

Myths and Mythical Spaces

Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks
in Albania and South-Eastern Europe



V&R Academic

Open-Access-Publikation im Sinne der CC-Lizenz BY 4.0

© 2017, V&R unipress GmbH, Göttingen

ISBN Print: 9783847108115 – ISBN E-Lib: 9783737008112

Eckert. Die Schriftenreihe

Studien des Georg-Eckert-Instituts
zur internationalen Bildungsmedienforschung

Band 147

Herausgegeben von Eckhardt Fuchs

Redaktion

Wendy Anne Kopisch

unter Mitarbeit von Niamh Burns

Die Reihe ist referiert.

Wissenschaftlicher Beirat

Konrad Jarausch (Chapel Hill/Berlin)

Heidemarie Kemnitz (Braunschweig)

Frank-Olaf Radtke (Frankfurt)

Manfred Rolfes (Potsdam)

Peter Vorderer (Mannheim)

Claudia Lichnofsky / Enriketa Pandelejmoni /
Darko Stojanov (eds.)

Myths and Mythical Spaces

Conditions and Challenges for History Textbooks in
Albania and South-Eastern Europe

With 11 figures

V&R unipress

Funded by the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Federal Foreign Office

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISSN 2198-6320

ISBN 978-3-7370-0811-2

Weitere Ausgaben und Online-Angebote sind erhältlich unter: www.v-r.de

© 2018, V&R unipress GmbH, Robert-Bosch-Breite 6, D-37079 Göttingen / www.v-r.de

Dieses Werk ist als Open-Access-Publikation im Sinne der Creative-Commons-Lizenz BY International 4.0 („Namensnennung“) unter dem DOI 10.14220/9783737008112 abzurufen.

Um eine Kopie dieser Lizenz zu sehen, besuchen Sie <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Jede Verwertung in anderen als den durch diese Lizenz zugelassenen Fällen bedarf der vorherigen schriftlichen Einwilligung des Verlages.

Titelbild: © Ralf Kasper

Open-Access-Publikation im Sinne der CC-Lizenz BY 4.0

© 2017, V&R unipress GmbH, Göttingen

ISBN Print: 9783847108115 – ISBN E-Lib: 9783737008112

Inhalt

Foreword	7
Claudia Lichnofsky / Enriketa Pandelejmoni / Darko Stojanov Introduction: Textbooks and Teaching of Albania in South-Eastern Europe	9
Part I: History, Myth and Ideological Spaces	
Durim Abdullahu Myths in Kosovar Textbooks: History in the Service of Identity Construction	33
Denis Vuka Portrayals of the National Resistance during the Second World War in History Textbooks: A Critical Layout Analysis	57
Darko Stojanov / Jovan Bliznakovski Between History and Politics: Understanding <i>Antiquitas</i> Myths in Macedonian History Textbooks	77
Fabio Bego The Vlora Conflict from a Trans-Adriatic Perspective: History, Myth and Ideology	97
Enriketa Pandelejmoni Myth of a Leader: Enver Hoxha's Role during the Second World War in Contemporary Albanian History Textbooks	137

Enis Sulstarova	
Examining the Meanings and Uses of ‘Civilization’ in Albanian History Textbooks	151
Gentiana Kera	
The National Liberation Movement in Albanian History Textbooks of the Socialist Era	173
Part II: ‘Othering’ in Textbooks from Albania and Macedonia	
Konstantinos Giakoumis / Ilir Kalemaj	
Fortifying the Nation: The Image of the Greeks in Albanian History Textbooks (1945–1990)	195
Aleksandar Pavlović / Aleksandra Ilić Rajković	
‘Fierce Warriors’ or ‘Bloodthirsty Savages’: Albanians in Serbian Textbooks (1882–1941)	225
Violeta Petroska-Beshka / Nikolina Kenig	
Ethnocentric History Textbooks in a Multiethnic Society: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia	237
Irena Stefoska	
Constructing the Image of the ‘Threatening Neighbour’ in Macedonian History Textbooks	249
Petar Todorov	
Representations of Ethnic Albanians in Macedonian History Textbooks from 1970 until the Present Day	257
About the Authors	271

Foreword

This peer-reviewed edited volume focuses on textbook research pertaining specifically to the Albanian-speaking regions of South-Eastern Europe, a subject somewhat neglected by educational media research in the SEE region until now, which has tended to focus on the countries of former Yugoslavia. This book is the first to make textbooks written in the Albanian language its primary focus, and thus fills a significant gap in textbook research in the SEE region. I therefore congratulate the editors, Claudia Lichnofsky, Enriketa Pandejmoni and Darko Stojanov, and thank them for their expertise and collaboration over the years.

The idea for this volume emerged in the context of the project *History Textbooks and Teaching in Albanian Language Areas*, carried out at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany, between 2013 and 2015, and funded by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. The project sought to examine and advance the status of research on textbooks from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Conferences on educational media research, seminars for textbook authors and workshops for teachers were held every year of the project, and fellowships for research stays at the institute with its unique textbook library were awarded to several scholars and textbook authors in support of their work on textbooks written in Albanian and neighbouring South-Slavic languages.¹ The project and its events brought together scholars, history teachers and textbook authors working in the region, particularly three conferences convened in Prishtina (2013), Tirana (2014) and Skopje (2015), on the subject of myths in textbooks of South-Eastern Europe. Here, the visual representations, national histories, ethnic conflicts and historical terminology to be found in history textbooks of the region were analyzed and discussed in a variety of presentations and panels.

Many individuals and institutions contributed to the success of the project.

1 For further information on this project, see <https://albanianlanguagetextbooks.wordpress.com/> and <http://www.gei.de/en/departments/textbooks-and-society/history-textbooks-and-teaching-in-albanian-language-areas.html>.

First and foremost I thank Claudia Lichnofsky for her coordination of the project at the GEI, and her assistants Christine Chiriac and Elvir Becirovic. We are grateful for the cooperation of many institutions in the SEE region, particularly to Skender Asani from the Institute for the Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of the Albanians, Skopje, Bujar Dugolli from the University of Prishtina, Valentina Duka from the University of Tirana, and Dragi Gjorgiev from the Institute of National History in Skopje. I also extend my appreciation to our network of history teachers, academics and textbook authors, which has grown and flourished thanks to Jonathan Even-Zohar and Dieter Nehring.

This edited volume has also come to life thanks to the hard work of many. The sincere thanks of the editors and myself go to all contributors for their unique perspectives and insights. On behalf of the editors and contributors, I also thank the two anonymous reviewers for their invaluable advice and detailed, constructive criticism, and Marcus Otto for his support and advice. Sincere thanks are due to our proofreaders at the GEI, Nicola Watson and Kate Ebisch-Burton, for their patience and diligence, to Niamh Burns for her sensitive and intelligent editing, and to Wendy Anne Kopisch for her editorial coordination.

Eckhardt Fuchs
Director, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research,
Brunswick, Germany, September 2017

Introduction: Textbooks and Teaching of Albania in South-Eastern Europe

Textbook research is no longer a new field of study and has made its mark in South-Eastern Europe particularly in the course of education reform since the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1992. Until now, however, studies have tended to marginalise textbooks and educational media written in the Albanian language. While several volumes and articles have been published on textbooks in South-Eastern Europe since the 1990s,¹ Albanian textbooks hardly feature in these writings. This volume therefore seeks to fill this research gap by focusing on textbooks written in the Albanian language and neighbouring South-Slavic languages and of significance for Albanians and Albanian speakers.

What textbooks teach is always of political interest: ‘they provide a key through which national and citizenship identities are projected and constructed vis à vis a wider world’.² When analysing textbooks, we learn what generations of learners will read about their own pasts and about the history of others. A textbook represents a society’s intentions for its next generation. Two factors are vital for understanding the images of countries and peoples that are produced in textbooks: selection (*which* aspects of history?) and presentation (*how* are Others depicted?). Stereotypes and prejudices are built on certain perceptions that shape how one sees (and writes about) the world. For this reason, they ultimately reveal more about one’s own identity problems than about how one views one’s neighbour. As Wolfgang Höpken has remarked, an ‘ethnically fragmented region such as South-Eastern Europe is a space of intensive expe-

1 Augusta Dimou, ed., *‘Transition’ and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*. Eckert. The Book Series, vol. 124 (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2009); Wolfgang Höpken, ed., *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa/Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung, vol. 89 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996); Christina Koulouri, ed., *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002).

2 Hanna Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal, eds, *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), p. 2.

rience of both confrontation and conflict. In such a region, where being an 'other' has often been associated with conflict intensity, a swift recourse to stereotypes can provide an easy means of categorisation and self-confirmation'.³ Or, following Rainer Ohliger, one might say that as textbooks are instruments for the implementation of national ideologies, they can turn into prominent sources of intra-societal conflicts in (ethnically) diverse societies. Not only the state but also competing interest groups often intervene in the process of textbook writing. Cultural hegemony and political power over the national curricula provide tools for defining the very essence of the nation. Textbooks not only mirror the national culture of education, but are also essential and complex instruments for building, constructing and reproducing it. Representation in textbooks is thus significant for the recognition and status of minorities and marginal social groups. A crucial conflict within the realm of educational policy arises as soon as the nation is constructed along ethno-national lines and the state either includes members of 'other' ethnic groups or excludes minorities who are considered part of the ethno-national Self.⁴

In defining what is meant by 'enemies' and 'others', a nation also shapes its own desired (self-)perception. The framework for such definitions is the nation-building process and its need for demarcation and exclusion since the end of the 18th century. After the fall of the communist regime in Albania and the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Marxist approach was removed from textbooks and former interpretations were replaced by ethnocentric perspectives.

Textbook Research in and on Albania and South-Eastern Europe

Most research published on history textbooks of former Yugoslav states, particularly in the 1990s, addresses textbooks either from Yugoslavia (from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) or from Serbia. This volume seeks to fill the existing research gap on textbooks for Albanian readers living in South-Eastern Europe. It brings together a diverse group of scholars, history teachers and textbook authors from Albanian-speaking countries and other states within the Balkans with analyses of the visual representations, national histories, ethnic conflicts and historical terminology presented in history textbooks of the region.

A significant portion of this volume is dedicated to the analysis of myths

3 Höpken, ed., *Öl ins Feuer?* p. 24.

4 Rainer Ohliger, 'Representing the National Other: Textbooks and the Formation of Ethno-national Identity in Germany 1871–1945', in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 21/2 (1999), pp. 103–124.

inspired by the narratives of history textbooks in South-Eastern Europe. After the demise of communism in the region, the concept of the nation continued to function as the major organising principle of history. Many historians continue to produce national myths to substantiate national identity. They locate the nation in the past, sketch the future of the nation and create boundaries excluding 'others'. According to Anthony Smith, two types of myth support nationalism: the myth of ethnic descent and that of cultural affinity.⁵ An alleged shared ethnicity is used to support territorial claims and to bolster national as well as communal solidarity. Ethnic myths appear in narratives of spatial origin, ancestry, heroic age, decline, and regeneration. Textbooks of South-Eastern European countries feature such ethnic myths, even displaying contradictory and conflicting narratives within the same country, yet in books intended for different communities. Myths based on a supposed cultural affinity, on the other hand, seek to

recreate the heroic spirit (and the heroes) that animated 'our ancestors' in some past golden age; and descent is traced, not through family pedigrees, but through the persistence of certain kinds of 'virtue' or other distinctive cultural qualities, be it of language, customs, religion, institutions, or more general personal attributes.⁶

Pål Kolstø identifies myths that seek to define boundaries, and categorises them into four types: the myth of *sui generis*, of *antemurale*, of *martyrdom*, and of *antiquitas*.⁷ Myths of *sui generis*, *martyrdom*, and *antiquitas* are also identified in the South-Eastern European textbooks analysed in this volume. Two approaches to the analysis of myth are defined by Kolstø: the 'enlighteners', who treat myths as the opposite of 'facts', and the 'functionalists', who treat myths as 'an inevitable element of human existence and human societies'. Both of these approaches are analysed within this volume.

South-Eastern Europe is not new to historiographical myth. Two previous volumes constitute the fundamental reference works for this fascinating field of research: Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers' volume on *Myth and History* investigates myth production in Albanian historiography and politics, Enver Hoxha's contribution to and role in myths, myths in nationalist historiography and the role of education in myth production.⁸ Kolstø's 2005 volume on myths and boundaries in South-Eastern Europe deals with aspects such as ancient nationhood and the connection between myth and religion. Neither of these vol-

5 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).

6 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

7 Pål Kolstø, *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst & Co., 2005).

8 Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernard J. Fischer, eds, *Albanian Identities. Myth and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

umes, however, addresses the impact of myths on education and educational media.

Lulzim Dragidella has concluded that history textbooks in Kosovo lack multiple perspectives, and that history teaching is instrumentalised for political purposes.⁹ Even in reference to times before modern nation-building, for instance the medieval period, historians spoke of ‘Albanians’ rather than ‘Albanian speakers’, and Islam was presented as forcefully imposed upon the population rather than exercised through choice. The analysis equally notes the emotional nature of the vocabulary used, and that the selection of topics is politically motivated and presented with little room for discussion and divergent opinions. Indeed, a workshop held in Prishtina in May 2005 by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research was attended by evaluators of Kosovar textbooks who pointed to the weaknesses of the textbooks in use at the time. The workshop was a good example of a clash of paradigms where ‘Western’ historians sought to introduce deconstructivist approaches to the nation while Kosovar and Albanian historians insisted on maintaining a distinctly national narrative.¹⁰

History teaching in Kosovo has been the subject of intensive debate in recent years. Denisa Kostovicova has conducted the most significant research to date on this subject: in a volume edited by Augusta Dimou in 2009, Kostovicova investigates the impact of parallel education on history teaching in Kosovo after 1999.¹¹ She discovers that some 400 000 pupils, university students, and teachers were part of the parallel system and that schools were segregated (one part of the school was used by Albanians or the day was divided into two shifts: one Serbian and one Albanian). Secondary schools and universities denied access to Albanians and classrooms were moved to private houses. In the Albanians-only classes, the story of the Illyrian descent of Albanians was emphasised in order to confirm the autochthony of Albanians as opposed to the Serbian narrative of Albanian immigration to Kosovo. The history of the Serbian presence in Kosovo was presented exclusively as a history of conflict, war, colonisation and massacre.¹²

Publications on textbooks and teaching in Albania have until now tended to be of a descriptive nature or to remain within the scope of practical recom-

9 Lulzim Dragidella, ‘Neue Entwicklungen des Geschichtsunterrichts und der Geschichtsschulbücher des Kosovo’ in *Eckert.Beiträge* vol. 12 (2010).

10 Rutar, Sabine, ‘Evaluation von Geschichtsbüchern im Kosovo. Eine Tagung in Prishtina’ in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 27/2 (2005), pp. 242–244.

11 Denisa Kostovicova, ‘The Albanian Parallel Education System and Its Aftermath: Segregation, Identity, and Governance’, in Dimou, ed., *‘Transition’ and the Politics of History Education*, pp. 201–215.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 208.

mentations.¹³ Denis Vuka analyses the Albanian textbooks following the education reforms and liberalisation of textbooks in Albania in 2008. While he acknowledges the changes the textbooks underwent and the attempt to integrate new educational theories into their design, he nevertheless ascertains that the textbooks lack historical sources, rather limiting their scope to background texts and only few.¹⁴ The same is true, Vuka continues, of textbooks in Kosovo, which are all published by only one publishing house. According to Vuka, these lack not only sources but also a didactic concept, using language that is inappropriate for the age of the pupils. Textbooks from both countries follow a linear narrative of Albanians, portrayed as the descendants of Illyrians and the only resistance fighters against the Ottoman Empire. Vuka describes this as reminiscent of the concept of national identity in the Communist era (during the socialist regime of Enver Hoxha). He concludes that the liberalisation of the textbook market has not improved the quality of the books: although in Albania seven publishing houses produce textbooks today, their strict adherence to the curriculum, which defines chapters and even sub-chapters, renders them all highly similar. At the same time, Vuka notes, the textbooks are not based on constructivist learning theories, although this is equally a requirement by the curriculum.¹⁵ Similarly, Enriketa Pandelejmoni has shown that, while the Marxist interpretation of history was omitted in the textbooks when Albanian transition was still in its infancy, there has still been no ‘paradigm shift’ as far as changes to the conceptualization, methodology, and interdisciplinary incorporation of perspectives and historical analysis.¹⁶

Research on history textbooks in Macedonia is for the most part available in Macedonian and English. Robert Pichler provides an introduction to education

13 See, for example, Valentina Duka, ‘The History of Albanians and their Neighbors in Albanian Textbooks’ in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2001), p. 10; Albana Lama, ‘The Balkan Neighbours in the School Textbooks of History and Geography in the Albanian Secondary Schools of General Education’ in *The Image of the ‘Other’. Neighbours in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries*, ed. by Panos Xochellis, D. Toloudi and I. Fotini (Athens: Dardanos, 2001) p.6; Agim Sinani and Mimoza Gjokutaj, ‘The Reflection of Intercultural Relations and their Integration in the Contents of the Curricula in the Albanian School System’ in *The Image of the ‘Other’*, ed. by Xochellis et al., p. 45.

14 Denis Vuka, ‘History Teaching in Albania following Educational Reform in 2008’, *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 7/1 (2015), pp. 119.

15 Ibid, p. 120.

16 Enriketa Pandelejmoni, ‘New Approaches on the History of Albania in Historical Textbooks during Transition’ in *The Call for Freedom. Studies on Totalitarianism and Transition in Albania*, ed. by Thomas Schrapel, Enriketa Pandelejmoni and Andi Pinari (Tirana: Maluka, 2016), p. 305.

policy in Macedonia and its impact on history teaching¹⁷: after a short violent conflict in north-west Macedonia, the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) of 2001 gave the Albanian community (some 25–30 percent of the population of Macedonia) more collective rights, including higher education in their mother tongue. In the light of events in Kosovo, the Macedonian majority population and politicians feared requests of territorial autonomy or even separatism on the part of their Albanian population. Pichler thus describes the OFA as a compromise and ultimately an attempt to secure the territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia.¹⁸ In a similar context, Petar Todorov examines representations of conflicts between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, as well as the image of the ‘other’ (i. e. ethnic Albanians), in the textbooks published as a result of the post-2001 curricula reform. He argues that, despite certain changes coming from both the governmental and non-governmental sectors, there has been no genuine progress in terms of inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding in the textbooks.¹⁹ A significant effort to relate textbook research to the field of peace education and approaches such as multiperspectivity in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 conflict was made by Violeta Petroska-Beshka in a special report for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) focusing on the relationship between history teaching and conflict.²⁰ A further relevant study on history teaching and textbook research in Macedonia is the EUROCLIO analysis (European Association of History Educators) emphasising the development of ethnocentric or ‘nation-based interpretations of the past’ which tend to have divisive effects.²¹

Dieter Nehring analyses the situation of history teaching, textbooks and curricula in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Albania (all countries with classes given in the Albanian language), and ascertains that Macedonian and Albanian textbooks in particular refer to a historiography which claims to include all Macedonians and all Albanians, even outside the territory and at a time long before the commencement of the state-building process. He attributes this tendency to the relatively delayed nature of this process, as well as the

17 Robert Pichler, ‘Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)’ in Dimou, ed. *Transition and the Politics of History Education*.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

19 Petar Todorov, ‘Teaching History in Macedonia after 2001. Representations of Armed Conflict between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians’, in *History Can Bite. History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies*, ed. by Denise Bentrovato, Karina V. Korostelina and Martina Schulze (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2016), pp. 111–124.

20 Violeta Petroska-Beshka and Mirjana Najchevska, *Macedonia: Understanding History, Preventing Future Conflict*, Special Report 115 (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2004).

21 Joke van Der Leeuw-Roord, *A Key to Unlock the Past. History Education in Macedonia: An Analysis of Today’s Suggestions for the Future* (The Hague/Skopje: EUROCLIO, 2012).

multicultural and multinational composition of the territory, which in turn gives rise to a more transnational (in the sense of ‘trans-state’) approach to a national historiography focusing on all members of the nation.²²

Dubravka Stojanović is a principal contributor of scholarship on textbooks in Serbia and is active in initiatives such as the creation of the joint history workbooks by the Center for Reconciliation and Democracy (CDRSEE) in Thessaloniki. She criticises nationalism in textbooks and describes shifts in historical narratives. In the 1990s, during the era of Milošević, textbooks continued to describe ‘the Serbian people’ as the focus of a ‘class struggle’; Serbs and Montenegrins were presented as victims of Croatian traitors, Hitler and nationalist Albanians who terrorised Serbs in Kosovo.²³ Croats were depicted as enemies and the numbers of victims of the Croatian Ustasha regime were used to legitimise the war against Croatia during the 1990s.²⁴ The beginning of the disintegration of Yugoslavia is marked by the removal of Aleksandar Ranković, the then chief of the federal police, from his position in 1964. The new textbooks of the 1990s, notes Stojanović, describe the constitution of 1974 as the culmination of injustice against the Serbs, and the Serbian nation is presented as having suffered the largest number of victims (together with Montenegro), while the Catholic Church is accused of fanaticism and of exerting pressure on the Serbian people. At the same time, maintains Stojanović, the Serbs were nevertheless able to preserve their religious and national identity.²⁵

Interestingly, an overview of the current research status regarding textbooks from South-Eastern Europe reveals certain similarities between the history textbooks of the different countries: one pattern shows that Balkan history is taught separately from national history and European or world history. In all textbooks, however, sources are rare and generally used for decorative, rather than pedagogical, purposes. The Ottoman Empire is perceived as a foreign rule and suppressive power in relation to the local population in all textbooks, and the history of each individual nation is depicted as dating back to antiquity and with a strong line of continuity. Positivist national paradigms continue to stress the singularity of the nation, and history is taught via a prevalent politicised master narrative.

22 Gerd-Dieter Nehring, ‘Geschichtsbücher in albanischsprachigen Gebieten Südosteuropas’ *Eckert. Working Papers*, vol. 3 (2014).

23 Dubravka Stojanović, ‘Slow Burning: History Textbooks in Serbia, 1993–2008’, in *Transition and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, p. 144.

24 Radina Vučetić-Mladenović, ‘Textbooks and the Teaching of Twentieth-Century History in Serbia since 1989’ in *After the Wall: History Teaching in Europe since 1989*, ed. by Martin Roberts (Hamburg: Edition Körber Stiftung, 2004) p. 154.

25 Dubravka Stojanović, ‘Yugoslavia in a Broken Mirror. The Serbian Textbooks’, in *Clio in the Balkans* ed. by Christina Koulouri, pp. 250–251.

Textbooks and Education Policies in South-Eastern Europe: Historical Background and Political Challenges

This volume addresses textbooks written in the Albanian and neighbouring languages and in use in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. While the relevant region for the use of these textbooks is inhabited primarily by an Albanian-speaking population, it is also home to Macedonians, Serbs and Montenegrins as the titular nations of the respective countries, in addition to Roma, Egyptians, Ashkali, Aromanians, Turks, Croats, Bosniaks, Gorani, Macedonian Muslims and other ethnic groups. From the length of this list of ethnic affiliations, one can easily appreciate the difficulties associated with establishing nation-states in the region, a challenge which has persisted since the days of the Ottoman Empire. While former Yugoslavia did endorse processes of national identification post-1945, the question of nationality was intensified, however, after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s. Each national group sought to establish an 'ethnically pure' nation state, which in such a diverse multi-ethnic region led, inevitably, to conflict, as was the case in Croatia (1991–1995), in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995), in Kosovo (1998–1999) and in Macedonia (2001).

One consequence of the specific historical developments within the region is that the majority of Albanians live outside the borders of Albania. This is the case despite the existence of the nation-state in which members of the titular nation reside. In Kosovo Albanians are the majority population (some 90 percent) of eight ethnic groups; they live in Macedonia (between 25 and 30 percent) as a group with comprehensive minority rights (such as schooling in the Albanian language and Albanian political representatives); and in Serbia and Montenegro as a minority entitled to Albanian-language schooling and media. In Greece there are a small number of Albanians who are not recognised as a minority group, most of them having been expelled to southern Albania and Turkey after the Second World War and joined later by those who had migrated from Albania to Greece after 1991. Greece does not yet offer schooling in the Albanian language.

Albanian nation-building differs in many aspects from that of its neighbours: the nation is not bound to any particular religious denomination due to the religious heterogeneity of its population, comprising Muslims, who moved amongst the elite during the Ottoman Empire, Catholics (in northern Albania and western Kosovo) or Orthodox Christians (in southern Albania). Although the language is divided into two main dialects – Gheg (spoken in northern Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia) and Tosk (in southern Albania) – in 1972 a

standard language based on Tosk was made official. The language thus constitutes a uniting force for all Albanians.

The establishment of a standard language in 1972 led to lessons being taught in standard Albanian not only in Albania and Kosovo, but also in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, even though the Albanian spoken in those areas differs somewhat from the standard. The curricula that govern this teaching differ from country to country. In Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia each recognised ethnic group is entitled to 30 percent of lesson time dedicated to their 'own history'. Clearly history is viewed in the region as being predominantly categorised along ethnic lines; the concept of an 'own history' thus carries obvious ethnic and national connotations. Since 1990, therefore, the subject 'History of Albania' has been replaced by 'History of the Albanian People', which also includes Albanians living in neighbouring countries and implies an inclusion of their territories within the Albanian nation-state. This, however, is at odds with the Serbian and Macedonian national historiographies, which likewise portray their respective nation-states as occupying only a portion of the natural and historic territory of their nations, a perception which, understandably, conflicts with the historiographies of neighbouring countries. History textbooks depicting an ethnic-nationalistic history thus pour further oil on the fire of ethnic conflict in the region, to continue the metaphor coined by Wolfgang Höpken.²⁶

Not surprisingly, there are interesting differences between the curricula and textbooks provided for the subject of history in those countries which provide schooling in the Albanian language. In 2001/2002, the Republic of Serbia initiated reforms which sought to replace the hitherto rather more 'socialist' vocabulary with so-called 'Western' standards, also incorporating assessment programmes such as PISA. One obstacle was that Serbia intended to launch a reform for the whole country, while the province Vojvodina insisted on its autonomy in terms of education.²⁷ This brought about a shift in pedagogical approaches: the books now contained tasks, direct questions, pupil involvement, sources, and a better balance of textual and visual material.²⁸ In contrast, textbooks from the 1980s which were merely revised (yet equally widely used in secondary schools) only featured small changes and less innovative pedagogical approaches.²⁹

The history curriculum in Albania has undergone dramatic changes. Between 1945 and 1990, historical events of national significance were primarily depicted

26 Höpken, ed., *Öl ins Feuer?*

27 Sabine Rutar, 'Bildungsreform in der Republik Serbien', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 24/3 (2002), pp. 315–316.

28 Bojana Petrić, 'History Textbooks in Serbia after 2000: Signs of Educational Change?' *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 28/2 (2006), pp. 179–183.

29 *Ibid.* p. 186–192.

from a Marxist and ethnocentric perspective or, as historian Bernd Fischer has put it, as ‘Marxist Nationalism’.³⁰ Here, the national history of Albanians, as Peter Barl asserts, ‘was not rarely portrayed with romantic notes and as a linear development, from the Illyrians era to the period of Enver Hoxha’s rule’.³¹ Initially, the post-communist reform was focused on changing the curricula on the basis of which new textbooks of both pre-university and university level were to be prepared.³² The years 1991–1992 were characterised by the resolution of certain pressing issues such as the elimination of official Marxist-Leninist ideology, removal of the subject of the History of the Albanian Labour Party (PLA) from the syllabus, and a complete review of national history, especially that of the communist and World War II eras.³³ The following years saw profound changes in the content of the history syllabus and in textbook writing, and the National Council of History was set up at the Ministry of Education. This was composed of experts in all periods of history from the Academy of Sciences, professors from Albanian universities, and history teachers from various types of schools. The official history curriculum for all pre-university levels in Albania was drawn up according to the instructions of this Council, and it was this curriculum on which history textbooks of the subsequent years were based.³⁴

But the impacts of policy on academia, as well as the political change of power from Democrats to Socialists following the turmoil of 1997, also had an effect on the National Council of History. While its specialists were now closer to the power base, at the same time curricula were subject to review and new textbooks were to be compiled. Between 1998 and 1999 almost all textbooks were reviewed (in most cases by different authors than those who had done so prior to 1996). These assessments revealed frequent subjectivism in the treatment of both World War II and of communism, with the pronounced aim of ‘protecting history from nihilism and the denigration of Albanian historiography from right-wing elements’. The trend for reviewing and the political repositioning of the Albanian humanities, particularly in the writing of national history, seems to be a permanent feature.³⁵

30 Bernd Fischer, ‘The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas’ in *Albanische Geschichte. Stand der Forschung*. Special issue of *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten* 140, ed. by Oliver J. Schmitt and Eva Frantz (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2009), p. 122.

31 Peter Barl, ‘Begegnungen mit der albanischen Geschichte’, in *Albanische Geschichte*. ed. by Oliver J. Schmitt and Eva Frantz, p. 259.

32 Valentina Duka, ‘Dhjetë vjet historiografi postkomuniste në Shqipëri’ in *Çështje të historisë bashkëkohore të shqiptarëve* (Tirana: ShBLU, 2008) p. 214.

33 Bernd Fischer, ‘The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas’ in *Albanische Geschichte. Stand der Forschung*, p. 126.

34 Enriketa Pandelejmoni, ‘New Approaches on the History of Albania in Historical Textbooks during Transition’ in *The Call for Freedom*, pp. 305–306.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 307–308.

It appears that 'political correctness' is a dominant theme in academic work conducted at institutions responsible for the compilation of textbooks and their writing. Old clichés of Albanian historiography are still to be found, even in the post-communist period. According to Duka,³⁶ contemporary textbooks of history have reflected upon the war and the Albanians' efforts to consolidate an independent state and economic-social reforms. Similarly, emphasis is also placed on the War of Liberation against the fascist and Nazi occupation and Albania's positive role played in World War II, even if these portrayals are equally occasionally subject to political influence. The monopoly of the state publishing house *Libri shkollor* collapsed in 2005, and several publishing houses now issue authorised history textbooks, written by teachers as well as historians. The new government of the Socialist Party with Edi Rama as Prime Minister came into power in 2013 and seeks to return to the monopoly of the textbook market. This could lead to only one textbook being used in the future, mainly translated from Western European languages.

The illegal Albanian university in Tetovo, founded in 1994, was legalised in 2004 due to the political agreement between the political parties in power and due to the socio-political changes in Macedonia after 2001. Previously, the Southeast European University had been opened with the support of the international community in 2001, in order to establish an alternative for Albanian students.³⁷ The Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) also had an impact on the history curriculum: indirectly it led to commissions for curricula and textbook development and for textbook selection to be multinational with a significant number of Albanian historians. Since 2001, controversy has arisen due to the opposition on the part of Macedonian historians to the inclusion of the history of Albania in the teaching of Albanian history, rather than teaching the history of the local Albanian population in Macedonia.³⁸ Meanwhile, Albanian historians insist on their Illyrian origins despite a lack of sources to support this claim, and they critique the recent claim of some mainstream Macedonian historians that Macedonians are not Slavs but descendants of Alexander the Great.³⁹ Both communities are young nations and struggle for recognition of their narratives on the part of their neighbours. Ethnic Macedonians additionally defend their language against denial coming from Bulgarian political and intellectual elites, their church against denial of its autonomy coming from the Serbian Orthodox

36 Valentina Duka, 'The History of Albanians and their Neighbors in Albanian Textbooks' in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2001), p. 50.

37 Robert Pichler, 'Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)' in *Transition and the Politics of History Education*, p. 222–225.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 232–233.

Church, their national designation against Greece, and the integrity of their territory against potential Albanian separatists.⁴⁰

The Macedonian political and cultural elite therefore react with national narratives which seek to confirm the autochthony and longstanding history of ethnic Macedonians. Every past event, from Antiquity through to the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century to the independence of the Republic of Macedonia is perceived as 'Macedonian' and sometimes depicted in isolation from the broader context. Not unlike the Albanian historiographical narrative, the Macedonian counterpart constructs a linear continuity of the Macedonian nation. This nationalist approach in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious context of Macedonia uses mainly myths, memories, traditions and symbols, defines itself through the exclusion of other nations and national narratives, and produces divisions within society.⁴¹

The conflict between Albanian and Macedonian historians continues unresolved. Albanian historians complain of an overly ethnocentric content in favour of Macedonians, and of their own limited power within the commission. The procedure of creating and selecting textbooks is strictly defined and in the hands of the ministry: the books are published and purchased by the ministry and distributed directly to schools.⁴² EUROCLIO has analysed Macedonian history education and recommended curriculum revisions and new textbooks detailing the history of the population living in Macedonia, online materials, and a more open selection procedure regarding textbook authors.⁴³ Together with the local History Teacher Association ANIM, EUROCLIO published a large number of additional teaching materials regarding Macedonia and its neighbours.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, however, this material was not approved by the Ministry of Education. At present, a potential solution for the Albanian/Macedonian textbook conflict appears to be the production of textbooks to be used by all relevant communities in their own languages. Indeed, one joint textbook does now present both the Macedonian and Albanian 'versions' of history; however, the narratives run parallel without reference to one another. Serbia was also included in the joint history textbook project of the CDRSEE from the very beginning of

40 Ibid., p. 246.

41 Nikola Jordanovski, 'Between the Necessity and the Impossibility of a "National History"', in *Clio in the Balkans*, ed. by Christina Koulouri, p. 265–266.

42 Besnik Emini, 'School History Textbooks in the Republic of Macedonia. Report for the Project History Textbooks and Teaching in Albanian Language Areas, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2014, p. 4.

43 Joke van Der Leeuw-Roord, *A Key to Unlock the Past*, p. 10.

44 'Change and Continuity in Everyday Life in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia 1945-2000'; 'Macedonia: Retelling the History of a New Nation' (2007), 'Once upon a time ... we lived together (2014)' <http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php/publications/educational-material-mainmenu-391> (23.4.2015).

the process. The publication of four workbooks on the Ottoman Empire, nation-states, the Balkan Wars and the Second World War by CDRSEE, however, provoked rather violent reactions from elites, especially in Serbia and Greece. The project was perceived as an attempt at homogenisation and an attack on the nation's memory.⁴⁵

After the war, in 1999, administrative matters and education were organised by UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo), who sought to establish a modern European education system. The destruction of 45 percent of school buildings posed a problem, as did the emigration of many teachers and the relatively low education level of those remaining. The Kosovo-Albanian textbooks presented Kosovo as an independent state and Albanians as the native population.⁴⁶ The teaching material, as well as the methods and didactics, were outdated, and the books were text-heavy and fact-orientated. While Serbian schools in Kosovo still follow the Serbian curriculum and have textbooks from Serbia, the Bosniak minority use textbooks from Bosnia which do not follow the Kosovar curriculum. The Turkish minority has its own books, written by Turkish historians from Kosovo.⁴⁷

Since the reforms in 2010, history has been taught in Kosovo in the subject cluster 'Society and Environment', together with geography and civic education. The framework curriculum defines that school education (called pre-university education) should cultivate personal and national identity, raise awareness of the existence of the Kosovar state and focus on key competencies such as effective communication, thinking skills, learning competencies, competencies in negotiating, and other 'soft skills'.

The depiction of the Ottoman Empire in Kosovar history textbooks was the initial bone of contention giving rise to diplomatic quarrels and media attention after the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, requested during a meeting with the Prime Minister of Kosovo in November 2010 that Kosovar textbooks be reviewed in terms of offensive vocabulary and negative images.⁴⁸ The Kosovar Minister of Education, Science and Technology established a 'Committee to review the portrayal of Ottoman and Turkish history, geography and culture in textbooks of the Republic of Kosovo', which in December 2012 suggested the replacement of terms such as 'revenge', 'murder', 'crudeness', 'harsh measures', 'violently occupied', 'conquest' and similar expressions with

45 Dubravka Stojanović, 'Slow Burning', p. 157.

46 Lulzim Dragidella, 'Neue Entwicklungen des Geschichtsunterrichts und der Geschichtsschulbücher des Kosovo', p. 7.

47 OSCE, *Kosovo Non-majority Communities within the Primary and Secondary Educational Systems* (Vienna: OSCE, 2009).

48 There is still only one publishing house which produces history textbooks for Kosovo (*Libri shkollor*), although textbooks of the publisher *Albas* (from Albania) are also in use.

milder alternatives.⁴⁹ The textbook authors were far from pleased with these recommendations, considering them a violation of their academic freedom. They pointed to the 500-year occupation of Kosovo and refused to accept what they viewed as ‘political intervention’ by Turkey as well as the recommendations of the committee on account of the latter exploiting the ‘Kosovar inferiority complex’. Albanian intellectuals signed a petition refusing the changes because national history, they claimed, should consist only of resistance, rebellion and the struggle for freedom. In view of the banishment of the Albanian language and cultural genocide against Albanians on the part of the Ottoman Empire, it was stated that any intervention would ‘threaten the very DNA of the Albanian nation’.⁵⁰ In the meantime, important steps have been taken towards reconciliation: the German Forum *Ziviler Friedensdienst*, in cooperation with EUROCLIO, has established a cooperative project, ‘Dealing with the Past’ with the Kosovar history teachers association, while the latter, EUROCLIO and the Ministry of Education are pursuing curricular reforms unique to the region.

On the Contributions to this Volume

The contributions to this volume reflect on aspects of visual representation, terminology, national history and the representation of conflictual events in Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Macedonia in current history textbooks written in the Albanian language. Many chapters are dedicated to the creation and propagation of myths, building on theories by Kolstø. For reasons of comparison, some chapters address textbooks written in Macedonian, Greek and Croatian in order to contextualise the Albanian books within the general regional and political landscape of South-Eastern Europe.

Durim Abdullahu begins the first section, ‘History, Myth and Ideological Spaces’, with his study of historical myth in Kosovar textbooks written in the Albanian language. He begins with a theoretical introduction to the myth, ascertaining that the historical myth possesses, in Heideggerian terms, a kind of ‘being without beings’; it is a mere construction, detached from the past events that it purports to organise. He acknowledges the political and ideological uses of such myths before moving to his identification of the dominant historical myths in the textbooks under consideration. He concludes with a call for a wholesale reform of these textbooks.

49 Shkëlzen Gashi, ‘Report on the Debate of the Portrayal of the Ottoman Empire in Kosova-Kosovo History Textbooks’, *Eckert: Working Papers* 1/2015, p. 2–4.

50 Shkëlzen Gashi, *Kosova 1912–2000 in the History Textbooks of Kosova, Albania and Serbia* (Prishtina: KAHCR and KEC, 2012) pp. 11, 50–52.

Denis Vuka investigates the images used in textbooks during and after the Socialist period in Albania. His paper focuses on the cult of personality surrounding absolute leader Enver Hoxha. This tradition was continued even after Hoxha: photos and biographies of both Ramiz Alia and Sali Berisha, the first post-Communist president of Albania, are included at the end of textbooks published during their reign.

Darko Stojanov and *Jovan Bliznakovski* work towards an understanding, and deconstruction, of political myths taught in schools in the Republic of Macedonia. The separation of ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia's schools ensures that each group learns its own distinct national myths. Both the Albanian and the Macedonian national historiographies refer to antique origins: in the Macedonian case, to Alexander the Great, and the Albanians to the Illyrians.

Fabio Bego compares national perceptions of the Vlora conflict of 1920 in Italy and Albania and claims that they contribute to the formation of collective identities. The Italian government made use of the conflict in its shift towards a more authoritarian regime; whereas in Albania, it was used to legitimize the country's independence.

Enriketa Pandelejmoni analyses the main interpretations of the role of Albania's communist leader Enver Hoxha in the Second World War found in post-socialist history school textbooks. Examining processes of demythologization of historiography, Pandelejmoni argues that although there were attempts to demythologize and deconstruct Hoxha's myth, the old ethno-centric history writing nonetheless prevails in Albania's history textbooks. She maintains that the presentation of Hoxha's role during the Second World War alters according to the 'political attitudes' of the textbooks author(s).

Enis Sulstarova critically examines the use of the term 'qytetërim' [civilisation] in history textbooks in Albania. The phrase 'historia e qytetërimit botëror' [history of world civilisations] is used to teach the progress of human civilisation, which for the most part is equated with European civilisation. Sulstarova describes the colonial history of the term but does not argue against its use; rather he advocates a nuanced and critical approach to such terms.

Gentiana Kera investigates how the myth of the Albanian Communist Party's role in the Second World War is represented in history textbooks. The liberation myth legitimised the Communist regime after 1944. It can be divided into two phases; in the first, lasting until the end of the 1960s, the role of hero was reserved for the Communist Party. In the second phase, beginning in the 1970s and continuing on until 1990, Enver Hoxha took over the cult.

In the second section, "Othering" in Textbooks from Albania and Macedonia', *Konstantinos Giakoumis* and *Ilir Kalemaj* begin with a study of the image of the Greek in Albanian history textbooks published during the Communist

regime. They analyse the attributes related to Greeks and Greece, dividing them into three categories that are then used to produce statistical data, which in turn can be related to important historical processes and shifts in the Albanian society. Using a longitudinal research model, they conclude that there appears to be a significant correlation between state politics and the content of textbooks.

Following an outline of the general landscape of Serbian and Yugoslav national education policy, the chapter by *Aleksandar Pavlović* and *Aleksandra Ilić Rajković*, 'Fierce warriors' or 'bloodthirsty savages': Albanians in Serbian textbooks (1882–1941)', seeks to establish a thorough and nuanced discussion on depictions of Albanians in educational media from Serbia, an aspect somewhat marginalised by research to date. The authors argue that Albanians are represented in the textbooks with same ambivalences and contradictions that marked the official Serbian and Yugoslav policy towards them. The analysis focuses particularly on a popular history textbook of the time by Mihajlo Jović, which saw some 20 revised editions between 1882 and 1944.

Violeta Petroska-Beshka and *Nikolina Kenig* examine parallel ethnocentrism in recent Macedonian textbooks by investigating textbook and curriculum revision processes. They argue that despite the officially proclaimed multicultural character of education, the textbooks in fact fail to foster an understanding of inter-ethnic cohabitation in the country. They recommend a revision of the textbooks, whereby they would be written in a tone of inter-ethnic inclusiveness and understanding, building both the student's critical thinking capacities and empathy.

Irena Stefoska provides an insight into techniques used to construct an image of the 'threatening neighbour' in recent Macedonian history textbooks for the seventh and eighth grades of primary school. She emphasizes wording, selection of topics, frequency and language style, as the main tools for a subtle transmission of negative messages in relation to neighbouring peoples/countries. Although there have been efforts to remove stereotypes from textbooks, she argues that some of them are still implicitly presented.

Petar Todorov studies the image of the Other in Macedonian textbooks, with a focus on the presentation of Albanians in times when all textbook authors were ethnic Macedonians. Chronologically he focuses on the period between the 1970s and 2005, noting the dynamic and the shifts which occur in the portrayal of Albanians. While during the Yugoslav times, Albanians were presented as allies to the Macedonians in their struggle for national independence, in post-independence textbooks such joint efforts are omitted, and a rather negative tone is introduced. Albanians are described using terms such as 'criminal bands', 'Shkipitar', 'mountaineers', and 'tribes'. After the conflict and peace agreement of 2001, textbooks contain a bi-polar ethno-national narrative which gives the impression that Albanians and Macedonians lived entirely separately in the past.

Some negative terms are removed from textbooks but pupils cannot study these conflicts in detail, and are presented with only stereotyped images of Albanians.

The region of South-Eastern Europe offers a strong potential for continued and in-depth research on textbooks and other educational media, and this volume seeks to advance the field and provide inspiration for further studies, not least on the hitherto oft-overlooked textbooks for Albanian speakers. As the UNYT-INH cooperation mentioned above has demonstrated, new ideas for future textbooks, other educational media and teaching are currently being developed, especially with a view to intercultural understanding. Such cooperative projects constitute one of the key elements in the improvement of history education in the region, for which both textbook reform and the concept of the nation itself are relatively recent developments.

Bibliography

- Bartl, Peter, 'Begegnungen mit der albanischen Geschichte', in *Albanische Geschichte. Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver J. Schmitt and Eva Frantz (München: Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, vol. 140, 2009), pp. 253–260.
- Brisku, Adrian, 'Islamization reconsidered: Islam and Muslim Albanians in Albanian History Texts (1973–2006)', in *Narrating Islam. Interpretations of the Muslim World in European Texts*, ed. by Gerdien Jonker and Shiraz Thobani (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 168–193.
- Dimić, Ljubodrag and Danko Alimpić, 'Stereotypes in History Textbooks in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia', in: *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa/Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. by Wolfgang Höpken, *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung*, vol. 89 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996), pp. 89–98.
- Dimou, Augusta, ed., '*Transition*' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe. *Eckert. The Book Series*, vol. 124 (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2009).
- Dragidella, Lulzim, 'Neue Entwicklungen des Geschichtsunterrichts und der Geschichtsschulbücher des Kosovo' in *Eckert.Beiträge 2010* vol. 12: <http://www.edumeres.net/urn/urn:nbn:de:0220-2010-00537>, last accessed September 2017.
- Duka, Valentina, 'The History of Albanians and their Neighbors in Albanian Textbooks' in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2001), pp. 49–53.
- Duka, Valentina, 'Dhjetë vjet historiografi postkomuniste në Shqipëri' in *Çështje të historisë bashkëkohore të shqiptarëve*, ed. by Valentina Duka (Tirana: ShBLU, 2008) pp. 213–234.
- Emini, Besnik, *School History Textbooks in the Republic of Macedonia*. Report for the project *History Textbooks and Teaching in Albanian Language Areas*, Georg Eckert Institut for International Textbook Research: <https://albanianlanguage textbooks.wordpress.com/2014/06/05/besnik-emini-school-history-textbooks-in-the-republic-of-macedonia/>, last accessed September 2017.

