



**“Politics of Memory and Memory Cultures of the Russian-Ottoman War 1877/1878:  
From Divergence to Dialogue”  
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The Russo-Ottoman War (ROW) of 1877-78 is part of the formation of national narratives in the Balkans, in Turkey, and in the Caucasus in the 19th and 20th centuries. The official politics of memory of these countries is based on symbols that unite, generalize and fix contradicting memories, which have been passed from one generation to the next.

The ROW was a major historical event, which resulted in the establishment of a new political order in the Balkan and Caucasian regions and determined their long-term development. In the decades that followed, the peace treaties were interpreted as crucial – but in different and often opposing ways by the nations directly involved in the War (Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Georgians, Bulgarians, Macedonians and Russians). In every nation/country contradicting official cultures of memory emerged. In Bulgaria, e.g., the conclusion of the San Stefano Peace Treaty was celebrated as a national feast, but in Greece it was received as a tragic event because it stipulated the integration of most of Macedonia to Bulgaria. In the Ottoman Empire, the war and the following preliminary Treaty of San Stefano and the definite Treaty of Berlin have been regarded as dramatic peak of nationalist separatist movements aimed at the destruction of the Empire. Interpreted in contradicting ways, the ROW served national ideologists as basis for strengthening national identities.

The overall aim of the proposed project is to prepare ground for a revision of conflicting images of the Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-78. The project considers itself positioned within the new tendencies in regional and memory studies and aims on the establishment of a network of researchers from all countries with relevant ROW memories in order to facilitate this revision. It is worth mentioning that this is the first initiative of this kind.

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