the former Soviet republics.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, nation-building policies of independent states radically changed the role of Russian speakers: in most cases, instead of being representatives of the state's majority, they became local minorities,

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1 Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," *Acta Sociologica* 47, no. 2 (2004): 159–169, here 161, doi: 10.1177/0001699304043853.

2 Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 127–150, here 128, doi: 10.2307/2902903.

3 Dario Henri Haux, Antoinette Maget Dominicé, and Jana Alexandra Raspotnig, "A Cultural Memory of the Digital Age?" *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 34 (October 2020): 769–782, doi: 10.1007/s11196-020-09778-7.

4 Jan Assmann, "Globalization, Universalism, and the Erosion of Cultural Memory", in *Memory in a Global Age. Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 121–137, doi: 10.1057/9780230283367_7122.

5 Joakim Ekman and Jonas Linde, "Communist Nostalgia and the Consolidation of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 21, no. 3 (2005): 354–374, doi: 10.1080/13523270500183512; Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Transition: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-Socialist Countries," *East European Politics and Societies* 23 (2009): 535–551, doi: 10.1177/0888325409345140.

and had to adjust to their new, underprivileged, status.[6] In this situation, the emergence of online communication became crucial for virtual unification of these new diasporas.[7] Nowadays, thousands of Russian-medium online groups exist on platforms such as Facebook and Vkontakte. These groups enable their members not only to solve practical problems, but also to share their feelings, thoughts, and memories with people who have similar life experiences and speak the same language.

The present article deals with one particular case of using online platforms for sharing memories, contributing to the creation of a nostalgic memorial discourse of Estonia's Soviet past. The study focuses on the Facebook public group with a bilingual Russian-Estonian title, *Sovetskaia Estoniia* [Soviet Estonia] – *Eesti NSV* (an abbreviation for "Nõukogude Sotsialistlik Vabariik," which means "Soviet Socialist Republic"). Within this group, members post photos depicting various places and scenes of Tallinn and Estonia during the Soviet period, sometimes accompanied by texts that reference personal memories of those places. A significant number of these posts provoke reactions from other group members, resulting in lengthy discussions. By analyzing the data from this group, our aim is to reveal newly developed discursive mechanisms of sharing and creating memories in a digital space; and to show how these mechanisms are used by the Russian speaking minority for strengthening its group identity and harnessing nostalgic feelings to challenge the official narrative, not only in relation to the past but also in current political issues. Memory, according to M. Schudson, may characterize groups, revealing a "debt to the past" and "moral continuity"[8]; sharing "diverse and shifting collections of material artifacts and social practices,"[9] which are the core of memory, may create a sense of belonging to an imagined community rooted in the past, perceived as common by different individuals.

The structure of the article is as follows: first, we provide a brief description of the historical and social background necessary to understand the context of the study. Next, we detail our research methodology and describe the data we

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6 Federica Prina and Aziz Berdiqulov, "Majorities and Minorities in the Post-Soviet Space. Continuity and Change," *ECMI Working Paper* 105 (November 2018): 1–34.

7 Henrike Schmidt, Katy Teubener, and Nils Zurawski, "Virtual (Re)Unification? Diasporic Cultures on the Russian Internet," in *Control + Shift. Public and Private Usages of the Russian Internet*, ed. Henrike Schmidt, Katy Teubener, and Natalja Konradova (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2006), 120–146.

8 Michael Schudson, *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 51.

9 Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory," 130.

collected. Then we present and discuss our main findings concerning the content and structure of communication within the group. Finally, in the Conclusions section, we attempt to conceptualize our results within the framework of memory studies in the Estonian context.

Historical and Social Background

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation, it is crucial to mention some historical background facts regarding the presence of Russian speakers in the territory of modern Estonia. Historical documents indicate that Russians have been present there since the 12th–13th century. In the 17th century, the Russian community was further complemented by the arrival of Old Believers, who continue to reside mainly in the area near Lake Peipsi.[10] Under the rule of the Russian Empire (1721–1918), the migration of Russian speakers to Estonia was quite modest. Prior to the first period of independence, in 1897, there were approximately 53,000 Russians, accounting for 4.7% of the population, living within the borders of modern Estonia.[11] However, during the period of the Russian Civil War (1918–1922), the number of Russians doubled to 91,100, constituting 8.2% of the population. By the end of World War II, this number decreased once more to approximately 23,000.[12]

During the Soviet era, Estonia experienced a significant influx of Russian speakers. It is important to note that not all of these people were of Russian origin, as they came from various parts of the Soviet Union. When Estonia restored its independence in 1991, the majority of these individuals and their children, who spoke Russian as their mother tongue, chose to remain in the country, contrary to the hopes of many Estonian politicians. In 1998, it was reported that there were 409,111 Russians, making up 28.2% of Estonia's population. Together with other nationalities, they formed a "Russian-speaking population."[13] These

[10] Galina Ponomareva, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov'. Staroobriadchestvo. Kulturnaia zhizn'. Sistema russkogo obrazovaniia Estonii," in *Russkoe natsional'noe men'shinstvo v Estonskoi respublike (1918–1940)*, ed. Sergei Isakov (Tartu: Kripta, 2000), 170–192.

[11] Il'ia Nikiforov, "Istoriia russkogo natsional'nogo men'shinstva Estonii do 1945 g.: opyt istoriografii," *Zhurnal rossiiskikh i vostochnoevropeiskikh istoricheskikh issledovanii* 92, no. 9 (2017): 154–170, here 156.

[12] Sergei Isakov, "Istochniki i istoriia izucheniia russkoi emigratsii v Estonii (1918–1940). Obzor," in Sergei Isakov, *Kul'tura russkoi emigratsii v Estonii (1918–1940). Stat'i. Ocherki. Arkhivnye publikatsii* (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 2011), 21–60.

[13] "Minorities and majorities in Estonia: problems of integration at the threshold of EU," *ECMI Report*, no. 2 (March 1999), 6, https://www.ecmi.de/fileadmin/redakteure/publications/pdf/report_2.pdf.

historical events and policies have had a significant impact on the relationship between Russian and Estonian speakers, shaping the discourses and ideologies that exist today.

The most recent census, conducted in 2021, provides the most up-to-date information.[14] However, it is important to note recent changes resulting from the presence of Ukrainian refugees who sought shelter in the country after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Some of them still reside in Estonia, while others have relocated to other EU countries or have returned to Ukraine. A significant number of the refugees are Russian speakers, originating from the eastern regions of Ukraine. The children among them are typically bilingual, speaking Russian at home and studying in Ukrainian at school. Although the refugee numbers are not included in the statistics, they, most probably, do not significantly impact the overall results.

Here are some findings from the 2021 census. Estonia exhibits a rich linguistic scene, with 243 different mother tongues spoken. The number of nationalities (according to ethnic self-identification) among Estonian residents amounts to 211. It is crucial to acknowledge that the distribution of speakers across these languages is highly uneven. Additionally, some native speakers are bilingual or even multilingual. The questionnaire of the 2021 census allowed individuals to specify two first languages rather than just one native language. The Estonian population in 2021 was 1,331,824. Out of these, 30,710 individuals reported being bilingual, with Estonian and Russian being the most common combination, noted by 18,160 people. Estonian is spoken as the first language by 895,493 individuals. Russian holds the second position, spoken by 379,210 people. Ukrainian, with 12,431 speakers, is the third most widely spoken mother tongue (according to 2021 data).

Facebook Russian-speaking groups in Estonia have regularly attracted the attention of state authorities and the general public. For example, in their Annual Report published in 2023, the Internal Security Service (KaPo) pointed out that social media groups play a more significant role for Russian-speaking residents in Estonia than for Estonian-speaking ones.[15] Russian-speaking online communities are usually much larger in terms of the number of participants, sometimes boasting tens of thousands of members. A couple of years before this review,

[14] "Demographic and ethno-cultural characteristics of the population," Estonia counts 2021, https://rahvaloendus.ee/en/results/demographic-and-ethno-cultural-characteristics-of-the-population (accessed September 23, 2023).

[15] *Estonian Internal Security Service Annual Review 2022/23*, published April 12, 2023, https://kapo.ee/sites/default/files/content_page_attachments/Annual%20Review%202022-23_0.pdf.

ERR journalist Anton Alekseev attempted to find out why a disproportionately large number of Russian speakers were hospitalized with severe forms of COVID-19 during the pandemic. He highlighted that typical Russian speakers had more sources of information compared to Estonian speakers. This information, originating from both Russia and Estonian Russian media, was often confusing and prevented people from following health instructions.[16]

KaPo also claims that some members of Facebook groups have Russian telephone numbers, and "they actively participate in threads, share news stories and links, and express opinions, shaping dominant views" aimed at influencing the attitudes of group members, often with a hostile stance towards Estonia, Ukraine, or the West.[17] The negative impact can primarily be attributed to comments, as the posts have to maintain at least a neutral tone in order to pass through the filters imposed by the platforms.

