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# HIPERBOREEA



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# INFLUENCES OF SITES OF TRYPILLIA BI – CUCUTENI A<sub>4</sub> STAGES ON THE ESTABLISHING OF STYLES OF PANTING OF CERAMIC WARE OF ZALISCHYKY GROUP OF TRYPILLIA BI–BII STAGES (UPPER AND MIDDLE DNISTER REGION)

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*Y. Yakovyshyna, R. Koropetskyi, N. Bulyk, O. Sytnyk*

## ABSTRACT

It has been noted for a long time, that Ukrainian Trypillia sites are closely connected with Moldovan and Romanian settlements of Cucuteni-Ariuşd. Tribes which were formed on the small territory of Seret River's basin and middle reaches of Prut and Dniester Rivers migrated at the early stage to north and east. Appearance of painted ceramic ware in Sub-Dniester region as well as external influences on the formation of local groups in examined region in future are obviously associated with the expansion of Cucuteni tribes. In this context, we will search for the origins of painted ornament and trace transformation of painted tableware of transitional stage of the middle period of existence of culture (Trypillia BI-BII – Cucuteni AB). Namely, we will pay special attention to formation of Zalischyky group of Trypillia culture on the basis of earlier settlements of Trypillia BI – Cucuteni A<sub>4</sub>.

**Keywords:** *Eneolithic; Trypillia BI-BII; Cucuteni AB; Zalischyky group; ceramics; ornamentation; contacts.*

## *Introduction*

During the Eneolithic period a number of agricultural and animal husbandry cultures developed on the territory of Europe. They were characterized by ornamented pottery in a specific special meander-spiral style. One of them was Ariuşd-Cucuteni-Trypillian cultural complex which existed on the territory of modern Ukraine, Moldova and Romania.

Bearers of the culture which formed on the small territory of Seret River basin, middle reaches of Prut and Dniester Rivers, at the early stage migrated to the north and east. Thereby, territorial differences in material culture are formed. They were reflected in the shape and ornamentation of ceramic ware.

Various ornamental patterns made by ancient craftsmen on ceramic ware became the basis for scientific hypotheses on issues of periodization and relative chronology of sites.

During the researches two systems of periodization of sites of Trypillya-Cucuteni were developed: Trypillya A – Pre-Cucuteni II and III; Trypillya BI – Cucuteni A<sub>I</sub>-4; Trypillya BI-BII – Cucuteni A<sub>B</sub><sub>I</sub>, 2; Trypillya BI, CI (γI) – Cucuteni B<sub>I</sub>-3; Trypillya CII (γII) – Horodiște-Foltesht.<sup>1</sup> The periodizations were created on the base of stratigraphic observations and changes observed at repertoires of sites. As for absolute chronology of this periodization it was developed by researchers on the base of dating of settlements. However, common scheme still not created and existed schemes are differs from each other.<sup>2</sup>

Special attention is paid to the middle stage of development, when, on the one hand, Pre-Cucuteni and Early-Trypillya pottery tradition continued its evolution, and on the other – a new decoration method (painted pottery) is gradually introduced. During this period, significant progress was made in various branches of economy; contacts with steppe population and inter-tribal exchange were intensifying.<sup>3</sup> With the expansion of the communities over a large area, material culture of settlements in distant regions acquires clear local characteristics. One of them concerns the ornamentation of ceramic ware by polychrome painting.

With the beginning of middle period of the development of Trypillya on the territory of Prut-Dniester interflaves, parallel development of the Trypillya and Cucuteni cultures can be traced, and the local originality of the settlements (or groups) is observed: Zalischyky and Solonceni groups in Dniester River's basin and sites of Bug-Dnipro region (Fig. 1). Most often, changes and local peculiarities in more or less homogeneous complex of cultures are explained by further advancement of Cucuteni population. Together with this expansion, painted ceramic ware appear – initially in Sub-Dniester region, and then in Bug-Dnipro region.<sup>4</sup>

In this article, we concentrate attention on the transitional stage of middle period of existence of the culture (Trypillya BI-BII – 4200-4000 B.C.)<sup>5</sup>, exactly on the search for origins of painted ornament of this time and transformation of painted ceramic ware during this period. Our task is to trace the history of distinguishing of Zalischyky group in Trypillia BI-BII/Cucuteni AB. Also to define base of formation of this group through search of styles and motives in decorations of vessels on the settlements from the period of Trypillya BI/Cucuteni AB.

### *Definition of Zalischyky group*

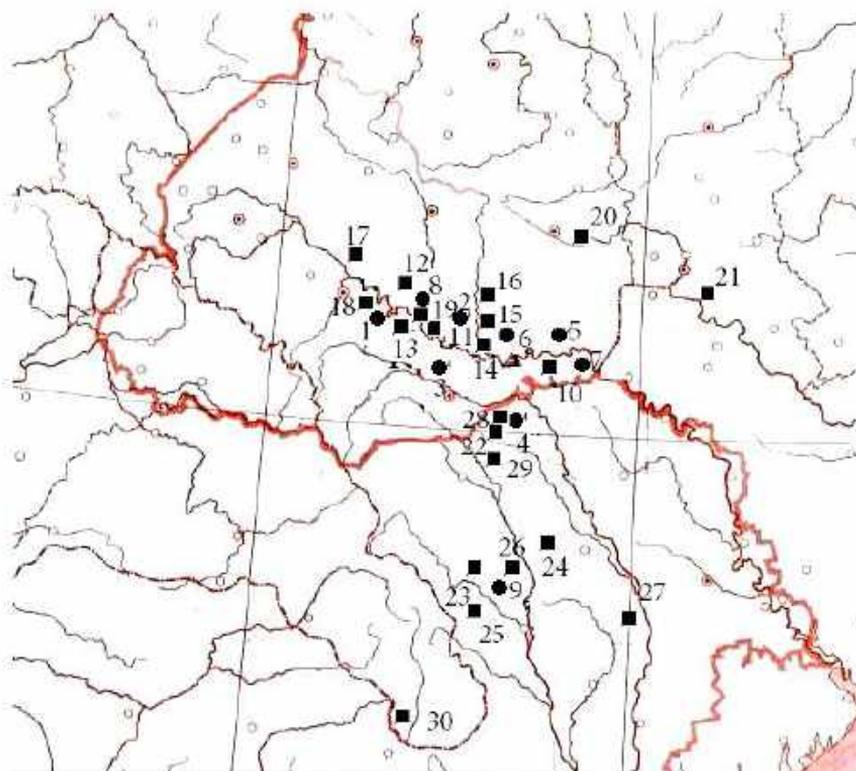
After field studies of the multilayered settlement of Cucuteni, H. Schmidt developed a classification scheme for ornamental styles on ceramics. This scheme is especially valuable because, as opposed to previous ones,<sup>6</sup> it was already well-supported by stratigraphic data and covers large chronological interval. In 1932, his work was published as a monograph.<sup>7</sup> In H. Schmidt's work two main issues were considered. First – origin of Cucuteni-Trypillya, second concerned change of ornamentation. The researcher followed changes in pottery decoration according to stratigraphic layers. Ornaments are divided into groups, called styles. During researches of styles, not only motifs, but also color, and a consistent combination of motifs and colors were taken into account. The color changes and their combinations became chronological indicators. Styles were named after the letters of Greek alphabet and joined into groups. It should be noted that changes of

ornaments in groups were homogeneous and uniform and may contain newly discovered decors, so these structures do not require creation of new groups. Later, scheme of H. Schmidt was taken as a base by other researchers – it was refined and used for analysis of paintings on pottery Cucuteni sites such as Traian, Izvoare, Corlăteni, etc.<sup>8</sup>

The classification was adapted and used by N. Vinogradova during the study of ceramic materials from sites of Middle Dnister region,<sup>9</sup> by T. Popova for studying of collection of Polyvaniv Yar<sup>10</sup> and others.

H. Schmidt still not isolates group AB among Cucuteni ceramics, but notes that  $\alpha$ - $\delta$  styles represent the transition from group A to group B.<sup>11</sup> K. Dascălu, based on observation of Cucuteni ceramics, expressed the idea about existence of a transitional period between Cucuteni A and Cucuteni B.<sup>12</sup> Later, V. Dumitrescu confirmed the necessity to isolate Cucuteni AB stage. Excavations of settlements Traian,<sup>13</sup> Corlăteni,<sup>14</sup> Dîmbul-Morij,<sup>15</sup> Calu,<sup>16</sup> Frumușica,<sup>17</sup> Huși,<sup>18</sup> Chetrești, as well as field surveys in the area of Bacău and Botoșani,<sup>19</sup> and also Drăgușeni, Vorniceni, Mindrești<sup>20</sup> sites confirmed the stratigraphic location of transitional stage of Cucuteni AB and showed that it lasted for a long time.<sup>21</sup>

T. Movsha for raised the first time the question of separating the transition from BI to BII by studying materials of the settlement Solonceni II, the middle layer of which she estimated coincided with sites of phase Cucuteni AB Traian and Corlăteni.<sup>22</sup> N. Vinogradova developed this idea by identifying Trypillia sites of BI-BII, similar to settlements of Cucuteni AB stage.<sup>23</sup> For the region we are considering, there are settlements of Zalischyky group.



**Fig. 1** Settlements of Cucuteni A and finale of Trypillia BI phases: 1. Nezvyisko II, 2. Kudryntsi, 3. Shypyntsi A, 4. Drăgușeni, 5. Tymkiv, 6. Smotrych II-Kubachivka, 7. Vasylivka, 8. Hlybochok, 9. Izvoare. Settlements of Cucuteni AB and Trypillia BI-BII phases: 10. Polyvaniv Yar, 11. Bilche-Zolote Park I, 12. Buchach, 13. Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom, 14. Zalischyky, 15. Kapustyntsi, 16. Vygnanka, 17. Bilshivtsi, 18. Khom'iakivka I, 19. Blyshchanka II, 20. Rusanivtsi, 21. Klishchiv, 22. Corlăteni, 23. Frumușica, 24. Cucuteni, 25. Calu, 26. Traian, 27. Huși, 28. Vorniceni, 29. Mindrești, 30. Ariușd.

In 1920-th L Chykalenko grouped some sites in Dniester River basin by the ornaments and forms of vessels, and came to the conclusion that there was a certain group represented by settlements in Gorodnytsia, Vasylykivtsi, Vygnantsi, and partly some others.<sup>24</sup> Later, in 1938, O. Kandyba in his article "Ancient painted ceramics in Halychyna" introduced the name "Zalishchyky group" at the first time and outlined a number of settlements that represented it.<sup>25</sup> He distributes all Trypillia settlements in Dniester River's basin to periods A and B, based not only on morphological criteria of ceramics but also on stylistic ones. Meanwhile, O. Kandyba also worked with materials obtained by researchers at the end of 19-th century. without stratigraphic observations, which make his arguments less reliable. Period A consists of the Nezvyisko and Zalishchyky phases. Zalishchyky phase is divided into two groups. The first – Shypyntsi A, which is widespread

in Halychyna and Bukovyna, is characterized by a black negative ornament. The second group is named Zalischyky. It includes 12 settlements. O. Kandyba's studies were generally confirmed by the further researches. N. Vinogradova increased the number of known settlements from 12, about which O. Kandyba wrote, to 26.<sup>26</sup> Today, some layers of Bilshivtsi settlement are also included in the Zalischyky group,<sup>27</sup> Blyshchanka II,<sup>28</sup> Khomyakivka I.<sup>29</sup> Radiocarbon dating of Bilshivtsi and Khomyakivka I indicates that they existed in the period about 4200 B. C.<sup>30</sup>

Zalischyky influences can be observed at the sites, situated to the east from area of Zalischyky group. For example, S. Ryzhov notes the similarity of tangent and metopic schemes of ornamentation of pear-shaped vessels, lids, goblets from Klischev in the Southern Bug with decoration of ceramic from Zalischyky, Buchach, Polyvaniv Yar II, Kapustyntsi, Blyshchanka II (lower Trypillia horizon).<sup>31</sup> Some similarities are observed in Rusanivtsi I on Southern Bug.<sup>32</sup> This phenomenon is explained by the movement of the population in eastern direction.<sup>33</sup>

### *Methodology*

During the work with ceramic collections we use stylistic and compositional analysis of paintings and traditional methods of historical and archaeological research, first of all typological and comparative. Elements of statistics, historical analogies and systematization are also used for description of the ceramic complex. Below, we consider motifs of compositions of Zalischyky paintings, which were also used during the stages Trypillia BI-BII/Cucuteni AB. We also pay special attention to the styles of painting outlined by H. Schmidt and supplemented by other researchers.

### *Styles of painting and ornamental motives of Zalischyky ceramics and sites of Trypillia BI/Cucuteni A4*

Sites of the Zalischyky group were researched in different periods (during the last 150 years) with the use of various methods of excavation and systematization of archaeological materials, which complicate the analysis. State of studying of the sites of this group is very different. Excavations were carried out only on the part of settlements, namely on Zalischyky, Buchach I, Bilche-Zolote Park I, Blyshchanka II, Bilshivtsi, Gorodnytsya nad Dnistrom, Khomyakivka I. The rest of the settlements are known by surface finds. It should be considered that excavated sites have different saturation and quality of ceramic complex. For example, excavations of Zalischyky, Bilche-Zolote Park I, Gorodnytsya nad Dnistrom were carried out in the late 19th and beginning of 20th centuries and some of these materials were lost. On some sites, due to acidity of the soil, paintings were poorly preserved (Blyshchanka II, Khomyakivka I) or completely ruined. Due to the dismantling of some museums and transfer of materials to others ones, export of collections abroad during World Wars and other circumstances, large amount of materials was lost. Therefore, some of the settlements, which were included to Zalischyky group by O. Kandyba, now have neither description in the literature nor any preserved collections. Despite this fact, database of painted ceramic ware of Zalischyky group is quite presentable. Many original forms of ceramic ware and large fragments have been

preserved. They allow determining of shape of the pots and reconstructing of ornamental motives.

Clayware is the most common category of finds in Trypillian settlements. In addition, ceramic complex has specific features of morphological, technological and stylistic character. All this makes it an excellent material for exploring of different aspects of life of ancient societies. Ceramic complex responded most clearly to changes in environmental conditions, to the specifics of economic, social, cultural life of ancient collectives. At the same time, after the reaching of a certain stage of development, the ceramic obtained remained unchanged with stable forms. Therefore, significant changes in the ceramic industry required significant changes in the economic and social spheres.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the ornamentation was characterized by rapid changes, triggered by various cultural and economic factors. We focus on the ornament because its changes in the ceramic collections of studied settlements were the most dynamic.

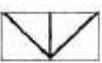
On the ceramic tableware of Zalischyky group's sites it is clearly observed formation of several major variations of painting. Ornament is mostly constructed by repetition of certain motives and arranged in one or two zones (friezes), often edged by borders. All motives, isolated in the paintings of ceramic ware, are characterized by clear construction, symmetry and strict geometricity. In the category of "tableware" pottery (conventional name of a ceramic category made of elutriated clay), the painted ones almost completely replaced ceramic ware with in-depth ornament. There were also changes in the shapes of the vessels, first of all the disappearance of ones with pallets and the emergence of new forms of lids.

