

Considering Slavia Islamica and Ukraine

by Alexander Kratochvil

The considerations about Slavia Islamica are divided in two parts. In Part one I outline some preconditions and locate the theoretical framework within Slavia Islamica as a concept. Part two gives several examples from Ukrainian literature and culture as part of a conceptualization of Slavia Islamica as a “contact zone” (Mary Pratt). This approach opens new research perspectives in the entangled sociocultural history of this region and the interactions of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. The research will shed light on questions of Ukrainian self-perception and as well on external perceptions of Ukraine and Ukrainian identity. Against this background, questions of Slavia Islamica stress Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar intercultural relations and their significance in Ukraine’s past and present.

Keywords: contact zone, Crimean Tatars, Ukrainian literature, Slavia Islamica.

Part I.

“Slavia Islamica”

The Slavic space is traditionally be subdivided in two different ways. Besides the genealogical subdivision into West, East and South Slavic, as was established in the 19th century by Vatroslav Jagić (1838-1923), there exists another division into the two cultural areas of Slavia Latina and Slavia Orthodoxa. This concept was 1958 suggested by Riccardo Picchio (1923-2011)¹, and is nowadays widely accepted in Slavic studies. Referring to two cultural and religious communities and not to political and territorial entities, the concept proved extremely useful in clarifying various aspects of the literary and cultural history of the Slavic world, and above that – as Giorgio Ziffer stresses - are of particular significance for the description of the external history of Church Slavonic.² The concept of Slavia Latina and Slavia Orthodoxa reflects the broadest possible cultural division among the Slavic peoples into two primary supranational communities. The individual Slavic nations as we know them today emerged from the shared cultural patrimonies of Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Latina. The concept fits well with current transnational and transcultural research issues and methodological approaches that examine the entanglement of sociocultural and historical constellations through spaces and regions.

The term Slavia Islamica complements the two “Slavia designations” in a manifold way. The term is sometimes used in Slavic studies to refer to Islamic cultural or religious aspects in Russian literature, such as e.g. in Tolstoy’s works or in Solovev’s religious and philosophical essays. Links between Islam and Balkan Slavic languages and culture are receiving even more attention in Slavic and Eastern European studies. As the editor of one of the few comprehensive publications on

Slavia Islamica, Robert Greenberg, notes:

Scholars who have focused on Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Romana [i.e. Slavia Latina] have largely ignored the significant numbers of Slavs in the Balkans who converted to Islam under Ottoman rule. Prior to their conversions, these Slavs had for several generations belonged to the realms of both Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Romana. While the largest group of converts were residing in what is today known as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Islamicized Slavs lived in other parts of the Balkans as well [...].³

This publication *Slavia Islamica: Language Identity and Religion* deals mostly with Islam-related social, cultural and linguistic aspects of the Balkans. The common theme is the centrality of cultural patrimony referring to language as a marker of identity and cultural belonging of the Slavs who converted to Islam. This theme is explored both in connection to issues of translation from Arabic or Turkish into Slavic, or refers to contemporary sociolinguistic questions, and it is linked with national narratives on the Balkans too. Interesting for our topic is the fact that the publication extends the concept of Slavia Islamica to the Northern Slavs, e.g. how the Tatars brought Islamic culture to the lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania resp. Poland and to the borderlands between Western and Eastern Slavs. It comes a bit by surprise that the Tatars and their social and cultural relationships with Slavs in Poland and Belarus⁴ seem more researched than Tatars and their social, cultural and religious interactions within the territories of today's Ukraine. There is of course a whole range of interesting and important works on historical topics related e.g. to Crimea, the Black Sea region, the Tatars, to slave trade or Cossack-Tatar encounters. But with a few exceptions⁵, the Ukrainian cultural and literary interaction with Crimean Tatars and Ottomans and vice versa only seems to have emerged on the agenda of interest and research in Ukraine since the annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Slavia Islamica and Ukrainian topics

A description on Slavia Islamica of the Black Sea region and Ukraine requires (beside sociocultural and historical contextualization) conceptual parameters. As in the Bosnian case, one could consider approaches and parameters of empire studies⁶ which can be applied to Slavia Islamica in the Black Sea region as well. One could also envision an approach of entangled history, for example, the research on the manifold relations in this region⁷ opens a perspective for the social and economic action and reaction as Clemens Pausz⁸ shows in a recent study. He approaches the Crimean Tatars via their neighbours and opponents, the Cossacks and demonstrates the influence that the Crimean Khanate had on the development of Cossack communities in the steppes north of the Black Sea. The Crimean Tatars also helped the Cossacks to gain greater international significance at this time. In