- Fischer, Bernd, 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas' in *Albanische Geschichte. Stand der Forschung*. Special issue of *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten* 140, ed. by Oliver J. Schmitt and Eva Frantz (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 119–130.
- Gashi, Shkëlzen, *Kosova 1912–2000 in the History Textbooks of Kosova, Albania and Serbia* (Prishtina: KAHCR and KEC, 2012).
- Gashi, Shkëlzen, 'Report on the Debate of the Portrayal of the Ottoman Empire in Kosova-Kosovo History Textbooks', *Eckert: Working Papers* 2015/1 <http://www.edumeres.net/publikationen/working-papers/working-paper/p/report-on-the-debate-of-the-portrayal-of-the-ottoman-empire-in-kosova-kosovo-history-textbooks.html> 2015, last accessed September 2017.
- Höpken, Wolfgang: 'Der Zweite Weltkrieg in den jugoslawischen und post-jugoslawischen Schulbüchern', in: *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa/Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. by Wolfgang Höpken, *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung*, vol. 89 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996), pp. 159–178.
- Höpken, Wolfgang, 'History Education and Yugoslav (Dis-)Integration' in: *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa/Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. by Wolfgang Höpken, *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung*, vol. 89 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996), pp. 99–124.
- Höpken, Wolfgang, ed., *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa/Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung*, vol. 89 (Hanover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996).
- Ohliger, Rainer, 'Representing the National Other: Textbooks and the Formation of Ethnonational Identity in Germany 1871–1945', in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 21/2 (1999), pp. 103–124.
- Janjetović, Zoran, 'National Minorities and Non-Slav Neighbours in Serbian Textbooks' *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 23/2 (2001), pp. 201–214.
- Jordanovski, Nikola, 'Between the Necessity and the Impossibility of a "National History"', in *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002), pp. 265–275.
- Jordanovski, Nikola, 'The Common Yugoslav History and the Republic of Macedonia', in *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002), pp. 254–260.
- Jovanovski, Dalibor, 'The History of the Balkan Nations Presented in the School Textbooks of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', Paper given at conference 'Historiography and History Education in the South-Slavic and Albanian-Speaking Regions', Skopje, 3–4 June 2015.
- Karge, Heike, 'Geschichtsbilder im postjugoslawischen Raum: Konzeptionen in Geschichtslehrbüchern am Beispiel von Selbst- und Nachbarschaftswahrnehmung' *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 21/4 (1999), pp. 315–337.
- Kolstø, Pål, *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst & Co., 2005).

- Kostovicova, Denisa, 'The Portrayal of the Yoke. The Ottomans and their Rule in the Post-1990 Albanian-language History Textbooks', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 24/3 (2002), pp. 257–278.
- Kostovicova, Denisa, *The Politics of Identity and Space: Albanian Language Education in Kosovo*, Routledge Advances in European Politics, vol. 29 (London: Routledge, 2005).
- Kostovicova, Denisa, 'The Albanian Parallel Education System and Its Aftermath: Segregation, Identity, and Governance', in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, Eckert. *The Book Series*, vol. 124 (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2009), pp. 201–215.
- Koulouri, Christina, ed., *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002).
- Lama, Albana, 'The Balkan Neighbours in the School Textbooks of History and Geography in the Albanian Secondary Schools of General Education' in *The Image of the 'Other'. Neighbours in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries* ed. by Panos Xochellis, D. Toloudi and I. Fotini (Athens: Dardanos, 2001) pp. 141–153.
- Nehring, Gerd-Dieter, *Geschichtsbücher in albanischsprachigen Gebieten Südosteuropas*. (Eckert. Working Papers, vol. 3): <http://www.edumeres.net/publikationen/working-papers/working-paper/p/geschichtsbuecher-in-albanischsprachigen-gebieten-suedosteuropas.html> 2014, last accessed September 2017.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation In Europe (OSCE), *Kosovo Non-majority Communities within the Primary and Secondary Educational Systems* (Vienna: OSCE, 2009) <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/36978?download=true> 2009, last accessed September 2017.
- Pajo, Erind, 'Albanian Schoolbooks in the Context of Societal Transformation: Review Notes' in *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002), pp. 445–461.
- Pandelejmoni, Enriketa, 'New Approaches on the History of Albania in Historical Textbooks during Transition' in *The Call for Freedom. Studies on Totalitarianism and Transition in Albania*, ed. by Thomas Schrapel, Enriketa Pandelejmoni and Andi Pinari (Tirana: Maluka, 2016), pp. 294–306.
- Petrić, Bojana, 'History Textbooks in Serbia after 2000. Signs of Educational Change?' *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 28/2 (2006), pp. 177–196.
- Petroska-Beshka, Violeta and Najchevska, Mirjana, *Macedonia: Understanding History, Preventing Future Conflict*, Special Report 115 (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2004).
- Pichler, Robert, 'Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)' in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, Eckert. *The Book Series*, vol. 124 (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2009), pp. 217–250.
- Rutar, Sabine, 'Bildungsreform in der Republik Serbien', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 24/3 (2002), pp. 315–321.
- Rutar, Sabine, 'Evaluation von Geschichtsbüchern im Kosovo. Eine Tagung in Prishtina' in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 27/2 (2005), pp. 242–244.

- Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie, 'Narratives of Power. Capacities of Myths in Albania' in *Albanian Identities. Myth and History* ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernard J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 3–25.
- Schissler, Hanna and Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal, eds, *The Nation, Europe, and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).
- Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie and Bernard J. Fischer, eds, *Albanian Identities. Myth and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).
- Sinani, Agim and Mimoza Gjokutaj, 'The Reflection of Intercultural Relations and their Integration in the Contents of the Curricula in the Albanian School System' in *The Image of the 'Other'. Neighbours in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries*, ed. by Panos Xochellis, D. Toloudi and I. Fotini (Athens: Dardanos, 2001) pp. 187–192.
- Smith, Anthony D. *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: OUP, 1999).
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'Stereotypes in Contemporary History Textbooks in Serbia as a Mirror of the Times', in *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa*, ed. by Wolfgang Höpken (Hanover: *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung* 89, 1996), pp. 125–135.
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'The Balkans, Wars and Textbooks: The Case of Serbia' in *Öl ins Feuer? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa* ed. by Wolfgang Höpken (Hanover: *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung* 89, 1996) pp. 143–158.
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'The Image of the 'Other'. The Neighbours in Serbian History Textbooks' in *The Image of the 'Other'. Neighbours in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries*, ed. by Panos Xochellis, D. Toloudi and I. Fotini (Athens: Dardanos, 2001), pp. 111–116.
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'Yugoslavia in a Broken Mirror. The Serbian Textbooks', in *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002), pp. 249–253.
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'Slow Burning: History Textbooks in Serbia, 1993–2008', in *Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, Eckert. *The Book Series*, vol. 124 (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2009), pp. 141–158.
- Šuica, Marko, 'Public Reactions to the New History Textbook for the 8th Grade of Elementary School in Serbia' *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 24/3 (2002), pp. 322–326.
- Sulstarova, Enis, 'Albania: Between Europe and Turkey?' *Eckert: Das Bulletin* 8 (2010), pp. 8–10.
- Todorov, Petar, 'Teaching History in Macedonia after 2001. Representations of Armed Conflict between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians, in *History Can Bite. History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies*, ed. by Denise Bentrivato, Karina V. Korostelina and Martina Schulze (Goettingen: V&R unipress, 2016), pp. 111–124.
- Ursprung, Daniel, 'Personenkult im Bild. Stalin, Enver Hoxha und Nicolae Ceaușescu' in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Heidi Hein-Kirchner and Benno Ennker, (Marburg: Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, vol. 27, 2010), pp. 50–73.
- Van der Leeuw-Roord, Joke, *A Key to Unlock the Past. History Education in Macedonia: An Analysis of Today's Suggestions for the Future* (The Hague/Skopje: EUROCLIO, 2012).

- Vučetić-Mladenović, Radina, 'Textbooks and the Teaching of Twentieth-Century History in Serbia since 1989' in *After the Wall: History Teaching in Europe since 1989*, ed. by Martin Roberts (Hamburg: Edition Körber Stiftung, 2004) pp. 152–159.
- Vuka, Denis, 'History Teaching in Albania following Educational Reform in 2008', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 7/1 (2015), pp. 116–132.
- Xhemalaj, Fatmiroshe, *The Situation of History Teaching in Albania: Problems and Challenges*. Report for the project *History Textbooks and Teaching in Albanian Language Areas*, Georg Eckert Institut for International Textbook Research, 2014: <https://albanianlanguagetextbooks.wordpress.com/2014/04/02/fatmiroshe-xhemalaj-the-situation-of-history-teaching-in-albania/>, last accessed September 2017.

Part I:
History, Myth and Ideological Spaces

Myths in Kosovar Textbooks: History in the Service of Identity Construction

This chapter examines a number of recent Kosovar textbooks for the degree to which they mythologize historical events. Mythologizing history involves an intervention in the past, twisting it to suit the present and ensure a particular future. This arbitrary intervention obfuscates history by distorting the collective memories of the people. Mythologizing can be achieved either coincidentally or deliberately. The more mythologizing is a deliberate attempt, the more history is abused in favour of certain themes. Mythological histories are particularly effective in the case of textbooks, which influence which identities and values are passed onto the next generation.

History and myth have often gone hand in hand. In the twelfth century a Danish soldier with the Latin name Saxo Grammaticus, under the patronage of the Archbishop of Lund, Absalon, wrote a concise history of Denmark entitled *Gesta Danorum*. At the outset of the book, the author states his intention to glorify his homeland with his writing. Later on, at the beginning of thirteenth century, the Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson wrote a book entitled *Heimskringla* (*The Circle of the World*), a history of the deeds of Norwegian kings and imbued with myth. Seven hundred years later, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these books became a source of inspiration for Danish and Norwegian nationalists. Such examples highlight the long-standing interaction between myth and history.

As soon as myth encroaches on the domain of history, it becomes an *active* subject. Though time moves from the past to the present, history, particularly mythologized history, can move in either direction, as history is always reflected upon from the contemporary perspective of the historian. It creates a new story that competes with and negates history, empiricism and science alike.¹ While history is in some sense always accessible, the myth lies beyond reach, pertaining not to the present, but to an imagined past, and attempting to forge a particular future. In Heideggerian terms, the historical myth has a kind of 'Being without

1 Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (1979), pp. 7–12.

beings'.² There *are* myths, but they do not exist as anything more than mere constructions. Most of the time, they behave as parasites in the body of history. The more history succumbs to myth, the vaguer it becomes.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that a mythologized history is a disguised one with a powerful potential. If one wishes to demythologize history, one is compelled to deploy a method of deconstruction that utilizes all its strands: from its language and theory to its more natural and practical sides.³ However the task at hand is not a general deconstruction of myths. This study is confined to the *identification* of certain myths in Kosovar textbooks.

With a theory that takes into account the Nietzschean concept of the will to power, Michel Foucault considers the school to be the most important institution shaping the modern man.⁴ According to him, the school imparts essentially the same information over many generations, forging one specific type of person for decades. This kind of education greatly reduces the creativity of students by curtailing their mental capacities to the acquisition of such information. Its main purpose is to establish a class of 'undoubted truths'. It is therefore of the utmost importance to know what sort of information is being imparted upon school students. Jean-François Lyotard summarizes the questions that arise from this as follows: 'Who transmits learning? What is transmitted? To whom? Via which medium? In what form? To what effect?'⁵

Under the educational system of the Republic of Kosovo, history is taught during eight years of education. There are 17 books in use across all these levels: 12 textbooks and five workbooks. History textbooks have been standardized by the Ministry of Education, and there is thus little room for alternative textbooks. Consequently, a situation has emerged in which all schools deliver essentially the same history, of which all students are indiscriminately aware.

This chapter seeks an answer to one major question: what kind of identity is envisaged by such textbooks? Although these textbooks cover history from antiquity to modern times, all 17 textbooks are written by eight authors, few of whom possess qualifications in ancient or medieval history. It is striking that political history makes up more than 90 percent of the contents of these books. The remaining ten percent are designated for the history of culture, philosophy, arts, religion, architecture, or science. The latter histories are undoubtedly influenced by political history.⁶ This uniformity of content reveals a tendency to

2 Gordon and Gordon, *Heidegger on Truth and Myth* (2007), p. 17.

3 Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction* (2004), pp. 18–24.

4 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. by Sheridan (1995), p. 147.

5 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. by Bennington and Massumi (1982), p. 48.

6 Bujar Dugolli and Durim Abdullahu, 'Çështje kundërthënëse dhe të ndjeshme në tekstet e historisë për shkollat fillore dhe të mesme në Kosovë', *Diskutime*, 3 (9) (2014), pp. 121–144.

inculcate in students an overly political perspective on the history of their country and that of the world.

The content of these textbooks entails a socio-political take on history. Most of them share a uniform structure, common language and illustrations, and the same approach to their topics. The authors create a selective narrative and make use of certain myths and gross exaggerations in order to impart to the students a nationalist identity. This is perhaps best exemplified by the first paragraph of a fifth grade history textbook: 'By learning history, we enable ourselves to approach the present and future, and to engage with civilized values'.⁷ These textbooks bolster a kind of identity founded on a hypothesis of ethno-cultural homogeneity stretching back through time. This identity is centered on six central mythical themes: autochthony, ethnic continuity, religious tolerance, Albano-centrism as nationalism, victimization and innocence, and relations with the West.

The Myth of the 'Native People'

A solid identity requires deep roots and they in turn need a soil: the space of history and identity. Thus the idea of autochthony is generated, a concept which has created a complex of 'nateness'. Although scholars do hold that ethnic Albanians are, historically speaking, native to the region in which they now dwell, historical textbooks in Kosovo have mythologized this fact in a crude fashion.

The clear implicit message of the myth of the native people is this: 'We are the first dwellers here; the rest came after us'. This is what underpins the textbook writers' interpretation of the Albanian ethnogenesis. Their textbooks, particularly those for the fifth, sixth, and tenth grades, lay a special emphasis on the origin of Albanian people. The myth of the native people is the cornerstone of the identity provided by texts. This specific myth is a byproduct of the wider fraught discussion around the problem of Albanian ethnogenesis.

There are certain passages in these textbooks which dwell on the origin of Albanians:

The earliest population in the Balkans was the Pelasgians. Scholars opined that they were the predecessors of Illyrians [...] Illyrians are among the oldest peoples in the Balkans. They are thought to be the offspring of Pelasgians and are the antecedents of Albanians [...] They had a distinct language and customs, very similar to those of modern Albanians. Their dress is similar to that of Albanians.⁸

7 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 5* (2012), p. 5.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 8, p. 21.

Scholars held that Illyrians owe their origin to the Pelasgians...Albanians are the descendants of Illyrians. The Illyrian language was spoken in Illyria, although it was written with either the Greek or Latin alphabet. Thousands of words survive from this old language, such as the names of people, tribes, cities, places, rivers, etc. These words are fairly similar to modern Albanian equivalents, which attests to the fact that Albanian is a direct descendant of Illyrian.⁹

According to many Albanian and foreign scholars, the Pelasgians were the forebearers of the Illyrians [...] Data shows that they lived in the Balkans as early as the third millennium B.C. [...] A large number of historians conclude that Illyrians are native, and belong to Indo-European peoples. According to many researchers, both Albanian and foreign, the Pelasgians were the ancestors of the Illyrians.¹⁰

The above-cited passages make it plain that the alleged origin of Albanians (whereby they are descendent from both the Pelasgians and the Illyrians) is articulated in these textbooks without ado, through a number of simple assertions. Rather unconvincingly, the main argument relies upon a linguistic connection between Illyrian and Albanian that is considered by scholars to be at best a mere indication of the origin of the Albanian people, but hardly decisive proof thereof.¹¹ Moreover, the Illyrian origins of Albanians are overly mythologized, especially in statements describing similarities between Illyrian and Albanian dress.

This thesis is repeated time and time again by teachers in order to inculcate it firmly in their students' minds, and in textbooks it is marked in bold. The 'obsession with origin'¹² goes as far as to claim that the Illyrians had lived in the Balkans since the third millennium B.C. In fact, the earliest accounts of certain tribes later designated 'Illyrian' are those of Hesiod and Homer, who lived in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C., respectively. The first account which explicitly mentions Illyrians as a distinct people appears in Herodotus' work from the fifth century B.C.¹³ It is worth pointing out that nowhere in these textbooks is there any mention of the second common theory about the origin of Albanians, according to which Albanians descend largely from both the Illyrians and the Thracians.

9 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 6* (2012), p. 24, p. 89.

10 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 10* (2010), pp. 26–29.

11 Joachim Matzinger, 'Shqiptarët si pasardhës të ilirëve nga këndvështrimi i gjuhësisë historike', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve*, ed. by Schmitt and Frantz (2012), pp. 13–39.

12 Ardian Vehbiu, 'Obsesioni ynë me origjinën', *Roli i Miteve në Historinë e Shqipërisë, Përpjekja*, year VI, no. 15–16. ed. by Fatos Lubonja (Tirana: Përpjekja, 1999), pp. 67–72.

13 Homeri, *Ilias*, ed. by G. Dindroff (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri, 1921); Homeri, *Odyssea*, ed. by G. Dindroff (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri 1925); Hesiodi, *Carmina*, (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri, 1913); *Ilirët dhe Iliria te autorët antikë*, ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Arkeologjisë (Tiranë: Toena, 2002), pp. 8–14.

The Myth of Original Culture

Another myth which appears in these textbooks is that surrounding the allegedly distinct and authentic culture of Illyrians. In an effort to instill in students a sense of pride regarding their noble ancestors, some textbook authors portray them as highly culturally advanced, such as in the following excerpts:

In the period of King Glaucus, both arts and culture bloomed [...] In [Pyrrhus of Epirus'] time, arts and culture flourished [...] The children of free citizens went on to private schools at the age of seven [...] where they were instructed in maths, history, arts, etc. [...] The Illyrian language, distinct from Greek and Latin, was spoken in Illyria [...] It is believed that there were many books in Illyrian which have not survived [...]¹⁴

'Greek settlers found a more developed culture in Illyria than they had ever encountered before. They learned a great deal from the Illyrians, especially concerning agriculture, livestock, and craft [...] The Illyrian woman enjoyed respect both in the family and society [...] There were even public schools in several cities [...] funded by the state.'¹⁵

The earliest examples of art on Illyrian soil are from the Neolithic period [...] Illyrian art was of the highest quality [...] Illyrians developed their own culture through art, building, language, way of life, religion, etc. [...] in addition to theatre, music and gymnastics; even literature prospered.¹⁶

In the above, the Illyrians are portrayed as possessing a highly advanced culture, a textbook narrative with intensive recourse to the Neolithic period. By the same token, the Greek culture of coastal colonies on Illyria is overlooked, while Illyrians are presented as culturally superior to Greeks.¹⁷ The assertion that Illyrians wrote many books is by far the most blatantly false claim, considering that the first book was printed in the middle of the 15th century by Gutenberg; prior to him, there were only manuscripts or codices.¹⁸

The authors place a special emphasis on the Illyrians. This is best illustrated by the history workbook for the fifth and sixth grades. Students are required to know which language is similar to Pelasgian; how children were educated in Illyria; which language was spoken in Illyria; what similarities there are between Illyrians and Albanians; the cultural developedness of Illyrians as compared to

14 Rexhepi, *Historia 5* (2012), pp. 11–20.

15 Rexhepi, *Historia 6* (2012), p. 32, pp. 84–85.

16 Rexhepi, *Historia 10* (2010), pp. 56–58.

17 For helen colonies in Illyria see Muzafer Korkuti, 'Themelimi i kolonive helene dhe marëdhëniet me botën ilire', in *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I. ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Historisë (Tirana: Toena, 2002), pp. 56–58.

18 For language and culture of Illyrians see Aleksandër Stipçeviq, *Ilirët: Historia, jeta, kultura, simbolet e kultit*, trans. by Nazmi Rrahmani (Tirana: Toena, 2002), pp. 121–134; pp. 187–192; pp. 216–239; pp. 249–254.

the Greeks; the boundaries of Illyria; the comparison between Illyrian and Albanian and so forth.¹⁹

The Myths of Vertical Continuity and Ethnic Purity

The mythologizing of autochthony reaches its nadir with the myth of ethnic continuity. This myth establishes an uninterrupted vertical structure to the Albanian ethnogenesis: Pelasgians-Illyrians-Albanians. This alleged lineage is presented in an uninterrupted timeline, despite spanning a period of more than 3000 years. This narrative appears in textbooks for the fifth, sixth, seventh, and tenth grades. It is illustrated in the following passages:

From the 8th century onwards Illyrians were called 'Arbër' or 'Albanians', while their country was referred to as 'Arbëri' or 'Albania'; these came from the name of the Illyrian tribe of Albanoi [...] Later, these terms came to encompass all Albanian lands [...] Albanians are the descendants of Illyrians [...] The Albanian state did not include all areas inhabited by Arbërs-Albanians.²⁰

The old Illyrian populace which survived came to be called 'Arbër' or 'Arbëri' as time went on. These primeval names for Albanians originate with the Illyrian tribe of Albanoi [...] During the Middle Ages, the name 'Arbër' and 'Arbëri' spread throughout all Albanian lands, from Kotor Bay [Montenegro] in the north, all the way to Arta's Bay in the south. These areas were called Arbëri-Albania.²¹

During the 11th century, Albanians were under the rule of Byzantines [...] Among the most famous uprisings against the Byzantines was that of 1043. Around this time the name Arbër appears for the first time.²²

The above passages exemplify the widespread idea that Illyrians, Arbërs, and modern Albanians form a single ethnic substance with different labels. The transition from Illyrian to Arbër, and from Arbër to Albanian, is not explained as a socio-historical and political evolution, but rather as a mere spontaneous shift of terms. These authors uncritically fail to differentiate between concepts such as 'Arbëri', 'Arbëria' and 'Albania', ignoring the historical sources that draw a sharp distinction between them.²³ This is part of the myth of ethnic continuity, which is based upon a manufactured alternative historical timeline that traces a

19 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 5 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009), p. 6, p. 11, p. 14; Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 6 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2011) p. 23, p. 42, p. 52.

20 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, p. 23, p. 26.

21 Rexhepi, *Historia 6*, p. 109.

22 Isa Bicaj and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 7* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009), pp. 35–37.

23 See Xhufi, Pëllumb, 'Vëzhgime mbi emrin Arbër dhe Arbëresh', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)*, (Tirana: Pegi, 2006), pp. 3–23.

straight line from the Illyrians to modern Albanians.²⁴ This mythologizing plunges new depths in passages such as the following, taken from the tenth grade history textbook: '[...] the previous names 'Illyria' and 'Illyrians' were replaced by the newly emerged national names 'Arbër' and 'Arbëri' over time. These old names have recourse to the Illyrian tribe of Albanoi'.²⁵ This formulation gives the impression that the transition from Illyrians to Albanians was merely linguistic, rather than a deep socio-political evolution which saw the alteration of the framework of the Byzantine world through continuous invasions and changed demographics. It should be noted that the terms 'Arbër' and 'Arbëri' are described as 'new national names' despite the fact that there was not yet any modern sense of the nation. These names are quite paradoxically considered equivalent to the later names 'Shqiptarë' and 'Shqipëri'.²⁶

The textbook authors intertwine the myth of a vertical continuity with that of ethnic purity. Such myths ignore the diversity which characterizes the Albanian ethnogenesis; instead the ethnic history of Albanians is presented as undiluted from antiquity to modern times. Moreover, they serve to create a sense of superiority among Albanians over their neighbours. This is best exemplified in the following passages:

Throughout the centuries, Illyrians preserved their own language, culture and traditions, handed down from generation to generation [...] Arbërs are the descendants of Illyrians. They preserved the language, customs and culture of their ancestors, the Illyrians [...] In the areas that now constitute modern Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia, the ancient Arbëror-Shqiptar populace dwindled away gradually, replaced by the new Slavic dwellers. In the territories of modern Albania, Kosovo, and in much of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece, however, the ancient Albanians did not disappear. This population preserved its language, customs and ancient culture, which were continued by Albanians.²⁷

Illyrians were not Romanized despite being under Roman rule. They were able to preserve their language, culture, traditions, and their customs [...] Illyrians were on the verge of assimilation by the Romans and barbarian invaders [...] However, Illyrians, and later Albanians, managed to persevere, although a great deal of their land was engulfed by Slavic settlers [...] the main factors which enabled the survival of the Albanian people were their language, culture, traditions, and customs.²⁸

24 See Milan Shufflay, *Serbët dhe shqiptarët*, trans. by Hasan Çipuri (Tirana: Toena, 2004), pp. 30–36.

25 Rexhepi, *Historia 10*, p. 158.

26 For ethnogenesis of Albanians see Kristo Frashëri, *Etnogjeneza e Shqiptarëve – Vështrim historic*, ed. by Miranda Goleci and Bujar Karoshi (Tirana: M & B, 2013), pp. 225–249.

27 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, p. 23, p. 26.

28 Rexhepi, *Historia 10*, pp. 109–110.

This is a gross oversimplification of Albanian medieval history. The authors of these textbooks ignore all relations with the outside world, and thus can explain the transition from Illyrians to Albanians as organic, internal transformations of a distinct ethnic entity, untouched by any outside circumstance. By emphasizing repeatedly the preservation of language, traditions and culture, they preclude any possibility of ethnic evolution.²⁹ These authors admit only two extremes: the first is the hypothesis according to which the Albanians-Shqiptarët of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia were utterly obliterated by the invading Slavs. The second is the theory that Albanians in the territories of modern Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece escaped assimilation by keeping intact their own identity. Furthermore, these authors misuse the term 'Arbër', projecting it back onto the past, onto all areas in which the Illyrians lived, and precluding any possibility of historical ethnic symbiosis in the Balkans.³⁰ Another major flaw is the use of modern political concepts to describe the history of the Middle Ages.

The Myths of Religious Tolerance and Indifference

A common myth is that of a religious harmony in Albania. Myths of this nature are motivated by the religious diversity of modern Albanians. All historical religions are depoliticized to create the impression that the Albanian identity was never based on religion but rather on ethnicity. This myth has two branches: the myth of religious tolerance and that of religious indifference. The former is of the utmost importance to the identity created by history textbooks, as behind it lies a deliberate attempt to subordinate the religious diversity of the nation. This can be observed in the following excerpts:

Although Albanians have three different religions, they were always unified in a single body, maintaining a religious tolerance towards one another. Albanians are thought to be the only people who have never had any religious war.³¹

Though divided into three different religions, the Albanian nation is known for its religious tolerance. Language, tradition, and customs were the main elements which bound together Albanians [...] With the spread of Islam at the end of the 17th century,

29 For the complexities of Albanian medieval history see Milan Shuflyaj, 'Gjendja etnike në periudhën e Mesjetës', in *Qytetet dhe kështjellat e Shqipërisë – kryesisht në Mesjetë*, ed. by Luan Malltezi (Tirana: Onufri, 2009), pp. 74–81.

30 Oliver Jens Schmitt, 'Monada e Ballkanit – Shqiptarët në Mesjetë', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve: Gjendja dhe perspektivat e studimit* ed. by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012) pp. 67–69.

31 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, p. 50.

the national names 'Shqiptar' and 'Shqipëri' emerged. These names were used in all areas where Albanian was spoken, in spite of religious differences.³²

These textbooks place a great deal of emphasis on the pragmatic behaviour of Albanians regarding religion.³³ This myth contains a very ambiguous term: religious tolerance, a term which in fact does not reflect a peaceful symbiosis among Albanians but rather presupposes a discrepancy, disagreement or conflict in need of neutralization. The multi-religious symbiosis among Albanians was not a consequence of tolerance, but of a wider inter-religious consensus, best exemplified by mixed marriages and the so-called crypto-Christians.³⁴

In their workbooks, the students are compelled to choose between the following options: '[Albanians] had religious tolerance', and '[Albanians] did not have religious tolerance'; and between 'they had religious wars', 'there were no religious wars', and 'they only had a religious war'.³⁵ Similar questions ask students to 'describe some factors which paved the way to the spread of Islam among Albanians', or 'name the religion of Albanians'.³⁶

The myth of religious tolerance would be less convincing were it not accompanied by the myth of religious indifference. At the heart of such a myth lies the idea that no religion made any strong impact on Albanian beliefs, and that religion did not matter at all to the identity of Albanians. This myth is bolstered in one textbook by reference to a verse of Pashko Vasa's famous poem 'Oh my Albania'. His attempts to conceive an identity are described in this way: 'To achieve the much yearned-for unification, they chanted a verse by Pashko Vasa, "The religion of Albanians is Albanism", which challenged not religious beliefs, but religious divisions among Albanians'.³⁷ This verse presents the idea that Albanians are strongly bound by ethnicity, and not by religion.³⁸ Religious di-

32 Bicaĳ, *Historia 7* (2009), p. 118.

33 Rapper, Gilles de, 'Culture and the Reinvention of Myth in a Border Area', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 190–200.

34 For religious tolerance see Khufi, Pëllumb, 'Toleranca fetare ndër shqiptarë', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)* (Tirana: Pegi, 2006) pp. 541–553.

35 Rexhepi, *Historia 5 – Fletore Pune* (2009), p. 30.

36 Isa Bicaĳ and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 7 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2011), p. 48.

37 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 8: Shkolla e Mesme e Ulët* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012), p. 70; see also the the classwork for this poem in: Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 8 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2010), p. 35; for more passages on religious pragmatism see Ramiz Abdylı and Emine Bakallı, *Historia 11: Gjımnazi i shkencave shoqërore* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012), pp. 41–42; see also Bajraktari, Jusuf, and Isa Bicaĳ, *Historia 11: Gjımnazi i përgjithshëm* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2004), p. 72.

38 For the mythologizing of this poem see Artan Puto, 'Nga Skënderbeu mitik në atë historik', in *Skënderbeu i kërkimit shkencor, Përpjekja* year XIX, no. 28–29 (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012) pp. 32–38.

versity is seen as a direct result of pragmatism and the struggle for survival.³⁹ Unlike religious tolerance, religious indifference is never dissected in its entirety. While these texts do not explicitly state that Albanians were indifferent towards religion, they imply such by pointing out all too often the fact that Albanians compromised with regards to religion in order to attain political or economic benefits. These texts therefore suggest a kind of religious fluidity among Albanians.⁴⁰ Many chapters are dedicated to the spread of Islam, whereas there are only a few superficial explanations of the spread of Orthodoxy and Catholicism among Albanians. It is worth pointing out that these writers do not examine the fact that, in addition to the three above-mentioned religions, Albanians embraced certain religious heresies, such as Bogomilism, some of which are still practiced. Nor is any mention made of the Protestant or Bektashi communities of Albania.⁴¹

The Myth of the Nation: Albano-centrism as Nationalism

Most myths which appear in these textbooks are modernized versions of longer-standing myths which were originally driven by nineteenth-century nationalism. The pioneers of Albanian nationalism of the nineteenth century, such as Jeronim de Rada, upheld the theory of the Pelasgian origin of Albanians and supported German scholars who adhered to the view that Albanians were of Illyrian 'stock'. The Illyrian theory underwent a process of mythologizing under the communist

39 For the religions of Albanians during the Middle Ages and Ottoman period see: Duka, Ferit, 'Feja dhe shoqëria në hapësirën shqiptare – Periudha Osmane', in *Shekujt osmanë në hapësirën shqiptare (Studime dhe dokumente)* (Tirana: UET Press, 2009), pp. 41–72; see also Pëllumb Xhufi, 'Ndjenja fetare në Shqipëri gjatë Mesjetës', in *Dilemat e Arbërit* (2006), pp. 523–539.

40 For Albanian myths concerning religion see Nathalie Clayer, 'Feja, krijimi i kombit dhe shoqëria', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve* pp. 121–132.

41 For spread of Islam see Peter Bartl, *Mysllimanët shqiptarë në lëvizjen për pavarësi kombëtare (1878–1912)*, trans. by Nestor Nepravishta (Tirana: Dituria, 2006), pp. 11–138; for spread of Christianity see Schramm, Gottfried, *Fillet e krishterimit shqiptar: Konvertimi i hershëm i besëve dhe pasojat e tij të gjata* trans. by Skënder Gashi (St. Gallen: Albanische Institut, 2006); see also Pëllumb Xhufi, 'Krishtërimi roman në Shqipëri, shek. VI–XVI', in *Dilemat e Arbërit* (2006), pp. 473–485; for heresy of bogomilism see Ylber Hysa, *Shqiptarët dhe të tjerët: nga Madona e Zezë deri te Molla e Kuqe* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2009), pp. 11–60; see also Edwin Jacques and David Young, *Ungjilli ndër Shqiptarët* (Prishtinë: Tenda, 2000), pp. 15–20; for spread of Protestantism see Alexander Thomson, *Bible Ways in Old Albania* (Gjirokastër: Albanian Evangelical Trust, 1992); see also James Clark, *1912 dhe Ungjilli* (Gjirokastër: AEM-Misioni Ungjillor, 2012); for spread and role of Bektashism in Albanian society see Memli Krasniqi, *Shoqëria Biblike Britanike për të huajt dhe bektashizmi (1814–1897)* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2013), pp. 97–180.

regime of Enver Hoxha (1944–85),⁴² and Pashko Vasa's promotion of the myth of religious tolerance served a nationalist agenda. Even the regime of Ahmet Zogu exploited such myths in an attempt to consolidate Albania's statehood. These same themes re-emerged after the collapse of communism due to the fear that Albanians might return to the practice of religion, which had been forbidden by the communists in 1967.⁴³ The history presented in these textbooks speaks not only of the Albanians of Kosovo, but of Albanians in general⁴⁴ and, as such, there is no room for the perspective of those who advocate a 'Kosovar nation'. The idea of Albano-centrism imposes a purely Albanian perspective on students.

While nationalist themes are abundantly popular in these textbooks, not even a single paragraph is devoted to the process of how the nation was coalesced. The Albanian nation is presented as self-evident fact. This nation not only inhabits a modern framework, but appears to transcend historical periodization. This can be seen in the erroneous joining-together of ethnonyms to form such concepts as 'Ilir-Arbër-Shqiptar'.

When the kingdoms established by the Illyrian tribes of Encheleans, Taulanti, Molossians, Ardieai, or Dardani are discussed, they are treated as successive groupings which followed from one another.⁴⁵ This view is consistent with the desire to see Illyrians as a single ethnic entity. They ignore the fact that the term 'Illyrian' was most likely never used by Illyrians to denote themselves; indeed this term was probably an exonym used by either the Greeks or Romans to refer generally to a number of different tribes located all the way from the Danube to the Gulf of Ambracia. A chapter dedicated to Balsha II includes the following: 'His intention was to unite all Albanian lands into a single state [...] yet he could not fulfil his aspiration. The council of Lezha created the grounds on which an Albanian state could be established'.⁴⁶ The writers identify nationalist ideals in a time when no modern nation had taken shape.⁴⁷ In general, they call every political entity a 'state', each with its own nationalist background: 'Kara Mahmut Pasha considered himself a descendant of Scanderbeg and aspired to detach from

42 For Enver Hoxha's role on constructions of myths see Standish, Alex M. J., 'Enver Hoxha's Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths', in *Albanian Identities* (2002), pp. 115–124.

43 Piro Misha, 'Invention of a Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia', in *Albanian Identities* (2002), pp. 33–48.

44 Olsi Jazexhi, *Rrëfimet e një kombi: shqiptarët, turqit, muslimanët dhe të krishterët në tekst-librat shkollorë të historisë dhe letërsisë në Kosovë – Analizë e teksteve shkollorë të ciklit fillor, të mesëm të ulët dhe të mesëm të lartë në Kosovë* (Tirana: Free Media Institute, 2013), p. 54.

45 Rexhepi, *Historia* 5, pp. 11–13; Rexhepi, *Historia* 6, pp. 73–80; Rexhepi, *Historia* 10, pp. 37–44.

46 Rexhepi, *Historia* 5, p. 28, p. 40.

47 For myths on nationalism see Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 19–22.

the Ottoman Empire [...] Ali Pashë Tepelena struggled [...] to make concrete his vision of an independent Albanian state'.⁴⁸ While there is no doubt that these Albanian rulers during the Ottoman period were well aware of the French Revolution, it is incorrect to call their various attempts deliberate nationalist acts. All these textbooks, however, give the impression that Albanians had cultivated a proto-nationalist consciousness all along.⁴⁹

The Myth of National Awakening

The period of nation-building is known in Albanian historiography as that of National Awakening. Given that the Albanian nation is considered a timeless entity, the writers of history textbooks do not delve into the nature of a nation. This raises the question of what new phenomenon might have emerged during the nineteenth century. As Anthony Smith puts it, the myth of National Awakening is closely linked to 'the golden age of the nation'.⁵⁰ According to nineteenth-century nationalists, the time of Scanderbeg was the brightest period of the nation. History textbooks in Kosovo assert the following on the formation of the Albanian nation: 'The Awakening was a political movement with nationalist overtones, whose main purpose was to liberate and unite into a single independent state and to develop both national education and culture'.⁵¹ They state as its aim 'the liberation of all Albanian lands from the Ottoman yoke, and the unification of those lands into a single national state'.⁵²

The formation of the Albanian nation is described in these textbooks in a manner much the same as that of the Albanian nationalists of the nineteenth century. The Albanian National Awakening is considered a unique movement with a clear political platform: liberation, cultural development, and the establishment of an independent state. There is no explanation of the ever-growing antagonism between pro-Ottoman elements and those who advocated for either greater autonomy or full independence.⁵³ Historical events are presented selectively, with anti-Ottoman revolts receiving the most attention, and no mention

48 Abdyli, *Historia 11*, pp. 67–71.

49 For protonationalism and myths on nationalism see Erick J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 46–50.

50 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991), p. 34.

51 Jusuf Bajraktari, Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 10: Gjimnazi matematikë dhe informatikë; Gjimnazi i shkencave natyror* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2010) p. 51.

52 Jusuf Bajraktari and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 12: Gjimnazi i përgjithshëm*, (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2006), p. 50.

53 See Nuray Bozbor, *Shqipëria dhe nacionalizmi shqiptar në Perandorinë Osmane*. trans. by Dritan Egro (Tirana: Dituria, 2002), pp. 146–207.

at all of the participation of Albanians in the Russo-Ottoman wars or the Crimean War. There are many references to Pashko Vasa, Sami Frasheri, Naim Frasheri, Hasan Tahsini, and Ismail Qemali, while the text fails to point out that all these men were well-established in the Ottoman system.⁵⁴ There is a great deal of information about cultural development in intellectual circles, yet nothing sheds light upon the cultural features and identity of other strata of society.⁵⁵

The Myths of Victimization and Innocence, and of Continuous Resistance

The authors of the textbooks under consideration here carried out a deliberate purification of history, and sought to sweep away the 'sins' of their people. They attempt to present a history that is an account of mere *events*, without consideration of the chain of cause and effect that link those events. In order to carry out this kind of purification, the authors conceive of Albano-centrism as a focal point around which the historical narrative can be built. In so doing, they select events and historical sources with the primary intention of bolstering an image of an innocent people that has been the victim of other peoples.⁵⁶ Many events are simply left out of the histories in order not to provoke students. The ninth grade history textbook tackles the Second World War with the following passage:

Albanians who were ill-treated during the Monarchy of Yugoslavia were fairly cautious towards their Serbian neighbours [...] After the unification of a part of Kosovo with Albania, the Albanian majority was quite tolerant towards Serbian and Montenegrin minorities, and there were many instances when Albanians offered their help to the Serbs.⁵⁷

The truth runs much deeper than this statement. According to impartial observations conducted by foreign scholars, a number of Serbs were driven from their homes because they felt in danger of retaliation by the Albanians. Yet most of the expelled Serbs were colonizers who came to settle in the fertile plains of Kosovo between the two World Wars. The myth which creates this vision of

54 Nuray Bozbor, *Shqipëria dhe nacionalizmi shqiptar në Perandorinë Osmane*. trans. by Dritan Egro (Tirana: Dituria, 2002), pp. 244–255.

55 Aleks Buda, 'Mendimi politik dhe kultura kombëtare në vitet 50–70 të shek. XIX', in *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar, vol. II*, ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Historisë (Tirana: Toena, 2002), pp. 121–131.

56 See the homework in Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 9 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2007), p. 28.

57 Fehmi Rexhepi, *Historia 9* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009), p. 118.

innocence is a deliberate attempt to justify an Albanian collaboration that is today condemned by many historians.⁵⁸

Thus, whenever authors dwell on the problem of collaboration between Albanians and Nazi authorities, they seem determined to justify the Albanians' motives:

When the German authority was established, a group of nationalists attempted to preserve the national unification which had been achieved earlier by providing support to the Germans. From 16 to 20 September the Second League of Prizren took place in Prizren [...] Nazi Germany supported the Second League of Prizren in service of their own goals, while on the other hand, the League members tried to exploit the Germans' presence in order to achieve their objectives.⁵⁹

This is an attempt to justify collaboration by portraying the Second League of Prizren as a kind of pragmatic movement. In a similar manner, there is not a single mention of the quisling government of Tirana and the SS Skanderbeg Division.⁶⁰ Although the role of the latter was insignificant, the authors also leave unmentioned the instances when Jews were rescued voluntarily by Albanians during the Second World War, for example.

The myth of continuous and unbroken resistance throughout history corresponds to this idea of an 'innocent' people.⁶¹ The former myths paint the Albanians in a perennially defensive position, resisting the onslaught of others. This is the kind of narrative presented in the following passages, for instance:

Illyrians were never subjugated under Roman rule; they fought all the time for their freedom. Although their uprisings were crushed with violence and cruelty, the Illyrians rose up continuously against foreign rulers.⁶²

The Albanians waged a continuous war to liberate themselves from the Ottoman yoke [...] The Albanians never ceased in their resistance against the Ottoman invaders [...] [Elena Gjika] emphasized the war of the Albanians against Ottoman rule in her folk songs [...] The establishment of an Independent Albania [...] was the direct result of continuous uprisings against the Ottomans [...] In all the cities of Albania [...] Italian invaders were faced with the resistance of Albanians.⁶³

They never accepted Ottoman rule. The resistance of the Albanians grew stronger each time [...] The resistance of the Arbërs never ceased.⁶⁴

58 See Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (USA: Harper Perennial, 1999), pp. 293–294.

59 Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 11: Gjinnazi i gjuhëve* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2004), p. 161.

60 See Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Kosova: Histori e shkurtër e një treve qendrore ballkanike* trans. by Enver Robelli. (Prishtinë: KOHA, 2012), pp. 164–171.

61 For a typical example see Fehmi Rexhepi, *Historia 9* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009), p. 47.

62 Rexhepi, *Historia 6*, p. 87.

63 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, pp. 57–58; p. 67; p. 71; p. 84.

64 Bicaj, *Historia 7*, p. 54.

The insurgents fought against oppression and economic exploitation [...] The unceasing uprising of the Albanians, as well as the Italian war, weakened the Ottoman Empire considerably.⁶⁵

These authors eschew modern terms such as ‘Pax Romana’ or ‘Pax Ottomanica’, and thus remain silent on the fact that Illyrians were well integrated within the Roman political and military framework, and within the structures of the Ottoman Empire. They never mention the economic prosperity of the Ottoman period; likewise the intertwining identities of Ottomans and Albanians are ignored.⁶⁶ They stress the minor resistance of Albanian forces against the fascist invasion of 1939, whom they portray as having played a far greater role. Ultimately, the myth of continuous resistance on the part of the Albanians is a mere byproduct of ‘historic victimization syndrome’, which reassures Albanians of their history and paints over the lost chances of the past.⁶⁷

The Myth of Scanderbeg and the Relationship with the ‘West’

Most textbooks widely used in Kosovo relay the myth of an intrinsic connection between the Albanians and the West, and generally play down the relations of Albania with the Eastern world. This myth is an example of history being altered to attain modern objectives; the textbook writers pursue the same path as the political elites who are eager to belittle Eastern elements in society. This myth is affected by the intense debates of the Albanian intellectual milieu on the nature of Albanian identity.⁶⁸ Most of these textbooks are awash with passages which speak to the European identity of Albanians.

The anti-Ottoman resistance led by Scanderbeg seems, in the eyes of these authors, to best exemplify the affiliation of Albanians with Europe and the Western world, and they thus mythologize Scanderbeg accordingly. The myth of Scanderbeg emerged in the nineteenth century when Albanian nationalists were eager to find an outstanding historical personality to symbolize their struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Scanderbeg fitted the bill perfectly: an Albanian born into an Orthodox family, he later converted to Islam during his stay at the Ottoman court. He left the Ottoman army in 1443 when he managed to stir up a

65 Rexhepi, *Historia* 8, p. 69; p. 111.

66 For the history of Albanians during the Ottoman period see Ferit Duka, *Shqipëria gjatë sundimit osman (Një histori e shkurtër)* (Tirana: UET Press, 2009), pp. 373–426.

67 For this syndrome see Piro Misha, ‘Fenomeni nacionalizëm dhe kriza shqiptare’, *Roli i Miteve në Historinë e Shqipërisë*, (1999), p. 27.