Anthropologist Aimar Ventsel published his observations on the Russian-speaking online community Nasha Estoniia [Our Estonia] in a news portal. He drew attention to the fact that among the 2,500 members of the community, only about 20 are top contributors. The article was published on May 25, 2021, and focused on the prevailing attitudes of group members during the pandemic. Ventsel noted that such a community forms a specific ecosystem, acting as a distorting mirror where things take on different meanings and emphasis is often inverted. Administrators and contributors within this community tend to be staunchly loyal to Russia and supportive of decisions made by Russian authorities, especially during the pandemic. Conversely, they exhibit an extremely negative attitude towards Estonia and NATO. Ventsel pointed out that he could not explain why any action by Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid did not receive any approval, even when she had taken risks, such as visiting Putin after 2014.[18]

Ventsel emphasized that there was almost no fabricated or deceptive data; instead, users manipulated actual information to fulfill their influencing goals. Regarding Russian-speakers' loyalty, Ventsel drew attention to the fact that such attitudes are not new in history, comparing it to the loyalty many residents of America once had towards the British Empire. In an earlier study, Ventsel claimed that Russian-speaking communities were more likely to embrace

[16] Anton Aleksejev, "Venelase inforuum on laiem kui eestlase oma. Arvamus," *ERR*, March 30, 2021, https://www.err.ee/1608160213/anton-aleksejev-venelase-inforuum-on-laiem-kui-eestlase-oma.

[17] *Estonian Internal Security Service Annual Review 2022/23*, 9.

[18] Aimar Ventsel, "Vene maailm eesti internetis. Arvamus," *ERR*, May 26, 2021, https://www.err.ee/1608225133/aimar-ventsel-vene-maailm-eesti-internetis.

conspiracy theories, especially when the topics were related to politics.[19] In a recently published book, Ventsel, Madisson and Lotman revealed the mechanisms of the spreading of those theories through new forms of media.[20]

It may be worth mentioning that the administrators of Nasha Estoniia, Rodion Denissov and Leonid Tsingisser, responded to Ventsel's article.[21] They highlighted that the community had a larger number of members, almost twice the figure mentioned by Ventsel. They argued that Ventsel perceived hatred in the group's posts because he wanted to see it. They provided an example: while everyone approves when an Estonian in Argentina expresses their love for Estonia, people tend to view a Russian-speaker in Estonia who loves Russia as an enemy. They also contested Ventsel's claims about the sources the community members shared, asserting that the majority of shared content consisted of Estonian media publications.

Russian online groups in Estonia, therefore, have been treated, mostly, as a controversial political topic in media discussions and, to some extent, as a source of data for intelligence services. There are very few scientific studies on the matter. For linguists, they can provide useful data on language use in the case of language contact between Russian and Estonian,[22] but so far there were no attempts to address the issues of communication and memory construction in those groups, and the role they could play for Estonian Russian speakers' group identity. At the same time, such a study could be instrumental in better understanding of the social processes and tendencies within post-socialist societies. The opposing views on the Soviet and post-Soviet periods of Estonian history and different kinds of traumas associated with them coexist and compete in the divided Estonian society, resulting in contested memories and memorial practices, reflected, among other things, in online communication.[23]

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[19] Aimar Ventsel, "Kõige taga on oblastikomitee. Arvamus," *ERR*, November 28, 2020, https://www.err.ee/1172452/aimar-ventsel-koige-taga-on-oblastikomitee.

[20] Aimar Ventsel, Mari-Liis Madisson, and Mihhail Lotman, *Varjatud Märgid ja Salaühingud. Vandenõuteooriate Tähendusmaailm* (Tartu: Postimees Kirjastus, 2023).

[21] Rodion Denissov and Leonid Tsingisser, "Vastukaja. Facebook-i Grupist Meie Eesti. Arvamus," *ERR*, August 31, 2021, https://www.err.ee/1608323183/vastukaja-facebooki-grupist-meie-eesti.

[22] Alessandra Dezi, "Estonskie vkrapleniia v internet-diskurse russkoiazychnykh zhitelei Estonii," *Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies* 13, no. 2 (2019): 331–342, doi: 10.35634/2224-9443-2019-13-2-331-342; Alessandra Dezi, "Funktsii inoiazychnykh vkraplenii v internet-diskurse russkoiazychnykh zhitelei Italii i Estonii: sopostavitel'nyi aspekt," *Russkaia filologiia* 31 (2020): 336–351.

[23] Alena Pfoser, *Borderland Memories. The Remaking of the Russian-Estonian Frontier* (PhD thesis, Loughborough University, 2014); Eneken Laanes, "Transcultural Memorial Forms in post-Soviet Estonian Narratives of the Gulag," in *Narratives of Annihilation, Confinement, and Survival: Camp Literature in a Transnational Perspective*, ed. Anja Tippner and Anna Artwińska (Berlin:

Methods and Data

For the purposes of this study, we had to combine two main methodological approaches: conversational analysis of online communication and critical discourse analysis.

The first method aims to analyze all forms of communication, including online posts and status updates, as instances of social interaction organized according to "an institutionalized substratum of interactional rules, procedures, and conventions."[24] Applied specifically to online communication, this method also explores how different features of platforms such as Facebook or Twitter shape online interactions.[25] In the case of Facebook, the most significant factor defining the structure of communication is the distinction between "posts" (or status updates) and "comments" organized in threads. Additionally, the use of "reactions" (various forms of "likes") and "reposts" (hyperlinks) adds complexity to these interactions.[26]

Critical discourse analysis focuses on "the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains."[27] By identifying various textual elements and structures and analyzing their social implications, this method unveils ideological dimensions that both reflect the existing social world and contribute to its construction and maintenance. Intertextuality, in this sense, plays a critically important role, as every text and communicative event inevitably draws upon earlier texts and events. In the context of online comment exchanges, these intertextual chains, as described by Norman Fairclough, become salient.[28] Power relations in society determine different actors' access to various discourses, and some discourses wield more influence than others. However, they must still contend with each other, as all social groups participate in the process of negotiating meaning.[29]

De Gruyter, 2019), 51–70; Meike Wulf, *Historical Culture, Conflicting Memories and Identities in post-Soviet Estonia* (PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006).

[24] Charles Goodwin and John Heritage, "Conversation Analysis," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (October 1990): 283–307, here 283.

[25] David Giles, Wyke Stommel, and Trena M. Paulus, "The Microanalysis of Online Data: The Next Stage," *Journal of Pragmatics* 115 (July 2017): 37–41, doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2017.02.007.

[26] Matteo Farina, *Facebook and Conversation Analysis. The Structure and Organization of Comment Threads* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

[27] Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 60.

[28] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 77.

[29] See also Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 200–207.

Contesting discourses about the past coexist in any society, but in many post-socialist countries polarization of opinions about the period of the Soviet rule is very strong which can "throw into doubt official/elite expectations around a shared moral national valuation of the social memory of communism."[30] The Facebook group studied for the purposes of the present article serves as a prime example of the ongoing struggle between the official approach to the past in Estonia and a distinctly different perspective held by some of its citizens.

The "Sovetskaia Estoniia – Eesti NSV" (hereinafter referred to as SE) was created on May 2, 2020, as an open public group. This means that both the group itself and all its publications are visible to the public. Anyone with a Facebook account can join without an invitation or approval from moderators and can start posting. Commenting and reposting are also open to everyone, even without joining the group. As of September 24, 2023, the SE group had 33,456 members, and its membership continued to grow. For example, on September 23, it gained 46 new members, and similar numbers (averaging 30–50 new members per day) were observed during the spring and summer of 2023.

We obtained the data from the SE group in two ways. First, starting in January 2023, we systematically collected the most "popular" posts in the group. By "popular," we mean those that received significantly higher attention from the audience in terms of comments, reactions, and reposts. In total, we collected 212 posts using this method. Second, in order to obtain more precise quantitative data on the group's content through continuous sampling, we analyzed every post published within two sample periods, each consisting of three days, in July and August 2023 (a total of 91 posts). We considered the following parameters:

- Number and types of reactions (Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad, Angry)
- Number of reposts
- Number of comments
- Number of the first level comments (and the ratio of this number to the whole number of comments)
- Number of comments in the longest comment thread

The last two parameters are important for identifying posts that triggered the most heated discussions.

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[30] Cristian Tileagă, *Representing Communism After the Fall. Discourse, Memory, and Historical Redress* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 51.

In addition to the statistical data, we also coded the content of the posts, including the main topic, the referred time period, the presence or absence of visual content, the presence or absence of text, the inclusion of links to other resources, and the languages used in the posts and comments.

The initially collected data (“popular posts”) were subsequently reevaluated in light of our sample data. We selected the most prominent posts according to each parameter for further in-depth thematic and critical discourse analysis. This process allowed us to identify the most provocative topics that sparked lengthy and emotionally charged discussions, as well as those that received passive approval from the audience. We also conducted an analysis of the communication between commentators, identifying typical phrases and ideologically loaded clichés related to various memorial, socio-cultural, and political discourses.

It is important to note that, in order to protect the privacy of SE group members, we do not reference their actual names (Facebook usernames) but use pseudonyms (alphabetic aliases). Additionally, we do not provide hyperlinks to specific posts and comments; all quoting is done in an anonymous form. On screenshots, we have covered the names and avatars and added pseudonyms to distinguish between different commentators.