the context of the Turkish Wars in the 17th century, several European powers explored ways of winning over the Cossacks as allies in order to minimize the war potential of the Crimean Khanate. A telling example of intercultural contacts Ulrich Hofmeister⁹ presents in his study on Ismail Gasprinskiy (1851-1914), an outstanding Crimean Tatar intellectual and scholar. He reflected on the dilemma of the both Russified and Ottomanized Crimean Muslims intellectuals in the second half of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, who struggled with their position between Istanbul and St. Petersburg. Gasprinskiy proposed a project of modernization of Crimean Tatar society and culture with a visible orientation towards Europe. This orientation of course demonstrates parallels with Ukrainian efforts at reformation of society and culture at the same time. Similar Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian historical parallels can be found in the study by Kerstin Jobst.¹⁰ It discusses the 1920s as a “Golden Age” of the Crimean Tatars, as the latter benefited from early Soviet proclaimed support of national minorities with the politics of “korenizaciya”. Here one sees not only a counterpart to the “renaissance” of Ukrainian literature and culture in the 1920s, but also learns about the contacts of Ukrainian and Crimean intellectuals and politicians in the 1920s. This communication of intellectuals and writers¹¹ can be interpreted as a contact zone¹² like just like the intertwined relationships of the region.

The term contact zone refers to sociocultural spaces in which cultures meet, communicate and resolve conflicts, often in an asymmetrical power constellation. In contact zones, neither states nor nations are the benchmarks, rather, the view is directed towards interaction and phenomena such as interculturalism. This term refers to a cross-cultural dialogue and challenging self-segregation tendencies within a common habitat resp. ecological and economic environment as the steppe, the Black Sea region and the Crimean peninsula. Interculturalism involves a move beyond the fact of multiple cultures (e.g. Crimean Tatar, Ukrainian, Russian, Jews) existing in a region and instead promotes dialogue and interaction between cultures. Intercultural relations are based on the recognition of both differences and similarities between cultures. In this point they are different from transcultural relations resp. transculturalism (as “seeing oneself in the other”¹³). The description of Slavia Islamica as a contact zone refers to an intercultural constellation in the Ukrainian-Crimean borderland, which distinguishes it from the transcultural mixture of Slavia Islamica in the Balkans.

The contact situation of the Ukrainian Slavia Islamica is characterized by changing asymmetrical relations. The region north of the Black Sea was a borderland developed by settlements from the North and the South. The emergence of communities and settlements shaped a dialogical form of life-organization on the Tatar and Cossack sides. Especially the Cossacks improved their military techniques by learning from the Tatars, modelled an original way of life and economy according to the steppe and even started raids against the Tatar settlements and the Otto-

man Empire. Thus they were able to compete with the Tatar communities for resources. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the Cossack's self-perception and assigned identity as guardian of the steppe and an equal adversary of Tartars originated in this contact situation.

The contact situation becomes particularly visible in literary texts, where it positions itself along borders and invokes cultural contexts with its narratives and counter narratives against the background of *Slavia Islamica*. Here we find well-known texts, authors, figures and institutions¹⁴:

The corpus of *Dumy*, the stories about Crimean Tatar culture by Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns'kyy, the Crimean and Islam related texts by Lesya Ukrayinka, literarized the historical figures of Roksolana and Marusya Bohuslavka -,¹⁵ or more recent individuals such as Ahatanhel Krymskyy, a scholar and writer, who is related to Ukrainian and Tatar literature and intellectual history.¹⁶ *Slavia Islamica* as contact zone also applies a certain colonial constellation within the Russian Empire which has been reflected on by Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian intellectuals and writers, e.g. the writings and activities of Ismail Gasprinskiy or Cafer Seydamet¹⁷, Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns'kyy and Lesya Ukrayinka. Last but not least I want to mention aesthetic principles with Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar modernism resp. the writings and public activities of Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns'kyy, Lesya Ukrayinka, Ahatanhel Krymskyy and Ismail Gasprinskiy. Beyond that, we should consider current processes with popular highlights like Jamala, who successfully represented Ukraine in the Eurovision Song Contest 2016 with the song "1944"¹⁸, and the institutionalization of Crimean Tatar culture (language, literature, history) in Ukrainian educational institutions in Kyiv and other places, as well as the integration of Crimean Tatar literature as part of the culture of Ukraine for instance in the project "Library of the Crimean Tatar literature".¹⁹