68 For these debates see Ismail Kadare, *Identiteti Evropian i Shqiptarëve* (Tirana: Onufri, 2006); see also Kristo Frashëri, *Identiteti Kombëtar Shqiptar dhe Çështje të Tjera – (Ndërrhyrje në debatin Ismail Kadare – Rexhep Qose)* (Tirana: Edisud, 2006).

successful anti-Ottoman resistance, which lasted until his death in 1468. The first mythologizing of Scanderbeg was carried out by European Christian writers who opposed the Ottoman Empire. They saw in Scanderbeg a noble knight who could inspire the European Resistance against the Muslim Ottomans.⁶⁹

Scanderbeg is overly mythologized in history textbooks in Kosovo. An image showing the monument of Scanderbeg in Prishtina is stamped on the first page of the fifth grade history textbook; the introduction to Scanderbeg asserts: 'The noble family of Kastriot was from Has'.⁷⁰ It is telling that from a number of theories concerning Scanderbeg's origin, these authors choose the theory that he came from a village near modern Kosovo. It is unclear whether this represents an attempt to establish a connection between the students of Kosovo and Scanderbeg, or a disguised desire to 'usurp' him.⁷¹

Scanderbeg is further portrayed thus:

The wars waged by Scanderbeg thwarted the Ottoman army in their campaign to conquer Europe. It can be stated that Scanderbeg defended Europe from Ottoman onslaughts [...] Scanderbeg remains a national personality, and a great figure in European history [...] Numerous monuments of this hero [...] have been erected in the cities of Europe: in Rome, Brussels, Geneva, etc.⁷²

In the tenth grade history textbook, there is a special chapter entitled 'The Cooperation of Scanderbeg with Europe', which explicitly states:

The Albanian war led by Scanderbeg echoed powerfully across Europe. The western Europeans considered him the main bulwark against Ottoman incursions on the eastern fringes of the continent [...] The Popes of Rome were sympathetic towards him [...] and they called him a 'defender of Christendom' [...] bestowing upon him the title of 'General Captain of the Holy Sea'.⁷³

Historia 7 continues the narrative:

The fierce resistance of Albanians was a shield for Western Europe [...] Scanderbeg maintained good relations with many European countries [...] The anti-Ottoman struggle of Albania was highly praised by European audiences [...] Thus [...] Scanderbeg might be regarded as a defender of European civilization.⁷⁴

69 See Kristo Frashëri, 'Skënderbeu dhe Evropa', in *Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu: 600 vjet pas*, ed. by Dom Ndue Ballabani (Zagreb: Misioni Katolik Shqiptar në Kroaci & Këshilli i Pakicës Kombëtare Shqiptare të Qytetit të Zagrebit, 2005), pp. 19–25; see Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skënderbeu*, trans. by Ardian Klosi (Tirana: K & B, 2009), pp. 423–455.

70 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, p. 37.

71 For Scanderbeg's alleged Kosovo origins see Jahja Drançolli, 'Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu dhe Kosova', in *Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu* (2005), pp. 39–47; see also Jahja Drançolli, *Shteti mesjetar i Gjergj Kastriotit – Skënderbeut* (Peja: Dukagjini, 2001), pp. 183–192.

72 Rexhepi, *Historia 5*, p. 42; p. 47.

73 Rexhepi, *Historia 10*, pp. 180–181.

74 I. Bicaj, *Historia 7*, pp. 67–69.

The view that Scanderbeg fought on behalf of Europe often appears as part of an attempt to construe a purely European Albanian identity and socialize new generations with this concept. But this attempt is at odds with the historical reality of Scanderbeg: there is a conflict between the mythical figure and its historical counterpart.⁷⁵ Statements such as the above aim to provide a new set of values in line with modern politics.⁷⁶

The Myth of Cultural Homogeneity

The authors of these textbooks have been careful not to challenge the image of a Western Albania by examining historical links with the Eastern world. This can be observed in the myths concerning religious pragmatism, where the impact of Islam on Albanian society is not evaluated in depth.⁷⁷ An example can be found in the following passage: 'Although the peoples of the Balkans embraced Islam, they preserved their language, traditions and customs [...]. Dhimitër and the population of Arbëria were converted from Orthodoxy to Catholicism [...] He aimed to affiliate Albania with Western countries'.⁷⁸ Albanian Islam is hidden behind the mask of Western influence. Thus, many prominent Albanian writers, painters and architects are excluded from Albanian culture and instead presented as figures 'who contributed to Ottoman culture'.⁷⁹ In addition to this, the cultures of Albania and Kosovo after the Second World War are presented as homogeneous.⁸⁰

Faced with the old question as to whether Albanians belong in the East or West, these authors have arbitrarily decided to cling to Western civilization.⁸¹ The construction of a Western identity necessitates an 'escape from the East'.⁸² This myth relies on the idea of cultural homogeneity, according to which Al-

75 See Artan Puto, 'Nga Skënderbeu mitik në atë historik', in *Skëndebeu i kërkimit shkencor, Përpyjekja* year XIX, no. 28–29 (Tirana: Përpyjekja, 2012), pp. 18–23.

76 See Nicola Nixon, 'Ngaherë e tashmë evropianë: figura e Skënderbeut në nacionalizmin bashkëkohor shqiptar', in *Skëndebeu i kërkimit shkencor* (2012), pp. 142–164.

77 For the influence of Islam in Albanian society see Fatmir Shehu, 'The Influence of Islam in Albanian Culture', *Journal of Islam Asia*, Special Issue (1), (Malaysia: International Islamic University of Malaysia, 2011), pp. 389–407; see also Ger Duijzings, *Religion and Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

78 I. Bicaj, *Historia* 7, p. 34; p. 39.

79 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

80 Isa Bicaj and Isuf Ahmeti, *Historia 12: Gjinnazi shoqëror* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2006), p. 211.

81 For the history of this dilemma see Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Shqiptarët: Një histori midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit* trans. by Ardian Klosi (Tirana: K & B, 2012).

82 For the escape of Albanians from the Orient see Enis Sulstarova, *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja* (Tirana: Pika pa Sipërfaqe, 2013).

banian society is a monolithic entity devoid of diversity.⁸³ The endeavour to 'westernize' Albanian history as much as possible is evident in an illustration in the seventh grade history textbook, in which Ali Pashë Tepelena and the British poet Lord Byron are depicted in a seemingly western interior.⁸⁴ This illustration belies historical truth; in fact Ali Pashë Tepelena's palace was built in the Eastern style, and he maintained a broadly Eastern lifestyle. Moreover, these textbook authors go to great efforts to mention the contribution of Albanians to Western culture. They point to the Illyrian or Albanian origins of Alexander the Great, Constantine the Great, Saint Jerome, Justinian the Great, Saint Anastasia, and Francesco Crispi.⁸⁵

Conclusion

Historical textbooks in Kosovo have a missionary character and seek to advance a complex historical, cultural, and political identity which corresponds to far-reaching political objectives. The writers of these textbooks have devised a mythologized history from a number of clichés or stereotypes, which depicts Albanians as a native people bearing an original culture with a linear history which can be traced along the structure Pelasgians-Illyrians-Arbërs-Shqiptarë; a people which has withstood assimilation by retaining its ethnicity and culture. Albanians are portrayed as pragmatic and tolerant with regard to religion, with their proto-national consciousness making up for any religious differences between them. They are cast in the role of victim in disputes with their neighbours, and as such carry no historical blame, and they were also defenders of and contributors to European civilization and culture. This portrayal eschews every aspect of Albanian history which might point to the country's links with the Eastern world. This meta-narrative, which presents a history to be proud of and asserts the international and historical importance of the Albanian people, serves to inculcate a modern Western identity in students.

Further, the authors of these textbooks are selective in their presentation of events in the political history of Kosovo. They leave unmentioned many historical events of major importance, while writing unnecessarily long-winded chapters on other, less significant, subjects. For instance, these textbooks make no mention of the Bulgarian Kingdom, the period when the Balsha clan ruled

83 See Noel Malcolm, 'Myths of Albanian National Identity: Some Key Elements, as Expressed in the Works of Albanian Writers in America in the Early Twentieth Century', in *Albanian Identities* (2002), pp. 70–87.

84 I. Bica, *Historia* 7, p. 124.

85 Rexhepi, *Historia* 6, pp. 94, p. 105 and p. 108; Rexhepi, *Historia* 8, p. 16; and Rexhepi, *Historia* 8 – *Fletore pune*, p. 10.

most of Kosovo, nor of any Serbian rulers of the region, and equally neglect the Sicilian Kingdom's Albanian territories, or of those of Naples or Venice. Conversely, they include long chapters on the Ottoman conquests, taking advantage of the stigma around Ottoman rule. The 1912 and 1918 Serbian conquests of Kosovo are featured heavily, as are agreements between Yugoslavia and Turkey and Serbian plans to expel Albanians from Kosovo. These textbook authors' interpretations of the past are shaped by thoroughly modern political perceptions of Albanian history.

The style of narration in these histories resembles that of a literary folk tale. There is no use of references. Not a single historical document is presented to the students: no imperial decree, correspondence, military order, journal entry, historical photo, or proclamation. Moreover, while these textbooks contain factual questions on each chapter, none of these inspires critical assessment of the information presented, nor do the supplementary textbooks. History is treated as a set of given facts, and its study consists in the absorption of such facts, without the need for critical distance. The terminology used in these textbooks is hardly appropriate for the narration of history, often displaying propagandistic overtones. When the myths are addressed as a whole, as has been done here, a more comprehensive picture of the overall impacts of such textbooks is revealed. The books seem to aim to lend legitimacy to a particular modern identity by projecting it onto the past, creating myths that can become manifest in the present day. Kosovo's history textbooks conform to neither the basic principles of historiography, nor those of education. They revolve around transhistorical interpretations, which in turn give rise to historical myths. They accept and promote the identity conceptions provided by politics. These textbooks cannot, therefore, foster a reflective understanding of history, and ought to be replaced in their entirety.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Abdyli, Ramiz, and Emine Bakalli, *Historia 11: Gjinnazi i shkencave shoqërore* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012).
- Bajraktari, Jusuf, and Isa Bicaj, *Historia 11: Gjinnazi i përgjithshëm* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2004).
- Bajraktari, Jusuf, and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 12: Gjinnazi i përgjithshëm* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2006).
- Bajraktari, Jusuf, Fehmi Rexhepi and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 10: Gjinnazi matematikë dhe informatikë; Gjinnazi i shkencave natyror* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2010).

- Bicaj, Isa, and Isuf Ahmeti, *Historia 12: Gjinnazi shoqëror* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2006).
- Bicaj, Isa, and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 7* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009).
- Bicaj, Isa, and Arbër Salihu, *Historia 7 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2011).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 11: Gjinnazi i gjuhëve* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2004).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 9 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2007).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 5 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, *Historia 9* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2009).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 8 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2010).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 10: për gjinnazin e përgjithshëm dhe për gjinnazin e shkencave natyrore* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2010).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 6 – Fletore pune* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2011).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 6* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 5* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012).
- Rexhepi, Fehmi, and Frashër Demaj, *Historia 8: Shkolla e Mesme e Ulët* (Prishtinë: Libri Shkollor, 2012).

References

- Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Arkeologjisë, ed., *Ilirët dhe Ilira te autorët antikë* (Tirana: Toena, 2002).
- Bartl, Peter, *Mysslimanët shqiptarë në lëvizjen për pavarësi kombëtare (1878–1912)*, trans. by Nestor Nepravishta (Tirana: Dituria, 2006).
- Bozbor, Nuray, *Shqipëria dhe nacionalizmi shqiptar në Perandorinë Osmane*. trans. by Dritan Egro (Tirana: Dituria, 2002).
- Buda, Aleks, 'Mendimi politik dhe kultura kombëtare në vitet 50–70 të shek. XIX', in *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar, vol. II*, ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Historisë (Tirana: Toena, 2002).
- Clark, James, *1912 dhe Ungjilli* (Gjirokastrë: AEM-Misioni Ungjillor, 2012).
- Clayer, Nathalie, *Në fillimet e nacionalizmit shqiptar: Lindja e një kombi me shumicë myslimane në Evropë*, trans. by Artan Puto (Tirana: Përpejka, 2009).
- Clayer, Nathalie, 'Feja, krijimi i kombit dhe shoqëria', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve: Gjendja dhe perspektivat e studimit*, ed. by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Tirana: Përpejka, 2012).
- Çabej, Eqrem, *Shqiptarët midis Perëndimit dhe Lindjes* (Tirana: Çabej, 2006).
- Drançolli, Jahja, 'Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu dhe Kosova', in *Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu: 600 vjet pas*, ed. by Dom Ndue Ballabani (Zagreb: Misioni Katolik Shqiptar në Kroaci & Këshilli i Pakicës Kombëtare Shqiptare të Qytetit të Zagrebit, 2005).
- Drançolli, Jahja, *Shteti mesjetar i Gjergj Kastriotit – Skënderbeut* (Peja: Dukagjini, 2001).

- Dugolli, Bujar, and Durim Abdullahu, 'Çështje kundërthënëse dhe të ndjeshme në tekstet e historisë për shkollat fillore dhe të mesme në Kosovë', *Diskutime*, year III, no. 9, ed. by Arsim Sinani (Tetovë: Qendra për Marrëdhënie Ndërkombëtare dhe Studime Ballkanike – Akademia Diplomatike Shqiptare Tetovë & Instituti për Studime Evropiane i Universitetit të Tiranës, 2014).
- Duijzings, Ger, *Religion and Politics of Identity in Kosovo*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- Duka, Ferit, 'Feja dhe shoqëria në hapësirën shqiptare – Periudha Osmane', in *Shekujt osmanë në hapësirën shqiptare (Studime dhe dokumente)* (Tirana: UET Press, 2009).
- Duka Ferit, *Shqipëria gjatë sundimit osman (Një histori e shkurtër)* (Tirana: UET Press, 2009).
- Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of Prison*. trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
- Frashëri, Kristo, 'Skënderbeu dhe Evropa', in *Gjergj Kastrioti – Skënderbeu: 600 vjet pas*, ed. by Dom Ndue Ballabani (Zagreb: Misioni Katolik Shqiptar në Kroaci & Këshilli i Pakicës Kombëtare Shqiptare të Qytetit të Zagrebit, 2005).
- Frashëri, Kristo, *Identiteti Kombëtar Shqiptar dhe Çështje të Tjera – (Ndërrhyrje në debatin Ismail Kadare – Rexhep Qose)* (Tirana: Edisud, 2006).
- Frashëri, Kristo, *Etnogjeneza e Shqiptarëve – Vështrim historic*, ed. by Miranda Goleci and Bujar Karoshi (Tirana: M & B, 2013).
- Geary, Patrick J., *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003).
- Gordon, Haim, and Rivca Gordon, *Heidegger on Truth and Myth: A Rejection of Post-modernism* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007).
- Hesiodi, *Carmina*, (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri, 1913).
- Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Homeri, *Ilias*, ed. by G. Dindrof (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri, 1921).
- Homeri, *Odyssea*, ed. by G. Dindrof (Lipsiae in aedibus: B.G. Teubneri 1925).
- Hysa, Ylber, *Shqiptarët dhe të tjerët: nga Madona e Zezë deri te Molla e Kuqe* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2009).
- Illirët dhe Iliria te autorët antikë*, ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Arkeologjisë (Tiranë: Toena, 2002).
- Jacques, Edwin, and David Young, *Ungjilli ndër Shqiptarët* (Prishtinë: Tenda, 2000).
- Jazexhi, Olsi, *Rrëfimet e një kombi: shqiptarët, turqit, muslimanët dhe të krishterët në tekstitë shkollorë të historisë dhe letërsisë në Kosovë – Analizë e teksteve shkollorë të ciklit fillor, të mesëm të ulët dhe të mesëm të lartë në Kosovë* (Tirana: Free Media Institute, 2013).
- Kadare, Ismail, *Identiteti Evropian i Shqiptarëve* (Tirana: Onufri, 2006).
- Korkuti, Muzafer, 'Themelimi i kolonive helene dhe marrëdhëniet me botën ilire', in *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. I. ed. by Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë: Instituti i Historisë (Tirana: Toena, 2002).
- Krasniqi, Memli, *Shoqëria Biblike Britanike për të huajt dhe bektashizmi (1814–1897)* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2013).
- Levi-Strauss, Claude, *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979).

- Lyotard, Jean-François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982).
- Malcolm, Noel, *Kosovo: A Short History* (USA: Harper Perennial, 1999).
- Malcolm, Noel, 'Myths of Albanian National Identity: Some Key Elements, as Expressed in the Works of Albanian Writers in America in the Early Twentieth Century', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Matzinger, Joachim, 'Shqiptarët si pasardhës të ilirëve nga këndvështrimi i gjuhësisë historike', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve: Gjendja dhe perspektivat e studimit* ed. by Oliver Jens Schmitt & Eva Anne Frantz (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012).
- Misha, Piro, 'Fenomeni nacionalizëm dhe kriza shqiptare', *Roli i Miteve në Historinë e Shqipërisë, Përpjekja*, year VI, no. 15–16, ed. by Fatos Lubonja (Tirana: Përpjekja, 1999).
- Misha, Piro, 'Invention of a Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Nixon, Nicola, 'Ngaherë e tashmë evropianë: figura e Skënderbeut në nacionalizmin bashkëkohor shqiptar', *Skëndebeu i kërkimit shkencor, Përpjekja* year XIX, no. 28–29 (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012).
- Norris, Christopher, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004).
- Puto, Artan, 'Feja e shqiptarit është shqiptaria: mit apo konstrukt historik', *Roli i Miteve në Historinë e Shqipërisë, Përpjekja* year VI, no. 15–16, ed. by Fatos Lubonja (Tirana: Përpjekja, 1999).
- Puto, Artan, 'Nga Skënderbeu mitik në atë historik', in *Skëndebeu i kërkimit shkencor, Përpjekja* year XIX, no. 28–29 (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012).
- Rapper, Gilles de, 'Culture and the Reinvention of Myth in a Border Area', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Schmitt, Oliver Jens, *Skënderbeu*, trans. by Ardian Klosi (Tirana: K & B, 2009).
- Schmitt, Oliver Jens, *Shqiptarët: Një histori midis Lindjes dhe Perëndimit*, trans. by Ardian Klosi (Tirana: K & B, 2012).
- Schmitt, Oliver Jens, 'Monada e Ballkanit – Shqiptarët në Mesjetë', in *Historia e Shqiptarëve: Gjendja dhe perspektivat e studimit*, ed. by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Tirana: Përpjekja, 2012).
- Schmitt, Oliver Jens, *Kosova: Histori e shkurtër e një treve qendrore ballkanike*, trans. by Enver Robelli. (Prishtinë: KOHA, 2012).
- Schramm, Gottfried, *Fillet e krishterimit shqiptar: Konvertimi i hershëm i besëve dhe pasojat e tij të gjata*, trans. by Skënder Gashi (St. Gallen: Albanische Institut, 2006).
- Shehu, Fatmir, 'The Influence of Islam in Albanian Culture', *Journal of Islam Asia*, Special Issue (1), (Malaysia: International Islamic University of Malaysia, 2011).
- Shufly, Milan, *Serbët dhe shqiptarët*, trans. by Hasan Çipuri (Tirana: Toena, 2004).
- Shufly, Milan, 'Gjendja etnike në periudhën e Mesjetës', in *Qytetet dhe kështjellat e Shqipërisë – kryesisht në Mesjetë*, ed. by Luan Malltezi (Tirana: Onufri, 2009).
- Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity* (Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1991).

- Standish, Alex M. J., 'Enver Hoxha's Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Stipçeviq, Aleksandër, *Ilirët: Historia, jeta, kultura, simbolet e kultit*, trans. by Nazmi Rrahmani (Tirana: Toena, 2002).
- Sulstarova, Enis, *Arratisje nga Lindja: Orientalizmi shqiptar nga Naimi te Kadareja* (Tirana: Pika pa Sipërfaqe, 2013).
- Thomson, Alexander, *Bible Ways in Old Albania* (Gjirokastër: Albanian Evangelical Trust, 1992).
- Vehbiu, Ardian, 'Obsesioni ynë me origjinën', *Roli i Miteve në Historinë e Shqipërisë, Përpyekja*, year VI, no. 15–16. ed. by Fatos Lubonja (Tirana: Përpyekja, 1999).
- Xhufi, Pëllumb, 'Vëzhgime mbi emrin Arbër dhe Arbëresh', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)*, (Tirana: Pegi, 2006).
- Xhufi, Pëllumb, 'Krishtërimi roman në Shqipëri, shek. VI–XVI', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)* (Tirana: Pegi, 2006).
- Xhufi, Pëllumb, 'Ndjenja fetare në Shqipëri gjatë Mesjetës', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)* (Tirana: Pegi, 2006).
- Xhufi, Pëllumb, 'Toleranca fetare ndër shqiptarë', in *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI–XVI)* (Tirana: Pegi, 2006).

Portrayals of the National Resistance during the Second World War in History Textbooks: A Critical Layout Analysis

Introduction

In the national historical narrative established during the socialist period in Albania from 1944 to 1992, the national resistance during the Second World War occupies a prominent position. This resistance movement is given the status of a bright chapter in the nation's past, if not the brightest. In his discussion of the impacts of the war on the social sphere during the socialist era, historian Bernd Fischer argues that rarely has a historical event so deeply and for so long dominated a national psyche.¹ The wartime experience, following Fischer, became a central theme for the next forty-five years, and was mirrored in a wide spectrum of cultural production and also in education and school textbooks.² The glorification of the partisan war that began immediately after WWII intensified in the decades to come, with its peak during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s.

Furthermore, in socialist historiography Albania's wartime experience is divided into three sub-phases: the early years of the scattered resistance (1939–1941), the organization of the national 'liberation' by the Communist Party of Albania, during which the foundations of an armed front were laid (1941–1943), and finally the years of the armed resurgence (1943–1944).³ In this periodization, there are at least two critical moments that are highly praised and on which the categorization of the wartime experience is based. The first is the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania in 1941, a political event that changed the course of the war. Within a brief period, following the socialist historiography, the Party had assumed leadership of the socialist movement and, during the same period, formed the basis for the organization of the armed

1 Bernd J. Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in: Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, eds, *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung* (München: R. Oldenbourg, 2009), pp. 119–130.

2 Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War 1939–1945* (London: Hurst & Company, 1999), pp. 255–256.

3 Stefanaq Pollo, Kristo Frashëri, Muin Çami and Viron Koka (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi i Tretë (1912–1944)*, (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1984), p. 9.

resistance.⁴ The year 1943 marked a second turning point in the course of the war: in July, the General Staff of the National Liberation Army was established. This was a people's army that would carry the liberation struggle against the occupiers and the domestic reactionary forces. The creation of a regular army, again under communist control, was a crucial step that resulted in the intensification of the liberation struggle as the war was coming to an end.⁵

In history textbooks, a similar narrative and periodization has been followed as far as the national resistance during the Second World War is concerned. In the subject of national history, the establishment of the Communist Party and the formation of the National Liberation Army remained the events extolled predominantly by the textbooks. While the account remained stable during the years of the socialist government, the liberation struggle has gained in importance since the turn of the century and in the aftermath of Albania's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. These years correspond to the beginning and the culminating phases of the isolation of the country from the international arena. An additional substantial change concerning the textbooks in this historical framework is that of the 'visual turn'. The use of images has increased rapidly since the early seventies; they now occupy an increasingly significant place in textbook layouts, contributing to the creation of a parallel visual narrative next to that of the text.

It is the aim of this chapter to address the visual representation of the national liberation struggle in national history textbook layouts. More specifically, I concentrate on the images that show the events of the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania and of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army. I seek first to read the messages the images contain, while on a second level I attempt to analyze the structure of the layouts and their content. I thus aim to fill the research gap concerning the use of visual resources in the Albanian context of educational media research using a socio-semiotic visual approach.

Methods

This methodological approach, introduced by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, considers illustrations to be important means of communication and, like any other semiotic resource, to fulfil three major metafunctions: the rep-

4 Pollo et. al., eds, *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi i Tretë*, p. 9.

5 Stefanaq Pollo and Arben Puto, *The History of Albania from its Origins to the Present Day*, trans. Carol Wiseman and Ginnie Hole (London: Routledge & Kegan and Paul, 1981), p. 235; Kristo Frashëri, *The History of Albania (A Brief Survey)*, Tirana: 1964, p. 298.

representational, the interactive and the compositional.⁶ Kress and van Leeuwen analyze each of these metafunctions of the visual resources and thus read the visually articulated messages. Simply put, the representational metafunction refers to the ability to represent the world as it stands, the interactive metafunction represents the relations of those engaged in communication, i.e. the represented participants or objects and the viewers, and the compositional metafunction provides information concerning the internal coherence of the elements.⁷ Along with the images, the textbook layouts, considered distinct semiotic units on their own, will also be addressed in the analysis. Layouts belong to the genre of composition that incorporates in its substructure both textual and visual elements. Being a multimodal compositional unit consisting (in this study) of two pages, a layout relates its various elements through three signifying systems: informational value, salience, and framing.⁸ Verbal communication will equally be taken into consideration in an attempt to create a unified perception of the visually and textually constructed meanings the layouts contain.

The material derives from the national history textbooks published during the last two decades of the socialist era. The layouts showing the historical events of the establishment of the Communist Party and that of the Liberation Army were chosen from the fourth and eighth grades of compulsory education on the grounds of being the most representative examples. Another reason for choosing the layouts analyzed below was their persistence over the years: these two layouts remained in use for some time.

Albania's Wartime Experience (1939–1944)

The principal developments of the national resistance began with the Italian invasion in April 1939 and ended with the retreat of the last German troops in late November 1944. In the aftermath of the Italian occupation, first reactions took place, mostly non-violent acts that would later become armed and better organized. In 1940 the guerrilla attacks began, followed by a general increase in incidents and civil disobedience.⁹ From the end of the following year, several

6 Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 42.

7 Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, p. 15.

8 Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress, 'Critical Layout Analysis', in: *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 17, 1 (1995), pp. 25–43.

9 Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London and New York: Tauris, 1995), p. 141.

permanent organized guerilla groups were in full operation.¹⁰ However, even this point is still too early a stage to argue for a national movement, considering the lack of organization on a large scale.

The synchronization of the scattered armed resurgence was achieved when the Communist Party of Albania called a meeting in 1942 to be attended by participants from a wide political spectrum, and subsequently established the National Liberation Movement (NLM).¹¹ The main tasks called for were the creation of a united front directed by a central committee and the establishment of national liberation councils and small armed groups throughout the Albanian territory.¹² Since its establishment the activities of the NLM were dominated by the Communist Party, the sole organized political power existing at the time. The latter had been formed in November 1941 as a result of the merging of the most significant communist groups. In the establishment of the Albanian Communist Party, the direct assistance of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had proved crucial.¹³

In the meantime, a novel political organization had formed. In November 1942 the liberal, nationalist, and primarily anti-communist organization of Balli Kombëtar (the National Front) was established, becoming the communists' main political and military rival. Despite their ambition to be the principal power contenders, they mostly refrained from military activity in order to save resources for the end of the war and the final confrontation with the communists.¹⁴ Taking advantage of the passivity of Balli Kombëtar, the communist-led National Liberation Movement gained the upper hand in the armed resistance. It coordinated and intensified its military activities, lending the resistance a national character for the first time.¹⁵ A distinctive achievement of this period is the formation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army in July 1943, always under communist leadership.¹⁶

Following the German invasion in September 1943, the armed resistance entered its final and most critical phase. The partisan forces of the NLM launched a general offensive against the nationalist organization of Balli Kombëtar and the pro-monarchist Legaliteti Movement, both of whom were collaborating with the

10 Valentina Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë 1912–2000* [History of Albania 1912–2000] (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Kristalina, 2007), p. 214.

11 Fischer, *Albania at War 1939–1945*, p. 130.

12 Nicholas P. Pano, *The People's Republic of Albania* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 48.

13 Elez Biberaj, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1990, 17; Peter Prifti, *Socialist Albania Since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978), p. 11.

14 Fischer, *Albania at War 1939–1945*, p. 134.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

16 Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, p. 15.

Germans.¹⁷ A civil confrontation could no longer be avoided. Military operations continued into the winter of 1943–1944 and German attacks against the forces of the NLM increased. Nevertheless, the latter were able to resist the German offensive, while maintaining the front against their domestic opponents who were defeated by the summer of 1944. During this critical phase of the war the communists received moral and military aid from the Allied Mediterranean Command¹⁸, and organizational and military advice from Yugoslavia throughout the entire course of the war.¹⁹

In autumn 1944, with the war drawing to an end, the internal opponents defeated and the German retreat underway, the leadership of the NLM turned its attention to the political front. In October a provisional government was formed. After the last German troops had left Albania the government moved to the capital Tirana and took control over the entire country. The war had just ended and the communists, as the only remaining political and military force, faced hardly any obstacles when assuming power.

Analysis

In a chronological sequence, following the order in which the events took place, I will first refer to the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania and then to the creation of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army.

The Establishment of the Communist Party in 1941

There can hardly be a better example with which to begin the analysis of how this event is depicted than the layout used in the national history textbook for the fourth grade (Figure 1). This double-page layout was introduced in 1978 and with one exception in the year 1979 remained in use until the end of the 1980s. It is divided into two pages, both containing visual and verbal information. In my attempt to read the multimodally articulated messages this layout ‘sends’, I will first refer to the visual resources before examining the inner layers of the layout and finally discussing the verbal communication inherent in the design.

At the center of the right-hand page we see a well-known painting by Shaban Hysa. It is a photograph of the original work created by the artist in 1974, and as it

17 Fischer, *Albania at War 1939–1945*, p. 195.

18 Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, p. 14.

19 Nicholas C. Pano, ‘Albania: The Last Bastion of Stalinism’, in: Milorad M. Drachkovitch (ed.), *East Central Europe. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), pp. 194–195.

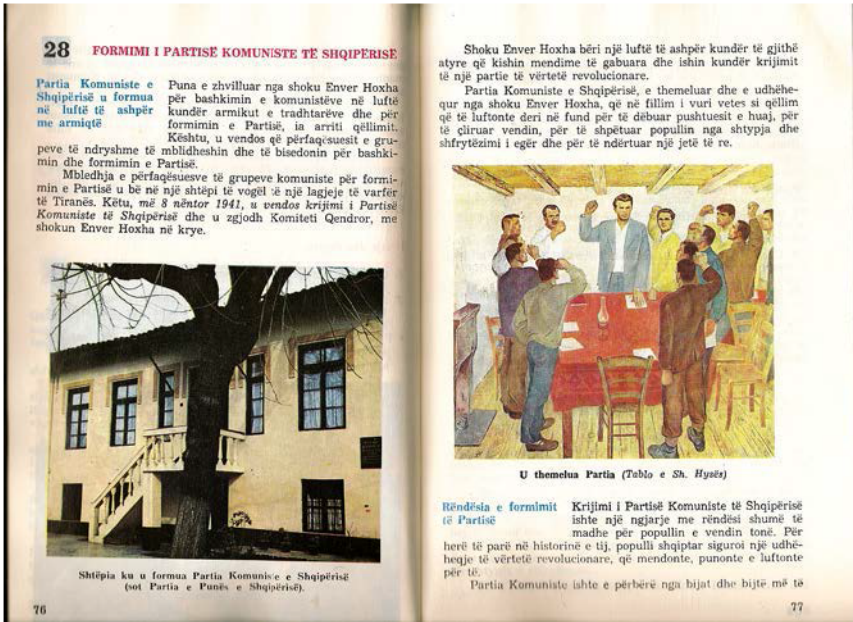


Figure 1: Source: Elsa Minga, Vedat Demiraj, Tefta Malile, *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasen e 4-të të Shkollës 8-Vjeçare*, Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1982, 76–77.

appears in the layout it is followed by the caption: ‘The Party was founded’. On the left-hand page there is a photograph of the building in which this historical event took place. The Hysa painting occupies a central position on the page and thus catches the pupils’ attention. It shows a group of people attending a meeting in the interior of a room. The oil lamp on the table and the clothes of the participants suggest that it is a winter evening. A narrative structure is perceptible based on the presence of several vectors²⁰ which via their presence in the composition connect the participants to each other while bringing to the fore information referring to the actor or actors and the object of a certain action. The strongest is the eye-level vector that connects most of the participants or actors to one specific figure, Enver Hoxha. At the same time, the latter prevails as the most salient part of the painting positioned in the center. Hoxha’s dynamic appearance reverses the roles, however. He stands out as the main actor as all eyes are upon him, including those of the reader. His own gaze moves beyond the frame of the painting and refrains from interaction with the rest of the participants or with the reader. There is no doubt that he is the dominant figure, indicated further by his physical size and height, whereas the rest of the par-

20 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, pp. 59–60.

ticipants are relegated to the background. As far as the action of the painting is concerned, this is the announcement of the establishment of the Communist Party by Hoxha, who appears concomitantly as its unequivocal leader and founder.

A second vector is the cyclical form according to which the other founding members of the Communist Party are positioned, including Hoxha himself. This circular vector is also visible in the dispersed papers lying on the table. Despite his inclusion within this circular representation Hoxha is once again distinct due to his attire, his blue suit contrasting with the white background. Other figures who can be identified in the painting are Qemal Stafa, the leader of the Communist Youth Organization, positioned very close to the leader's left, and Vasil Shanto, a leading figure of the communist movement in the city of Shkodër.

In terms of the interactive metafunction, the first most apparent of these are the gazes of these figures. Readers establish a connection with the participants of the meeting via the gaze of Qemal Stafa, Hoxha's closest companion in the meeting. Whereas the viewers' gaze has been captured by Hoxha's presence, he stares out of the frame of the composition as if looking towards the future that he alone can envision.²¹ Despite the significance of the event at hand, he has already moved a step further with his gaze, reaching for the future. Stafa's gaze, on the other hand, meets the eye of the reader as if demanding our attention.²² At such a critical moment for the country during the war and the occupation, the undisputable leader seems to have the power to unite the people, in this specific context the representatives of divergent communist groups, and to form the Communist Party of Albania. The founding act of the Communist Party is visually depicted in the grounding political resolution Hoxha touches with his hand; the others appear to have approved the resolution unanimously. They reiterate the same gesture made by the leader. With their raised clenched fist, in a gesture of unification and unanimity, they salute the newly established Communist Party. The painting is presented without distance to the reader, yet it is the central perspective that truly captures our attention: The painting is depicted with what Kress and van Leeuwen have called a 'built-in' perspective.²³ The magnetic effect of Hoxha's stature and gaze are yet further magnified by the slightly diagonal lines which converge at the vanishing point of Hoxha's head.

With regard to the compositional meta-function, the painting has been

21 Mathew C. Bown, *Socialist Realist Painting*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 142–143. Reference to the future is a key concept in socialist realist painting. As Bown puts it, it is a requirement for the artist who portrays the present to discern within its frame those elements that will foreshadow the future Communist paradise.

22 Kress and van Leeuwen. *Reading Images*, p. 119.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

structured along the dimensions of centre and margin.²⁴ Hoxha occupies the centre, and the rest of the participants constitute the marginal elements surrounding him. The significance of this circular spatial arrangement grows when one considers the fact that these circles are concentric and grouped around the main protagonist.²⁵ Hoxha thus becomes the most salient part of it, a kind of 'holy' centre. This pattern of spatial organization at the same time enhances the framing of the composition and also moves the content beyond its frame in enlarged imaginary concentric circles.

The photograph situated on the left-hand page shows a typical and relatively small house. It is followed by a caption informing readers that this is the house where the CPA was established. The absence of any kind of vector indicates a conceptual representation and, more specifically, an analytical structure that relates the participants or objects to one other in terms of a part-whole structure.²⁶ The whole or carrier is the house and the parts or attributes are the walls, windows, door, roof or steps. The low angle from which the photograph is taken renders this relatively small house more imposing and thus emphasizes its symbolic significance.²⁷ While this oblique angle from which the house has been photographed is unexpected and may therefore inspire detachment on the part of the viewers, this choice has a different function when it comes to the overall structuring of the layout and will be explained below.

The lines formed by the beams in the ceiling just above the participants' heads and also by the floorboards are also significant. They not only enhance further the image's perspective and add depth to the painting; they equally pull the readers' gaze towards a definite point within the painting's frame, again at Hoxha's head.²⁸ By extending beyond the frame of the composition, these lines expand and take on the form of sunrays. This suggested 'sunlight', not immediately striking, can be read as the first light of dawn rising after a long, dark night. It emerges from the head of the leader, reminiscent of the halo surrounding the figures of saints, but it also seems to have a more general meaning not exclusively related to the figure of Hoxha but denoting the cheerful message of the arrival of a new bright era: the commencing of the sunny socialist period that was inaugurated with the establishment of the Communist Party.

24 Ibid., p. 194.

25 Jan Plamper, 'The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles Around Stalin', in: Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (ed.), *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), pp. 28–29.

26 Kress and van Leeuwen. *Reading Images*, p. 87.

27 Ibid., p. 140.

28 The use of pictorial devices such as perspective, orthogonal lines both in the basement and ceiling of the room that give the painting depth and converge at a definite vanishing point, is reminiscent of Renaissance technique. More specifically, the painting of Shaban Hysa bears striking similarities to the famous da Vinci mural: 'The Last Supper'.

Concomitantly, these ‘sunrays’, as they expand from the compositional frame, establish a connection with the upper section of the page, possibly suggesting an openness and connection to the heavens. This latter observation might appear more plausible in the light of the Messianic associations with Hoxha. During the socialist era, he was depicted as the promised Messiah for whom the Albanians had been waiting for centuries²⁹ and by his arrival the people and the country will be relieved from the darkness of the past.³⁰ This quasi-religious depiction of Hoxha is reminiscent of a religious icon as found in socialist realist paintings, often rich in religious symbols and allegories.³¹ His portrayed deistic quality as the promised ‘deliverer’ of the Albanian nation is further emphasized by the fact that he interacts neither with the meeting’s participants nor with the reader of the textbook. Another significant element in the painting is the vector beginning in the bottom-left corner and ending in the top-right of the composition. Within this diagonal line we see an oil lamp, the founding declaration of the Communist Party, and above all Hoxha’s hand. The table bears a tablecloth in a striking red: on the one hand the colour red is related with socialist ideology and revolution, while on the other it represents the main colour of the Albanian national flag. Lastly, there is space reserved for the readers. The presence of the empty chair represents a visual device for integrating the viewers into the painting.³²

The visual resources described above communicate to the readers the message of the creation of a revolutionary and national leadership deriving from the people, and the dawn of the new communist era as a direct consequence. However, if this message is to be examined merely in the frame of the work of art, then it runs the risk of losing its dynamic appearance in the medium itself. The layout has some significant aspects to add in this respect, particularly regarding the structuring of the given and new elements within its frame.³³ The given information, already familiar to the learners reading the textbook, is the photograph of the house in which the Communist Party was established, positioned at the bottom of the page.³⁴ The new aspect, which represents the crucial point of the message, is the painting showing the interior of the house.

Aside from their positioning on the page, equally significant is the connection

29 Enis Sulstarova, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist ne Shqipëri* (Tirana: Afërdita, 2003), p. 74.

30 Fatos Lubonja, “Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World”, in: Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (ed.), *Albanian Identities. Myth and History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), p. 95.

31 Wolfgang Holz, ‘Allegory and Iconography in Socialist Realist Painting’, in: Mathew C. Bown and Brandon Taylor (ed.), *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-Party-State, 1917–1992*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 77–78.

32 Holz, ‘Allegory and Iconography’, p. 77.

33 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images* (2006), pp. 179–180.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

between the two images within the layout. They were printed in the format described above only from 1978 onwards. By including the two images on the same double page, the textbook gives the learners the chance to perceive this historical event from a dual perspective: from the inside of the room where the Communist Party was founded and from an outside perspective of the house where the event took place. Both images are related to each other through connecting devices, so as to make this movement from the inner room to the house or vice-versa as natural as possible. The placement of the painting on the right page evokes a horizontal vector that, when expanded to the left, reaches the house. What is significant in this case is the level of this horizontal line, which is level with that of the entrance to the house. In this manner, readers are brought within the blink of an eye into the building. At the same time, this affects the framing of the layout, bringing the two distinct images closer. Once readers 'reach' the house, they can easily identify the room in which the meeting took place: the window on the right on the ground floor where the photograph zooms in.

Both these images primarily convey a sense of hope in the establishment of the Communist Party of Albania, the first revolutionary leadership that grew from the inner forces of Albanian society, this fact alone proving significant enough to mark the beginning of a new era for the national community. This era appears bright and began with the formation of the Party, which, in accordance with Hysa's painting, was founded thanks to the efforts of protagonist Enver Hoxha. In terms of Messianic discourse, he is 'sent to earth' to save his community and represents the supernatural will to transform society. This sublime leader plays the crucial role of mediator between the supernatural and the people. From this distinctive position, he appears to remain in direct communication with the heavens and represent the symbol of national unity and the hope for the future. The future is epitomized in the grounding resolution of the Communist Party, which he touches with his hand, approved, so the image suggests, not only by the other founding members but also by a 'sublime' order.

In view of this analysis, the angle from which the house has been photographed does indeed seem more appropriate, encoding for the reader the sense of distinctiveness that characterizes this building; a 'sacred' place where the prophecy proved true. Taken together with the low angle of the depiction, the house imposes its power over the readers, while its oblique angle reinforces the frame of the layout.

The text – the verbal narrative – serves to support the effects created by the images. Several central motifs within the text have already been provided visually, for example the creation of a revolutionary leadership that would think, work and fight for the people and the arrival of a new era. The text further explains that this bright future, described in the form of a new life that began with

the establishment of the CPA, will survive the successful war against the occupiers. The armed struggle results as one of the main tasks of the newly established party. The text adds more information concerning who, when and what happened during the meeting. It goes without saying that Hoxha's contribution and work in the creation of the party is described as indispensable. The founder and most prominent among the participants, the text informs us, was elected head of the Central Committee of the CPA. The text and the entire chapter ends on the following page, which also mentions the establishment of the Communist Youth Organization under the leadership of the young communist Qemal Stafa. The caption assigned to the Hysa painting, titled 'The Party Was Founded', is interesting in that it uses the passive voice, allowing the speaker to avoid naming a subject and thus evading – for dramatic effect – the question as to by whom the Party was founded. This question, of course, is answered at several instances and via several means of communication.

The Formation of the National Liberation Army, 1943

If the establishment of the Communist Party is regarded as a kind of 'year zero' in the socialist calendar, then the creation of the National Liberation Army represents the second major development towards attaining power and the liberation of the country. In an attempt to maintain initiative in a military capacity, the communists, under the guise of the National Liberation Movement, intensified their activities during 1943. One of their larger achievements remained the establishment of the General Staff of the National Liberation Army on 10 July 1943, a prerequisite for channelling the escalation of military action. The creation of a people's army, commanded by the communists as the names of its leadership show, not only had organizational consequences; it created first and foremost a pole of resistance against the invaders led by the communists, from which the nationalist resistance forces were largely excluded. The elected commander-in-chief of the newly established army was the communist Spiro Moisiu and the post of political commissar went to the First Secretary of the Communist Party, Enver Hoxha.³⁵

The second national history textbook layout I wish to analyze in this chapter is from an eighth-grade textbook issued in 1974 (Figure 2). Again, this is a double-page layout; the left-hand page contains exclusively visual resources, whereas the right-hand page consists primarily of verbal communication and is accompanied by two smaller images. The title of the chapter refers to the beginning of the general uprising.

35 Prifti, *Socialist Albania*, p. 15.

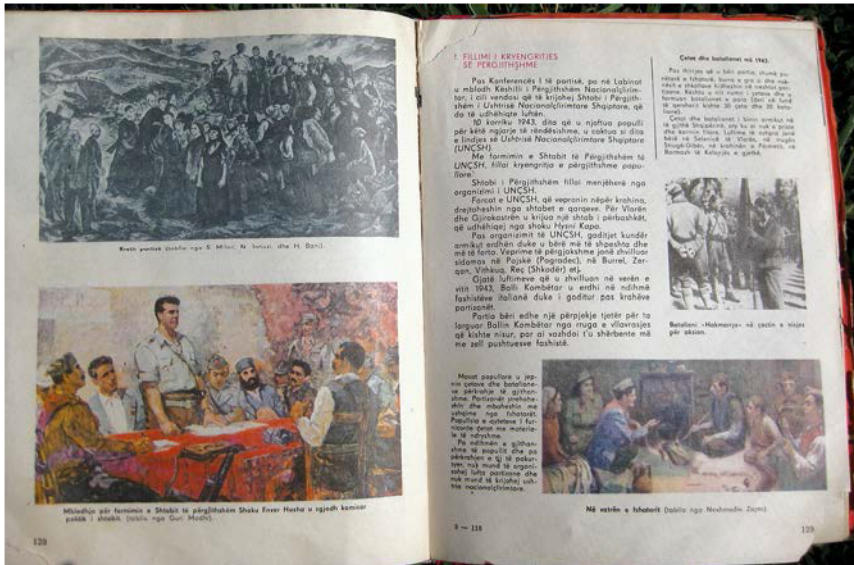


Figure 2: Source: Dhimitër Grillo, Neritan Ceka, *Historia e Shqipërisë për Klasen e 8të* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1974), 128–129.

Beginning with the visual communication and the left-hand page, I will first address the painting positioned at the bottom. This is a famous painting by Guri Madhi from the year 1962, bearing (here in the textbook layout) the unusually long title: ‘The meeting for the establishment of General Army Staff where Comrade Enver Hoxha was elected political commissar’. Given the restrictions of space and the number of images the layout contains, it would exceed the scope of this chapter to discuss in detail the representational, interactive and compositional metafunctions of each; rather, I will provide a short description, explaining the protagonists or activity depicted, as well as crucial visual elements that play a vital role in formulating the central message.

The first to catch the reader’s attention in this painting is the powerful figure of Enver Hoxha. He occupies the centre of the visual representation and his size dominates the frame. The painting has much in common with that by Shaban Hysa addressed in the previous section. The compositional structure follows the same pattern of centre and margin: the center is occupied by the leader, surrounded by other figures in the form of expanding concentric circles. Hoxha’s central position as protagonist is further emphasized by the representational meta-function of the painting. Once again, the reader cannot establish direct eye-contact with Hoxha, whose gaze reaches beyond the frame of the composition and could be interpreted as the visionary looking to the future; however, here a sense of involvement and closeness is created thanks to the empty space left

around the table. From the point of view of interactive significance, the low angle of the depiction emphasizes further Hoxha's symbolic power. The painting captures Enver Hoxha at a moment when his plans and tactics for the upcoming military operations were revealed. The strategic maps are positioned on the table Hoxha touches with his left hand. He is thus portrayed as the supreme commander, thus minimizing the role of the actual commander-in-chief, Spiro Moisiu, seated to Hoxha's left.