Paintings of Zalischyky group pottery can be clearly divided according to motifs from the ornamental compositions. In addition, we can observe clear attachment of a particular motif to specific shape of vessels, as well as the choice of the place on the surface (for example, some motifs are characteristic for the painting of rims, others for the body).

All material belongs to 9 settlements, among which not only large collections but also separate finds. There are such sites as Zalischyky (775 finds), Buchach (1038 finds), Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom (161 finds), Blyshanka II (159 finds), Bilche-Zolote Park I (140 finds), Bilshivtsi (108 finds), and also several fragments and complete vessels from Kapustyntsi, Vygnanka, Novosilka-Kostiukova.

Among Zalischyky paintings 14 general motifs can be distinguished.<sup>35</sup> Five of them, also used on stage BI are the most interesting for us. One of the most frequently used is a motif that consisted of a central vertical line and diagonals which are divergent from the central one and forms inverted triangles (table 1). This motif is created by mirror symmetry. The vertical central line (this line divides composition into two blocks) serves as the axis of symmetry and diagonals reflect one another. During the painting, the ornament became more complicated and additional elements appeared. Sometimes a vertical central line was changed or replaced by some other elements. Thus several variants of this motif were formed. Painting was made mostly by red color, less often by black or red and black colors, on light engobe or natural background. In such way bowls were ornamented (their external and internal surfaces), rarely – rims of other types of ceramic ware and spoons. In general we found this motif on 58 vessels from different sites.

Table 1

motives sites							
Zalischyky	5	4	5	4	1		
Buchach	9	1	5	4			
Bilche-Zolote Park I	7		1				2
Vygnanka						1	
Bilshivtsi	4						
Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom							
Blyshanka II	4			1			

The painted pattern, which is based on a T-shaped figure, can be interpreted as commonly used. Space around it can be filled with other elements: arches, circles, ovals (table 2). This motive is created, as well as the previous one, with using of mirror symmetry. A central vertical line, which divides the motif into two blocks, creates the axis of symmetry. T-shaped figures can be partially divided or become stylized, but it is always clearly highlighted. It was placed on the rims of pear-shaped vessels, rarely – on the rims of lids, goblets and pots; one sample appeared on the bottom of a lid. Painting was made with using only red or red and black colors on the light engobe on the surface of ceramic ware. This motif can be found on 20 vessels.

Table 2

motives sites					
Zalischyky	3	2	2		
Buchach	4		2	1	
Bilche-Zolote Park I	1		1		2
Vygnanka					
Bilshivtsi					
Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom					
Blyshanka II	2				

The tangent ornament is the basis of another motif (table. 3). In the literature it is known as “Tangentenkreisband” (circular spiral, tangent ornament). A central tangent shape can be surrounded by additional elements. Several variants of this motive were drawn. Differences between them are based on construction of central part of the figure – spiral, circle with oblique line in the middle and oval. Painting is mostly polychrome, with using of red and black colors or only red, black or brown ceramic ware on a light engobe. In this way, shoulders and body of pear-shaped pottery and lids were painted; in one case, such painting was placed under the rims of the pot. 24 examples vessels with such motifs were found.

Table 3

sites \ motives			
<b>Zalischyky</b>	1	2	2
<b>Buchach</b>	3	5	2
<b>Bilche-Zolote Park I</b>			1
<b>Vygnanka</b>			
<b>Bilshivtsi</b>			1
<b>Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom</b>		2	
<b>Blyschanka II</b>	3		

Another motive of ornament which is typical for goblets is also often used. Its basis is a diagonal line and two ovals (Table 4). Ovals are placed above and below the diagonal line. The axis of symmetry runs diagonally and divides this module into two blocks. In this motif, several variants can be distinguished depending on the elements that are included to drawing or coloristic features. Among them paintings in only red color or – red and black ones can be found equally often. There are also ornaments appeared, made with using of only one brown or black paint. Such motif was found on 39 vessels.

Table 4

motives sites						
Zalischyky	3	2	1	4		
Buchach	5	5	2			3
Bilche-Zolote Park I	1	3	2			
Vygnanka	1				2	
Bilshivtsi						
Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom						
Blyschanka II	1	2				1

Motif formed by arched lines that is known in the literature as a garland is also characteristic (table 5). There are several variants of this motif. The paintings were made with using of only red, brown or black color or two paints – red and black. Such ornaments can be found under the rims and on the body of amphora, goblets and pots.<sup>19</sup> vessels with such painting are known.

Table 5

motives Sites			
Zalischyky	6	1	
Buchach	2		1
Bilche-Zolote Park I	3		
Vygnanka			
Bilshivtsi	3		
Gorodnytsia nad Dnistrom	1		
Blyschanka II	2		

### *Discussion and results*

The motifs described above are widespread and represent the majority by frequency of using. So, some “classical” paintings of the Zalischyky group are identical to the Cucuteni ones; analogies for them can be found among ceramic complex of such settlements as Corlăteni, Traian, Huși and others. Prototypes of most of the common motifs can be observed at the local sites of Trypillia BI (Kudryntsi, Nezvysko II, Shypyntsi A and among ceramic ware of Cucuteni A4 sites (Drăgușeni).<sup>36</sup>

As for the motifs, during the time of Trypillia BI–BII, types that are common for Trypillia BI – Cucuteni A4 sites continue to be used. Thus, fragments of two goblets from Bilche-Zolote Park I contain composition of circles similar to samples from Nezvysko II,<sup>37</sup> Ariușd,<sup>38</sup> Frumușica,<sup>39</sup> Izvoare,<sup>40</sup> Tîrpești<sup>41</sup> on the first stages of Cucuteni A and in Drăgușeni of Cucuteni A4 stage.<sup>42</sup> In the ceramic complex of Bilche-Zolote Park I, such patterns of painting on the goblets has been preserved, probably as archaism. Sometimes there are not only circles, but also semicircles, hooks, spirals. It is obvious that such ornament can be interpreted as a relic, which has been preserved until the middle phase of Cucuteni culture. Also, under the rims of the vessels from Buchach and Zalischyky, series of small circles covered with paint were placed. Such motifs appears on the settlements of Drăgușeni (Cucuteni A4) and its occurrence is associated with the transformation of a deepened pointed ornament.<sup>43</sup>

Goblets of various sizes from Zalischyky and amphorae, ornamented with jagged lines and “garland ornament” (black background and white stripes, filled with thin red lines or two-color painting with red and white colors were used for creation of picture) are also similar to ceramic ware from sites of Trypillia BI – Cucuteni A4. Changes of the garland motif can be traced on the earliest Romanian sites (Drăgușeni) from the period of Cucuteni A4<sup>44</sup> and Trajan.<sup>45</sup> This motif is more clearly constructed on Zalischyky sites, as well as in the later Cucuteni ceramics (the settlement of Vorniceni from the Cucuteni AB stage).<sup>46</sup>

On the ceramic ware from settlements of the final stage of Trypillia BI, Cucuteni A4 of examined region, changes of the ornament can be traced – appearance of transitional elements from BI to BI–BII. The main band in spiral ornament is changed – expanded, made uneven turns. Longitudinal lines appeared on the background. Black color became more important. It is no longer just an accent (underlining the main motif) but becomes the background of the composition. Painting with white stripes filled with thin red lines, on a black background, characteristic for Trypillia BI–BII, Cucuteni AB was also used. Thus, when considering ceramic complexes of Nezvysko II, Shypyntsi A, materials and objects of stage BI seems interesting, because in paintings on ceramic ware combination of black stripes with white, filled with thin red lines, garland and spruce-like ornaments appeared. In some cases, compositions are divided into several zones. Obviously, as was noted by R. Vulpe,<sup>47</sup> and later by K. Chernysh,<sup>48</sup> we can observe in the ceramic complex of Nezvysko II features of transition from stage BI to BI–BII. Such polychrome painting can be seen on ceramic ware not only of Nezvysko II, but also of Kudryntsi, where the main band of the spiral changes its width and makes uneven turns. Black color became more important. It is no longer just an accent (underlining the main

motive) but becomes the background of the composition. Obviously, we are dealing with transitional elements of the ornament.<sup>49</sup> Presence of such sites allow to conclude that the transition from Cucuteni A to Cucuteni AB took place both to the west and east from Prut Rivers basin.<sup>50</sup> At BI stage on some sites, along with polychrome painting the bichrome one can be traced. Both of them were modified and probably create the later Zalischyky ceramic complex. Also, at the end of BI stage, stylistic subgroups  $\alpha$  were formed. We can observe them among paintings on ceramic ware of such sites as the following: Nezvysko II,<sup>51</sup> Shypyntsi A,<sup>52</sup> Vasylivka,<sup>53</sup> Smotrych II–Kubachivka,<sup>54</sup> Tymkiv,<sup>55</sup> Drăgușeni,<sup>56</sup> Fedeleșeni<sup>57</sup> and others. The  $\alpha$  style is represented on ceramics from the beginning of BI-BII stage, but it is gradually superseded by different variations of later styles. The issue of chronology of stage BI is actively developed by researchers<sup>58</sup> but we still do not have a common chronological scheme.

Style  $\beta$  together with the style  $\alpha$  is the most archaic among Zalischyky group's paintings. Style  $\beta$  appears episodically on the settlement of Zalischyky and more often in Bilshivtsi,<sup>59</sup> Blyshanka II.<sup>60</sup> Origins of this style is on the settlements of BI stage, such as Kadyivtsi Bavky, Frydrivtsi,<sup>61</sup> Glybochok,<sup>62</sup> Drăgușeni, Brynzeny IV.<sup>63</sup> By the frequency of use in Zalischyky group's paintings, style  $\beta$  concedes to  $\alpha$  style and appears only on the earliest sites.

### *Conclusion*

During stage Trypillia BI-BII painted ceramic completely replaced vessels with in-depth ornaments. Changes of shape of ceramic took place – vessels with pallets disappeared and new forms of ceramic arose. New styles of painting on ceramic appeared. Meanwhile 65 % of ornamental motives, found on painted vessels of the Zalischyky group were used in decorations, characteristic for sites of Trypillia BI\Cucuteni A4 period. Also decoration styles  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ , which appeared on the stage Trypillia BI\Cucuteni A4 continue to exist on sites of Zalischyky group. Settlements from Dnister region of Trypillia BI (Cucuteni A4) became the basis of the formation of Zalischyky group of sites. Obviously, on the genetic basis of such sites as Kudryntsi, Shypyntsi A, Nezvysko II under the Cucuteni influence, the Zalischyky group of sites was formed. We can observe origins of Trypillia BI-BII ornament (and also on Zalischyky sites) on sites of Moldova and Romania, as well as on Dnister sites from the end of stage BI.

Presence of such ceramic ware show us how ornamentation, characteristic for stage Trypillia BI, is gradually being modified or replaced by samples of Zalischyky type ornament of stage BI-BII. It is very interesting, because in Trypillia we can't also observe transition from one stage to another. For example, in the end of Trypillia BI-BII quite drastic change of painted ceramic took place and transition to Trypillia BII cannot be traced so clearly.

**Y. YAKOVYSHYNA**, PhD, junior researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

**R. KOROPETSKYI**, PhD, researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

**N. BULYK**, PhD, senior researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

**O. SYTNYK**, PhD, senior researcher of the Department of Archaeology, Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

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<sup>11</sup> Schmidt, *Cucuteni*.

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<sup>52</sup> O. Kandyba, "Shypyntsi. Mystetstvo ta vyroby odnoho neolitychnoho selyshcha," in *O. Olzhych. Arkheolohiia* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo imeni Oleny Telihi, 2007), fig. 1: 1, fig. 151–175.

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<sup>63</sup> Palaguta, *Tripol'skaja kul'tura*, fig. 44.



**BETWEEN THE MAN'S HANDS AND GOD'S EYES:  
THE PSALTER OF 1437 FROM THE COLLECTION  
OF THE VERNADSKYI NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF UKRAINE**

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*Oleksandr Okhrimenko, Stanislav Voloshchenko*

ABSTRACT

The Gavril Uric's Psalter, created in 1437, remains one of the important manuscripts from the Neamț Monastery and South Slavic Cyrillic heritage. Involving the late medieval religious source into research, especially then it is a common text as Psalter, inspires to see this codex as the material object that was used by several generations. The system how the scribe organized the page, how he solved the mistakes, how he decorated the text is the way of interacts with his readers; behind the sacred text he put eyes of God, shown by his calligraphy. The Psalter of 1437 became a memorial of the scribe Gavril Uric, Leon the monk, and other people, who signed the codex with their names at different times. Until the 19th century, this Psalter remained the physical mediator between the person and God. From the end of the 19th century, the book was an object for scientific research and closed to the public. Nowadays, the digital version gives a new breath for the Psalter and new opportunity to revise our perception and the way in which we study medieval manuscripts.

**Keywords:** *Gavril Uric; Neamț Monastery; medieval codex; medieval manuscript; Psalter; heritage study; history of reading.*

In 2016, Christopher de Hamel in *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* proposed to “interview” the medieval codices. His way of analysis focused on the physical features of old books and the importance of direct interaction of a researcher and an object. He states, that the questions manuscripts can answer face-to-face are sometimes unexpected, both about themselves and about the times in which they were made<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, a facsimile or on-line digitized copy of a manuscript creates different experiences from the examination real exemplar, its weight, texture, surface, ruling, thickness, smell, the tactile quality etc.<sup>2</sup>. Christopher de Hamel built his work as personal stories with the most famous medieval manuscripts. However, his vision is helpful during the analysis of a codex that has no miniatures, outstanding features, and seems to be usual, not interesting at all. The interview with such “ordinary” copy opens another word – of common people, which are left their dirty fingerprints and pure hopes upon the pages.

The collection of the Institute of Manuscript of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine contains 104 Cyrillic codices and fragments dated the twelfth – fifteenth centuries that make this gathering one of the largest in the world. Each object in this collection is unique, with sometimes untold yet story and not well involved in scholarly research. Within the collection, the Psalter of 1437<sup>3</sup> is one of the 57 manuscripts from the fifteenth century; also, it is one of the three codices on parchment and the single text in Bulgarian redaction of Church Slavonic language<sup>4</sup>.

