Handbook on the History and Culture of the Black Sea Region

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Nicole Kançal-Ferrari

Between Imposed Memory and *Damnatio Memoriae:* Places of Memory in the Black Sea Region

Men bu yerde yaşalmadım
yaşlığıma toyalmadım
Vatanıma toyalmadım
(I could not live in that place
I could not live my youth fully
Sighing for my homeland)[1]

In 2016, Jamala won the Eurovision Song Contest representing Ukraine with an adaption of the Crimean Tatar ballad "Ey Güzel Qırım" (O beautiful Crimea), a paean of longing for a homeland lost after the Soviet Union's deportation of indigenous peoples in 1944. By not naming Crimea in the lyrics, Jamala turned this song into a universal metaphor for expulsion, trauma, and place-bound remembrance; but by keeping the verses above in Crimean Tatar, with a haunting allusion to her homeland in the song's final line, she also maintained its connection to a specific place.

The song serves as a jumping-off point for this chapter's discussion of *lieux de mémoire* in the Black Sea region, a region rich in material heritage and riven by competing narratives about the pasts this heritage evokes and the presents erected upon them. This chapter is not primarily about the sites at the center of these divides, but rather about how such sites are perceived, valorized, and instrumentalized by various actors through different practices of remembering and forgetting. It is about how place, history, culture, and memory interact to produce certain patterns of commemoration and remembrance, to create certain kinds of identities, and to forget others. As a result, this chapter, probably more than other contributions in this handbook, must be read alongside and against the backdrop of the other chapters, especially those on history, identity, religion, and nation building—for places of memory are space-bound constructions of the past in the present, manifestations of and linked to these concepts.[2]

Lieux de mémoire come in many forms: public buildings, monuments, landscapes, virtual spaces, even immaterial concepts. Invested with symbolic significance through

1 Crimean Tatar lyrics from the song "1944" by Jamala (Susana Alimivna Camaladinova, after her grandfather Jamaladdin). Translation by Nicole Kançal-Ferrari. For more context, see Kerstin S. Jobst, *Geschichte der Krim: Iphigenie und Putin auf Tauris* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 281–82.

2 As the main focus of this chapter is, in the widest sense, on space-bound, site-related memory, I have opted to translate the term *lieux de mémoire*, coined by Pierre Nora, as "places" or "sites" of memory, in preference to the wording "realms of memory," used in the English translation of Pierre Nora's seminal work: *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–98).

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rituals, images, and practices that create or support the identity of a nation, religious group, or specific community, they figure and operate in religious, historical, communal, and political narratives, narratives that can intermingle, overlap, and, often, conflict. The same site can have very different meanings for different communities or groups. Places of memory are created through active historical and politico-cultural actions, through ideological interventions which create, erase, or reactivate sites and attribute meaning to them, sometimes quite independently of whatever meanings the sites originally held. Such sites are at once products of and disconnected from the ever-changing flow of history, embedded in the historical past yet filled with meaning in the present by those who use, remember, imagine, or visualize them, sometimes up close, sometimes from afar, through narrative accounts or photographs—expressions of pasts, both real and imagined, that shape the future of the communities that lay claim to them.[3]

Sites of memory are related to power, power which is exerted on or through them. As powerful symbolic sites, they can operate dichotomously as vehicles both for unification and for exclusion, elevating certain perspectives on or elements of the past even as they sideline others. They can also serve as spaces of resistance, when memories associated with a place challenge official narratives, and as targets for violence, when that resistance turns to anger or provokes a backlash. In the Black Sea region, where many different pasts, histories, identities, and memories, as well as resettlements, deportations, and other traumas, come together in the same places of memory, the questions as to what is remembered by whom and why, and who decides which memories are cultivated and commemorated, rarely have simple answers. The tendency to monopolize heritage is strong, and every act of remembrance contains the danger of excluding other memories.[4]

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3 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," in "Memory and Counter-Memory," special issue, *Representations*, no. 26 (Spring 1989): 12, 14; Jan Assmann, "Erinnern, um dazuzugehören: Kulturelles Gedächtnis, Zugehörigkeitsstruktur und normative Vergangenheit," in *Generation und Gedächtnis: Erinnerungen und kollektive Identitäten*, ed. Kristin Platt and Mihran Dabag (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1995), 60–61; Lionella Scazzosi, "Limits to Transformation in Places' Identity: Theoretical and Methodological Questions," in *Landscape, Identity, Development*, ed. Zoran Roca, Paul Claval, and John Agnew (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 9–24; Philip L. Kohl, Mara Kozelsky, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, eds., *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Charles W. Withers, "Place and the 'Spatial Turn' in Geography and in History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (Oct. 2009): 637–58.

4 Michael Landzelius, "Commemorative Dis(re)membering: Erasing Heritage, Spatializing Disinheritance," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (2003): 195–221; Kelly O'Neill, *Claiming Crimea: A History of Catherine the Great's Southern Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 1–31; Brian Graham and Peter Howard, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008); Neil A. Silberman, "Heritage Interpretation as Public Discourse," in *Understanding Heritage*, ed. Marie-Theres Albert, Roland Bernecker, and Britta Rudolff (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 21–34, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110308389.21; *The ICOMOS Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* (2008) and the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2019).

Given the vast number of memory places in the Black Sea region, a comprehensive survey here is out of the question. Instead, I opt to focus on a selection of places of memory, tangible and intangible, drawn from across the region, including sites in Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Turkey, and Crimea. Because of space limitations, these examples are meant to be illustrative rather than representative, and because of my own fields of expertise, the reader may note a certain preference for examples drawn from Turco-Tatar Muslim heritage. This preference is counterbalanced by Tatiana Zhurzenko's chapter in this volume, on Ukrainian and Russian memory sites. It is also worth noting that I do not include a discussion of Istanbul, which, though part of the broader region, would deserve a separate analysis, the city being itself a multilayered *lieu de mémoire*; nor do I discuss the Black Sea itself, despite its great role in shaping the literary and artistic imagination of the region's many peoples.

My primary goal here is to explore the complex dynamics in which places of memory are embedded and the many roles these places play as both vessels and vehicles for the conveying of historical lived experience and place-bound identities. I therefore begin with a discussion of the politics of memory and the forms it takes in successive sections on national historical consciousness, place-bound remembering through monuments and memorials, and remembering within minority communities and diasporas. I then move on to offer a more extended treatment of how the politics of memory unfolds in a selection of particular sites of memory to illustrate how these sites shape the way the Black Sea region is perceived. By way of conclusion, in the paper's final section, I turn to explore innovative new approaches with the potential to overcome some of the challenges presented by memory places in contested areas like the Black Sea region.

1 Politics of Collective Remembrance Linked to Territoriality: Construction of Place-Bound Historical Consciousness

Any effort to understand memory spaces in the Black Sea region must reckon with the region's multilayered past—the region's oscillation between the regional and the global, its history as part of Southeastern Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia, the Caucasus, and beyond, and thus its historical and cultural embeddedness in regional and global history[5]—as well as the way various aspects of that past are continually reinterpreted and instrumentalized on political, societal, cultural, and individual levels. As a disputed region, it not only holds overlapping memories but also is the stage for the construction of competing memories, identities, and hegemonic claims.

5 Stefan Troebst, "The Black Sea as Historical Meso-Region: Concepts in Cultural Studies and the Social Sciences," *Journal of Balkan and Black Sea Studies* 2 (June 2019): 11–29.

This has consequences for how we evaluate sites of memory. On the one hand, history and memory and their traces transgress the borders of the nation-states that now make up the region. On the other hand, they are also inextricably bound up in the often much narrower narratives of identity those nation-states invoke. These states establish narratives of an exclusive historical past, claim their territories as solely their own, and incorporate only the layers of the past useful to those efforts. In doing so, they often exclude other agents historically involved in the region, agents who share, in one way or another, the same territories. Efforts to transcend the narrowness of these narratives and to embrace transnational pasts risk undermining national uniformity and complicating nationalist ideologies.

In the construction of national narratives, sites of memory are tied closely to historical events and facts that are selected, manipulated, and transmitted as tools of socio-cultural integration, especially in multiethnic states, while simultaneously being sacralized and politicized. In post-Communist countries like Bulgaria, Georgia, and Romania, the nation-state is justified and material heritage instrumentalized against the foil of Ottoman rule and its legacy.[6] In Crimea, the Russian interpretation of the past is embedded in a twofold narrative: of exclusive and uninterrupted Christian presence, documented through archaeological "evidence," turning the peninsula into a Christian territory of salvation; and also, since Catherine II (the Great), a narrative of Crimea's Greek past, reinterpreted through the lens of enlightenment ideology and philhellenism, connecting the peninsula to the European past and its values.[7] Both narratives exclude Crimea's Turco-Muslim past, as well as its present; and both have only gained further traction since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Ukraine, by contrast, has followed a different path since the second half of the twentieth century, when it was still a Soviet Socialist Republic. While tracing its roots, and therefore its legitimacy as a nation-state, to the Cossack Hetmanate (mid-sev-

6 James V. Wertsch, "Deep Memory and Narrative Templates: Conservative Forces in Collective Memory," and Nutsa Batiashvili, "The 'Myth' of the Self: The Georgian National Narrative and Quest for 'Georgianness,'" in *Memory and Political Change*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 173–85 and 186–200; Victor Shnirelman, *The Value of the Past: Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2001); Gheorghe Alexandru Niculescu, "Archaeology and Nationalism in the History of the Romanians," in *Selective Remembrances*, 127–59; Tchavdar Marinov, "Ancient Thrace in the Modern Imagination: Ideological Aspects of the Construction of Thracian Studies in Southeast Europe (Romania, Greece, Bulgaria)," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, vol. 3, *Shared Pasts, Disputed Legacies*, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Alexander Vezenkov (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 10–117; Ana Luleva, "Das Nationale versus das Europäische in der bulgarischen Gedächtniskultur: Zeitschichten konfliktreicher Erinnerungspraktiken," in *Neuer Nationalismus im östlichen Europa*, ed. Irene Götz, Klaus Roth, and Marketa Spiritova (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2017), 101–17.

7 Mara Kozelsky, "The Challenges of Church Archaeology in Post-Soviet Crimea," in *Selective Remembrances*, 71–98; Kerstin S. Jobst, "Holy Ground and a Bulwark Against 'the Other': The (Re)Construction of an Orthodox Crimea in the Nineteenth-Century Russian Empire," in *Rampant Nations: Bulwark Myths of East European Multiconfessional Societies in the Age of Nationalism*, ed. Liliya Berezhnaya and Heidi Hein-Kirche (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 149–72. For the transformation of Crimean territory into Russian space, philhellenism, and the exclusion of the Crimean Tatars, see O'Neill, *Claiming Crimea.*

enteenth century to the second half of the eighteenth century), it has also embraced a more integrative perspective based partly on a common history and mutual cultural influence with the Crimean Khanate and its non-Christian, Turco-Mongol predecessors. In the twenty-first century, despite Russia's annexation of Crimea, this new approach served as a basis for a more inclusive narrative of Ukraine as a political nation-state, one that embraced the historical presence of minorities, mainly the Crimean Tatars, and eschewed legitimization through appeals to a religiously and ethnically uniform past.[8]

In Turkey, place-bound narratives are based on Turco-Islamic and Ottoman conquests and subsequent transformations, and on the Turkish nation's struggle during the war of independence and creation of the Turkish Republic,[9] all of which has the effect of marginalizing the religiously and ethnically diverse elements of the country and its past.

From this perspective, material heritage is at the heart of identity construction. Thus, the study of this heritage, in particular archaeological excavations and the inventorying of material remains and artifacts, often also serves, and is seen by others, as an ideological intervention with political goals.[10] While the recollection of material heritage and the detection of cultural landscapes is an imperative first step to the recovery of the multiple dimensions of a region's past,[11] such efforts also risk upsetting the nationally-minded historical status quo, and they are thus often fraught with political considerations. Hence, while the researching and inventorying of Ancient Greek, Byzantine, and even Genoese remains and inscriptions in the northern Black Sea, for example, is understood as a legitimate scholarly undertaking,[12] the inventorying of Turco-Muslim architecture in the region is often viewed with suspicion, not as a simple act of recovering material heritage, but as preparation for eventual hegemonic claims to a

8 Stefan Rohdewald, "Vom ukrainischen 'Antemurale Christianitatis' zur politischen Nation? Geschichtsbilder der Ukraine und muslimische Krimtatataren," in *Religiöse Pluralität als Faktor des Politischen in der Ukraine*, ed. Katrin Boeckh and Oleh Turij (Munich: Biblion Media, 2015), 395–422.