Further visual elements include the dominant red colour, in the tablecloth or in the background, the dynamic representation of the event from the perspective of the corner of the table, and the presence of the arms and the armed participants, reminding the reader that the event took place during wartime. Lastly, the absolutely motionless representation of Hoxha³⁶ is critical for this national moment; the leader remains calm and confident, as compared to the rest of the participants who are captured in a state of movement and emotional upheaval.

The upper section of the page features an additional painting that foregrounds in idealistic tones the powerful nexus between the people and the Party during the war. The painting is by S. Milori, N. Januzi and H. Bani, according to the caption, and is entitled 'Around the Party'. The Communist Party in this case is represented through its leader Enver Hoxha, positioned at the higher point of the composition. In this narrative representation, depicted in black and white, a distinct vector created by Hoxha's open arms remains visible. A notion of the imaginary 'embrace' the leader imparts to his people is suggested by the circular vector that results from the positioning of the participants in the visual composition. They surround the leader and create a large closed circle, further emphasized by the gaze of the people, directed in most cases towards the leader. While at the bottom of the page Hoxha is depicted in real tones as a human being in possession of extraordinarily capabilities, in the image at the top of the page Hoxha's appearance upholds a somewhat deistic air with his placement at the very top of the composition, as close as possible to the sky, suggesting his role (as in the Hysa painting) as a kind of 'modern Messiah', come down to earth to save his community. The title of the painting, 'Around the Party', is in line with the visual representation and best elucidates its core theme.

The next page also presents two images. Their small size and poor resolution, however, minimizes their significance in the frame of the layout. The painting positioned at the bottom of the right-hand page shows a wartime scene in which the people provided shelter to the fighting partisans of the National Liberation Army. The painting is by Nexhmedin Zajmi and from the year 1954. It shows a scene in which one of the partisans seems to be telling a fascinating story from the war to an avidly listening young man sitting opposite him. Just above we see a

36 Plamper, 'The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult', p. 30.

photograph showing a scene of the military preparations that intensified during 1943, and above this, a short source discussing the formations of the first guerrilla units or battalions in 1943.

Simply put, the central message of the visual narrative refers to the organizational measures taken towards providing armed resistance that brought about the culmination of the liberation struggle. The highlight remains the creation of the headquarters of the National Liberation Army under the directive and guidance of the leader Enver Hoxha, followed by information related to the developments of the war and the creation of fighting units throughout the Albanian territory. A second, equally crucial, theme depicted by the images is that of the strong connection between, and useful contribution of, the people in the partisan war and the creation of the NLA. Such a visual discourse continues in the next layout, where more details are added.

The double-page layout is, like the previous layout analyzed, structured along the dimensions of given and new. Given and already familiar to the pupils is the visual narrative positioned on the left-hand page, which on its own performs under a top-ideal and bottom-real polarization.³⁷ The top contains the idealistic information showing perhaps the reaction of the people to the call to war by the Communist Party. The lower section represents the down-to-earth information and refers to the real event, the meeting for the establishment of the People's Army on 10 July, 1943. The right-hand page, however, primarily structured along verbal lines, represents new information to which the pupils must pay special attention. All in all, the visual and textual elements of the double spread create a balancing centre and simultaneously reveal a third structure following the pattern of centre and margin. In the middle we read the text, which is surrounded by a circle of four images on both pages. In this new core of the layout, the key message is to be found in the text and refers to the 'birth' of the National Liberation Army that signified the beginning of the general armed uprising in the country. The use of the word 'birth' rather than 'establishment' or 'formation' is reminiscent of the terminology of the romantic historicist school that tended to attribute the laws of living organisms to the People's Army.³⁸ The outcome of this supernatural 'conception' leading to a natural 'birth' that became possible between the people and the Party could hardly be expressed more clearly. In the framing of the layout, the images seem to set the tone in this double spread. They are connected in pairs through diagonal vectors and share certain meanings. The first group includes the painting positioned at the top of the left-hand page and the painting towards the lower ('real') section of the right-hand page. This connection depicts the moral advantage enjoyed by the Communist Party and its

37 Kress and van Leeuwen, *Reading Images*, pp. 179–186.

38 Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 191.

strong bond with the population. The Party, identified in the image of Hoxha, is connected to the people, whereas the nationalist resistance groups are not, so the images appear to imply. The second vector is again diagonal and unites the remaining two images by providing an overview of military activity during the year 1943. As mentioned above, the military developments are also covered by the following layout, which is part of the same chapter.

The textual narrative offers detailed information with regard to the organization of the armed struggle during the critical year 1943. At every possible instance the text mentions the dependence of the people on the Communist Party and vice versa as a decisive factor for the continuation of the war in this historical turn. The nationalist resistance groups are referred to in negative terms as 'traitors' or 'collaborators'. The text warns that this would eventually lead to a civil conflict, which the Party had initially sought to avoid. Given the continuing anti-national stance of the rival organization, Balli Kombëtar, so the text informs us, the Party began preparations for the final confrontation. A further significant element in this regard is the caption of Guri Madhi's painting. It is in line with the main topic of the layout, which presents Enver Hoxha as architect and coordinator of the newly established army and the military operations. This unusually long caption mentions the election of Hoxha in the post of political commissar of the National Liberation Army, yet at the same time subtly avoids any reference to the name of the General Commander Spiro Moisiu.³⁹ This chapter in the textbook is entitled 'The Beginning of the General Uprising'. With such a dynamic beginning and the entire population on the side of the National Liberation Army, the reader will be in no doubt as to the outcome of the war; the final triumph of the People's Army, which would lead the community into the 'bright' socialist future, can be safely predicted by means of these textbook layouts.

Conclusion

The analysis of the textbook layouts presented here identifies an oversimplification of two historical events that decided the course of the war. The leading position of the Communist Party in the liberation struggle, both on the political and military front, is a recurring theme. On the one side stand the communists and the people, while on the other the invaders and the internal collaborators are presented in a negative manner. This represents a clearly de-

³⁹ The caption, as it appears in the layout, is not the real title of the painting of Guri Madhi. This is also the case for the painting by Nexhmedin Zajmi placed at the bottom of the right-hand page.

finer narrative depicted in black and white terms. Such a schema would have been considered conducive to the political legitimization of the communists in the aftermath of, and throughout, the socialist era. Another important finding of the analysis is the exaggeration of the role the communists played during the war, specifically that of the legendary leader Enver Hoxha. In the case of Hoxha even a Messianic visual discourse seems to have been implemented, further exalting his contribution during the years of the National Resistance.

Of equal significance are the omissions in the portrayal, presumably because they would have posed several problems to the official interpretation. Such omissions include, for instance, the role played by Yugoslavia in the formation of the CPA and the election of Hoxha to the post of Secretary General of the CPA at the meeting held in November 1941. Even the art of the war conducted by the National Liberation Army, primarily a guerrilla warfare confrontation, underwent a change in textbooks. The visual representation gives the strong impression that the Albanian army was perfectly organized and able to defeat enemy forces in a direct confrontation. Nevertheless, most of the above interpretations remain somewhat remote from the findings of current historical research. The textbooks, generally speaking, follow a socialist historiography, promoting to the extreme the role of the Party and its leader. The framing of the narrative fosters a close link between the visual and verbal communication, providing meanings of equal significance to the pupils.

Ultimately, the account of the national resistance is, both in the portrayal of the establishment of the CPA and the creation of the National Liberation Army, in fact a mythical one. This holds true if myth is defined as a collective narrative that is not necessarily guided by facts, yet nevertheless with the aim of being accepted as true by the members of a certain society.⁴⁰ What matters is not the historical accuracy but the content of the account and mostly its acceptance by a social or national group, in our case the learners. When the latter leave school, they will have learned that in one of the brightest and most difficult chapters of national history, during the Second World War, the Party and its leader Enver Hoxha led the people against the nation's enemies and the dangers the latter posed to the country. Following the rhetoric of the Albanian leadership, such perils were never entirely extinguished for this small socialist country on the Balkan Peninsula, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. This simplified master narrative, which might well guide students' behaviour in both their early and adult lives, at the same time asks the latter indirectly to remain close to the Party, it being a unique political and military force of Albanian society and the strongest in

40 George Schöpfli, 'The Nature of Myth: Some Theoretical Aspects' in: Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (eds.), *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 26–32.

decades. This is certainly supposed to foster social cohesion among the pupils⁴¹ and brings to the fore the second and possibly most crucial feature of myth as defined by current debate connecting the function of myth with its social and historical context.⁴² In other words, myth should always be related to the context in which it appears and, via analysis, ultimately reveals the function of said context.

It is, therefore, no coincidence that the myth of the partisan resistance gained momentum in this historical context of Albania's retreat from the international scene. It was not the 'visual turn', with regard to textbook production and the vast amount of visual material related to the war, that urged this development, but rather the need to stress the achievements of the recent past, a political and military highlight of the community. It goes without saying that, following this argument, the preservation of socialist society is sought by ensuring the monolithic unity between the Party and the people (in our case the learners), the sacrifice of the latter and the exceptional leadership capacities of the former and above all its leader, Enver Hoxha. In these textbook layouts, Hoxha shines through a Messianic visual discourse and prevails as the 'saviour' of his community. Even a pre-Christian mythological representation that alludes to Mount Olympus with the leader occupying the throne of Zeus is perceptible in one of the images showing the armed resurgence, thus rendering Hoxha a mythical figure. We can even identify a cosmic representation here: Hoxha is the shining sun and the point of reference around which the entire Albanian universe oscillates in concentric circles. Without him, the textbooks would have its readers believe, the entire Albanian cosmos would fall apart.

Theo van Leeuwen points out that images are by nature polysemous⁴³ and might be viewed, read and interpreted in different ways by different readers. While this is certainly true, the textbook layouts presented here demonstrate that room for interpretative freedom on the part of the reader can be strongly influenced by the various devices discussed. The textbook layouts channel potential meanings into one principal topic or theme: in this case, the dawning of the luminous socialist life on a specific room of the 'sacred' house in which the Communist Party was founded by the absolute leader, Enver Hoxha.

41 Ibid., p. 29.

42 Christopher G. Flood, *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 164; Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 163.

43 Theo van Leeuwen, 'The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 14, 1 (1992), 35–58.

Bibliography

Textbooks Cited

- Grillo, Dhimitër and Neritan Ceka, *Historia e Shqipërisë për Klasen e 8-të* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1974).
- Minga, Elsa, Vedat Demiraj and Malile Tefta, *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasen e 4-të të Shkollës 8-Vjeçare* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1982).

References

- Biberaj, Elez, *Albania: A Socialist Maverick* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).
- Bottici, Chiara, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Bown, Mathew C., *Socialist Realist Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).
- Duka, Valentina, *Histori e Shqipërisë 1912–2000* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese Kristalina, 2007).
- Fischer, Bernd J., *Albania at War 1939–1945* (London: Hurst, 1999).
- Fischer, Bernd J., 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, edited by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009).
- Flood, Christopher G., *Political Myth: A Theoretical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Frashëri, Kristo, *The History of Albania (A Brief Survey)* (Tiranë: 1964).
- Holz, Wolfgang, 'Allegory and Iconography in Socialist Realist Painting', in: *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-Party-State, 1917–1992*, edited by Mathew C. Bown and Brandon Taylor (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993).
- Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
- Lubonja, Fatos, 'Between the Glory of a Virtual World and the Misery of a Real World', in: *Albanian Identities. Myth and History*, edited by Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Pano, Nicholas C., *The People's Republic of Albania* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968).
- Pano, Nicholas C., 'Albania: The Last Bastion of Stalinism', in *East Central Europe: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, edited by Milorad M. Drachkovitch (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1982).
- Plamper, Jan, 'The Spatial Poetics of the Personality Cult: Circles Around Stalin', in: *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003).
- Pollo, Stefanaq, Kristo Frashëri, Muin Çami and Viron Koka (eds), *Historia e Shqipërisë. Vëllimi i Tretë (1912–1944)* (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1984).

- Pollo, Stefanaq and Arben Puto, *The History of Albania from its Origins to the Present Day*, trans. Carol Wiseman and Ginnie Hole (London: Routledge & Kegan and Paul, 1981).
- Prifti, Peter, *Socialist Albania since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1978).
- Schöpflin, George, 'The Nature of Myth: Some Theoretical Aspects', in: *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, edited by Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2002).
- Smith, Anthony D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).
- Sulstarova, Enis, *Ligjerimi Nacionalist ne Shqipëri* (Tiranë: Afërdita, 2003).
- Van Leeuwen, Theo, 'The Schoolbook as a Multimodal Text', in: *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 14/1 (1992): 35–58.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo, and Gunther Kress, 'Critical Layout Analysis', in: *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, 17/1 (1995): 25–43.
- Vickers, Miranda, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (London and New York: Tauris, 1995).

Between History and Politics: Understanding *Antiquitas* Myths in Macedonian History Textbooks

Do I believe in ghosts? No, but I'm afraid of them.
– Marie Anne de Vichy-Chamrond, Marquise du Deffand

Precisely by rendering banal the extraordinary and vice versa, political myth may come to operate within the ambit of that which is out of question, because it is either apparently irrelevant or too important to be questioned.
– Chiara Bottici

Introduction

It can be somewhat disconcerting for a scholar of the humanities and social sciences who neither believes nor participates in political and nationalist myth-making to observe the negative results of such a process. It may feel as though one's own academic efforts to bring about a deeper understanding of the complexity of human affairs have been defeated.¹ Political myths most often appear to possess no solid grounding, yet they have real potential for serious destruction. Their study poses quite a challenge. Faced with the workings of political/historical myths, scholars have habitually approached them guided by either the 'enlightenment' or 'functionalist' principle. A great deal of energy has been expended on debating whether a myth should be deconstructed and 'destroyed', or understood within its social context and left in peace. As Kolstø has suggested, however, these two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive.² We strongly support this position and shall, therefore, use the distinctive methodologies of both approaches in our effort to both understand and deconstruct the myths of *antiquitas* (the myths of ancient origin, continuity, etc.) which are integrated into recent history textbooks in the Republic of Macedonia.

1 Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations* (2002), p. 7. Geary's work is now one of the leading texts on the place of late ancient and early medieval history in the national imagination of many modern European countries.

2 Pal Kolstø, 'Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society', in *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Kolstø (2005), p. 31.

Some research into ethnocentric nationalist myths in Macedonian historiography and history textbooks has been carried out in the last two decades, although none of it is particularly extensive. Brunnbauer, Pichler, Vouri and Proeva, among others, have contributed by posing the questions under consideration here and instigating a discussion. These researchers have observed different types of myths and examined the ideological issues that are generated by their use. Brunnbauer, for example, has brought myths of origin, continuity, and victimization under the banner of a 'national mission'.³ Others, such as Hasimbegović and Gavrilović, emphasize the myth that casts Macedonia as a 'promised land'.⁴ Proeva has analyzed the Macedonian myth of ancient origin in correlation with similar myths in neighbouring countries (Greece, Albania, and Bulgaria).⁵ In a larger study of education, ethnocentrism, and minority policies in Macedonia, Pichler tackles the question of ancient origin in history textbooks.⁶ It is quite common for researchers in this field to separate or group myths in different ways, leaving us with a multitude of classifications today. However, it is not our goal to propose new classifications, nor to analyze different myths. In this chapter we shall focus on one particular group of historical/political myths, *antiquitas* myths, following the typology proposed by Kolstø.⁷

Thus, by linking textbooks and society, this chapter seeks to contribute to scholarship in this area by dealing with the relationship between political/his-

3 Ulf Brunnbauer, 'Historiography, Myths and the Nation in the Republic of Macedonia', in *(Re)Writing History*, ed. by Brunnbauer (2004), pp. 165–200.

4 Elma Hasimbegović and Darko Gavrilović, 'Ethnogenesis Myths', in *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States*, ed. by Gavrilović and Perica (2011), p. 26. Although technically it encompasses all of the former Yugoslav republics, their paper essentially focuses on the old tandem Serbia–Croatia. It offers only a few lines on myths in Macedonia.

5 Nade Proeva, 'Savremeni makedonski mit kao odgovor na nacionalne mitove suseda: albanski panilirizam, bugarski pantrakizam i grčki panhelenizam', *Zgodovinski Časopis*, 64, (1–2) (2010), 176–219. For the interdependence of and mutual conditioning between the myths of ancient origin in Macedonia, see also Matvey Lomonosov, *National Myths in Interdependence*, (unpublished master's thesis, Central European University in Budapest, 2012) <www.etd.ceu.hu/2012/lomonosov_matvey.pdf> (accessed 29 April 2016). He defines 'national myths of antiquity' as: 'certain visions of the beginnings and of the earliest period of the communal past, which are put in form of narratives and claim that the national history started in Antiquity, i.e. before the Middle Ages or prior to 5th–6th centuries AD [*sic*]' (p. 30).

6 Robert Pichler, 'Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)', in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, Eckert. Die Schriftenreihe, 124 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 217–49. Of particular value to the current discussion is Pichler's inclusion of interviews with members of commissions for history textbooks and historians, which offers an insight into the process of preparing textbooks, and the ethnicized and mythologized visions of history which they present.

7 Kolstø considers myths to be boundary-defining mechanisms, and divides them into four principal groups: myths of *sui generis*, myths of *ante murale*, myths of *martirium*, and myths of *antiquitas*. See: Kolstø, *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005), p. 4.

torical myths and history education in the contemporary Republic of Macedonia. More precisely, we will analyze the myths of ancient origin and ethnic continuity presented to ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian students in primary and secondary schools. Ethnic Macedonians are taught about their ancient Macedonian roots, while at the same time, and by the same textbooks, ethnic Albanians are taught about their ancient Illyrian origin. It is worth stressing that since the Ohrid Framework Agreement, which marked the end of the 2001 armed conflict, history textbooks in Macedonia have been written by teams of historians and history teachers from the two largest ethnic communities in the country, Macedonians and Albanians.⁸ The textbooks they prepare are translated into various languages and used by all communities in Macedonia.

In the Myth-Maker's Workshop: The Enlightenment Approach

Bottici argues, after Wittgenstein, that 'to define myth in general, and political myth in particular, in terms of its claim to 'truth' means to bring it to a terrain that is not its own'.⁹ As much as we agree with the general idea of this statement, we nonetheless believe that analyzing and deconstructing the historical veracity of a myth is useful and appropriate for subsequent efforts to understand its role in a particular socio-political context. Furthermore, we strongly agree with Kolstø's view of the function of demythologization and enlightenment, according to which 'a society that is able to treat its homespun identity myths with some degree of irony and detachment is less likely to be mobilized by political and ethnic entrepreneurs for aggressive purposes'.¹⁰ It is, however, important in this first part of our endeavour to examine how the myths of *antiquitas* are constructed in Macedonian history textbooks.

In this section we offer an overview of the 'veracity' of the *antiquitas* myths found in the texts we are considering. We will present the results of a comparison between the interpretations proposed by these textbooks and the current established theories and concepts in the field of late ancient/early medieval studies. For almost a decade, Macedonian history textbooks dealing with the late ancient/early medieval period (that is, textbooks for the fifth grade of primary school, for

8 According to the Law on Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Education (*Official Gazette* no. 98 from 4 August 2008) all textbooks have to be approved by a *Recenziona Komisija* (Review Committee) consisting of a total of three members, from which at least one must be a member of a non-majority community if the textbook is intended for students from non-majority backgrounds (Article 16).

9 Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 9.

10 Pal Kolstø, *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe* (2005), pp. 32–3.

eleven-year-olds; and the first grade of secondary school, for fifteen-year-olds) state that there is an ethnic and cultural continuity between ancient and modern Macedonians, as well as between Illyrians and Albanians. The terminology, arguments and didactic strategies of the textbooks have changed to meet a new desire for autochthony. Stojanov has argued that the myth of continuity follows two lines, or has two ways of operating: directly and indirectly.¹¹ In order to better understand the controversy of the question we will briefly sketch out this argument in the following.

The indirect presentation of mythologized historical knowledge in some history textbooks relies on the vague concept of the 'fatherland'. Through an imprecise, ambiguous, and potentially manipulative terminology, it suggests a sort of ethno-political continuity with the ancient Macedonians.¹² Dealing with this material requires, besides common sense, the employment of discourse and didactic analysis. Authors' own interpretations are sometimes hidden in the seemingly neutral tone of the narration, and are closely related to the current political situation in the country. The opening chapter of a 2005 history textbook for fifth graders, for example, headed 'Macedonia, our Fatherland', states that 'the name of our fatherland is very old. It is mentioned for the first time in the seventh century B.C.', and that 'our fatherland has a long and rich history. In Antiquity it was a strong state'.¹³ These statements not only suggest an ancient origin, but also describe a reversal of the contemporary political situation. They have multiple implications. The most important one is the indirect suggestion that ancient Macedonia (and even politically the Kingdom of Macedon) was or is 'our' fatherland. Furthermore, the students are reassured that Macedonia is not something new, that 'our' name belongs to 'us', and that 'our' country has not always been 'small' or 'weak'.

As for the direct presentation of the ideas of ancient origin and continuity, the focus here is on the late ancient history of the region, and the group identities during that time period. One textbook published in 2006 suggests ancient origins and continuity through a process of ethnic mixing between ancient Macedonians and Slavs in the seventh century. While it is quite reasonable to assume that some cultural assimilation took place between the newcomers and the local population in the early medieval Balkans, what is striking in this particular case is the clear distancing from the generally accepted theories in the field of late Roman and

11 Darko Stojanov, 'In Search of Autochthony: A Case Study of the Great Migration Period in History Textbooks in Macedonia', *Der Donauraum*, 50 (3–4) (2010): 225–34.

12 *Ibid.*, 226.

13 Kosta Adževski, Darinka Petreska, Violeta Ačkoska, Naum Dimoski, and Vančo Gjorgiev, *Istorija za petto oddelenie* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2005), p. 4: 'Името на нашата татковина е многу старо. Првпат се споменува во VII век пред н.е.', and 'Нашата татковина има долга и богата историја. Во антиката таа била силна држава'.

early Byzantine studies. This departure forms the basis for a new national myth. In order to account for ‘Macedonian’ continuity, the textbook maintains that a clear ancient Macedonian identity persisted until the time of the Slavic invasions and migrations in the Balkans, in the late sixth and early seventh centuries.¹⁴ In this version, it is ‘ancient Macedonians’ who mixed with the Slavs, as opposed to the more nuanced and academically more acceptable ‘local Romanized population’ found in earlier textbooks. Without taking into consideration more reputable theories of group identity in the late empire, or those dealing with group identities among the so-called ‘barbarian’ tribes in the age of migrations, the textbook presents an image of a Macedonian identity that is frozen in time, at least until the arrival of the Slavs. To support its claim the textbook provides selected quotations from three Byzantine writers who mention the ethnonym ‘Macedonians’: Theodoret of Cyrus, the Miracles of Saint Demetrius, and Simeon the Metaphrast. They omit an explanation of the neoclassicist tendencies of numerous late Roman and Byzantine writers. Besides the adoption of a classical style of writing and some old techniques, one of the major traits of this literary tradition is the use of classical names (toponyms, ethnonyms, etc.) to refer to the post-classical period.¹⁵ It is generally accepted by scholars of the Late Roman and Byzantine periods that the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonians’ had a geographical and administrative meaning at that time, but certainly no ethnic significance. The authors repeat their main argument for the supposed longevity of the ancient Macedonian identity four times in the space of a few pages to ensure that it is absorbed by students. This argument states that the Roman Empire did not and could not assimilate the Macedonian people due to the latter’s strong collective consciousness based on traditions originating in the times of Alexander the Great.¹⁶ The argument is present not only in the core textual parts of the particular lesson (unit), but also provides direction to the questions posed: ‘What was the mutual relationship between the Slavs and the ancient Macedonians and how did their symbiosis develop?’¹⁷ A similar position on the idea of continuity is taken up by other textbooks, where it is repeated as fact, but not

14 Blaže Ristovski, Šukri Rahimi, Simo Mladenovski, Todor Chepreganov, and Mitko B. Panov, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanie* (Skopje: Albi, 2006), pp. 98–103.

15 Roger Scott, ‘The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography’, in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Margaret Mullet and Roger Scott (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1979, 1981), pp. 61–74. For a rare article on this topic published in Macedonia see Oliver J. Schmitt, ‘“Mysians, Macedonians, Dardanians”: Some Remarks on Late Medieval Ethnonyms in the Central Balkans’, in *Makedonskiot identitet niz istorijata* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 2010), pp. 73–8.

16 Ristovski et al, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanie* (2006), pp. 98–102.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 146.

discussed in detail.¹⁸ A number of other textbooks which touch upon the question of the relationship between the ancient Macedonians and the Slavs contain statements so confused that they reveal a lack not only of academic support, but also of a basic sense of literacy and historical knowledge. This renders them unsuitable for analysis.¹⁹

Similar to the previous case, a mythical historical narrative is also presented to ethnic Albanian students in Macedonia. In a 2009 textbook, a chapter entitled 'Illyrian-Albanian continuity' proposes that contemporary Albanians are the direct descendants of the Illyrians. The authors claim that 'the archaeological investigations in several Albanian regions confirm the ethno-cultural continuity of the Illyrians'. As in its Macedonian counterparts, the focus of the historical narrative is late Antiquity. The Komani culture identified by archaeologists is interpreted as an ethnic Illyrian (i.e. Albanian) culture, and the principle that archaeological culture does not equal ethnic group, accepted since the 1960s, is ignored. According to Bowden, one of the leading archaeologists working on sites in Albania, the Komani culture is not an expression of ethnic identity but rather an indication of more localized and fluid social structures.²⁰ He claims that the Komani population 'participated in a European-wide medium of funerary practice, rather than constructing an identity that consciously expressed their difference from their neighbors'.²¹ In this case too, the didactic section reflects the same impulse as the main text: 'Was there an ethno-genetic link between the Illyrians and the Arberians, and how did this reflect on culture?'²²

These mythical historical narratives have much in common, but certain differences can be observed: while the Macedonian narrative is based mostly on written sources, its Albanian counterpart is based on archaeological sources. The former proposes an assimilation of two ethnically and culturally different populations, while the latter proposes an evolution of one autochthonous population. On the other hand, both myths of *antiquitas* presented to students as

18 Milan Boškovski, Nebi Derviši, Safet Nedžiri, Dime Madžovski, and Saško Nikolovski, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanje* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2009), pp. 164; and Milan Boškovski, Jordan Ilioski, and Nebi Derviši, *Istorija za sesto oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2010), pp. 32. The latter also emphasizes that the local population in the region had an ancient Macedonian ethnic identity, but differs from the other textbooks by claiming that their contemporary descendants are the Vlachs from Macedonia. This proposition is not compatible with the Macedonian nationalist discourse and is equally groundless.

19 Nenad Naneski and Behar Memeti, *Istorija za VI oddelenie* (Skopje: Zvezda, 2006), pp. 32: 'The autochthonous population in Macedonia were the ancient Macedonians, called Pao-nians. They originated from the Roman colonists in Macedonia'.

20 William Bowden, 'The Construction of Identities in Post-Roman Albania', in *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology*, ed. by Luke Lavan and William Bowden (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 57.

21 Ibid.

22 Ristovski et al, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanje* (2006), p. 141.

historical 'fact' share two common features. They seek a solution for the continuity problem in the late ancient/early medieval period, and they both largely ignore basic historical and archaeological concepts and theories. Group identity in the Later Roman Empire manifested itself for the most part in terms of citizenship, religion, and finally region, as well as social status, profession etc. Contemporary research into the history and archaeology of the region does not speak of a transmission of ethnic identity from classical to late ancient times. As Geary, who rightly considers nationalist interpretations and (mis)use of historical phenomena to be the very antithesis of history, states: 'The flux and complexities of Late Antiquity belong to a different world from the simplistic visions of ideologies'.²³ In fact, contemporary scholarship challenges and re-examines even the group identities and related terminology of classical times that are often taken for granted (Romans, Greeks, Hebrews, Gauls and *genos*, *ethnos*, *phylon*, etc.).²⁴ This presents additional problems to those attempting to link two different groups of people over a long period of time. Such problems are, however, ignored or forgotten by the myth-makers.

In order to provide some context for the shift of the historical narrative in history textbooks, we shall briefly turn to the aftermath of the fall of socialism and communism in the Balkans. Research into the place of ancient history in Macedonian history textbooks of the 1990s has yielded different results. For example Vouri, who examined textbooks from four Balkan countries (Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey), observed that ancient history has been included in four particular ways: thematic exploration of ancient history in the curriculum, the incorporation of ancient history within the body of national history, ethnocentric narrative of ancient history, and a revision of the Marxist approach to the ancient past.²⁵ What these countries' textbooks had in common was that 'they all lay emphasis on the passing need to rehabilitate the 'downgraded history' of ancient Thrace, ancient Macedonia, or Illyria'.²⁶ Studying the mainstream Macedonian historiography of the 1990s, Brunnbauer also emphasizes the inclusion of ancient Macedonians in the national narrative. He too points to historians' interpretations of the alleged assimilation of Slavs and

23 Geary, *Myth of Nations* (2002), p. 156.

24 For classical group identity see Erich Gruen, 'Did Ancient Identity Depend on Ethnicity? A Preliminary Probe', *Phoenix* 67 (1-2) (2013), 1-22. For a post-modernist analysis of groups in the context of modern nationalism and identity theory, see Roger Brubaker, 'Ethnicity without Groups', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 43, 2 (2002), 163-89. Brubaker challenges the tendency to take groups for granted, i.e. the 'common sense groupism'.

25 Sofia Vouri, 'Antiquity as Source of National Documentation in Balkan History Textbooks (1991-1996)' in *The Image of the 'Other'/Neighbour in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries*, ed. by Xochellis and Toloudi (2001), p. 77.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Macedonians in the sixth and seventh centuries.²⁷ Yet this situation differs from our more recent case study, because the ‘symbiosis’ theory had not yet been formalized, and was not included in history textbooks. Our point can be illustrated by Brunnbauer’s conclusion:

Academic historians usually do not go so far as to claim a shared ethnic identity between the ancient and the Slav Macedonians – although they recognize a contribution of the ancient Macedonians to the ethnogenesis of the Macedonian people – but stress the tradition of statehood that the ancient Macedonians had established in the region and handed down to the Macedonian nation.²⁸

The first part of this statement indicates that Macedonian historians do not question the Slavic identity of the modern Macedonian people. Ancient history is part of the national narrative and, while it has been claimed that the ancient Macedonians were not Greeks, the matter is not paid much attention, and there is no explicit claim to ancient origins of the modern Macedonian identity. At the same time, the myth of the Albanians’ ancient origin was already well-established,²⁹ but in Communist Albania, not in Macedonia. Of course, we must recognize that these processes of myth-construction took place in two different countries, at least somewhat independently. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of these processes influencing one another. In any case, our objective here is not to establish the chronological order of myth construction, but rather to examine the changes in the historical narrative from the 1990s to the post-conflict period. We argue that the myth of *antiquitas* in Macedonia, as seen in history textbooks, is today much more detailed and explicit, and based on limited and hypothetical historical interpretations which provided new (pseudo-) arguments and conclusions. It can be seen as an example of the ideological use of history, which K. G. Karlsson has related ‘to attempts to arrange historical elements into a relevant context of meaning, made mainly by groups of intellectuals and politicians in control of public representations’.³⁰

Yet proving the ‘incorrectness’ of the myth in textbooks seems to be not only the easiest, but also perhaps the least useful thing to do. We shall therefore now

27 Brunnbauer, ‘Historiography, Myths and the Nation in the Republic of Macedonia’, in *(Re)Writing History*, ed. by Brunnbauer (2004), p. 180.

28 Brunnbauer, ‘Serving the Nation: Historiography in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) After Socialism’, *Historein* 4 (2003), p. 168.

29 Sofia Vouri, ‘Antiquity as Source of National Documentation in Balkan History Textbooks (1991–1996)’, in *The Image of the ‘Other’/Neighbour in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries*, ed. by Xochellis and Toloudi (2001), p. 78, p. 80.

30 Klas-Göran Karlsson, ‘Public uses of history in contemporary Europe’, in *Contemporary History on Trial*, ed. by Jones, Osberg and Randerad (2007), p. 39. See also his discussion on ‘the longer back, the more legitimate’ idea employed by nationalists.

move to the functionalist approach to the myth of ancient origin, and examine the precise role of the myth in contemporary Macedonian society.

‘Significance’ and ‘Work on Myth’: The Functionalist Approach

In the contemporary literature on political myths there are many theories surrounding what defines a myth. Despite certain differences, in general they share the conclusion that political myths mainly serve to legitimize a given political order or community. Ifversen, for example, claims that modern myths are political, that their task is to legitimize foundational political acts, and that they express trans-historical values that provide orientation to a given community.³¹ He suggests regarding a mythical narrative as a particular discourse whose purpose is to justify order and authority in a community.³² For Bosković, Gavrilović and Perica, political myths are in general connected to the state; they classify them as myths of the polis, founding myths of the state, and myths of the nation.³³

A much more common view than those mentioned above is offered by Bottici, in a study seeking to provide the first refined theoretical framework for the use of political myth, and which centres on the universal need for significance. She defines the political myth as follows:

[T]he work on a common narrative by which the members of a social group (or society) make significance of their political experiences and deeds. Thus, what makes a political myth out of a simple narrative is not its content or claim to truth, but first, the fact that this narrative coagulates and produces significance, second, that it is shared by a group, and third, that it can come to address the specifically political conditions in which the group operates.³⁴

At the heart of her theory is the notion of significance or *Bedeutsamkeit*, a concept that she borrows from the German philosopher Hans Blumenberg.³⁵ It is argued that people need significance, lest they become indifferent to the world in which they live.³⁶ The second basic concept of her philosophy, also stemming

31 Jan Ifversen, ‘Myth in the Writing of European History’, in *Nationalizing the Past*, ed. by Berger and Lorenz (2010), p. 454.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 454.

33 Aleksandar Bosković, Darko Gavrilović and Vjekoslav Perica, ‘Myths, Political Mythologies and Nationalism’, in *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States*, ed. by Gavrilović and Perica (2011), pp. 13–14.

34 Bottici, *Philosophy of Political Myth* (2007), p. 14.

35 For significance and the work on myth see Hans Blumenberg, *Arbeit am Mythos* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), especially chapter three entitled ‘Bedeutsamkeit’. For an English translation see Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

36 Bottici, *Philosophy of Political Myth* (2007), p. 131.

from Blumenberg, is that of the ‘work on myth’. This is the main focus of the inter-relational approach to myth, whereby a myth is not only a story, or a narrative. Bottici argues that a myth is not ‘a product that is given once and for all, but is instead a process of the continual reworking of a basic narrative core or mythologem’.³⁷

An important aspect of the political myth is its use in the politics of identity, especially in an ethno-national context. The place of the myth in that process is not fixed, but rather dynamic. As Bottici argues, political myths ‘can be seen as both the symptom of an already existing identity, but also as a means for creating an identity yet to come’.³⁸ Kolstø’s theory of the myth as an ethnic boundary equally stresses the link between historical narratives and traditions as the legitimization and celebration of identity. Specific to myths of this nature is the tendency to move to action. Political myths represent a determination to act on the part of those who generate them, and as such they have the potential to incite people to action, particularly in cases in which their group identity is largely based on such a myth.³⁹

A political myth can simultaneously exhibit a cognitive, a practical, and an aesthetic dimension without clear distinctions; these are the dimensions identified by Bottici, who draws on previous ideas from Flood, Sorel and Tudor.⁴⁰ The cognitive dimension refers to the role of the myth in providing fundamental cognitive schemata which map the social world by reducing its complexity to the relative simplicity of the mythical narrative plot. The practical dimension reflects the need of social agents to represent their planned activity in the form of a narrative that will ensure their success. The aesthetic dimension meanwhile speaks to the myth’s manifestation in dramatic or even poetic forms of narration.

Finally, it is worth stressing that the concept of political myth is not limited exclusively to those narratives with political content. The myth can transmit a non-political message, but when it is inserted into a political context, or employed to fulfil a political function, it becomes a political myth. It is the latter condition which renders the myth of *antiquitas* in Macedonia a political myth. The story of ancient Macedonia and the longevity of its ethnos, as well as its subsequent mix with Slavic tribes, is not necessarily a political story but probably more of sociocultural interest. Yet in the current political context (especially in relation to the name dispute with Greece), this narrative does take on a political function: that is, to mobilize public emotion, opinion, and action. Our theoretical considerations above render the purpose and operation of the ethno-

37 Ibid., p. 7.

38 Ibid., p. 230–1.

39 Ibid., p. 243.

40 Ibid., p. 179–80.

centric myths of ancient origin and continuity in Macedonia a great deal more understandable. As we shall see, it is in the context of the current political situation that the narrative of the ancient past becomes 'relevant'.

In the following section we examine the supposed *function* of the *antiquitas* myth in the contemporary Republic of Macedonia. We connect sociopolitical developments with the 'turn' towards antiquity in primary and secondary school history textbooks. We show the double significance of the function of the *antiquitas* myth: firstly, its importance in relation to the self-perceived position of the Macedonian nation (understood in purely ethnic terms) in the overall 'order of nations', and especially in its relations with neighbouring countries, and the name dispute with Greece; and secondly, its use in the inter-ethnic dispute between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians over the character of the state and the political nation. This dispute has marked the contemporary history of Macedonia from the independence of the state to the present day. It is important to emphasize the complex interrelation of theoretically distinguishable aspects of the myth's function. Such interplay provides understandings of reality valid for a particular point in time, and a specific sociopolitical context.

The Justification Function: Making Use of the 'Ancient Origin' of the Nation in the Great 'Order of Nations'

Previously presented citations from the history textbooks that point to an ancient origin of the nation serve to show the greater value of the nation in the 'order of nations'. It must be made clear that in the Macedonian case the nation is understood in ethnic terms, as first and foremost a nation of exclusively ethnic Macedonians. The idea of a 'glorious' antique origin of the nation functions as a buffer against allegations of non-autochthony in a particular socio-political context (post-1991), in which the markers of Macedonian identity have been contested by politicians and intellectuals in the neighbouring countries; these include the name of the state in the context of relations with Greece, the distinctiveness of the Macedonian language and ethnicity in the context of relations with Bulgaria, and the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in the context of relations with Serbia. In this narrative the Macedonian nation is seen as morally superior to its neighbours, who 'falsely' attack the markers of Macedonian identity. The Macedonian nation is portrayed as older, more glorious, and thus with an absolute right to its present territory. The contemporary experience of a 'small' and 'weak' state is seen as a direct consequence of the attempt of neighbouring states to 'hijack' the glorious antique historical heritage of Macedonians.

This interpretation of the myth is lent weight by the contemporary state of relations between Macedonia and Greece. Since 1991, the governments of Greece and Macedonia have been involved in a political and diplomatic conflict centred around the right to the use of the name 'Macedonia', although the conflict has much wider implications. Both sides venture back into ancient times, to the age of Alexander the Great, in order to demonstrate their legitimate and 'rightful' ownership of the name. Or, more accurately stated in terms of elections and the legitimacy of political power, political parties attempt to obtain votes by presenting themselves as protectors of the Greek or Macedonian nation respectively. In this context, following Bottici, the myth of ancient origin provides ethnic Macedonians with a meaning for the conflict, a *significance* for their situation and values, and a call to action for the defence of an identity. Kolstø argues that:

No magician's trick can turn the South Slav into the autochthonous population of the area they now live in, unless they accept that they fused with the older groups. By seeing their nations as a mixture of old and new population segments they can extend their local roots by many centuries, if not millennia.⁴¹

Thus, through the myth of *antiquitas*, which projects modern Macedonians into classical times through the fusion of ancient Macedonians and Slavs, ethnic Macedonians feel more confident and morally secure in their current struggle for identity. The major economic and diplomatic blockades⁴² through which they have lived since the independence of the country thus make better sense to them.

The myth of the 'obvious' linear historical continuity between ancient and contemporary Macedonians, coupled with the myth of historical right over the territory, represent two prime arguments in the ongoing name dispute with Greece.⁴³ In this narrative, Macedonians have an absolute right to use the name 'Macedonia', firstly because they are descendants of ancient Macedonians, and secondly because they resided in the given territory for many centuries. Even though neither of the two arguments is valid in the context of international relations, they provide a satisfactory explanation to Macedonians of what exactly is wrong with Greece's position.

An important part of the Interim Accord signed by Macedonia and Greece in 1995 is Macedonia's obligation not to use symbols associated with the regimes

41 Kolstø, 'Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society', in *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Pal Kolstø (2005), p. 26. He rightly points out that this solution contradicts with the nationalist belief that national groups are eternal and unchanging, i. e. the same belief which rendered autochthony dependent upon ethnic mixture in the first place.

42 The economic blockade in 1994 and the blockade to NATO membership in 2008 being the most serious examples.

43 In a TV debate in June 2009 one of the main supporters and myth-makers, Pasko Kuzman, then a director of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, argued that 'we' must prove an ancient origin if 'we' don't want to lose our name.

known as ancient Macedonia (primarily the kingdom of Philip II and Alexander III the Great).⁴⁴ From 2006 the Macedonian government began to change its position on this issue and moved towards a policy of using ancient Macedonian symbols either openly or in 'disguised' form. The government re-named one of the country's highways and the airport in Skopje with the name 'Alexander the Great'. This met with instant objections and accusations of non-compliance with the Interim Accord in Greece. From 2010 the government initiated a large-scale project to re-build Skopje, the capital of the country, in which antique symbols and references were used even more openly. The main feature of the project is a 14.5 meter statue of Alexander the Great in the main square in Skopje with the cautious title 'The Warrior on the Horse'. Statues of Philip II and Alexander's mother Olympia also feature in the city centre, while new buildings used as administrative facilities and museums are built in neo-classical and baroque styles. Statues of other Macedonian national figures from Antiquity to contemporary times are also present as a part of the project, entitled 'Skopje 2014'.

The project has been highly controversial in Macedonia's public sphere since its unveiling to the public. However, it can be argued that such an open use of ancient symbols and references has fueled the national pride of ethnic Macedonians, since it is widely perceived that this was not allowed previously due to Greek objections. The myth of the ancient origin of the nation is particularly important in this regard, providing as it does a 'rationale' for the use of these symbols. It explains that the use of such symbols is the right of ethnic Macedonians, to which no one may object.

Competition over Historical Precedence: Contemporary yet Ancient Macedonians versus Contemporary yet Ancient Illyrians

The 'Skopje 2014' project touched on another sensitive issue in the Macedonian public sphere, important from the very first days of the independence of the state. The two largest ethnic groups have long disputed the principles on which the state and nation are built. This was best exemplified in the demands of ethnic Albanian politicians and intellectuals in the 1990s for a revision of the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution to include ethnic Albanians as a 'constitutive

44 Article 7, paragraph 3 of the Interim Accord states that 'If either Party believes one or more symbols constituting part of its historic or cultural patrimony is being used by the other Party, it shall bring such alleged use to the attention of the other Party, and the other Party shall take appropriate corrective action or indicate why it does not consider it necessary to do so'. <http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MK_950913_Interim%20Accord%20between%20the%20Hellenic%20Republic%20and%20the%20FYROM.pdf> [accessed 29 August 2014].

element' of the state. This issue was seemingly resolved after the conflict of 2001 when the Preamble was altered to include the 'shared constituency' of all communities residing in the Republic of Macedonia (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Romas, Serbs, Bosniaks, and Vlachs). Previously, the Constitution had identified the Macedonian ethnic group as a 'constitutive element', while 'full equality and co-existence' was guaranteed for the members of minority groups.⁴⁵

'Skopje 2014', first and foremost a project aimed at the promotion of the ideas of ancient origin and continuity of ethnic Macedonians, fueled ethnic Albanian resentments for at least two reasons. Firstly, the project obviously lacked representation of Albanian national figures. This yet again introduced the question of the place of ethnic Albanians in the political Macedonian nation. Secondly (and more importantly for our discussion here), the issue of the historical claim to the city was also re-examined. Irritated by the ethnic marking of a shared territory, some ethnic Albanian groups and organizations from Skopje have challenged this activity by invoking their own belief in their ancient Illyrian origin, and the historical right to the city that this might afford them. This phenomenon was most clearly observed during and after the archaeological excavations at the medieval and Ottoman fortress ('Kale') in the city centre. Many local Albanians suspected that the archaeologists, i. e. the state, were hiding or destroying any evidence of the Illyrian/Albanian character of the site, and thus their autochthony in the Skopje area. Some aspects of the activities of both sides seem absurd: the government's efforts to interpret new artifacts as Macedonian or as a sign of continuity at any cost (in the context of the 'name dispute'), as well as the Albanian paranoia that their 'historical precedence' in Skopje might be denied, for example. However, this situation serves to display the interdependence of and interrelation between historical myths in the region.

More importantly and troublingly, these events have led to inter-ethnic violence. In keeping with with the program for national 'renaissance', the government decided to build a church at the archaeological site mentioned above, located in a zone considered their own by both Macedonians and Albanians. The result, in February 2011, was a clash at this contested location between groups of young men who apparently felt that 'historical truths' could be settled through physical violence.⁴⁶ Two myths of *antiquitas* had been confronted. The aftermath of the event saw many minor ethnically motivated acts of violence throughout the city, which was but a snapshot of the wider ethnic urban violence there over

45 For a broader discussion on this issue see Jovan Bliznakovski, 'Symbolic Aspects of Nation-Building: The Story of Three Versions of the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution', *Political Thought* 44 (2013), *Ethnic Conflict. New Perspectives of the Old Reality*, 115–22.

46 Filip Stojanovski, 'Macedonia: Violent Inter-Ethnic Incident on Skopje Fortress', *Global Voices* (2011) <<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/02/15/macedonia-violent-inter-ethnic-incident-on-skopje-fortress/>> (accessed 29 August 2014).

the last several years. Younger generations live the myths fabricated by their parents' generation. Through nationalist and pseudo-historical ideas, a space can be created for politics, public discourse, and education to lead to violence.

In this way, it can be argued that some recent manifestations of the myth of the Illyrian origin of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia has been provoked by the resurgence of the myth of the ancient Macedonian origin of ethnic Macedonians. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that each myth feeds off its counterpart, and thereby gains more ground. At the heart of this process stands a quite common feature of nationalism: the dispute over which group has historical precedence over a given territory.