Topics and Post Types

First and foremost, the research findings highlight the paramount role of visual content within the studied group. The overwhelming majority of posts, including all those within our sample periods, feature some form of visual content. Primarily, group members share photographs related to various epochs in the history of Soviet Estonia. The sources of these photographs vary and include personal archives, media and online publications, books, and photo albums. In most cases, the authors do not provide references to the sources. According to our sample data, only 3% of posts consist solely of images without any accompanying text. In contrast, 68% of posts consist of photo captions, while the remaining 32% include longer texts containing detailed information or personal memories from the author.

There are also reposts, which make up approximately 20% of all content in the group. These reposts come from the personal profiles of the primary contributors within the group, as well as articles from news portals, YouTube videos, or content from other Facebook groups. Similar to original posts, what distinguishes reposts in the group is their consistent inclusion of images. Approximately 75% of reposts are complemented with some text, which can sometimes be quite lengthy

and is written by the person doing the reposting. Interestingly, there is no clear correlation between the presence or absence of text and the number of reactions and comments. Therefore, we can conclude that visual elements contribute significantly to the process of memory dissemination within the group, with images serving as catalysts for generating comments and initiating discussions.

The images shared as posts within the community encapsulate diverse facets of Soviet Estonia, which can be categorized into the following groups:

- Photographs featuring various locations within Tallinn, and to a lesser extent, other locations in Estonia, encompassing streets, squares, buildings, and related subjects (= images of places);
- Depictions of specific products that were prevalent during the Soviet era, including automobiles, ships, clothing, household and food items (= images of objects);
- Portraits of notable figures from the period, as well as representations of different societal groups (e.g., punks, students engaged in dictation exercises) and personal family photographs (= images of particular people);
- Imagery capturing various events, such as car races, meetings of mineworkers, or festivals (= images of events).

Quite often, contributors do not specify the times when the pictures were taken (in 32% of the posts). However, most of the shared pictures were taken during the late 1960s, 1970s, and the early to mid-1980s. There are only a few pictures from earlier or later periods. From time to time, photos from outside the period of Soviet Estonia's existence (such as the early 20th century when Estonia was part of the Russian Empire and the 1920s and 1930s during Estonian independence) are also posted, but none were found within the sample periods. In essence, the depiction of Soviet Estonia in the SE group does not solely encompass Estonia during the Soviet rule but more precisely represents a phenomenon associated with the late socialist period or the era of stagnation (known as *zastoi* in Russian), which began with Leonid Brezhnev's leadership in the USSR and ended with Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika*.

The majority of the initial posts are authored by a select group of individuals, identified by Facebook as top contributors. Only 5% of the images are contributed by regular members of the group. Throughout the group's existence, the identities of these top contributors have periodically shifted. Typically, within relatively brief intervals, approximately 20 individuals consistently engage in regular posting activities, often sharing multiple posts within a single day. It is worth noting that

one of the group moderators, AA,[31] is responsible for nearly half of the group's content, highlighting their significant and active role in shaping the group's discussions and shared content. Commentators, on the other hand, exhibit great diversity and include even non-members. There are, however, a few very active members who frequently comment and participate in almost every discussion.

Triggering Topics and Embodied Memory

An analysis of the quantity of reactions and comments proves instrumental in elucidating the most favored subject matter among group members. While "likes" represent a common form of expressing support for a post, it is noteworthy that members also employ "love," "haha," and "wow" emoticons, albeit to a much lesser extent than "likes," to convey their approval of posts.

Generally, images of Tallinn, particularly those captured in the old town, tend to garner more attention from group members. In contrast, reposts of articles from news portal, such as www.tribuna.ee, exhibit comparatively lower popularity, typically receiving 22–25 reactions, with minimal reposts (1) and comments (0–1).

Explaining the extraordinary popularity of specific images within the same thematic category may pose a challenge. Thus, the overall number of "reactions" observed in the sample periods, ranges from a minimum of 7 to a maximum of 1202, exemplifying the considerable variability in member engagement. For instance, a photograph depicting the busy Viru Street in Tallinn (Figure 1) amassed over 1100 reactions, comprising both "likes" and "love" reactions. Furthermore, it garnered 70 reposts and drew 33 comments, indicative of its exceptional resonance within the community.

Another picture with almost the same amount of reactions (1102 "likes," 67 reposts and 20 comments) also depicted Viru Street in the 1970s. And the highest number of reactions obtained yet another photo of Viru Street (in 1979), with 1202 "likes," 62 reposts and 39 comments. Overall, posts referring to Tallinn draw more attention than those devoted to other places in Estonia, and within Tallinn, the Old Town and particularly Viru Street with its medieval gates are most popular. One of the most popular posts in the group as a whole (over 5400 reactions) presents an 11 minutes long documentary video from 1981 depicting young female tourists in their strolls around Tallinn.

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[31] Hereinafter, as mentioned above, we use alphabetic aliases instead of the actual names of group members.

AA

Модератор Топовый соавтор · 31 июль 2023 г. ·

1975 год

Виру

1,1 тыс. 33 комментария Поделились: 70

Figure 1: Photo of Viru street in 1975 posted in the SE group. Screenshot.

While reactions and reposts are important for demonstrating the audience's interest and approval of the given content, the quantity of comments it receives is an even more significant indicator of engagement among group members. On average, within our sample periods, each post garnered approximately 18 comments, with the range spanning from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 150 comments. Some of the most commented-upon posts outside the sample periods received as much as 264 comments (such as the post about the assortment of fish in shops in SE), 734 comments (the aforementioned post with the 1981 video), and even 966 comments (the post about tar used as a chewing gum, which will be discussed in detail below). However, typically, the number of comments falls between 60 and 130.

Posts with minimal commentary tend to be reposts from news portals, as well as stories featuring well-known figures (e.g., economist Hanon Barabaner or Günther-Friedrich Reindorff, the artist responsible for designing banknotes in prewar Estonia). Similarly, posts centered around motocross and car racing, as well as images depicting "specific," less captivating, or less trendy locations such as the Põlva shopping center, canteens, Emajõgi berth in Tartu, and Pärnu beach, tend to attract fewer comments.

However, it is important to note that this localization trend is not absolute. For instance, a post highlighting the Pärnu amusement park, referred to as "Lunapark," garnered 21 comments (alongside 355 "likes" and 8 reposts). This can be attributed to the fact that many community members did not associate Lunapark with Pärnu, as it was an amusement company originating from Czechoslovakia that toured the USSR with its equipment. Consequently, community members are engaged in discussions surrounding childhood experiences and emotions in their comments, with only a few individuals having actually visited the attraction in Pärnu.

The most valuable material for memory research is undoubtedly provided by posts that amass the maximum number of comments, especially those fostering extended comment threads resembling online dialogues, exchanges of opinions, and, on occasion, discussions that may escalate into provocative and impolite exchanges. Our analysis of the topics of such highly commented posts reveals the following subjects that can trigger a maximum response from the audience: food (everything related to eating and drinking, as well as smoking), clothing and fashion, and children's games and activities.

The topic of food is especially popular in the group, comprising more than half of all posts with the highest response rates. This is well in line with the important role of food as an instrument of claiming and expressing identity:

"food-related practices can be regarded as a shortcut, or a faster way, to perform identity."[32] Food-related posts include photos of specific dishes and products (such as caramelized condensed milk), displays in grocery stores, labels of popular brands, and images of dishes and cooking utensils. Typical responses to such posts involve "recognition" ("I remember it too!," "Taste of my childhood!," "We used to eat it too in my family," etc.) and "appraisal" ("How delicious it was!," "Yummy!," etc.), usually accompanied by comparisons with modern products, not in favor of the latter ("You can't get anything like that now," "Now the quality is much worse," "It was all natural, not like now," etc.). The topic of food is so popular that even fully textual posts asking food-related questions, for example, "What types of fish do you remember being on sale in Soviet shops?" can draw significant attention (264 comments), which is unusual for posts without any visual content.

Clothing and fashion are rarely discussed, but when such posts appear, they tend to receive a high response rate. In some cases, the topic of clothing is not mentioned in the original post but arises in the comments, which often provokes more responses. For instance, a photo from 1986 taken in front of a pond in Kadriorg park, depicting a smartly dressed family of three (554 likes, 33 comments), garnered significant attention. Typically, personal family photos in SE receive limited engagement (30–50 likes, 1–5 comments). However, in this case, the very first comment ("Parents are so fashionable!") initiated a chain reaction of comments on fashion and style. It is likely that Facebook algorithms increased the post's visibility and showed it to a larger audience. Comparisons, often unfavorable, with modern fashion and clothing quality are also common.

Another triggering topic, which also provokes "recognition" and "appraisal" comments, revolves around the activities of children in Soviet Estonia. This includes various outdoor games, carousel rides, festivals, and concerts in schools and kindergartens, as well as "practices of friendship," such as publishing announcements in newspapers to find new friends. For instance, a post on this topic received 659 reactions, 180 comments, and was reposted 42 times. Sometimes these posts can also touch upon one or two other triggering topics discussed above, leading to maximum engagement from the audience.