Part II

Ukrainian Folklore - Dumy

Let me now flesh out my considerations with some brief examples. The Ukrainian *Dumy* are a canonical textual corpus of Ukrainian folklore and until today, they are often situated in or refer geographically and metaphorically to the Ukrainian-Tatar contact zone. The *Dumy* are a lyrical genre in Ukrainian folklore of the 17th and 18th centuries, mostly collected in the 19th century.²⁰ In the 19th century, against the background of ideas of romanticism, *Dumy* also attracted intellectuals and writers such as Taras Shevchenko, Panteleymon Kulish, Ivan Nechuy-Levits'kyy and others. They are divided into different groups thematically and in content. The main categorizations are by Mykhaylo Drahomanov (1841-1895) and Filaret Kolesa (1871-1947) and show the two main principles used: chronological (Drahomanov) and thematic (Filaret). However, all subdivisions have in common that a

majority of texts address the encounters between Cossacks and Tatars and Turks, mostly clashes in the Black Sea region. The Dumy also belong to these texts, which tell tales of captivity and enslavement by the Tatars or Turks. This refers to the slave trade flourishing in the region until the 18th century, in which not only the Crimean Tatars, but also other Crimean inhabitants participated. The texts about the struggles and suffering of the Cossacks and civilians often depict heroic but at the same time tragic human destinies that were later seen as representative of the destiny of the Ukrainian people. Natalie Kononenko refers to this element as the point of view of the reader:

*The only quirk of fate is that most scholars studying Western epics have emphasized the heroic, while most scholars studying dumy have emphasized the tragic, whereas, in reality, both elements are present in all epic traditions.*²¹

The scholar herself continues then somehow reiterating the stereotype of self-victimization: “Ukrainian dumy, then, and the epic genre in general, are characterized by a combination of heroism and tragedy. In other words, they speak of heroism in the face of defeat. This is the supreme form of heroism.”²² But I would argue that there are several popular Dumy, which report of brutal raids of the Cossacks on Crimea and are tragic for the Tatars. Thus – and this is sometimes overlooked – the Dumy do not fit perfectly into scheme of the Ukrainian victimization respectively “tragic heroism”, which is often attributed to Ukrainian literature or even culture as a whole. Dumy are surely heroic narratives of victims, but also about offenders and marauders and as well Islamized and with Ottoman culture well adapted Ukrainians (so called “poturnaky”).

Marusya of Bohuslav and Roksolana

The Dumy about the battles in the Tatar-Ukrainian borderland and the Tatar-Turkish captivity are among the best known ones. They are also an integral part of the school canon today, in particular *Nevilnyky* (Duma about Captives), *Plach nevilnyka* (Duma about the Lament of the Captive), *Plach nevilnykiv* (Duma about the Lament of the Captives), *Utecha troch brativ iz Azova* (Duma about the Flight of Three Brothers from the City of Azov) and of course the famous *Marusya Bohuslavka* (Duma about Marsuya Bohuslavka). These Dumy with their heroic Cossack narrative have been part of the collective memory since the 17th century. Canonized and then integrated into the cultural memory, the Cossack narrative was an important part of the 19th century nation-building strategy, in which the process of exclusion of other social and cultural collectives plays a prominent role too.

The hostility at the individual, collective and esp. the official state level against the Crimean Tatars is well known. Yet taking into account that the Cossacks partially adapted survival and other strategies in the steppe from the Tatars, some Dumy seem rather ambivalent and do not represent a clear strategy of exclusion

of Crimean Tatar and Ottoman culture. At the same time, a different attitude of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars could be observed when it came to blood relatives. It was first of all reflected in the folk literature with incestuous motives, which told about the sale and purchase of unrecognized daughters, sisters, mothers, etc. by Islamized Ukrainians. Some literary works of the time expressed them quite frankly,²³ for instance the Duma about the Cossack Kishka and the former Cossack Liakh Burturliak where the latter tries to get the former to convert. The practice of conversion leads to a good and even wealthy position in (Ottoman) society what was widely known.²⁴

Obviously, these sentiments grew out of knowledge of the fate of the slaves in the Crimea and the Ottoman Empire. Quick social adaptation and cultural assimilation of captives (not only Ukrainian or Slavs) in Islamic society was a fact widely known throughout Europe for the records of travellers and diplomats. However, in Ukraine family ties between Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars were an acknowledged socio-cultural fact and accepted as part of the collective memory.²⁵ There are sources suggesting that this practice was brought by former prisoners who returned from captivity. Some Duma of the captive cycle, especially the Duma about Marusya Bohuslavka, set specific patterns of behaviour for those who could fall into captivity and unfreedom. Marusya Bohuslavka, the legendary Ukrainian heroine of the 17th century, who, like Anastasiya (or Oleksandra) Lisovska²⁶ (the later Roksolana respectively Hürrem), arrived at the Ottoman court and clearly showed the ambiguity of behaviour in the harem of the Sultan. In the harem, if we understand it as a social system, she ascended to a very influential woman in the Osman court.