As many others manuscripts from the collection of the Institute of Manuscript of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, the Psalter of 1437 left with small attention of researches. Only short references could be found in the catalogues and the general descriptions of the collections to which it belonged. The first references were made by Mykola Petrov, who mention this Psalter as a new object in the collection of the Church Archeology Museum of the Theology Academy of Kyiv (CAM TAK): in the *Report of the year 1895* he stated about the transfer the Psalter from the collection of Mykola Leopardov to the CAM TAK<sup>5</sup>, in the *Izvestiya* [Newsletter] of the year 1896<sup>6</sup>, and in the *Index of CAM TAK* (1897) he mentioned it as well<sup>7</sup>. The first description of the manuscript (year of creation, materials and type of hand, size, cover, decoration of the text etc.) was given by Alexander Lebediev in 1916 in his catalogue of the manuscripts from the collection of CAM TAK<sup>8</sup>. The next period of examination of the Psalter is connected with the Institute of Manuscript of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, which received the collection of CAM TAK during 1920s-1930s with growing of Soviet state. This research connected with Mykola Geppener, Mykola Vizyr, and modern scholar Liudmyla Hnatenko. In the 1930s, Mykola Geppener started the cataloguing of the Cyrillic manuscripts in the Institute of manuscript. He supposed that the Psalter belongs to the Bulgarian redaction with Serbian and East-Slavic influences; the codex was dated with different systems of Alexandrian (1445) and ultra-March (1436) calculations (the scribe dated the Psaltes from the creation of the world – year 6945)<sup>9</sup>. However, the cataloguing project was interrupted by the Second World War, and the description was left in small notes. In the 1970s, Mykola Visyr gathered and systematize all the information of the Psalter and created the full handwritten catalogue sketch<sup>10</sup>. Only in 2003, Liudmyla Hnatenko published the catalogue of the Cyrillic manuscripts of the fifteenth century with the general description<sup>11</sup>. Along with Ukrainian scholars, Russian and Romanian historians included the Psalter into their catalogues and analysis. Nikolay Rozov in the *Book in Russia in the Fifteenth Century* (1981) gives the Psalter in the table of the dated manuscripts in Russia<sup>12</sup>. A. Turilov included the codex into the list of the joint catalogue of Cyrillic manuscript in the USSR (1986)<sup>13</sup>. Damian P. Bogdan and Alexander Paskal incorporated the Psalter into their research of Gavril Uric, the scribe of the codex<sup>14</sup>. Until now linguists and Slavists examined the Psalter. For the first time, we study this Psalter as the source for social history, in the way of the history of reading and history of medieval everyday material life. Therefore, in this article the main focus on the people, who created, used, and examined the Psalter from the fifteenth century until nowadays. The scriptorium created a book for reading, using in the daily Holy services, but through the centuries, the functions of the same codex changed, it became a relic of the epoch, an object of collection and scholarly examination.

### *The hand of the scribe*

The Psalter was rewritten between August, the 1st and December, the 10th, year 6945 from the creation of the world. The exact chronological boundaries of the manuscript, as well as its copywriter, are informed by the colophon at the end of the manuscript (f. 183r). The Psalter was copied by a man named Gavril: “Се азъ Гаврїи(л) исписа(х) сїи Ѱлтирь начл(х) от а го ав(г) и до де(к) і сьврѣши(х) в лѣ(т) #шце” [This is me, Gavril, copied this Psalter, started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August and until 10<sup>th</sup> of December finished, in summer 6945].

In 1978, Damian P. Bogdan attributed the scribe of Psalter of 1437 as Gavril Uric<sup>15</sup>, who was one of the famous scribes working in the first half of the fifteenth century. His scriptorium was situated in the Neamț Monastery (founded in 1392 by three monks from Bulgaria). We know about 26 manuscripts, created by Gavril Uric: the earliest one dated as 1413, the latest – 1451<sup>16</sup>. The most of the manuscripts are preserved in the Russian (12 copies), Romanian (11) collections, but also Moldavian, Ukrainian, and British (one copy each)<sup>17</sup>.

Most researchers, such as M. Petrov, A. Lebediev, M. Vizyr, A. Turilov, M. Geppener, D. Bogdan, A. Pascal, calculated the year of the manuscript to the modern system of chronology as 1437. However, N. Rozov and L. Hnatenko determined the date as 1436<sup>18</sup>. Their dating relates to the transfer of the date of the manuscript in the modern chronology of the “ultra-March” year (year began on March 1), when they take from year 6945 number 5509 and received – 1436. This method is recommended by R. Simonov for the Slavic manuscript until the end of the fifteenth century<sup>19</sup>. We should underline that the date of the manuscript in the main researches is known as 1437, and during the previous year of 1436, from April and February, the scribe worked on the *Gospel*<sup>20</sup>. So, the date of the manuscript, we suppose, is 1437. In any case, for Gavril Uric, his mentality and understanding of time, the year was listed according to his understanding of when the earth was created and all the dated manuscripts created by him were signed according to this system.

The reasons of creation or motivation of Gavril Uric in the case of the Psalter was left unclear. For example, the colophon of the same scribe's Gospel, created in 1429, says: “With the blessing of the Father, the teaching of the Son, and the fulfilment of the Holy Spirit this Four Gospel book was written during [the reign] of the devoted Orthodox ruling Prince Alexandru Voievode, the Master of all the land of Moldo-Vlachia, and of his wife Marina. Their love for the word of Christ made them ask for this writing to be done. In the year 6937; finished on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, by the hand of Gavril, the son of Uric, in the monastery Neamț<sup>21</sup>. We suggest the Psalter of 1437 was copied by the practical reasons of Neamț community. The Psalter was used daily during the services, a new copy was needed, and scriptorium of Gavril Uric produced it.

The manuscript is written in the Church Slavonic language (Bulgarian redaction). The codex consists of 183 folios, collected in 23 quires, 8 bifolios in each, the last page was lost. The numbers of quires were done in the Cyrillic numbers in the first and the last folio in the lower margin closer to the inner part of a page. The modern foliation was

made on October 25, 1923, by the keeper of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra Museum Pavel Popov (he signed the codex on the endpaper).

The mirror of the text on the page is 180 x 100 mm with 22 lines. The height of the lowercase letters is 4 mm, the ascenders are 2-3 mm and descenders 2-16 mm. The width of the lowercase letters “o”, “a”, “c”, “b” ranges from 2 to 3 mm, while the broad “m”, “r”, “ш”, “щ”, “я” is from 5 to 7 mm. Spacing width is 4 mm minimum. The line contains from 18 to 24 letters. On the folios 164 and 183 the text completion of the sections goes down to the bottom in the V-shaped form, they end with the S-symbol with two dots at the top and two short horizontal lines and a small cross under it (on f. 183 – without S-symbol).

The codex has a feature of the writing of Cyrillic digits. The scribe to indicate numbers from 90 to 99 used “c”-“cf”. In Eastern Cyrillic manuscripts it used to be the “ч”-“чф”, the letter “c” is used for 200. However, the scribe Kallist Rasoder had an identical practice in the *Gospels of Jakov of Serres, 1354-1355*<sup>22</sup> and unknown scribe in the fourteenth century Psalter from the Bodleian Library<sup>23</sup>. This practice is a characteristic of the manuscripts of the tenth – fifteenth centuries from South Slavic origin.

The text of the codex is compactly divided by the scribe with rubrics (kathismata, stasis and hymns), which allows for appropriate use and concentration in reading. The care of the reader also includes a system of indices on the outer fields of the folios in the form of symbols of the number of psalms, songs, and the locations of the stasis.

### *With a sinned hand*

The Cyrillic codices of the period typically have a note in a colophon about the sinful soul of a scribe, so the reader could forgive mistakes in the text, as, for example, Kallist Rasoder in the *Gospels of Jakov of Serres*<sup>24</sup>. The colophon of Gavril Uric is quite short, only with date and name.

The Psalter contains many margins of the main text made by the scribe's hand. We separate several groups. The majority of correction cases, the text was overwritten at the top of the line at the place of the passes of letters, syllables, words and even phrases. The most vivid examples of these flaws are in italics, for example, missing letters “несъберу” (f. 13r), “зеліє злака” (f. 38r), syllables “оказа мя утроба моя” (f. 13v), “стужающеими” (f. 26v), “глаголющими” (f. 27v), “прибъжища спасти мя” (f. 30r), “сновь коревь” (f. 47r), “безаконіе” (f. 104v), “по пути непорочноу” (f. 11v), “милость твою яко на тя оуповах” (f. 157r), “благоволишь Господь” (f. 161v). The scribe also missed the words – “ни сътвори искрънемоу своему зла” (f. 12r), “боже мои на тя уповахъ” (f. 24r), “да крѣпится сердце твое” (f. 27v), “радость мни” (f. 29v), “да не постыждуся” (f. 30r), “весь день сітоую хождаахъ” (f. 41r), “се желаніе мое” (f. 41v), “поставиши князя их повъсеи земли” (f. 50r), “избавить душу мою” (f. 53v), “подріжаніе и поруганіе сущимъ” (f. 90r), “оустрашенія твоя възмутишу мя” (f. 98v), “и възрадовахомся и възвеселихомся” (f. 102v), “исповімся тебѣ яко” (f. 133r), “не оуклонихся яко ты законъ” (f. 138v), “на небо ты тамо еси” (f. 153r), “стяжата и сътворитя и създатя” (f. 166v). In addition to the mentioned flaws, there were passages, the whole phrases: “Господи волею твоею подаждь” (f. 29v), “и ти от руки твоея от риновени бышия” (f. 97v), “кто подобень тебѣ въбзѣх Господи, кто подобень тебѣ прославень въ святыхъ” (f. 165r).

The words were also added on the upper and lower sides of the pages. In this case, different types of designations of references are applied: most often in the form of oblique or vertical risk with two dots on the sides or only on the right (./., |:). This type of text correction assumed that one of the listed calls at the checkpoint was placed on the line in which the words were omitted. On the margins the same symbol indicates the place of missing text. In the case of f. 144v he puts the symbol |: on the missing line of the line “оубо прииде душа наша |:” and on the lower space has written missed text “|: воду непостоянну”. Using the ./ symbol, the phrase was added in the same way “./ сміріет и высить”, which was omitted in the line “Господь оубожить и боготить ./.” (f. 170v.). There is a case where the pass is marked by two different symbols. The “+” was marked with a missed space in the line “Господи въ чриві пряхомь +”, and a missed word combination was added to the oblique line with two dots ./ on the lower field “./ и поболіхом и родихомь” (f. 173v).

Another group of margins is the improvement with crosscutting. For example, the scribe corrected the word “твоему” because it was written twice “въздаждь работу *твоему* твоему живи мя” (f. 134r). Other mistakes in the text of the scribe were fixed by erasing the parchment. The identification of those most common cases of errors solving is the most complicated one. The scribe shifted the two letters “ми” on the f. 102r between “и” and “же” in the line “вчєрашній имиже мимо иде”. The same case occurs on the f. 148r (lines 20 and 21), f. 167r (line 13), f. 181v (lines 7 and 9) etc.

In the margin in the middle part of the text of the third song of Moses, there is a pointer finger (f. 170r). The sign of a hand turns up to the line 14, to the words “лукъ сильныхъ изнеможе” [the bows of the warriors are broken]. The manica is drawn by cinnabar, and includes a hand and a sleeve of monk's robe. We underline that in Cyrillic manuscripts this kind of pointer finger or manica is a sign of a scribe, not a reader as in Latin medieval manuscripts, and plays a decorative role. For another example, see a hand at the end of the text part in the *Gospels of Jakov of Serres* (f. 85v)<sup>25</sup>. In any case, the visible presence of the scribe's hand in the almost the end of the Psalter of 1437 and self-identification on the end (colophon as a form of signature in his own way of skoropys, cursive) make Gavril Uric a real person for a reader, the scribe that presented in the codex.

### *Under His Eye*

The book is written on parchment, measuring 232x165. The pages have suffered from general surface pollution. The book is damaged by the ingress of moisture, which caused a lot of destruction to the part of the text on f. 83v and initials Г on f. 111v. The parchment in the lower bottom of almost the whole manuscript is twisted, wrinkled, and on ff. 123, 132, 183 is ruptured. The lower left corners of the first folios are turned off, and a piece of the lower part f. 178 is cut off. The first folio has stains of wax and has a hole from burning. More than five centuries of using is reflected on the codex. Gavril Uric created this book for several generations that left their marks inside the codex. The Psalter is rewritten by the half-uncial type of Cyrillic letters of the first half of the fifteenth century by Gavril Uric in a very calligraphic way, the text was decorated with red, gold and other colours.

The feature of the Psalter's text is graphical performance of the word *eye* ("око"). The first letter of the word – *o* – similar to a face, and the scribe added two points that resemble the eyes. When the word "eye" is used in singular, the dot in the first letter is one – "око мое" [my eye] (f. 5r, 58v, 10v), "яко зѣницю ока" [like the apple of one's eye] (f. 14r), "око не съматрієтѣ" [eye does not looked] (f. 105v), "грядѣмь окомь" [follower's eye] (f. 111r). The first letter of the "eye" when it used in plural contains two dots. We have recorded more than 40 examples: "очима твоима" [your's eyes] (f. 4r, 102r), "очи его" [his eyes] (f. 9v, 10v, 69r), "очи мои" [my eyes] (f. 14r, 32v, 61r, 73r, 84r, 98r, 111r, 131r, 140v, 141r, 143r, 144r, 147r, 155v), "очи свои" [the eyes of oneself] (f. 14v), "очима его" [by his eyes] (f. 16v, 37v), "очима гордихъ" [eyes of the proud] (f. 16v), "просвѣщающе очи" [enlightening eyes] (f. 19r), "очима моима" [with my eyes] (f. 25v, 111r, 111v, 147v), "очию твоєю" [by eyes for yours] (f. 31r, 174r), "очи Господни" [the eyes of the Lord] (f. 33v, 35r), "помызающе очима" [blinking eyes] (f. 36v), "очию моею" [by mine eyes] (f. 41v), "очи ихъ" [their eyes] (f. 74v), "очима нашими" [by our eyes ] (f. 90v), "очима своима" [eyes of himself] (f. 103v), "очию нашею" [eyes of ourselves] (f. 132v), "очи рабъ" [eyes of a slave] (f. 144r), "очи наши" [our eyes] (f. 144r), "очи твои" [your eyes] (f. 153v), "очи всѣхъ" [the eyes of all] (f. 159v).

A similar graphic practice of writing the word "eye" in the form of singular and plural was used by Kallist Rasoder, the scribe of the Serbian version of the *Gospels of Jakov of Serres* 1354-1355, which is now in the collection of the British Library<sup>26</sup>. For examples, using one point in the word "eye" – "око за око" [eye for an eye] (f. 15), "око твоє" [your eye] (f. 17, 56), "оци брата твоєго" [your brother's eyes] (f. 18); and two points for plural form "eyes" – "очима" [by the eyes] (f. 36, 268), "очи свои" [the eyes of oneself] (f. 36, 164, 200, 243, 278), "очи мои" [my eyes] (f. 152), "очи твои" [your eyes] (f. 257, 258), "очи его" [his eyes] (f. 112), "очи ихъ" [their eyes] (f. 268), "очию нашею" [by our eyes] (f. 61v), "очи имоуще" [who has eyes] (f. 112r), "очи слихъ" [evil eye] (f. 134), "очи видещи" [the eyes that see] (f. 181r), "очи отвѣща" [eye answer] (f. 256v), "очи пакъ" [eyes again] (f. 257r). This practice is also fixed in the early Cyrillic prints, in particular, the Book of Hours of 1491 published in Krakow (Poland) by Schweipolt Fiol<sup>27</sup>. In cases of "очима твоима" [by your eyes] (f. 9 nn), "очи мои" [my eyes], "під очима моима" [under my eyes] (f. 10 nn v) and others the first letter has two dots.

### *Leon the Monk, and others*

Alexander Paskal suppose that the Psalter for several centuries belonged to the Neamț Monastery<sup>28</sup>. In any case, the codex was in constant use and some persons left their names inside.

Monk Leon signed the Psalter four times (ff. 113v, 13v, 159c, 179v). Maybe he or somebody else left a note (f. 89v), but we could not find any sense of it. On the last folio (f. 183v), there is a line of names (Johann, Wojcech, Kateryna) that could be synodicos or pomennyk – a family list for a mention during a service. On the same page, there are several other names of later periods (Mykolai, Borys, etc). Under these scriptures around 20 lines of some text was written, but effaced during the early modern era. On the endpaper, we find the dated text of year 7256 from the world creation, AD 1748.