For example, a post by AA (the main contributor to the group) dedicated to the practice of wearing a pioneer tie (see Figure 2) by Soviet children received

[32] Abel Polese, Oleksandra Seliverstova, Tanel Kerikmae, and Ammon Cheskin, "National Identity for Breakfast: Food Consumption and the Everyday Construction of National Narratives in Estonia," *Nationalities Papers* 48, no. 6 (2020): 1015–1035, here 1016, doi:10.1017/nps.2019.131.

Moderator Top contributor · September 4 at 1:16 PM ·

Пионерский галстук
Любили носить или снимали?

Figure 2: The post about a pioneer tie. The text reads: "Pioneer tie. Did you like wearing it or did you take it off?" Screenshot.

136 comments. People discussed whether they liked or disliked doing that in their childhood and shared reminiscences of where and when they joined the pioneer organization. The topics of clothing and children's activities intersect here, providing group members with the opportunity to reminisce about another aspect of their memory, contributing to a broader image of a "Happy Soviet childhood."

The absolute champion by all measures (12,000 reactions, 966 comments, 822 reposts) among all the posts published in 2023 is the post by the same author, AA, featuring a photo of a piece of tar and calling it "chewing gum Gudron (tar)" (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Chewing gum “Tar.” Screenshot.

It refers to the practice of chewing tar in the absence of any real chewing gum, which was a scarce product in the USSR. Many commentators related to this memory and shared their own experiences, as well as reminiscences of other “wild” activities (such as playing at construction sites or looking for cartridges and unexploded shells on former World War II battlefields) that they considered “unheard of by today’s modern children with their smartphones.” Childhood, in this sense, is closely related to other topics important to the group members. These topics intertwine and create what can be called an “embodied memory.” The things and actions that trigger the process of recognition and validation of the shared experience are those associated with the body. People can “like” what they see, but they “comment” about things they could experience through touch, feeling, and consumption.

Taken together, all these comments reaffirm each other and create a monolithic image of a country where “everyone was happy,” and people “knew how to appreciate the simple joys of life.” It is a country that no longer exists, but in comparison, it makes the modern world appear gloomy and unattractive. Phrases like “We lived really well and were very happy” become a mantra, with

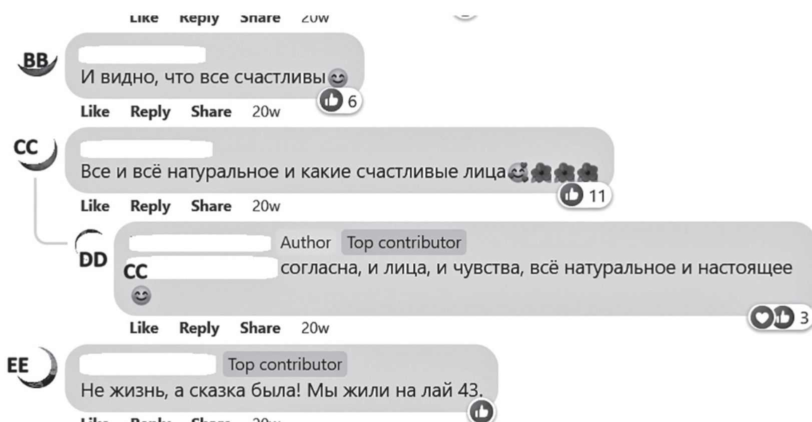

Figure 4: "Everyone was happy" comments under the photo of a New Year family party from the late 1960s. Screenshot.

synonymous comments merging into a single, lengthy, and redundant text, or rather a hypertext, where words like "happy," "cheerful," "satisfied," and "joyful" sound like an endless refrain.

A perfect example can be found under the post by DD, presenting a family photo depicting three young women, including DD's mother, and one man sitting at the kitchen table with their wine glasses in front of a New Year's tree. Some commentators became interested in discussing festive food and female styles, but almost half of the comments (22 out of 49) repeat in different ways, "Oh, how good it was, how happy we were!" (see Figure 4). Moreover, those comments, in turn, receive a large number of approving reactions ("likes" and "love"). Commentators not only confirm each other's statements but also express their solidarity with this happy image by employing reactions, emoticons, and gifs. The most popular comment (52 "likes") reads*: Mne ochen' povezlo zhit' v sovetskom vremeni. Byla radost' ot prazdnikov i uverennost' v zavtrashnem dne* ("I was very lucky to live in Soviet times. There was joy in the holidays and confidence in the future").

Provocative Questions and Ideologically Loaded Clichés

With all their popularity, most posts about food, fashion, and a happy Soviet childhood generally do not provoke serious discussions, as commentators do not contradict each other but rather provide support and appraisal. Overall, the ratio

between the number of first-level comments and the total number of comments is around 0.6–0.8, indicating that people do not initiate long threads or engage in debates. However, there are some posts with a ratio as low as 0.1–0.2, indicating that instead of contributing to the "happy memory" hypertext, commentators begin to disagree and argue with each other. This can happen in two different ways.

First of all, there are posts that touch on sensitive and controversial subjects, provoking discussions in the comments. For example, the post with the highest number of comments within our sample periods defies some statistical expectations. It is a repost of a news article from 2013 in which Estonian historian Heiki Pärdi delves into the topic of hygiene among Estonians before and after the Second World War. In contrast to the relatively small number of reactions (148), the number of comments is huge – 150. There is a relatively small number of first-level comments, and the longest thread within the researched period gained 50 comments. This indicates that the topic of whether Estonians actually benefited from Soviet rule provoked a serious debate.

Indeed, the content and style of many comments are very different from the happy chorus described above. Commentators use expressions like *O gospodi, kakaia chush'!* ("Oh my God, what crap!") or *sovetskofashistkaia propaganda* ("Soviet-fascist propaganda"). Sometimes, after a long exchange of arguments, they resort to direct insults and obscenities, such as *Zasun' svoi tupye voprosy kuda-nibud' sebe poglubzhe* ("Shove your stupid questions somewhere deeper inside yourself").

Interestingly, the aforementioned longest thread of 50 comments has very little to do with the topic of the post itself. It was started by a commentator (EE) who stated: *Da i ne zabyvaem, chto Estonskii iazyk, kotorym nas tak pichkaiut, i za kotoryi tak boretsia nashe pravitel'stvo, neimeet i 200 let.-. otkuda vziat'sia kul'ture?* ("And we should not forget that the Estonian language, which we are so inundated with and which our government fights so hard for, doesn't even have 200 years [of history] ... where could it get any culture from?"). Unsurprisingly, this obnoxious and derogatory statement divided the audience: some commentators supported EE, while others condemned them and tried to refute their view. Such heated arguments quite often attract group members who usually refrain from active engagement with the posts. As a result, the entire composition of the comment exchange transforms. Instead of unanimous admiration for Soviet Estonia, we can see polarized opinions and attempts to hurt and ridicule ideological opponents.

This example illustrates the second possible way to generate a real discussion in the SE group – by posting a provocative comment. These comments can

Figure 5: The photo of the exposition in Kolkhoz house (Estonian Open Air Museum), which provoked negative reactions among the SE group's members. Screenshot.

be either radically "pro-Soviet" (or "pro-Russian", "anti-Estonian") or explicitly "anti-Soviet." In both cases, supporters and opponents of the expressed position become embroiled in an irreconcilable struggle and do not hold back in their attempts to prove the inconsistency of the opposing viewpoint.

Moreover, when the opponents are not actually present in the discussion but their positions are constructed based on external content, group members can find unanimity and spiritual comfort in joining together to post negative comments. This creates not a "happy chorus of sweet memories" but rather a "chorus of menacing voices" cursing the enemies of Soviet Estonia.

A prime example of such "negative unanimity" is the group's reaction to a post featuring photos of reconstructed Soviet apartments from the Estonian Open Air Museum. This post generated 144 comments, with only 58 being first-level comments, and most threads containing between 5 and 7 comments. Interestingly, most comments focused on just four photos out of 35, which

depicted the apartment reflecting the social and economic turmoil of the early years after Estonia regained independence (see Figure 5). Ignoring this historical context of the early 1990s, many commentators laid blame on "Estonians" for distorting the Soviet past, expressing extreme indignation. For instance, one commentator stated: *Muzei kakikh-to alkashei. Protivno smotret'. Nikogda u nas takogo ne bylo* ("A museum of some drunks. It's disgusting to watch. We've never had anything like this"). Other commentators reinforced this sentiment through both likes and additional comments echoing similar sentiments.

The same negative unanimity may occur in "happy posts" as described above when someone begins to compare the happy Soviet past with the not-so-happy reality of the present or mentions the anti-Soviet ("Russophobe") position of Estonians, especially the Estonian government. Group unification then occurs in the fight against the figure of an imaginary enemy constructed using ideologically loaded clichés, irony, and memes.[33] The topic of these clichés and their integration into everyday speech, media, and online discourses in the Estonian socio-political context demands a separate study. Here, we will describe several prototypical phrases most commonly used by SE group members in their interactions.