9 Gökhan Çetinsaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of the 'Turkish-Islamic Synthesis' in Modern Turkish Political Thought," *Muslim World* 89 (1999): 350–86; Hakan T. Karateke, "Interpreting Monuments: Charitable Buildings, Monuments, and the Construction of Collective Memory in the Ottoman Empire," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 91 (2001): 183–99; Ebru Erbaş Gürler, Başak Özer, and Ebru Yetişkin, "Hafızanın Arayüzü Olarak Anma ve Anma Mekanları: Gelibolu Yarımadası Örneği," *Mimarist* 56 (Summer 2016): 73–79.

10 Ulrike Sommer, "Archaeology and Nationalism," in *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology*, ed. Gabriel Moshenska (London: UCL Press, 2017), 166–86.

11 Maximilian Hartmuth, ed., *Centres and Peripheries in Ottoman Architecture: Rediscovering a Balkan Heritage* (Stockholm: Cultural Heritage without Borders, 2011); Hakan Kırımlı and Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, eds., *Kırım'daki Kırım Tatar (Türk-Islâm) Mimarî Yadigârları*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2021); Nebi Gümüş and Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, eds., *Ahıska Bölgesindeki Türk İslâm Mimari Yadigarları* (Ankara: Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, 2019).

12 Svetlana V. Koch, "The National Self-Determination Projects of Greece and Bulgaria: The Role of Ethnic Bessarabian Diasporas," in *Europe and the Black Sea Region: A History of Early Knowledge Exchange (1750–1850)*, ed. Dominik Gutmeyr and Karl Kaser (Zurich: LIT Verlag, 2018), 304.

bygone Ottoman or Crimean Khanate domain. Similar skepticism is seen in the documentation of Pontic Greek, Georgian, and Armenian heritage in Turkey, especially for sites dating from the Ottoman period onwards.

In other fields relating to material heritage, this dynamic plays out differently. In architecture, for example, national identity construction translates as the search for a unique national style, as part of which the material heritage in a state's territory is interpreted in line with an imagined or idealized past. Since the nineteenth century, in parallel with the rise of historical national narratives, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, and the southern provinces of the Russian Empire all "rediscovered" their respective national styles (neo-classical, but mostly neo-Byzantine), and these continue to be used in the design of new churches.[13] Meanwhile, ambitious mosque architecture around the Black Sea followed European eclectic trends, mainly the popular Orientalist neo-Mamluk style, which was also used for governmental buildings and synagogues in the region.[14] But it was also in this period that Turkish/Ottoman architecture was rediscovered, and this revivalism had a lasting impact on the architectural milieu in the Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic.[15] Its legacy remains discernible in more recent mosque constructions which, in a narrow and simplified act of imitation, deliberately refer to the golden age of Ottoman architecture, the style developed by Mimar Sinan in the sixteenth century.[16]

The question of which examples of material culture are viewed as part of a common heritage and which are held suspect relates to a broader divide in the Black Sea region between north and south—a geographical but also historical-cultural division stemming from the partition of the region between two historical empires (the Russian and the Ottoman, and later the Soviet influence zone and Turkey) that have today been replaced by multiple nation-states, some of them now part of the European Union.[17]

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13 Ada Hajdu, "The Search for National Architectural Styles in Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to World War I," and Tchavdar Marinov, "The 'Balkan House': Interpretations and Symbolic Appropriations of the Ottoman-Era Vernacular Architecture in the Balkans," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, vol. 4, *Concepts, Approaches, and (Self-)Representations*, ed. Roumen Daskalov, Diana Mishkov, Tchavdar Marinov, and Alexander Vezenkov (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 394–439 and 440–593. See also Dragan Damjanović and Aleksander Łupienko, eds., *Forging Architectural Tradition: National Narratives, Monument Preservation and Architectural Work in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022).

14 Examples of this eclectic style include the Friday Mosque in Aqyar (Russian/Ukrainian: Sevastopol), Crimea, inaugurated in 1914; the Carol I Mosque (Grand Mosque) in Constanţa, Romania, inaugurated in 1913; and the synagogues of Batumi, Georgia (1904), and Cluj-Napoca, Romania (1887).

15 For architectural culture in the Ottoman realm at the turn of the twentieth century, see Ahmet Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2015).

16 Examples include an oversized mosque based on the classical Ottoman model now under construction in Ortahisar, Trabzon, overlooking the sea; and, in a case of the export of this "Ottoman Golden Age architecture" outside of Turkey, the Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque in Groznyi, Chechnya, opened in 2008.

17 For the historical context of this division, see Eyüp Özveren, "A Framework for the Study of the Black Sea World, 1789–1915," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 77–113.

These new states have all undertaken great efforts to create their own, national and often exclusive, narratives, rituals of remembrance, and places of memory, all to illustrate a uniform national identity. Nevertheless, in dealing with "their own" memories and corresponding sites, such states remain firmly caught up in this north-south dichotomy.

This division is also discernible in scholarship. Scholars working on the region can be divided into those who work from a background in Southeastern European history in the widest sense and those who are trained in Ottoman and Turkish (Turkic) or Islamic studies, not to forget those who work from a national perspective. The gap between these divergent perspectives directly affects the way the region's past, and its many identities and related places, is investigated and presented in scholarship, and it is one of the many reasons behind the multiple blind spots in discussions of the Black Sea world. The centuries-long Turco-Muslim presence and related historical-cultural places and sites of memory fall between the cracks of scholarly accounts on the Black Sea region in Southeastern Europe and outside Turkey more generally, despite the fact that Islam was present on the northern shore from the fourteenth century, and that the Black Sea was an "Ottoman preserve" from the sixteenth century.[18] The same can be said for the non-Turkish, non-Muslim dimension of the Turkish Black Sea region to the south, for the memory sites of former political entities and later societal communities there: ethno-cultural Pontic Greeks, Georgians, Armenians, Hemshin, Laz, and others.[19]

To this north-south divide might be added another, an East-West divide that has become increasingly prominent with the accession of states on the western shore of the Black Sea into the EU, and with it the rise, or perhaps resurgence, of the notion of the Black Sea as a "European Sea."[20] Seen from the European perspective, the Black Sea world is embedded in the ancient Greek, then Roman, and later Byzantine cultural sphere, with local ethnic groups and Venetian and Genoese colonies later still forming a world around the sea. In an important project founded by the EU, with the goal of integrating the Black Sea world into the larger geography of Europe, the region's past was virtually "mapped" for heritage tourism. This mapping was made by a careful selection of narrative spaces, dividing the region's past into north

18 For a recent discussion of this notion, see Kahraman Şakul, "From *Mare Clausum* to *Mare Liberum:* Black Sea Diplomacy in the Era of Russo-Ottoman Duopoly," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 21, no. 4 (Fall 2020): 701–32.

19 While the Turkish coastline of the Black Sea is "fitted" within the line of the country's official history thesis and related commemorations of (pre-Ottoman, Ottoman, and Republican) Turkish history, this largely excludes the 1,500 entries related to Armenian, Greek, Syriac, and Jewish cultural heritage that the Hrant Dink Foundation has marked on the southern Black Sea shore of its *Turkey Cultural Heritage Map*, accessed February 2, 2024, https://hrantdink.org/en/bolis/activities/projects/cultural-heritage/12-turkey-cultural-heritage-map.

20 This idea was promoted, for example, by the former Romanian president Ion Iliescu in 2003; quoted in Troebst, "The Black Sea as Historical Meso-Region," 19.

and south, into a Turkish part and the "Western" rest.[21] Abundant reference is given to Jason and the Argonauts and their search for the golden fleece, the Greek mythological account of heroes navigating the Black Sea; the focus is thus on the sea and the coastline, one of the main aspects of ancient Greek settlements and their occupation of space, and in general of Greek identity, comfortably in line with new studies focusing on Greek dominance in the region's port cities from the late eighteenth century until the early twentieth century, obscuring other identities and narratives of the past.[22]

Meanwhile, the sea itself does not have the same importance in the cultural memory of Eurasian people—they used the territory around the sea, the hinterland, and operated through intermediaries in well-defined port cities, although the Seljuks and Ottomans conquered and temporarily dominated many places of the Black Sea region by sea, such as Sudaq (Russian/Ukrainian: Sudak) and Caffa (today: Feodosiia) in Crimea.[23] These two contrasting poles—between cultures that are shaped and defined through the sea and those that occupy the space around it and connect the region with the larger geography of the Balkans and Europe, the Caucasus, and Eurasia—mutually condition each other and constitute the dynamic reality of the broader Black Sea world, their different views on space creating divergent places of memory. Thus, although the ambitious EU project furnishes many valuable insights into layers of the Black Sea region's past, it is also a noteworthy example of a cultural heritage politics that privileges narratives relating to a European past and future while silencing others.[24]

This amnesia concerning the northern Black Sea region's Turco-Tatar Muslim communities and their memories and the marginalization or even absence of a discussion

21 The project was conducted between 2007 and 2013, with a conference held in 2016, the proceedings of which were published in 2019. For a presentation of the project and its goals, see Dorothea Papathanasiou-Zuhrt, Nikolaos Thomaidis, Aldo Di Russo, and Valentina Vasile, "Multi-Sensory Experiences at Heritage Places: SCRIPTORAMA, the Black Sea Open Street Museum," in *Caring and Sharing: The Cultural Heritage Environment as an Agent for Change: 2016 ALECTOR Conference, Istanbul, Turkey*, ed. Valentina Vasile (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 11–49.

22 Another similar project, the ongoing "History of the Black Sea, 18th-20th Century" (2012–), supported by Greece and the EU, focuses on the port cities of the region and their connections with the global economy: https://blacksea.gr/. Among the project's published or planned publications is one on the architecture and urbanism of twenty-two of these cities; however, in this project too, the exclusive focus is on Greek heritage at the expense of Russian and Ottoman cultural places: Vassilis Colonas, Alexandra Yerolympos, and Athina Vitopoulou, eds., *Architecture and City Planning in the Black Sea Port-Cities* (forthcoming).

23 This said, difficult topography meant that many Ottoman cities on the northeastern coastline, like the important port cities of Samsun and Trabzon, were accessible only by sea, although tentative efforts to connect them by road were undertaken in the second half of the nineteenth century and accelerated during the Russian occupation in 1916–18.

24 Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, eds., *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Maria N. Todorova, Augusta Dimou, and Stefan Troebst, eds., *Remembering Communism: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014).

of the "Oriental" part of the region's past are due to the fact that this past has, since the end of the eighteenth century, been at odds with the official imperial, and later national, historical narratives in the region. One noteworthy exception in this regard is Ukraine's effort, mentioned above, to embrace a more integrative understanding of its national past and to present the non-Christian elements of that past in a more positive light; though this effort has been interrupted by the current political situation in Ukraine, they will hopefully resume in the near future.[25]

Meanwhile, a similar historical amnesia obtains in Turkey, where the establishment of an official, exclusive narrative—in contrast to the more inclusive Ottoman perception of the empire's non-Muslim, non-Turkish subjects in the nineteenth century—gained shape with the "Turkish Historical Thesis" and the effort to create a uniform citizenry in the new republic.[26] These selective perceptions have to be seen against the backdrop of a long history of cross-cultural presence, of fluctuations and transfers in the Black Sea region. Successive waves of people established themselves, created colonies, and were expelled or forced to either emigrate or assimilate. Traces of those who left have disappeared, been altered, or, worse, in the case of many monuments and sites, been victims of destruction, of what has been named a "memoricide of monuments."[27] In any case, one can speak of a constructed, often imposed, amnesia in the region's historical narratives and, as a consequence, of *lieux d'oubli*, of sites of oblivion, physically destroyed sites and erased memories of a past which is or has to be "forgotten."[28]

In this section I have shown how different ways of reading and presenting the past, even in the form of cultural heritage protection, selectively shape the perception of the region's identity. I now turn, in the following sections, to examine a thematic selection of different forms the politics of memory can take in this process, first in the context of monuments and memorials, and then in the context of remembering among minorities and exile communities.

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25 There are other exceptions to this amnesia, such as Kerstin S. Jobst, who mentions (without elaborating) the existence of a rich collection of legends and myths belonging to the Crimean Tatars in her *Geschichte der Krim,* 32.

26 See the related chapters in this handbook. See also Çetinsaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam"; Dietrich Jung, "Minorities as a Threat: A Historical Reconstruction of State-Minority Relations in Turkey," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues Online* 2, no. 3 (2002): 127–49, https://doi.org/10.1163/221161103X00076.

27 For this term, see Bénédicte Tratnjek, "Géographie des conflits: Les lieux de mémoire dans la ville en guerre; Un enjeu de la pacification des territoires," *Diploweb.com: La revue géopolitique*, October 31, 2011, http://www.diploweb.com/Geographie-des-conflits-Les-lieux.html.