The thoughts of the salvation of the soul after death and the associated eschatological experiences encouraged people to leave their names on the margins of liturgical books

that were used in church services. These records often contain calls to future generations about a prayer for them. We could find the examples of such subscriptions from the ninth – tenth centuries from all over the medieval Europe. The commemorative notes in the Psalter are not exceptional. For instance, the Psalter of the fourteenth century from the Bodleian Library<sup>29</sup> was copied on parchment, but several damaged folios were restored with a paper. Those spaces were used by a person for a note: “Have mercy for my soul God, Holy Trinity, Virgin” (next to the 99<sup>th</sup> chapter if David’s Psalms). Each of such small note, left in marginalia, is unique source. In this case, for example, it allows us to understand the system of the divine hierarchy on the view of a particular person. He asks for the pardon of his soul directly from God the Father, the Holy Trinity (again God the Father, as well as God the Son and the Holy Spirit) and the Virgin. In our case, notes of several generations that used the Psalter of 1437 demonstrate the importance for the local society at least to 1748, and in the furthers studies on other codices from the same location we could more clearly see the personal stories of people belonged to the community.

The renewing of a cover of the Psalter of 1437 was done in the eighteenth century, according to the watermark of the upper flyleaf. Wooden boards are covered with leather. Light-brown surface decorated with a blind embossing. The upper cover ornamented with a frame, in the inner space, there is a large cross with one crossbar. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, the codex remained in use for initial purpose and understanding of a sacral text. The period of the next hundred years in the history of this medieval codex stayed for our next research, as it needs a complex analysis.

### *Leopard no 38*

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Psalter of 1437 appeared in Kyiv. In 1895, Anton Leopardov passed a large number of artefacts from the collection of his brother – Mykola Leopardov – to CAM TAK. The gathering valued at an amount of 11,448 rubles in silver and consisted of 717 objects, belonged to Christian sacred culture (silver bowls, liturgical stitches, sculptures, medallions, crosses), icons, portraits, books, eastern and Greco-Roman antiquities, etc<sup>30</sup>. The books from the Mykola Leopardov's collection are represented by 15 manuscripts and 35 prints. Mykola Petrov, among other manuscripts, noted about the *Gospel* of the fifteenth century (according to the modern research, it is dated by the last third of the sixteenth century), *Typicon* and the *Psalter* on parchment. Printed books are represented mainly by Cyrillic copies - the Lviv *Gospels* of 1636 and 1690, and *Sluzhebnyk* of 1712; Kyiv *Trebnyk* of 1646, *Mineya* of 1680 and the *Psalter* of 1697; the Chernigov *Tsarskyi Put Khresta Hospodnia* of 1709 by Benedict Heftan in the translation of Ioann Maksymovych, and the *New Testament* of 1717. There were also Moscow and St. Petersburg publications of the eighteenth century. In addition to Cyrillic books, the owner collected Western European prints - an illustrated *Bible* in three parts, decorated with engravings by German, Italian and Dutch masters, *The Poets of Great Britain*, published in London in 1782<sup>31</sup>.

Philanthropist and collector Mykola Leopardov (1820-1895) was a native of the Vologda province (Russian Federation) from a family of a priest, graduated from the Vologda seminary, and in 1878 moved to live in Kyiv, after his long career. At the end of

his life, M. Leopardov decided to donate his collection to CAM TAK. During March 1894 and January 1895, it was done the first two contributions. In total, the value of the collection was more than 42 thousand rubles in silver<sup>32</sup>.

After the receiving of the Psalter, CAM TAK gave it collection-number *Leopard. No. 38*. The collection of Mykola Leopardov occupied half of the exhibition gallery in CAM TAK, in particular, the manuscript and old printed books was placed in a *special locker*, according to the description of Mykola Petrov.

The new role of the old medieval object was found in the Kyivan museum: the Psalter of 1437 became a part of representing Mykola Leopardov's legacy. Almost all the items from his collection belonged to the Christian culture; maybe his family and education played the main role for such reason. CAM TAK displayed the artefacts as the evidence for God's presence and a general idea of the Psalter as a sacral object remained. As it was one of the first public museums in the Russian empire at that time, more people had a chance to make contact with the relict. The Psalter no longer had its function of daily services, but became an artefact of an old epoch, without the hand of its readers on its pages, but under the eyes of the museum's visitors.

### *Without God: Soviet period. The hands of scholars*

In 1919, with soviet authorities in Kyiv, CAM TAK was closed. Several years before, in 1915, during the First World War, almost all objects were transported to Theology Academy of Karan (Russia). Only with the stabilization of the situation, the collection came back to Ukraine. In 1922 the funds of CAM TAK joined the Museum of cult and everyday life in the territory of Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. In 1923, the head of the manuscript and prints department of the Museum Pavlo Popov revised the collection of books. On 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1923, he worked with the Psalter. He made the foliation and proofed the date as 1437 (see the flyleaf and f. 51r), signed and stamped the book (see flyleaves and f. 20r, 183v). After the creation of All-Nation Library of Ukraine (now – Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine), Pavlo Popov became a head of the manuscript department (1929-1934) and transferred the book collection from Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. Two call-numbers of the Psalter of the period signed on the flyleaf – “Inv. 19 345” and “No. 54”. After the restructuration, the gathering of CAM TAK separated into the fund no. 301 “Collection of historical documents and collection of CAM TAK”, the manuscripts' call-numbers are the same as in catalogues of Mykola Petrov and Alexander Lebediev, for instance, the Psalter's one is “9L (38)”.

The period of the last hundred years for the history of the Psalter was a period of scholarly research. We have already mentioned about the studies of Mykola Geppener, Mykola Vizyr, Liudmyla Hnatenko and others during the twentieth – early twenty-first century. In general, the medieval manuscript is a scholarly object, closed to common visitors of the library. The questions that were asked by the scholars during the period are about the physical characteristic, composition, and language of the Psalter.

The scholarly research of the Psalter of 1437 during the nineteenth century belonged to the persons who see Psalter as Holy book, Words of God, the text was more important than the book as object. Soviet codicology stressed the questions about the physical aspects of the codex, and linguists examined the ancient languages and redactions of

Church Slavonic, all the liturgical aspects were out of their interests. Now we see the perspectives on making this item a story of people, who for five centuries contacted and had a perception of the Psalter in different ways. The role of the Psalter among other liturgical books in the Neamț community in the fifteenth century needs special examination of the individual history of each codex from the monastery library and left for the further research.

### *A new eye of digital and the perspectives*

In the twenty-first century, the Psalter of 1437 received a new life in a new form. The Institute of manuscript of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine is doing the digitalization project. Among other items, the Gavril Uric's Psalter was scanned. Note it was dated as 1436 according to the L. Hnatenko's catalogue<sup>33</sup>.

The free new version of this old Psalter opens new perspectives for scholars, but moreover everyone, who has access to the website of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine. For example, digital versions of artefacts from the British Library stimulated not only the scholarly researches but also art projects, new views of old objects<sup>34</sup>. The history behind the Psalter and its people is inspiring. In priority to speak about the heritage, that this Psalter share – Cyrillic, Christian, medieval, Bulgarian, Moldavian, Romanian, Balkan etc. It is a part of Gabriel Uric's legacy, now separated around the world. As a part of the Kyivan collection, it is connected with a lot of people and their stories and studies.

As far as we are fascinated with new technologies, digital project etc., we will research deeper the meaning of physical aspects of objects. The Psalter is not only a text. We see the importance of calligraphy, navigation with the rubrics and initials, decorations etc. During reading the real book, we see the broadside, with a digital version we are scrolling the pages. The touch of parchment, the colour of a text, the size of a page etc. are important aspects of understanding the previous generations and ourselves.

**OLEKSANDR OKHRIMENKO**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Ancient and Medieval History, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Currently he is working on the project dedicated to the newly discovered manuscripts from the collection of Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine and introducing those codices to the scientific and general public. Among other topics of research, he develops a history of reading, history of book (a book as an object of the collection).

**STANISLAV VOLOSHCHENKO**, Master of History, is a Head of the Mission *Manuscript and old printed heritage of Kyivan Church: archives, libraries, museum* of the Eparchy of Pereiaslav and Vyshnev of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. He is codicologist, the scholar of Cyrillic manuscript and early printed books, with a special interest in *Jerusalem Typikon* of the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the author of several catalogues.

#### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Christopher de Hamel, *Meeting with remarkable manuscripts* (Penguin Group, 2016), 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Kyiv, Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, Institute of Manuscript, fund 301 *Collection of historical documents and collection of Church Archeology Museum of Theology Academy of Kyiv*, no. 9L (38).

<sup>4</sup> Liudmyla Hnatenko, *Slovianska kyrylychna rukopysna knyha XV st. z fondiv Instytutu rukopysu Natsionalnoi biblioteky Ukrainy imeni V. I. Vernadskoho. Kataloh* (Kyiv: NBUV, 2003), 117-118.

<sup>5</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Otchet Tserkovno-Arkheolohicheskogo Obshchestva pri Kievskoi dukhovnoi Akademii za 1895 god", *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* (1) 1896, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, "Izviestiiia Tserkovno-Arkheolohicheskogo Obshchestva pri Kievskoi dukhovnoi Akademii za m. noiabr 1895 g.", *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* (1) 1896, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *Ukazatel tserkovno-arkheolohicheskogo muzeia pri Kievskoi dukhovnoi Akademii* (Kiev: Typohrafiia Imperatorskogo Universiteta sv. Vladimira N. T. Korchak-Novytskogo, 1897), 240.

<sup>8</sup> Aleksandr Lebediev, *Rukopisi Tserkovno-arkheolohicheskogo muzeia Imperatorskoi Kievskoi Dukhovnoi Akademii* (Saratov: Elektro-typohrafiia Volha, 1916), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Kyiv, Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, Institute of Manuscript, fund 169 *Geppener Mykola Volodymyrovych*, no. 169, f. 76-78, 81-84.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., fund 432 *Archive of the Institute of Manuscript*, series 3, no. 16, f. 28-32.

<sup>11</sup> Liudmyla Hnatenko, *Slovianska kyrylychna rukopysna knyha XV st.*, 117-118.

<sup>12</sup> Nikolai Rozov, *Kniga v Rossii v XV veke* (Moskva, 1981), 136.

<sup>13</sup> A. Turilov, *Predvaritelnyi spisok slaviano-russkykh rukopisnykh knig XV v., khраниashchyksia v SSSR (dlia Svodnogo kataloga rukopisnykh knig, khраниashchyksia v SSSR)* (Moskva, 1986), 72.

<sup>14</sup> Damian P. Bogdan, *Paleografia româno-slavă* (București, 1978), 105; Aleksandr Paskal, "O rukopisnom nasledii moldavskogo knyzhnika Gavriila Uryka iz monasteryia Niamts", in *Istorie și cultură: In onorem academician Andrei Eșanu* (2018), 347.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Aleksandr Paskal, "O rukopisnom nasledii moldavskogo knyzhnika Gavriila Uryka iz monasteryia Niamts", 345-54.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Nikolai Rozov, *Kniga v Rossii v XV veke*, 136; Liudmyla Hnatenko, *Slovianska kyrylychna rukopysna knyha XV st.*, 117-8.

<sup>19</sup> P. Simonov, "Ob osobennostiakh tsyfrovoy sistemy, upotreblivsheisia v kirillicheskiikh rukopisiakh X-XV vekov", *Metodicheskoe posobie po opisaniiu slaviano-russkiikh rukopisei dlia Svodnogo kataloga rukopisei, khраниashchikhsia v SSSR* (1) (1973), 208-9.

<sup>20</sup> Aleksandr Paskal, "O rukopisnom nasledii moldavskogo knyzhnika Gavriila Uryka iz monasteryia Niamts", 346-7.

<sup>21</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Gospel, MS Canon. Graeci. 122. The translation of the colophon made by Elena Ene D-Vasilescu "New Aspects Regarding the Tetraevangelia Written by the Monk Gavril Uric in Neamț Monastery in 1429, Bodleian Library MS. Canon. Graeci. 122", *Romanoslavica* 46 (2010), 93.

<sup>22</sup> London, British Library, Additional, MS 39 626.

<sup>23</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Psalter, MS e Mus. 184 (S.C. 3132).

<sup>24</sup> London, British Library, Additional, MS 39 626, f. 239r-v.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., MS 39 626.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Kyiv, Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, Department of old-printed books and rare editions, IA 173.

<sup>28</sup> Aleksandr Paskal, "O rukopisnom nasledii moldavskogo knyzhnika Gavriila Uryka iz monasteryia Niamts", 347.

<sup>29</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, Psalter, MS e Mus. 184 (S.C. 3132).

<sup>30</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Otchet", 1-4.

<sup>31</sup> Nikolai Petrov, "Izviestiiia", 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Ukazatel*, 238.

<sup>33</sup> Kyiv, Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, Institute of Manuscript, fund 301, no. 9L (38), <http://irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/dlib/item/0001356>

<sup>34</sup> One of the latest exhibition is the *Imaginary cities* with images and metadata of nineteenth-century city maps. See details here: <https://www.bl.uk/events/imaginary-cities>



# WHY DID ALBANIANS AND THEIR COLLABORATIONIST GOVERNMENTS RESCUE JEWS DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

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*Esilda Luku*

## ABSTRACT

The article aims to analyse the policy of the Albanian quisling governments on 200 Albanian-Jewish residents and 2000 Jewish immigrants from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, ex-Yugoslavia during WWII. The study focuses on the treatment of Jews by the puppet governments under the Italian occupation of Albania (1939–1943); secondly, the policies enacted by the Albanian central and local authorities to protect Jewish lives under the German occupation and, thirdly, the reasons that explain the positive stance of Albanians towards Jews, as: hospitality, Besa (the sworn oath), religious tolerance, lack of anti-Semitism etc. Based on classical hermeneutics, archival research and bibliographical analysis, this article intends to analyse the policy of the Albanian quisling governments under the pressure of the German authorities and the reasons why they rejected the Nazi request to hand over the Jews, giving an important contribution to the rescue of the Jewish people from the racial persecution.