First of all, there are two typical reactions of "appraisal" and "recognition," usually expressed as *Kakaia krasota!* and *Krasota-to kakaia!* ("What a beauty!" or "Such a beauty!") and *Ia pomniu!* and *I ia!* and *Ia tozhe!* ("I remember!" or "Me too!" or "Me as well"). These can be followed and supplemented by more expanded and more ideologically explicit statements like *U nas bylo samoe schastlivoe detstvo!* ("We had the happiest childhood ever!") and *Kakaia strana byla!* ("What a country it was!"). These reactions constitute the majority of comments, representing the positive aspect of the SE group's memory practices: people unite in their shared appreciation of their past life in Soviet Estonia by contributing to the endless ritual hypertext of the glorious past. In doing so, they focus on their collective feeling of sweet nostalgia.

However, there is also a dark, negative side to this emotional reunion. The stress in the phrase "What a country it was!" can be placed on the last word, in the past tense, emphasizing the notion that this happy land has sunk into oblivion and cannot be reached anymore. This is where the question is raised: *I gde*

[33] Bradley E. Wiggins, *The Discursive Power of Memes in Digital Culture: Ideology, Semiotics, and Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Ana-Maria Bliuc, Laura G.E. Smith, and Tina Moynihan, "'You wouldn't celebrate September 11': Testing Online Polarisation Between Opposing Ideological Camps on YouTube," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 23, no. 6 (2020): 827–844, doi: 10.1177/1368430220942567.

vsio eto teper'?! ("And where is all that now?!"). Normally, this cliché is employed in discussions of Soviet industry and agriculture (for example, "What happened to our fisheries?!"), as well as traditional values and Soviet ethics destroyed by capitalism and "liberal propaganda" ("Girls looked like girls"; "People trusted each other").

Inevitably, there should be someone responsible for this loss, someone who could be blamed. This is where an obscene expression, extremely popular in Russian colloquial speech, becomes useful: *Kakuiu stranu prosrali!* ("What a country they screwed up!", literally, "what a country was defecated"). Unsurprisingly, though, an indefinite-personal sentence, which in Russian does not even have a grammatical subject, may seem insufficient since the culprit is, in fact, obvious for many commentators. And then the figure of the ideological opponent and oppressor in the form of the Estonian government or all ethnic Estonians comes to the foreground. In this case, the Estonian official narrative of Soviet occupation and hardships of life under Soviet rule becomes ironically inverted: *Posmotrite na nikh, kak oni stradali pod 'okkupatsiei'!* ("Look at them, how they were suffering under the 'occupation'!"). In particular, commentators claim that Estonians used to live better than Russians and much better than people from other Soviet republics. They enjoyed all possible privileges and freedoms, including education in their mother tongue and state support of their cultural traditions. This idyllic (and certainly very far from reality) picture is opposed to the "deplorable situation" of Russians in modern Estonia who, in turn, are represented as victims of unfair policies and prejudices on the part of Estonians.

Multilingual Practices and the Audience Composition

It would be very easy to describe the SE group as exclusively Russian, created by Russian speakers for the benefit of other Russian speakers – people feeling nostalgic for the times when they were in power and suffering from the loss of their former status. Moreover, the description of the SE group written by its creators states: *Zdes' delimsia istoricheskimi sobytiiami, fotografiiami, kino-video materialami o SSSR, Sovetskoi Estonii, Talline. My posmotrim na nashu stranu, kakoi ona byla 30-70, ili dazhe bol'she, let nazad. (...) V kachestve iskliucheniia dopuskaiutsia i drugie istoricheskie publikatsii na RUSSKOM iazyke* ("Here we share historical events, photographs, film and video materials, memories of the USSR, Soviet Estonia, Tallinn. We will look at our country as it was 30–70, or even more, years ago. (...) As an exception, other historical publications in

RUSSIAN are allowed"). The status of Russian as the only language of communication in the group is mentioned explicitly and even stressed by using caps lock.

However, the reality is much more complicated, as our analysis of multilingual practices employed by the group members reveals. In fact, even the list of main contributors to the group contains many Estonian names. Certainly, names alone cannot provide conclusive evidence since they may not be real. Moreover, some native Russian speakers and Russian-Estonian bilinguals may have names and surnames typical for Estonians due to family reasons. A more decisive factor in defining the group's ethnic and linguistic composition is the analysis of language choices people make both in their activity within the group and in their publications on Facebook in general. Based on the analysis of data from group members with open profiles, it can be assumed that at least 10–15% of active participants are not native speakers of Russian. Most of them are Estonian speakers; however, there are also people from other former Soviet republics, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, or Uzbekistan, who still live in Estonia or used to live there many years ago and, by joining the group, can relive their past.

If we look at the posts and comments themselves, we will see that while the primary language of communication within the group is indeed Russian, it is noteworthy that other languages and different alphabets are also occasionally observed. The presence of Estonian top contributors facilitates sporadic posts in Estonian, either in their original form or as reposts from external sources. This linguistic diversity results in a fusion of languages and a fascinating blend of multilingual practices within the group.

Moreover, the group's communication exhibits also a unique form of "paradoxical politeness"[34] in which Estonian-speaking community members compose comments in Russian when engaging with Russian-speaking individuals. The Russian speakers reciprocate by responding in Estonian. For example, in the exchange represented in Figure 6, the Estonian speaker (GG) replies to the initial comment in Russian, but in Latin script. In response, FF, the author of the initial comment, switches to Estonian in their reply (Figure 6).

These phenomena imply that Estonian-speaking community members often possess competence in Russian, effortlessly switching between the two languages as needed. Moreover, many Russian speakers readily resort to Estonian when prompted by comments in the Estonian language, and even when refraining

[34] Cf. Anna Verschik, "Russian-Estonian Language Contacts, Linguistic Creativity, and Convergence: New Rules in the Making," *Multilingua* 24, no. 4 (2005): 413–429, doi: 10.1515/mult.2005.24.4.413.

Figure 6: An example of "paradoxical politeness" in the comments. Screenshot.

from active use of Estonian, they typically have no problems with understanding it.

Furthermore, there are instances of transliteration (as shown in the example above), where individuals write in Russian but employ Latin characters, as well as a few instances of English usage within the group's communication. These linguistic variations add depth and richness to the group's discourse, reflecting the diverse linguistic competencies of its members.

The group's diverse demographic, including individuals with various connections to Soviet Estonia, such as former residents, university alumni, or individuals with family ties to the region, further complicates the picture. This diversity is reflected in the comments section, where one can observe interactions in languages beyond Russian and Estonian. For instance, comments may appear in languages like Georgian, Belarusian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and others (see Figure 7), demonstrating the broad international appeal of the group and its ability to bring together individuals with diverse backgrounds and linguistic competencies.

It is not that surprising, then, that under the post expressing gratitude to the creators of the group for building a "miniature time machine" that transports everyone to a happy past (369 reactions of "like," "love" and "care"), among 27 very similar gratitude comments there is one written in Estonian and by a person with an Estonian name which almost literally repeats other comments written in Russian: *Mina ka väga tänan neid inimesi kes on selle grupi taga. Kõige tähtsam on olla INIMENE suurte tähtedega!!!!* ("I also really thank the people who are behind this group. The most important thing is to be HUMAN with capital letters").

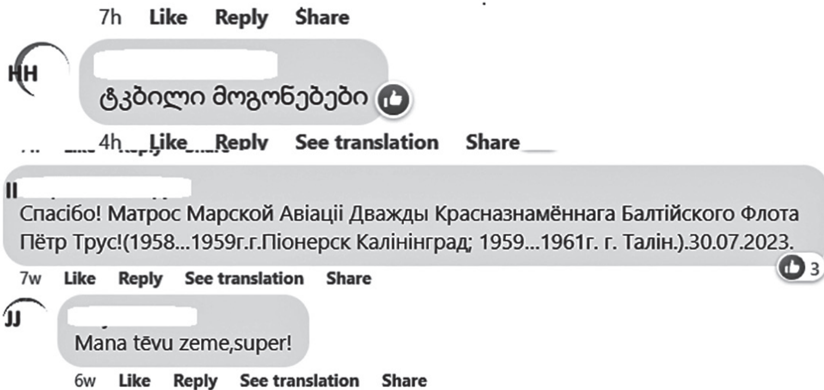

Figure 7: Examples of comments in different languages (Georgian, Belarusian, Latvian). Screenshot.

Through sharing memories and maintaining the sense of belonging, group identity is constructed not (only) on the basis of language (Russian) but rather on common beliefs and discourse practices regarding the past. Multilingualism as an ability to transgress linguistic and cultural differences represents, in this sense, a conviction, explicitly expressed by many SE group members, that there were no serious ethnic and linguistic conflicts in the USSR, "and everyone used to live in peace and harmony." While undoubtedly false, this belief turns out to be very important for everyone for whom nostalgia for the Soviet past becomes one of the foundations of their own identity.

Concluding Discussion: "Localization of Nostalgia"

The SE group, therefore, serves as a platform for individuals to practice collective nostalgia. By joining the group, its members gain access to images of the past they can relate to, even if not from personal experience but from those of their parents. It is almost impossible to collect fully reliable demographic data on the authors of the posts and comments, but with some users, it is evident that they are younger than what could be expected from the group's target audience.

