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**Transnationales Erbe in nationalisierten Geschichtsbildern. Istanbul (Galata-Pera)
und Thessaloniki im Vergleich/**

Transnational heritage in nationalized historiography:

A comparison of Istanbul (Galata-Pera) and Saloniki

Abstract (German/English version)

Die Studie "Transnationales Erbe in nationalisierten Geschichtsbildern" versteht sich als Weiterführung der Untersuchung „Die Pera-Gesellschaft von Istanbul von 1918/23 bis heute“ (P 15803-G04), die basierend auf lebensgeschichtlichen Interviews mit nichtmuslimischen Minderheiten dreier Generationen in Istanbul der Frage nach der Nationalisierung von transnationalen Komponenten der spätosmanischen Gesellschaft nachging. Anhand der beiden Hafenstädte Istanbul und Thessaloniki, die eine gemeinsame Vergangenheit im byzantinischen und dann im osmanischen Reich verbindet, untersucht das Projekt „Transnationales Erbe“ nun die Nationalisierung des Osmanischen Reiches aus einer makrohistorischen Perspektive, geleitet von der Frage, wie das transnationale (historische) Erbe in einem weiteren Sinne an den genannten Schauplätzen, durch nationale und nationalistische Geschichtsbilder verklärt wird. Wenn die Studie auf die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen (historischen) Räumen, Zeit(en) und Menschen (die mit Räumen und Zeiten durch das historische Erbe als Mittler zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft verwoben sind) fokussiert, so greift sie nicht nur einen der wichtigsten Aspekte der Südosteuropa-Historiographie auf, der im Zuge der politischen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Integrationsprozesse nun auch wissenschaftlich besser bearbeitbar wird, sondern hat aufgrund ihres interdisziplinären Ansatzes und des Defizits an vergleichbaren empirischen Untersuchungen im internationalen Forschungsfeld gewissermaßen Pioniercharakter. Die Studie brachte folgende zentrale Erkenntnisse: (1) Die „Gegenwart der Vergangenheit“, in der sich Probleme der Identitätsfindung fortsetzen: Diese werden durch Rückgriffe primär auf Raummythen kompensiert. Dadurch wird aber der Entstehung von Regionalismen, Provinzialismen, Traditionalismen etc. Vorschub geleistet, was letztendlich auf die Staaten Südosteuropas modernisierungshemmend wirkt und sich nicht selten in einer betont anti-europäischen Haltung, in Isolationismus, Nihilismus oder gar in einer selbst definierten

Europeanness äußert. (2) Das sich in der Kulturpolitik der untersuchten Schauplätze manifestierende Phänomen der „Reauthentisierung oder Verechtung“ (W. Pauser): Durch alle nur erdenklichen Mittel werden Erinnerungen an die transnationale Vergangenheit unter Ausblendung der Gegenwart in die Zukunft transferiert, was jedoch mangels der Träger dieser Vergangenheit nur formal gelingt. Das „Verechtete“ färbt vielmehr auf die verbliebenen Restbestände des Echten ab und verleiht dem gesamten Ensemble einen kulissenhaften, gespenstischen Touch, läßt den Schauplatz mitunter provinziell erscheinen.

The study „Transnational heritage in nationalized historiography“ is a continuation of the project on „The Pera Society in Istanbul from 1918/23 to date“. Based on narrative-autobiographical interviews with contemporary witnesses belonging to three generations of non-Muslim minorities in Istanbul, the latter examined the nationalizing process of transnational components within the late Ottoman society. Focusing on the two case studies of Istanbul (Galata-Pera) and Salonica, which are connected by a common past within the Byzantine and later the Ottoman Empire, the project “Transnational heritage” analyzes the nationalizing process of the Ottoman Empire from a macrohistorical perspective. The question as to how the transnational heritage in Istanbul and Salonica is transfigured by national and nationalistic historiography is central. By focusing on the interrelations between (historical) spaces, periods, and people (who are woven into the fabric of time and space through this historical heritage in the sense of a mediator between past and future), the study not only takes up one of the most important aspects of South-Eastern European historiography, which now also, within the movement of political and civil-society integration processes, becomes easier to process scientifically; but in view of its interdisciplinary focus and because of the deficiency in comparative empirical research in international discourse on cultural research, the study also takes on a somewhat pioneering character. The central findings of the study are as follows: (1) The “presence of the past”, in which problems of identity have remained and people often compensate for this by reverting to myths of space. Such milieus are especially susceptible to regionalisms, provincialisms, traditionalisms etc., that is to say, phenomena by which societies are ultimately hindered in their modernization. This dilemma then results in an underlying anti-European attitude, in isolationism, nihilism or even in a self-defined “Europeanness”. (2) The phenomenon of