Writers and artist from Ukraine and outside Ukraine throughout the 19th and 20th century were inspired by Roksolana and Marusya Bohoslavka and produced numerous international literary and musical adaptations of the characters of of these women. They are an active part of the cultural memory and a lieu de memoire of Ukraine, e.g. Kuliš, Pantejlemon: *Marusya Bohuslavka*; Lazors'kyy, Mykhaylo: *Stepova kvitka*; Nechuy-Levyts'kyy, Ivan: *Marusya Bohuslavka*; Staryc'kyy Mykhaylo: *Marusya Bohuslavka*, Ivan Bahryanyy: *Marusya Bohuslavka*; Vasyl Shklar: *Marusya*. Among the Ukrainian stories about Roksolana, who became the main wife of Suleyman I (or the "Great"), those by Pavlo Zahrebelnyy (1980) and Osyp Nazaruk (1930) are the most popular. The novel by the latter was popularly filmed in the 1970s as a television series). In the 90ies Yuryy Vynnychuk launched a fictive diary of Roksolana (*Zhytyie haremnoye*), which was in the beginning taken for an authentic document. Vivid examples of the recent popularity of Roksolana in Ukrainian literature are pop-cultural interpretations of the figure in the novels by Yuriy Kolisnichenko, Serhiy Plachindy or Natalia Pavlyshcheva. Recently the Turkish historical fiction television series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (The Magnificent Century) 2011-2014, based on the life of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, and his

wife Roxolana/ Hürrem Sulta, also deals with the era known as the sultanate of women.

The perception and representation of Islamic culture in the Dmy and Ukrainian literature of the 19th till 21th centuries differs significantly from the Oriental constructions described by Edward Said. In the light of this construction we see the rather ambivalent and even negative representation of Roksolana in literatures esp. in the 19th and 20th century outside Ukraine:

Although Western historians have been struggling to define Roxolana's legacy for over four centuries, it is often overlooked that she was largely a creation of the European imagination. Due to the lack of historical records and hard evidence, most of what is known about this woman rests on a handful of second hand contemporaneous accounts and subsequent reinterpretations and speculations by numerous historians, quasi historians, dramatists, and other men of letters who have shaped the Western discourse on Roxolana. Yet, despite the fictions written about this woman, her allure and impact on Europeans have not been critically explored to date.²⁷

However, taking the Ukrainian context into account, is it not amazing that the Ottoman harem lady Roksolana functions as an Ukrainian national heroine even today? It seems that the formation of the plot and image of Roksolana within the Ukrainian memory is different than the construct of Orientalism and its creation of gender images. For instance Alexander Pushkin's famous poem *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* (*Bakhchisarayskiy fontan*, 1821-1823) takes a partially similar starting point as the Roksolana/ Marusya Bohoslavka theme (Christian captive girl in the Harem and a Muslim Khan). It portrays the doomed love of the khan, who is presented as uncivilized, for a gentle Christian prisoner from Poland and the realizations of the plot is of course very different and shows clear traits of Russian orientalism.

Primary sources on Roksolana since the 16th century are rare, she appeared mostly as a vicious schemer and even murderer in some diplomatic documents, historical accounts and literature. For example English historian Richard Knolles called Roxolana "the greatest empress of the East" in his famous *Generall Historie of the Turks* (1603) and portrayed her as a malicious and wicked woman, who controlled Sultan Suleiman's thoughts and deeds.²⁸ The publication of several historical accounts and documents on the Ottoman and Crimean past, e.g. Joseph Hammer-Purgstall's *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* (1827-1835), Leopold Ranke's *Fürsten und Völker von Südeuropas* (1827), Johann Zinkeisen's *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches in Europa* (1840-1863) reiterated both traditional Western stereotypes of Roxolana as a schemer and contributed, at least implicitly, to the western construction of the "oriental other". This included the image of Roksolana as a "one-sided, and (one might say) "patriarchal" view [...] in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."²⁹