**Keywords:** *Jews in Albania; rescue; Italian and German occupation; quisling government; WWII.*

## *Introduction*

At the beginning of the 1930s, 200 Jews lived in Albania within a population of 803,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Their number began to increase as the Nazis implemented their policy of mass annihilation throughout Europe. Initially, Jews considered Albania as a transit country to Israel or America but, because of the Albanians' hospitality and the lack of racial prejudice, they decided to stay until the end of World War II. The Albanian people's noble and generous attitude was affirmed even by the United States Ambassador to Albania, Herman Bernstein, in 1934, when he declared: "There is no trace of any discrimination against Jews in Albania, because Albania happens to be one of the rare lands in Europe today where religious prejudice and hate do not exist, even though Albanians are divided into three faiths."<sup>2</sup>

The positive stance of the Albanians towards the Jews was also facilitated by King Zog's government policies though Albania was under the economic and political influence of Fascist Italy. The Jewish Daily Post reported in July 1935 that King Zog had ordered the Albanian diplomats in Europe to issue Albanian passports to the Jews who wanted to go

and live in Albania. The same year, Albert Einstein came and stayed for three days in the city of Durres, on the Albanian coast, and then equipped with an Albanian passport continued his journey to America.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Albanian historian Shaban Sinani, the liberal immigration policies of the royal government were not only related to the importance of the Jewish capital investments in the economic growth and the personal relationships of the royal family with employees of the Jewish origin, but also to their political interests. He confirms the existence of projects of the International Jewish Organizations, as well as of the American and British governments to save the Jews of Central Europe and Balkans seeking asylum in Albania, a country known for its anti-Semitism. Moreover, the League of Nations suggested granting Albania an international status for sheltering Jews.<sup>4</sup>

The Italian authorities, afraid of the competitiveness of the Jewish investments in Albania and of some indications of the Jewish collaboration with the communist movement, forced the Albanian government to put into effect anti-Jewish measures during 1938-1939.<sup>5</sup> On October 18, 1938, the Italian Legation in Tirana asked the Air Command in Rome to send two file forms Model 23 called the "Foreigners Card" with the aim to investigate and provide data on racial basis.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the decision no. 1898 of the Council of Ministers, dated 24.09.1938, ordered the Albanian consulates to issue only tourist visas to Jews, who should possess at least 250 francs in arrival.<sup>7</sup> While the decision no. 118, dated 28.01.1939, of the royal government limited to one month the tourist visas issued to Jews and increased to 500 francs the amount of money that every Jew should declare at customs.<sup>8</sup> Despite these restrictive measures issued by the Albanian government under the Italian pressure, they lacked the implementation in practice. It is proved that 100 Austrian Jews and another 95 Jewish families took shelter legally in Albania during February-March 1939.<sup>9</sup>

### *Methodology*

The study is based on archival research at the Albanian Central State Archive of the correspondence between the central government institutions and the local ones, such as prefectures, sub-prefectures with reference to the royal and then the puppet governments' policies to shelter Jews before and during the Second World War, as well as the contribution of the clerics to help Jews by baptizing or converting them to Islam. In addition, the study utilizes qualitative content analysis of the memories of the native and immigrant Jewish people who lived in Albania during the Holocaust, and of different secondary sources, as: *Panorama*, *Shekulli*, *Korrieri*, *Shqip*, *Gazeta Shqiptare*, *Sot*, *Ndryshe*, *Republika*, *Ballkani's* newspaper articles, national and international scientific journal articles, contemporary bibliographical sources of the Albanian and foreign scholars, and sites of the Holocaust available via the web, such as Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

*The position of the Albanian puppet governments  
towards Jews under the Italian occupation*

On the eve of the outbreak of the WWII, Italian troops invaded Albania on April 7, 1939. The Italian Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano was responsible not only for the political preparation of the occupation, but also for the country's assimilation. Ciano had gradually developed a paternalist affection for Albania that was reflected on his interest in the integration of the country in the new Roman Empire. Through proclaiming the maintenance of the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Albania, he sought the collaboration of the traditional elite of the landlords, Muslim beys and tribal leaders. Many of them had served the previous regime or were personal or political enemies of the ex-King Ahmed Zogu and of course they expected personal gain from the cooperation with the Italians.<sup>10</sup> One of them was Xhafer Ypi, ex-Prime Minister of the Albanian royal government till the moment of occupation. He agreed to lead an interim government helping Ciano achieve his political purpose of annexing Albania. During a radio speech he acknowledged the inability of the Albanians to govern themselves appealing to Mussolini for saving the country from the catastrophe.<sup>11</sup>

In accordance with Ciano's political plan, Xhafer Ypi convened a Constituent Assembly on April 12, 1939, whose members voted to unite the country with the Kingdom of Italy and offered the crown to Victor Emanuel III. The Italian authorities set up a fascist government under the Premier Shefqet Verlaci, a landlord and a sworn enemy of ex-King Ahmed Zogu, who held the same position in the five puppet governments under the Italian occupation and the ex-Ambassador of Italy in Tirana, Francesco Jacomoni was appointed as Viceroy General.<sup>12</sup>

F. Jacomoni introduced the Italian legislation which, among others, included the prohibition of the Jewish immigration to Albania and asked for detailed statistical data on the Albanian citizens of the Jewish origin. Therefore, on May 14, 1939, the Interior Minister, Maliq Bushati, ordered the prefectures to complete the lists of the Jewish people living in their districts and send them to their respective Offices of the Civil Status.<sup>13</sup> Although the Italian authorities possessed the necessary data, they did not enact any policies against the Jews.

Furthermore, Albania continued to be considered as a "reserve homeland" to give safe refuge to European Jewry. In September 1939, on behalf of the Albanian intellectuals, Father Gjergj Fishta appealed to Viceroy General F. Jacomoni to rescue the most prominent philologist of the Albanian language, Professor Norbert Jokl, of Jewish origin, living in Vienna, not only by giving shelter in Albania, but also appointing him to a suitable position for his fame as a well-known scientist and philologist.<sup>14</sup> Aware of his great contribution to the Albanian studies, the Minister of Education of the puppet government, Ernest Koliqi, offered him a job as "organizer of the Albanian libraries", but the German authorities refused to let Jokl leave the country. On 2 March 1942, he was arrested by the Nazis and four days later was deported to Maly Trostinec near Minsk. He died soon thereafter, either during transport or at the extermination camp.<sup>15</sup>

In order to justify the lack of the anti-Semitic policies in Albania, the government authorities used the so-called "certificates of good attitude" for the Jews under

observation. A similar response was given to the Police Directorate of Tirana and the Guard Command in May 1940, in regard to the positive attitude of the German citizens of Jewish origin Heinrich and Elisabethe Garde.<sup>16</sup> The same was written for the German Jew Tendel Blimo.<sup>17</sup> Under the argument of “good attitude” the sub-prefecture of Kavaja accepted the request of Isak Albahar to permit his wife and his sister living in Bulgaria to come and visit him.<sup>18</sup> The lack of willingness to violate and torture the Jews was proved by another document of the General Police Directorate, in July 1943 that released the Jew Majes Kolamos Mantesh, who used false documents to hide his real identity.<sup>19</sup>

The terminology used in the correspondence between the police directorates, military commands and other law enforcement agencies, when referring to Jews coincides with “internal exile” and “concentration camps”. Though, as historian Sh. Sinani argues, the so-called “concentration camps” in Albania had nothing similar to the institutions of torture and mass extermination set up in the Nazi occupied countries.<sup>20</sup> Harvey Sarnier shares the same opinion in his book *Rescue in Albania*, when he addresses on one hand, the existence of wire-wrapped enclosures of concentration fields guarded by Italian wardens and, on the other hand, Jews who were interested in a film, football match or a religious event.<sup>21</sup> Also, on their request, Jews were given permission to join their family members, to celebrate feasts and visit their relatives abroad. For example, the Jew Elia Vituli was granted permission to travel to Italy, in the fall 1940, to meet his son Kiakov / Iakov, who was carrying out military service in the Italian army.<sup>22</sup>

The non-similarity of the concentration camps in Albania with their counterparts in Europe is also evidenced by the appeal of Salomon and Rica Sadicaria; Stela, Abraham and Silvia Avrahamovi and Jakov Arnesti, directed to the General Police Directorate arguing that because of the ill-treatment by the Yugoslav authorities, they seek to be displaced in the concentration camp in Kavaja.<sup>23</sup> As the number of Jews arriving from other regions to Albania increased, the local authorities took measures to give them shelter. The so-called “concentration camps” in Kavaja, Durrës and Berat provided food and clothing supplies to the Jews in the form of a daily diet.<sup>24</sup> Thus, they resembled the refugee camps at most.

During the Italian occupation, there were three main waves of the Jewish people coming from ex-Yugoslavia to find refuge in Albania. The first one relates to 192 Jews of Kotorr displaced in the concentration camp of Kavaja due to the German invasion of the country. This fact is proven by the full list of the Jewish names and the letter that the permanent police advisor G. Travaglio sent to the Viceroy General Jacomoni explaining that they were transported to Kavaja’s concentration camp, where they were temporarily taken over by the military authority in charge of the camp.<sup>25</sup> The second wave addresses the case of 350 Jews of Dalmatia arrested for political reasons who were given safe haven in Albania. The Ministry of Interior allowed them to be deported to the concentration camp of Kavaja, in September 1941.<sup>26</sup> The third one refers to the situation created after the Wannsee Conference convened in Berlin, on January 20, 1942, where 15 high-ranking Nazi bureaucrats coordinated the implementation of what they called the “Final solution of the Jewish question”. It consisted in the systematic, deliberate and physical annihilation of the European Jews in the occupied territories of Nazi Germany.<sup>27</sup> Following that line, the German authorities ordered that all Jews gathered in Pristina

should be handed over to the Nazis. As soon as he came to know, the collaborationist Albanian Prime Minister, Mustafa Kruja, immediately went to meet the Viceroy General, Jacomoni, and asked him to save the Jews.<sup>28</sup> When M. Kruja got his approval, he ordered the Minister of Interior, Mark Gjemarkaj to mobilize a team of prefects, sub-prefects, and trustees of the ministry, under the direction of the General Secretary of the Premier, Ēngjell Ćoba, to go to Pristina to provide Albanian names and documents to as many Jews as possible aimed at facilitating their transfer to Albania.<sup>29</sup>

According to the Albanian historian Apostol Kotani, nearly 500 Jews of Kosovo managed to escape from the Nazi death camps. The first group of 130 Jews arrived in early April 1942 and took place in Berat; the second group of 195 Jews was transported to Kavaja and the third group of 175 sought asylum in Kruja. Another contingent of 69 Jewish people, who came to Albania, in July 1942, where either put into the concentration camps or protected by the local inhabitants of Kavaja, Shijak, Kruja and Burrel.<sup>30</sup>

However, there is no consensus among scholars regarding the fate of Jews of Pristina after the Wannsee meeting. Tatz and Higgins in the book *The Magnitude of Genocide* argue that the Italian occupiers refused the German demand to hand over the Jews of Pristina, except for “sixty Jews serving prison sentences. All other Jews were transferred to a camp near the Albanian town of Kavajē”.<sup>31</sup> Whereas Harvey Sarnier argues that the local authorities of Pristina compiled the Jewish lists at the Germans’ request. This led to the arrest of 60 Jewish men. An Albanian doctor, Spiro Lito, persuaded the country’s leadership to prevent their deportation to Poland because the 60 Jewish men were destined for extermination. He managed to convince even the German authorities explaining that the Jewish prisoners were suffering from typhus so they should be transported to the hospitals in Albania to prevent the epidemic from spreading. The Jews were transported to Berat and issued false papers. Most of them were sheltered by the friends of Doctor Lito in Lushnja, Shijak, Kavaja and Kruja.<sup>32</sup>

In general, the economic situation of the Jewish people who fled from ex-Yugoslavia or other Balkan countries to the Albanian proper was difficult. Based on the registers held by the commands of the border military units in Pristina, it turned out that only one of a group of Bulgarian Jews owned 800 Bulgarian Lev. Also, as stated in the document of the Prefecture of Durres, no. 1362, dated 05.07.1943, four Jewish families were unable to pay even their transport to the city of Lushnja. The Prefecture of Durres had a list of Jews coming from Pristina and next to the names of 18 Jewish people was written “poor economic condition”. In this respect, the Command of the Territorial Legion of Royal Carabineers Troops of Burrel claimed that the economic situation of the 15 Jews displaced in the German camp was very bad.<sup>33</sup>

The government of Mustafa Kruja made efforts to integrate them into the Albanian society, providing with identity cards, in some cases under fake names.<sup>34</sup> Some Jewish people in the refugee camps were asked to collaborate as specialists together with the Italian Army Corps of Engineers in Durres.<sup>35</sup> Others decided to change their names into Muslim ones; for example, Jakob to Jakup, Isac to Isa, Samiko to Sami etc. to hide their true origin.<sup>36</sup> Besides the governmental authorities, the religious institutions played an important role in protecting the Jews. In 1940, the Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See asked the Albanian civil and military authorities, under the fascist occupation, to

facilitate the transfer of the Jews of German origin, Dr. Dietrich Anderman and Dr. Walter Mandl. According to Michele Sarfatti, on behalf of the Jewish community, the lawyer Leo Thur, requested continuously the Apostolic Nunciature located in Shkodra, to aid and save Jews.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, based on the files of the fond "Archbishopric Durres-Tirana, the parish of the Catholic Church, Tirana" at the Central State Archive, it is found that some Jews in the capital wanted to convert to Catholicism. At the request, no. 458/43, dated 22.VII.1943, of the vicar office of the Catholic Church in Tirana, signed by the parson Dom Shtjefën Kurti to the Durres Archbishopric office, it is stated that Venko Verah, a Jew from Skopje is well prepared in the knowledge of religion by father Pjeter Meshkalla and has shown good signs of conviction. The same day, the Archbishop of Durres, Vincenc Prendushi, answered giving permission to baptize him. Venko Verah was baptized on August 3, 1943 and registered at the book of baptizing with no. 138.<sup>38</sup>

So, in order to hide their identity, the Jews that sought shelter in Albania used even the formal conversion that served for their personal and family security by the victimization of Gestapo. Their formal evangelism was approved by the presbyter of the parish of Tirana, Dom Shtjefën Kurti. He thought the conversation was the only possibility he had to contribute to the rescue of Jews.<sup>39</sup>

The Albanian Church is only one of the religious institutions that managed to save Jews from the genocidal campaign engineered by the Nazis. There is reliable evidence that the Jew Siegfried Schvarc and Elia David Kohen were converted to Muslims. Consequently, the Muslim clerics helped the Jewish people in Albania to change their names and religious faith, too.<sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, some of the Jews that took refuge in the Albanian cities were involved in the Antifascist Resistance of the Albanian people in different ways. They provided money, goods, food and clothing to partisans, or helped them by collecting aid, delivering messages, sewing clothes etc. The Jews of Vlora, such as the merchants Rafael Jakoel and brothers Levi, financed the communists. The Police Headquarter of Vlora, based on document no. 463, dated 01.03.1943, considered them politically dangerous people, engaged in activities against the regime. R. Jakoel and Josef Levi were arrested and then released either through bribery or friendship with local military officials.<sup>41</sup> While the youth Jews of Berat joined the Albanian National Liberation Army. They fought bravely along with the partisans of VII Offensive Brigade. Some of them, as Jusef Solomon Konfort, Jusef David Bivas, Jakov Avramovic, Jakov Josef Bahar etc., lost their lives in the battles. Other Jews of Berat, who contributed to the Antifascist war, triggered the Italian authorities to request the deportation of 39 Jewish people to a concentration field, accusing them of being responsible for the Antifascist propaganda and subversive organization.<sup>42</sup> However, the Italian occupiers in Albania lacked the anti-Semitic tradition. It is also proven by the Italian Commander of the Kavaja's camp who, as soon as Italy surrendered to the Allied forces, tore the lists of Jews residing in the camp and asked them to hide aimed at saving their lives from the Nazis.<sup>43</sup>