“reauthentication” (W. PAUSER), which is typical for the cultural policy of Istanbul and Salonica: Memories of a multicultural, transnational past are preserved for the future in the wake of “reauthentication” and at the same time by cutting out both recent history and the present. But due to the lack of representatives of that past – be it material heritage, be it contemporary witnesses - this can only function superficially. The “plagiarism-kitsch character of the reauthenticated” rather rubs off on the authentic relics, so that the whole ensemble is provided with a façade, sometimes even with a ghostly touch, underscoring the provincial character of the Galata-Pera quarter of Istanbul and of Salonica.

2. Brief project report

2.1. Report on the scientific work

2.1.1. Information on the development of the research

Based on a comparison of the two transnational places of memory, Istanbul (Galata-Pera) and Salonica, which were linked for centuries by a common past within the Byzantine and later the Ottoman Empire, the project *Transnational heritage* analyzes the nationalizing process of the Ottoman Empire from a macrohistorical perspective. The study concentrates on a constellation that is typical of many areas in South-Eastern Europe (SEE): the (mainly cultural-political) controversy surrounding historical heritage that is claimed by two or more sides, each with its own distinct point of view, with the aim of advancing their own national, territorial interests. The central question concerns the ways in which the transnational heritage in Istanbul and Salonica is transfigured by national and nationalistic historiography. Here the reviewer's reference to R. Bryant's monograph on *Imagining the Modern* was of tremendous help!

The project was led by a transdisciplinary concept using principles borrowed from historical comparatistics and historical-transfer approach, museology and cultural sociology. This combined approach represents a new trend in historical research, especially where SEE is concerned, so the project took on an innovative character when an empirical model study was performed using these tools. For an empirical test of transnational traces, historical heritage understood in a wider sense is especially well-suited as a source of information.

Problems in Istanbul concerning access to sources of vital importance to the systematic documentation of historical heritage and its functions in the urban context, forced the project director to restrict to scanty sources collected in foreign archives. Due to the advanced age or the often poor health of potential contemporary witnesses of the 1st generation of Salonician migration society as well as the scanty quality of interview data gained from the Salonician Jewish community, the information on social and organizational heritage in Salonica proved to be less constructive for the study.

These difficulties, which could not have been foreseen in the planning of the project, led the project director to concentrate more on the Salonician case, focusing on the analysis of material, ideational and functional historical heritage in its socio-cultural urban context.

2.1.2. Most important results and brief description of their significance

Both research studies that the project director conducted (P15803-G04; P18508-G14) focus on the post-Ottoman period from a transnational perspective: Both projects were based on the idea that in spite of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the new political, legal, demographic and mental situation following the establishment of the Turkish Republic or the incorporation of Salonica and Macedonia into the Greek state, transcultural identities have remained and, consistent with the general trend, especially in the countries of SEE, have become part of the historical heritage in the collective memory of the cities under study, Istanbul and Salonica.

For an empirical test of transnational traces, historical heritage in a wider sense is especially well-suited as a source of information in two respects: 1) whether as individual, or as material relics, or as mental projection of the heritage, or as a social organizational system, it reinforces per se diverse traces of a transnational past and syncretic characteristics in a more and more nationalized, ethnically homogenized environment. 2) It most clearly reflects in its material manifestations within the social context of a place an immense continuity, a

phenomenon that according to Halbwachs leads societies to become prisoners of the *power of the material milieu*. The sociologist R. Lindner even refers here to a *habitus of the city*, which continually catches up with societies, and due to which *nowhere is the constancy, indeed the persistence clearer than in the difficulties caused by the attempt to improve the image of a place*. From this *power*, which is inherent in historical heritage, or better still, the holding power within the collective memory of a place, conclusions can be drawn about the interrelations between the *spaces* ((political) myths of space), *periods*, and *people* (who are woven into the fabric of time and space through this historical heritage in the sense of a mediator between past and future). By researching this interaction or the function of a place – similar to a museum – *to serve as a mediator between past und future* (Pomian), the project did not restrict itself to P. Nora's thesis of the *transition from milieu to lieu de mémoire* and to the detailed discussion of P. Bourdieu's theory of the *transformation of cultural into economical capital*, reflected in the Istanbulian/Salonician culture and museum policies as well as in the preservation of historical monuments and, in general, the awareness and processing of and also the reaction to exogenic influences, particularly those of the EU, which often hide paternalistic or imperialistic tendencies. The concrete question is additionally based on a very helpful differentiation between *developed, fabricated, prescribed and concealed* historical heritage (Heppner).