The formation of the Roksolana theme started in Eastern Europe in the 18th century with the national revivals taking place in Poland and Ukraine that were inspired by Romanticism. The heightened interest in the past and the perception of a romantic world renewed the pride in Polish history, what entailed a romantic interest in the Ukrainian folklore as well. The interest in the Roksolana topos – as mentioned above – was triggered in Eastern Europe via western literary modifications and some historical records and speculations. Thus Roksolana somehow returned via Western mediation to Ukraine.³⁰ Yet had it not been for the existence of a similar subject in Ukrainian folklore (*Marusya Bohuslavka* / Marusya of Bohuslav), the Roksolana theme would never have acquired such significance for Ukraine.³¹ At the same time, the ambivalence of the Roksolana topos is inherent as well in the subject of Marusya Bohuslavka. The ambiguity towards Crimean Tatar respectively Islamic culture in the narratives of Marusya Bohuslavka and Roksolana is an integral part of the wider literary tradition in Ukraine and runs through the works of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Duma *Marusya Bohuslavka* closely resembles the story of Roksolana. Although Marusya feels comfortable for having accepted the “Turkish luxury” (*rozkish turets’ka*) and Muslim faith, she does not forget her origin and frees 700 Ukrainian Cossacks from her Sultan’s dungeon on the eve of Easter Sunday.

To sum up, literary texts about Roksolana and Marusya Bohuslavka reflect the challenge with Islamic culture and the interactions between Cossacks and the Crimean Tatar way of life. They show forms of interculturality and in the case of the heroines as well a certain transculturation. Roksolana can be described in several respects as a crossover figure: In religious, cultural, social and gender patterns, linguistic terms. In the case of Roksolana’s and Marusya Bohuslavka’s conversion, the attractiveness of Islam and Ottoman culture plays an obvious role. Thus the question of the specificity and significance of the Ukrainian Oriental construction resp. Slavia Islamica in Ukraine and its development is part of an identity discourse in Ukraine today. Comparative review of literary texts and contexts will be telling in this regard³², and will present a refreshing antidote to old stereotypes on Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian relations, while reflecting on Roksolana from a different cultural perspective will enable us to gain new insights on the Crimean Tatar – Ukraine contact zone.

Lesya Ukrayinka and Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns’kyy

The next two examples to illustrate the outlook on potential further research are also linked to Slavia Islamica as a literary contact zone. The writings of Lesya Ukrayinka and Mykhaylo Kotsyubyns’kyys offer a very empathetic perspective on Crimea and Crimean Tatars. Ukrayinka dedicated three sonnets to the former capital of the Crimean Khanate Bakhchiseray, which address not only the beauty of the

place, but also the deplorable state of Tatar cultural monuments and the ignorance of imperial officials towards Crimean Tatar culture; Rory Finnin denotes it a “Rhetorical “re-Tatarization” of the Black Sea peninsula.”³³

All in all, the Crimean Tatars and their culture appear in Ukrayinka’s texts as a genuine part of Crimea, especially in the two lyric cycles: *Krymski spohady* (Memoirs from Crimea) and *Krymski vidhuky* (Echoes from Crimea). Her repeated stays in Crimea inspired her also to write the unfinished novel *Ekbal Hanem* (Ekbal Hanem). In this novel she deals with the position of women and the attempts at emancipation by the heroine Ekbal Hanem in a society shaped by Islamic traditions and religion. These aspects find their counterpart in her texts referring to a Ukrainian modernization project including gender and social questions. Ukrayinka opens an implicit intercultural dialogue between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar themes of modernization which refer distinctly to questions of colonialism within the Russian Empire - a constellation very similar to the Crimean texts of Kotsyubyns’kyy.

In Kotsyubyns’kyy’s three long-stories about Crimean Tatars, the position of women in Tatar culture becomes a metaphor for the difficulties of modernizing a traditional society. What Kotsyubyns’kyy depicts is an asymmetrical contact situation between the Crimean Tatars and the representatives of the Russian Empire. This contact situation had a social effect in two respects: first, the colonial conditions for the Crimean Tatars in the Russian Empire, and second and closely related to this contact is the internal effect on the patriarchal social system of the Crimean Tatars. It is challenged by the colonial situation, and as a reaction, Kotsyubyns’kyy describes two possibilities. First, even stricter adherence to the traditions of Islamic culture is demanded by the elder generation. Second, reforms and modernization are demanded by the younger generation. In the story *V putach shaytana* (In the pitfall of the demon) Kotsyubyns’kyy employs a classic narrative pattern of the 19th century: a generation conflict within a family and at the same time within a village community. It shows the religious tensions and social dynamics of that time: the contact with the Russian imperial culture and way of life as a possibility of improving one’s own material as well as spiritual situation is reflected above all by the younger generation, for example by the protagonist, the Tatar girl Emene.