28 Sites of oblivion and related literature are discussed in Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1–30.

2 Place-Bound Remembering Through Memorials of National Greatness, Victory, War, and Martyrdom

2.1 Monuments of Imperial and National Greatness and Victory

States and communities use monuments, memorials for individuals and significant events, and even the awareness and cultivation of cultural landscapes (e. g., battlefields or planned urban space) to transform space into meaningful place. This section investigates how this process operates, how monuments and memorials function as vessels of identity construction in different parts of the Black Sea region, and how, in doing so, they create zones of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. This section also examines instances of radical spatial transformation, where a memory is erased and new ones are imposed.

Monuments, imbued with layers of social and cultural memory, are the physical manifestation of pasts that are deemed worthy of commemoration by imperial, national, or, more rarely, minority or diasporic communities. Those who participate in this remembering effort are "imagined communities."[29] Like religious (pilgrimage) sites, themselves stages of social-cultural religious practices, monuments can undergo a process of sacralization; and the rituals connected to or held at these sites often blur the boundaries between the national, the hegemonic, and the religious. Monuments codify the past and make it concrete; they also create precise interpretations of the past through their materiality, fostering new public/collective memories and nourishing group identity related to a specific place and time.[30] As sites of memory, monuments (and other symbolic markers, like flags) are thus instrumentalized as vessels and transmitters of all kinds of messages. They are powerful tools for the creation of a group identity, but also for determining boundaries of belonging and exclusion for the imagined community.[31] In the nineteenth century, public monuments became more and more widespread and turned into expressions of the specific forms of hegemonic national identity that arose in that period. With the rise of these new forms of group identity, new forms of remembering arose that used public monuments, statuary, memorials, and commemorative sites in the (urban) landscape as a means of conveying to newly coalescing national publics values like human dignity, (past and future) national

29 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006); Nuala Johnson, "Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography, and Nationalism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13 (1995): 51–65.

30 Karen Till, quoted in Nuala C. Johnson, "Public Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Geography*, ed. James S. Duncan, Nuala C. Johnson, and Richard H. Schein (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 323.

31 Sara McDowell, "Heritage, Memory and Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 37–53.

greatness, and sacrifice for a better cause.[32] The major transformations of nation-building and regime change the Black Sea region has undergone over the last two centuries produced an abundance of monuments related to these concepts, ideologically loaded sites that not only commemorated past greatness or important events but also projected these constructs/interpretations back into the past.

A typical example of an "official" site of memory is the monument of honor in Samsun, erected in 1932 in commemoration of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's arrival in this city on the steamer *Bandırma* in 1919 and the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence. The monument, a statue with Atatürk atop a rearing horse, marks Samsun as one of the starting points in the formation of the Turkish Republic.[33] Together with the open-air museum housing a replica of the steamer, the monument turns the city's coastline into a symbolic space of the new republic. Situated in the first public park of Samsun next to the Square of the Republic, the monument was commissioned by the people of Samsun and made by the Austrian painter and sculptor Heinrich Krippel (1883–1945), who also created other statuary monuments in Turkey.[34] Krippel's description of the monument at the opening ceremony effectively conveys how it captures the foundation myth of modern Turkey: "His [Gazi Mustafa Kemal's] bearing expresses a fearlessness [...] and the power of Turkishness."[35]

Like other cities on the Black Sea's southern coast, Samsun was a rich port whose urban space blossomed from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Impressive official and religious buildings dominated the city's skyline, among them the especially impressive Greek Orthodox Aya Triada (Holy Trinity) Church. But after the forced population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923–24, Samsun's demographic composition abruptly changed: churches were transformed, repurposed, and ultimately torn down, paving the way for the city's reinterpretation in line with the new republican narrative, conflating place and the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.[36]

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32 Katharyne Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory," *Urban Geography* 24, no. 5 (2003): 456.

33 The monument was the target of vandalism in February 2022, triggering a national outcry: "Samsun'daki Onur Anıtı'na Yönelik Çirkin Saldırının Ardından Atatürk Nöbeti," *Habertürk*, last modified February 15, 2022, https://www.haberturk.com/son-dakika-samsun-da-mesalelerle-ataturk-nobeti-3334777.

34 Osman Nuri Dülgerler and Tülay Karadayı Yenice, "Türklerde Anıt Mimarisinin Bir Örneği: Konya Atatürk Anıtı," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Mühendislik, Bilim ve Teknoloji Dergisi* 23, no. 1 (2008): 70.

35 "Onur Anıtı," Samsun Turizm Haritası, accessed August 22, 2024, https://www.samsunharitasi.com/turizm/onur-aniti/.

36 For the process of the transformation of the churches in Samsun, see Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, "The Fate of Tanzimat-Era Churches in Anatolia after the Loss of Their Congregations," in *Christian Art under Muslim Rule*, ed. Maximilian Hartmuth (Leiden: NINO, 2016), 219–30; Baki Sarısakal, *Bir Kentin Tarihi: Samsun* (Samsun: Samsun Valiliği İl Kültür Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2002). And for a smaller church that is still functioning, the Roman Catholic church Mater Dolorosa (from the second half of the nineteenth century), see the following document on the website of the Catholic Church of Antioch, accessed March 28, 2022, http://www.anadolukatolikkilisesi.org/samsun/tr/storia.pdf.

Other examples of physical manifestations of national-identity building are the monuments to King David (David the Builder, 1073–1125) in Tbilisi and Kutaisi and to the legendary queen Tamar the Great (ca. 1160–1213) in Mestia and Akhaltsikhe (Georgia). Symbols of Georgia's past greatness and its struggle for independence, these monuments both elevate and delimit Georgian identity, raising up those who fit within the rigidly defined national narrative while simultaneously excluding other kinds of communities and minorities. The same holds true for monuments to Stephen the Great (Stephen III of Moldavia, r. 1459–1504) in historical Moldavia (now Romania and Moldova), a national symbol of resistance against the Ottoman and Crimean invaders and of later Romanian and Moldovan independence. While these date to the 1880s, another more recent symbol of national unification is Carol I (1839–1914) of Romania. Proclaimed king in 1881 after Romania's independence in 1877, the most famous of his monuments is the equestrian statue in front of the former royal palace in Bucharest. Erected in 1939, the statue, a symbol of the Romanian monarchy, was destroyed under the Communist regime in 1948, with a copy reinstalled in 2015, illustrating the attitude of Romania towards its monarchic past during de-communization. The Soviet Army Monument erected in 1954 in Sofia to commemorate the role played by the Soviet Army in the last period of World War II is another controversial case which can be seen in the same line, understood either as a symbol of Soviet occupation and subsequent oppression or of the liberation of Bulgaria and the expulsion and defeat of Nazi Germany. In recent times, it has been the scene of vandalism and political graffiti.[37]

As exemplified in the statue of Carol I and this war monument, once-unifying monuments can turn, in times of regime change, into problematic symbols. These are sometimes destroyed or annihilated, but, more often, such sites are remodeled according to new ideologies and attributed new meanings that, where possible, incorporate dimensions of the old imaginary. This transformation is most visible in cultural and political centers, which are generally at the forefront in the symbolic implementation of new identities.[38]

A striking example is the Khan's Palace in Bağçasaray (Russian: Bakhchisarai, Ukrainian: Bakhchysarai), Crimea. After the annexation of Crimea in 1783 and the elimination of the Crimean Khanate, the palace was used by the tsar's family and remodeled into a monument to the Russian imperial regime's tolerance. Maintaining its

37 Martin Dimitrov, "Sofia's Red Army Monument: Canvas for Artists and Vandals," *Balkan Insight*, October 26, 2018, https://balkaninsight.com/2018/10/26/sofia-s-red-army-memorial-the-favorite-canvas-of-artists-and-vandals-10-25-2018/; Daniela Koleva, "The Immortal Regiment and Its Glocalisation: Reformatting Victory Day in Bulgaria," *Memory Studies* (August 2021): 216–29.

38 Karen E. Till, "Places of Memory," in *A Companion to Political Geography*, ed. John Agnew, Katharyne Mitchell, and Gerard Toal (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 289–301. This process is especially apparent in the case of monuments from the Soviet period in formerly Soviet countries around the Black Sea: Mischa Gabowitsch, "Der Umgang mit sowjetischen Kriegsdenkmälern seit 1989/91: Ein Überblick," in *Kommunismus unter Denkmalschutz?*, ed. Jürgen Danyel, Thomas Drachenberg, and Irmgard Zündorf (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2018), 49–64.

Oriental flair, the palace under the tsars suggests a smooth passage from the annexed khanate to Russia. Today, visitors to the palace learn about the Oriental features of the edifice, especially the famous Fountain of Tears, through the eyes of Pushkin, and experience the rooms through narratives connecting them to the tsar's family. Although not perceptible at first sight, this is a rather radical reinterpretation and appropriation of a conquered monument and an example of what has been called "spatial violence" in recent scholarship.[39]

Another, even more complex, example of this sort of spatial violence is the Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) Mosque in Trabzon, a Byzantine imperial church (erected 1250–60). While the biggest church in Trabzon, the Panagia Chrysokephalos Church, was converted into the Fatih Mosque ("mosque of the conqueror") by Sultan Mehmed II (1432–81) upon the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1461, the Ayasofya was transformed into a mosque only in 1584, more than one hundred years after the conquest of Trabzon.[40] It underwent restoration and was opened as a museum in 1964, but in 2013, it was again turned into a mosque. This recent transformation triggered vehement reactions from both supporters and opponents, and it can thus be seen as a real symbol of a "double" re-appropriation and re-sacralization of a place.

The various examples mentioned in this section all show the effort of political entities, both empires and nation-states, to construct places of memory which can serve as sites for the creation of new group identities. In doing so, they erase meanings and narratives which are not in line with these new identities. This is especially clear in the case of memorials to war dead and fallen soldiers, the subject of the next section.

2.2 Memorials of War and Martyrdom: Claiming Territory through Heroes and the Dead Body

> I was ten. Caught out in the rain far from the village, soaking wet, we'd piled onto our horse-drawn cart to return home. Our "uncle" Nuri Ağa from Bulgaria was at the reins. … Suddenly these lights rose from the ground all around us, shining in the night. Spellbound, I asked, "Nuri Ağa, what are those?" … Nuri Ağa turned to me and said, "Those are lamps Allah has lighted for our martyrs." …

39 For a discussion of this term, see Andrew Herscher and Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "Spatial Violence," *Architectural Theory Review* 19, no. 3 (2014): 269–77. Aside from ideological reinterpretation, the palace also seems to be undergoing another, even worse, kind of spatial violence: physical alteration and destruction under the guise of restoration. While I have not visited Crimea since 2014 and no first-hand information on the condition of the palace is available to me at this moment, alarming information is circulating about the destructive scope of recent "restoration work" that began in 2018 with the mosque and continues with the privy chambers.

40 Ömer İskender Tuluk and Halil İbrahim Düzenli, "Osmanlı'da Fetih Sonrası Dinsel Mekânı Camileştirme Anlayışı: Trabzon Örneği (1461–1665)," in *Trabzon Kent Mirası: Yer – Yapı – Hafıza*, ed. Ömer İskender Tuluk and Halil İbrahim Düzenli (Istanbul: Klasik, 2010), 93–118.

> He could have simply said "fireflies," but people had loaded them with a particular significance: "In this place here, our martyrs yet live."[41]

This is one of the many childhood memories the late Ottoman historian Kemal Karpat shared in his autobiography about the Romanian part of Dobruja. Home to Turkish settlers since the thirteenth century, the region was Ottoman from the fifteenth century; later, many Crimean Tatar Muslims from the northern Black Sea region settled there after Crimea and its hinterland were incorporated into the Russian Empire.[42] With the creation of the nation-states in Southeastern Europe and the weakening and later collapse of the Ottoman Empire, (forced) immigration to Anatolia surged and continued for decades. Like other minorities in changing political situations, these people were forced to question their identity in an increasing hostile environment. To claim the soil as being populated by Turkish martyrs was a symbolic, spiritual appropriation of the earlier conquered and now threatened territory.

In general, war memorials illustrate how empires and nations shape and nourish their identity cultures. And something all these commemorative sites share is the problem of how to transmit the memory of a past event—war or martyrdom—to a living community that has no experience of it. Therefore, they have to generate their own identity-creating context which functions in a sacred time-space, similar to artifacts in museums, which are experienced as witnesses to and relics of a meaningful past.