Although the project focused on two separate case studies, they identified a common phenomenon which, after the political upheavals in the countries of SEE in 1989/91, is reflected in and virtually symptomatic of their relationship to Europe, that is to say, that of *the presence of the past*, in which problems of identity have continued. Precisely because societies suffer from such instability of identity, they often compensate for this by reverting to political myths or myths of space, that is to say, by escaping into a distant past promising security and orientation. Such milieus are especially susceptible to traditionalisms, provincialisms, regionalisms etc. These are, however, reactions to and protective mechanisms against globalization. Therefore, societies are hindered in their modernization, and an accelerated transformative and integrative process free of conflict, such as that promoted by the West, is being delayed if not completely blocked in the long term. This dilemma then results in an underlining anti-European attitude, in isolationism, nihilism or even in a self-defined *Europeanness*.

The phenomenon of *reauthentication* (Pauser) is typical of this. Today the Galata-Pera district in Istanbul is being promoted for natives and foreigners alike as a first-class tourist attraction, as an entertainment quarter in a Western-style tradition, in other words as a kind of advertisement for Ottoman cosmopolitanism and tolerance. Galata-Pera lives on with the memory of its multicultural, transnational past, and tries to keep it alive for the future, in the wake of *reauthentication* and at the same time by cutting out both recent history and the present. Among other things, for lack of representatives of this past, namely the non-Muslim minorities, this can only function superficially. Furthermore, as Pauser puts it, the *plagiarism-kitsch character of the reauthenticated* rubs off on the authentic relics, contemporary witnesses included. It obstructs both the memory of contemporary witnesses who look back on experiences typical for the time and the place, and their emotional impressions of life, and provides the whole ensemble with a façade, sometimes even a ghostly touch, underscoring the provincial character of this quarter.

Salonica, too, was for more than 2000 years part of supranational empires, before it was incorporated into Greece in 1912/13. However, after the great fire of 1917, the port city rose again with Western influence: archaeologists and city planners remodeled the city around Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine monuments, while physical, material and social traces of

its cosmopolitan Ottoman past were ignored, cut out, noticeably removed, allowed to go to waste. Syncretic characteristics of historical buildings, from which the history and the continuity of this city could truly be understood, were often glossed over by stylish historical simulations. Recently, with EU-subsidies, these transnational characteristics have again been uncovered and carefully restored with considerable effort, albeit almost exclusively by Greek specialists. In contrast to Galata-Pera, these strategies of reauthenticification hardly serve to promote touristic aims. This is connected with Salonica's history: Until the early 20th century the multiethnic and multi-confessional fabric of the city consisted of Jews (the largest community), Muslims, Greeks and Slavs. Compared to other Greek cities, Salonica maintains its reputation as the most Oriental city in Greece. Furthermore, due to the city's position at centuries-old geographic, cultural and ethnic crossroads, it has continuously been confronted with ambiguous identities. Through a meticulous quest to find genuine Greek cultural contents rooted in the soil, Salonica tries to cling to the imagination of a remodeled unambiguous Greek/Byzantine city in the collective memory, in order to counteract an increasing foreign influence.

In both cases the close connection with the development of the market economy, the globalization tendencies and the exogenic influences of the EU and NATO become evident. Furthermore, the results of globalization and of a more or less considerable dependence on the EU become similarly apparent in both cities, that is, in a new drive to reinforce characteristic features and identity, which becomes apparent in the phenomena of a traditionalism without tradition, a persistent provincialism and a strengthening of regional tendencies, but at the same time in the fact that new technologies are being welcomed and employed for a more efficient pursuit of goals and, when needed, in appeals to the support of the European public without however abandoning a self-defined *Europeanness*.