The Crimean Tatar prose by Kotsyubyns’kyy marks as a common denominator the socio-cultural constellations in the Crimean Tatar village and in the city of Bakhchisaray, the cultural and political center of the Crimean Tatars. The narratives deal with the change and modernization of Crimean culture on an individual and collective level and its interdependence with Russian imperial society. The story *Na kameni* (On the rock) is among the most striking texts of Ukrainian modernist prose and is stylistically part of European impressionism. On the content level, *On the rock* tells of the forbidden love between a young Tartar woman who is forcibly married and a stranger (a Turk) who is stranded as a shipwrecker in a Tartar village by the sea. The forbidden love is a metaphor of social protest against a frozen,

traditionalistic, encapsulated village community and at the same time an escape from this oppressive, hopeless circumstance, for which both pay with their lives.

The criticism of the traditionalist adherence to the sociocultural situation in need of reform, in which the Crimean Tatars find themselves in the Russian Empire, was expressed in particular in "Jadidism"³⁴, an independent but not uniform Muslim national reform movement. As the lowest common denominator, the representatives of Jadidism opposed the decline of traditional values and social conditions with their will to reform Tatar culture oriented towards modern Western ideas of state and society. Jadidism was particularly widespread in the Crimea, but also in other areas of the Russian Empire with a large Tatar population.

This reform movement, and the activities of the younger generation of intellectuals inspired by it, and the generational conflict are programmatically reflected in the extensive narrative *Pid minaretamy* (Among minarettes). The story takes place in Bakhchisaray and focuses on the young Crimean author and prospective teacher Rustem, who has fallen out with his father, a mullah. The generation conflict here is not carried out on a purely family level, such as *In the pitfall of the demon*, but also on a collective and cultural level. Finally the confrontation peaks in a provocative theatrical performance in which not only traditionalist, outdated practices are brought up, but also corruption, the old-fashioned education system, social issues, including gender questions, are ironically presented with clear allusions to local notables. The whole story can be read as a somehow literarized program of Jadidism.

Since the middle of the 19th century, reforms have been reflected in the efforts of various Tatar intellectuals to modernize Islam in the Russian Empire as a religion *and* a social system, especially the writings and activities of Ismail Gasprinkii. Ukrainian writers and intellectuals like Kotsyubyns'kyy, Ukrayinka or Ahatanhel Krymskyy observed this process and perceived the similarities to the Ukrainian situation, but also to other minorities and people from the Russian Empire's borderlands.³⁵ Kotsyubyns'kyy and Krymskyy were probably in contact with Ismail Gasprinskiy and Crimean Tatars intellectuals, who worked on education, cultural reforms and modernization of the Tatar communities. This is echoed by the contacts and consultations between Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian intellectuals and politicians in the wake of World War I and the independence aspirations of both peoples after the collapse of the Tsarist Empire.³⁶ It would be an important task to research this relationship, because Gasprinskiy presented the alleged backwardness and colonial status of Russia's Muslim societies in the context of needed reforms in imperial Russia.

Conclusion

The research of texts, authors, crossover figures such as Roksolana, and as well as institutions within a contact zone “Slavia Islamica” represents a counter-draft resp. a complement draft to concepts that on *the one hand* reproduce a certain orientalism and colonial relations and *on the other hand* repeat a traditional national canon and essentialism. Here, the concept of the contact zone sets a different accent in the representation of the encounter: Individuals and collectives from all sides are brought into dialogue with each other, leaving behind the traditional perpetrator-victim relations or the self-victimization patterns e.g. in Kotsyubyns'kyy's stories or the Dumy-texts. In these literary texts the actors are addressed in their relations to each other simultaneously, and the focus is on interaction and its possible consequences (as e.g. the Duma of Marusya Bohuslavka clearly depicts), and undermine their common reception which centers around the experience of (colonial) victimization. A telling example is for instance the postmodern interpretation of the Roksolana-theme by Yuriy Vynnychuk.³⁷ Literary (Ukrainian or Russian) texts do not cover all aspects of the Slavia Islamica contact zone, but provide a complement perception on some of the key questions of convergence and divergence between the Slavic and Islamic worlds. They surely help for a fresh understanding of Slavia Islamica, as a supranational community of Slavs with intercultural ties with Islamic culture and peoples. Well known canonical writings and writers could be analyzed as a part of an “Slavia Islamica”, and this would supplement previous interpretations with an important intercultural component and at the same time bring a revisionist perspective, and open different perspectives for the description of socio-cultural identity in Ukraine than the well-known, exclusive model of the imagined, national identity-producing community.³⁸