In particular, there is one active contributor to the group who regularly posts staged photos of himself in the role of a Soviet man from the 1970s and early 1980s (using period clothing, shoes, and accessories) in various scenes: smoking in the kitchen among empty bottles and dirty dishes, sleeping fully clothed on the sofa among the remnants of a drinking party, and more. Judging

by his appearance, he is no more than forty, which means he can remember only the very last years of Soviet Estonia's existence. However, he puts a lot of effort into creating those images and actively interacts with older commentators who are happy to point out his mistakes and deviations from the "historical truth" (for example, sneakers that are too new, clothes that are not dirty enough, etc.). At the same time, the majority have an extremely positive attitude towards his activities and praise him for "making us all happy."

Overall, if we exclude "controversial" posts and long comment threads provoked by those commentators who do not share a 100% positive image of the past, communication in the group and its general atmosphere is almost idyllic. In comparison with many other Russian-speaking online communities, and Russian-medium online communication in general, which is usually described as extremely toxic and negativistic,[35] the SE group gives the impression of a "safe haven" where polite and pleasant people exchange impressions about what is dear to them. Under the photos of Tallinn, they express their appreciation for bustling streets with numerous pedestrians, a scarcity of automobiles, verdant surroundings, and the preservation and restoration of historical buildings by the Soviet authorities. Significant emphasis is also placed on the individuals featured in the photographs. Women and girls are often depicted wearing dresses and skirts, accompanied by heeled shoes and elegant hats, all complemented by ladylike and sophisticated hairstyles; the group members do not fail to approvingly comment on that. Occasionally, the sentiments and backgrounds of the group's members can give rise to discussions on the topic of "traditional values" in contrast to modern perspectives on gender issues.

Furthermore, descriptions of food featured in the posts evoke a sense of nostalgia and longing. Visual stimuli and confirmation of the validity of one's personal experience from others create a shared image of the past and what can be called an "embodied memory." Members reminisce about the superior taste and natural quality of food during that era. Occasionally, there are mentions of the challenges associated with waiting in lines and procurement difficulties, but such accounts appear incongruous when juxtaposed with documentary photographs that depict abundant supplies of delectable items, including fish, jars of canned goods, sweets, chocolates, and chocolate-glazed cottage cheese bars. These images challenge the notion of scarcity and evoke a sense of abundance that

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[35] Vera Zvereva, "Attitudes to Linguistic Accuracy among Russian-speaking Social Media Users," *Languages and Nationalism Instead of Empires,* ed. Motoki Nomachi and Tomasz Kamusella (New York: Routledge, 2023): 63–77, doi: 10.4324/9781003034025.

leaves viewers' mouths watering. At the same time, they never tire of repeating how good Soviet Estonian products were and how better supplies and life in general were in Soviet Estonia than in other places in the USSR, while deliberately avoiding discussions related to the occupation and the consequences of the Second World War, or the ongoing Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

This focus on the past and, at the same time, avoidance, whenever possible, of engagement with current political turmoils distinguish the SE group, on the one hand, from other Russian-speaking online groups in Estonia like *Russkoiazychnaia Estoniia* ("Russian-speaking Estonia") or *Tallinntsy* ("Tallinn residents"),[36] and on the other, from more direct and aggressive audiences like *SSSR. Prekrasnaia strana, v kotoroi my zhili* ("USSR. The beautiful country we used to live in"). The latter, it may seem, exploits the same nostalgic feelings and targets the same audience of people unhappy in their present and mourning their past, but on a larger scale – on the whole territory of the former USSR. The difference, however, is significant. Despite the fact that *SSSR* is not a group but a Facebook page managed by several individuals and generating likes and comments from a quarter of a million followers, its rhetoric and overall goals and ambitions are much more straightforward: to promote the memory of the "beautiful country." To do that, the authors heavily use propaganda clichés and employ exaggerated, almost comical in its agitation, style of Soviet-time slogans: in the page's description, out of 29 sentences 18 ends with an exclamation mark. Comments often follow this style and contain a lot of exclamations and caps locked words and phrases. The SE group, in contrast, sounds less aggressive and provocative, and subtler in its approach to Soviet memory.

Moreover, it overwhelmingly stresses the second part of its name, "Estonia," and not just "Soviet." The posts within the group exclusively revolve around Estonia during the Soviet era and have very little to do with modern Russia or the entire Soviet Union. Photographs of school buildings and children on their way to school not only evoke cherished memories of childhood; they also trigger discussions and descriptions related to Estonian school uniforms worn during that era, which were distinctive from uniforms in other Soviet republics and are always described as superior to them. The same is true for discussions of food, clothes, architecture and other aspects of life: everything Estonian was much better and should be remembered as such.

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[36] Kapitolina Fedorova and Natalia Tšuikina, "From 'oppressors' to 'oppressed': Baltic Russian Post-Soviet speakers in search of a new identity through social networking," *REGION* (forthcoming).

The aforementioned cliché "What a country it was!" therefore refers not to the USSR but is very much localized in Estonian context. The Atlantis of Soviet Estonia is opposed not only to modern "capitalist" and "Russophobic" Estonia, but also to Soviet Russia and other Soviet republics and is depicted as a true paradise where everyone was happy and never suffered from oppression.

However, this idyllic chorus of "happy memories" can take a provocative turn when, for example, someone brings up the fact that, during Soviet times, Estonian schoolchildren had the opportunity to study in their mother tongue. This is in stark contrast to the current situation where Russian-medium schools in Estonia are transitioning into fully Estonian-language instruction. These discussions may evoke strong emotions and differing opinions about language policies, education, and cultural identity in contemporary Estonia. The same sharp turn in rhetoric happens every time when someone tries to challenge the mytheme of the "happy Soviet shared past" and expresses opinions more in line with the official Estonian view of the Soviet occupation. Such attempts immediately meet with unanimous resistance on the part of the majority of SE group members.

Group unification, in other words, may exist in two modes, positive and negative, the one based on the "glorious past" and the one built on self-victimization and a feeling of loss. The notion of cultural trauma refers to a "dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion."[37] Unsurprisingly, those who refuse to see themselves as victims and an oppressed group, in the current situation of polarization and radicalization against the backdrop of war, started to reject the SE group. Recently, several Estonian public intellectuals who are native speakers of Russian but are well integrated into the Estonian cultural establishment published posts about their controversial or purely negative feelings towards the SE group. They blamed it as toxic and explained that even looking at the historical images, which used to be entertaining, now became almost impossible. Soviet nostalgia, in this sense, turns out to be a powerful instrument of both unification and disengagement, identification and de-identification. How long will this last, and what will prevail? Only time will tell.

[37] Eyerman, "The Past in the Present," 160.

REVIEWS

Keir Giles, **Russia's War on Everybody and What it Means for You**. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. 246 + xviii pages. ISBN 978-1-3502-5508-1.

For at least two decades now, international scholars have been busy at work studying transformation of the world order, from a unipolar system led by the United States to a more multipolar constellation with the BRICS countries vying for their share of power.[1] For most of this time, mainstream books on Russia roughly fell into the following three categories: either books presenting Russia as a quirky cabinet of curiosities with readers raising eyebrows at the impossible state of affairs in the Russian state,[2] books infatuated with the personality of Vladimir Putin[3] or books providing a reflection as well as a warning for the Western audiences on dangers of populism and its slippery path towards totalitarianism if we are not careful enough.[4]

Only a handful of authors traced the return of Russia's imperial ambitions.[5] However, most of their findings fell on deaf ears, because ever since Huntington's clash of civilizations pitted "the West" against "the rest" – with a particular role assigned to "Confucian-Islamic Connection"[6] – mainstream scholars' sights fixed firmly first on the Islamist terrorist threat in the first decade and then on the spectacular rise of China in the second decade of the twenty-first century in anticipation of a great power showdown between China and the United States.[7] Russia thus remained out of focus.

Oblivious to scholarly debates, tensions continued to rise, and as it usually happens, something had to give: systemic changes are often accompanied by conflict as states reshuffle into their new positions. What very few expected, though, is that the clash

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1 Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Cambridge: polity, 2014); or Stephen Walt, *The Hell of Good Intentions. America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

2 Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible. The Surreal Heart of the New Russia* (New York: Public Affairs, 2014); and Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy. Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

3 Mark Galeotti, *We Need to Talk about Putin. Why the West Gets Him Wrong* (London: Penguin Books, 2019); Brian Taylor, *Code of Putinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); or Richard Sakwa, *The Putin Paradox* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020).

4 Timothy Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom. Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018).

5 Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War. Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy. The Return of Great Power Politics* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009); and Mark Galeotti, *Russian Political War. Moving Beyond the Hybrid* (London: Routledge, 2019).

6 Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 22–49, here 45.