Recent European Analogies

The myths of *antiquitas* seen in Macedonian history textbooks have several analogies in contemporary Europe. In Romania, until recently, history textbooks emphasized the ancient origin of the contemporary Romanians by linking them with the Romans and the Dacians.⁴⁷ One 1998 textbook teaches that 'the Romanian people formed via the living together of the Dacians with the Roman colonists and the assimilation of the Latin language by the Dacians', while others from 1999 and 2003 even tried to establish similarities between the national costumes of the Dacians and Romanians. This situation changed in the years prior to the country's EU entry in 2007, although similar ideas were suggested more subtly as recently as in 2006.⁴⁸ In the region of Galicia, in north-western Spain, a 'Galician nation' was legitimized by means of a theory of Celtic roots, as opposed to Spanish Iberism, or of Germanic Suebian roots as opposed to the myth of Visigoth reign. These narratives were challenged and deconstructed by a new generation of local Galician historians, influenced mainly by the 'Annales school', at the very end of Franco's dictatorship.⁴⁹ A peculiar case in this context is Greece and the idea of direct descent from the ancient Greek city-states. It is probably the only myth of *antiquitas* in the EU left unchallenged, perhaps in part because Western European civilization itself traces its origins back to the rise of culture and philosophy in ancient Greece.

47 Anamaria Dutceac Segestan, *Myth, Identity and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Romanian and Serbian Textbooks* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2009), consulted at the library of the Georg Eckert Institute in Brunswick, Germany, pp. 252–5.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

49 Ramon Lopez Facal, 'Teaching history in Galicia', in *School and Nation: Identity Politics and Educational Media in an Age of Diversity*, ed. by Peter Carrier (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 74–5.

Whatever the differences and similarities between these myths, researchers have repeatedly highlighted their potentially dangerous role in any society. In a brief discussion of myths in Kosovo, Geary emphasizes the Serbian myth of the Battle for Kosovo (1389) and the Albanian myth of Illyrian descent. In both myths he recognizes the workings of a 'deadly logic' of the 'historical right' to a territory.⁵⁰ The same point is made by Kolstø in his reflection on *antiquitas* myths in general; he warns that they can be 'pernicious and politically destabilizing'.⁵¹

In this context, the mixed teams of ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians responsible for writing textbooks propose to their students myths of *antiquitas*, introducing them to a 'we were here first' mentality that insists that this place is 'ours', and that the Other is an unwanted visitor. Historical facts may be forgotten later in life, but the values transmitted through history education remain.

Conclusion

The myth of *antiquitas* has been explicitly present in Macedonian history textbooks for over a decade. The narrative is constructed with the use of hypotheses and presumptions that are unsupported by scholarship in late ancient and early medieval history and archaeology, as well as identity theory. While it has hitherto received relatively little attention in textbooks (a single unit), its message is quite clear. The narrative style and the didactic section play an important part in the presentation of the narrative. How such portrayals first entered textbooks is another line of inquiry, rendered complex because textbook writing in the region was and is conditioned not only by political context, but also by personal interests and connections as well as by different personal interpretations of history. Which of these factors, if any, played a part in the introduction of the *antiquitas* myth into Macedonian history textbooks some ten years ago is a question yet to be answered.

The particular form in which the myth of *antiquitas* has been presented in the last decade is considerably more explicit than the treatment of ancient history in textbooks from the 1990s. We consider it a new stage in its functioning, and an illustration of 'work on myth', rendering it worthy of increased academic attention.

Current theories of the functioning of political/historical myths provide a relevant framework for a general understanding of the myths of *antiquitas*

50 Geary, *Myth of Nations* (2002), p. 7.

51 Kolstø, 'Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society', in *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Kolstø (2005), p. 10.

among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia; we follow for the most part Bottici and Kolstø.

The myth presented in the textbooks is in keeping with a set of ethnocentric policies focused on antiquity, identity and ‘historical rights’, exemplified in the ‘Skopje 2014’ project, the large-scale archaeological excavations subject to political (mis)interpretation and the campaign of renaming places, streets and objects in an ‘ancient’ style. These endeavours are part of a policy to re-brand the nation and (re-)invent tradition.

The main purpose of the *antiquitas* myth in Macedonia, we believe, is twofold: to provide significance and to mobilize for action. In the context of the ongoing name dispute with neighbouring Greece, the myth renders the complex problem of having to defend one’s own identity in the democratic Europe of the twenty-first century understandable and bearable. It provides significance and even a feeling of moral superiority to those ethnic Macedonians who feel that their identity is endangered. At the same time, for both ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, it renders justifiable their desire to separate themselves from their respective Other, and to mark (even through aggression) as an exclusive historical territory something which is in reality a shared space. Through the idea of the ‘historical right’ to a territory that they promote, *antiquitas* myths have played a role in a number of violent events in Skopje. This of course does not mean that one or two school lessons on ancient origin and continuity have led directly or indirectly to any particular violent event in the last few years. However such lessons do contribute to the same symbolic ‘mythologized’ discourse and mindset manifested in ethnocentric ‘anticomania’ and the struggle for ‘historical territories’.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Adževski, K., D. Petreska, V. Ačkoska, N. Dimoski, and V. Gjorgiev, *Istorija za petto oddelenie* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2005).
- Boškovski, M., N. Derviši, S. Nedžiri, D. Madžovski, and S. Nikolovski, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanje* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2009).
- Boškovski, M., J. Ilioski, and N. Derviši, *Istorija za sesto oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2010).
- Naneski, N., and B. Memeti, *Istorija za VI oddelenie* (Zvezda: Skopje, 2006).
- Ristovski, B., S. Rahimi, S. Mladenovski, T. Chepreganov, and M.B. Panov, *Istorija za prva godina gimnazisko obrazovanje* (Skopje: Albi, 2006).

References

- Bliznakovski, Jovan, 'Symbolic Aspects of Nation-Building: The Story of Three Versions of the Preamble of the Macedonian Constitution', *Political Thought*, 44 (2013): 115–22.
- Blumenberg, Hans, *Arbeit am Mythos* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979).
- Bosković, Aleksandar, Darko Gavrilović, and Vjekoslav Perica, 'Myths, Political Mythologies and Nationalism', in *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States. A Shared Narrative*, ed. by Darko Gavrilović and Vjekoslav Perica (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011), pp. 13–20.
- Bottici, Chiara, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Bowden, W., 'The Construction of Identities in Post-Roman Albania', in *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology*, ed. by L. Lavan and W. Bowden (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 57–77.
- Brubaker, Rogers, 'Ethnicity without Groups', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 43 (2) (2002), 163–89.
- Brunnbauer, Ulf, 'Historiography, Myths and the Nation in the Republic of Macedonia', in *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. by Ulf Brunnbauer (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2004), pp. 165–200.
- Facal, Ramon Lopez, 'Teaching history in Galicia', in *School and Nation. Identity Politics and Educational Media in an Age of Diversity*, ed. by Peter Carrier (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013), pp. 70–9.
- Geary, Patrick J., *The Myth of Nations. The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Gruen, Erich, 'Did Ancient Identity Depend on Ethnicity? A Preliminary Probe', *Phoenix*, 67 (1–2) (2013), 1–22.
- Hasimbegović, Elma and Darko Gavrilović, 'Ethnogenesis Myths', in *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and Successor States. A Shared Narrative*, ed. by Darko Gavrilović and Vjekoslav Perica (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011), pp. 21–34.
- Ifversen, Jan, 'Myth in the Writing of European History', in *Nationalizing the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), pp. 452–79.
- Interim Accord*, No. 32193, between Greece and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (signed in New York, 13 September 1995) <http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MK_950913_Interim%20Accord%20between%20the%20Hellenic%20Republic%20and%20the%20FYROM.pdf> [accessed 26 September 2016].
- Karlsson, Klas-Göran, 'Public uses of history in contemporary Europe', in *Contemporary History on Trial: Europe since 1989 and the Role of the Expert Historian*, ed. by Harriet Jones, Kjell Osberg and Nico Randerad (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 27–45.
- Kolstø, Pal, 'Assessing the Role of Historical Myths in Modern Society' in *Myths and Boundaries in Southeastern Europe*, ed. By Pal Kolstø (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers, 2005), pp. 1–34.
- Lomonosov, Matvey, *National Myths in Interdependence: The Narratives of Ancient Past among Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia after 1991* (un-

- published master's thesis, Central European University in Budapest, 2012) <www.etd.ceu.hu/2012/lomonosov_matvey.pdf> [accessed 29 April 2015].
- Pichler, Robert, 'Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia (1991–2008)', in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in South-east Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), pp. 217–49.
- Proeva, Nade, 'Savremeni makedonski mit kao odgovor na nacionalne mitove suseda: albanski panilirizam, bugarski pantrakizam i grcki panhelenizam', *Zgodovinski Časopis*, 64 (1–2) (2010), 176–219.
- Schmitt, Oliver J., 'Mysians, Macedonians, Dardanians': Some Remarks on Late Medieval Ethnonyms in the Central Balkans', in *Makedonskiot identitet niz istorijata* (Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 2010), pp. 73–8.
- Scott, Roger, 'The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography', in *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Margaret Mullet and Roger Scott (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1979, 1981), pp. 61–74.
- Segestan, Anamaria Dutceac, *Myth, Identity and Conflict: A Comparative Analysis of Romanian and Serbian Textbooks*, Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2009 (consulted at the library of the Georg Eckert Institute in Brunswick, Germany).
- Stojanov, Darko, 'In Search of Autochthony: A Case Study of the Great Migration Period in History Textbooks in Macedonia', *Der Donauraum* 50 (3–4) (2010): *Cultural Changes in Central and South East Europe after 1989*, 225–34.
- Stojanovski, Filip, 'Macedonia: Violent Inter-Ethnic Incident on Skopje Fortress' (15 February 2011) <<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/02/15/macedonia-violent-inter-ethnic-incident-on-skopje-fortress/>> [accessed 26 September 2016].
- Vouri, Sofia, 'Antiquity as Source of National Documentation in Balkan History Textbooks (1991–1996)', in (eds), *The Image of the 'Other'/Neighbour in the School Textbooks of the Balkan Countries* ed. by Panos D. Kochellis and Fontini I. Toloudi (Proceedings of the International Conference, Thessaloniki, 16–18 October 1998: Thessaloniki-Athens, 2001), pp. 75–90.

Fabio Bego

The Vlora Conflict from a Trans-Adriatic Perspective: History, Myth and Ideology

Introduction

This chapter aims to explain why the Vlora conflict of 1920, between Italians and Albanians, is subject to different interpretations and representations in Italian and Albanian textbooks. My answer forms an analysis of mythologies that have conditioned the development of historiographies on both sides of the Adriatic Sea. Myths generate collective identity, determine the establishment of the institutional orders, and legitimize the political system that governs them. By observing the representation of events in different sources such as monographs, encyclopedias, and newspapers, it is possible to pinpoint the relation between the representation of the conflict and incipient ideological myths that define the contexts in which historiographies are developed. History textbooks are mere products of a certain historiography, but seem even more sensitive to ideological constraints since they aim to provide future citizens with a narrow concept of collective identity. To understand how textbooks transpose mythicized narratives, we must examine how history and myth merge together in our modern historiographies. The theoretical perspectives that I employ in this analysis are borrowed from anthropologists, historians, and philosophers; however I will not provide a full chronological account of the development of this debate. Instead I will briefly discuss current critiques concerning the function of myth in nation states.

The Mythical Imperative: How History becomes Myth and how Myth becomes Reality

Roland Barthes observes that ‘there are formal limits to myths, there are no *substantial* ones’¹. I agree, but in order to answer the questions raised so far I must begin with a working formal definition of myth. One possibility is the etymological sense of the word: ‘story’ or ‘legend’. However Mircea Eliade distinguishes myths from ordinary fiction as they contain a sacred history of ‘the imaginary time of the *origins*’.² Many historians implicitly accept this definition, and use ‘myth’ to refer to a fantastic story that religious or political propaganda presents as an undisputable truth. Most modernist critiques of the nation state and ethnic identity involve demystifying the mythical conceptions of the past that affect all national historiographies.³ Antony D. Smith, however, states that the mythical roots of nationalism are older than modernists would claim. He believes that identity is transmitted over generations through elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition.⁴

The concept of social order in both so called pre-modern societies and modern nation states is founded on myth. In his studies of Melanesian culture, Broinslaw Malinowski comes to affirm that myth is not ‘merely a story told but a reality lived’:

[...] a living reality believed to have once happened in primeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. The myth is to the savage what, to a fully believing Christian, is the Biblical story of Creation, of the Fall, of the Redemption by Christ’s Sacrifice on the Cross. As our sacred story lives in our ritual, in our morality, as it governs our faith and controls our conducts, even so does his myth for the savage⁵.

Smith and Malinowski suggest that myths have a strong and long-lasting pedagogical function for the whole of society. They forge collective identity by offering insight into matters that might otherwise remain mysterious, such as the ancient origins of humanity, the meaning or purpose of life, ethics, the nature of

1 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Noonday, New York, 1991), p. 107.

2 See Mircea Eliade, *Mito e Realtà* (Borla, Roma, 1985) p. 28.

3 I refer especially to the works of Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Program, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ernest Gellner, *Nation and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

4 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memoires of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 9.

5 Broinslaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), p. 78.

the divine, and so on. Myths, by assuming a narrative form, perpetuate the memory of the moment when a cosmological order was founded. Nonetheless, a myth also establishes an ideal pattern of behavior that members of a society should follow in any practical situation. It does not simply define the conception of the past, but dictates behavioural norms for everyday life. This conditioning power that myth exerts over the conception of the past, and its normative force in everyday life I call the mythical imperative.

In order to understand how the mythical imperative structures perceptions and interpretations of the Vlora Conflict the notion of 'sacred history' needs to be questioned. Malinowski compares biblical stories with Melanesian myths, affirming that both affect present-day attitudes and practice. Is there however any history that does not have this 'sacred' quality? Let us leave aside for the moment conventional sacred histories that belong specifically to religions, and look to sacred histories in modern philosophy. The Idea of history as a coherent and natural process, subject to some divine design that lies beyond the realm of human comprehension, can be traced in the work of jurist and philosopher Gianbattista Vico.⁶ At the close of the eighteenth century similar assumptions are found in Herder, who saw a 'God in history' just as there was one to be found in natural phenomena, since man too was part of creation and thus subject to the same natural laws.⁷ The definitive consecration of history as divine will was Hegel's. He affirmed that 'God governs the world; the actual working of his government – the carrying out of his plan – is the history of the world'.⁸

According to Ernest Cassirer, myth overtook reason when romantic thought replaced the rationalistic approach of the Enlightenment age even in social and political life. The Romantics, attracted by the sense of unity that was considered a distinctive feature of the Middle Ages, showed a great interest in history and folklore. They identified mythical roots in all histories. Mythicized history became not only a source, but the 'very origin of right'.⁹ Cassirer states that 'the idealization and spiritualization of the past is one of the most distinctive characteristics of romantic thought. Everything becomes understandable, justifiable, and legitimate as soon as we can trace it back to its origin'.¹⁰

This 'idealization and spiritualization of the past', became at the beginning of the nineteenth century a policy deployed in the education of the progressively

6 See Gianbattista Vico, *The First New Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 66.

7 My translation from Johann Gottfried Herder, *Idee per la Storia dell'Umanità* (Laterza: Bari 1992), p. 286.

8 Georg Wilhelm Friederich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001), p. 62.

9 Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 182.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

growing masses. In 1807 Fichte called history teaching the greatest tool for building a national character.¹¹ In his ideal image, a national history book was to accompany the people as a 'Bible or as a hymn [...], until the day we in turn accomplished something worthy of being recorded'.¹² This message was directed at the German nation at the time when the Napoleonic wars disrupted social order all over the continent, threatening traditional forms of collective identification. In Fichte's mind myth clearly became reality. Historical knowledge provides a collective identity, and contains an explicitly imperative character. History-writing and history-making are complementary parts of a teleological approach not only to knowledge but also to practice.

The ideologies that developed in the course of the nineteenth century claimed legitimacy on the basis of historical arguments. Pioneers of nationalist, socialist and racist thought produced distinctive versions of history, each with the aim of proving scientifically the existence of particular collective identities. Accordingly, various collective identities developed independently, simultaneously, and/or in opposition to one another. Marx, Engels, and their followers read history as a circle of class struggles. Giuseppe Mazzini, whose thought had a profound impact on the development of national emancipation movements throughout Europe and inspired the Adriatic foreign policy of Italy, saw in history the natural process of emancipation of all people. De Gobineau believed that racial divisions were marked by physical and cultural factors, and that race determined the evolution of history. As with the myths of Melanesians studied by Malinowski categories of 'class', 'people', or 'race' were living realities that transcended historical periodization. The peculiar social and economic conditions of the nineteenth century created the basis for actual political action from groups who proclaimed their collective identities. Because they were presumably carrying the same collective identity, they were to move forward the realization of the prophetic vision entailed by their historical development. This first thrust toward social (re)fragmentation reached its zenith in the twentieth century. Clashes between opposing *living realities*, such as those of nationalists of different contexts, enthusiasts of imperialistic adventures, and socialists, were inevitable, because these conceptions of an ideal world were simply antithetic. History became a science useful for galvanizing the engagement in conflict of intellectuals and soldiers, while the development of physics provided new deadly weapons for the battlefields. This fracture also affected education systems.

The mythical imperative, that is the power of myth to intercede in the real world, causes two complementary processes that are both equally necessary for

11 Johann Gottlieb Fichte (with an introduction and notes by Gregory Moore), *Addresses to the German Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 19.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 83.

(a) the affirmation of myth as reality and (b) its transformation into historiography. The dynamics of the first process have been observed by Marshall Sahlins in Polynesian cultures where ‘myth is used to found actual action that will be recorded as a historical event’.¹³ In a further study Sahlins employed the term ‘mytho-praxis’ to indicate the arbitrary enactment of history as the fulfillment or the reiteration of the mythical narrative that characterized Maori society.¹⁴ As I will argue below, the Italian ambition to control the Adriatic on the grounds of their mythical, self-ascribed role as an agent of civilization was in flagrant contradiction with the Albanian will for self-determination, which in turn employed myths of national unity and autonomy. The second process regards the mythologization of events that has largely influenced Albanian and Italian historiographies concerning the Vlora conflict. By mythologization I mean the extraction of a fact, a linguistic unit, or an object from its context of signification in order, perhaps unconsciously, to lend scientific credibility or political legitimacy to an ideological discourse. This process is what Roland Barthes defines as a language robbery that transforms meaning into form.¹⁵ Ideology- and practice-driven representations of events are achieved by choosing elements convenient to the adaptation of myths to practical use. Anthropologist Jonathan Friedman observes that ‘the discourse of history as well as of myth is simultaneously a discourse of identity; it consists of attributing a meaningful past to a structured present.’¹⁶ The events to which historiographies refer do not satisfy merely ‘scientific’ purposes; rather, events must highlight determinate cultural features or social patterns that prove the existence of a certain institution or collective identity through time. By proving their existence, such entities claim authority over the surrounding political environment as they purport to establish legitimacy on both historical and natural legal grounds.

National Historiography and Textbooks

Textbooks are an engine of the mythical imperative, akin to the ‘Bible’ that Fichte had in mind; they inherit all their qualities from the prevailing historiography of which they are just one element. Seldom does ideology drive historiography accidentally, and even more seldom does an institutional order allow the cir-

13 Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), p. 11.

14 Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Bristol: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 54–72.

15 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 131.

16 Jonathan Friedman, *Myth, History and Political Identity*, in Kajza Ekholm Friedman and Jonathan Friedman, *Modernities, Class, and the Contradictions of Globalization* (Plymouth: Altamira Press, 2008), p. 89.

culuation of textbooks that openly defy its ideological traits. Socialist Albania scholar Hamit Beqja, commenting on the 1946 decision of the Albanian government to shut down schools owned by religious institutions, observed that

it is absurd for an educational institution directed by a socialist state to accept and perhaps even tolerate or legalize the official *coexistence*¹⁷ of the socialist ideology with religion, which at their root are the one against the another.¹⁸

Philosophical idealism has likewise had a great impact on schoolbooks in Italy and Albania, a free and conscious decision on the part of prominent intellectuals. Antagonistic personalities such as Antonio Gramsci and Giovanni Gentile shared a similar functional conception of education whereby school was to provide knowledge not merely of history, but also of one's function within the historical process of which they were a part. Gentile claimed that the goal of education was the realization of the spirit,¹⁹ whereas for Gramsci the objective was rather the promotion of class awareness and the subsequent conquest of hegemony.²⁰ From Gentile's work²¹ it is possible to infer the logic beneath the manuals devised by national historiographies in modern nation-states. For idealist thought, educational historiography cannot be disengaged from its context as 'the subject does not appear as the creator of his own object'²². Nonetheless:

Historical truth, when we presume to have known it, braces our intellect with the same energy of the mathematical truth, and the facts [...], impose respect, require worship, fill the soul with a sacred feeling of insubordination not inferior to that stimulated by the concept of a mysterious nature in the pure naturalist and by a supernatural God in the strict religious spirit.²³

He then explains that this concept of historical truth cannot be interiorized as such by the subject unless it is presented in the precise manner that allows it to be objectified. Teaching in fact 'does not accomplish *history* proper, [...] but tra-

17 This word is placed in inverted commas in the original text.

18 Hamit Beqja, *Lufta për Shkollën Socialiste Ateiste Shqiptare* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1984), p. 44.

19 Giovanni Gentile, *Sommario di Pedagogia Come Scienza Filosofica: II, Didattica*, G.C. (Firenze: Sansoni, 1913) [1955], p. 66.

20 Angelo Broccoli, *Antonio Gramsci e l'Educazione come Egemonia* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1972), pp. 149–165.

21 He was the minister of education in the fascist government of Italy between 1922 and 1924, and devised and promoted a major school reform in 1923 that, among other things, introduced the norm that each text adopted for school use was to be sanctioned by a board. This was to ensure that they adhered to the principles and values of the Fascist Revolution. Sergio Romano, *Giovanni Gentile* (Milano: Bompiani, 1984), pp.165–181 and 202–210.

22 Giovanni Gentile, *Sommario di Pedagogia Come Scienza Filosofica: II Didattica*, p. 184; my translation.

23 *Ibid.* pp. 184–185.

dition, which is history as pure objectivity'.²⁴ For Gentile is aware that what he calls tradition is only a part of history, which is in turn critical of that tradition – a process during which the subject reinstates his freedom. From the point of view of criticism, however, he emphasizes that 'tradition must first be absorbed and this represents the religious element of history; that in which the subject does not give, stays passive, limited and does not determine himself in his own infinity'.²⁵ While Gentile's speech is often obscure and hard to decipher, here he is doubtlessly stating that historiography devised for textbooks cannot avoid being dogmatic. For both the subjects of history and religion alike, the learner must surrender to the fact that not all notions are questionable. The opinion expressed by the Italian philosopher concerns not only Italian textbooks but can be extended to all national historiographies and related textbooks produced until now. In a further passage Gentile explains what he means by the term 'tradition':

in its common meaning [...] the force and the fundament of any progress, the centre where hinges each real movement of man and society, the same tangible and full reality of the spirit, that in the tradition attains his own self as self-consciousness, real only because it explains *per se* the consciousness of the object that he has become. Whereby we are sons of our fathers, born in Italy and risen again to a new life, constituted to unity and to the political freedom of an autonomous nation thanks to the reawakening of energies made possible by the conquests of the Third State with the French Revolution, prepared in the long term by the internal dissolution of feudalism and of the thought that justified that system in which European society found settlement after the fall of the Roman Empire and the decline of the creativity of Greek thought. We cannot understand ourselves [...] and really be who we are if we do not become aware of all this, of how it extends into the past, real only because we restore it in us; [...] For the French Revolution and the Italian *Risorgimento*, and the instauration of feudalism, and for the fall of the Roman Empire there is no God, for however almighty He may be, he cannot make them cease to be because they already are. This is an observed and almost radiant form of tradition, as the unfailing essence of our real personality.²⁶

This quotation contains an archetypal scheme of the teleological narrative characterizing history manuals for schoolbooks, universities and other knowledge divulging agencies in all so-called national historiographies. The main concern of this type of historiography is that of identity (to know who we are), an awareness that is gained or perhaps determined by the continuity of the historical processes that link the different 'generations', so to speak, of individuals. It seems that students are pushed to embrace an identity, if for no other reason then in order to honor the martyrdom of those who preceded them. The perpetuation of memory in this case seems to stimulate the inner individual and

24 Ibid. p. 185.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid, pp. 186–187; my translation.

collective psychology of guilt and responsibility which I consider reminiscent of the individual and collective emotional response inspired by the Christian liturgy of the Passion. The problem, however, springs from the fact that the objectivity to which Gentile's conception aspires is limited by the subjectivity of each and every national entity or agent of collective identity that uses the same logic to nurture its own tradition.

Enver Hoxha had a similar conception of history teaching. In 1965, not long after the break in relations with the Soviet Union, he read a document in a meeting of the political bureau of the Albanian Party of Work with the title 'Our School is Political and Ideological'. Hoxha repeatedly asserted that the school is not apolitical and must provide students with ideological and political instruction.²⁷ Accordingly, all subjects taught in school had their own ideology and politics. He affirmed that the social sciences and history were those in particular need of revision. He called for the removal of all notions taken from Soviet and bourgeois texts. History in high school and university textbooks was to serve the needs of the ideological framework of the party. For example, he noted in the context of teaching about the Roman Empire, it was necessary to talk about the rebellion of the slaves in order for students to understand the class struggles which were 'the red wire of all the historical materialism'. In dealing with conflicts and wars, the social contrasts were to be emphasized. 'There must be boys and girls who do not know what classes, the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, the class struggle are [...]?', wondered Hoxha. Each epoch was to be illustrated by works of different philosophers and historians. Such works were to be chosen that better enhanced the ideological and political education Hoxha had in mind. He went so far as to suggest that textbooks were also to cite diametrical views in order to be shrewdly demolished by Marxist critique, with the objective that the student understand the materialist development of history.

In Italy and Albania, history textbooks are written by historians who reflect their political inclinations in the pages of their work. In socialist Albania, the national communist ideology constituted the only lens through which historians could render events perceptible to students. This clearly emerges in the case of the Vlora conflict. Nowadays, Albanian historiography has been thoroughly (but not wholly) cleansed of most of its formerly flagrant socialist rhetoric. However, the teleological approach to history writing that Gentile has termed 'tradition' still survives in textbooks and other materials for dissemination. Albanian history has been canonized by works carried through the decades by authoritative academic institutions such as the University of Tirana and the National

27 Here and the following quotes: Enver Hoxha, *Shkolla Jonë Është Politike dhe Ideologjike (Diskutim në mbledhjen e Byroës Politike të KQ të PPSH)* in *Vepra* 29 (Tiranë: Instituti I Studimeve marksiste – Leniniste Pranë KQ të PPSH, 1979), pp. 165–169.

Academy of Science. Every history book produced under the auspices of these institutions may be referred to as 'official historiography'.

In contemporary Italy there is not one 'official historiography'; however, its most authoritative historians and textbooks for different levels of education certainly demonstrate ideological constraints to a certain extent. Alberto de Bernardi affirms that intellectual and political elites deliberately decide to recreate a narrative that canonizes the past in order to justify and make sense of the present.²⁸ Soon after the unification of the country, national historiography was conceived as the 'biography of the nation'. De Bernardi, himself a textbook author, recognizes that ideology has at a later stage also played a major role in defining the perspective and the narrative of the textbooks. However he does not challenge the influence of ideology on textbooks as a problem; rather, he demonstrates that the only effective critique of excessive nationalistic drifts imposed over the ages came from new textbooks written by authors who were inspired by diametrically different ideas.²⁹

In both Italy and Albania, history writing and teaching endure the yoke of politics. Socialist Albania scholar Hamit Beqja affirms that 'school outside of politics is a demagogy, and a refined lie of the bourgeoisie'.³⁰ Empirical evidence taken from the textbooks to be discussed below further confirms this notion.

Mytho – Praxis, or the Vlora Conflict

After the armistice of November 1918, Italian troops in Albania waited for the Paris Peace Conference to decide the fate of the country. Unfortunately for both Albanians and Italians, the peace delegations gathered in Paris were unable to fulfill the task, probably because, as Ivo Lederer notes, few delegations possessed the experience and the talent the challenge required.³¹ Tensions among locals and occupants gradually developed into open hostility as Italian diplomacy proved detrimental to Albanian integrity and independence. Armed conflict broke out in the night of 5 June 1920, after a year and a half of fruitless diplomatic discussions which frustrated public opinion in both Italy and Albania. Albanians

28 Alberto De Bernardi, *Il Canone della Storia Contemporanea nei Manuali Scolastici dall'Unità alla Repubblica*, in *La storia contemporanea tra scuola e università. Manuali, programmi, docenti*, G. Bosco – C. Mantovani (a cura di), (Rubettino: Soveria Mannelli, 2004), pp. 19–37; the quotations given here are taken from the pdf available on sissco.it, pp. 1–2.

29 *Ibid.* pp. 13–18.

30 Hamit Beqja, *Problemi i Edukates Socialiste dhe Shkolla II* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1981), p. 257.

31 See Ivo J. Lederer, *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: A Study in Frontiermaking* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 84.

from the south attacked the remnants of the Italian contingent, which was drastically reduced after the general demobilization ordered by the Nitti government.³² In the first days of fighting, Albanians overtook the Italian army with unexpected rapidity. The latter was forced to hold position inside the *campo trincerato di Valona* (entrenched field of Vlora). Combat formally ended on 2 August, when representatives of both governments signed the Tirana agreement which, primarily, delivered Vlora to Albanian sovereignty and Sazan to Italy as a military base for the control of the Adriatic.³³

From the disengaged historical perspective that I adopted in the last paragraph, one might have the impression that the Vlora conflict seems to have had no mythical roots but only contingent causes that led two parties to fight against each other. But if we investigate the reasons why the Italians believed themselves to be in a legitimate position to claim a piece of the Albanian coast, suddenly we

32 See Giorgio Rochat, *L'Esercito Italiano da Vittorio Veneto a Mussolini (1919–1925)* (Laterza: Bari, 1967); the author reports some figures concerning the Italian presence in Albania between March 1920 and the 3 June 1920, which decreased from 33,000 to 15,000 troops (see pp. 170–181); According to another source, by mid-June, Italian troops in Vlora amounted to some 7000 men. See Vincenzo Gallinari, *L'Esercito Italiano nel Primo dopoguerra 1918–1920* (Roma: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1980), p. 177.

33 For a detailed and objective historical account of military operations, see Mario Montanari (ed.), *Le Truppe Italiane in Albania 1914–1920* (Roma: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1978); Vincenzo Gallinari, *L'Esercito Italiano nel Primo dopoguerra 1918–1920* (Roma: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1980). For a broader view of history concerning the social and political relations of Italy and Albania see Massimo Borgogni, *Trà continuità e incertezza. Italia e Albania 1914–1939* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007). Older but still valuable works on Albanian–Italian relations that specifically treat the Vlora conflict include Paolo Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e La Questione Adriatica* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1976) and Pietro Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella Politica Estera Italiana* (Napoli: Editore Jovine, 1970). The Albanian perspective on the Vlora conflict has been thoroughly developed from different angles by Muin Çami. For the elaboration in hand I relied on Muin Çami (ed.), *Kongresi i Lushnjes dhe Lufta e Vlores* (Tirana: Akademi e Shkencave e RPSH, 1974); Muin Çami, *Lufta e popullit shqiptar për çlirim kombëtar (permbledhje dokumentash)* (Tiranë: Instituti i historisë dhe i Gjuhës, 1976); Muin Çami, *Shqipëria në Rrjedhat e Historisë 1912–1934* (Tiranë: Onufri, 2007). Other detailed accounts of the events are found in Stefanaq Pollo (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë III* (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave e RPSH të Shqipërisë, 1984); Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939* (Tiranë: Toena, 2009). Outside Italy and Albania, the Vlora conflict seems to have lost the interest of scholars. The sole exception is an article by Bernd J. Fischer, 'Perceptions and Reality in Twentieth-Century Albanian Military Prowess' in *Albanian Identities, Myth and History* edited by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). A leading contribution to the issue remains the valuable – if now a little dated – work of Joseph Swire, *Albania: Rise of a Kingdom* (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd., 1929); a basic chronology of events is reported in Owen Pearson, *Albania and King Zog* (London: IB Tauris, 2004); recent research on Albanian history and politics around 1920 generally neglect the Vlora conflict (see Robert C. Austin, *Founding a Balkan State: Albania's experiment with democracy 1920–1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); and Nicola Guy, *The Birth of Albania: Ethnic Nationalism, The Great Powers of World War I and the Emergence of Albanian Independence* (London: Tauris, 2012).

are confronted by arguments that defy logical or contingent explanations. Instead, Albanian reactions to the Italian occupation unravelled as a strong emotional response to the fear of being disposed and humiliated on their own territory. Speeches and appeals, memorandums, and peculiar events that involved or impressed the public, were largely conceived and expressed in a symbolic form which recalled the mythical conceptions of collective identity such as origin, unity, freedom, kin and foe. By focusing on the mythical causes of the conflict I do not intend to minimize the economical and political regional causes; rather, it is my aim to highlight how myths are deployed from the ideologies that stand behind organizations or institutions which govern passively or actively the activities of the agents involved in the conflict.

Italy as the Natural Civilizing Agent of Albania

Italian expansionist policy in the Mediterranean and specifically in the Adriatic was justified as the natural continuation of the civilizing mission of ancient Rome and Venice.³⁴ Italy entered the war joining the Entente by the (secret) Treaty of London of 26 April 1915, which guaranteed her possession of Vlora and a prime position in the negotiation of Albanian affairs. The clauses of that document also laid open the possibility for repartitioning the Albanian territory in the north and south between Serbia, Montenegro and Greece if deemed useful.³⁵

On 3 June 1917, the commander of Italian troops in Albania, General Giacinto Ferrero, made a public declaration in Gjirokastrë promising to Albania, on behalf of the Italian Kingdom, full support for national independence and integrity. The declaration contradicted the Treaty of London, and later Italian historiography remarked that it had been a bluff conceived in order to secure Albanian support.³⁶ Bluff or not, the words used by the General envisioned a past when Italy and Albania were naturally bound in alliance. The speech deserves at least partial citation as it shows how political discourse exploited the myth of 'civilization' in order to gain Albanian sympathies by feeding their desire for liberty and self-esteem:

34 See Aldo Mola, *L'imperialismo Italiano, La Politica Estera dall'Unità al Fascismo*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1980, p. 129.

35 *Trattati e Convenzioni fra il Regno d'Italia e gli Altri Stati, Volume 23*, Tipografie del Regio Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma 1930, pp. 287–288.

36 Military historian Mario Montanari, as others have argued, affirms that the Italian *Proclama* was an emulation of the constitution of the autonomous republic of Korça in late 1916 by the French and to the institution of an autonomous Albanian protectorate in Shkodër by Austria–Hungary at the beginning of 1917. The Italian declaration went further since it promised full independence. See Mario Montanari (ed.), *Le Truppe Italiane in Albania 1914–1920*, cit., p. 110.

To all the Albanian people. Today, 3 June 1917, delightful celebration of Italian statutory freedoms, [...] Albanians, wherever you might be, [...] you who are of an ancient and noble progeny who have old memories and traditions that rejoin you to the Roman and Venetian civilizations; you who are aware of the common Italian–Albanian interests in the sea that separates but at the same time joins us: All you men of goodwill unite the destinies of your beloved country [...] for an independent Albania, with the friendship and the protection of Italy.³⁷

The bluff was never called. Soon after the end of the First World War, Italy demanded the possession of Vlora and the creation of a protectorate in the rest of Albania.³⁸ Italian opinions were then radically changed toward Albanians. The latter suddenly appeared as a ‘primitive people’³⁹ who would certainly benefit from Italian assistance and protection in order to build a modern state.⁴⁰ Even a few months before the attacks on Vlora, plans were being discussed for moving Italian peasants from the region of Emilia in Albania with the double purpose of easing the demographic weight in Italy and ‘bringing civilization to the barbarians’.⁴¹

Indeed, the myth of Italy as an ‘agent of civilization’ did materialize in Albania. Once settled in Vlora in 1914, the Italians made improvements to the urban infrastructure and connections with the hinterland. These constructions were then exploited by the nationalist press, who emphasized the benefits of the Italian occupation of Albania and their right to stay. Benito Mussolini in the pages of *Il Popolo d’Italia* repeatedly pointed to the ‘roads, the bridges, the houses, the hospitals’ that the Italians had built during their ‘peaceful occupation’, which were then to be bitterly left behind.⁴² This sentiment was transferred to the Italian historiography that developed during the *ventennio*⁴³ and incredibly survives in recent treatments of the topic.⁴⁴ The most emblematic example of this propaganda is perhaps a chapter from an Italian fifth-grade textbook of 1940. The chapter is titled ‘The crown of Albania to Vittorio Emanuele III’ and explains why Albanians democratically decided to join their destinies with Italy under the same crown. Next to the paragraph we find an illustration of

37 Amedeo Giannini, *L’Albania dall’Indipendenza all’Unione con L’Italia (1913–1939)* (Roma: Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1940), pp. 39–40; my translation.

38 Adriaticus, *Da Trieste a Valona* (Milano: Alfieri Lacroix, 1918), pp. 90–91.

39 *Ibid.* p. 76.

40 *Ibid.* p. 78.

41 Giulio Tozzi, *L’Albania e il Suo Incerto Destino* (Milano: Treves, 1920), p. 29 (discourse pronounced in a public conference at the *Accademia Olimpica* of Science, Literature and Art in Vicenza in March 1920).

42 See Benito Mussolini in ‘Via da Valona? No’; ‘Restare a Valona’ and ‘Addio Valona’ in *Il Popolo d’Italia*, 11 June, p. 1; 13 June, p. 1; and 5 August, p. 1, 1920.

43 See Antonio Baldacci, *L’Albania* (Roma Istituto per L’Europa Orientale, 1929), p. 364; Filippo Tajani, *L’Avvenire dell’Albania* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1932), p. 33.

44 Massimo Borgogni, *Tra continuità e incertezza: Italia e Albania 1914–1939*, p. 68.

an Albanian in a traditional *gegë* costume posing in the Roman salute. The writing is closely reminiscent of the Ferrero 1917 declaration, but emphasizes Italian support for the Albanian state:

The ancient Albanian people, proud warriors, had always befriended fascist Italy. Our government sent millions in order to help in every way. Construction of roads, airports, schools, hospitals, plumbing, industrial areas – all this was made possible in Albania with Italian support.⁴⁵

The socialist newspapers, until now perceived by Albanian historians as voices in support of Albanian claims to Vlora,⁴⁶ in fact disseminated the same misconception and derogatory view of Albania as did their rightist foes. Soon after the attack, the newspaper *Avanti*, while demanding that the troops leave immediately, affirmed that the rebellion had been caused by brigands disguised as patriots, instigated by feudal lords, and manipulated by foreign influences and capitalistic interests.⁴⁷ Socialists too employed the myth of civilization but in the opposite sense, thus to dissuade any imperialistic dream. An article appeared in *Avanti* on 20 June with the title 'Il Paradiso Albanese', describing Albania as a barren land:

Sterile by nature: proved by the fact that it has not once in its history seen a period of flourishing. The inhabitants of the villages built with primitive material do not have beds or sheets or shirts and live by exploiting the shepherds who guard the flocks of the feudal lords and live on the mountains in little shanties made of earth and grass. [...] Between the different localities there is no commerce; they are connected by mule tracks and trips on the back of a donkey that Albanians keep only for the purpose of finding food. [...] Having wasted four billion, we are leaving it poor and neglected.

Italian historians agree that relations with Albanians swiftly deteriorated after the Tittoni–Venizelos secret agreement of July 1919 which, among other territorial arrangements, partitioned South Albania between Italy and Greece.⁴⁸ The latter was to acquire the cities of Gjirokastër and Korça, Italy Vlora and its outskirts, while Saranda was to be made a free harbour.⁴⁹ The Italian nationalist

45 Luigi Rinaldi and Bepi Fabiano, *Il Libro della Quinta Classe, Letture* (Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1940), p. 156.

46 See Muin Çami, *Shqipëria në Rrjedhat e Historisë 1912–1934*, p. 264.

47 'Contro L'Impresa Albanese' in *Avanti*, 12 June, 1920, p. 2.

48 Gabriele Parese, *Italia e Jugoslavia* (Milano: Bemporad e figlio editore, 1935), p. 152; Mario Montanari, *Le truppe italiane in Albania*, p. 177; Paolo Alatri has expressed another opinion, claiming that the main responsibility for the conflict lay with the inability of the Italian military command in Vlora to reach an arrangement with the locals regarding the civilian administration of the city. See. Paolo Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e La questione adriatica*, pp. 475–476.

49 Amedeo Giannini, *L'Albania dall'Indipendenza all'Unione con L'Italia (1913–1939)*, cit., pp. 248–251.

newspaper *L'Idea Nazionale* condemned the agreement, even before the attack on Vlora, defining it as the 'most cynical and shameful diplomatic document of the Third Italy'.⁵⁰ The greatest regret of the nationalists was that Tittoni's agreement countaracted all progress made by Italian diplomacy which had succeeded in obtaining the trust of the Albanians with the *Proclama di Argirocastro*. Leading nationalists intervened in parliament by stating that Italy was not looking for a colonial adventure in Albania, but was seeking only to protect Albania's independence and the Italian coast.⁵¹ The term 'protection' was thus used to persuade the socialist party to withdraw their veto on sending fresh troops to Vlora, but also to convince the Albanians closely following Italian political debates that the military presence was beneficial to them too. However, it was already too late for such words to produce the desired effect. Socialist propaganda had already been successful in mobilizing strikes and meetings against the Italian presence in Vlora. Episodes of severe military insubordination in Trieste and Ancona had convinced Italian Prime Minister Giolitti not to send additional troops to Albania.⁵² Giolitti then adopted the only exit strategy available that avoided overly displeasing radicals from both the left and the right. While there was to be no new deployment of troops, the remaining contingent was to continue resisting attacks for as long as possible in order to limit damage to Italian prestige.

Vlora: Enacting the Myth of Collective Dignity

The *Proclama di Argirocastro* was not unanimously welcomed by Albanians. Many remained skeptical towards Italy as it was not clear how and to what extent Rome would influence state sovereignty.⁵³ Italians seemed to support Albanian independence as they had not opposed but even promoted the formation of the Durrës government on 25 December 1918. However, the members of the government were not admitted to the Paris Peace Conference and Italy demanded the full application of the Treaty of London. This destabilized the political sit-

50 Francesco Coppola, *La Liquidazione Albanese in Idea Nazionale*, 1 June, 1920 p. 1. The term 'Third Italy' is used to underscore the continuity between the first, which was ancient Rome, and the second, the Italian cities of the Renaissance.

51 Antonino Di Giorgio, *Il Problema Militare, La questione Adriatica, L'Albania e la Libia*, Discorso sulle comunicazioni de governo pronunciato alla camera dei deputati nella tornata del 1 luglio (Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1920), p. 51; Luigi Federzoni, *Per la Pace Italiana in Adriatico, Discorso pronunciato alla Camera dei Deputati nella tornata del 7 luglio 1920* (Roma: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1920), p. 5.

52 Giovanni Giolitti, *Memorie della mia vita* (Milano: Garzanti, 1967), pp. 348–349.

53 See Paskal Milo, *Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë I* (Tiranë: Toena, 2013), 292–293; Kostë Çekrezi, *Shqipëria, e Shkuara dhe e Tashmja* (Tiranë: Naimi, 2012), p. 197.

uation in Albania. A hard media campaign denigrated the Durrës government whose members were considered puppets of Italy and traitors to the national cause. Epistolary communications of Minister of Education Luigj Gurakuqi,⁵⁴ who had been in Paris at the Peace Conference in the Autumn of 1919, revealed that Albanian delegates had lost their composure due to the unpredictable behavior of the Italians. In a subdued state of mind, Gurakuqi advised Sotir Gjika,⁵⁵ editor of the Albanian newspaper published in Rome, *Kuvendi*, not to slander Mustafa Kruja,⁵⁶ thus contributing further to the fragmentation of the delegation. He then wrote that decisions were dictated by winners and that ethnic minorities had no voice. Gurakuqi knew that the self-determination of the people was the last concern of the great powers, and that Wilson, George and Clemenceau would sleep peacefully regardless.⁵⁷

This short remark is enough to encapsulate the Albanian question in its entirety: Albania was a fragmented reality, both socially and politically, and this was plainly visible to the great powers. The country did not have the international benefits of Czechoslovakia and Poland, for instance, which served strategically as boundaries with the dying, but still kicking, central and eastern empires. Casualties of the Great War did not count as they had fought for both blocs. In comparison with their Balkan neighbours who had attained independence and unity by fighting in the Balkan Wars and in the First World War, Albania lacked any true martyrdom suffered for the sake of the national cause. Recognition of national rights could not be obtained by diplomacy, and it came at the price of bloodshed that would legitimize independence. At the time, only a war that was expressively and internationally presented and received as ‘patriotic’ could

54 Luigj Gurakuqi (1879–1925) is among the most celebrated figures of the late Albanian national awakening (*Rilindja*). He took part in the Congress of Monastir in 1908 and in the declaration of independence in 1912. He was elected minister of education in the first independent Albania government. In the Durrës government he took again the same charge, but was then dethroned by the Lushnje Congress. His relationship with Albania’s future king, Ahmet Zogolli, was thus problematic from the beginning and ultimately led to his murder in Bari in 1925.

55 Sotir Gjika was an Albanian activist and journalist who collaborated in the publication of different newspapers. In 1911 he collaborated with the newspaper *Shqypeja e Shqypënis* published in Sofia and in 1914 was editor of the Albanian page in the *Corriere delle Puglie* published in Bari. He died in 1927. Gaetano Petrota, *Populli, Gjuha dhe Letërsia Shqiptare*, Almera, Tiranë (1932) 2008, p. 430–431.