The transnational orientation of the study can be seen on 4 levels:

In a number of articles by the project director and developed in collaboration with the Turkologist (Dogan). These articles are based on genuine, heterogeneous Turkish and Greek (written, visual, audiovisual) sources produced in Istanbul, in the Athenian diaspora and Salonica, which are subjected to impartial and equitable treatment, and not used in support of hegemonic aims or interpretations based on nationalized historiography.

In two articles by the project director, which point out the traditionally transnational importance of Istanbul and Salonica in SEE generally.

In an increased inclusion of the subject in university teaching at KFU Graz and in stimulating international scientific cooperation (cf. 2.3.a)).

In the recently published book *Bilderwelten-Weltbilder*.

These interculturally characterized spaces exert considerable influence on the construction of nationalized, here Turkish and Greek historiography. They tend much more to favor the phenomena of traditionalism, regionalism, provincialism etc., which often compete with national identities, which is why they ultimately have an influence on transformative and integrative processes in SEE countries. Thus, the study opened up new horizons for further research, which will focus as a third case study on the in-between space of Thrace. In the context of a postdoctoral project (Habilitation), the three case studies (Istanbul, Salonica, Thrace) will be combined within a theoretical frame aimed at developing innovative approaches to a *theory of historical heritage in transnational SEE contexts*.

2.2. Effects of the project outside the scientific field

a) Relevance of the project for developments in teaching and aspects of particular relevance for the general public

With regard to the implications of the research subject for other fields of research as outlined in the project proposal, the project director developed an interdisciplinarily oriented concept for a course at the KFU Graz held in cooperation with the Univ. of Zagreb/Dept. of Museology, which takes into account the emphasis on *museology* and *historiography and tourism* in teaching activities at the Dept. of History. At the end the results of that course, entitled *The challenge of Ottoman heritage in the history of Greece and Turkey*, attended by students from Graz and Zagreb, were presented to a wider public in the exhibition "FEZtgefahren. Aus dem Istanbul und Saloniker Alltag" in Graz (Jan. 19th –March 10th, 2007), supported by an exhibition catalogue. Negotiations with the Greek Ministry of Culture, the Turkish Consulate General in Salonica, the Dept. of Ottoman Studies at the Macedonian Univ. and the Austrian embassy in Athens to hold this exhibition and present it in one of the Ottoman buildings in Salonica are still in progress. (b) At the invitation of Greek colleagues, the project director had the opportunity to present the results of her empirical research carried out in Istanbul and Salonica as a guest lecturer in May 2008 at the Macedonian Univ./Salonica and at the Kapodistrias Univ./Athens. (c) The project director intensified contact with historians and anthropologists at the Macedonian Univ., which in Oct. 2006 even led to a Socrates Agreement with the KFU Graz for the exchange of students and teaching staff. The international academic cooperation is evident not only in the planned access of Macedonian University to the Joint Master's Program, but also in the project director's invitation to teaching staff from that university to contribute to the project-focused course that she gave at the KFU Graz in the summer semester 2009, entitled "Power of Tradition: the case of Northern Greece". (d) In the summer semester 2009 the project director was invited to give a block course on "Urban Balkan-Cultures" (examples of Istanbul and Salonica) within the university course "Interdisciplinary Balkan Studies" (organized by Vienna University).

(project relevant) Scientific Publications

Ulrike TISCHLER/Kerstin TOMENENDAL/Sena DOĞAN, Galata-Pera als kulturpolitische Herausforderung. Die Gegenwart der traditionellen Europäerviertel Istanbuls in Literatur und Medien seit 1980, *SOF* 63/64 (2004/2005), pp. 430-464.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Zur Erforschung transnationalen Erbes in Südosteuropa. Ein Forschungsbericht, in: Johannes FEICHTINGER/Helga MITTERBAUER (eds.), *Moderne – kulturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch* 1 (2005), pp. 177-180.

Ulrike TISCHLER (ed.), From «milieu de mémoire» to «lieu de mémoire». The cultural memory of Istanbul in the 20th century. [Proceedings of an international conference, Graz 2005], München 2006.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Retour aux sources. Indicateurs identitaires à Péra comme milieu de mémoire, in: U. TISCHLER (ed.), From «milieu de mémoire» to «lieu de mémoire», pp. 38-58.