7 Henry Kissinger, *On China* (London: Penguin Books, 2010); John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no 4 (December 2010): 381–396, https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poq016; or more recently Kai-Fu Lee, *AI Superpowers. China, Silicon Valley and the New World Order* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018).

could start at the borders of a declining great power looking to save its face.[8] But the future always has a way of sneaking up on the analyst in an unexpected way and February 24, 2022 was like a punch to the gut to many within international relations community now suddenly scrambling to make sense of this new reality. We have woken up into a different world and now our eyes are finally fixed on Russia and Ukraine crushing our preconceptions.

In a rush to understand what is happening, and more importantly, *why* it is happening, a host of new books on Russia are being published: Mark Galeotti's *Putin's Wars. From Chechnya to Ukraine* and *The Weaponisation of Everything. A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (both 2022) dedicated to Russian foreign activities[9] or Jade McGlynn's *Memory Makers. The Politics of the Past in Putin's Russia* and *Russia's War* (both 2023) providing a look into the Russian soul, society and ideology,[10] and finally, Keir Giles' *Russia's War on Everybody and What it Means for You* (2023).[11] Most of these books have been written before the full-scale invasion – Giles too acknowledges finishing the manuscript in October 2021 and then having to update it in light of recent events – but they are cast in a different light now that we are all finally paying attention.

Giles' book *Russia's War on Everybody and What it Means for You* is a compact and comprehensive guide for people who are not too familiar with Russian foreign activities but are interested in learning more – quickly – as it contains a little bit of everything that has already been said: Chapter 1 deals with the impossible, ridiculous and surreal nature of Russia stuck in a different century mentality reminiscent of Pomerantsev's *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible* or Lucas' *The New Cold War*. The author's advice is to "suspend disbelief" because attempts to find logic where there is none – at least not one along the Western lines of rational thinking as Giles demonstrated in his 2019 book *Moscow Rules*[12] – ultimately leave us blind to the opportunistic creative destruction that seems to be the Russian *modus operandi* detailed in the following pages. Chapter 2 gives us a look behind the scenes into the paranoid propaganda-controlled Russian politics reminiscent of Snyder's "politics of eternity"[13] full of twisted historical narratives and in dire need of foreign enemies simply to keep attention away from the poor, corrupt and

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8 Richard Ned Lebow, "International Relations Theory and the Ukraine War," *Analyse & Kritik* 44, no. 1 (2022): 111–135, https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2022-2021.

9 Mark Galeotti, *Putin's Wars. From Chechnya to Ukraine* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2022), see the respective book review in this journal issue. See also Mark Galeotti, *The Weaponisation of Everything. A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022).

10 Jade McGlynn, *Memory Makers. The Politics of the Past in Putin's Russia* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023); Jade McGlynn, *Russia's War* (Cambridge: polity, 2023).

11 For a list of books new and old on Russia and Ukraine see Stuart Anderson, "The Books To Read About Russia And Ukraine," *Forbes*, October 12, 2022, https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2022/10/12/the-books-to-read-about-russia-and-ukraine/.

12 Keir Giles, *Moscow Rules. What Drives Russia to Confront the West* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press and London Chatham House, 2019). See the respective book review in this journal, vol. 22, no. 2 (2022): 93–97, https://doi.org/10.14712/23363231.2023.6.

13 Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom*, Ch. 1. See also McGlynn, *Memory Makers.*

dysfunctional Russian state. Under such circumstances, Giles writes, it is not only naïve but downright dangerous to keep on approaching Russia as if it was just another normal power or a normal state you could negotiate with. As seen in the long history of relationship "resets" between the US and Russia or decades-long advocacy of an open dialogue by the European Union, such approach is rewarding rather than sanctioning Russia for its transgressions. For the last "20 years [we] have seen a pattern of Russia consistently demonstrating that it believes in a form of power from a different place and a different time, that European leaders who believe all conflict can be resolved by dialogue are simply not equipped to deal with" (p. 57).

Chapter 3 deals precisely with how that "form of power from a different place" and time looks like – a phenomenon commonly referred to in the literature as "hybrid warfare." This description is, nevertheless, somewhat lacking in depth as it describes the tools used rather than the motives and intent behind them that Giles is interested in. Lacking in any credible "soft power," Russia is looking to use a panoply of other "active measures" – anything from targeting digital infrastructure, supporting protest movements, information warfare to jamming GPS or murder (pp. 83–88) – to influence target countries through more or less illicit means. All of the incidents that Giles illustrates highlight "Russia's regularly repeated approach of creating problems and crises in order to extract concessions in exchange for removing them, in a process of blackmail leaving Russia better off than before it started" (p. 87). Such an approach of using any and every opportunity short of open confrontation to harass is not self-serving; it is part of a broader strategy of exploiting Western vulnerabilities and blind spots to influence/cause harm but escape the repercussions. Citing former Australian Army officer and unconventional warfare specialist David Kilcullen: "Russian style of operations has emerged with a very careful sequencing and integration of different activities to stay in that liminal space, and get done what you need to get done and get back down below the detection threshold before an adversary can respond" (p. 100).

In Chapter 4, Giles documents the role of the regular army: from Potemkin-style May 9th parades in the Red Square giving impressions of the latest modern equipment, to armed forces restructuring of the past decade to testing them in Syria and to regular skirmishes in the Baltic and Scandinavian airspace. A subchapter on nuclear arms details the cunning irresponsibility with which Russia approaches international cooperation. New arms control treaties which Russia ignores until the point it has built enough of these arms itself and then publicly disses other countries from having had enough and stepping away from the defunct treaty too – the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty being case in point (p. 111). Nuclear threats in and of themselves fit into the larger strategy of blackmail Russia employs, citing officially former Russian military intelligence officer Dmitri Trenin: "the 'world is visibly moving toward military collision between major powers. However, no great power would be willing to accept defeat in conventional conflict at [the] hands of another great power without recourse to nuclear weapons' – the implication being, of course, that nobody should attempt to defeat Russia. [...] The more robustly-minded Russia-watchers in the West refer to this as the 'Don't upset Russia too much or

they'll invade a NATO country' trap; 'if we get nuked, it will be our own fault for making Putin feel threatened'" (p. 119). A subchapter on Ukraine, despite Russian miscalculation and strategic errors, still illustrates painfully the consequences of Western policy of misunderstanding and/or turning a blind eye to Russian misbehavior and stands in stark contrast to the situation in the Baltic states which, unlike Ukraine, are firmly embedded in Western institutions including NATO with troops present as a successful deterrent.

At this point, one might now rightfully ask: what is then the added value of reading Giles' book if he just keeps on bringing up themes explored in more depth by other authors? Besides drawing richly on open sources, what lends depth to the book is Giles having interviewed over 40 people from all walks of life (some of them already cited above): from academics, through intelligence officers, journalists, cybersecurity and disinformation experts to public servants on national as well as European levels (see their list on pp. 229–230). The interviewees do not only share their opinions, but also their personal experiences with Russian encounters, and thus make Russian "active measures" more relatable.

This becomes particularly acute in Chapters 5 and 6, where Giles makes a break with current literature on Russia, and finally delivers on the book title bait "war on everybody" and "what it means for *you*" with chilling intimacy. From diplomats' unsolicited home visits betrayed only by a window consciously left open, toilets not flushed, to stolen iPad cables and single stolen running shoe from a pair done solely for the purpose of messing around with a person's sense of security. But, you do not have to be a diplomat to be targeted! Giles brings narratives of duped journalists: "'If it can happen to me, it can happen to anyone'" (p. 145), online witch-hunts of Kremlin critics, hacked phones of servicemen stationed near Russian borders with deleted contacts and playing "creepy Russian hip-hop" (p. 154). No one is too unimportant, from charity workers to religious organizations, to become a target because as the Russian propagandist Dmitriy Kiselev put it on the American PBS: "If you can persuade a person, you don't need to kill him. Let's think about what's better: to kill or to persuade? Because if you aren't able to persuade, then you will have to kill'" (p. 130). Nevertheless, there are people who work for Russia more or less consciously, as outlined in Chapter 6: greedy bankers and businessmen, lawyers and politicians. They do it for "MICE" – money, ideology, compromise (meaning not compromise with Russia, but because they are being compromised, blackmailed through sensitive *kompromat* incriminating material) or ego (or a combination of all four). They do it because of short term rewards rather than long term security, and many continue to spread Russian influence simply because they are "useful idiots" (p. 166).

The reasons why people fall under Russian influence, consciously as well as unconsciously, are further explored in Chapter 7 which brings us again to more common ground: the intricate mix of business, crime and state apparatus. It is not easy to make sense of a network of connections between state agencies, oligarch sponsors and criminal underground when nothing is as it seems – a veil of offshore companies hiding the public-private connections, mercenaries doing the state's dirty work and so on and so forth. However, this network would not have been as influential abroad were it not for all the

people enabling it to work in target countries themselves: all the less-than-diligent bank clerks, lawyers, corrupt or just egocentric political actors and useful idiots introduced in Chapter 6.

The outlook that concluding Chapter 8 gives is not very optimistic. The Russian war on Ukraine has indeed woken the West up to the multifaceted threat Russia poses to the world. Mainstream academia as well as the publics are finally beginning to get to grips with how Russia operates. Russia playing according to its own rules *does not* mean it is completely unpredictable as some patterns have not changed since tsarist empire, only the technology of putting them into practice has, and understanding this is the first necessary step in our line of defense. In this regard, Keir Giles' book is a great compact and comprehensive guide for us to better understand these patterns as well as the current means and motives of Russian "active measures."