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Endnotes

- 1 Picchio calls his partition “Slavia Romana” and “Slavia Orthodoxa”: *Slavia Orthodoxa and Slavia Romana: Essays Presented to Riccardo Picchio by His Students on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*. New Haven, The MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University, 2008.
- 2 Ziffer, Giorgio. “Slavia orthodoxa und Slavia romana“. *Die slavischen Sprachen/ The Slavic Languages*. Halbband 2. Eds. Gutschmidt, Karl/ Kempgen, Sebastian/ Kosta, Peter/ Berger, Tilman, Berlin et al.: (De Gruyter, 2014), 1308-1319.
- 3 “Introduction (Slavia Islamica: Language Identity and Religion)”. *Slavia Islamica: Language Identity and Religion*. Ed.: Greenberg Robert D., Nomachi Motoki. (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center of Hokkaido University, 2012), 1-8.
- 4 See for instance Hotopp-Riecke, Mieste/ Napiwodzki, Dominik.
- 5 See for instance the latest study by Rory Finnin’. “A Bridge Between Us’: Literature in the Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar Encounter“. *Comparative Literature Studies* 56, no. 2, (2019): 289-316.
- 6 See Ruthner, Clemens. “Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1878–1918: A Colony of a Multinational Empire.” Healy Rósin/ Lago, Endrico Dal. (eds) *The Shadow of Colonialism on Europe’s Modern Past. Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 156-169; Ottoman Bosnia. A History in Peril. Eds. Karpat, Kemal/ Koller, Markus, (Madison/Wisc. 2004).
- 7 See e.g. *Krimtataren*. Eds. Hofmeister, Ulrich/ Jobst, Kerstin S. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017).
- 8 Pausz, Clemens. “Das Krim-Khanat und der Aufstieg des Zaporoger Kosakentums. Erich Lassotas Mission im diplomatischen Kontext“. *Krimtataren*. Eds. Hofmeister, Ulrich/ Jobst, Kerstin S. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017), 14-40.
- 9 Hofmeister, Ulrich. “Ein Krimtatare in Zentralasien. Ismail Gasprinskij, der Orientalismus und das Zarenreich”. *Krimtataren*. Eds. Hofmeister, Ulrich/ Jobst, Kerstin S. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017), 114-141.
- 10 Jobst, Kerstin S. “‘Dunkle’ und ‘Goldene’ Zeiten. Die krimtatarische Bevölkerung unter zaristischer und sowjetischer Herrschaft bis 1941. *Krimtataren*. Eds. Hofmeister, Ulrich/ Jobst, Kerstin S. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2017), 91-113.
- 11 See more detailed on that topic Temur Kurshutov in his contribution here.
- 12 “Arts of the Contact Zone”: “I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today” Pratt, Mary Louise. “Arts of the Contact Zone“. *Profession* 91 (1991), 33–40. (Online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25595469>), cf. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. (London: Routledge, 1992).
- 13 Cuccioletta, Donald. „Multiculturalism or Transculturalism: Towards a Cosmopolitan Citizenship“. *London Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17, (2001/2002): https://web.archive.org/web/20160417212459/http://www.canadian-studies.net/lccs/LJCS/Vol_17/Cuccioletta.pdf
- 14 Cf. contributions by Temur Kurshutov, Austin Warren, Alina Zubkovych.
- 15 The Duma *Marusja Bohuslavka* already creates the Roksolana subject about the social rise of an enslaved Ukrainian girl to the position of the main woman of the Turkish Sultan, who subsequently stands up for the captured Cossacks.
- 16 Ukrainian Orientalist, linguist and literary scholar, folklorist, writer, and translator. He was one of the founders of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (VUAN) in 1918, see Bilodid, I. Ahantanhel *Krymskyj, - ukrajinist ta orientalist*. Kyjiv 1974; Pavlychko, Solomeja. *Nacionalizm, seksual'nist', orientalism. Skladnyj svit Ahatanhela Kryms'koho*. Kyjiv 2000.