*The fate of Jews in Albania under the German occupation*

After Italy signed the armistice with the Allies in September 1943, the Wehrmacht rolled into Albania. The German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, taking into consideration the strategic position of Albania on the Adriatic coast and the limited military forces at their disposal for an effective occupation, aimed at creating an independent, neutral and German friendly government able to build a stable political system that would guarantee the internal security. For that reason, Ribbentrop asked the German Consul in Albania Martin Schliep and Hermann Neubacher, ex-Mayer of Vienna and his special representative in Southeastern Europe, to identify political personalities, possibly elements of the traditional elite with the intention to implement this policy.<sup>44</sup>

In order to convince distinguished nationalists to collaborate with the German authorities, H. Neubacher had to develop a system of government that would leave considerable power to the Albanians. He advocated the formation of a National Committee, under the leadership of Bedri Pejani the head of the Second League of Prizren from January to June 1944, which aimed at protecting the Greater Albania. The National Committee constituted a six-member interim government, whose first task was the proclamation of Albania's independence and neutrality after having agreed with H. Neubacher. On October 16, 1943, the National Constituent Assembly was convened mostly with representatives from Kosovo and Northern Albania, which legitimized the German occupation. It dissolved the Union with Italy and Albania was declared a free, neutral and independent state. With the purpose of maintaining the monarchical system of government, a four-member Regency Council was formed with representatives from each of the main religious communities in Albania, under the direction of Mehdi Frashëri. On November 5, 1943, the German authorities created a puppet government led by Rexhep Mitrovica.<sup>45</sup>

The appointment of popular and influential nationalists in government was not an easy negotiation for H. Neubacher. He had to make concessions promising the Albanian national elite to grant the country extensive autonomy in the domestic civil affairs. Following this policy, he aimed to neutralize the communist and the other resistance forces and minimize to two and a half divisions the German troops' presence in Albania, in order to concentrate the war efforts of Germany against the Soviet Red Army and the Western Allied forces in Italy.<sup>46</sup>

Soon after Albania was put under the Nazi control, H. Neubacher asked the Regency Council not only to hand over the gold of the Albanian state and two oldest gospels of Berat's Metropolis, but also the lists of Jews.<sup>47</sup> The head of the Regency Council M. Frashëri agreed to give 2.6 tons of gold to the German authorities on condition to turn it back after WWII. On the other side, he refused to provide the lists of native and immigrant Jews and the gospels were hidden by the Church's Council.<sup>48</sup>

According to the Jewish American scholar Harvey Sarnier, the policy of the Albanian government to protect Jews was result of the agreement reached with the Political and Military Command of the German Army, based on the formula that the Hitler's troops in Albania was given the status of a "transient army" with the intention not to intervene in the domestic affairs. This bilateral pact guaranteed what Bernd Fischer called two new

categories in the international law, “relative neutrality” and “relative sovereignty” of Albania.<sup>49</sup>

The content of this agreement was confirmed even in the meeting held between Eberhard von Thadden, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Third Reich and Heinrich Müller, the Head of Gestapo secret police on October 17, 1943. They discussed about the strategies to be used aimed at continuing the implementation of the Nazi doctrine of “Final Solution” in the newly conquered territories, such as Croatia, Greece, Albania, etc. They decided to go on the extermination policy towards Jews in the abovementioned countries, except for Albania. Müller argued that every anti-Semitic initiative without the knowledge and the consent of the Albanian government would be considered offensive and may cause unfavorable situation in the country. For that reason, their stance towards Jewish people in Albania would be in conformity with the instructions of the German Foreign Ministry unless new negotiations have begun with the Albanian puppet government at an appropriate time.<sup>50</sup>

Nearly six months later, the German Army had no “transient status” any more. It began fighting against the National Liberation Army of Albanian partisans during the winter operation and in May 1944, the Nazis requested again the lists of Jews, as well as ordered their gathering into a concentration field.<sup>51</sup> Being aware of the fact that this German order meant the deportation and the annihilation of the Jewish community, Rafael Jakoe and Mateo Mathatia asked the head of the Regency Council Mehdi Frashëri for help. He advised them to meet the Minister of Interior, Xhafer Deva, who was known as an anti-Semite. But, his Besa was so forceful that would overcome every sign of anti-Semitism. Xh. Deva tried to calm the two Jews, taking the responsibility to oppose the Germans’ request to turn over the lists of Jewish people living in Albania.<sup>52</sup>

The attitude of the Interior Minister witnessed the overall position of the Albanian government authorities under the German occupation. On May 2, 1944, the Prefect of Shkodra, Javier Hurshiti, informed the Political Office of the Ministry of Interior that S. D. Hausding German command arrested 4 Pristina Jews in the Albanian town of Shkodra and two days later they were released after giving a bribe worth of 60000 Albanian francs to the German soldiers who were detaining them.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the Albanian Interior Deputy Minister, Engjëll Çoba, instructed the Foreign Ministry to request the German military authorities not to intervene in their internal matters, except in cases that have to do directly with the German military.<sup>54</sup>

Another case of rescuing Jews relates to the Prefect of Tirana, Qazim Mulleti, who sent a telegram on June 9, 1944 to the Prison and the District Command Office of Tirana Police Headquarter reporting that a Special Committee had gathered two days before under the chairmanship of the governor of the Prefecture and had decided to release with warrant Sallomon Tashi and Mina Roshi from Durres, because there were no facts to refer them to the Court. Moreover, they had declared of not being dangerous people, as a consequence their release would not undermine the public peace or security. The Jews were asked to secure as guarantors honest people, known for their moral values and political behaviors, in order to be accompanied to the Prefecture and released after the edition of the act of guarantee.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from the good intentions and the positive stance of the Albanian central and local authorities to save Jews, there is a much debated issue among scholars concerning the involvement of the 21<sup>st</sup> “Skanderbeg” Armed Mountain Division of the SS made by Kosovar Albanian volunteers in the arrest and deportation of Pristina’s Jews in May and June 1944. According to Bernd Fischer, the men of SS “Skanderbeg” Division arrested 281 foreign and local Jews in Pristina, who were accompanied to a camp there before being transported to Germany.<sup>56</sup> The same number is stated even in the Summary Report on the Formation and State of SS “Skanderbeg” Division written by its second commander August Schmidhuber.<sup>57</sup> Whereas Noel Malcolm writes that the Albanian SS troops participated in the “round up and deportation” of 218 Jews in May 1944.<sup>58</sup>

On the other side, the Albanian historian Shaban Sinani based on a document found at the Albanian State Archive argues that referring to the list of people accompanied by SS “Skanderbeg” Division, most of the prisoners were communists, partisans, antifascists, political opponents, etc., and only 32 were Jews and 2 others married with a Jew. He goes further in the analysis mentioning that the data of the military topography of the location of SS “Skanderbeg” troops do not support their involvement in the transportation of the prisoners from Pristina to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany via the Sajmište concentration camp near Belgrade. However, Sinani adds that, if there is evidence that only one Jew has been deported by the members of SS “Skanderbeg” Division, they bear the heavy burden of the historical responsibility.<sup>59</sup>

The Albanian people have made efforts to give safe refuge to every Jew who was displaced in the Albanian proper. Thousands either rich or poor Albanian families living in the cities or villages risked their lives to protect the Jewish people. Refik Veseli was the first to be honored in Albania as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. He and his brothers, Hamid and Xhemal Veseli, sheltered 7 Jews, both Yosef Ben Yosef and Moshe Mandil’s family members, who were refugees from Yugoslavia. Yosef was offered a job in Hamid’s clothing shop, while Moshe worked in the photography studio of Refik Veseli in Tirana. When the Germans entered Albania in September 1943, the two Jewish families were moved to their parents’ home in Kruja. They dressed the Jews as villagers and preferred to walk approximately 50 km for 36 hours to their family home rather than take a bus afraid of being found out. The adults were hidden in a cave in the mountains near their village during the day, whereas the children used to play with other peers in the village. The neighborhood knew the Veseli family was sheltering Jews. One day some German troops were conducting a house to house control looking for a lost gun, which was never found and the soldier who lost it was executed. Veseli family sheltered the two Jewish families for nine months until the liberation of the country, when both Ben Yosef and Moshe Mandil’s family members left for their home in Yugoslavia.<sup>60</sup>

Another story of giving safe haven to Jews was told by Sazan Hoxha, the son of Nuro Hoxha, a well-known teacher and a devout Muslim of the community of Vlora. When the Nazis moved into their city from Greece, all the Jews living in Vlora went into hiding. Nuro Hoxha managed to shelter four Jewish families, whom he considered his best friends. There were 12 Jews in total, who belonged to three generations of the extended families of Ilia Sollomon and Mojsi Negrin. They were treated as part of his family. Nuro assured the Jews that he and his son, Sazan, will defend them against peril at the cost of

their lives. The Jews were hidden in the underground bunkers, which were connected to each-other and had many escape routes. The duty of Sazan was to bring them food and shop for necessities. All the citizens of Vlora were anti-fascists and they knew many families were helping Jews.<sup>61</sup>

Even low-income Albanian villagers gave shelter to Jewish people. Destan and Lime Balla from the village of Shëngjergj in Tirana took in three brothers by the name of Lazar. Though they lived in poor economic conditions, the Balla family never allowed them to pay for food or shelter. They grew vegetables in their garden and Lime used to go into the forest to chop wood and haul water. The Jews were dressed as farmers and took shelter in their village for fifteen months. They left for Pristina in December 1944 helped by the partisan nephew of Destan Balla. Only in 1990, Sollomon and Mordehaj Lazar made contact with Balla family from Israel.<sup>62</sup>

Another interesting case of saving Jews during the German occupation was the story told by the Jew Mark Menahemi, a refugee from Skopje. He remembers that terrible day at the beginning of the year 1944, when he escaped falling into the hands of the Nazis. He was sheltering in the home of a noble woman called Dhorka Kovaçi of Kolonja origin located on “Naim Frashëri” Street in Tirana, when the German military forces knocked on the door. Dhorka put him in her bed and when Germans forcibly entered in, she told them: “Do not touch, he is my husband”. They left and Mark Menahemi escaped deportation and annihilation.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, Ali Sheqer Pashkaj from Puka risked not only his life, but also those of the entire village inhabitants to save the Jew Yeoshua Baruchowiç. He owned a store with food provisions, which was the only one around for many miles. One day, Germans were transporting nineteen Albanian prisoners destined to forced labor. Among them was a young Jew, who was to be shot. Ali spoke German fluently and invited them into his store. He offered them food and too much wine until they became drunk. Ali Sheqer Pashkaj took advantage of the situation to hide a note in a piece of melon and gave it to the Jew. It instructed him to flee into the woods to a certain place. The Germans were furious over the escape and brought Ali into the village, lining him up against a wall, in order to confess where the Jew was hiding. They put a gun to his head four times. The Nazis came back and menaced to set fire in the village if Ali didn't tell about the Jew. He remained silent until they finally left. Ali got the young Jew back from the forest and sheltered him in his home for nearly two years till the Second World War ended. None of the thirty families of the village knew that Ali Pashkaj was hiding the Jew.<sup>64</sup>

Except for Albanians, who shared their home, food, clothes and heart with the displaced Jewish families during the Holocaust, many Jews too tried to help the Albanian National Liberation Movement. A considerable number of Jewish engineers, doctors and mechanics especially of Yugoslavian origin shared their experience and technical knowledge with the partisans. The Jewish doctor Ludovik Kalamari treated and healed many members of the resistance forces in Tirana. His activity was learned by the Nazi invaders, who arrested him. With the help of Simon Rasku, a former owner of “Savoja” and “Splendit” bars, Ludovik was released. Then, he went to the village of Shëngjergj. There he was arrested again and taken to Tirana's prison hospital, where his life was put at risk. It was the help of a former patient and a friend of his family house, Sadik Ram

Selimmusai, who intervened to his cousin, ex-commander of the “Skanderbeg” regiment, Bajazit Boletini, and released him.<sup>65</sup> The story of Ludovik Kalamari is a sample of mutual solidarity and aid.

According to Samuilo Mandil, a Serbian Jew who took refuge with his family in Albania, the entire Jewish community followed the heroic struggle of the Albanian army passionately because they knew their victory would mark the liberation of Albanians from occupation, as well as the rescue of Jews from slavery. The elders of the Jews who were not able to fight in the mountains offered their expertise to the Albanian resistance forces. While five Jewish youths who fought bravely against the German troops were killed in the war, some others were either lightly or heavily wounded and the majority of Jews survived the WWII.<sup>66</sup>

Meanwhile, the Albanian King Zog I, who was in exile in London, met several times the representatives of the Anglo-Jewish Community after receiving the approval of the Foreign Office. He and the Albanian Royal Court Minister, Sotir Martini, revealed to the heads of Zionism the plan for re-establishing the throne in Albania. King Zog I argued that Albania is a rich country with poor people. It contains a wealth of petroleum and mineral resources. It has a population of one million people, but at least 5 million inhabitants can live there. The Albanian King Zog I promised to the Anglo-Jewish Community that 150.000 hectares of land will be available for the settlement of 50.000 Jewish families, so nearly 200.000 people can be accommodated. He also promised them to grant Jews equal civil and political rights with the rest of the citizens. In exchange for the settlement of Jews, he aimed at receiving the political support of Britain and the Jewish financial support to regain the lost throne. But, as the Second World War was over, there were no chances for the King Zog I of Albania to come back to power.<sup>67</sup>

### *Why did Albanians save Jews during the Holocaust?*

The rescue of Jews in Albania was a unique experience in the Holocaust history. There were approximately 200 resident Jews living in Albania referring to the 1930 census. Their number increased to 2265 at the end of WWII, as Jews of Germany, Austria, Poland, Bulgaria, ex-Yugoslavia etc., sought refuge in the Albanian proper under the Italian and German occupation.<sup>68</sup> The salvation of all Jewish people in Albania during the Holocaust can be explained by the Kanun, a set of customary oral laws that has guided the Albanian conduct over centuries. It states that the household belongs to God and to the guests. Besa was an important factor that helped the Kanun pass down through generations. It means literally “to keep promise”.<sup>69</sup> Besa relates to personal honor to respect for and equality with others. It involves uncompromising protection of a guest even to the point of forfeiting one’s own life.<sup>70</sup> Besa, the Albanian sworn oath, with its duty towards guests explains the Albanian generosity towards the Jews in need.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, thousands of Jewish people’s lives were saved in Albania as the result of their code of honor, the Besa. It is documented by almost all the stories told by the rescuers, such as Veseli family, Sazan Hoxha, Merushe Kadiu, Eshref Shpuza etc., who were recognized as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem.<sup>72</sup>

The Albanians' sense of humanity was another key factor, which drove the nation to rescue Jews from being deported by the occupation forces to the extermination camps in Axis-occupied Europe.<sup>73</sup> They demonstrated compassion, loving-kindness, tolerance, self-sacrifice and courage. The Albanians' strong character was described by the Jew Irene Grunbaum, who sought safe haven in Albania during the Holocaust. In her autobiography, *Escape through the Balkans*, she writes:

"Farewell, Albania. One day I will tell the world how brave, fearless, strong, and faithful your sons are; how death and the devil can't frighten them. If necessary, I'll tell how they protected a refugee and wouldn't allow her to be harmed even if it meant losing their lives. The gates of your small country remained open, Albania. Your authorities closed their eyes, when necessary, to give poor, persecuted people another chance to survive the most horrible of all wars. Albania, we survived the siege because of your humanity. We thank you." (Grunbaum, 1996)

Furthermore, the religious tolerance contributed to save native and immigrant Jews alike. Though Albanians belong to different religious beliefs, such as: Islam, Bektashi, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, they give importance to the unity of God, which inspired their positive attitude towards Jews at risk. The Kasapi family who were devout Muslims believed that it was a moral duty to help one another. Religion was part of their family education and motivated them to give shelter for more than two years to five members of Francis Moisi family from Skopje in their small apartment in Tirana, as well as their friends' home in the nearby village of Babrru.<sup>74</sup> Another good example comes from the Albanian Head of the Regency Council at the time of the Nazi occupation, Mehdi Frashëri, who was a member of the Bektashi. He organized an underground of all Bektashi to shelter both Jews of Albanian origin and refugees, giving a secret order that "all Jewish children will sleep with your children, all will eat the same food and all will live as one family."<sup>75</sup>

Except for religious tolerance, hospitality and honor manifested in the Besa, the Albanian historian Ana Lalaj, emphasizes the role played by the general anti-fascist spirit of the Albanians that stipulated their helpful behavior towards the victims of the Nazi-Fascism. In addition, she argues that the small number of the Albanian Jews and their poor economic conditions were not envied by the Albanians, which in turn could become hatred.<sup>76</sup> Though most of the Jews were good professionals, they didn't become a threat to the overall situation of the Albanians.