Ulrike TISCHLER, La diaspora stambouliote-pérote à Athènes en tant que milieu de mémoire chimérique. Le processus de transformation d'un milieu de mémoire en lieu de mémoire dans l'historiographie et les médias audiovisuels grecs, in: U. TISCHLER (ed.), From «milieu de mémoire» to «lieu de mémoire», pp. 112-122.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Microhistorical views of the sociocultural phenomenon of Pera society in the post-Ottoman period, in: U. TISCHLER (ed.), From «milieu de mémoire» to «lieu de mémoire», pp. 156-169.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Constructing a useful past. The lieux de mémoire Istanbul and Smyrna in Greek audio-visual and illustrative media. A contribution to the pictorial turn in contemporary memory culture, in: U. TISCHLER (ed.), From «milieu de mémoire» to «lieu de mémoire», pp. 244-256.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Konstantinopel – Carigrad – İstanbul im transnationalen Kontext, *Etudes Balkaniques* 4(2007), pp. 11-39.

Ulrike TISCHLER (ed.), *FEZtgefahren*. Catalogue to the exhibition *FEZtgefahren*. Aus dem Istanbuler und Saloniker Alltag. University Library Graz, Jan. 19th – March 10th, 2007. Graz 2007.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Bilder in den Köpfen: Der Mythos Pera/Σταυροδρόμι im Κοινότητα-Bewusstsein der Istanbuler Griechen im 20./21. Jahrhundert, in: Maria S. STASSINOPOULOU/Ioannis ZELEPOS (eds.), *Griechische Kultur in Südosteuropa in der Neuzeit*. Beiträge zum

Symposium in memoriam Gunnar Hering. Wien 2008 (*Byzantina et Neograeca Vindobonensia*; XXVI), pp. 387-396.

Ulrike TISCHLER-HOFER, Vom wissenschaftlichen und öffentlichen Umgang mit der Geschichte zwischen provinzialisierter und kosmopolitischer Erinnerung. Das Beispiel Thessaloniki, *Südost Forschungen* 67 (2008) pp. 320-342.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Konstantinopel/Carigrad/Istanbul. Zur Genese transnationaler Bezugsrahmen. In: Bernd HENNINGSSEN/Stefan TROEBST/Hendriette KLIEMANN-GEISINGER (eds.), *Transnationale Erinnerungsorte. Nord- und südeuropäische Perspektiven (Die Ostseeregion: Nördliche Dimensionen. Europäische Perspektiven;10)*. Berlin 2009, pp. 145-174.

Ulrike TISCHLER-HOFER, Raum-Zeit-Mensch als historische Kategorien zur Erforschung der Identitäten von Vielvölkermetropolen in Südosteuropa: Istanbul und Saloniki, in: Bericht über den 25. Österr. Historikertag vol. ...? (St. Pölten 2009, in press).

Ulrike TISCHLER/Ioannis ZELEPOS (eds.), *Bilderwelten – Weltbilder. Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit in postosmanischen Metropolen Südosteuropas: Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Izmir*. Frankfurt/Main, New York, Wien 2010.

abstract: Based on mainly unpublished visual and image-evoking media, understood as material heritage in a broader sense, the volume explores the influence of these sources on the cultural memory of the post-Ottoman metropolises Saloniki, Istanbul and Izmir. The contributions critically discuss established patterns of perception, which are determined by national exclusion in favor of pluralistic-inclusive concepts typical of in-between spaces. The latter did not only characterize the past of these spaces, but also decisively influence its present and future with regard to transformative and integrative processes.

Ulrike TISCHLER/Sena DOĞAN, Der Sonderfall Beyoğlu: Ikonographie eines Begegnungsraumes zwischen Ost und West, in: U. TISCHLER/I. ZELEPOS (eds.), *Bilderwelten – Weltbilder*. Frankfurt/Main 2010, pp. 101-160.

Ulrike TISCHLER, Auf der Suche nach der transnationalen Vergangenheit Thessalonikis: Wege und Umwege der Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung, in: U. TISCHLER/I. ZELEPOS (eds.), *Bilderwelten – Weltbilder*, pp. 193-244.

Ulrike TISCHLER-HOFER, Thessaloniki und Istanbul (Galata-Pera): Von der Metropole im Kleinen zum Hort des Provinzialismus. Strukturprobleme von Zwischenräumen (in-between spaces) im Zeitalter der Postmoderne (in preparation).