Though the creation of monuments in public spaces is a relatively new cultural practice, the commemoration of important events, victories, and conquests in memorials and (funeral) monuments has existed since ancient times. The Tropaeum Traiani, today a popular tourist attraction, is a monument erected in commemoration of the victory of Roman Emperor Trajan over the Dacians at the Battle of Adamclisi in 101/102 CE. Standing prominently over the plain of Constanța in the Dobruja Region (Romania), the monument is an early example of this practice and a unique site of Roman commemoration politics. Part of the building complex was a (slightly earlier) altar upon which were inscribed the names, ranks, and birthplaces of the nearly 4,000 Roman soldiers who died in the battle.[43] Standing as a testament to the success and greatness of Rome, the memorial also, through the individual inscriptions of the identities of the soldiers on the altar, illustrates the cruel dimension of war, the loss of thou-

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41 Kemal Karpat, *Dağı Delen Irmak*, ed. Emin Tanrıyar (Istanbul: İmge Kitabevi, 2008), 24. Translation by Nicole Kançal-Ferrari. The historian Kemal Karpat (1923–2019) spent his childhood in Babadağ (today Romania).

42 Machiel Kiel, "The Dobrudja: A Bridge and Meeting Point between the Balkans, Anatolia and the Ukraine," in *Turco-Bulgarica: Studies on the History, Settlement and Historical Demography of Ottoman Bulgaria* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2013), 167–86.

43 The monument was reconstructed in 1977. Elements of the original edifice are displayed in the museum on site. For the altar, see Brian Turner, "War Losses and Worldview: Re-viewing the Roman Funerary Altar at Adamclisi," *American Journal of Philology* 134, no. 2 (2013): 277–304, https://doi.org/10.1353/ajp.2013.0019.

sands of lives. This monument thus incorporates the fundamental double dimension of war memorials: celebrating victory and (temporal) domination of a territory and the remembrance of the individuals who died for this triumph.[44] It exemplifies what Aleida Assmann has called the "transformation of a traumatic place into a heroic memorial site."[45] In addition, by including the place of origin of the soldiers, it is one of the first examples illustrating that "the dead are not allowed to pass unnoticed"[46]— also discernable in Karpat's recollection about the martyrs around his village—while also establishing territorial links to various other places of the Roman Empire outside Romania.

This site in Adamclisi stands today as a symbol of not just the Roman past, but also a historical defeat for Romania. It is the precursor of many monuments around the Black Sea region, including the monument commemorating the role of the Russian emperor Alexander II in Nikopol (Bulgaria) in the victory over the Ottomans in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78, which ultimately led to an independent Bulgaria.[47] This commemoration of the liberation of Bulgaria from "the Ottoman yoke" is a popular theme brought to life in more than four hundred monuments in the region, most of them at former battlegrounds. These monuments reinstall, at least on the popular level, a national narrative bound into the old hegemonic, dichotomic discourse between Russia and Turkey.[48] This focus also bypasses the periods of Russian domination, World War II, Communism, and the past three decades, effectively sidelining the critical reappraisal of those periods. At the same time, it creates an exclusive group identity that marginalizes the descendants of those inhabitants of the region who are not considered culturally and ethnically Bulgarian. The same attitude is also visible in other neighboring nations, and it represents a major obstacle to the "pluralization" and "democratization" of the region's memory.[49]

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44 The conquest celebrated in this monument, the subsequent demographic change it engendered, and thus the question of the ethnographic composition of the Romanians (as purely Dacian, and the Thracoromans as foreigners, and the like) have haunted Romanian scholarship for a long time. On this, see Niculescu, "Archaeology and Nationalism in the History of the Romanians."

45 Aleida Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2006), 220.

46 McDowell, "Heritage, Memory and Identity," 41.

47 The monument was "erected in honor of 1300 Russian and Romanian soldiers who lost their lives during the liberation of Bulgaria in 1877. It was built in 1906 [immediately before the declaration of Bulgaria's independence in 1908] and is one of the 12 monuments built immediately after the Liberation, at the initiative of the Russian Ministry of War": "The Monument of Victory," The Bridges of Time, accessed March 28, 2022, https://thebridgesoftime.com/?ait-item=the-monument-of-victory&lang=en.

48 Vildane Dinç, "Bir Savaşın Bellek Alanlarında Yeniden Üretiminin İşlevleri: 1877–78 Türk-Rus Savaşı (93 Harbi) Örneği," in *The 1st Annual Kurultai of the Endangered Cultural Heritage AKECH 2018, 5–8 July, Constanța, Romania,* ed. Taner Murat (Constanța: Anticus Press, 2018), 165–80.

49 Heike Karge, "Practices and Politics of Second World War Remembrance: (Trans-) National Perspectives from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe," in Pakier and Stråth, *A European Memory?*, 64–74, 139. Karge discusses how in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, memorial tourism in the form of "pilgrimage to

War memorials are also abundant in Turkey. But because Turkey directly experienced neither World War II nor Communism, and because what is commemorated as victory by the nation-states elsewhere around the Black Sea, like the liberation of Bulgaria, was a defeat for the Ottomans, the Turkish Republic differs from its neighbors in that it concentrates its commemorative efforts on sites connected to Turkey's War of Independence and World War I. These so-called *şehitlik* (lit. "martyrs' memorials") commemorate fallen Ottoman and later Turkish soldiers. Dozens of these are situated around the Black Sea region outside Turkey: six in Ukraine, three in Romania, one in Bulgaria, and eight in Azerbaijan. While a few of these memorial sites date back to the 1930s, most were established or restored in the late 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century—that is, they were created just as the experience of these historical events was about to disappear from living memory.[50] These places are visited by Turkish government representatives on official trips to the region. One site in Crimea, known as the Sevastopol Memorial for the Martyrs of the Crimean War (1853–56), was "inaugurated" in 2004, and the remains of forty Turkish war dead from the vicinity were exhumed and transferred to the site. Due to its proximity to the "Hero City" of Sevastopol, this war memorial has a highly symbolic significance and constitutes a contested, appropriated space by Turkey in the Russian-dominated understanding of that part of Crimea. It is therefore no wonder it was the scene of vandalism in 2014. The city of Sevastopol occupies an extraordinary place in Russian memory. Besieged, destroyed, and seized twice—in the Crimean War, and ninety years later in World War II—it was liberated by the Soviet Army on May 9, 1944, only some days before the deportation of the Crimean Tatars. The *şehitlik* are thus binding official and counter memorials on foreign territory and are examples of symbolic territorial appropriation and the effort to maintain place-bound identity.

War memorials are inclusive only for the party they stand for; they make sense only for those who belong to the community of those the monuments commemorate, those who share the same perception of the past and identify with, or at least feel empathy toward, the fallen soldiers and want them to be remembered. They operate much as the firefly tale Karpat related in his autobiography, but in a more formal and official way, imprinting the presence of (real or imaginary) war dead on a particular territory. This is also the case in the most important commemorative site of Turkey, the memorial for the battle of the Dardanelles (1915–16) on the Gallipoli (Turkish: Gelibolu) Peninsula, which ended in a victory for what was still at that time the Ottoman Empire. Although only indirectly part of the Black Sea world, the traumatic memory of this battle at the Straits exemplifies place-bound individual and official remembering and col-

war memorials" came to replace visits to religious sites, and how with it arose an understanding of meaningful dying on the battlefield different from that in the West.

50 Cengiz Dönmez, "I. Dünya Savaşıyla İlgili Yurt Dışındaki Türk Şehitlikleri," *Gazi Akademik Bakış* 7 (2014): 137–62.

lective mourning in the region.[51] It is not only the Turkish side who suffered casualties in the fighting; the Anzac (Australians and New Zealanders fighting for Great Britain) soldiers did as well. In the 1920s, construction began on a cemetery for and monuments to the Anzac war dead, and efforts were undertaken to have the entire site around the Anzac Cove designated as consecrated ground. Similar efforts on the Turkish side began in the 1950s, and the first memorial structures were erected only a decade later. Starting with the construction of a cemetery and monuments in the 1920s, today the whole Gallipoli Peninsula has been developed into an immense *lieu de mémoire* and the victory there incorporated into the successful founding narrative of the Turkish Republic. This place of memory, the real battlefield and its constant remembrance by Turkey, Australia, and New Zealand as a place of a common mourning, constitutes at the same time a place of multiple official and individual (counter-)memories, a dissonant space with competing interpretations.[52]

Monuments of victory and martyrdom are always embedded in concepts of triumph for a certain group, while representing mourning and defeat for others. However, even as sites of defeat, as in the case of Turkey's *şehitlik*s in former Ottoman territories, they keep alive the memory and lay claim to the spaces they are erected upon. While these monuments, on an institutional scale, commemorate past events and work against forgetting, communities in exile or local minorities need different strategies of remembering.

3 Remembering and Postmemory

This section explores the many strategies minority and diaspora communities have elaborated to prevent forgetting and keep place-bound memory alive; among these strategies are the establishment of strong rituals and narratives related to place and the experience of exile, the creation of new sites, and the establishment of (counter-) monuments referring to episodes of the community's past or to the traumatic experience of exile. I also look at the organized renaming of places at different moments in the past, a practice that goes hand in hand with the reshaping and reinterpretation of sites and landscapes, and at efforts of diaspora communities to keep the memory of the original names alive.

51 Another traumatic World War I experience for Turkey, this time a defeat, was (the prelude to) the battle of Sarıkamış against Russia (part of an Ottoman campaign to retake the northeastern part of the Black Sea, the port of Batumi, and access to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea). Before the battle, more than 25,000 Turkish soldiers froze to death on the march to the battlefield. As part of a Turkish effort to keep the memory of this trauma alive, young people from all over Turkey have in recent years participated in an annual large-scale reenactment of their march.

52 Paul Gough, "Commemoration of War," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Farnham: Ashgate 2008), 215, 223–24; Gürler, Özer, and Yetişkin, "Hafızanın Arayüzü Olarak Anma ve Anma Mekanları."

3.1 Memories from Exile

Many diaspora communities are connected to the countries around the Black Sea. To maintain their place-bound identity and memories far from the geographical places people left behind because of expatriation, deportation, and emigration, these communities hold the places in their memories and create new memory sites, real or imaginary. Countless such monuments referring and relating to these places left behind, many of them counter-monuments, have been erected all over the globe. In Turkey and elsewhere, these include symbolic sites of ritual, places of individual and/or official remembrance, and monuments related to the victims of the population exchange (*mübadele*) of Pontic Greeks and the deportation and annihilation of the culture of Armenians, Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetian (Ahıska) Turks, and also to the memory of the immigration of diverse peoples from the Caucasus.

These memories include narratives of the experience of being deported from their homelands, as well as all sorts of narratives transmitting the idealized places and milieus they left behind. These often take the form of stories, tales, and songs that are performed and transmitted within families and groups, listened to again and again, reinforcing and recreating the bonds within the community and the link between the lost place and its memory, between those who experienced deportation, *mübadele*, expulsion, or worse and the following generations through the theme of traumatic experience. Community-specific rituals, like the preparing of certain dishes, such as the *havitz* (Turkish *kuymak/mıhlama*) or the *piroshki* (a loan word from Russian, similar to the Turkish and Tatar *börek*) of the Pontic Greeks, reinforce not only community identity but also the spatio-cultural link to the "homeland." In recent years, Turkish and Greek diaspora communities have also begun to visit their respective sites of origin in the other country, thus enriching abstract narratives of places left behind with the real experience of the sites.

For those living in Turkey today, even the act of planting young fruit trees imported directly from Crimea or the Caucasus—whose fruits are said to be of the best quality—can be considered a way of commemorating a lost past through recreating its symbolic site, articulating indirectly the loss of the real place. While these real sites of memory are often erased, destroyed, or simply transformed, in the common imagination of the community, they are suspended in their imaginative timeless "original" form. Or, in some cases, their substitutes are constructed at the new settlement, as in the case of the Pontic Greeks in Kastania (Greece), who built there a reconstruction of the monastery Panagia Sumela near Trabzon to accommodate the famous icon of the Virgin they took with them during the population exchange.[53] This is an excellent ex-

53 For this icon, see Stefanos P. Tanimanidis, *Historical Account of the Holy Icon and the Monastery of Panagia Sumela* (n.p., 2020). And for the creation of similar pilgrimage places with copies of this icon elsewhere, and for more on the Greek diaspora generally, see the work of Michel Bruneau; for an example in English, see his article "The Pontic Greeks, from Pontus to the Caucasus, Greece and the Diaspora," *Journal of Alpine Research* 101, no. 2 (2013): 1–10, https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.2092. For forms of

ample of the transformation of so-called communicative memory, of lived experience, present, and transmitted by those who were part of the event, into institutionalized memory, where this traumatic experience is transformed into a place of commemoration.