56 Mustafa Merlika Kruja (1887–1958) was minister of communications in the Durrës government, appointed in December 1918. The government was overthrown by the Lushnje Congress in late January 1920. Kruja and other two ministers (Fejzi Alzoti and Myfit Libohova) were accused of treason as, according to the new self-proclaimed government, they attempted to oppose the Lushnje Congress opting for closer Italian control over Albanian politics.

57 AQSH, Fondi 34 Luigj Gurakuqi, Dosja 8, 1919, letter addressed from Gurakuqi to Sotir Gjika in Rome on 22 November.

provide empirical evidence for the acclaimed existence of a national identity worthy of territorial integrity and self-determination. Gurakuqi seemed to implicitly acknowledge this in another letter that he addressed to Myfit Libohova, at the time Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Here he states that he was 'willing to die for Gjirokastrë'.⁵⁸ Indeed, someone had to die but it was not Gurakuqi, at least not this time. The war effort fell to those who lived in what is now Albanian territory, carved out for repartition by the Peace Conference.⁵⁹ Their struggle, although restricted to the local population, was soon absorbed by Albanian political elites and later by historiography that presented the conflict as a national war.

While the Tittoni–Venizelos agreement certainly displeased Albanians in the south, it was not enough to cause a war with Italy. Relations had been friendly and collaborative during the Great War, and it seemed unlikely that a mere diplomatic dispute would incite Italians and Albanians to face one another in a deadly battle. The Vlora conflict began when Italians offended local sentiments by disrespecting the symbols of the collective identity. On 28 November 1919, the day on which the citizens of Vlora celebrated the declaration of independence, an incident occurred that proved fatal to the relationship. Italian historian Pietro Pastorelli refers to a celebration organized by Italian authorities that ended in failure.⁶⁰ The Albanian account of the accident is found in many sources, especially in memoirs.⁶¹ The official account delivered to the Albanian government stated that military authorities had agreed with citizens that a celebration could take place, on the condition that no Albanian flag was to be hoisted on any institutional building, and that no speeches were to be made in public. Participants disobeyed both rules, and according to the report, Muslims and Christians both entered the mosque at Tabakhane. The muezzin there gave his blessings first in Arabic and then in Albanian. Afterwards, an intellectual (Professor Minga⁶²), held a passionate nationalistic speech. When the crowd headed for the exit, eager to continue the proceedings outside, they found the Carabinieri pointing guns at

58 Ibid.; letter sent to Myfit Libohova in Albania on 4 December 1920.

59 The memorandum of 9 December which was meant as a diktat by the United States gave full sovereignty to Italy on Vlora and the right for a mandate on Albania.

60 Pietro Pastorelli, *L'Albania nella Politica Estera Italiana*, p. 318.

61 See. Eqerem Bej Vlora, *Kujtime 1885–1925*, IDK, Tiranë, 2006, p. 444; Syrja Vlora, *Kujtime, Iceberg*, Tiranë, 2013, pp. 171–172; Tanush Frashëri (editor), *Ali Kelcyra, Shkrime për Historinë e Shqipërisë*, Onufri, Tiranë 2012, pp. 451–452 (in notes); Sejfi Vllamas, *Ballafaqime Politike në Shqipëri (1897–1942)*, Neraida, Tiranë 2000, p. 213.

62 Jani Minga is credited by Albanian historiography as an orator who (with Murat Toptani and others) inflamed the population of Vlora with patriotic speeches on 28 November 1912, the day of the declaration of independence. Stefanaq Pollo (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë Vellimi I Dyte (vitet 30 te shek. XIX – 1912)*, Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Tiranë 1984, p. 499.

the mosque. The situation soon escalated into a street riot. Italian paramilitaries tore Albanian flags to shreds and attached one to their dog named *Caporale*, who was then let loose in the city. This insult was the last straw for the people of Vlora, who asked the government to take a firm position, ending their petition by declaring that consequences were to be expected: 'The people of Vlora, because of the war, perhaps erring, did not want to cause problems for Italy unless the conflict continued, but now cannot endure such cruelties and have decided to take danger into account for the salvation of the homeland'.⁶³ Although this account contains aspects that seem unlikely, such as Vlora Christians entering a mosque to hear the sermon of the muezzin, the event is reported in many sources, suggesting that – whether or not all details are true – certainly something dramatic happened that day.

In the following months, tensions between Italians and Albanians increased considerably. By March, 1920, the illegal organization *Mbrojtja Kombëtare* based in Vlora began to recruit people in support of military action against Italy. A war committee was formed in Barçalla (near Vlora) on the night of 28 May 1920. On 3 June an ultimatum was sent to Piacentini, the Italian General in command of the troops at Vlora. He was ordered to withdraw his men and deliver the city to the Tirana government. The ultimatum could have been delivered earlier, but the Albanians decided to wait four days because 3 June was the anniversary of the *Proclama di Argirocastro*. The choice of a symbolic date shows that the protagonists were willing to define history not erratically but as the precise enactment of a self-fulfilling prophecy that would, perhaps, accomplish national freedom and punish Italy for treachery. In the worst case they would die, but at least with honor and on their own land. A participant in the Vlora conflict, Ago Agaj, wonders why the war committee did not decide to take the strongholds by surprise and ensure a maximum degree of military success.⁶⁴ He suggests that the noble feeling of those men or the little hope for a peaceful disentanglement may have led to this solution.⁶⁵ Most certainly, a surprise attack would have provoked a different reaction from the Italian government and public opinion. Moreover, I believe that Albanians were not only seeking the conquest of the Vlora territory as a geographical resource, but also because of the symbolic value of the city where the flag had been lifted in 1912, and where it had been torn apart a few months earlier by Carabinieri. The attack needed a clear declaration of intent that would prove to the great powers that it was conceived for national and not local purposes. In May 1920, the local Gjirokaštër press *Drita* wrote, 'Vlora is ours and

63 Muin Çami, *Lufta e popullit shqiptar për çlirimin kombëtar (përmbledhje dokumentash)*, p. 480.

64 Ago Agaj, *Lufta e Vlorës, Tregim i një pjesëmarrësi*, Harmony Printing LTD, Toronto, 1971, p. 130.

65 Ibid p. 131.

so it must be. For while Albania may exist only because Vlora made it, she can also destroy it'.⁶⁶

The ultimatum was expressed in florid language, laying the blame heavily on the Italian administration: 'For five years, Vlora, cradle of Albanian independence, has been governed like one of the lowest colonies: the language, the administration and our flag have been denied us [...] Italy infamously determined the partition of Albania with secret agreements, thus dishonoring herself when she reneged on a treaty she had signed in London in 1913'. Whoever wrote it was clearly stating that they would face their destiny with stoic dignity but not permit themselves to be 'treated like cattle in the market of Europe'.⁶⁷ This last statement is primarily an affirmation of identity and a war threat only secondarily, as the use of force is hesitantly suggested in the last paragraph only. Key words in the paragraph are 'flag', 'dishonor' and 'cattle'. Decrypted in the context of the mentality that guided the works of the Peace Conference these three words meant that Albanians were not disposed to be treated as humans of an inferior race (the lowest of colonies) that needed to be civilized (cattle in the market), because they had a history (the flag), and would not obey an undignified patron (Italy dishonored). The ultimatum was conceived to overturn the mythical conceptions of Albanians as ruthless, lacking in national identity, unfit for self-government, and thus in desperate need of a civilizing companion. The 6 June was the first Sunday of the month and therefore the celebration day of the *Statuto*, the celebration to mark the first Italian constitutional charter. However, because of the attack, celebrations in the Italian-controlled areas were cancelled; thus their festivities, like the 28 November event, were ruined.

Comparing Historiographical Traditions

There have so far been at least three definitions of the same event: the war, the rebellion (or the insurrection), and the 'war'. Albanian historiography refers to the event as the Vlora War (*Lufta e Vlorës*) or 'one of the most enlightened chapters in the history of Independent Albania'.⁶⁸ Official historiography affirms that 'the Vlora war of liberation stands among the greatest events of our national history of the twentieth century that played a decisive role in the defence of Albanian territorial integrity and in reestablishing independence'.⁶⁹ On the other side of the Adriatic, a much darker spot is reserved for the same event: Italians

66 In Muin Çami, *Shqipëria në Rrjedhat e Historisë 1912–1934*, p. 229.

67 Ago Agaj, *Lufta e Vlorës, Tregim i një pjesëmarrësi*, p. 133.

68 Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939*, p. 273.

69 Kristaq Prifti (ed.), *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III* (Tirana: Toena, 2007), p. 166.

label it a rebellion or insurrection which negates or drastically reduces the manifestation of the war as a military phenomenon. Sporadically, Italian historians speak of a war only using inverted commas or italics, thus suggesting that events have been exaggerated by their colleagues across the sea.⁷⁰ With only few exceptions, the history textbooks designed for high schools and universities bypass the facts as if nothing ever happened. How are such dissimilar representations to be explained? The simplest answer is to say that the events did not bear the same weight for the two countries. The burden of the conflict was dissimilar because Albania was in a more endangered position. Moreover, the battles on the outskirts of Vlora were only small skirmishes as compared to the massive undertakings of the Great War. Nevertheless, a relativist consideration cannot explain the amnesia in many Italian history textbooks. On the other hand, Albanian historiography places too much weight on the idea that the events were part of a coherent national war of independence.

In the following sections I analyze the reconstruction of events as they appear in Italian and Albanian historiographies in general, and in textbooks in particular. As stated above, textbooks are but the offspring of a historiographical tradition developed in each nation-state, which renders it impossible to understand the variability they present if the reasons for the variability in the historiographical approach are not investigated first. The following textbook study does not aim to be exhaustive as I have limited it to the texts that were readily available. They are sufficient, however, for an objective synthesis of how textbooks transpose mythical narratives and how they enhance the enactment of a mythical conception of history into reality. I have collected textbooks published in Italy and Albania between the 1960s and the present day. In the Italian case, I have limited the research to secondary education as primary education textbooks would not treat the issues related to the Vlora conflict. In the Albanian case I have included a few advanced primary school texts in order to enrich the scope of the study.

The Italian Perspective

The Italian presence in Albania siphoned from the state far greater resources than that in other occupied territories.⁷¹ Italian newspapers of 1920 seem to

70 Massimo Borgogni, *Tra continuità e incertezza*, p. 74; Mario Montanari, *Le truppe Italiane in Albania (anni 1914–1920 e 1939)*, p. 154.

71 See Giorgio Rochat, *L'esercito Italiano da Vittorio Veneto a Mussolini (1919–1925)*, p. 180, according to whom it is difficult to estimate the expense; however, with a good degree of precision he states that for the month of February 1920 Italy was spending 5.5 million lire on Dalmatia, 14.5 on Albania, and 4 million on Asia Minor. In a note he reports that according to

suggest that the loss of Vlora rendered manifest the myth of the ‘mutilated victory’ (an expression invented by D’Annunzio) as much as the loss of the Dalmatian territories that Italy had been unable to obtain in the Peace Conference. Nationalist and rising fascist forces were extremely disappointed when the treaty of Tirana was signed.⁷² Mussolini claimed that Italy’s prestige was being profoundly wounded and that attacks on Vlora were stimulated by foreign powers such as Yugoslavia.⁷³ On 15 July he wrote that Valona was ‘another Caporetto, worse than the first’.⁷⁴ On 5 August he affirmed: ‘Consequences of our disaster may be incalculable’, dreading that Italy lose authority in the region.⁷⁵ The same day, the nationalist paper *L’Idea Nazionale* opened with the headline ‘Italian prestige sacrificed to the Balkan gangs’.⁷⁶ A few days later in the same newspaper, D’Annunzio released a statement describing how the whole conflict was an attempt to emasculate the Italian people. ‘Because of being expelled from Vlora’, he said, ‘Italy today is a grand soprano choir of castratos in a Sistine chapel without Michelangelo’.⁷⁷ Long after the conflict, Mussolini’s henchman Dino Grandi wrote that Vlora was the greatest humiliation Italy had suffered after Adua.⁷⁸ After signing the Tirana treaty, the Italian government felt it necessary to make an official statement on the whole affair. On 7 August, Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza declared before parliament that ‘we left Vlora after a brilliant battle that showed the Albanians that never would they manage to force us out’.⁷⁹

The latter representation of the event was produced in order to prevent further contention against the government and reduce the traumatic effects that an unfortunate struggle against a poorly armed neighbour could have on military institutions. When Mussolini came to power, historiography displayed a contradictory attitude toward the Vlora conflict. On the one hand, references to it were avoided; a book published in 1938 on the Italian assault troops Arditi, who had also fought in the Vlora conflict, is perhaps emblematic of this censorship, being published in two different editions in the same year. In the second, the chapter dedicated to the Vlora fighting was omitted in its entirety.⁸⁰ On the other

the official documents of the time the sum of expenses for Albania including the war years amounted to 1.385 million, but that he considered this figure far too low.

72 Gabriele Paresce, *Italia e Jugoslavia*, cit., p. 152.

73 See Nicola Bonservizi *Il Ritorno di Giolitti: Albania – Jugoslavia*, in *Il Popolo d’Italia* 1920, p. 4.

74 Benito Mussolini, *Popolo d’Italia* 15 luglio, 1920 p. 1.

75 Ibid. *Addio Valona*, 5 agosto 1920 p. 1.

76 Francesco Coppola, *The Italian prestige sacrificed to the Balkan gangs*, *Idea Nazionale* 5 August, p. 1.

77 *L’offerta di D’Annunzio per la difesa di Vlora*, in *Idea nazionale*, 10 August, 1920, p. 2.

78 Dino Grandi, *Il Mio Paese, ricordi autobiografici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985), p. 309.

79 In Mario Montanari, *Le truppe Italiane in Albania*, p. 230.

80 Salvatore Farina, *Le Truppe d’Assalto Italiane*, Roma 1938, I ed. pp. 332–339.

hand, Italian history books produced during the *ventennio* argue that fascism recovered the international prestige that Italy had lost.⁸¹ They blamed the former liberal regime for reducing Italian military prestige⁸² and the 1919–1922 period was labelled ‘one of the saddest times for Italian foreign policy’.⁸³ Condemnation of the liberal government whose policies had led to the ‘loss’ of Vlora was used by the new regime to legitimate itself. Italian historiography that developed after the Second World War has rather followed the first, reductive, approach. The prestige of the Italian military and foreign diplomacy capabilities are as precious to democratic Italy as they were to the totalitarian state of the *ventennio*. Slightly more attention has been dedicated to the Vlora conflict by authors who are openly inspired by socialist ideas. But in this case too the Vlora conflict is subject to interpretation, and interpretations can have the purpose of exalting the merits of the proletarian movements or of criticizing Italian expansion policies.⁸⁴

Historical literature usually observes a rigorous silence on the Vlora conflict.⁸⁵ Few clues appear in encyclopedic works, and any details they do include describe the Vlora conflict in terms aimed to prove that the rebellion had been settled by foreign powers who manipulated Albanian peasants, and that Italy, in the face of adversity, did not lose the city but delivered it voluntarily to the Albanians. The Treccani Encyclopaedia, whose first director was Giovanni Gentile, was published during the fascist regime and has not made revisions to its sections on the conflict since its first edition:

81 See Pietro Silva, *Il Mediterraneo, dall'Unità di Roma all'Impero Italiano*, Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, Milano 1937, p. 408.

82 See Indro Montanelli, *Albania Una e Mille*, G. B. Paravia & C., Torino, 1939, pp. 86–88.

83 Umberto Nani, *Italia e Jugoslavia (1918–1928)*, Librerie d'Italia, Milano 1928, p. 11.

84 See Vittoria Foa, *Questo Novecento*, edizione ridotta (Milano: Einaudi Scuola, 1998), p. 100; also Ruggero Giacomini, *La rivolta dei Bersaglieri e le giornate rosse: i moti di Ancona dell'estate 1920 e l'indipendenza dell'Albania* (Ancona quaderni del consiglio regionale delle Marche, 2010); the author begins by describing a robust tradition of popular pacifism in Italy that becomes stronger in times of conflict, unlike the official pacifism which tends to disappear when war breaks out. The aversion, he continues, to colonial and imperialistic war and thus affinity to freedom wars is in the tradition of the Italian anarchist, socialist, communist and working class movements. Such tradition is recognizable in the opposition to the African wars, in the struggle against the war in 1915, and in the movement *via da Valona* of summer 1920 that supported Albanian independence (pp. 13–14). This affirmation is later contradicted by the documents presented in the book as many soldiers who participated in the military sedition in Ancona on 25 June, when interrogated by military police, declared that the main reason for their opposing departure from Albania had not been pacifism but rather a fear of being killed in action or as a result of disease.

85 In particular: Federico Chabod, *L'Italia Contemporanea 1918–1948*, Einaudi Scuola, Milano (1961) 1994 and Indro Montanelli e Mario Cervi, *Storia d'Italia vol. VII 1919–1936*, RCS libri, Milano (1965) 2006; both authors avoid any reference to Albanian and Italian relations during the years 1918 to 1920.

International intrigues, which manipulated the Albanian soul that had emerged from the war unaware of any organizational efforts that had in fact been to her advantage, led to the Vlorë insurrection against the Italian occupation of the city. Having lost a few external positions, the city of Vlorë remained in Italian hands until the Tirana protocol, [...] determined the evacuation of Vlorë by Italy, the latter retaining only the small island of Sazan.⁸⁶

Later Italian encyclopaedias transpose shorter representations of the Vlorë question and references to the conflict are avoided. This enhances the process of forgetting, which indeed characterizes most of Italian historiography in relation to the Vlorë conflict. The Garzanti encyclopaedia of 1976 gives the following description:

At the outbreak of the First World War, Albania suffered a new occupation by Greeks, Montenegrins, Bulgarians and French, who were attempting to split it, until June 1917, when Albania became a protectorate of Italy. Once independence had been regained it was admitted to the League of Nations (1920), and it became a republic under the presidency of Ahmet Zogu (1925), who in 1928, with the support of Italy, proclaimed himself king and imposed a dictatorial regime.⁸⁷

Reference to an armed struggle is omitted from this perspective. The Italian presence in Vlorë is considered salutary for Albania in spite of the presence of other nations. The *Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico UTET* reveals great confusion concerning the events and dates that articulated the conflict: 'The Peace Conference of 1919 reconfirmed the borders decided in London in 1913, and in June of 1920, the last Italian presidium in Vlorë was withdrawn. An Italian--Albanian agreement of 2 August, 1920 granted Italy the occupation of Sazan Island.'⁸⁸

The *Piccola Treccani* of 1997 reveals that Sforza's speech was metabolized by educational historiography: 'Vlorë [...] occupied by Italian troops from 1914 to 1920, was an important base of military operations in the Balkans. In August of 1920, the Tirana agreement returned Vlorë to Albania.'⁸⁹ Here too, there is no reference to an armed struggle, and the Albanian government seemed to have peacefully gained control over Vlorë.

Encyclopedias published elsewhere in the world are more open to describing the violent confrontations. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia is a fine example of idealized historiography:

86 *Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Agro - Ammi* (Istituto Giovanni Treccani MCMXXXIX-VII, 1929), vol. II, p. 120; this is part of the entry *Albania* and remains unchanged.

87 *Enciclopedia Europea*, vol. I (Aachen- Bakuni, Milano, 1976), p. 220.

88 *Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico A - Anti* (Torino: UTET, Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1984), p. 414.

89 *La piccola Treccani, dizionario enciclopedico* (Roma, 1997), p. 621.

The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution created the preconditions for the successful struggle of the Albanian people for independence. The Albanian National Congress, which assembled from January 21 to 31 1920, in Lushnje, proclaimed the independence of Albania and declared Tirana the country's capital. As a result of the ensuing armed struggle that was led by the government created in Albania against feudal separatists and foreign occupiers, in the spring and summer of 1920 southern and southwestern regions of Albania were liberated from Italian troops;⁹⁰

The representation that emerges in the French *Encyclopaedia Universalis* of 1973 is similar to that of Albanian historiography. The Vlora conflict is presented as part of a greater plan of the Albanian government to obtain freedom and integrity:

(...) L'Italie prenait Vlora, Sazan et recevait mandat sur l'Albanie; les frontières de 1913 étaient maintenues au nord et à l'est; les frontières sud seraient déterminées plus tard, mais laisseraient sans doute Korça et Gjirokaster à la Grèce. Ce mémorandum discrédita le gouvernement provisoire, qui dut démissionner à la suite du congrès de Lushnja (janvier 1920). Le nouveau gouvernement transporta son siège à Tirana, obtint le retrait des troupes françaises mais une rébellion d'Esat Toptani bientôt assassiné, profita d'une révolte réussie à Vlora pour obliger les Italiens à évacuer le pays (sauf Sazan) et put faire admettre l'Albanie à la SDN, le 17 décembre 1920, comme Etat souverain dans ses frontières de 1913.⁹¹

While Italian textbooks hardly provide any information about Italian and Albanian relations, they do adhere to the tradition of narrative defined by the divulging historiography. The *Corso di Storia* authored by Pietro Silva was, according to De Bernardi, one of the most often used textbooks during the *ventennio*.⁹² After the Second World War the last chapters were omitted in order to avoid any reference to the fascist period, with the result that the book continued to enjoy high popularity throughout the 1950s.⁹³ Silva first mentions Albania in the paragraph dedicated to the Balkan wars. He affirms that the existence of an independent Albania was decided by the Great Powers in London, who did not want Serbia, and – indirectly – Russia, to reach the Adriatic.⁹⁴ Silva does not reflect on Italian involvement in Albania during the Great War, and no reference to the Vlora conflict is made. When the author illustrates the gains that Italy was granted by the London Treaty of 1915, he does not include Vlora or the Albanian

90 *Great Soviet Encyclopedia, A translation of the third edition* (London: Macmillan Educational Corporation, 1973), p. 201.

91 *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, Vol. I (Paris, 1973), p. 553.

92 De Bernardi, *Il Canone della Storia Contemporanea nei Manuali Scolastici dall'Unità alla Repubblica*, p. 10.

93 *Ibid.* p. 15.

94 Pietro Silva, *Corso di Storia per i licei classici, i licei scientifici e gli istituti magistrali, III* (Milano: Principato Editore: 1963), p. 297.

mandate in the list.⁹⁵ However, Vlora is marked as a territory that Italy was to receive from that treaty only under the terms dictated by the map referred to on the following page.

Giorgio Spini's *Disegno Storico della Civiltà* was published in 1963 and is considered by De Bernardi to be a new kind of textbook which was, unlike Silva's work, free of ideological veneer coating.⁹⁶ The change of style is noticeable. While the author recognizes that some relevant incidents did indeed occur between Albania and Italy,⁹⁷ his deductions minimize, however, the military vicissitudes and are reminiscent of the speeches of the 1920 newspapers. He highlights that neither Albania nor Dalmatia were of great use due to the poverty of their natural resources.⁹⁸ He defines the conflict as a 'guerrilla war carried by gangs who began to attack the Italian presidiums'. The 'Albanian problem' was eventually solved by the Giolitti government who managed nonetheless to guarantee Italy supremacy over the Adriatic via possession of Sazan Island.⁹⁹

While the 1972 textbook for high schools, *Storia Contemporanea* by Rosario Villari, reports that Italy was to gain Vlora according to the Treaty of London, the book refrains from giving the slightest indication as to how that particular matter evolved. It does mention the myth of the 'mutilated victory' and how it was exploited by the extreme nationalist formations.¹⁰⁰ However, Villari does not relate the latter to the military and diplomatic exploits in Albania, but only to the Dalmatian question. A similar narrative emerges in the 1979 textbook, *Storia e Storiografia* by Antonio Desideri. While the author recollects that the allies did recognize Italy's right to maintain Vlora,¹⁰¹ there is no reference to the conflict of 1920. He states that the Peace Conference sanctioned Albanian sovereignty.¹⁰² In fact, however, it was the League of Nations that finally acknowledged Albanian sovereignty in December 1920.

A slight notion of the Vlora conflict is perceptible in the 1980 textbook *Elementi di Storia 3* by Augusto Camera and Renato Fabietti. As in Silva's textbook, the authors claim that Albania was created in 1912 at the expense of Serbia, to which the great powers denied possession of the Adriatic coast that Serbia had conquered. References to the Albanian proclamation of independence are

95 Ibid. p. 333.

96 De Bernardi, *Il Canone della Storia Contemporanea nei Manuali Scolastici dall'Unità alla Repubblica*, p. 17.

97 Giorgio Spini, *Disegno Storico Della Civiltà, III*, Cremonese (Roma, 1963), p. 329.

98 Ibid. p. 330.

99 Ibid. p. 358.

100 Rosario Villari, *Storia contemporanea per le scuole medie superiori* (Bari: Laterza, 1972), p. 467.

101 Antonio Desideri, *Storia e Storiografia 3: dalle organizzazioni del movimento operaio alla crisi del colonialismo* (Firenze: G. D'Anna, 1979), p. 420.

102 Ibid. p. 429.

omitted, and the formation of the state is displayed as a purely Austrian affair culminating in the imposition of King William of Wied.¹⁰³ While the authors fail to mention Albania when they describe the Treaty of London,¹⁰⁴ they do dedicate some space to the events that followed. The textbook affirms that an Italian protectorate was sanctioned by the Paris conference. In fact, Italians had occupied Vlora since the end of 1914 and it was the London Treaty that recognized that possession as an Italian war goal. The authors then claim that the mandate produced an insurrection of the local population. The situation was resolved by Giolitti and Foreign Minister Carlo Sforza. The two were able to guarantee Italian control of the Otranto Channel by keeping Sazan Island.¹⁰⁵

The writers of the *Manuale di Storia, L'età Contemporanea*, a popular textbook in high schools and universities, however, appear to be afflicted by complete amnesia when it comes to Albania. The book does not refer to Albania at all, not even when the Treaty of London is discussed.¹⁰⁶ Throughout all 1000 pages of the volume the term Vlora appears just once, in the last chapter in a picture of half-naked Albanians struggling to get in and out of an overcrowded ship named, ironically, Vlora.¹⁰⁷ This exemplifies how a simple term, the city name Vlora, can epitomize two different historical idealities. On the one hand Vlora is the symbol of Albanian unity, strength and freedom where Italians were forced to withdraw from Albanian coasts. Simultaneously, following the events of 1991 that the picture shows, Vlora has also become the symbol of Albanian poverty and failure that reevaluates Italy as its natural and, above all, closest hope for salvation. Italian historiography has clearly preferred to transpose the latter at the expense of the former.

The final Italian textbook in my study is *Il Senso del Tempo* by Alberto Mario Banti published in 2008. The narrative of the Albanian question and its relations with Italy is very similar to that of the other textbooks. Banti shares the opinion that Albania was created at the expense of Serbia, thanks to the pressures of Italy and Austria-Hungary which did not want Belgrade to get too close to the Adriatic.¹⁰⁸ He reminds the reader that Italy was to obtain a protectorate on Albania and the possession of Vlora according to the Treaty of London.¹⁰⁹ He

103 Augusto Camera and Renato Fabiotti, *Elementi di Storia 1, L'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1980), p. 289.

104 *Ibid.* p. 300.

105 *Ibid.* p. 345.

106 See Andrea Giardina, Giovanni Sabbatucci and Vittorio Vidotto, *Manuale di Storia, 3. L'età contemporanea* (Roma/Bari: Laterza, 1999), p. 425. More recent editions of the textbook do not present significant changes in the section.

107 *Ibid.* p. 936.

108 Alberto Mario Banti, *Il Senso del Tempo 3* (Bari: Laterza, 2008), p. 213.

109 *Ibid.* p. 234.

refrains from further explanation, however, regarding the following exploits that determined the Italian evacuation of the coastal city.

Italian historiography and textbooks mirror the perception that governments and scholars conjointly imposed on the conflict after the Tirana agreement. Textbooks generally dedicate little space to Albanian affairs and to the history of their mutual relations. The analysis of this textbook study reveals that the Italian traditional narrative on Albania runs as follows: Albania was made an independent country after the first Balkan war thanks to Austria and Italy, who wished to prevent Serbia from finding her way to the Adriatic Sea. In 1915, Italy obtained recognition of the possession Vlorë and a mandate on Albania as a trophy of war with the Treaty of London. In 1918 the Peace Conference sanctioned the application of the Treaty and Italy began to officially impose her regime on Albania. However in the summer of 1920, for reasons that remain unclear, Albanian gangs began to attack the Italian presidiums in Vlorë. The matter came to an end with minor diplomatic efforts successfully carried out by Giolitti and Carlo Sforza. Both withdrew their troops from Albania, which after all was of no economic advantage to Italy. Italy managed to keep the little island of Sazan that allowed her to maintain her hegemony in the Adriatic Sea. No reference is made to the Albanian national movement. The capacity of Albanian subjects to decide their own fate is reduced to a minimum and warily emerges during the Vlorë events, but in the form of a questionable riot carried out by gangs without clear political orientation or national identity.

The Albanian Perspective

The Vlorë conflict is solidly rooted in Albanian collective memory. Apart from a great number of folk songs and lyrical compositions that celebrate the heroism of the conflict,¹¹⁰ a film was also released in 1977, *Guna Përmbi Tela*, which describes in a highly idealistic fashion the events of what Albanians call *Lufta e Vlorës* (the Vlorë War). Historian Bernd J. Fischer has dedicated an article to the mythization of the Vlorë conflict claiming that, although Albania's success over Italy increased the collective mythical perception of the former's military skills, it ultimately led to the comfortable defeat of the Albanians in the second Italian occupation of April 1939.¹¹¹ My aim here is not to deepen the analysis of artefacts

110 See Albert Habazaj, *Lokalizimi i Këngës Epike Të Luftës Së Vlorës*, in *Gazeta Dielli*, 13 December 2013. For a collection of memoirs and songs related to the Vlorë conflict see Muin Çami, Qemal Haxhihasani, Zihni Haskaj and Zihni Sako (eds.), *Kujtime dhe Kënge Popullore për Luftën Çlirimtare të Vitëve 1918–1920* (Tiranë: Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës, 1970).

111 Bernd J. Fischer 'Perceptions and Reality in Twentieth-Century Albanian Military Prowess'

that prove the mythization of the events, but to understand how historiography works under the constraints of ideology. Under such constraints historiography, just like any other institution, becomes a tool for the legitimization of the political system where it is developed. By operating arbitrarily on the representation of the fact, history becomes a myth by emphasizing facts that have a strong symbolic appeal and are thus able to generate collective identification processes. This logic appears unmistakably clear in the speech of Enver Hoxha above. Unlike in the Italian case where the Vlora conflict is barely cited, Albanian historiography in general and textbooks in particular have established a tradition (in the Gentilian sense) that places the events within the larger frame of events that determined Albanian independence.

The Vlora conflict is portrayed by historiography as a result of the rising force of three different layers of identity. The first, the dominant one, is the national identity that fostered the constitution of the state in 1912 and claimed its sovereignty, beginning with the Lushnje Congress of January 1920. Secondly, it underscores the role played by the local southern or *lab* identity. Locals, who bore all the military effort, appear as naturally gifted with a spirit of freedom, honour, strength and national pride. Lastly, historians have highlighted the war as a process of raising an awareness of social class that ultimately inspired the establishment of socialism. The juxtaposition of different historical issues such as state-building, national feeling and class awareness is based more on theoretical speculation than on empirical evidence.

The Albanian government formed in Lushnje could not declare war on Italy for two reasons. First it was not an internationally recognized entity and therefore did not possess the interlocutory authority for such an act. Secondly, declaring war on Italy would have provoked a more energetic reaction not just from Italy but from the Great Powers who, as members of the League of Nations, would have been obliged to assist a fellow member country under threat. However, Albanian historiography adamantly presents the conflict as part of a larger plan that was conceived by the government with the purpose of obtaining sovereignty over the territories that foreign armies had occupied since the Great War.¹¹² The enactment of this plan is proven by a series of diplomatic steps that presumably paved the way to the armed showdown. According to Arben Puto the Vlora question was treated in the first session of parliamentary life in Albania. The members decided upon underground action via the ‘national defence’ (*mbrojtja kombëtare*) organization based in Vlora.¹¹³ Meanwhile, the govern-

in Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (eds.), *Albanian Identities, Myth and History*, pp. 134–142.

112 See Kristaq Prifti (ed.), *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III 1912–1939*, p. 150; and Stefanaq Pollo (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë III* (Tiranë: Akademi e Shkencave, 1984), pp. 213–235.

113 See Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939*, p. 267.

ment of Albania moved the capital from Durrës to Tirana. On 3 April the commander of Italian troops in Vlorë was asked to deliver the civil administration of Vlorë and Gjirokastër; retaliation was threatened should he refuse.¹¹⁴ The Italian response was negative. Later in April the government sent its representative in Belgrade to request military and diplomatic support from Yugoslavia in order to fight against Italy,¹¹⁵ to no avail.¹¹⁶ The Albanian government took action nevertheless: On 17 May Italians in Tepelena were asked to deliver the town to local administrators, and the Italians responded by opening fire.¹¹⁷ The last diplomatic effort ensured the neutrality of the Greek troops on the south-eastern frontier via the Kapështice agreement of late May. The role of the government in the conflict was thus of an intermediary kind, and consisted in carrying out discussions with Italian representatives, but also in spreading war propaganda throughout Albania.¹¹⁸ Finally, the assassination of Esat Pasha¹¹⁹ in Paris and the annihilation of his faction in central Albania seemed to have completed the political action undertaken in support of the Vlorë conflict.

Muin Çami has claimed that the uprising resulted as a consequence of a slow social evolution process in Albania in the preceding years. The national bourgeoisie had increased its ranks and was the first class to raise the national question and to spread it among the rest of the population.¹²⁰ According to Çami the Vlorë war was a stepping-stone toward a higher-class conscience and was not, as Italians argue, a local insurgency.¹²¹ It was a war organized simultaneously on both a local and national scale, and so it developed.¹²² Arben Puto in a recent work affirms that the war was inspired by the peasants and the middle classes.¹²³ Puto's assessment is based on the opinions expressed by Eqerem bej Vlorë who was a member of the aristocratic family that ruled the city in Ottoman times, and

114 See Paskal Milo, *Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë* (Tirane: Toena, 2013), p. 478.

115 Sejfi Vllamasi, *Ballafaqime Politike*, p. 196.

116 Muin Çami, *Shqipëria në Rrjedhat e Historisë 1912–1934*, p. 229.

117 *Ibid.* pp. 229–230.

118 See Romeo Gurakuqi, *Shqipëria dhe Çështja Shqiptare pas luftës së Parë botërore*, Camaj – Pipa, Shkodër 2007, p. 229–230.

119 Esat Pasha Toptani is recorded among the most infamous characters of Albanian history by national historiography. He is accused of many misdeeds, including the sellout of national interests to Serbs for personal gain. He was the last prime minister in charge before the country was occupied by the Habsburg army in 1915, which forced him to flee. In 1919 he reached Paris claiming that he led the only legitimate delegation of Albania in the conference. Having many loyal supporters in central Albania and in Shkodër the Tirana government was forced to negotiate with him. Esat Pasha was shot and killed on 13 June 1920 by Avni Rustemi in front of the Hotel Continental in Paris.

120 *Ibid.* p. 140.

121 *Ibid.* p. 141.

122 *Ibid.* p. 150.

123 See Arben Puto, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939*, p. 274.

the nephew of Ismail Qemali (Kemal). Although he initially thought that fighting Italians would amount to 'suicide', when reality proved different, he affirmed that military success was probably due to the motivational factors that animated the insurgents. But his remarks highlight a local feature of the war instead of a greater national commitment. The interests that they were presumably looking to protect, according to Eqerem bej Vlora, appear thoroughly contingent and personal: 'It was their war, it was the battle for their social position, for the properties, for their women, their children, their honour and survival'.¹²⁴

Combat, with rare exceptions, only actually involved the local community, a fact not denied by Albanian historiography. Only the people of Vlora and its outskirts attended the Barçalla convention of 28 May where the decision was taken to go to war. The attack of 5 June was ordered by the insurgents' commander Qazim Koculi without consulting the government of Tirana.¹²⁵ The symbol of the war is a local dress, the *guna*, which is a coat made of sheep's fleece that insurgents presumably used for crossing the barbed wire around the Italian strongholds. The most famous war hero became a man who fulfilled the archetype of an emblematic *lab*, Selam Musai, who courageously led the attack at the age of 76 years. His bravery is narrated in lyrical songs as well as in the film *Gunat Përmbi Tela*. What linked the local people directly involved in the war to the rest of the Albanians was the 'common ideal of liberating the fatherland from occupation, thus ensuring full independence and the integrity of the Albanian state'.¹²⁶

The causal relationship that historiography has established between state-making, class awareness and the Vlora conflict has created a syllogistic explanation of the event for textbooks over the years. During the socialist period, emphasis was placed on the moment in which class awareness was raised, and on the local intolerance of foreign domination. The Tirana government is not portrayed particularly positively since, according to the official ideological framework, the political elite represented the interests of the retrograde feudal society. Moreover, the events that took place in Albania after the Great War were an occasion for celebrating the October Revolution and Lenin who denounced and published the secret Treaty of London. Textbooks for high schools from the 1960s reported that 'the Vlora War, which possesses a liberating, popular and anti-imperialist character, is another brilliant page in the history of our people.

124 Eqerem Bej Vlora, *Kujtime 1885–1925*, p. 447.

125 Romeo Gurakuqi, *Shqipëria dhe Çështja Shqiptare pas luftës së Parë botërore*, p. 153–154.

126 Muin Çami, *Lufta e Vlorës Lufta e gjithë popullit Shqiptar*, in Muin Çami (ed.), *Kongresi i Lushnjes dhe Lufta e Vlorës*, p. 139.

By winning the war, the detested enemies of the Albanian people – the Italian imperialists – were expelled from Albanian lands'.¹²⁷

In the 1970s, when Albania was almost completely isolated in the international sphere, textbooks emphasized the capacity of the country to defend herself from foreign invaders. In 1973, while the narrative form of the event was not altered, the authors ended the paragraph by admonishing that 'the war of Vlora made it clear to the chauvinist circles of the neighbouring countries that their ambitions on Albania would face rising opposition from the Albanian people'.¹²⁸

Textbooks produced during the socialist period reserved far more space for the Vlora conflict than books in use nowadays. As it seems that the subject of history has lost appeal in our times of political pluralism, nonetheless the depiction of the Vlora conflict presents many elements of continuity with the past. Textbooks may have lost their formerly flagrant Marxist interpretations, yet the teleological tradition of the nation-state persists. The correlation between the armed struggle and national emancipation is soundly emphasized. Attention has shifted from the social conflict to the state-building process of which the Vlora conflict is still portrayed as an eminent example. In *Historia 3* for high schools (1997), for instance, the conflict is presented as a 'movement' that engaged all the people, as many Albanians from different regions of the country took part in the attack. According to this textbook, the Tirana government even sustained the fighting by providing weapons and sending officers.¹²⁹

The 2003 ninth-grade textbook *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar 9* transposes what may be termed as the consolidated post-socialist knowledge tradition concerning the Vlora conflict. The paragraph titled 'Lufta e Vlorës' states that the Tirana government, after facing the refusal of Italian troops to evacuate the city, opted for an 'armed insurrection'. It also clarifies that the government did not sustain the attack openly, but provided 'weapons, soldiers, ammunitions, etc'.¹³⁰ The authors apparently somehow felt the need to underline at the end of the paragraph that volunteers from all over Albania and even the diaspora participated in the war, and that the victory determined the forfeiture of the Treaty of London and the recognition of independence by the Paris Peace Conference.¹³¹

127 Ministria e Aresimit dhe e Kultures, *Drejtoria e Studimeve e botimeve Shkollore, Historia e Shqiperise per Shkollat e Mesme (dispense)* (Tirane, 1960), p. 145; the same quote is reported in the 1962 and 1965 editions of the same book respectively on pp. 192–193 and p. 200.

128 See Kristo Frashëri and Stefanq Pollo, *Historia e shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 1st ed. (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1973), p. 140.

129 Ademi Mezini, Muharrem Dezhgiu and Jusuf Bajraktari, *Historia 3 per shkollat e mesme* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1997), p. 72.

130 Myzafer Korkuti, Petrika Thëngjilli, Gazmend Shpuza, Fatmira Rama, Xhelal Gjeçovi, Ajat Shahu, Ana Lalaj, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar 8*, Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, Tiranë, 2003 p. 136.

131 *Ibid.* p. 138.

A very similar perception is to be found in the ninth-grade book published a few years later. Accordingly, the Vlora conflict was caused by Italy's persistent denial to deliver the city administration to the Tirana government. The latter then understood that the use of weapons was unavoidable. Thus the National Defence Committee was created in order to lead the military action.¹³² The textbook does not explain the relationship between the committee and the Tirana government; however, the narrative gives the impression that the capital organized the attack and determined the fate of the country. The paragraph ends affirming that 'the events of the Vlora War testified to the strength of the union of the Albanian people when facing a foreign threat'.¹³³ The exercise section provides a short riddle for the students:

*Luftuam me guna mbi tela,
E dëbuam armikun nga skela,
Isha shtet me dyzet miliona,
Shqiptarët më shfryne si ballona.*¹³⁴

In a more recent textbook for high school the Vlora conflict is still presented as the result of a precise policy decided by the Tirana government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sulejman Delvina. It is interesting to note that the name of Ahmet Zogolli, at the time Minister of the Interior and certainly a key player in Albanian internal politics, is not mentioned. Zogolli is under a process of revision in Albanian historiography, and textbooks still seem reluctant to mention him in a patriotic context. The authors of the 2011 *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar XII* claim that the government, which enjoyed the support of all the Albanian people, decided to liberate Vlora from Italian occupation. After explaining the reason for this, they go on to say that the government did not engage in an open conflict against Italy, but that the Vlora Committee was composed of volunteers from all around the country. This committee organized the popular revolt that became known as the 'War of Vlora'.¹³⁵

Understanding what pushed the local population to take the risk of fighting the Italians is one of the greatest historiographical challenges regarding the Vlora conflict. Historiography and textbooks have until now given nationalistic reasons for this. The interesting memoirs by a veteran, Ago Agaj, who wrote his book far from communist Albania and thus out of reach of its ideological con-

132 Myzafer Korkuti, Xhelal Gjeçovi, Agron Gani, *Historia* 9, Morava, Laprakë 2009, p. 115.

133 *Ibid.* p. 116.

134 *Ibid.* Translation: We fought with *guna* on the wires / we kicked out the enemy from Skela [a neighbourhood in Vlora] / I was a state with forty million / Albanians deflated me as if I were a balloon. The answer to this riddle is, of course, *Lufta e Vlorës*.

135 Petrika Thengjilli, Fatmira Rama, Ajet Shehu, Lorenc Bejko, Liliana Guga, *Historia e Shqiptarëve XII* (Tiranë: Pegi, 2011), p. 106.

straints, provide vivid details which portray the social life and psychology of the combatants in a way that historiography does not. In the pages of this book Albanians who fought Italians appear as ethnical *labs* who practiced divination rites¹³⁶ and were strictly observant of local customs.¹³⁷ Fear is certainly an element that national historiography is likely to keep away from the description of war events where national unity is at stake. But indeed Albanians were afraid of Italians, and the decision to fight them arose from the fear of becoming a colony of Italy. Agaj affirms that it was difficult even to find volunteers to deliver the ultimatum to Piacentini due to the fear of a possible immediate retaliation towards the messenger.¹³⁸ Albanian historiography has until now shown little interest in the religious feeling that animated Albanians in their struggles, not just in Vlora. According to the memories of Agaj the religious element played a significant part in motivating the combatants. In Barçalla they swore an oath on the Koran before the fight, saying: 'May it slay me with all I have got', and then holding the gun: 'May it kill me with a weapon in my heart'.¹³⁹ Before an attack, they washed in the river fearing that 'there will be no muezzin to wash us and we have to die clean'.¹⁴⁰

Albanian historians have 'cleansed' the Vlora War of elements that would stain the idealized image of a fair struggle for national independence. Agaj informs us, without regret, of a summary execution of Roma people suspected of being Italian spies.¹⁴¹ Roma prostitutes working for the Italian contingent were putatively killed in an exchange of fire during the night and were left unburied until Albanians ordered Italian prisoners to bury them appropriately. This reveals that a strong taboo hit relations with Italians which prevented Albanians from coming into contact with their victims. Agaj's account adds grotesque details concerning a 'little suicidal pandemic', as he defines it, which spread in the Autumn, long after the end of the conflict, among Albanian girls of villages where Italian troops had been stationed. The author concludes the paragraph with the chilling comment: 'And so this nasty problem was finally solved'.¹⁴²

Although Agaj considers the war a sterling patriotic fight for the sake of the national cause,¹⁴³ his memories reveal that the relationship between the war

136 Ago Agaj, *Lufta e Vlorës, Tregim i një pjesëmarrësi*, p. 143. Ago Agaj became minister of the economy during the German occupation of Albania in 1943. Xhelal Gjeçovi (ed.), *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar Vëllimi i Katërt 1939–1990* (Tiranë: Toena, 2009), p. 85.

137 Ago Agaj, *Lufta e Vlorës, Tregim i një pjesëmarrësi*, pp. 114–115.

138 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

139 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

140 *Ibid.*, p. 150.

141 *Ibid.*, p. 200.

142 *Ibid.*, pp. 164–165.