- 17 Cafer Seydamet was the foreign and then defense minister of the short-lived People's Democratic Republic of Crimea (KNR), which existed between 1917 and 1918. The Republic was the first successful - albeit very short-lived - attempt in the Islamic world to establish a sovereign state with both a secular and democratic orientation. We writes about his and other Crimean Tatar activists' relationship with Ukrainian intellectuals (Hrushevskij, Vynnychenko etc.) in his memoirs (*Bazı Hatıralar*) published in Istanbul 1993: "We have closely monitored the structuring of Ukraine's national movement, the establishment of the Central Rada, the actions of Ukrainians to exercise territorial autonomy, and, finally, the creation of a national government. The anarchy, which came from everywhere, clearly demonstrated the unreasonableness of our intentions to preserve our country on a contractual basis with the Russians, with the Russian authorities - this put us in need of a more thorough study of the Ukrainian national movement." (org. Turkish, translated from an Ukrainian translation at Radio Svoboda).
- 18 Cf. contributions by Austin Charron and Temur Kurshutov in this publication.
- 19 So far, the first volume of the book, originally planned as a 9-volume edition, has been published. The book is in two languages: Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian, see <https://unpo.org/article/15816>
- 20 The most prominent editions of the Dumas of the first half of the 19th century were six issues of the *Zaporozhska Staryna* (1833–1838) by Izmail Sreznevsky, a collection by Platon Lukashevich *Little Russian and Red-Russian Folk Dumas and Songs* (1836), and the collections by Mikhail Maximovich, *Ukrainian Folk Songs* (1834), and *A Collection of Ukrainian Songs* (1849). Further important folklore collections of Amvrosius Metlinskij, Pantejlemon Kuliš and Mykla Markevych followed in the second half of 19th century.
- 21 Kononenko, Natalie. "Introduction". *Ukrainian Dumy*, trans. Tarnawsky, George and Kilina, Patricia (Cambridge/ MA: HURI, 1979), p.9.
- 22 Ibid, 10-11.
- 23 Cf. Kononenko, Natalie O., *Ukrainian Minstrels. And the Blind Shall Sing*. (London / New York: Routledge, 1998), esp. Part 2 Minstrel Rites and Songs passim.
- 24 See Hruševska, Kateryna. *Ukrainski narodni dumy*. 2 Vol. Charkiv 1927-1931, Vol 1., pp. 44-49.
- 25 Halenko, Oleksandr. "Pro etnichnu sporidnensti' ukrajinciv i krymskykh tatar ranishe i teper." *Krymski tatory: Istorii i suchasnist* (Materialy mizhnarodskoi konferencij. Kyjiv, 13-15 travnia 1994 r.), Kyjiv 1995.
- 26 Discussion on her descend and primary sources see Yermolenko, Galina. "Roxolana". *The Muslim World*, 2, no.95 (2005): 232-233.
- 27 Yermolenko, Galina. „Introduction“. *Roxolana in European Literature, History and Culture*, ed. Yermolenko G., (London: Routledge 2010), 1.
- 28 More on this topic and the aspects of Western reception see Yermolenko, ibd., pp. 23-56.
- 29 Yermolenko, Galina. „Roxolana“, *The Muslim World*, 2, 95 (2005): 233.
- 30 See Yermolenko, ibid, 46-48. For instance, in his 1864 poem *Podolia*, Maurycej Goslawski expressed great pride in the fact that the celebrated Roxolana was a native of Podolia, i.e. Poland. "And what about Roxolana, / Who rocked the entire East? / She was ours, from Podolia, / A native of Chemerovtsy."
- 31 As Samuel Twardowski, member of the Polish Embassy to the Ottoman court in the years 1621-1622 maintained, Turks told him that Roksolana was the daughter of an Orthodox priest from Rohatyn, a small town in Podolia; and an old folk song from Bukovina tells the story of girl called Nastja, who was kidnapped by the Tatars from town Rohatyn and sold into the Turkish harem. According to the Ukrainian tradition, Roksolana's name was Anastasia Lisowska, daughter of Gavriil and Oleksandra Lisowski. But this is not a hard historical fact, and probably it originated in the nineteenth century.

- 32 For instance Rory Finnin wrote a comprehensive and inspiring study on the Crimean Tatars in nineteenth century Russian and Turkish Literatures and shows interesting parallels and differences: "The poetics of home: Crimean Tatars in nineteenth-century Russian and Turkish literatures". *Comparative Literature Studies* , 49, no. 1 (2012): 84-118.
- 33 Finnin, Rory. "'A Bridge Between Us': Literature in the Ukrainian-Crimean Tatar Encounter". *Comparative Literature Studies*, 56, no. 2 (2019): 295; for a comprehensive and close reading of Ukrainka's poems on Crimean Tatar topics see Finnin, *ibid*, 289-316.
- 34 For Jadidism and the significance of Ismail Gasprinskii see Lazzerini, Edward, "Ismail Bey Gasprinskii, the Discourse of Modernism, and the Russians." In: *Tatars of the Crimea: Their Struggle for Survival*. Ed. Allworth, Edward. Durham (Duke University Press) 1988, pp. 149-169; Fisher, Alan. *Between Russians, Ottoman and Turks: Crimea and Crimean Tatars*. Istanbul (The Isis Press) 1998.
- 35 Cf. *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917*, Eds. Lazzerini, Edward/ Brower, Daniel Bloomington (Indiana University Press 1997).
- 36 Cf. contribution by Temur Kurshutov in this publication
- 37 Vynnychuk, Yuriy. *Zhytye haremnoye* (Lviv: Pyramida, 1996).
- 38 Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983).