The study of individual and collective suffering and trauma began with and remains dominated by work on the Holocaust, which serves as the archetypal model for European and even global memory politics. This model is often adopted by and for other communities who have suffered: Pontic Greeks, Armenians, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetian Turks, etc. However, there are two problems with this model: (1) the danger of ethnocentrism, and (2) the problem of mediation. How can the experience of one group's suffering be communicated to those who did not experience and whose communal past was not affected by that suffering or similar traumas of their own? In the global politics of commemoration, some minorities experience a double exclusion due to their absence both from official national narratives, including possible recent reappraisals, and from other minority or counter-narratives. Every act of remembrance contains the danger of excluding others' memories, even, or perhaps especially, if they are connected to the same spatio-temporal past.

That said, current global and specifically European memory politics involves more than merely integrating negative or neglected episodes in a national past into commemorative efforts and official narratives—it extends to the recording and institutionalization of memory passed down through the lived experience of individuals. This cultivation and preservation of the experiences of a community, the struggle against the forgetting of past (traumatic) experiences as the generations who lived through them die out, has been named postmemory.[54] For all the minority and diaspora communities around the Black Sea, this process of institutionalization of memory is well underway, and thus new ways of memory storage, of not forgetting, have been developed to replace intergenerational memory transmission and transfer memory to future generations. Examples include the efforts of Bulgarian and Greek diaspora communities living in Odesa and Bessarabia (today Moldova and Ukraine) to create and support museums

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remembering and the recreation of symbolic memory sites of people of the Caucasus in Turkey, see Abdullah Temizkan, Didem Çatalkılıç, and Tuğba Erdem, eds., *Kafkasya Kökenlilerin Hafıza Mekânları – Memory Spaces of the People of Caucasian Origin* (Izmir, 2018), http://hafizamekani.com/calistay-kitabi/. For Crimean Tatars, see Filiz Tutku Aydın, *Émigré, Exile, Diaspora, and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars: Preserving the Eternal Flame of Crimea* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). For Turks in the Dobruja region, see Yelis Erolova, "(Re) Invented Traditions – Reconstructed Identities (Case Studies from Bulgarian-Romanian Border Region of Dobrudzha)," in Taner, *The 1st Annual Kurultai*, 7–20. For Armenian sites of memory, which largely focus on eastern Anatolia, see David Leopold, *Embattled Dreamlands: The Politics of Contesting Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

54 For the notion of postmemory, see Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Ernst Van Alphen, "Second-Generation Testimony, Transmission of Trauma, and Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006): 473–88, https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2005-015.

and memorial complexes like the Museum of the Filiki Etairia ("Friendly Society"), which commemorates the role of Odesa's Greek community in Greece's nation-building process and its struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire.[55]

Interestingly, it is often only in the phase of postmemory—that is, in generations who do not have direct experience of a memory through transmission from family members or other firsthand witnesses—that people become interested in their past. While the search for "one's origins" has until recently been a difficult undertaking, that has now changed thanks to the internet and digital resources, and memory is thus placed increasingly in a virtual space. Diasporas create their own digital (often exclusive) communities and exchange platforms, and in doing so, they create virtual places of memory. Individuals, too, can easily search for or gather information on the internet. For instance, people in Turkey are interested in their ancestors in Dobruja (Bulgaria and Romania), Crimea, and the Caucasus, while Pontic Greeks and Armenians are exploring their past in the southern Black Sea region. In recent years, this interest in places of past habitation has turned to action. While Pontic Greeks visit the Sumela Monastery, its vicinity, and places they or their ancestors left behind, Turks from Dobruja claim Romanian citizenship through their ancestry.[56]

Oral history records are an effective instrument for the storage of personal experience and memory and for the preservation of the group identity of diaspora communities. In the last twenty years, much effort has been put into the collection of oral biographical records of Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Meskhetian Turks, and other diaspora communities.[57] Through these first-hand records, abstract historical narratives of past events are fleshed out and tied to individual experience, thus creating another level of understanding and remembering. Collectively, they represent a new wave of efforts to keep alive the memory of different ethno-social groups who for-

55 Koch, "The National Self-Determination Projects of Greece and Bulgaria," 304. Also see the website for the Odessa Hellenic Foundation for Culture, accessed March 28, 2022, http://hfcodessa.org/en/museum/.

56 See, for example, the Facebook group Romanya Yerdeğişim Göçmenleri – Romanian Turks Exchange Migration, accessed March 28, 2022, https://www.facebook.com/groups/13889500458/.

57 For the deported Meskhetian Turks, see Ömer Beyoğlu, ed., *1944 Ahıska Sürgünü Son Tanıklar* (Ankara: YTB, 2019). For exile experiences from Crimea, see the website of the Crimean Turks Cultural and Mutual Aid Society, accessed March 28, 2022, https://www.surgun.org, and the journal *EMEL* at https://emelvakfi.org/emel/, as well as the autobiography of a Crimean Tatar educator translated into English by his daughter: Fevzi Altuğ, *Thornbush: Memoirs of a Crimean Tatar Nationalist and Educator Relating to the Russian Civil War and the Famine of 1921–1922*, trans. İnci A. Bowman (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2004). For Armenian oral accounts (from Ordu, Samsun, Trabzon, and elsewhere), see the oral histories section of the archive of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan–Dearborn: https://umdearborn.edu/casl/centers-institutes/armenian-research-center-0/collections-and-archives/oral-histories. For biographic accounts, see Selçuk Küpçük, "Ordu Şehrinde Gayri Resminin Tarihi: Bakırcı Harut Usta'nın Öyküsü," and Ibrahim Dizman, "Ordu: Çoklu Bir Kimlik Bileşkesi," in *Karadeniz'in Kaybolan Kimliği*, ed. Uğur Biryol (Istanbul: İletişim, 2014), 147–77, 179–198. For Pontus Greek memory, see Vahit Tursun, "Farklı Kimliğin Somut ve Psikolojik Bedeli," in Biryol, *Karadeniz'in Kaybolan Kimliği*, 119–26.

merly inhabited the Black Sea region through the creation of diverse places of memory, among them museums, recordings of memory, and virtual communities. While these efforts focus on collection and remembering, and can thus be viewed as primarily preservative in focus, others are more confrontational.

3.2 Counter-Hegemonic Monuments and Dissonant Memories

Places of memory that actively challenge dominant narratives are termed counter-monuments. These are visual and material expressions of the memory and experience of minority, diaspora, or other communities which challenge or reject the normative and officially accepted version of the past. Counter-monuments are spaces of resistance that create disruptive openings, real and imaginary "landscapes of minority" in the landscape of official narratives. In the case of exiled communities, they can also establish counter-narratives related to another nation's established history and view of the past, and reintroduce ignored or suppressed events and identities.[58] When conceptually well planned, they can promote fruitful discussion, debate, and reflection and encourage the inclusion of formerly neglected dimensions of that past in official narratives. At the same time, counter-monuments run the risk of provoking violent reactions and vigilant defense of the established version of an official narrative of a national past; that is what happened to monuments erected in commemoration of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 in Alushta and the memorial in Mamaşai (renamed Orlovka) to Crimean Tatars who served in the Soviet army and were either killed in World War II or exiled after their return to their village near Sevastopol. Both of these monuments were vandalized and destroyed shortly after their unveiling.[59]

Two monuments of different function and scope exemplify the role of counter-memory in the Black Sea region. The first is the so-called Monument to the Genocide of the Greeks of Pontus. Erected in Piraeus, Greece, in 2017, the provocatively named monument further inflamed the already tense debate on the different readings of the population exchange in 1923 between Turkey and Greece and the subject of the Pontic Greeks, who hail originally from northeastern Anatolia. Erected in the square where the Athenian general Themistocles launched the fleet that defeated Persia at the battles of Marathon and Salamis in 480 BCE, the monument establishes a historical link to ancient Greek success and territorial expansion and dominance. It was inaugurated with a liturgical procession that included the sacred icon of the Virgin Mary of Sumela—a powerful symbol of Pontic Hellenism, the centerpiece of the Sumela Mon-

58 Mitchell, "Monuments, Memorials, and the Politics of Memory," 451.

59 "Ukraine Monument to Victims of Crimean Tatars' Deportation Vandalized," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, January 17, 2014, https://www.rferl.org/a/crimea-tatars-memorial-vandalized/25233461.html; Halya Coynash, "Monument to Crimean Tatar WWII Heroes Which Debunked Russia's Lies Destroyed in Occupied Crimea," Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group Information Portal, May 10, 2019, https://khpg.org/en/1557448771.

astery near Trabzon in Turkey, brought to Greece when the Pontic Greeks left the country in the 1920s—thus also making a spatio-religious connection to the eastern Black Sea region and the Pontic Greeks' expulsion from their historical homeland. Given its religious dimension and reference to the greatness of ancient Greece, the memorial to this displaced community is a powerful counter-hegemonic monument that challenges the narrative of the eastern Black Sea coast as exclusively Turkish, a narrative that is closely tied to the rise of the Turkish Republic and the wave of nationalist historiography that came with it.

The second example is a memorial in the village of Taraktaş, near Sudaq (Crimea), to three young Crimean Tatars who were accused of killing a priest in 1866 and executed two years later. The fate of the three men—who, according to the Crimean Tatars, were falsely accused—was the source of great sorrow for the people of Taraktaş, and a folk song lamenting their deaths is still popular even today.[60] On May 18, 1998, fifty-four years after their deportation from the village in 1944, the returned people of Taraktaş erected a memorial next to the graves of the three men. Regular commemorative ceremonies are held at the site by Crimean Tatars who have returned to their villages, turning the monument into a site of remembrance for all the victims of oppression and despotism. And gravestones from destroyed cemeteries nearby have been collected at the site as well, further contributing to its accusatory dimension, thus creating an uneasy stumbling block in the neat hegemonic Russian narrative of the Crimean landscape.[61] Compared with the genocide monument in Greece, this monument, on a much more modest scale, perforates the official amnesia about the fate of these people, whose voices have been silenced since the Russian annexation of the peninsula.

Both examples show how commemoration of forgotten or oppressed events of the past creates a rupture in official and imposed narratives. But at present, neither has served to initiate much reflection or dialogue, let alone a new negotiation of established narratives. Nevertheless, the creation of counter-monuments, as an act of standing up for and reintroducing officially neglected dimensions of the past, is an effective tool against oblivion, against forgetting and being forgotten. So too is another strong vessel of place-bound memory: the name of a place.

60 For different orally transmitted versions of the Crimean Tatar folk song, see Feridekhanum Useinova, "Sözlü Gelenekte Kırım Tatar Türklerinin Muhacereti ve Sürgünler" (master's thesis, Gazi University, 2016), 43–49.

61 For an analysis of the Taraktaş tragedy based on archival research, see Ibraim Abdullaev, *Taraktashskaia tragediia* (Simferopol: Tezis, 2010).

3.3 Spatial Violence and Resistance: Erasing of Place Names and Place-Bound Memory

The way a place, a settlement, or a cultural landscape is designated contributes to how it is perceived; a name is fundamental in constructing not only the geographical but also the historical and socio-cultural dimensions of the identity of space and place. In other words, the name, with all its connotations, constitutes the place. This holds both for real, physical places and for imaginary, intangible sites of memory. Therefore, toponyms are places of memory par excellence, and research on place names includes such dimensions as their meaning and the various namings and renamings of a place or space in different textual sources and maps across history. Recent scholarship has been particularly interested in the close connection between place names and heritage, identity, and memory.[62]

The Black Sea region has undergone many different phases of renaming, through colonization, conquests, resettlements, and direct colonial and political intervention. In Antiquity, newly founded Greek colonies "mapped" the Black Sea region with Greek names, and later communities, conquerors, settlers, and others added names of their own, including Turco-Tatar Islamic names, imprinting their identity on places by renaming them. Often, places have several names, and different communities use the name with which they identify themselves. One of the first systematic renaming projects was undertaken after the conquest of the northern Black Sea region by Russia at the end of the eighteenth century. Part of the colonial project of Catherine II was the symbolic incorporation of the cultural landscape into her empire, in line with which historically rooted place names were changed into names connecting them to ancient Greek settlements.[63]

This radical remapping was followed by many others in different parts of the region. Reinterpretation through renaming has been particularly marked during periods of nation building, serving as a preferred tool in the construction of a national past and common identity. Renaming, the erasing of a place name or its replacement by a new one, creates new connections between the past and present and a uniform citizenry. It is a manipulative political act with the goal of changing the perception of the past based on the ideological framework of those who change the names; it is a reinvention of national identity and history, but also an act of memory annihilation and spatial violence against historically given names and toponyms.[64] Meanwhile, clinging firmly to a name, or re-implanting it onto a real or imaginary landscape, can be understood as

62 Derek H. Alderman, "Place, Naming and the Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 196.

63 Kelly O'Neill, "Constructing Russian Identity in the Imperial Borderland: Architecture, Islam, and the Transformation of the Crimean Landscape," *Ab Imperio* 2 (2006): 163–92.