143 In the opening section of his memoirs, for instance, where he contends that the war was the greatest accomplishment of Albanians since the time of Skanderbeg. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

committee and the Tirana government were not as splendid as official historiography asserts. When representatives went to Tirana only Prime Minister Delvina and Minister of the Interior Zogu received them and showed due respect to the guests. The other members of the government refrained from even inviting them to coffee, which means that their mission did not fully succeed in raising consent among Albanian elites. In other words, even in Tirana only few Albanians supported an attack against Italy. Nonetheless, Zogu and Delvina promised only moral support, by indirect means, so as not to give Italy reason to declare war against the whole country.¹⁴⁴ As far as the message sent to Piacentini on 3 June is concerned, 'Italy cannot forbid the small people of Albania to die for their homeland', Agaj wonders whether by 'the small people of Albania' they meant the whole of the country or merely the Albanians living in Vlora. He finds no answer.¹⁴⁵

The memoirs of Agaj open up a perspective on the Vlora conflict that is invisible in the official historiography. It would perhaps be interesting to understand in more depth the relations between Albanians and Italians during the years of the occupation, as this would provide research insights into the process of conflict escalation. Human contacts between the military and local population, rather than within the diplomatic field, would constitute an instructive subject for research. Such a change of perspective may tell us if and how high politics and propaganda affect interpersonal relations in everyday life. The reasons why the Southern Albanians decided to fight the Italians are probably more likely to be found in local rather than in high-level politics. Relations between Italians and Albanians had in fact been peaceful until the emergence of a landlord-tenant hierarchy. The riot of 28 November 1919 sanctioned the end of this relationship when Albanians were given a taste of colonial rule. Elites emerged from the Lushnje Congress and then established links with local leaders such as Qazim Koculi and Osman Haxhi, who managed to instrumentalize the fears and dissatisfaction of the local population in order to incite their attack on the Italians.

As far as the representation of the Vlora conflict is concerned, it appears that Albanian historians have operated in much the same way as a gardener would when working with a hedge, cutting the raw growth of the plant in order to lend it shape and harmoniously match a designed environment. The image of the Vlora War spread by propaganda during the communist regime has not recently been subject to revision by Albanian historiography. Even if some of the most xenophobic allegations have been removed, the mythical attributes of the war still stand untouched in Albanian history texts. I personally doubt that it will be possible to have Albanian official historiography present the Vlora conflict free

144 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

145 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

of its mythical attributes: the idea that it was a genuine national fight involving the entire nation. Such revisions would mean not merely removing exaggerations concerning numbers of belligerent occupiers, victims and acts of heroism, but questioning the entire function of the conflict in relation to the foundation of Albanian sovereignty.

Conclusion

Myth defines collective identity and gives sense to the social order, thus ultimately legitimizing the political system that governs the order. From the early nineteenth century onwards, national histories have become sacred histories, thus assuming the resemblance of a myth both in structure and in function, since historical speculation defines not only legitimacy but also prescribes action for a determinant political constituency. The latter concept is taken from Marshall Sahlin's use of the concept of *mytho-praxis* which implies that events involving human relations, in this case conflict and war, are always structured by cultural background. This background is defined by the myths of origins or by the myths entailed in modern ideologies such as class, national identity and so on. A dominant ideology and the incipient myths therefore not only determine the course or the details of an event but also shape its inscription into historiography. I have named this double conditioning effect a mythical imperative that affects events *a priori*, by determining collective action and *a posteriori*, by shaping the narrative. The second part of this process concerns historiography that transposes a representation of the events in order to legitimize the political system that follows the prescriptions of the dominant ideology, which in turn defines the intellectual environment where historiography develops. Thus Albanian historiography, heavily conditioned by a blend of nationalist and Marxist ideology, has presented the conflict as an ethno-national struggle for the emancipation of national and class rights. Italian historiography, on the other hand, has exploited the event in order to legitimize authoritarian turns during the fascist period. Italian socialist historiography also uses the event to prove the positive incidences of Italy's proletarian struggles in the fight against Italian imperialist trends. My study also revealed that Italian historiography prefers to omit the Vlora conflict from history in order to limit damage to state sovereignty by not harming military prestige. The differences characterizing Albanian and Italian perceptions and representations of the Vlora conflict are also visible in the different stances to the manifestation of violence as a phenomenon related to the conflict. In Albania the event served as a foundation myth for the independence of the country, and historiography has *a posteriori* monopolized the violence on behalf of the Albanian state. It has done so by exalting the role of the Tirana

government as a determinant factor of success. This can be read clearly in Albanian monographs and history textbooks for high school education. On the other side of the Adriatic, Italians still refuse to accept that violence during the Vlora conflict was a product of the monopolistic practices allegedly exercised by the state. Rather, responsibility is attributed by historians of different ideological backgrounds to singular agents such as Piacentini, Tittoni or Nitti, or peculiar and vague political contingencies such as 'Italian imperialism' or the Vlora military occupational regime, which do not represent the genuine orientation of Italian policy towards Albania which, presumably, was collaborative in nature.

Recent revisionist history seems to concern eastern Europeans more than their western counterparts, especially when it comes to national myths. New interpretations are sometimes astonishingly daring because, in their attempts to demystify myths of national identity forged by political regimes with the aim of building a national conscience, they underestimate that such myths are products of the same social and cultural European ideas affirmed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and that such myths interdependently contradistinguish all European states. Myths are therefore functional to the establishment of state sovereignty both within the boundaries of a nation and among the larger international institutions; in other words, myths also serve to regulate international relations and perhaps even to reinforce some of the realist theories that dominate the debates of the IR discipline from both a historical and political perspective. On the other hand, since myths foster collective identities and, in Europe at least, supersede the social or spatial domains, their study can help us develop a historiography that goes beyond the analysis of subjects within their national boundaries and a mere observation of international relations as if nations and states, in their different historical configurations, were discrete entities.

Bibliography

List of textbooks cited

- Banti, Alberto Mario *Il Senso del Tempo 3* (Bari: Laterza, 2008).
- Camera, Augusto, and Renato Fabietti, *Elementi di Storia 3, L'età contemporanea* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1980).
- Desideri, Antonio, *Storia e Storiografia 3: dalle organizzazioni del movimento operaio alla crisi del colonialismo* (Florence: G. D'Anna, 1979).
- Frashëri, Kristo, and Stefanq Pollo, *Historia e shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 1st edn (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1973).
- Frashëri, Kristo, (ed.), *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III* (Tirana: Toena, 2007).

- Giardina, Andrea, Giovanni Sabbatucci, and Vittorio Vidotto, *Manuale di Storia, 3. L'età contemporanea* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1999).
- Korkuti, Myzafer, Petrika Thëngjilli, Gazmend Shpuza, Fatmira Rama, Xhelal Gjeçovi, Ajet Shahu, and Ana Lalaj, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar 8* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2003).
- Korkuti, Myzafer, Xhelal Gjeçovi, and Agron Gani, *Historia 9* (Morava: Laprakë, 2009).
- Mezini, Ademi, Muharrem Dezhgiu, and Jusuf Bajraktari, *Historia 3 per shkollat e mesme* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1997).
- Ministria e Aresimit dhe e Kultures, drejtoria e Studimeve, *Historia e Shqiperise per Shkollat e Mesme (dispense)* (Tirana: Shkollore, 1960).
- Ministria e Aresimit dhe e Kultures, drejtoria e Studimeve, *Historia e Shqiperise per Shkollat e Mesme (dispense)* (Tirana: Shkollore, 1965).
- Rinaldi, Luigi, and Bepi Fabiano, *Il Libro della Quinta Classe, Letture* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1940).
- Thëngjilli, Petrika, Fatmira Rama, Ajet Shehu, Lorenc Bejko, and Liljana Guga, *Historia e Shqiptarëve 12* (Tirana: Pegi, 2011).
- Silva, Pietro, *Corso di Storia per i licei classici, i licei scientifici e gli istituti magistrali, III* (Milan: Principato Editore, 1963).
- Spini, Giorgio, *Disegno Storico Della Civiltà, III* (Rome: Cremonese, 1963).
- Villari, Rosario, *Storia contemporanea (per le scuole medie superiori)* (Bari: Laterza, 1972).

Further References

- Adriaticus, *Da Trieste a Valona* (Milan: Alfieri Lacroix, 1918).
- Agaj, Ago, *Lufta e Vlorës, Tregim i një pjesëmarrësi* (Toronto: Harmony Printing LTD, 1971).
- Alatri, Paolo, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e La Questione Adriatica* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976).
- Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).
- Baldacci, Antonio, *L'Albania* (Rome: Istituto per L'Europa Orientale, 1929).
- Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (New York: Noonday, 1991).
- Beqja, Hamit, *Problemi i Edukates Socialiste dhe Shkolla II*, (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1981).
- Beqja, Hamit, *Lufta për Shkollën Socialiste Ateiste Shqiptare* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1984).
- Borgogni, Massimo, *Tra continuità e incertezza. Italia e Albania 1914-1939* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007).
- Broccoli, Angelo, *Antonio Gramsci e l'Educazione come Egemonia* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1972).
- Çami, Muin (ed.), *Kongresi i Lushnjes dhe Lufta e Vlores* (Tirana: Akademi e Shkencave e RPSH, 1974).
- Çami, Muin, *Lufta e popullit shqiptar per çlirimin kombëtar (permbledhje dokumentash)* (Tirana: Instituti i historisë dhe i Gjuhës, 1976).
- Çami, Muin, *Shqipëria në Rrjedhat e Historisë 1912-1934* (Tirana: Onufri, 2007).

- Çami, Muin, Haxhihasani, Qemal, Haskaj, Zihni and Sako, Zihni (eds.), *Kujtime dhe Kënge Popullore per Luftën Çlirimtare të Viteve 1918–1920* (Tiranë: Universiteti Shtetëror i Tiranës, 1970).
- Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).
- Çekrezi, Kostë, *Shqipëria, e Shkuara dhe e Tashmja* (Tirana: Naimi, 2012).
- Chabod, Federico, *L'Italia Contemporanea 1918–1948* (Milan: Einaudi Scuola, 1994).
- De Bernardi, Alberto, *Il Canone della Storia Contemporanea nei Manuali Scolastici dall'Unità alla Repubblica*, in *La storia contemporanea tra scuola e università*, in Sissco.it.
- Di Giorgio, Antonino, *Il Problema Militare, La questione Adriatica, L'Albania e la Libia*, Discorso sulle comunicazioni di governo pronunciato alla camera dei deputati nella tornata del 1 luglio (Rome: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1920).
- Eliade, Mircea, *Mito e Realtà* (Rome: Borla, 1985).
- Farina, Salvatore, *Le Truppe d'assalto Italiane*, 1st edn (Roma: 1938).
- Federzoni, Luigi, *Per la Pace Italiana in Adriatico, Discorso pronunciato alla Camera dei Deputati nella tornata del 7 luglio 1920* (Rome: Tipografia della Camera dei Deputati, 1920).
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Addresses to the German Nation*, ed. by Gregory Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Foa, Vittoria, *Questo Novecento (edizione ridotta)* (Milan: Einaudi Scuola, 1998).
- Frashëri, Tanush (ed.), *Ali Kelyra, Shkrime për Historinë e Shqipërisë* (Tirana: Onufri, 2012).
- Friedman, Kajza Ekholm, and Jonathan Friedman, *Modernities, Class, and the Contradictions of Globalization* (Plymouth: Altamira Press, 2008).
- Gallinari, Vincenzo, *L'Esercito Italiano nel Primo dopoguerra 1918–1920* (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1980).
- Gellner, Ernest, *Nation and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).
- Gentile, Giovanni, *Sommario di Pedagogia Come Scienza Filosofica: II, Didattica* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1955).
- Giacomini, Ruggero, *La rivolta dei Bersaglieri e le giornate rosse: i moti di Ancona dell'estate 1920 e l'indipendenza dell'Albania* (Ancona: Quaderni del consiglio regionale delle Marche, 2010).
- Giannini, Amedeo, *L'Albania dall'Indipendenza all'Unione con L'Italia (1913–1939)* (Rome: Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1940).
- Giolitti, Giovanni, *Memorie della mia vita* (Milan: Garzanti, 1967).
- Gjeçovi, Xhelal (ed.), *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar Vëllimi i Katërt 1939–1990* (Tiranë: Toena, 2009).
- Grandi, Dino, *Il Mio Paese, ricordi autobiografici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985).
- Gurakuqi, Romeo, *Shqipëria dhe Çështja Shqiptare pas luftës së Parë botërore* (Shkodër: Camaj-Pipa, 2007).
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *The Philosophy of History* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 2001).
- Herder, Johann Gottfried, *Idee per la Storia dell'Umanità*, (Bari: Laterza, 1992).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: program, myth reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- Hroch, Miroslav, *Social Preconditions of national revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

- Hoxha, Enver, *Vepra 29* (Tirana: Instituti I Studimeve marksiste-Leniniste Pranë KQ të PPSH, 1979).
- Lederer, Ivo J., *Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference: a study in frontiermaking*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).
- Malinowski, Broinslav, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948).
- Milo, Paskal, *Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë I* (Tirana: Toena, 2013).
- Mola, Aldo, *L'imperialismo Italiano, La Politica Estera dall'Unità al Fascismo* (Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1980).
- Montanari, Mario (ed.), *Le Truppe Italiane in Albania 1914–1920* (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1978).
- Montanelli, Indro, *Albania Una e Mille* (Turin: G. B. Paravia & C., 1939).
- Montanelli, Indro, and Mario Cervi, *Storia d'Italia vol.VII 1919–1936* (Milan: RCS libri, 2006).
- Nani, Umberto, *Italia e Jugoslavia (1918–1928)* (Milan: Librerie d'Italia, 1928).
- Paresce, Gabriele, *Italia e Jugoslavia* (Milan: Bemporad e figlio editore, 1935).
- Pastorelli, Pietro, *L'Albania nella Politica Estera Italiana* (Naples: Editore Jovine, 1970).
- Petrota, Gaetano, *Populli, Gjuha dhe Letërsia Shqiptare* (Tirana: Almera, 2008), p. 430–1 (translation from the original Gaetano Petrotta, *Popolo, Lingua e Cultura Albanese*, Palermo 1932).
- Pollo, Stefanaq (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë Vellimi I Dyte (vitet 30 te shek. XIX – 1912)* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1984).
- Pollo, Stefanaq (ed.), *Historia e Shqipërisë III* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, 1984).
- Puto, Arben, *Shqipëria Politike 1912–1939* (Tirana: Toena, 2009).
- Rochat, Giorgio, *L'Esercito Italiano da Vittorio Veneto a Mussolini (1919–1925)* (Bari: Laterza, 1967).
- Romano, Sergio, *Giovanni Gentile* (Milano: Bompiani, 1984).
- Sahlins, Marshall, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981).
- Sahlins, Marshall, *Islands of History* (Bristol: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).
- Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie, and Bernd J. Fischer (eds), *Albanian Identities, Myth and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).
- Silva, Pietro, *Il Mediterraneo, dall'Unità di Roma all'Impero Italiano* (Milan: Istituto per gli studi di Politica internazionale, 1937).
- Smith, Anthony D., *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- Tajani, Filippo, *L'Avvenire dell'Albania* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1932).
- Tozzi, Giulio, *L'Albania e il Suo Incerto Destino* (Milan: Treves, 1920).
- Trattati e Convenzioni fra il Regno d'Italia e gli Altri Stati, Volume 23* (Rome: Tipografie del Regio Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 1930).
- Vico, Gianbattista, *The First New Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Vllamasi, Sejfi, *Ballafaqime Politike në Shqipëri (1897–1942)* (Tirana: Neraida, 2000).
- Vlora, Eqrem, *Kujtime 1885–1925* (Tirana: IDK, 2006).
- Vlora, Syrja, *Kujtime* (Tirana: Iceberg, 2013).

Archival sources

Albanian National Archive (AQSH), Fondi 34 Luigi Gurakuqi, Dosja 8, 1919.

Encyclopaedic works and dictionaries

Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Pubblicata sotto l'alto patronato di S.M. Il Re d'Italia, Istituto Giovanni Treccani, vol. II (Torino: Agro-Ammi), MCMXXIX–VII (1929).

Enciclopedia Europea, vol. I (Milano: Aachen-Bakuni, 1976).

Encyclopaedia Universalis, Vol. I (Paris, 1973).

Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico UTET, A-Anti (Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1984).

Great Soviet Encyclopedia, A translation of the third edition (London: Macmillan Educational Corporation, 1973).

La piccola Treccani, dizionario enciclopedico (Roma 1997).

Newspapers

Avanti, Roma 1920.

Idea Nazionale, Roma 1920.

Il Popolo d'Italia, Milano 1920.

Myth of a Leader: Enver Hoxha's Role during the Second World War in Contemporary Albanian History Textbooks

The end of the political and economic system of socialism in 1992, of a system that had controlled almost all aspects of life in Albania, naturally affected many domains of society. The humanities were affected by the dramatically changed circumstances as they had to a certain extent served the ideological needs of the ruling Communist Party. Historiography, as in other former socialist countries of South-Eastern Europe, had certainly been one of the most highly ideologized disciplines because of its use in legitimizing communist rule and thus the claim to historical truth. The need to re-write and re-teach history was a clear result of this new political juncture following the collapsed East-West front within Europe in 1989. In fact, this front, as Christina Koulouri asserts, was historiographical as well as historical.¹ The fall of socialism was also reflected in the tertiary education and school sector, presented as the 'communist legacy' that was to be overcome. When communism ended in Albania, a re-examination of some of the foundational myths² occurred, as well as the establishment of new historical agendas.³ This chapter analyzes the principal interpretations of the role of Enver Hoxha during the Second World War, and how his character is depicted in post-socialist history textbooks. Content analysis will therefore constitute the primary methodological approach, bearing in mind the process of de-mythologization⁴ in post-socialist Albanian historiography.

1 Christina Koulouri, 'Introduction', in *Clio in the Balkans: The Politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki, 2002), pp. 15–48.

2 By myths I mean here presentations of history that distort demonstrable facts by ideologizing and legitimizing them according to the political agenda. I therefore share the definition of history discourse put forward by Roland Barthes (*Mythologies* 1972) as 'a language robbery that transforms meaning into form', and that of Jonathan Friedman (*Myth, History and Political Identity* 2008, p. 89): a 'history discourse of identity, consisted of attributing meaningful past to a structured present'.

3 Bernd J. Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten*, 140 (München: R. Oldebourg Verlag, 2009), p. 126.

4 With the term 'de-mythologization' I refer to the idea put forward by Pål Kolstø on veracity

I will begin by giving an overview of the general discourses on political and historical myth, focusing on the process of history revision and the core debates that are still ongoing in Albania. Further, the analysis will focus on how the figure of Enver Hoxha is portrayed in post-socialist Albanian school history textbooks, taking into account the role of Hoxha during the Second World War and his representation in socialist history textbooks as the most important leader of the anti-fascist and anti-Nazi movements. During socialism, Hoxha's role during the war was imbued with a mythical essence and deemed crucial for the political events to come in the aftermath of 1945, particularly the building of the new socialist Albania from 1945 to 1985, the year of Hoxha's death. All this changed after the collapse of socialism, and the process of history revision began by de-ideologizing and de-mythologizing Hoxha's character as leader, particularly his role during the war. This chapter will show that, although attempts to deconstruct the myth of Hoxha were especially intensive in the early years of transition, the old ethnocentric writing of history still prevails in the textbook, and Hoxha's role during the Second World War alters according to the political stance of the textbook author(s).

The school textbooks analyzed here are those of the fourth and ninth grades of primary school and twelfth grade of high school,⁵ corresponding with the national history published between 2000 and 2010. In post-communist Albania, history textbooks were usually written by the same group of authors, who might occasionally revise and republish their texts, generally making only very few changes to the original content.

Revision of National History

The so-called responsibility of the historian towards historical fact and to critique of the historical and ideological abuse of history, as Eric Hobsbawm (1994) has pointed out, is seldom pursued in post-socialist Albania. Efforts to deconstruct national myths in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within the framework of the so-called nineteenth-century national movement of *Rilindja Kombëtare*⁶ (National Renaissance) and during the socialist period were usually

and the correct argumentation of history as a scholarly discipline: Kolstø, *Myths and Boundaries*, p. 10.

5 *Të njohim historinë e popullit tonë. Për klasën IV të shkollës 8-vjeçare*, V. Kuri et al. (Tiranë, 2000); *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror*, M. Kokurti et al. (Tiranë, 2003); *Historia 9*, D. Egro et al. (Tiranë, 2009); *Historia e popullit shqiptar 12*, B. Meta et al. (Tiranë, 2010).

6 I share the opinion of Rigels Halili, who considers *Rilindja Kombëtare* 'a natural and concluding phase of earlier socio-cultural processes that saw Albanians emerge first as an ethnic group in the 17th century and then as a nation in the beginning of the 19th century. In this sense,

met with hostility and resistance from most historians as well as the general public. This shows that the constructed figures in a history-making process aimed at building national identities has found a foothold in Albania. That the emphasis on the nation renders historians susceptible to political instrumentalism is not seen as a problem. Many historians even share the explicit or implicit belief that they must serve their nation's cause. Few Albanian historians have emancipated themselves from such 'closed' traditions that uncritically honour patriotism and ideology. Thus traditional discourses underlying the national histories written in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries are often carried over into current history curricula. More worryingly, historians tend to uncritically accept the conventions of historiographical tradition while they receive their training. Radical re-evaluation and revisionist efforts have often been initiated by historians who had been well established during the past regime, and not by former dissidents. For some it was not even necessary to alter their views; they simply dropped token references to Marxism or Hoxhism.⁷ Other scholars spectacularly changed direction in order to avoid criticism and found acceptance in the new political order. Many revisionist efforts have therefore not resulted in developing historical knowledge, but rather reversed the semantic value of certain historical events.

In post-socialist Albania, as in other former socialist states, revisionism was mostly linked to right-wing forces, as left-wing ideas came to be completely discredited with the fall of communism. The character of the political system therefore continues to heavily determine the trajectory of the education level begun in 2013, a process initiated by left-wing forces and which aims towards the writing of a purely scientific history textbook.⁸ History-writing, according to one of the authors of a recent textbook review, is considered 'a natural and a continuous process'; especially in the case of Albania 'this process requires an equilibrium. There is a need for a depoliticized history'.⁹ This review process has provoked several debates on the need for revision and especially on the 'objectivity' of the experts enlisted for these revisions, fearing a political agenda fuelling an ulterior motive. The debates on revisions regarding the figure of Enver Hoxha and the events of the Second World War were particularly lively. Revisions

the period from the 1840s up to 1912 was the end of the long process of nation-formation'. Rigels Halili, "Rilindja Kombëtare": The Story behind the Name and the Study of the Albanian National Movement', *Annuario: The Albanian Yearbook of Historical and Anthropological Studies*, 1 (2011), pp. 36–51.

7 Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania', p. 26.

8 Interview with Pëllumb Xhufi for *Tema* Newspaper on 16 April 2014 (accessed June 2016): <http://www.gazetatema.net/web/2014/04/16/xhufi-si-do-i-ndryshojme-tekstet-e-historise>.

9 Interview with Paskal Milo for *OraNews* TV on 7 September 2014. <http://www.oranews.tv/vendi/milo-te-rishkruhet-historia-duhet-carmatosur-nga-politika>.

of portrayals of Hoxha have provoked the harshest reactions in the media; he was the ‘dictator’ of socialist Albania and found guilty of political crimes between 1945 and 1990.¹⁰ A ‘realistic depiction’ of the events and of Hoxha himself seems to be the final challenge facing both Albanian historians and Albanian learners of history as a subject in both primary and secondary school.

Political and Historical Myth

Bottici and Challand suggest that what renders a myth specifically political is not its content, but rather something in the relationship between a given narrative and the way in which it can come to address the political conditions of a given group.¹¹ By supporting Blumenberg’s philosophical reflections on myth, Bottici and Challand understand political myth as the continual process of work on a common narrative by which the members of a social group can provide significance to their political conditions and experience. What renders a myth specifically political, then, is not the political content of the story that it tells, but the fact that the story that it tells comes to ‘make significance’ (*Bedeutsamkeit*) of the specifically political conditions for a certain social group or society.¹² Thus, either a narrative can respond to this need for significance (*Bedeutsamkeit*) for a given group and accommodate the new circumstances by allowing variants to its narrative core, or it simply ceases to work as a myth.¹³ In order to catch the specifically political connotations of a myth, Bottici argues that we must look at the ‘work on myth’ as a whole. In dealing with political myth it is not only at the production of myth that we must look, but also, and foremost, at its reception.¹⁴

Barthes in his *Mythologies* argues that myths are a form of ideological distortion of reality and, in particular, one that presents that which is a product of

10 Current examples of these reactions to revisions concerning the figure of Hoxha are the debates among Fatos Lubonja and Paskal Milo. See: ‘Pse dhe si e duan Enver Hoxhën’: <http://www.panorama.com.al/2014/09/15/lubonja-kunder-milos-per-rishkrimin-e-historise-pse-dhe-si-e-duan-enver-hoxhen>; ‘Rishkrimi i historisë, Lubonja kundër Milos për rolin e Enver Hoxhës’: <http://www.oranews.tv/vendi/rishkrimi-i-historise-fatos-lubonja-kunder-paskal-milos-per-rolin-e-enver-hoxhes>, ‘Princ Leka: Paskal Milo idhtar i komunizimit, s’mund të rishkruajë historinë’: <http://lajmepolitike.com/princ-leka-paskal-milo-idhtar-kom-unizimit-smund-te-rishkruaje-historine>.

11 Chiara Bottici and Benoît Challand, ‘Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9/3 (2006), pp. 315–336; here, p. 317.

12 Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 180.

13 Bottici and Challand, ‘Rethinking Political Myth’, p. 318.

14 Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, p. 181.

contingency as natural and therefore eternal.¹⁵ According to Friedman, history is always the organization of the past in terms of a present situation; the past is always constructed according to the conditions and desires of those who produce historical texts in the present. Thus, history is a mythical construction because it is always a representation of the past subordinated to the establishment of an identity in the present. An objectivist history must necessarily be produced in the context of a certain kind of selfhood, namely, one that is based on the radical separation of the subject from any particular identity, and that objectifies and textualizes reality.¹⁶

For Bottici the appearance of purely political myths is a typically modern phenomenon. While political myths are hardly distinguishable from religious myths in archaic societies, in modern societies, with the separation of politics from its religious anchorage on the one hand and its democratization on the other, the role of specifically *political* myths becomes conspicuous. As Sorel argues, when it comes to explaining typically modern phenomena such as major social movements, the fact that the people participating in them represent their action in the form of grand narratives that depict their own success becomes so evident that there seems to be little need to insist on the role of political myth.¹⁷

George Schöpfli in his interpretation of national myth embraced a collectivist approach, asserting that:

myth is one of the ways in which collectivities establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values. Therefore myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community by itself. Centrally myth is about perceptions and not historically validated truths about the ways in which communities regard certain propositions as normal and natural and others as perverse and alien.¹⁸

Mircea Eliade argues that, in folk representations of the past, concrete events are subsumed under poetic categories and particular historical personages are assembled into archetypes of heroes.¹⁹ Nevertheless, historical narrative is an ever-changing narrative being disposed to a process of reinterpretation. As Smith asserts, a communal past is constantly being reconstructed in response to new needs, interests and perceptions.²⁰ As Schöpfli argues, myth establishes

15 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), p. 124.

16 Jonathan Friedman, 'Myth, History, and Political Identity', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7/2 (1992), p. 194.

17 Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, pp. 6–7.

18 George Schöpfli, *Nations, Identity, Power* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), p. 80.

19 Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of Eternal Return: Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 43.

20 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

coherence and creates thought-worlds that appear clear and logical. It simplifies and orders the environment in such a way as to make sense of it for collectivities.²¹ Myth can intensify communication within the community, easing the transmission of the messages from the rulers to the ruled and improving trust between them. Historical myth overrides and enables us to shape social memory. Myth can make certain parts of memory salient and convey a new understanding of them. At the same time it can exclude some events from public discourse and even block acknowledgements that certain events actually took place.

History Textbooks and the Myth surrounding Hoxha

Enver Hoxha as First Secretary of the Albanian Communist Party (later Labour Party) was both the principal subject of socialist Albanian myth-making and – at the same time – himself the principal myth-maker and author (or at least the guiding spirit) of the essential text of Albanian Marxism-Leninism.²² According to the myth developed during Hoxha's own lifetime, he had thus been the guiding political genius of the anti-fascist resistance to the Italian and later Nazi occupying forces.²³

Logically, after the fall of communism, depictions of Hoxha in Albanian school textbooks changed significantly from those advocated during the communist period. In the framework of the process of national history revision, the myth surrounding his reputation as the builder of the 'new socialist Albania', a role he first assumed during the Second World War, was thus demythologized. As Fischer asserts, revisions would first and foremost require the textbooks to debunk Enver Hoxha and the historical pillar upon which his power was built. This would include the rehabilitation of other historical figures and events, in particular those from the Second World War since this era was considered to be one of the most politicized.²⁴

In academia, one topic of heated debate was that of depictions of the Second World War, which would require revisions in accordance with the new trends. Amongst other aspects, this process included replacing the old communist

21 Schöpflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, p. 84.

22 M. J. Alex Standish, 'Enver Hoxha's Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 116; Michael Schmidt-Neke, 'Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Teleologie: das kommunistische Albanien als Objekt der Zeitgeschichtsforschung', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten*, 140 (München: R. Oldenbourg-Verlag, 2009), pp. 131–48; here, p. 135.

23 Standish, 'Enver Hoxha's role', p. 116.

24 Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania', 126.

historiography with the new anti-communist version. But the old way of writing and analyzing historical events remained the same. In the post-socialist period most of the history textbooks for pre-university level still maintained their narrative and descriptive character, far from being of epistemological character. Most of the textbook authors maintained their 'politically correct' position. The textbooks are mostly factually descriptive accounts of political and military events without any evaluation or value judgments. This because the textbooks are closely related to historiographical tradition, academic history and research.²⁵ Some terms used to describe historical events reflect certain negative attitudes of texts written during the socialist period. This is the case for the terms 'traitors', or 'exploiters', for example, which are still used in textbooks:

Heavily armed Italian fascists aided by the country's traitors occupied Albania. The occupiers' aim was to seize the country's national wealth and unite it with fascist Italy. They wanted to annihilate its language and customs.²⁶

This paragraph was taken from the history textbook for fourth grade of primary school, published in 2000, where the old ethnocentric historical narrative used during socialism continues, as it does in current textbooks. The paragraph is filled with metaphors and negative descriptions of the 'other' or of the 'enemy'. Such texts, which apparently seek to cause suffering to a collective group constitute what Vamik Volkan has called the political myth of 'chosen trauma', in the form of intergenerational transmissions of past traumatic events. The chosen trauma becomes a significant marker for the in-group identity. Furthermore, it may create a foundation for the society's development of an exaggerated entitlement ideology that, under new historical situations such as a threat to a group's identity, can be manipulated by political leaders to develop new political programmes and/or take new action supported by this ideology.²⁷ In the actual textbook one can trace further the 'myth of the victim', which was widely developed during Hoxha's time. The famous Hoxha quote: 'shqiptarët e kanë çarrë rrugën e historisë me shpatë në dorë' (Albanians have moved through history sword in hand) describes perfectly the level of paranoia that held force during Hoxha's regime, which certainly contributed to rendering Albania one of the world's most isolated countries. According to this 'victim' myth, Albanians have protected their national identity through wars and uninterrupted insurrections

25 Oliver Schmitt, 'Vorwort', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, p. 8.

26 Vilson Kuri et al., *Të njohim historinë e popullit tonë. Për klasën IV të shkollës 8-vjeçare* (Tiranë 2000), p. 98.

27 www.vamikvolkan.com/Chosen-Trauma,-the-Political-Ideology-of-Entitlement-and-Violence.php (accessed 26 January 2015).

against their country's enemies.²⁸ Current textbooks frequently use the myth of victimization and of freedom. Children and learners are taught that:

The antifascist national liberation war was led by the national ideology and by the ideas of national liberation. It aimed towards the expulsion of foreign invaders, the liberation of the country, the restoration of national independence and the building of the new democratic Albania.²⁹

In textbooks currently in use, we can also find what Koulouri calls 'neutral' school history – a history of omissions and silences. Rather than present negative or positive images, textbooks refrain from comment.³⁰ This is also the case for Enver Hoxha's representation in school textbooks of the transitional period, where in most cases his name appears in the context of the main figure of the national antifascist and liberation movement.³¹ There are cases where his name is not mentioned at all in the history textbooks, but instead his picture is shown in the page margins.³² In *Historia 9* for the ninth grade, a section on the formation of the Albanian Communist Party (hereafter ACP) presents a picture of Enver Hoxha positioned on the right-hand edge of the page and, although he was present at the meeting, there is no word on him or other Albanian communists. Instead we are given the names of both Yugoslavian emissaries who participated in the meeting by coordinating the agreement between Albanian communist groups and contributing insights from the Yugoslavian experience. Similar information on the creation of the ACP, in an abbreviated form, is given in the other textbook, *Historia 9*, where the learners are given only the names of both Yugoslavian emissaries.³³ Interesting is that in *Historia e shqiptarëve 12*³⁴ for the twelfth grade the information on the formation of Albanian parties remains superficial and the name of Enver Hoxha as First Secretary of the ACP is not given. Instead the text mentions that the formation of the ACP was a result of a meeting of the three communist groups, in which the two Yugoslavian emissaries also took part. In presenting the aims of the ACP during the war, the authors assume rather a leftist position by emphasizing the joining of the people around this party, with a view to the liberation of the country.

The three Albanian communist groups of Korça, Shkodra and the Youth held a meeting for their union from November 8th to 14th 1941 in Tirana. At their request, two representatives of the Yugoslavian Communist Party, Miladin Popovic and Dushan Mugosha,

28 Hans Ulrich Lempert, 'Qasje dhe çështje të hulumtimit bashkëkohor mbi nacionalizmin në Shqipëri', *Përpyekja* 32–33 (2014), pp. 263–282; here p. 273.

29 Myzafer Kokurti et al., *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror* (Tiranë 2003), p. 281.

30 Christina Koulouri, 'Introduction', in *Clio in the Balkans*, p. 33.

31 B. Meta et al., *Historia e popullit shqiptar 12*, (Tiranë 2010), p. 142.

32 Neritan Ceka et al., *Historia 9* (Tiranë, 2009), p. 106.

33 Maringlen Kasmi and Bernard Zotaj, *Historia e popullit shqiptar 9* (Tiranë 2009), p. 104.

34 Petrika Thëngjilli et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve 12* (Tiranë 2011), p. 126.

participated in order to help overcome the disputes among the communist groups. The meeting decided the formation of the party and drew up an actual party programme. Two tasks were outlined: the liberation of the country from the invaders, in order to re-establish national independence, and the establishment of a democratic regime after the war. This would be achieved by joining the people regardless of their religion, origin and ideas, in collaboration with other political forces and the antifascist allies.³⁵

The same 'silent' version of history is chosen by the authors of the other text of *Historia 12* for the twelfth grade, which, when describing the formation of ACP, gives no date of formation but instead mentions attempts to mobilize the people and guerrilla units against fascist aggression within the country.³⁶

Another textbook for the twelfth grade, *Historia e shqiptarëve 12*, does mention the name of Enver Hoxha as a participant in the meeting and also provides brief information on his political life.³⁷ Another textbook by the same authors, *Historia 12*, which serves as an optional subject for the twelfth grade, rather chooses not to mention Enver Hoxha by name in the entire textbook, only providing a photograph of him taken after the war during the Peace Conference in Paris.³⁸

Another aspect of history textbooks is that of a 'new pro-European history' or 'new pro-Western history' produced by scholars after 1991. This could, for example, be traced in the pages explaining the anti-fascist resistance of the Albanian people and political parties.

The antifascist and national liberation war of the Albanian people was part of the global antifascist struggle. Albania from its beginning was a worthy member of the global antifascist coalition, which was led by the three Great Allied Powers: the Soviet Union, USA and England. At the end of the war, Albania lined up beside the winners, beside the Great Allies and the other countries of the antifascist coalition, which had provided help for the common cause, that of the destruction of fascism.³⁹

This new 'pro-history' is produced by the old generation of historians and the language used to demonstrate this new attitude in the textbooks is rather peculiar; it appears to constitute a kind of vestige advocated by an older generation of academics.

35 Ibid.

36 *Historia e popullit shqiptar 12*, Meta et al. (Tiranë 2010), p. 142.

37 Menduh Dërguti et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve* (Tiranë 2011), p. 109.

38 Menduh Dërguti et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve. Me zgjedhje të detyruar* (Tiranë 2011), p. 118.

39 M. Kokurti et al., *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror* (Tiranë 2003), p. 281.

Enver Hoxha during WWII

In general, the majority of history textbooks in use nowadays give only very brief information on Enver Hoxha. In some of the textbooks he is depicted firstly as a participant in the formation of the ACP in November 1941 and then as the political commissary of the Albanian Partisan Army (UNÇSH), and later as Commander in Chief and Prime Minister of the democratic government as of October 1944 following the second meeting of the National Antifascist and Liberation Front.

Reviewing several school textbooks, I have identified two tendencies in depictions of Hoxha during the Second World War. Both tendencies appear politically motivated and lack a critical analysis of the events, mostly providing narratives and portrayals in accordance with the textbook author's political stance. The first is the so-called 'left-wing academic position', according to which Enver Hoxha is depicted as a neutral figure during the war and is mentioned in connection with the issues regarding the formation of the ACP, a party to which this group of historians attributes the main role in leading the anti-fascist movement and struggle.⁴⁰

Enver Hoxha is mentioned as the leader of the ACP only after March 1943 (the first ACP meeting) and is depicted as being automatically assigned the main leadership role of the leftist movement.⁴¹ This group of authors give an interesting explanation for the cancellation of the Mukja Agreement between the ACP delegates and Balli Kombëtar delegates: that the ACP reneged on this accord because the opposition party Balli Kombëtar threatened the ACP future role in the country envisaged for after the war. Enver Hoxha is not mentioned at all in this issue, although he was the party leader at the time.⁴²

The date of the liberation of Albania from the Nazis is one of the greatest polemic issues of post-socialist discourse, a debate equally reflected in school history textbooks. According to the 'left-wing academic' position, Albania's liberation date was November 29th 1944, the day on which 'the partisans entered the city of Shkodra after the Germans had withdrawn'.⁴³ As a final resume of the entire war the leftists teach learners that 'the antifascist and national liberation struggle was a war of liberation, a popular revolution, organized and led by the ACP'.⁴⁴

The second trend in the textbooks is the so-called 'right-wing academic position', which not surprisingly represents the thought and reflection on the war

40 M. Kokurti et al., *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror* (Tiranë 2003), pp. 257, 270, 280–281.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 257.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 265.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 280.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 280–281.

period of the right-wing political forces in post-socialist Albania. Particularly striking in the textbooks is the nomination of the anti-fascist resistance as a 'liberation struggle/war' against the Italian and Nazi aggressors,⁴⁵ contrary to the national antifascist war of liberation as it is described by the leftist position.⁴⁶ There is no word in the main text on the formation of the ACP and its leadership; instead, information on its formation and aims are offered as a supplement in the page margins.⁴⁷ Hoxha is mentioned only as the political commissary of the military headquarters of the liberation army and criticized as responsible for denouncing the Mukje Agreement, cancelled under the pressure of the Yugoslavian emissaries.⁴⁸ According to this stance this action taken worked against the unification of Albanians at that delicate moment of war.⁴⁹ This right-wing group of authors argue that, from the cancellation of the Mukja Agreement in August 1943 onwards, in a country fighting a war against the Nazis, a civil war was also being waged between the partisans, led by the ACP from the one side, and the 'nationalist forces' (Balli Kombëtar and Legaliteti) from the other. This civil war, the textbook continues, was started by the partisans and the ACP with a view to rising to power after the end of the war.⁵⁰

The disputable liberation date, according to the right-wing authors, was 28th November, in which the Nazi army withdrew and the partisans entered the city of Shkodra. Following this argument, these authors also explain to the students that, a year after the liberation of Albania, this date was changed from 28th to 29th of November for political reasons (the influence of Yugoslavia upon Albania) on November 9th 1945.⁵¹ Finally, this group of authors criticize the ACP for its efforts to seize power by waging war against other political forces, thus seeking to establish a communist state after the war.⁵²

Conclusion

In the introduction to her book, *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers summarizes the 'postmodern' writing of history in South-Eastern Europe as nationalistic. The prevalence of nationalism in any form (including national historiography) is explained in terms of historical

45 B. Meta et al., *Historia e popullit shqiptar 12* (Tiranë 2010), p. 141.

46 M. Kokurti et al., *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror* (Tiranë 2003), p. 257.

47 B. Meta et al., *Historia e popullit shqiptar 12* (Tiranë 2010), p. 142.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 145, 148.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 147–148.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 151–152.

52 *Ibid.*, 152.

specificity and commonality within the Balkans, and the circumstances of each particular historical movement.⁵³

In contrast to the socialist period, where Enver Hoxha was the principal figure in the *process* of myth-making, in the new socialist Albania he was the key figure *upon whom* foundation myths were founded. Accordingly, the post-socialist period initially saw attempts to re-examine the figure of Hoxha within the framework of the processes of de-mythologizing and de-ideologizing national history. But I would argue that, although attempts were made to deconstruct both his own myth and those built by him, still the old traditional nationalist ethnocentric historiography with its narrative style prevailed. The school textbooks continued to uphold an ideological influence depending on the political agenda of the day. History narratives have thus shifted several times both to the left and to the right. The writing of historical events and, in this case, of Hoxha's contribution to the events of WWII in Albania as represented in current textbooks, resembles the phenomenon attributed to Friedman above. Especially in the framework of the 'alter text'⁵⁴ option, learners read different variants of the same history, depending on who has written it.

In current textbooks, Enver Hoxha's role during the war is an ever-changing narrative, constantly being revised or reinterpreted according to the political views of the textbook authors'. His figure thus appears in certain textbooks as the leader of the partisans or communists, while in others he is not even mentioned at all. In the latter cases, Hoxha appears either non-existent or unimportant for the events of the war, and learners are denied access to knowledge about him or facts relating to events in which he played a key part. I believe that there is a need for a critical and apolitical re-evaluation of Hoxha's role during the war, and indeed a portrayal that does not avoid mentioning him.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Ceka, Neritan et al., *Historia 9* (Tirana: 2009).
 Dërguti, Menduh et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve* (Tirana: 2011).
 Dërguti, Menduh et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve. Me zgjedhje të detyruar* (Tiranë 2011).
 Egro, D. et al., *Historia 9* (Tiranë, 2009).

53 Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, eds, *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 13–14.

54 Currently in Albania, schools select themselves which textbooks they wish to use in the classroom. Several books officially approved by the Ministry of Education are used in the learning process at school.

- Kasmi, Maringlen and Bernard Zotaj, *Historia e popullit shqiptar* 9 (Tiranë 2009).
 Kokurti, Myzafer et al., *Historia 4. Profili shoqëror* (Tirana, 2003).
 Kuri, Vilson et al., *Të njohim historinë e popullit tonë. Për klasën IV të shkollës 8-vjeçare* (Tirana, 2000).
 Meta, Beqir et al., *Historia e popullit shqiptar* 12 (Tirana: 2010).
 Thëngjilli, Petrika et al., *Historia e shqiptarëve* 12 (Tiranë 2011).

Further References

- Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972).
 Bottici, Chiara, and Benoît Challand, 'Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (3) (2006), 315–336.
 Bottici, Chiara, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
 Eliade, Mircea, *The Myth of Eternal Return: Cosmos and History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
 Fischer, Bernd J., 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 140 (München: R. Oldebourg Verlag, 2009), pp. 119–30.
 Friedman, Jonathan, 'Myth, History and Political Identity', in *Maternities, Class, and the Contradictions of Globalization*, ed. by Kajza Ekholm Friedman and Jonathan Friedman (Plymouth: Altamira Press, 2008).
 Friedman, Jonathan, 'Myth, History, and Political Identity', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7 (2) (1992), 194–210.
 Halili, Rigels, 'Rilindja Kombëtare': the story behind the name and the study of the Albanian national movement', *Annuario: The Albanian Yearbook of Historical and Anthropological Studies*, 1 (2011), 36–51.
 Hobsbawm, Eric, 'Debunking Ethnic Myths: History is a weapon against an invented past – if we are brave enough to use it', *Open Society News* (Winter 1994), 1–16.
 Lempert, Hans Ulrich, 'Qasje dhe çështje të hulumtimit bashkëkohor mbi nacionalizmin në Shqipëri', *Përpyekja* 32–33 (2014), 263–282.
 Kantsteiner, Wulf, 'Hayden White's Critique of the Writing of History', *History and Theory*, 32 (1993), 273–95.
 Kolstø, Pål, *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe* (London: Hurst & Company, 2005).
 Koulouri, Christina, 'Introduction', in *Clio in the Balkans: The politics of History Education*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki, 2002), 15–48.
 Schöpflin, George, *Nations, Identity, Power* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000).
 Smith, Anthony D., *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
 Schmidt-Neke, Michael, 'Zwischen Kaltem Krieg und Teleologie: das kommunistische Albanien als Objekt der Zeitgeschichtsforschung', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und*

- Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 140 (München: R. Oldebourg Verlag, 2009), pp. 131–48.
- Schmitt, Oliver, 'Vorwort', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, ed. by Oliver Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz, Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 140 (München: R. Oldebourg Verlag, 2009), pp. 7–12.
- Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie, 'Narratives of Power: Capacities of Myth in Albania', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).
- Standish, M.J. Alex, 'Enver Hoxha's role in the development of socialist Albanian myths', in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).
- Volkan, Vamik D., 'Chosen Trauma, The Political Ideology of Entitlement and Violence' (2004) <www.vamikvolkan.com/Chosen-Trauma,-the-Political-Ideology-of-Entitlement-and-Violence.php> [accessed 26 January 2015].