But there are many more steps to follow no matter the result in Ukraine, since "Russia cannot change at home, so [it] seeks to change the world around it – sowing misery in the attempt," it will continue to pose danger (p. 222). Thus, our line of responses, once we *do* understand the nature of West-Russia relationship, should focus on what is working: unity and joint responses, confidence in the West and in our soft power of attraction. Since Russia uses any and every opportunity to interfere, it is key to minimize the opportunities we give and vulnerabilities of a free democratic society we have, but without losing our values in the process. We need to respond strongly to hostile Russian actions, not just let them slide and reward Russia with more dialogue. We should use more "unpredictability" in our strategies towards Russia as we are too clear to read. As well as the low-level response Giles does not mention in the conclusion, that nevertheless seems to work against Russian propaganda is responding "in kind" – twisting Russian propaganda online to reveal its absurdity and humiliate authors (which is the opposite of what Russia wants to achieve) as @DarthPutinKGB Twitter account does.

There is no easy solution, but now we see in plain sight what the alternative is.

Daniela Lenčéš Chalániová
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Mark Galeotti, **Putin's Wars: From Chechnya to Ukraine**. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2022. 384 pages. ISBN 978-1-4728-475-4-6.

In this book, the prominent political scientist Mark Galeotti certifies his extensive knowledge of military and political developments in Russia over the last 30 years and the nature of Vladimir Putin's regime. The book provides extraordinary insights into Russia's military technologies and the structure and organization of its armed forces. Based on interviews and primary sources from within Russia, it expands upon Galeotti's previous research and publications. This combination of source material gives it uniqueness and provides new understanding of the development of the Russian political and military system. Galeotti approaches his subject matter in chronological order, using a catchy academic writing style. The book is an easy read for an audience that may not be familiar with Russian politics and foreign affairs.

Galeotti provides a comprehensive analysis of Russia's military goals and the role of Putin's ideology, which is aimed at creating a "Great Russia" with a powerful military. Galeotti highlights the pitiful situation of the Russian army after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and how Putin went about rebuilding the military. In particular, he focuses on Russia's wars on Chechnya, Georgia, and Ukraine and its involvement in other military conflicts such as the war in Syria. Using a wide range of sources, the author analyzes the changes Russia's military has undergone during its participation in those conflicts and what the army's general staff has learned from its mistakes.

Galeotti's book was published in 2022, a couple of months after Putin launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. As the author admits, the invasion required him to add an extra chapter to his original manuscript. In my opinion, this new information only strengthens his claims and arguments. Step by step, Galeotti shows how Putin initiated his offensive in Ukraine and furthered his obsession with regaining control over the former Soviet sphere of influence. Most importantly, Galeotti's analysis of the Russian military system, its military strategy, and its available technology explains why Putin is failing to reach his goals in Ukraine and how Russia's militarization is only making the lives of ordinary Russian citizens worse.

The book contains five parts, each of which is devoted to a specific period of time. The first part focuses on the collapse of the Soviet Union, a period of rampant corruption and low morale in the military, Russia's first war in Chechnya, and interventions in Moldova and Tajikistan. The next two parts focus on Putin's launch of military reforms and the wars in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria. He then analyzes the technological and personnel structures of Russia's military and the failure of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. In conclusion, he speculates about the future of the Russian military and Putin's regime.

Galeotti's book offers a timeline of events that helps the reader understand why Russia's military and political expansion into its neighboring countries is a keystone of Putin's regime. The book outlines the main goals of almost every war that Putin has launched so far. It contends that Putin's main strategy going forward involves even larger

military actions. Galeotti says that Russia's increasing military strength will allow it to compete on an equal footing with the other great powers. Above all, it would rein in the United States as the dominant world super-power (pp. 82–92). Putin's aggressive military actions in Russia's neighboring states legitimize his ideology, which is aimed at Russia's ultimate dominance in world affairs. Russia's military strength, which Putin showcases at the Victory Day parades in Moscow every ninth of May, lies at the core of that ideology. Galeotti states that Putin and his ministers of defense want to popularize military service in Russian society (pp. 143–154). His analysis leads me to believe that the political elite in Russia is trying to create something like a "Russian Sparta."

The most notable part of Galeotti's book is his analysis of the Russian military hierarchy and Russia's military system in general. He provides large amounts of data and a comprehensive analysis of why Russia's early post-Soviet military interventions in Chechnya, and later in Georgia and Ukraine, failed despite huge state investment in the military. He believes the main reason is the high level of corruption in Russia's military system and the Russian state overall. Other reasons are certain weaknesses of the military, which include a tradition of hazing (*dedovshchina*), officers' lack of knowledge of modern military strategy, and an unwillingness to learn from mistakes. Galeotti adds to the list neglect of equipment maintenance, poorly trained troops, and an army that is built to handle small regional conflicts, not a full-scale invasion like that in Ukraine.

In 2012, Putin replaced Anatoly Serdyukov with Sergei Shoigu as defense minister in the hope that he could lead reforms that would increase Russia's military strength. Reforms have been implemented, but with little sign of remarkable success. The only solution is completely rebuilding Russia's entire system and its way of thinking. Galeotti argues that modernizing military hardware cannot show results when the system as a whole is still functioning on the old Soviet model (pp. 156–167). The Russian army is billing itself as the second strongest army in the world because it is developing new, powerful weapons systems. However, the military leadership is still resting on the laurels of victory in World War II and naively believes everything the Kremlin's propagandists are telling them. The army's strength has always been the enormous human resources it can call upon, combined with the ruling regime's indifference to expending the lives of ordinary citizens. In short, the author is very critical of way Russia's military is organized. He believes that given Russia's existing military organization, it is impossible for Russia to achieve anything more than a stalemate in any conflict (pp. 343–355).

Galeotti's second main theme is Russia's strategy in its latest wars. Focusing on the current war on Ukraine, Galeotti describes in detail the developmental stages of the conflict and Putin's main political goals. He describes Russia's war plans and the ways Putin has tried to execute them. In my opinion, the author could put a little bit more effort into this section by telling us why Putin refused to stop in 2014 and instead launched his offensive into Ukraine in 2022. Galeotti confesses that at the beginning of 2022 when Russia was building up its military near the Ukraine border, he believed that the chances the Russian military would launch a full-scale invasion were around 30–40% (pp. 343–355). Of course, many Western analysts held a similar opinion.

The question is, does Galeotti understand the Russian military but not the fascist nature of Putin's regime? He could be more critical of the West's approval of the Minsk Accords in 2014, which created a stalemate and an environment for further Russian aggression in Ukraine. After admitting that he was wrong in his speculation about the possibility of a full-scale invasion, he predicts possible further conflicts and scenarios for Russia's future political development. He claims that both Ukraine and Russia will struggle to achieve success in their respective counter-offensives and offensives. But he believes that the Ukrainians, with Western support, have a better chance of regaining their occupied territories than Russia does of defeating Ukraine (pp. 355–366). From a contemporary point of view, Galeotti is right: the war has turned into a bloody exchange of artillery fire in which both sides are sustaining huge losses.

The information in the book that should be looked at the most critically concerns the tactics used by Russia during the recent wars. It is hard to doubt the author's knowledge of the Russian Army's personnel and technologies. However, he is a political, not a military scientist and his analysis of the conflicts must be viewed with caution. In this work, Galeotti mostly retells Russia's moves during the conflict in a popular way, rather than pursuing an in-depth analysis of both belligerents' strategies. His statements could stand verification by an experienced military scientist, but they outline a topic for research that military scientists could profitably explore.

Galeotti sometimes puts too much effort into specifying Russian military equipment in detail for the reader. The information is valuable, but instead of trying to characterize each model of tank that the Russian military has, the author could focus more on the nature of Putin's regime and historical similarities of Russia's contemporary wars with other conflicts in the twentieth century. More attention could be paid as well to Putin's other forms of warfare. For example, the author could elaborate upon the role of information warfare and propaganda in each conflict. At times, Galeotti's book seems like an overview of Russian military history in the last 30 years. The reader would welcome more of his thinking about Putin's desire to revive Russian imperialism and other aspects of his ideology.

Nevertheless, Galeotti has given us a valuable analysis of Putin's role in creating Russia's policy of aggression against its neighboring countries. His main point is that Putin is building up a strong military and launching military interventions in neighboring states in order to preserve the Soviet sphere of influence and challenge the United States' global dominance. Rebuilding the strong military that won victory over Nazi Germany in World War II is one of the main pillars of Putin's ideology, one which he clings very strongly. Galeotti provides us with the main reasons why Putin is still having little success with his military policy. It is not because he lacks modern weapons systems but rather because of the military's structure, which is highly corrupt and based on internal competition and humiliation, not collaboration. With his aggressive yet unsuccessful foreign policy and faced with the impact of Western economic sanctions, Putin is slowly digging a grave for his regime.

Matīss Lozda
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6. Reference Examples

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