64 On government change and the "reorganization of memory" through renaming, see Aleida Assmann and Linda Shortt, "Memory and Political Change: Introduction," in *Memory and Political Change*, 7.

an act of symbolic resistance and as a refusal to forget the dimensions of a place connected to that name. Thus, groups like minority communities and diasporas create their own counter-memories through an insistence on the use of alternative place names, tying together place and group identity.

Exemplifying this tendency is the map of Crimean Tatar place names, an effort dating to the post-Soviet period. In tandem with the physical deportation of the Crimean Tatars and other communities in 1944, Soviet authorities carried out an ethnic cleansing of all Turkic and Crimean Tatar village and city names, replacing them with Russian names to erase, once and for all, the memory of these people. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, returning Crimean Tatars sought to reintroduce the original place names. While this goal was never realized, their efforts did succeed in producing a map with more than nine hundred original names, including names of extinct villages, and a comprehensive list with corresponding Russian names was compiled by Crimean Tatar scholars and made available online, in the "hope that many individuals seeking their roots in Crimea will be able to locate the place of their ancestors."[65] This map is a virtual reclamation of a territory and an insistence on place-bound remembrance of past and present identity. In 2016, these original names even made a brief appearance on Google Maps' online maps of Crimea, following Ukraine's decision, within the framework of its de-communization program, to reinstall Turkic and Crimean Tatar geographical names erased during the Soviet era. Because Crimea had been under Russian occupation since 2014, this can be seen as an example of the international community, here represented by Google Maps, supporting Ukraine's effort to respect the heritage of the Crimean Tatars and distance itself from Soviet ideology policies. However, after intervention by Russia, Google removed these historically and culturally rooted names and reinstalled the names from the Soviet period, even on the Ukrainian versions of Google Maps.[66]

In Turkey, the renaming of topographic and settlement names has been carried out in different periods. During the Ottoman period in 1913–16, when the government wanted all names of non-Turkish, non-Islamic settlements to be changed into Turkish ones, villages were given new names designed "to reflect diligence and military victories."[67] Later in the twentieth century, especially from 1957 to 1978, place names of different origins were again changed to remap the cultural landscape into a territory of Turkishness. On Turkey's northern shore, nearly five hundred names of villages were replaced because they were Greek (*Rumca*), Armenian, Georgian, or Laz, and this renaming simultaneously erased both the historical presence of deported groups and

65 For the map and relevant literature on its compiling, see "Crimean Tatar Place Names," International Committee for Crimea, accessed September 2, 2022, https://iccrimea.org/place/placenames.html.

66 "Google Maps Reverts to Soviet-Era Place Names in Crimea," *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, July 29, 2016, https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-crimea-google-maps-soviet-names/27888523.html.

67 Daniel Steven Fields, *State Imposed Place Name Change in Turkey and the Response of Giresun Residents* (master's thesis, Sabancı University, 2013), 69.

the historically rooted cultural identity of those who remained.[68] This went hand in hand with efforts to prove that the roots of places names were etymologically Turkish, and thus that the places themselves were originally Turkish as well.[69] Similar attempts to connect place to an imagined national past can be seen on the other side of the border, in Georgia, where place names are etymologically retraced to legendary figures, this time erasing the Ottoman dimension of the past.[70] Similar to the map of Crimea, the various erased or forgotten historical names of places in the southern Black Sea and their etymologies are reinstalled in the toponymic inventory of the so-called Index Anatolicus, a steadily evolving map open to individual contributions with entries of actual and historical names of places in former Ottoman territories, at present Turkey and the Balkans. Information on the map includes historically known names, related dates, and brief information on the meaning of the names, thus constituting a virtual window onto the past dimensions of places.[71]

Another example of a similar dynamic playing out—an effort to create a uniform landscape and to erase dissonant cultural identities and place-bound memories through renaming—can be seen in southern Bulgaria, where place names of Turkish and Arabic origin are still debated.[72] There, this push for renaming and the related erasing of other group identities gained a new wind in the 1980s, when Muslim Turks and Tatars were forced to change their first and last names to Slavic-Christian ones, while those who resisted were severely persecuted, sometimes even expelled from the country, triggering a wave of emigration to Turkey.[73]

In all these cases, names of places, sites, and individuals as holders of memory and acts of renaming are part of the negotiation of past and present place-bound identity, and efforts to preserve or reinstate old names are acts of resistance against manipulative transformations, assimilation, and forced forgetting.

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68 Harun Tunçel, "Türkiye'de İsmi değiştirilen Köyler," *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 10, no. 2 (2000): 23–34.

69 For these efforts, see especially the works of Fahreddin Kırzıoğlu. For a critical approach to the work of Kırzıoğlu, see Hovann H. Simonian, "History and Identity among the Hemshin," *Central Asian Survey* 25, no. 1–2 (March–June 2006): 164–70.

70 Mathijs Pelkmans, *Defending the Border: Identity, Religion, and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 65.

71 The website, which Sevan Nişanyan has operated since 2010, is Nişanyan Yeradları: Türkiye ve Çevre Ülkeler Yerleşim Birimleri Envanteri, last modified September 1, 2022, https://nisanyanmap.com/. See also Fields, *State Imposed Place Name Change in Turkey*.

72 Martin Dimitrov, "Bulgarian City Stirs Tensions by Changing Place Names," *Balkan Insight*, June 1, 2018, https://balkaninsight.com/2018/06/01/bulgarian-nationalists-stir-tensions-by-changing-turkish-arabic-names-in-stara-zagora-area-06-01-2018/.

73 For the 1980s, see Stefan Troebst, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung auf Bulgarisch: Zum Umgang mit den Akten der ehemaligen Staatssicherheit und zur strafrechtlichen Verfolgung kommunistischer Staatsverbrechen," in *Zwischen Arktis, Adria und Armenien: Das östliche Europa und seine Ränder; Aufsätze, Essays und Vorträge, 1983–2016* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2017), 184–85. See also Tomasz Kamusella, *Ethnic Cleansing During the Cold War: The Forgotten 1989 Expulsion of Turks from Communist Bulgaria* (London: Routledge, 2019).

The dimensions of memory conservation discussed here and the struggle against (imposed) forgetting of minority and diaspora memory, the collection and making available of individual experience through virtual storage, the establishment of counter-narratives and -monuments, and the insistence on retaining or reintroducing changed place names are all strategies of place-bound commemoration against forgetting.

However, there is another dimension of place-bound remembering which should not be neglected: Memory can be retrieved through an examination of the places themselves. The final section of this paper thus turns to a closer examination of a selection of specific sites and elaborates on the layers of identity and memory they contain, some forgotten or hidden, many still retraceable through their material remains or documentation.

4 Selected Sites of Memory

The last section of this chapter looks at the different dimensions of place-bound memory in four selected sites to illustrate some aspects of their complexity, to show how these dimensions are prioritized in local and national heritage politics, and to explore how the current way the sites are presented creates site-specific narratives that shape our perception of them. The re-examination of a place's past and the effort (official and individual) to reveal and promote awareness of its masked and ignored dimensions enriches and, in the long run, enhances the way we understand these sites.

4.1 Constanța

Constanţa (ancient Tomis), the oldest continuously inhabited city in Romania and one of the biggest ports of the Black Sea region, is a particularly interesting heritage site, as it is home to remains belonging to Antiquity, the Ottoman era, and the national Romanian past. In the Ottoman period, several prayer houses adorned the city; as late as the second half of the nineteenth century, a church for the Greek community was constructed by decree of the sultan in 1865–67. The later-destroyed Mahmudiye Mosque (named after Mahmud II) was situated close to the harbor, and the Hünkar (Sovereign) or Aziziye Mosque (after Abdülaziz) was erected in 1867–68 for the immigrants from Crimea who settled in Constanţa.[74] Still open for prayer, the Hünkar Mosque presents on its entrance façade the carved *tuğra*, or imperial monogram, of the Ottoman sultan, proudly expressing his territorial claim.

74 Bruno Andreşoiu, ed., *Geamii: Minarete pe cerul Dobrogei – Minarets in a Dobrogea Sky* (Bucharest: Igloo, 2012), 34–41. For the mosques erected during the reign of Abdülaziz in different parts of the Ottoman Empire, see Kasım Hızlı and Selman Kılınç, *Sultan Abdülaziz Han'ın Yadigarları: Aziziye Camileri* (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2013).

Constanţa gained importance in the Romanian Republic from the late nineteenth century on, and its urban fabric was restructured according to the ideological tenets of the young nation. The Romanian Orthodox cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul was built in 1883–85, and some forty years later, the archbishop's palace was constructed next to the church. A statue of the Roman poet Ovid (43 BCE–17/18 CE), who was exiled there, was made by the sculptor Ettore Ferrari in 1887; it now dominates the square, to which it has lent its name. Many new buildings were erected in the early twentieth century: the Casino, in Art Nouveau style, inaugurated in 1910; and, more importantly, the City Hall on Ovid Square, now the Constanța History and Archaeology Museum, designed in the Romanian Revival style, together with the square, by the architect Victor Ștefănescu in 1911 and constructed, interrupted by World War I, between 1912 and 1921.[75] Today, this museum not only holds an extensive archaeological collection, including a huge Roman mosaic *in situ* next to the museum building, but also illustrates the efforts to establish a Romanian national history narrative. In 1966–68, its so-called *sala pictată* (the painted hall) was adorned with frescoes showing historical scenes from Antiquity (Greek, Roman), the Middle Ages, and the independent Romanian nation, including even contemporary scenes of the Communist regime. However, any reference to the centuries-long Turkish/Ottoman past is absent from this national museum.

Ottoman memory had to be replaced by a new national claim without upsetting the still-numerous Muslim population in Constanța and the then still existing Ottoman Empire. In 1905, the construction of a Royal Mosque was decided, partially as a response to the recognition of the authority of the Romanian Church in Macedonia by Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909). Construction started in 1910 on the site of the Mahmudiye Mosque, which was torn down to create space for the new mosque. The first cornerstone was laid in the presence of the head of the Romanian bureau of religious affairs and the Ottoman ambassador. The mosque was inaugurated in 1913 by the Romanian king Carol I, and the sultan sent a huge carpet from the renowned imperial Hereke Factory for the interior of the mosque. The mosque was built in the then-popular eclectic style, with an impressive dome and a high minaret, by chief architect Victor Ștefănescu on the tip of the historical city center, dominating the harbor region and replacing the Ottoman visual presence with a new Romanian edifice. The architect, who was invited to Istanbul in 1912 to study Ottoman religious architecture, was awarded the prestigious Mecidiye order on behalf of Sultan Mehmed V (r. 1909–18) at the inauguration ceremony.

These few selected examples of the cultural heritage of Constanţa illustrate the complex interplay and overlay of sites of memory and the multicultural, multilayered past of the town and region. They also illustrate how a young, independent Romania

75 "Proiect 'Reabilitarea Muzeului de Istorie Naţională şi Arheologie Constanţa' Cod SMIS 116053," website of the Constanța Museum of National History and Archaeology, accessed March 28, 2022, https://minac.ro/muzeu-istori-CT/index.php.

shaped the perception of its history through a national lens, integrating and excluding well-selected dimensions of its past.

4.2 Batumi and Aziziye

Strategically situated on the connection to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea and home to the most important harbor in the eastern Black Sea, Batumi has been the scene of numerous territorial claims and, as a consequence, clashing and competing place-bound memories.

The history of Batumi goes back to the Greek colony Colchis, later a Roman-Byzantine garrison, and during the Middle Ages it was part of different local (Georgian) kingdoms. Batumi belonged to the Ottoman Empire from 1614 to 1878; it was then incorporated into the Russian Empire after the Russo-Ottoman War, returned to the Ottomans in 1918, and brought into the Soviet Union in 1920, where it remained until Georgian independence in 1989. Today, Batumi is a popular regional tourist destination famous for its casinos. Similar to other places around the Black Sea, Batumi embraces its antique past as a Greek colony and related legends. A statue of Medea and the Golden Fleece—a local princess in the mythological account of Jason and the Argonauts—by the sculptor Davit Khmaladze (unveiled in 2007) dominates the city's Europe Square. Another monument, *Man and Woman*, was installed in 2010 on the tip of historical Batumi; it is a moving work of art in which two lovers are brought together only to separate in the next instant, by the artist Tamara Kvesitadze. The people of the city have renamed this statue "Ali and Nino," relating it to the famous protagonists of the novel by the same name about the impossible love between a Georgian Christian girl and an aristocratic Azerbaijani boy in Bolshevik-era Baku.[76] Today these two monuments are among the best known sites in Batumi; together, they shape the perceptions of the city by tying Batumi to two elements of the city's many pasts, the first one relating to ancient Greek culture and Europe, the other to the interplay of complex regional identities.