The lack of anti-Semitism contributed also to nearly 100% of the Jewish people who survived the war. It derived partly as a result of the high percentage of illiteracy (85-90%) among the Albanians of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that prevented them to come into contact with the anti-Semitic literature and propaganda. It is best expressed in the words of the Jew Johanna Neumann, who took refuge in Albania during the Holocaust that states: "The Albanians were not anti-Semitic and did not even know what anti-Semitism was". However, it does not comprehensively explain why all Jews were saved by the Albanians. It should be noted that quite the same situation of high rate of illiteracy was among the populations of Eastern European countries, too, but their elite who was familiar with the anti-Semitic literature helped commit in most of the cases the worst pogroms against the Jews. On the contrary, although some of the Albanian political and intellectual elites had

studied in Germany and Austria and were sympathizers of the German culture and education, they couldn't agree with the anti-Semitism ideas.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, the abovementioned factors, such as: the Albanian moral code, the Besa, their benevolence, the hospitality, the religious tolerance and the absence of anti-Semitism can explain to some extent the reasons why the Albanian people protected the Jews at the cost of their lives.

### *Conclusions*

Albania, a small country in Southeastern Europe with a Muslim majority, succeeded to rescue almost all the native and the immigrant Jewish people, who sought refuge during the Second World War. Though under the Italian and the German occupation, the Albanians managed to escape the European and Balkan Jewry, who took shelter in the Albanian proper during the Holocaust, from being deported to the extermination camps in the German occupied territories. This was made possible by several factors, such as:

1. The Italian fascist authorities accepted the policies of the Albanian puppet governments to protect the Jews under their slogan "observation, not punishment" aimed at maintaining their political support, as well as their lack of the anti-Semitic tradition.

2. The Head of the Regency Council Mehdi Frashëri and the Albanian collaborationist governments used their authority under a deal with the Political and Military German Command to continuously refuse to hand over the lists of Jews to the Nazis. It came from the political pragmatism of Hermann Neubacher, who was interested in particular to strengthen the position of the Germans in exchange for establishing "relative sovereignty" of Albania.

3. The unified stance of almost all Albanians, regardless their social, religious and political spectrum, to save the Jewish lives at all costs. From officials to farmers organized the rescue of the Jews. Muslim Albanians, as well as Orthodox and Catholic ones provided food and shelter to the Jewish families. Not only the partisans, but also the Nazi-Fascist collaborators helped Jews escape the Holocaust.

4. The rescue of the Jews is mainly grounded in the code of honor, the Besa, which mandates hospitality and protection of guests as if they are members of the family. Jews were treated as guests by the Albanian families and protected even at the point of forfeiting their own life. Moreover, the small number of Jews to the total population of the country and the absence of anti-Semitism among Albanians further contributed to the salvation of all Jews in Albania.

These factors can explain why there were more Jewish people in Albania at the end of WWII than beforehand.

**ESILDA LUKU** is Associate Professor of History in the Faculty of Political Sciences and Law at the "Aleksander Moisiu" University of Durrës, Albania. Currently she is an Alexander von Humboldt research fellow at Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. Her research interests focus on textbook research, cultural heritage and oral history.

## Notes

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<sup>14</sup> Apostol Kotani, *Shqiptarët dhe hebrenjtë në shekuj* [Albanians and Jews over centuries] (Tiranë: Mësonjëtorja, 2007), 115.

<sup>15</sup> Albanian voices: Norbert Jokl. <http://www.albanianlanguage.net/voices/jokl>.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 138.

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<sup>19</sup> CSA, F. 153, Y. 1943, F. 386/1, 284-291.

<sup>20</sup> Shaban Sinani, *Hebrenjtë në Shqipëri*, 77.

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<sup>45</sup> Idem, *Shqipëria gjatë Luftës*, 227-231.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel Perez, “Our conscious is clean”, in John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 2013), 25-58, here 28.

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<sup>48</sup> Idem, “Si u mbrojtën hebrenjtë në Shqipëri?”, 21.

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<sup>71</sup> Marzouk, “Rescue in Albania”, 15.

<sup>72</sup> Gershman, *Besa: Muslims who saved Jews in World War II*.

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# BULGARIA AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE 60<sup>S</sup> – FROM CONFRONTATION TO DÉTENTE. A COLD WAR CASE STUDY

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*Veselina Uzunova*

## ABSTRACT

In the 1960s the relations between the US and Bulgaria reached its highest point of confrontation since the beginning of the Cold War. Bulgarian government was accused in three consecutive attempts for assault on the US Legation in Sofia which was considered a significant part of the conducted policy of intolerance, contempt and hatred towards everything American. At the time the US representation in Bulgaria was meant to be isolated and unappreciable, separated by a thick wall from the curious eyes of Sofia citizens. However, the shift of Soviet foreign policy in the mid-60s quickly changed the Bulgarian government's hunger for confrontation by taking a course towards warming and reconciliation of their bilateral relations. The present paper seeks to outline Bulgaria's ultimate pro-Soviet policies as Cold War best practice. The topic of US-Bulgarian bilateral relations in the period following the break of diplomatic relations in 1950 has not been a subject to detailed research neither in Bulgaria, nor in the USA. The paper cites the rich sources of both archives – the archive of US State Department and the archive of Bulgarian Politburo.

**Keywords:** *Bulgaria; US foreign policy; Cold War; Todor Zhivkov; Nathaniel Davis; Ivan-Assen Georgiev.*

## *Introduction*

In 1944, during his visit to Moscow, Winston Churchill agreed with Stalin on the separation and definition of their spheres of influence in the Balkans and Eastern Europe: the West gained 90 % of Greece, USSR got 80–100 % of Bulgaria and Romania, and Yugoslavia was divided equally between the two blocs.<sup>1</sup> In this way Bulgaria's fate in the following decades became closely associated with Soviet policy and influence, which emphatically determined its domestic and foreign policy. The separation of the spheres of influence was inevitably followed by political, economic and ideological alienation between the East and the West, leading to confrontation and intolerance in the policies pursued. The aim of present paper is to follow the events leading to the escalation of confrontation between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the US followed by a quick shift in policies towards Détente.

*Bulgaria – A coryphaeus of the “Anti-imperialist Policy” in the Eastern Bloc*

In the first half of the 1960s the Cold War confrontation reached its height. It was a time of impetuous activity by the two most powerful military alliances – the Warsaw Pact and NATO. The Cold War entered into the arms races and uncontrollable ideological and psychological warfare that created obstacles for normal political, economic, and cultural cooperation between the two sides of the “Iron Curtain”. However, in the second half of the decade, international relations improved significantly and foretold the onset of the *Détente* era. This process had a direct impact on Bulgarian foreign policy and made possible the resumption of the US – Bulgarian relations.

Caught in the Soviet sphere of influence, by the mid-1960s Bulgarian foreign policy aimed at overcoming the consequences of the Second World War and the subsequent international isolation resulting from the Cold War confrontation. In the second half of the 1950s, Bulgaria became a member of the United Nations. Nevertheless, its international reputation had been compromised and the country was often perceived as part of the Soviet Bloc, rather than an independent subject of the international relations. The persistent demonstrations of close Bulgarian-Soviet relations provoked tension and suspicion with the other Eastern allies of the USSR. This trend was solidified during the events in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Following a strict Soviet political model, Bulgaria pursued a foreign policy identical or similar to that of the USSR. Bulgarian political behavior was a voluntary emulation of that of the Soviet Union, as was particularly evident during the governments of Valko Chervenkov and Todor Zhivkov.<sup>2</sup> Therefore Western media quite rightly defined the country as “the closest satellite of the USSR”.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Bulgaria’s relations with the United States in the years after the Second World War consistently worsened and that trend continued into the first years of the Cold War. In February 1950, Washington broke diplomatic relations with Sofia and denounced the Bilateral Trade Agreement. Relations with the US were developing in a complicated, confrontational and uneven manner because of the differences in the social systems and mutual ignorance. Their notions of each other were literally built only by the media.

The Bulgarian media, controlled by the Communist Party ideologues, reflected a style of journalism committed only to anti-western propaganda. At the same time, however, part of the political elite believed that it was essential that the country maintain good relations with the US. Zhivkov himself openly supported the idea and a number of initiatives to pursue it, even while he carefully maintained distance from potentially scandalous situations. Nevertheless, Bulgaria managed to stir up a few unpleasant incidents. The declassified archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party Politburo do not store much information about such incidents, probably due to the repeated thorough sanitization on one hand, and the frequent lack of full access, on the other. The secrets of the former regime have been kept with much diligence. Then again, there are always ways to overcome such obstacles and find the necessary information. Such an opportunity is provided by the archives of the US State Department, which contain interesting

information on the period of the 1960s and help fill the purposely created gaps in Bulgarian Cold War history.

### *The 1960s – Years of change for US – Bulgarian relations*

By the mid-1960s relations between Bulgaria and the United States were seriously negative. Despite the assessed potential for mutual political and economic benefits, pursuing a firm policy of replication of the Soviet model did not allow any deviation for such purposes. Prime Minister Anton Yugov and Secretary of the Central Committee of the BCP, Todor Zhivkov, unswervingly followed the Soviet outlined political relations with the “capitalist world” and especially with the United States, which at the time included a variety of hostile acts. The archives of the State Department reveal information about demonstrations in Sofia against US foreign policy.

The first public protest outside the US Legation was held in 1961. The reason was the unsuccessful operation against the Cuban government in the Bay of Pigs, which seriously compromised the image of the popular US president John F. Kennedy at the very beginning of his presidency. In his memoirs, Bulgarian diplomat in the US Rayko Nikolov<sup>4</sup> wrote about the incident: “In Sofia a mass demonstration in front of the US Legation in solidarity with Cuba seemed to have gone out of control. On April 20, 1961 Assistant Secretary of State David Kohler called urgently on Bulgarian Minister Vutov and read him the message received regarding the angry demonstration of several thousand protesters outside the US Legation. Our authorities ignored the requests of the Legation for help and protection. The mob shattered windows and doors and attempted to break in. On behalf of the US government Kohler expressed ‘harsh protest against that hooligan attack’, which he noted was organized by the order of the Bulgarian government”<sup>5</sup>.

The following day, Interior Minister Karlo Lukanov received the American Minister and after the exchange of several harsh words, Lukanov refused to publish Kennedy’s reply to Khrushchev in the Bulgarian press as well as Adlai Stevenson’s speech in the UN on the Cuban issue because of their unacceptable and propagandist language. Nikolov linked the scandalous situation in Sofia with the subsequent attacks against Bulgarian mission staff in America, although no information was available substantiating this or the Bulgarian government’s involvement in the assault on the US Legation.<sup>6</sup>

The next cause for tension between Bulgaria and the United States was the public trial against Bulgarian diplomat Ivan-Asen Georgiev on charges of espionage. He was accused by the Bulgarian secret services to be engaged in active espionage on behalf of the CIA. Designed as a brilliant campaign by the Committee for State Security, that trial raised some serious doubts about the contrived accusation, with the broad participation of the Committee itself and with the support of the Communist Party leaders. The fact that the whole trial, which was supposed to be awash with state secrets, was up before the court publicly, and the fact that it ended very quickly, and the verdict was executed without delay, awoke suspicion about the whole story. But in those years who would have thought about it and who would have dared to judge what was right and wrong? Doubts still remains, supported by enough rumors that the alleged spy, a Bulgarian scholar and distinguished diplomat, obviously intellectually exceeded the First men in the Party and did not withhold his angry criticism of the country’s unconditional adoption of Soviet

policy. Most of all, he repeatedly expressed doubts about the restored spy network of the top agent Nikola Geshev whose former agents were not only incriminated, but still continued to be ahead of the country. That was most likely the reason for initiation of such a ridiculous trial. But in December 1963 things turned particularly dramatic, especially for Ivan-Assen Georgiev.

Supporters of the public trial were organized by the Party in various cities to condemn the “traitor”. On the second day of the trial a mob of about 3,000 people attacked the American Legation in Sofia with stones and ice chunks. Bulgarian archives are once again silent on the matter. On the other hand, Bulgarian press reflected in detail on the trial. *Rabotnichesko Delo*, for instance, played an important role – presenting an image of “full political decay of the traitor Georgiev and the moral filth of that heinous spy”.<sup>7</sup>

The trial drew worldwide attention. The *Time* magazine defined Georgiev as a “scandalous spy” and wrote: “yesterday no one could remember his name, and today the world is talking about him”.<sup>8</sup> The full confessions made by Georgiev inspired Western media to compare the case to “an exciting Cold War spy thriller”.<sup>9</sup>

During the trial that was too short for the serious charges, the Bulgarian press did not spare affronts and fiercely attacked Georgiev. On December 30, 1963 the journalist Dino Kiossev wrote: “Let it be said once more: Georgiev has never been a true communist, but only a political crook who managed to sneak into the Party and use it for his benefits. He could be called an intellectual, because he holds a university degree and an undeserved title of Associate Professor, but in fact he is just an intellectual degenerate and a moral freak. That spy is unable to write theoretical treatises, but only slanderous lampoons (...)”<sup>10</sup> During the trial’s 4 days many pages were written with similar reports designed not only to publicly humiliate the defendant but to send the right message to other Bulgarian intellectuals who might criticize the Bulgarian political line or harbor any doubts about the rightness of the pursued Soviet policy.

Georgiev’s execution on January 4, 1964 in the Sofia city prison was not in the Bulgarian media, not even on the pages of *Rabotnichesko delo*, whose readers, reassured by the just punishment of the traitor, could once again indulge themselves in their calm and safe lives controlled by the socialist state, comforted with appropriate and inspiring article entitled: “To implement production plans, to strengthen labor discipline”<sup>11</sup> and “Work rates expected for January were surpassed”.<sup>12</sup>

In the mid-1960s the first signs of the Détente between Washington and Moscow appeared. The historic Partial Test Ban Treaty signed in 1963 was an essential step forward, inspiring optimism among the people of Europe and America. Bulgaria entered this important stage of international relations with a new government. As of November 27, 1962 Bulgaria was governed by the Communist Party, Bulgarian Agrarian National Union, and the Fatherland Front. Todor Zhivkov the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party since 1956, became Prime Minister. Despite the change in the international environment, Bulgaria was not in a hurry to abandon its aggressive stance toward the West.