Neglected here is the contested and delicate subject of the city's Ottoman past. Modern Batumi was actually founded by the Ottomans in the second half of the nineteenth century, prior to which it had been little more than a small village. The Ottoman Empire undertook great efforts to build up and defend this region and its important port, restructuring it as a stronghold against an advancing Russia in parallel with similar efforts in the western Black Sea. These efforts began in 1864 under Sultan Abdülaziz (the town was renamed Aziziye in his honor) and continued until 1878, when the

76 Originally published by Kurban Said, the pseudonym for Lev Nussimbaum, in 1937. For the English version, see Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino*, trans. Jenia Graman (New York: The Overlook Press, 1996).

territory was lost to Russia.[77] The Ottomans developed the city's harbor, constructed a lighthouse, a quarantine center, a customs building, fortifications, barracks, and a government office, and they planned churches and cemeteries for the city's non-Muslim communities similar to those built in Samsun and Constanţa in the post-Tanzimat period. The still-functioning St. Nicholas's Church (1865–71), designated for the Rum (Anatolian Greeks) who were brought there from Rize and Samsun, is situated in the historic city center.

This vibrant chapter of the city's past is not commemorated today, and Georgia's cultural-heritage register lists only a single historical mosque still functioning in Batumi, the Orta Cami (Central Mosque) (1866) on the border of old Batumi. Another prayer house, the octagonal Aziziye Mosque (1869), a symbol of Ottoman domination, has disappeared. This mosque can serve as an interesting example of the transformation of a contested site of memory and illustrates debates on cultural legacies. Also known as the Valide Sultan (Queen Mother) Mosque, as it was partly supported by Pertevniyal Sultan (d. 1883), the Circassian mother of Sultan Abdülaziz, the mosque was constructed together with the new city and bore the same name, Aziziye. Though it continued to be used by local Muslims, under Russian rule it eventually fell into neglect and was torn down in the 1930s.[78] The Aziziye Mosque opened onto the Aziziye Square, which, deprived of the mosque, was renamed Lenin Square in Soviet times and is currently called Freedom Square. Today, the mosque and its urban context exist only in the memory of Georgian and Turkish Muslims, the memory being nourished by its documentation in archival material, plans, and some photographs. Without these documents, the memory of this mosque would not continue—and thus in this case, it is the photographs and other documents that are a *lieu de mémoire*, which can be reanimated at any time. In 2012, a bilateral agreement between Turkey and Georgia was signed with an accord for the reconstruction of the Aziziye Mosque, initially at the site of the original mosque on the headland in the center of Batumi, but later, because of local opposition, at another location. The matter has never been resolved, and discussions about the reconstruction of the Aziziye or the erection of a new mosque continue. This example illustrates the difficulty of dealing with contested or excluded pasts. What is at stake here is not the edifice itself, it is the struggle over a specific dimension of the region's past and its sites of memory, at once transformed, rejected, suppressed, and reclaimed.[79]

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77 Abdullah Bay, "Limanı Olan Bir Kasabadan Liman Kentine: Batum Şehri (1830–1905)," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 26, no. 1 (2016): 61–80; Selma Saltoğlu, "Batum Burunbaşı Mevkii'nde Aziziye Şehrinin Kuruluşu, Mimarisi ve Osmanlı Dönemi Yapıları (1864–1878)" (master's thesis, Istanbul Technical University, 2016).

78 Saltoğlu, "Batum," 71–79.

79 See Ruslan Baramidze, "Political Process, Social Activity and Individual Strategies in Georgia: Institutional Transformations, Struggle for Identity and Georgian Muslims in the Media," *CAP (Central Asian Program) Papers* 166 (April 2016): 1–17; Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, "Islamic Art and Architecture in a Contested Region: Negotiating the Muslim Heritage in Meskheti, Georgia," in "Hinterland Forces: Architec-

4.3 The Southern Black Sea Region: Trabzon and the Sumela Monastery

Trabzon

Unlike Samsun, discussed above, which gained importance only in the second half of the nineteenth century, Trabzon was always a vital cultural center in the eastern Black Sea region. A Greek colony, later part of the Romano-Byzantine world, it was the capital of the Empire of Trebizond founded by the noble family of the Komnenoi (1204–61), thus outliving Constantinople. Conquered by Mehmed II in 1461, the city was a sanjak (administrative district) under Ottoman rule, with an Ottoman prince (*şehzade*) at its head. The first prince to be installed as a sanjak-bey, between 1487 and 1510, was Selim I (1470–1520); and his son, Süleyman I, known as the Magnificent (1494–1566), was born in Trabzon. Today, the city is perceived by Pontic Greeks as the capital of their lost empire, a symbol of the irretrievable loss of their culture in the region they left behind in the *mübadele* in 1923–24; in contrast, it is understood in Turkey as the city of the princes (*şehzade şehri*) and viewed as a symbol of the successful conquest of the last stronghold of Byzantium.

In the nineteenth century, like other port cities of the Black Sea region, Trabzon experienced considerable growth. The brisk trade passing through the city's well-situated natural harbor helped give rise to rich Pontic Greek, Armenian, and Muslim merchant families, the best known among them the Nemlizade.[80] Trabzon flourished further after the Ottoman–Russian War in 1877–78 and the Russian conquest of the southern Caucasus, as emigrants from the conquered lands, including many merchants, flocked to the city and its vicinity; Western countries and Russia opened consulates there, and foreign trade companies established branch offices. At the turn of the twentieth century, Trabzon was a wealthy city with, besides its Byzantine and earlier Ottoman heritage, many newly constructed government and educational buildings, like the still-extant Muslim İdadisi (High School from 1880, currently the Science High School) and the Greek College (1902, open until 1921; currently the Kanuni Anadolu Lisesi), both prominently facing the sea; both are depicted in their original splendor on postcards from the period and on the web pages of the current educational institutions they host, standing as witnesses to the pre-republican flourishing city at the turn of the century. Another hallmark of the city was the Sümer (Turan) Cinema, also known as the Opera of Trabzon, as it was also a stage for opera and theater performances. A unique building constructed in the Art Nouveau style in 1912, the cinema was demolished in 1958 during the urban transformation of the city and is today remembered

tural Responses at the Margins," ed. Angela Andersen, special issue, *International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA)* 11, no. 2 (2022): 293–321.

80 The Nemlizade Hacı Ahmet Efendi corporation, established in 1869, is one of the first documented Ottoman joint-stock companies: Yasemin Nemlioğlu Koca, "19. Yüzyılda Trabzon Limanı: Seferler, Tüccarlar, Mallar," *Karadeniz Araştırmaları*, no. 49 (Spring 2016): 157–87.

only in images. It nevertheless remains part of Trabzon's current visual memory; and in recent times, voices of regret about the loss of this beautiful building and calls for its reconstruction have been raised, criticizing the decisions made by Trabzon's urban modernizers in the 1950s.

Discussions about tearing down the building as part of an effort to modernize the city were taking place as early as the 1930s. Part of the move to apply modern principles of urban design to the city was the commission of a city plan, a novelty introduced in Turkey in that period. Between 1931 and 1958, Trabzon underwent fundamental changes in the new republican spirit: the French urbanist Jacques H. Lambert produced a master plan and preliminary development project for Trabzon in 1937–38, and a year later, many historical streets and neighborhoods were renamed after important republican figures and institutions. The reorganization changed and covered up the earlier layers of the city, destroying some buildings while preserving but reinterpreting others in new ways.[81]

Two mansions constructed by rich Greek bankers and merchants in the eclectic, neo-classical European style of around 1900, reflecting the wealth and ambition of their owners, exemplify this transformation and conversion.[82] Both buildings, witnesses to Trabzon's rich cultural life at the turn of the century, changed ownership, meaning, and function in the young Turkish Republic. With the change of ownership, the memory of the first owners also disappeared.[83]

The first of these, a summer residence erected between 1890 and 1912 for the merchant Konstantin Kabayanidis on the slopes of Soğuksu near Trabzon, caught the eye of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on his visits to the city, and he stayed there twice, in 1924 and 1937. The kiosk was given to Atatürk as a gift and was later transformed into a museum. Today, the Atatürk Kiosk is among the top tourist attractions in Trabzon.[84]

The second, an even grander example, is the Kostaki Kiosk, since 2001 the Museum of Trabzon, in the heart of the city. This mansion was constructed around 1900 by the wealthy Kostaki Teophylaktov, who, immigrating from the northeastern shore of the Black Sea, settled in Trabzon around 1880. Falling into financial troubles in the aftermath of the Russian occupation of the city (1916–18), he was forced to auction off the

81 Evrim Düzenli, "Cumhuriyeti Trabzon'da İnşa Etmek: Belediye Zabıtnamelerinde 'Meydan,' 'Anıt,' 'Müze' ve 'Sinema' Tartışmaları (1936–1958)," and "J. H. Lambert Trabzon'da, Yıl 1937: Trabzon'da 'Şehirleşme' Çabaları ve Lambert'in 'Trabzon İmar Planı ve İzah Raporu' Üzerine Notlar," in Tuluk and Düzenli, *Trabzon Kent Mirası*, 265–306.

82 See also Stéphane Yerasimos, "La Communauté grecque de Trabzon au XIXe siècle," in *CIÉPO Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi VII. Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, İlber Ortaylı, and Emeri van Donzel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1994), 241–67.

83 For the mansions in Trabzon included in the inventory of cultural property, see Hamiyet Özen et al., *Trabzon Kent İçi Kültür Varlıkları Envanteri* (Trabzon: T.C. Trabzon Valiliği İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü Yay., 2010), 265–82.

84 Gültekin Kâmil Birlik, "Trabzon Atatürk Köşkü," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, no. 59 (Fall 2016): 51–71.

mansion. It was bought by Akif Kaptan Bey of the Nemlizades and was soon thereafter expropriated by the government. It was successively used as the Russian consulate, the Trabzon Provincial Hall, and, between 1936 and 1987, a school for girls. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his wife Latife Hanım are known to have stayed here in 1924.

It is worth taking a closer look at the architecture and interior decoration of the Kostaki Kiosk, thought to have been constructed by an Italian architect.[85] The impressive building is erected in an eclectic neo-Classical style with a bi-colored façade decorated with Italian tiles; several balconies and tower-like elevations covered with domes create multiple vistas on Trabzon and the sea. The interior bears sophisticated decoration, reflecting the mindset of the community the rich merchant was part of. While some of the rooms display the neo-Turkish decoration that was in fashion during the revival of Turkish art, of a perhaps slightly later date, other rooms are embellished with neo-Classical and neo-Baroque decoration programs. The most interesting room is without doubt the so-called play/fortune room. This room's ceiling is not only decorated in a neo-Classical style; the iconography of the depictions contains multiple references to Greek mythology. Hermes, the herald of the gods and protector of merchants, is depicted in a cartouche, and two scenes show Zeus on his throne surrounded by his entourage. Other motifs include mythological creatures and the signs of the zodiac. This edifice, especially the references to Greek mythology, offers a glimpse into the now-forgotten world of the educated merchants and urban elite at the turn of the nineteenth century, a shared world that spanned the Black Sea, with similar architectural and decorative programs found everywhere from Constanţa to Odesa and even Istanbul.

Sumela Monastery

The Greek Orthodox Panagia ("Virgin Mary") Sumela Monastery is unquestionably one of the most famous and most contested sites of memory in the southern Black Sea region, and it is exemplary of the innumerable holy sites related to the region's pre-Ottoman and Christian dimensions. Situated in the mountainous region behind Trabzon, the monastery dedicated to the Virgin is said to date back to the fourth century and, under sultanic protection, continued to function until 1923. Housing, among other significant items, one of the most venerated icons of the Virgin (now located in a reconstruction of the site in Greece),[86] it was the spiritual center and pilgrimage place of the Orthodox Greeks and a symbolic site of identification for Pontic Hellenism; this second quality made it an unwieldy monument in the early republic, when it was closed. A more neutral attitude toward the site has been adopted only in the recent years, in part to meet the international demands of heritage politics.

85 Candan Nemlioğlu, *Trabzon'un Abidevi Eserlerinden Kostaki Köşkü* (Istanbul: Nöbetçi, 2008).
86 Michel Bruneau, "Lieux de mémoire, hauts lieux et diaspora: Sanda et Soumela dans la diaspora grecque pontique," *L'Espace Géographique* 25, no. 2 (1995): 124–34.

Abandoned to its fate for decades, services once more began to be held at the monastery between 2010 and 2015, when restoration work began, and again beginning in 2021, when Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew performed the liturgy on the occasion of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin. The monastery's Ayazma (holy water) is attributed healing powers and has always been in demand by both Christians and Muslims, the latter of whom show great respect to this site as the Meryemana (Mother Mary) monastery. The site, similar to many other religious places across the Black Sea region, thus shows dimensions of syncretism.[87] Reopened as a museum in 2020, Sumela is currently promoted as an important regional touristic attraction, while the descendants of Pontic Greeks visit the monastery for its spiritual dimension.

The city of Trabzon and Sumela Monastery both are multilayered sites of memory with many forgotten or excluded rich dimensions, claimed and used by different communities and advocacy groups.

4.4 Muslim Heritage in Crimea: Bağçasaray Neighborhood

My last example in this selection of places of memory is a region in Crimea. The reader has no doubt realized that Crimea and related memories are present throughout the lines of this chapter. As already noted, the peninsula itself is one of the most disputed territories in the Black Sea region, and many of its historical and cultural sites are claimed by different stakeholders as part of a struggle over the past and for future legitimacy. One such site is the former capital of the Crimean Khanate, Bağçasaray (founded in the first half of the sixteenth century), in the Çürük Suv valley in the southwestern part of the peninsula. The same area is also home to the historical settlement of Salaçıq at the end of the valley, the hilltop Qırq Yer (later Çufut Qale, "the fortress of the Jews"), and in between, an ancient dervish lodge and cemetery with the tomb of the saint Gazi Mansur, the region called Eskiyurt (literally "old settlement," renamed Podgorodnee in 1948), and the nearby Azizler (saints) graveyard. All these Muslim sites are not only considered sacred by Crimean Tatars, they are also fundamental for their historical self-conception and identity, as they are the scene of the formation of the Crimean Khanate in the mid-fifteenth century, while other material remains testify to the presence of the khanate's predecessor state, the Golden Horde.[88]

The Khan's Palace in Bağçasaray (currently the Bakhchisarai Historical, Cultural, and Archaeological Museum-Reserve), discussed above, is a site which holds innumerable place-bound narratives and memories of multilayered and even multidirectional potential – a *lieu de mémoire* par excellence.[89] However, sites in this region are also

87 Anthony M. Bryer and David Winfield, "Nineteenth-Century Monuments in the City and Vilayet of Trebizond: Architectural and Historical Notes," *Archeion Pontou* 30 (1970): 277–78.

88 For these sites, see Kırımlı and Kançal-Ferrari, *Kırım'daki Kırım Tatar (Türk-Islām) Mimarī Yadigārları.*

89 Nicole Kançal-Ferrari, *Kırım'dan Kalan Miras: Hansaray* (Istanbul: Klasik, 2005).

considered sacred by other ethno-religious communities. Examples include the historical Balta Tiymez (literally "untouched by the axe") Karaite cemetery in an oak grove held sacred by the Crimean Karaites, the later inhabitants of Çufut Qale; another is the Orthodox Assumption (Dormition) Monastery. Both sites are situated on the slopes of Qırq Yer, the latter on the edge of a route in the valley linking the foot and the top of the hill. While no historical territorial dispute ever existed between the Crimean Karaites and Tatars, the situation is different for Islamic and competing Orthodox Christian sites. At the end of the Soviet era, the Muslim community returned from its deportation and exile and sought to reclaim its religiously and culturally significant sites and houses of worship, or simply to have them protected from destruction. At the same time, with the end of Soviet-era restrictions on religion, the Orthodox Church once more looked to expand. As a consequence, conflicts arose over places and sites claimed by both communities. Today, also due to the new political situation in the peninsula, a fragile (im-)balance exists between the two communities regarding these overlapping memory spaces and official attitudes toward heritage protection.[90]

These four selected sites, each in its own way, illustrate the manifold dimensions of place-bound memory and the interplay between remembering and religious, cultural, and territorial claims, ideologies, and national history constructs, as well as the transformation and selective appropriation and exclusion of memory connected with these places and sites. They also make clear that the excluded dimensions of a place's past continue to haunt it, hindering any fruitful renegotiation of the site until they are included in the way it is perceived and remembered.

5 Conclusion

In the sections above, I have presented different dimensions of places of memory related to the Black Sea region – tangible and intangible, conceptual constructs, and protected heritage sites. More than an all-inclusive overview, my goal was to show how remembrance and forgetting related to a specific territory have to be seen in their larger context and complexity, and how place-bound memory and understanding of space is directed by multifaceted processes of selection, many of them political. This selective approach has an impact on the current and future interpretation of sites in the region on multiple levels: locally, nationally, globally, and across diaspora communities.

The beginning of the twenty-first century was marked by a strong belief in a new politics of remembering, a belief that we had moved beyond a narrowly nationalist and ideological relationship with our collective pasts, and by a transformation in regional

90 Dariya Afanasyeva, "Shared Heritage: Sacred Landscapes of Crimea, Their Development and Protection in the Multicultural Context" (PhD dissertation, Brandenburg University of Technology, 2015); for the expansion of the Orthodox Church and the conflicts with Muslim sites, including the region mentioned here, see Kozelsky, "The Challenges of Church Archaeology in Post-Soviet Crimea," 82–90; O'Neill, *Claiming Crimea.*

discourses on cultural heritage and places of memory toward a more global vision of identity, culture, and memory. Now, twenty years later, we know better: the haunting, recurring memories bound to sites, instrumentalized by dominant agents, implemented in the past and recreated in the present, are omnipresent, especially in regions like the Black Sea, where both past and present remain fiercely contested. Therefore, for the sake of equity, dominant narratives of memory sites have to be counteracted by other, silenced memories. This effort of renegotiation, the constant insistence on the multiple possible other readings of cultural landscapes and places, of the existence of alternative, dissonant, and muted pasts, of counter-memories and alternative sites of memory, is not separate from scholarship—not the private domain of the activist—but goes hand in hand with research, scholarly investigation, and interdisciplinary work that pairs the fields of memory studies with neighboring disciplines ranging from history, sociology, and geography to material culture studies and architectural and art history.

Memory and cultural heritage management today is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the multi-dimensional spatio-temporality of places. However, simultaneously, the umbrella terms "heritage" and "culture management" are increasingly seen and instrumentalized for their economic value, with heritage management carried out with an eye to its potential contribution to a region's economic development. This focus on exploiting sites for profit through touristic promotion, often also ideologically driven, brings with it the dangers of oversimplifying a territory's past, of reifying an exclusive understanding of it, and even of willful misinterpretation, when such misinterpretations make economic sense.

The task of recapturing, maintaining, and preserving the multiple layers of a site and the complex intertwining of memory and place, the struggle against forgetting and exclusion, requires the will to remember, a will that is often lacking in discourses about memory sites in the Black Sea region today. To rectify this, the region's places of memory and the discourses around them must be rethought, reinterpreted, and transformed through a critical opening and negotiation, an act that would have the added benefit of countering the rising danger of postmodern fundamentalism (European, national, imperial, Muslim, Christian, etc.). The first step should be to keep all kinds of place-bound memory, tangible and intangible, intact and alive through protection, conservation, and documentation; the second step is to raise conscientiousness about and concern for overlapping, multilayered visions, for tolerance toward alternative voices, and to agree on a more heterogeneous way of remembering. The keeping alive of multifaceted (hi)stories and memory spaces of the past and the reappraisal of their forgotten layers would have an immediate impact on the understanding of sites and the region as a whole. Doing so would make them accessible for future generations while giving collectives, societies, and individuals the possibility to evaluate them as part of their own possible pasts. Further, in the long term, doing so would also promote broader reconciliation and open perspectives, including tolerance toward and fruitful interplay between different political, religious, ethnic, and cultural entities in the region.

The pressing question, then, is: How can the region's many different pasts co-exist without any falling into oblivion? Or, to phrase it differently: How can forgotten pasts—that is, pasts that are remembered only by specific groups—be reclaimed as parts of our general understanding of the region without sidelining other narratives? By way of a tentative answer, I would suggest two approaches to memory politics within and outside the region that use spatial investigation and critical mediatization and musealization to convey experience while avoiding the exclusion and suppression of memory, both focusing also on education. The first example is the labor camp of Belene (Bulgaria); the second is the divided city of Nicosia (Cyprus).

Belene was established on the island of Belene (Persin) on the Danube, a beautiful nature preserve and spot for bird watching, as a labor camp by the Communist government in 1949 for "adversaries of the regime." It was later expanded to include a prison where, between 1985 and 1989, Bulgarian Turks who opposed Bulgaria's forced assimilation policies were held. In the public memory, Belene thus became a symbol of the Communist regime and, for Turks, of forced assimilation. After the closure of the labor camp in 1989 (the western part of the island is still used as a prison), efforts were made to investigate the arbitrary imprisonments, cruelties, and crimes that had taken place at the camp and to keep alive the memory of the suffering its inmates had to endure. Among the strategies employed to this latter end are the holding of annual memorial services and the production of academic publications and documentaries in Bulgarian, German, and the latest one in Turkish (2020), all heavily relying on surviving inmates. Additionally, a site of remembrance has been established on the island, and the labor camp has been turned into a commemorative site on the model of Holocaust memorials.[91] In recent times, in the search for new strategies of mediation, a new approach was started to target in particular young Bulgarians who know of the Communist regime and its oppressions only through second-hand transmission. As part of this approach, annual summer camps are organized where students are confronted with Bulgaria's Communist past and its oppressive dimensions, including the forced assimilation of minorities, and learn about the importance this knowledge holds for understanding the present and shaping the future, and they are encouraged to spread the awareness they gain as "ambassadors of memory."[92] Among the strategies of mediation are academic lectures and the study of archival material, but also visits to and experience of the site, and, most importantly, the opportunity to meet and converse with the former inmates of the camp, the eyewitnesses. Students are encouraged to produce their own thoughts on the site, harnessing the experience they have gained

91 Daniela Koleva, "Belene: Remembering the Labour Camp and the History of Memory," *Social History* 37, no. 1 (2012): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071022.2011.651581.

92 Krasimira Butseva and Julian Chehirian, eds., *Summer School "Why Should We Remember?" 2019* (Sofia: Sofia Platform Foundation, 2021), http://sofiaplatform.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Belene-digital.pdf; "A Summer School Transforms Attitudes about Bulgaria's Socialist Past," America for Bulgaria Foundation, July 12, 2018, https://us4bg.org/news/belene-summer-school/.

as participants in the summer camp to turn the site into their own personal and concrete place of memory.

Another promising approach is the one Anita Bakshi has laid out in her investigation of cultural heritage and conflict and search for memory recovery in the city of Nicosia (Cyprus).[93] Divided since 1974 after years of conflict and intervention, the city is separated into a Greek and a Turkish part, with the zone around the division line, once the pulsing heart of the city and now a no-man's land, an empty buffer zone that has virtually been frozen in time for nearly fifty years. In her spatial investigation of the city, Bakshi searches for layers of presence and absence of memory; she identifies different types of remembering that are still traceable in the city and that can be recovered through a reading from the present. She studies the city from a spatial and material angle, with the tools of architectural investigation and mapping, but also with the cooperation of those who once used this buffer zone, Cypriot Greeks, Turks, and Armenians. Her effort to re-energize this specific space's apparently forgotten and buried past and to re-activate its hidden memories involves the elaboration of new designs and concepts for memorial spaces and heritage practices. Her work involves, besides the visualization of place through detailed mapping, the inclusion of non-visual aspects of design, like aspects of cognition and perception and of social, mental, emotional, and physical dimensions of experience—recapturing mentally and physically stored memories by wandering through space, visiting left-behind places, looking at (old and new) photographs of the once-vibrant zone, and exchanging experience with past neighbors and workmates. What she proposes is thus a combining of different ways of commemoration, including the training of practitioners and engagement of the community, especially those who frequented the now emptied zone on a daily basis. In this holistic approach, forgotten memory is triggered through evocation, and commemoration is made possible through physical and emotional engagement.

In both examples, place-bound memory is explored in a very concrete way by the community and/or visitors, who not only listen to historical facts or look at museum evidence, but are integrated into an active project of remembering, without neglecting uncomfortable memories and past harms in their experience of the multifaceted dimensions of a site's past and its significance for the broader understanding of the mutual conditioning of place, memory, history, and heritage. And it is this active engagement with memory and place which bears the potential to renew a site's meaning and transform and enrich our understanding of memory places into pluralistic, open, active, and inclusive sites, an engagement so needed in the Black Sea region today.

93 Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories: A New Poetics of Commemoration* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).