The organized demonstration on February 15, 1965 in front of the American Legation in Sofia was defined by US diplomatic circles as another attack against the American

government, with a mob of several thousand people protesting in an unacceptable manner against US policy and the war in Vietnam. Participants in the demonstration threw stones at the building, breaking its windows and leading to an angry reaction from Secretary Dean Rusk, who told the Bulgarian Minister in Washington: "We are seriously concerned that our Legation has been attacked for the third time in two years. We feel such matters very deeply. These attacks also create problems in the U.S. Such actions tend to proscribe our freedom of action to improve relations. Even if we have different views on serious and dangerous questions, we cannot permit these differences of opinion to erode generally accepted diplomatic practices".<sup>13</sup> In the same memorandum Rusk shared his concerns about the strenuous work of the Bulgarian militia around the American Legation in Sofia.

The protest did not impress the Bulgarian public, especially insofar as there was scarce information about it. The demonstration was described as "a spontaneous expression of frustration at the US policy"<sup>14</sup>, that workers, clerks, army recruits and etc. were often explicitly "organized" at public assemblies of unions and local Party or Komsomol meetings. The Bulgarian press covered the incident sparingly and according to the standards, without details. In its issue of February 16, 1965 the government's official outlet *Rabotnichesko delo* reported the event under the title: "To stop the aggression of the US imperialism in Vietnam – thousands of workers rally in the capital". The author commented on the "spontaneous manifestation of well informed (about the international situation) metallurgists from Kremikovtzi, tobacco workers from Haskovo, peasants, and students who found themselves in the capital to 'condemn the aggressor USA', after a spontaneous meeting in Universiada Hall".<sup>15</sup> The rally outside the US Legation accompanied by another attempt to assault it was not mentioned. That small and almost nondescript article paled before the cheerful and ordinary headlines that filled the newspaper every day: "High labor productivity in agriculture" and "Only good days expected".<sup>16</sup>

### *Zhivkov, the Whiskey, and the Bedbugs*

The waft of the Détente did eventually reach the Bulgarian Politburo. On October 8, 1965 Todor Zhivkov received the newly appointed US Minister Nathaniel Davis in his office. The conversation, in contrast to previous occasions, was conducted throughout in a "relaxed manner on the Prime Minister's part verging from time to time almost on the jovial".<sup>17</sup> Zhivkov began with the statement that "unfortunately, in the relations between the United States and Bulgaria, ninety-nine per cent depends upon the Department of State and only one per cent depends upon Bulgaria".<sup>18</sup> With these words he tried to shift the entire responsibility for the deteriorating bilateral relations onto the United States. However, the US Ambassador raised once again the issue of the attacks against the US Legation in Sofia and the permanent militia patrols in front of the building who verified and searched the belongings of the Legations' visitors. Zhivkov assured Minister Davis that those practices would be ceased, adding an important additional statement emphasizing that the warming of US-Bulgarian relation would not be at the expense of those with the Soviet Union.

Zhivkov's words were a sign that Sofia had received *carte blanche* from Moscow to change its course to the US. The jocular remark: "if it weren't so, I wouldn't have held the position of Prime Minister" sounded as if it was just another part of his peculiar manner of communication, but it also candidly confirmed the full dependence of Bulgaria on Soviet policy. This conversation seemingly marked a fruitful new beginning, one made with the blessing of the USSR. It ended with a toast of cognac and a new revelation from Zhivkov: that he preferred cognac to whiskey "because the whiskey smelled to him of bedbugs".<sup>19</sup>

In March 1966 the Politburo voted on and adopted a policy toward the US that specified new directions for mutual cooperation with the State Department including cultural and scientific exchanges, preparatory work on trade agreements, various exemptions for diplomatic personnel, and so on. In a proposal to the Politburo, Foreign Minister Ivan Bashev<sup>20</sup> listed a number of activities on which the government could work to improve US-Bulgarian relations. He stated that "without a break with our communist fundamental basis we should avoid certain behaviour that has contributed in the past to unnecessarily aggravating relations, such as going to extremes through demonstrations in front of their Embassy (...) The Committee for State Security should exercise new and more sophisticated forms of control over the embassy visitors and cease detaining them".<sup>21</sup>

A confidential report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reveals that despite the positive developments, Bulgaria remained aloof regarding US policy due to the continuing discriminatory policy of Washington on imports from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria. The US side insisted this policy remain in place until the fulfillment of certain demands, most of which were fiercely opposed by the Committee for State Security and the Defense Department of BCP Central Committee. Objections were raised for the introduction of a regime of multiple-entry visas for diplomatic personnel and the installation of reciprocal radio broadcasting stations in the diplomatic missions of the two countries.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the ongoing frictions, steps forward in the dialogue were made on various issues and the Iron Curtain gradually lifted. In the course of the warming US-Bulgarian relations there was also enhanced exchange of experts and artists (1964-1965), including the American writer John Updike and the playwright Elmar Rice.<sup>23</sup>

At a further meeting of Politburo on November 22, 1966, Protocol 333 changed the status of the Bulgarian mission in the US and the US mission in Bulgaria to embassies.<sup>24</sup> That appeared to be a natural step following from improving bilateral relations and a prerequisite for their further deepening. A few months later, in April 1967 Ivan Bashev submitted a new proposal to Politburo for extended cooperation between the two countries. Through proactive diplomacy the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to, inter alia, raise the interest of the State Department and the US business community in Bulgaria; to improve the quality of Bulgarian products; to attract American tourists and investments in tourism; and to negotiate direct flights to Bulgaria with leading American companies.<sup>25</sup> A report accompanying Minister Bashev's proposal highlighted the benefits of the extended cooperation with the United States, arguing that the American market was the largest and most solvent among the capitalist countries and also that Bulgaria could benefit from the technological progress of America.<sup>26</sup>

The conservative Bulgarian Committee for State Security, however, was not convinced of the effectiveness of pursuing such a policy. In this respect, the attached opinion of the Committee for State Security expressed doubts “that the proposed activities would achieve their purpose, as the Americans were not interested at this point in strengthening economic ties with us and mainly pursued political goals”<sup>27</sup>. Yet the results in favour of the moderate policy pursued by the Bulgarian government were positive – exports to the United States went up to \$3 million in 1966. The restrictions imposed on Bulgarian exports made stable bilateral trade relations impossible. This was mainly due to the quality of the Bulgarian goods, which were not good enough to meet the requirements of the US market, despite frequent Bulgarian media assertions that local production was of highest quality and that those who did not appreciate it had malicious political motives.

### *Conclusion*

The positive developments in US – Bulgarian relations in the late 1960s led to their normalization, although both countries kept their mutual suspicions. Yet, for the time being, Bulgarian foreign policy made a giant step toward the establishment of friendly bilateral relations, which, it must be added, was achievable with the blessing of and permission from the Soviet Union. Bulgaria carried out an active campaign to create stable and lasting trade relations with America. The financial difficulties of Moscow and the well-hidden economic collapse of Bulgaria in the 1960s sparked the Soviet pursuit of “peaceful coexistence”, to which Washington, being in a better position, responded only a decade later. Yet even under these international circumstances the US did not build closer economic ties with Bulgaria. That initiative was left to Iran, the closest US ally in the Middle East, which in 1966 established fruitful economic relations with the “most disfavored” Soviet satellites – Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.

**VESELINA UZUNOVA** completed her PhD at the Institute for Historical Studies (BAS) in Sofia in 2015. Her work spans multiple areas of research within socio-political and ideological phenomena in Bulgarian History (1944-1989), foreign policy, economics and human rights issues in Communist Bulgaria and Middle-Eastern Studies. In 2016 she published her first book entitled *USA and Iran – Partnership and Cooperation in the Cold War*, Sofia.

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Eugene L. Rasor. *Winston Churchill, 1874-1965: A Comprehensive Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2000), 269.

<sup>2</sup> Ghodsee added Todor Zhivkov to the well-known Soviet puppet V. Chervenkov which is not shared by most of the old Bulgarian historians whose writings are compromised by their longlasting careers in the domestic State Security. Kristen Ghodsee. *The Left Side of History: World War II and the Unfulfilled Promise of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> John Kifner. "Bulgaria Is a Land of Gratitude Toward Russians", *New York Times*, 25.01.1984. "Un Bulgare, espion pour les USA, demande la peine maximum à Sofia", *La Presse*, Montreal, 26.12.1963.

<sup>4</sup> Father of the future Prime Minister Marin Raykov appointed in 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Nikolov Rayko. „A Diplomat in America”, *Trud*, (2007): 158-159.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*: 158-159.

<sup>7</sup> *Rabotnichesko Delo*, is.361, 27.12.1963.

<sup>8</sup> "Bulgaria: Name That Tune", *Time*, January 03, 1964.

<sup>9a</sup> *La Presse*, Montreal, 26.12.1963; *The New York Times*, 1.01.1964; *The Desert Sun*, 37-224, 27.12.1963.

<sup>10</sup> *Rabotnichesko Delo*, is.364, 30.12.1963.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* is. 4, 01.04.1964.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* is.5, 01.05.1964.

<sup>13</sup> Department of State, Central Files, POL 23-8 BUL. Confidential. Memorandum of Conversation, Washington, Feb. 17, 1965.

<sup>14</sup> *Rabotnichesko Delo*, is.47, 16.02.1965.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* is.47, 16/02/1965.

<sup>17</sup> Department of State, Central Files, POL BUL-US, Memorandum of Conversation, Sofia, October 8, 1965.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Ivan Bashev was one of the distinguished collaborators of cooperation between USA and Bulgaria. He died in 1971 in a mysterious incident in the mountains while he still held the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>21</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6192, л.74-75 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>22</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6192, л.67 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>23</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6192, л.79 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>24</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6444 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>25</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6655, л. 3-8 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>26</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6655, л.11 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

<sup>27</sup> PPA, Fr, op.6.a.e. 6655, л.10 /Archives of Bulgarian Politburo/.

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Florica Mihaș Bohalțea, *Building a House in Rural Romania before and after 1989* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 124 pp, ISBN-13:978-1-5275-3453-7, ISBN-10:1-5275-3453-7, £58.99.

After reading this book there are certain comments to be made from the very beginning. Firstly, it is remarkable the author's consciousness in approaching and discussing the topic of building houses in the rural area of an ex-communist country and her certainty in finding (out of a complicated and complex sociological and historical situation) those aspects significant for the chosen topic. The purpose of this endeavour, mentioned in the introductory part of the book is to analyse the architectural diversity of Romanian rural houses as the result of a social and cultural process embedded in a historical context that gave different manners of defining habitation and living standards.

Florica M. Bohalțea brings up historical, sociological, economic data, as well as information about the geography of the places mentioned and about the history of the events which marked the places surveyed (such as the earthquake in 1977 or the systematization / demolition of the rural areas, a process started and carried on by the communist regime). The analytical discourse involves arguments and lines of reasoning regarding the political context and, more generally, concerning mentalities and trends, together with aspects related to certain traditional normative frames. All these categories of data are connected by the author's complex analytical approach, simultaneously historical, sociological and ethnological. Certainly not least, the decision to give significant importance to local discourses about home and housing (generously citing her interviewees) leads to empirically checking the historical and sociological data, the economic, juridical and political records, or the information related to building houses in the rural area.

The author mentions ethnographic studies published in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which is remarkable, considering that many researchers from former communist countries find it difficult to recover and integrate the local (Herderian) ethnographic approaches into a revised ethnological discourse, separated from the national ideology. There are many researchers belonging to the generations of ethnologists trained after 1990 who prefer (due to a methodological discomfort) to avoid the "classical" ethnological texts and to focus on their own field research. Conversely, the use of ethnological archives and of the ethnographic texts produced within the national culture project leads to an ethnographic approach which fails to connect the old bibliographic resources (from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the fall of the communist regime) with the sociocultural, economic, political contemporary situation of the rural areas. For Florica M. Bohalțea, the bibliographic source is a methodological challenge and a purpose in

itself: “Although many Romanian researchers have emphasized how ethnology has served ideological interests, the thesis of continuity and the descriptive manner of writing ethnography have not been definitively abandoned. Some of these ethnographic contributions will probably remain marginal but others could influence and perpetuate the “old ethnography” writing style. In this latter respect, the Ethnographic Atlas of the Romanians is an important reference, being a monumental work and also a research tool.” (p. 3) The benefits of this approach are essential for the entire text.

The volume has three chapters: Chapter One - House Construction and the Normative System during the Communist Regime and Post-Communist Period in Romania; Chapter Two - Projecting and Building a House; Chapter Three - Significance of Building a Home. As the titles suggest, each chapter deals with concrete aspects of house building during the communist regime and after its fall, as a result of a social and cultural process. Moreover, the author dedicates a generous segment to those interpretations which correlate distinct topics in an excellent piece of writing indebted to social sciences, a piece of writing which is at the same time ethnological, sociological, and historical. Therefore, the aims of the research, as they are stated in the introduction of the book, are accurately reached: My research aims to analyse the architectural diversity of Romanian rural houses as the result of a social and cultural process embedded in a historical context that gave different manners of defining habitation and living standards. (p. 2)

The research is organised on two main axes. The former, concerning the relationship with the authorities, is focused on two aspects which influenced house building during the communist regime and after its fall: the political and economic context of the last 50 years and the earthquake in 1977. The latter research axis regards the social network of interdependencies, related to a social and cultural reading of the domestic inhabited space. This way of organising the research process, which connects a great variety of rural aspects and domains, unhesitatingly leads to the two working hypotheses mentioned in the introduction of the book: “1. The diversity of the architectural forms of the dwellings in the villages is explained by the interaction of a cumulus of factors, which generates action strategies in the field of housing construction. 2. The activity of house building (or arranging and repairing it) is equally a material process and a cultural construction of the owner-builder’s identity. The latter is born out of the relationships established with members of the rural community and with other members of the family who live in the same household.”

Furthermore, the distinctive feature of this book is the relevance of the sociological and anthropological remarks which allow the reader to extrapolate the significance of the remarks in evaluating cultural and geographic areas larger than the one surveyed in the book (although the author mentions from the very beginning that she does not have any intention to generalise). Even though the text is not long, the complexity of the analysis and of the theoretical framework supporting it are remarkable. Therefore, this book is a significant milestone for the house building topic, as well as for the rural architectural diversity in Romania as a result of a social and cultural process defined by a certain historical context.

**CORINA IOSIF** is a senior researcher at the Romanian Peasant National Museum, Bucharest. She graduates the “G. Enescu” Conservatoire in Iași in 1988. She obtained her Ph.D. in Anthropology/Ethnology in 2007, at Ecole des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and in 2016 she obtained the habilitation in Sociology. Since 2004 she is associate researcher of the Center of History of Imaginary, Department of Ancient History, Archeology and Art History, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest, and since 2019 she is associate researcher of PLIDAM (research team attached to the French National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations – INALCO – in Paris). Since 2018 she is member of the editorial team of the journal of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest, *Martor The Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review*. She wrote several books, and she coordinated volumes and research teams, she wrote ethnology/anthropology articles and studies.