Examining the Meanings and Uses of ‘Civilization’ in Albanian History Textbooks¹

*There is no document of civilization
which is not at the same time
a document of barbarism.*

Walter Benjamin

Introduction

The concept of ‘civilization’ is the key organizing principle of a new generation of world history school textbooks in contemporary post-communist Albania. It is employed as a way to unite into a single narrative the entire progress of humankind, from its prehistorical beginnings to the formation of what the textbooks call ‘world civilization’. This paper examines the tension between the descriptive and normative uses of the term in these world history textbooks. The hypothesis of our analysis is that although there is an effort in the new textbooks to expand pupils’ knowledge of non-Western peoples, the Eurocentrism of the main narrative remains as strong as in older textbooks. Western civilization is presented as the ‘highest’, if not the only true civilization of the world, and is sanitized of all traces of the historical phenomena of Western colonialism and imperialism.

Although history textbooks take the past as their subject, the way in which a nation’s past is narrated reflects the outlook and the values of a society’s present: how it now sees itself, its past, and its aspirations for the future. Textbooks can be considered ‘a society’s official memory. They depict what the adult generation wishes to pass on to the next’.² As such, this chapter argues that these textbooks’

1 Research for this paper was carried out at the Georg Eckert Institute as part of a research project on Albanian history textbooks financed by a Marie Curie Fellowship from the Gerda Henkel Foundation. I am grateful to both institutions for their support. I particularly wish to thank Professor Eckhardt Fuchs for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

2 Falk Pingel, ‘Easing Tensions Through Textbook Research and Textbook Comparison: What Measures can be taken to the Balkan region?’, in: UNESCO (ed.), *Disarming History. International Conference on Combating Stereotypes and Prejudice in History Textbooks of South East Europe*, Visby, Gorland (Sweden), 23–25 September 1999, p. 40.

presentation of liberal Western society as the culmination of world civilization has been conceived as a way to instill in Albanian students liberal and Western values. This comes at a time when the country has joined NATO, and applied for membership of the European Union. However the promotion of such values is achieved at the expense of a critical awareness of the wrongs and sufferings that the spread of Western civilization has caused non-European peoples throughout history. In this way, the history textbooks of world civilization may cultivate in students a thoroughly *ahistorical* attitude, which allows for the misuse of history in the service of present concerns.

The method used in the research for this paper is qualitative discourse analysis (or content analysis). This method attempts to identify the information that circulates at a certain place and a certain time, and to explore both the contexts of power which have made possible the proliferation of such information, and the power effects that it generates. In a discourse there is a kind of order of knowledge, which absorbs and creates certain judgements or units of information while rejecting others³. Discourses thus discipline knowledge and, as such, they constitute acts of power. The introduction of the concept of ‘civilization’ into world history textbooks, and the central position it occupies later, can be linked to wider social and political phenomena that go beyond textbook and education reforms. It is part of an effort to ‘normalize’ among Albanian citizens the ideas of the market economy, political liberalism, and European integration. The term ‘civilization’ encompasses all these elements of modern development and places them in the timeline of the historical progress of the West, and of humankind as a whole. The sample for our analysis comprises world history school textbooks published in Albania from the beginning of the 1990s to the second decade of the twenty-first century.

Civilization, Colonialism and Imperialism

The word ‘civilization’ first appears in Britain and France in the second half of the eighteenth century. In its earliest uses, ‘civilization’ refers to both the process of *becoming* ‘civilized’ and the *outcome* of that process. Its antonym is ‘barbarism’. From the very outset there was a common assumption that civilization was the preserve of the peoples of Europe, while barbarism, savagery, or the state of nature lay beyond its borders. ‘Civilization’ has both a descriptive and a normative use. In its descriptive use, it identifies the common ethnographic material

3 Michel Foucault, ‘The Discourse on Language’, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. from French by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

products and values that a group of people, such as 'ancient civilizations' or 'Western civilization' have in common. This ethnographic usage conflates 'civilization' with 'culture', and allows for the existence of several contemporary civilizations. The normative use of the term, on the other hand, allows that a certain group of people be 'more civilized' than others, who may be 'less civilized', or altogether 'uncivilized'. In reality, the normative and descriptive uses of the term are inextricably linked. This can be seen in the following seemingly descriptive account of a 'civilized' group of people: a group that demonstrates a given 'degree of co-operation, urbanization and organization', in other words, who demonstrate the capacity for self-government and cooperation.⁴ The concepts used in this description (e. g. 'cooperation') are value-laden.

It is no coincidence that the term 'civilization' was coined during the Enlightenment era. It described precisely the position that the ascending intellectuals and bourgeois elites in England and France believed their countries, and Western Europe in general, enjoyed in the world. The concept of civilization was important not only for Western dominance in politics and commerce, but also for the new sense of identity formed in the era of reason, scientific discoveries, and progress. According to the sociologist Norbert Elias, civilization is the self-consciousness of the West:

It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier society or 'more primitive' contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more.⁵

The introduction of the term 'civilization' into Germany followed a somewhat different route, because the German term *Zivilisation* occupied second rank after the more esteemed *Kultur*. The German label 'culture' was reserved for intellectual, artistic, and religious matters, whereas 'civilization' was used in reference to political, social, economic, and scientific issues. The disparity in these terms' meanings in German, as well as in English and French, can be traced to the general detachment from political activity of German intellectuals, which stood in opposition to the debates carried out at court by French intellectuals. After the formation of the German state, the dichotomy between civilization and culture became one between national culture and the cosmopolitan and 'artificial' civilization of France. Accordingly, culture had to do with the spirit, whereas civilization with technology. This account should however be taken as a simplification of a more complex history of the two terms, given that a number of

4 Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 218.

5 Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 5.

important German thinkers, foremost among them Hegel and Marx, shared the idea of civilization as the progress of humankind in history.⁶

As an organizing principle, the concept of civilization imposes a rational logic onto the unfolding of history. It works on the basis of the notion of progress, which implies that history has a purpose. As we become civilized, and move away from the savagery and barbarism of the past, we make progress. The standard of civilization shows the direction of historical progress and is a yardstick by which to measure the progress of others. The West saw itself as not simply one among many civilizations, but as the bearer of the torch of progress. The narrative of progress is composed of a series of stages which the European man has passed. To fit into this narrative contemporary non-European Others are necessarily described as being at a previous and lesser stage of development. Other's contribution to progress is a thing of the past. Now only the West is advancing, and the Other is in need of assistance from the West. In the framework of Hegel's philosophy of history it is acceptable for civilized nations to treat those who lag behind them as barbarians: 'A pastoral people may treat hunters as barbarians and both of these are barbarians from the point of view of agriculturalists'.⁷ The self-appointed duty of civilized nations is to civilize the barbarians and savages. Throughout history there is a persistent image of the Other as incapable of self-government and prone to squander the resources of their land, and so in need of supervision and guidance. In other words, if a society was deemed less civilized or barbarian, it invited outside intervention by civilized powers.⁸ Organization and self-governance only fit the ideal of civilization when they came in the form found in Europe and the West. Hence 'Westernization' became a synonym for 'civilization'. Civilization narratives assume that agency emanates from modern European subjects alone. The project to spread civilization was the justification of the Western powers for colonialism. As Hamid Dabashi puts it:

Civilizational thinking was therefore a European Enlightenment project to give its rising bourgeoisie a universal frame of collective identity. The Western Civilization gave universal identity of European national cultures. German, French or British cultures were thought of as special manifestations of, so the story unfolded, Western civilization. [...] Islamic, Indian or African civilizations were invented contrapuntally by Orientalism, as the intelligence arm of colonialism, in order to match, balance and thus authenticate 'The Western Civilization'.⁹

The connection between civilization and colonization is established when colonizers consider the question of what to do with the 'natives' if they are not to be

6 Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization* (2009), pp. 34–40.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 218.

9 Hamid Dabashi, 'For the Last Time: Civilizations', *International Sociology*, 16 (3) (2001), 364.

killed. In this context civilization provides a framework in which natives can be deemed fit colonial subjects: slaves, labourers, souls to be saved, etc.¹⁰ The colonizers' privileged position is justified by their industriousness and the presumed indolence of their colonial subjects. So in America, Australia, and elsewhere, the 'failure' of the natives to work the land meant that the new continents were *terrae nullius* ready to be colonized by white Europeans who drove away the natives. Colonial peoples' means of emancipation was to become civilized, which in practice meant to follow the Western prescribes, and to remain under the Western gaze and control.

The constructions of civilization and barbarism, central to colonial domination, have survived the decolonization process and are still influential. Despite its association with colonialism and imperialism, 'civilization' is now used in an inclusive and universal sense. This universal dimension is however not clearly defined, and very often it is assumed that 'civilization' stands for the spread of modern Western society's models in the world. Modernization, development, free trade, liberalism, democracy, and human rights are taken as standards of contemporary world civilization. This is apparent in the theory of the 'end of history' which Francis Fukuyama proposed at the end of the Cold War to suggest that the universalization of the West is the completion of the progress of humankind. Thus Western civilization has become a static entity, a completed state of affairs, to which the rest of the world must aspire. By implication, the Other of civilization is construed as irrational, traditional, barbaric, yet susceptible to the 'civilizing' mission.¹¹

After taking centre stage in public debates at the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the political dichotomy that had sustained it, the concept of 'civilization' was reinforced after 9/11 as part of a hegemonic discourse on current world affairs and politics. The political myth of the 'clash of civilizations', first introduced by Samuel Huntington after the end of the Cold War, has in recent times become a powerful and widespread frame of reference.¹² Huntington used 'civilization' in the ethnographic sense, to designate the 'broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species'.¹³ According to him, the West is one of several civilizations. He argues that after the fall of world ideologies there is a real prospect of diverse cultural or civilizational identities coming to represent the

10 Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston, 'Civilizing the Irish', *Race and Class*, 51(1) (2009), 3.

11 Robert van Krieken, 'Reassembling Civilization: State-Formation, Subjectivity, Security, Power', in *State, Security and Subject Formation*, ed. by Anna Yeatman and Magdalena Zolkos (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 36–49.

12 Chiara Bottici and Benoist Challand, 'Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (3) (2006), 315–336.

13 Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3) (1993), 24.

organizing principles of world politics, opening up the possibility of clashes along civilizational lines. But, *pace* Huntington, European or Western civilization has always considered itself a distinct (modern) civilization that aspires to be a global one;¹⁴ therefore the clash of civilizations is often taken to be the clash of civilization against barbarism. Implicit in the use of the term ‘civilization’ in contemporary world politics is the idea that if certain people are left alone, they will revert to the stage of barbarism; therefore it is the duty of the ‘civilized world’ to intervene and save them. This leads to the idea that the world must be *policed* by Western nations. The interrelatedness of civilization and violence is attested to by the fact that the ‘war on terror’ is called a war for civilization, with the use of torture on suspected terrorists legitimized by the alleged need to protect civilized ways of life.¹⁵

The notion of civilization has brought about the resurrection of the ideas of empire and imperialism. Although the term ‘imperialism’ is generally thought to carry negative connotations, some commentators on world affairs have continued to use it in a positive sense, describing present situations which according to them call for ‘benign imperialism’. Thus Michael Ignatieff says that ‘imperialism doesn’t stop being necessary just because it becomes politically incorrect. Nations sometimes fail, and when they do, only outside help – imperial power – can get them back on their feet’.¹⁶ Others call it ‘humanitarian imperialism’. Imperialism and re-colonization are presented as the only solution to, for example, Africa’s problems. The adoption of these older terms suggests a commitment to previous projects of colonization and imperialism, and the idea that these projects were successful, and need to be replicated. This is far from evident; historical studies have shown that it was the Western colonialists in Africa who ‘invented’ what they considered to be ‘traditional’ African customs, communities, and hierarchies, including them within a colonial system of governance that favored the executive over the judicial power, thus in fact preempting the modern state of the continent.¹⁷ On the other hand, the reasons for the failure of these states are sought ‘inside’ the countries in question, as if historical colonialism, which moreover was responsible for establishing the borders that delineate what is ‘inside’ each state, has nothing to do with it.

14 Talal Assad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 166.

15 Mark Neocleous, ‘The Police of Civilization: The War on Terror as Civilizing Process’, *International Political Sociology*, 5 (2011), 144–159; Andrew Linklater, ‘Torture and Civilization’, *International Relations* 21 (1) (2007), 111–118.

16 Cited in Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization* (2009), p. 192.

17 Terence Ranger, ‘The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa’, in *The Invention of Traditions*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 211–262; Olufemi Taiwo, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 2010.

Neither does a global economy based on neo-liberal principles, nor the support, open and covert, of Western powers (and the Soviet Union) for local dictators during the Cold War and afterwards. While this reading, of a history that is heading towards some ideal of world civilization, is perhaps not the first that springs to mind from the facts presented here, it nonetheless represents a widespread view in liberal democracies. It is based on a common political culture and on shared interests. It is neither neutral, nor scientific, nor truly universal. It hides a great deal in order to present a story of success with normative force.

Civilization in World History Textbooks in Albania

Before examining the uses of the term 'civilization' in Albanian history textbooks, it is first necessary to provide some context on the Albanian educational system and recent reforms in textbook curricula. Until 2004, the school system in Albania was divided between the eight year compulsory primary education, and four years of secondary education. In primary schools, history teaching began in the fourth grade, where the history of Albania was taught in simple terms, presented in a literary form. In the fifth grade, ancient and medieval history up to the fifteenth century was taught. Students were taught modern history from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century in the sixth grade, followed by contemporary history in the seventh grade. The history of Albania was taught in the eighth grade. The same cycle was repeated in secondary schools: students began in the ninth grade by studying ancient and medieval history in greater detail than before; world history from the Age of Discovery to the beginning of the twentieth century was covered in the tenth grade, and contemporary world history in the eleventh grade, ending with national history in the twelfth grade.

Since the school year 2004–2005, primary education consists of nine years, with secondary education reduced to three. This change has affected the way world and national history teaching is divided between different grades. Now history teaching begins in the fourth grade with a rudimentary introduction to the discipline of historiography, and the history of Albania. In the fifth grade pupils are taught the local history of their village, city and region. World history from the beginning of humankind up to the fifteenth century is taught in the sixth grade, followed by modern history (from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century) in the seventh grade, and contemporary history (from the beginning of the twentieth century) in the eighth grade. National history is taught in the ninth grade. In secondary school the cycle is repeated again, as students learn ancient and medieval history in the tenth grade, modern history (from the sixteenth century to the end of twentieth century) in the eleventh grade, and national history in the twelfth grade.

There have been other reforms in secondary history curricula that have affected textbook production. From 1992 to 2000, history teaching in secondary schools was uniform, and only one history textbook was in use for each grade. From 2000 the secondary school curriculum was divided into two 'profiles': the natural sciences profile and the social sciences profile. Students chose between the profiles upon starting the eleventh grade. As such there were two types of history textbooks for the eleventh and twelfth grades: a more detailed one designed for the social sciences profile, and a shorter version for the natural sciences profile.

The division into profiles in secondary schools came to an end in 2009, when another reform introduced a core curriculum and a selective curriculum. According to this system, which is still used, the student has to attend the courses that belong to the core curriculum, and in addition select courses from the lists of 'obligatory-elective courses' and 'free-elective courses' at the beginning of each grade of secondary school. The list of obligatory-elective courses is approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, whereas the free-elective courses are agreed upon by individual secondary schools. History is taught as a core course throughout secondary school, and as an obligatory-elective course in the eleventh and twelfth grades. To cope with this kind of system, variants of the same history textbook are produced for the core curriculum as well as for the selective curriculum.

In the year 2006, alternative textbooks were introduced. This allows schools to choose one textbook among several available for each subject. All alternative textbooks have to follow the standard curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education and Science; before being offered up for inspection to teachers and students, they must be accepted by the Ministry. Although the alternative textbooks follow the same thematic programme, some variation is to be expected in the ways in which topics are presented and interpreted in each of the alternatives.

The world history taught in primary and secondary schools in post-Communist Albania is divided into the following main blocks: antiquity, feudalism, the new era from the Glorious Revolution to the end of the nineteenth century, and contemporary history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The ancient history course begins with Egypt and Mesopotamia. Later textbooks devoted to this period also deal with organized societies in India and China, which, along with those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, are called 'civilizations of rivers'. The narrative proceeds to Greece and Rome as the centre point of the study of antiquity. Feudalism and the history of the new and contemporary eras are narrated through an account of the developments of the main powers in Western Europe and, later on, Russia and the USA. The Eurocentric narrative is interrupted by occasional snapshots of other continents. However non-Western re-

gions feature in the narrative for the most part only when they are somehow linked to the actions of Europeans.

At times, this Eurocentric approach to world history is openly justified by the claim that Albania is part of Europe: for instance the authors of *History 3* state that 'the history of the Albanian people has been closely linked to the history of the peoples of Europe, so the central place in this text is occupied by the contemporary history of the countries of Europe and the USA'.¹⁸ But if by 'Europe' one understands Western European countries such as Italy, England and France, which are overrepresented in this textbook, this claim hardly holds up. From the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the West until the proclamation of independence in 1912, the Albanian people have been part of the Byzantine, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ottoman Empires, none of which are featured heavily in the historical narrative of this textbook. Similarly, if, as Albanian textbooks maintain, the hallmarks of European modern history are the events and the developments generated by the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and the English, American, and French Revolutions, Albanians have been at the periphery of 'Europe', and remained almost untouched by their influence for most of their history. Moreover, the various stages in European history are presented as if they were preordained, as if history could not have turned out any differently. The pupils and students are given the impression that history proceeds according to iron-clad laws, at least in Europe. According to a tenth grade textbook, the Age of Discovery and the Reformation were 'inevitable', bound to occur at precisely the time they did.¹⁹ According to another textbook, Humanism and the Renaissance were 'needed' in Europe at the time when they emerged.²⁰ European integration is presented as a 'necessity' after the Second World War,²¹ despite the great schism that in fact appeared between the Capitalist West and Communist East, dividing the continent, a state (Germany), and even cities (Berlin, Gorizia). Again, the features of the Western part of the continent are projected onto the whole, so that socialism in Eastern Europe represents the 'deviant' path off the normal history of Europe.

This Eurocentric approach is clearly marked by the centrality of the concept of civilization in the new generation of world history textbooks. Although the concepts of civilization and the 'clash of civilizations' were in use in public debates in Albania since the early 1990s, the idea of civilization became firmly established in world history textbooks at the turn of the new millennium. For

18 Adem Mezini et al., *Historia 3* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1999), p. 3.

19 Agron Gani, Hysni Myzyri and Jusuf Bajraktari, *Historia 2* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001), pp. 5–17.

20 Tomi Treska and Menduh Dërguti, *Historia 6* (Tirana: Albas, 2011), p. 127.

21 Llambro Filo and Gëzim Sala, *Histori e qytetërimit botëror: Për klasën e 11-të, bërthamë* (Tirana: Ideart, 2010), p. 169.

instance, the comprehensive organizing principle for the various stages of the new era in European history in *History 2* (in use in the secondary schools from 1995 to 2001) was the ‘European society’, or simply ‘Europe’.²² While the term ‘civilization’ was absent from the textbooks of the late Communist period, we have discovered that it was mentioned in the introduction of one textbook published in the year 1993, for the first grade of secondary school. The authors were referring to the birth of the first states in the ‘Ancient East’:

In this place emerged the first civilizations with social classes, beginning in the third and fourth millennia B.C. As a consequence of the disintegration of the primitive community, and of the separation of the population into slaves and slave-owners, the oldest slave-owners’ states were formed: Egypt, Babylon, India, China, etc. The history of the Ancient East demonstrates that these countries gave birth to the first civilizations, which laid the foundations for that material and spiritual culture that was embraced and further developed by the peoples of Ancient Greece and Rome, and which is in itself the basis of contemporary world culture.²³

This quote reveals the assumptions behind the historical narrative that follows in the textbook. World history progresses from primitivism to higher stages, according to changes in material conditions that produce the class society. The word ‘civilizations’ denotes the early stages of human development which occurred in Ancient East, whereas the higher stages in material and spiritual development are termed ‘culture’. This is a property of Ancient Greece and Rome, which form the bedrock of the modern world. Except for in this introduction, the term ‘civilization’ is not found in this textbook. Another isolated use of the term ‘civilization’ is found in *History 7*, published in 1994, and refers to the start of Crusades. The Crusades are interpreted as an ‘expression of the impetus of European civilization’, whose Christian armies were simultaneously ‘retaking’ the Iberian peninsula from the Arabs, and trying to ‘take’ Palestine, the ‘cradle of Christianity’ from the Muslim Turks.²⁴ By the contrasting the verb *rimarr* (re-take) with the verb *marr* (take), the text suggests that Iberia was liberated because it belonged to Christian Europe, whereas Palestine, although it was the birthplace of Christianity, was the object of Christian aggression. Therefore ‘European civilization’ stands for the Western and Catholic Europe. The term ‘civilization’ starts to appear in the table of contents and main narrative of world history textbooks in the years 2000 and 2001. In a textbook for the first grade of secondary school, the authors explain that the birth and development of cities mark the start of civilization, which is defined as ‘a more developed stage of culture

22 Gani et al., *Historia 2* (2001).

23 Faik Lama, Vilson Kuri and Ilira Çaushi, *Historia e kohës së vjetër dhe e mesjetës 1* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1993), p. 5.

24 Vilson Kuri et al., *Historia 7* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1994), p. 7.

[...] with the following characteristics: (1) organized governance; (2) organized religion; (3) division of labour; (4) class structure; [and] (5) a system of writing'.²⁵ That the use of the term 'civilization' is something of a novelty is shown by the fact that the authors felt the need to add a footnote in order to explain that in addition to the word *qytetërim*, another Albanian word, *civilizim*, which derives from the Latin word for 'city', is also used for 'civilization'.²⁶ In contrast to the first use of 'civilization' in the early 1990s, where culture was valued over civilization, here the term represents a higher and more organized form of culture, although both texts are referring to the same phenomena: the birth of the first organized societies in the Ancient East. In the textbook by Gjini et al., 'civilization' is a key term, but still used primarily to refer to the ancient world, and the non-Western world of the Middle Ages up to the fifteenth century. It is used interchangeably with 'culture'. Thus the table of contents presents sections on the 'Achievements of Greek Civilization', 'Roman Culture', 'Byzantine Civilization', 'Islamic Culture', 'Education and Culture in Western Europe', 'Medieval Civilization in China and India', 'Ancient and Medieval Civilization in Africa', and 'Ancient medieval civilization in America'.²⁷

The term 'civilization' is used more consistently in a number of textbooks for secondary schools published in 2000 and 2001 by a group of authors led by Llambro Filo, Professor of History at the University of Tirana. In these texts, civilization becomes the main point of reference for tracing and assessing the progress of history from its beginnings up to the establishment of liberal democracy in the twentieth century. Accordingly, European humanists are portrayed in the opening of the textbook *Historia 2* as the 'heralds of modern civilization', while the Renaissance 'represents a major developmental turn for Western civilization'.²⁸ The text follows closely the progress of European civilization, covering the Reformation, colonization, absolute monarchies, the Industrial Revolution, Enlightenment, and French Revolution, nationalism, and the 'Beginnings of Liberal Democratic Governance'. In accounts of the latter period, some attention is diverted to Asia and Africa. The text states: 'By contrast to Europe, the countries of the East were remained in general at the phase of high feudalism, or an even earlier one'. Although there is no explicit mention of 'civilization', the text engages in a comparison of civilizations, and treats Western civilization as the yardstick against which others are measured. Frequently in textbooks about Western civilization, Europe and Asia are compared in this manner, as the latter is imagined to be the West's nearest rival, while other

25 Roland Gjini et al., *Historia 1*, (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2000), p. 9.

26 Ibid., p. 9, footnote 1.

27 Ibid., pp. 185–186.

28 Llambro Filo et al., *Historia 2* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2000), p. 3.

societies are considered to lag too far behind. The authors state that feudal and state property of land and communes in the countryside were maintained in the East for a longer period, thus inhibiting private ownership of property and the 'undertaking of new economic initiatives'. Individual needs were subordinated to those of the community. Many Eastern countries followed a politics of 'ethnic isolation'. It is claimed that 'the countries of the East were not consolidated in the aspect of state organization'.²⁹ These are sweeping generalizations that apply to entire continents over centuries. The terminology is obscure; for instance no explanation or examples of the 'politics of ethnic isolation' are given. The clearest impression that students are left with on the basis of the comparison is that of a contrast of opposites between the West and East.

When the historical narrative reaches the twentieth century, a balance sheet of 'Achievements of Western Civilization' is drawn, among which the most important is the 'practical realization of the modern rule of liberal democracy, and of the other highest indicators of civilization'.³⁰ The 'highest indicators of civilization' are constitutional rule and parliamentary control, civil and political rights of citizens, social welfare, a rise in the productivity of labour, the longevity of the society or state, education, and the standard of living. Although the text speaks of the achievements of 'European countries', this analysis in fact applies to only a few states in Western Europe. Furthermore, it is asserted that these developments defeated Marxism and facilitated the victory of 'moderate socialists [who] launched the idea that the problems of the proletariat can be solved from within the framework of liberal democracy and the existing economic system, through legal and parliamentary means'.³¹

After discrediting the ideas of 'class war' and 'proletarian revolution', the author turns in the next and final lesson of the textbook to the 'challenges to liberal democracy and the dangers to the sustainability' of democracy and modern civilization. These are extreme nationalism based on social Darwinism, racism and irrationalism, imperialism, militarism and hidden alliances among European powers.³² Thus the dangers and challenges to modern civilization are listed separately to its achievements in the previous lesson, and no attempt is made to relate them. Liberalism and capitalism are presented as the pinnacle of civilization as such, while their relationship to nationalism, social Darwinism, imperialism, or class inequality is not mentioned at all. The text states that imperialism 'was triggered by extreme nationalists' who wanted to achieve national glory through conquest, and only then is imperialism linked in any way

29 Ibid., p. 162.

30 Ibid., p. 174.

31 Ibid., p. 175.

32 Ibid., pp. 177–178.

with the structural forces of capitalism: 'Guided also by economic motives [...] and especially the desire to attain favorable military and strategic positioning, the imperialists considered the safest means by which to realize these motivations and aims to be territorial invasion and the creation of colonies'.³³ Although the text states that 'all Great Powers took part in colonial invasions',³⁴ the narrative does not emphasize the *centrality* of imperialism for world history during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, a period which is appropriately termed the 'Age of Empire'.³⁵

The textbook *History 3* from 2001, designed for the social sciences profile, opens with a presentation of Western civilization and 'non-European countries' at the beginning of the twentieth century. This is a time of 'triumph for liberal democracies', in which these states developed their social welfare policies.³⁶ At this stage, the evolution of Western civilization is presented as having reached its end-point, whereby it has become 'the universal normative standard'³⁷ for the modernization of the entire world. Thus, compared to the West, 'non-European countries trail behind the achievements of modern governance'; this phrase is emphasized with bold letters in the text.³⁸ The main reason given for the lack of modernity in Asia is the strength of the 'old traditional culture', strongly influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Islam. This culture defends community, collectivist mentality, uniformity, and social hierarchy. In this part of the world the state is all-powerful. In contrast to the West, social indicators of civilization were absent at the turn of the twentieth century, with high mortality rates, widespread analphabetism, and low productivity of the labour force. The population was for the most part passive, but social demands were raised through violent revolts. Although the text states that many African and Asian countries were colonies or semi-colonies of Western powers, and that the independent Latin American countries were under neo-colonial pressure, imperialism and colonialism are not offered alongside endemic cultural and economic factors as causes of the failure to embrace modernity.³⁹

Oppression in Asia is illustrated by a black and white photograph showing a public execution on page eight of the same text. No information on the time and place where the picture was taken is provided, but from the physical features of the people we assume it is somewhere in East Asia. A crowd of people wearing traditional clothes have gathered in a town or village square to watch the ex-

33 Ibid., p. 178.

34 Ibid., p. 178.

35 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987).

36 Llambro Filo, et al., *Historia 3* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001), pp. 3–6.

37 Gerard Delanty, 'Civilizational Analysis and Critical Theory', *Thesis Eleven*, 100 (2010), 49.

38 Llambro Filo et al., *Historia 3* (2001), p. 7.

39 Ibid., pp. 7–8.

ecution. They stand in the background, forming a half circle and facing the camera. Most of them are men, but among the crowd we can also see women and children. The foreground of the picture is occupied by three men: two executioners and their prisoner. The executioners might be officials, although they are not dressed in a single uniform. The prisoner is half-naked and on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back. One of the executioners pulls a rope, the other end of which is tied around the neck of his prisoner, so that the prisoner is bent forward. The second executioner has raised his sword over his head with both hands, ready to swing it at the prisoner's nape. The caption reads 'a moment of persecution for infringing collectivist norms', although nothing in the picture suggests this interpretation. The photograph is chosen to reinforce the message of the main text only because it unites images of extreme violence and non-white people wearing traditional clothes. This message is that Asia is a violent and even barbaric place where individual dignity and rights are not respected. Whatever the real context of the picture, its inclusion reduces an entire non-European culture to a single event, that of a public punishment or execution.

The textbook suggests that the only way out for non-European countries was to adopt the practices of Western civilization, whereby Western civilization would become world civilization:

The progressive development of non-European countries in the framework of world civilization demanded the recognition of some basic premises. These were the acceptance of new ideas, modernization, and the democratization of society. This meant the adoption of the most developed form of civilization, i. e. Western civilization, which is characterized by economic, social, cultural, and governance structures. Moreover, civilization is completely opposed to imperialist policies.⁴⁰

In the quotation above, it would appear that the authors are hoping to exorcise the spirit of imperialism that haunts civilization. Perhaps they intended to point out that the Westernizing process in non-European countries fostered the demand for national independence from European powers. However, the text remains silent on the fact that the main justification for imperialism throughout history has been precisely the conservation and spread of civilization.

The progress of world civilization from ancient times to globalization is summarized in the middle of the version of *Historia 3* intended for students taking the natural sciences profile. Following sections on the Second World War and the start of the Cold War, the authors deemed it appropriate to retrace the entire course of Western civilization so far. This is done in the chapter 'The Western World and its Civilizational Values', and in the first lesson of the chapter 'Western Civilization: its Foundation and Development'. According to the

40 Ibid., p. 8.

textbook, the Ancient East was responsible for remarkable intellectual achievements before the Greeks, but the latter 'filtrated the achievements of the peoples of the East through a new spirit dominated by reason and directed towards action'.⁴¹ The Greeks invented democracy; though it was short-lived, 'its seed would later flourish in the West'. The Greeks also expanded on the knowledge of the Egyptians by means of their theoretical science, which in turn was put in practice by the Romans. The civilizational legacy of the Romans is 'respect for law and justice, as well as the establishment of a requirement for a state [which] follows the basic values of Western civilization'. Through Christianity 'two new values took their place in the West, and are added to the legacy of Antiquity: the dignity of man, which strengthened the democratic ideal, and the honoring of manual labour and craftsmanship'.⁴² In medieval times only the church preserved some sense of moral unity. It was the birth and strengthening of the bourgeoisie that put Western civilization back on track again. In modern era, Western Europe added to civilization with scientific and geographic discoveries, liberalism, industrialism, democracy, and human rights. In this account Western civilization is presented as accumulative and perfectionist at every stage, and no acknowledgement is made of contact with, and the contributions of, other civilizations. The closing lines of the lesson give the impression that the West has accomplished the task that carried it through the millennia, and will forever carry the torch of civilization in the world:

Thus, Western civilization, inspired by the challenge of Prometheus, oriented man towards action. Through science and technology it seeks to augment man's power over nature, in order to improve the material and spiritual conditions of men. This civilization, by remaining faithful to its different traditions, like Greek philosophy, the gospel, or the declaration of human rights, has placed itself in the service of respect for the personhood of man, whose freedom will always remain this civilization's highest virtue.⁴³

One should not forget that Western colonization continued for a couple of decades after the end of the Second World War, and that in some cases the decolonization process was bloody and painful for millions of people, for example in the cases of the partition of India and Pakistan, or the independence wars in Algeria and Vietnam. However the quoted text gives the impression that nothing of importance has been added to Western civilization since the war, leaving out changes brought by youth and civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and immigration etc.. By inserting this teleological account imme-

41 Llambró Filo et al., *Historia 3, profili natyror* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001), p. 83.

42 Ibid., pp. 83–85.

43 Ibid., p. 87.

diately after the account of the Second World War, the textbook also anticipates the victory of the West over the East in the Cold War, and does not convey to the students the full significance of the challenges and threat of the Soviet Union and Communism.

Around the years 2005 and 2006, civilization became the central concept in textbooks on world history. Its use was made mandatory according to new history curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. The newly introduced programmes place special emphasis on (1) achieving a more balanced presentation between, on the one hand, political, military, and diplomatic processes and, on the other, economic, social, and cultural processes; (2) including accounts of more countries and peoples in order to have a more comprehensive picture of each historical era; and (3) understanding and comparing the characteristics of different civilizations.⁴⁴ The first civilizations in the East are called 'The Civilizations of Rivers', while Ancient Rome, Greece, Macedonia, and Illyria are included in the chapter of 'The Birth of New Civilizations'. The programme for the seventh grade focuses mainly on developments in Europe in from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. It mandates that the last chapter of the textbooks, entitled 'Civilization in the Threshold of the Twentieth Century', must contain the lessons 'Achievements in Western Civilization: The Birth of New Ideas', and 'Imperialism and Extreme Nationalism Threaten Stability'.⁴⁵ Thus, the meanings of Western and world civilization are intentionally blurred in the history presented to the seventh grade, while imperialism is relegated to the position of a dysfunctional force that threatens 'stability', when in fact it is one of the main vehicles that arguably transformed Western civilization into world civilization. Moreover in the programme for the eleventh and twelfth grades of secondary school, the history books of the new generation are entitled 'History of Civilizations in Antiquity and the Middle Ages' and 'The History of World Civilization' respectively,⁴⁶ emphasizing once more the shift in ideas from that of different civilizations to that of a single world civilization.

The alternative world history textbooks are generally more inclusive than the older texts, because they describe the additional ancient civilizations of Jews, Phoenicians, Assyrians, and Persians. They also describe in much detail the medieval civilizations or cultures of the Middle East, India, China, and Japan, and some textbooks devote space to civilizations in Africa and the pre-Columbus Americas. There are of course differences in the ways in which alternative textbooks present civilizations. For instance, a comparative reading of two

44 Instituti i Kurrikulave dhe i Standardeve, 'Programi i historisë, klasa VI', Tirana, 2005, 2.

45 Instituti i Kurrikulave dhe i Standardeve, 'Programi i historisë, klasa VII', Tirana, 2005, 6.

46 Instituti i Kurrikulës dhe i Trajnimit, 'Programet e kurrikulës bërthamë të gjimnazit. Programet e lëndës 'Histori e Qytetërimet Botëror' për klasat 10-11', Tirana, 2008.

textbooks for the tenth grade, one by Nathanaili⁴⁷ and the other by Meta and Lleshi,⁴⁸ reveals that the first book is more balanced, treating on an equal basis the various medieval civilizations around the Mediterranean Sea and their interrelations, while the second textbook follows the traditional narrative of the evolution of Western civilization.

Nevertheless, the main narrative in all textbooks follows closely the approach laid down by the textbooks by Filo et al. that we examined above. Especially after the Renaissance and geographical discoveries, coverage of the non-European world is dependent on its relationship with European colonial and modernizing powers. We find on occasion traces of a critical attitude towards the use of 'civilization' in the context of the colonial and imperialistic ventures of European states. But here the emphasis is on the 'new imperialism' undertaken in the nineteenth century, inspired by 'extreme nationalism' and militarism.⁴⁹ As another textbook puts it, 'the economic needs of industrialized countries were masked with nationalism and racism, in order to be sold [to colonized countries] as civilization!'.⁵⁰ In a textbook on world civilization for the eleventh grade, the authors try to demarcate imperialism as the negative side of 'Westernization', which is the term they use for the spread of modern civilization in the world. They blame 'imperialism' for the wrongs of colonialism:

Imperialism constituted the opposite side of Westernization. It embodied all challenges to liberal democracy that were justified by irrationalism, social Darwinism, and extreme nationalism. The contradictory character of the achievements [of civilization] resulted from the consequences of imperialism, colonialism, and all their subsequent developments [...] Thus, colonial countries were introduced into the world economy as economic appendices of Western countries [...] Negative effects appeared in the form of forced labour, as in the cotton or rubber plantations, or in mines. In colonies a heavy blow was dealt to native economies which relied on agriculture and handicrafts.⁵¹

This is a genuine attempt to explain to students the contradictions of Western civilization's association with colonization and imperialism. However the distinction between Westernization (representing the spread of liberal democracy) and imperialism (representing militarism and extreme nationalism) remains artificial. While it is true that some liberals were against empire in principle, and especially extreme forms of exploitation of natives such as slavery, the fact remains that a great many liberal politicians and intellectuals in the West, not only

47 Petrika Nathanaili, *Historia 10* (Tirana: Filara, 2009).

48 Beqir Meta and Xhevair Lleshi, *Historia 10* (Tirana: Uegen, 2009).

49 Llambro Filo, Petrika Thëngjilli and Bedri Kola, *Historia 7*, (Tirana: Ideart, 2009), pp. 134–135.

50 Beqir Meta and Xhevair Lleshi, *Historia 10* (2009), p. 121.

51 Llambro Filo and Gëzim Sala, *Histori e qytetërimit botëror: Për klasën e 11-të, me zgjedhje*, (Tirana: Ideart, 2010), p. 113.

militarist and extreme nationalists, saw no contradiction between liberalism and democracy in metropolitan countries on the one hand, and imperialism and authoritarian or 'disciplined rule' in the colonies on the other. The text could do more to make it clear that, historically speaking, the spread of the market economy and capitalism in the world introduced and enforced the racial hierarchies of empire. To give an example, while it is true that slavery was practiced in Africa by native rulers and Arabs before the advent of modernity, the exportation of slave labour to the Americas began and intensified as a consequence of the extraction and production of minerals, cotton, and sugar for European industries and global trade.

Conclusion

Since the year 2000, world history textbooks in Albania have had the concept of civilization at their centre. This paper argued that these textbooks do not adequately explain the long and inextricable relationship between civilization and Western empires and imperialism, and that they perpetuate the Eurocentric historical narrative of the evolution of a liberal capitalist world civilization out of Western civilization. This narrative is anachronistic and teleological, telling the history of the formation of world civilization from the perspective of the present. It cherishes the values and achievements of Western civilization and so simplifies the contradictions within its history, neglecting its reciprocal relationship with other civilizations, and purging its evolutionary story of traces of its heritage of empire and colonialism.

If our argument holds, does it mean that the idea of 'civilization' should be dropped from history teaching in Albania? This is not necessary if future history curricula and textbooks adopt a more critical attitude towards the use of the concept. We should bear in mind not only that civilization has been used throughout history to mask barbarism, but also that many today consider progress and development to cause misery and cruelty to others. If our definition of civilization encompasses technical advancements and higher material standards of living, then Nazi Germany certainly reached a higher step on the civilizational ladder than the earliest *homo sapiens*, but does this fact give us comfort?⁵² Or, for that matter, what of the fact that that in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, socialist society called itself the most developed society on earth, and was silent about the horrific crimes committed in the name of Communism? And do modern men and states have the right today, in the name of higher civi-

52 Daniel A. Segal, "'Western Civ' as the Staging of History in American Higher Education', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 801–802.

lization, to evict from their natural habitats the last remaining hunter and gatherer communities, in order to exploit their lands through intensive agriculture and mining?

Concerning Westernization in history, we and our children must be aware of the fact that colonizers claimed the values of their own culture and society to be universal values, legitimizing their attempts to impose them on the rest of the world. A critique of this universalist approach does not entail the acceptance of an absolute relativism, which would allow that in some societies, practices such as human sacrifice and slavery may be considered values that cannot be overridden by values from elsewhere. Tzvetan Todorov argues that in order to live in a shared and peaceful world we must reject both views when dealing with cultural diversity. In his understanding, a more civilized culture is that which encourages its members to critically examine their tradition and take into account others' points of view. In other words, the use of 'world civilization' is legitimate if it points towards a greater commonality of mankind, in opposition to 'barbarism' which does not acknowledge the full humanity of others.⁵³ Such an attitude should be preserved in Albanian history textbooks; however we ought to remember the words of Daniel A. Segal, a Professor of Anthropology and History, when he said: 'we need textbooks that do not divide and diminish humanity by parsing it into the 'civilized' and 'pre-civilized'; textbooks that encourage students to examine, rather than presume, this violent binary of modernity'.⁵⁴

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Filo, Llambro and Gëzim Sala, *Histori e qytetërimit botëror: Për klasën e 11-të, bërthamë* (Tirana: Ideart, 2010).
- Filo, Llambro and Gëzim Sala, *Histori e qytetërimit botëror: Për klasën e 11-të, me zgjedhje* (Tirana: Ideart, 2010).
- Filo, Llambro, Petrika Thëngjilli and Bedri Kola, *Historia 7* (Tirana: Ideart, 2009).
- Filo, Llambro et al., *Historia 2* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2000).
- Filo, Llambro et al., *Historia 3* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001).
- Llambro Filo et al., *Historia 3, profili natyror* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001).

53 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 13–16; pp. 33–34.

54 Daniel A. Segal, "Western Civ' as the Staging of History in American Higher Education", *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 803.

- Gani, Agron, Hysni Myzyri and Jusuf Bajraktari, *Historia 2* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2001).
- Kuri, Vilson et al., *Historia 7* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1994).
- Gjini, Roland et al., *Historia 1* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 2000).
- Lama, Faik, Vilson Kuri and Ilira Çausi, *Historia e kohës së vjetër dhe e mesjetës I* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1993).
- Mezini, Adem et al., *Historia 3* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1999).
- Meta, Beqir and Xhevair Lleshi, *Historia 10* (Tirana: Uegen, 2009).
- Nathanailli, Petrika, *Historia 10* (Tirana: Filara, 2009) Treska, Tomi and Menduh Dërguti, *Historia 6* (Tirana: Albas, 2011).

Curricula cited

- Instituti i Kurrikulave dhe i Standardeve, 'Programi i historisë, klasa VI' (Tirana, 2005).
- Instituti i Kurrikulave dhe i Standardeve, 'Programi i historisë, klasa VII' (Tirana, 2005).
- Instituti i Kurrikulës dhe i Trajnimit, 'Programet e kurrikulës bërthamë të gjimnazit. Programet e lëndës 'Histori e Qytetërimit Botëror' për klasat 10–11' (Tirana, 2008).

Further References

- Assad, Talal, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- Bottici, Chiara and Benoist Challand, 'Rethinking Political Myth: The Clash of Civilizations as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 9 (3) (2006), 315–336.
- Bowden, Brett, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- Dabashi, Hamid, 'For the Last Time: Civilizations', *International Sociology*, 16 (3) (2001), 361–368.
- Delanty, Gerard, 'Civilizational Analysis and Critical Theory', *Thesis Eleven*, 100 (2010), 46–52.
- Elias, Norbert, *The Civilising Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
- Foucault, Michel, 'The Discourse on Language' in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. from French by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987).
- Huntington, Samuel P., 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3) (1993), 22–49.
- Linklater, Andrew, 'Torture and Civilization', *International Relations*, 21 (1) (2007), 111–118.
- McVeigh, Robbie, and Bill Rolston, 'Civilizing the Irish', *Race and Class*, 51 (1) (2009), 2–28.
- Neocleous, Mark, 'The Police of Civilization: The War on Terror as Civilizing Process', *International Political Sociology*, 5 (2011), 144–159.

- Pingel, Falk, 'Easing Tensions through Textbook Research and Textbook Comparison: What Measures can be taken to the Balkan Region?' in *Disarming History. International Conference on Combating Stereotypes and Prejudice in History Textbooks of South East Europe*, ed. by UNESCO (Visby, Gotland, Sweden: 23–25 September 1999), pp. 38–50.
- Ranger, Terence, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in *The Invention of Traditions*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 211–262.
- Segal, Daniel A, "Western Civ' as the Staging of History in American Higher Education', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 770–805.
- Taiwo, Olufemi, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).
- Todorov, Tzvetan, *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).
- Van Krieken, Robert, 'Reassembling Civilization: State-Formation, Subjectivity, Security, Power', in *State, Security and Subject Formation*, ed. by Anna Yeatman and Magdalena Zolkos (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 36–49.

The National Liberation Movement in Albanian History Textbooks of the Socialist Era

*Myth is an objectification of man's social experience,
not of his individual experience.¹*

The National Liberation Movement in Albania during World War II was an important topic of historiography during the socialist regime, a fact reflected in school history textbooks. Depictions of the Movement during the socialist period were to a large degree characterized by an emphasis on the contributions of the Albanian Communist Party and the National Liberation Army to the armed resistance to Italian and German occupation. This chapter seeks to analyze how this aspect of Albanian history is represented in secondary school history textbooks from the socialist period. The analysis will focus on several primary issues, such as the representation of first groups and forms of resistance in history textbooks, the representation of partisans and of important encounters during the war, such as the meetings of Peza and Mukja. I argue that the historical narrative on World War II contributed to the establishment of several myths regarding the War of National Liberation, which served the legitimization of communist rule in Albania. This chapter is based on the analysis of two history textbooks for upper secondary education published in 1963 and in 1985. The history textbook of 1963 was first published in 1958 and reprinted with revisions until 1972, and is particularly interesting for this study as it was printed before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, which brought about radical changes in state policy.

The principal changes undertaken included the war against bureaucratization and other influences of foreign ideology, which resulted in cutbacks in state administration and measures such as the obligatory sending of all civil servants for one month a year to engage in productive work, mainly in rural areas; indeed, not only all employees in the education system, culture and science, but also students and pupils.² This 'war' for the revolutionizing of the country further included measures against religious institutions and practices, and also the

1 Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 47.

2 Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë [Academy of Sciences of Albania], *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, IV (Tirana: Toena, 2009), pp. 284–285.

education reform which began to be implemented in 1970. The principal aim was to establish a new school structure and to revise the school curricula according to the Marxist-Leninist ideology. The new education system would comprise three main components: teaching, productive work, and physical and military education. The reform would therefore serve the indoctrination of the young generation with the principles of communist ideology.

The history textbook of 1985 was chosen because it was published after the death of Mehmet Shehu in 1981, commander of the First Brigade of the National Liberation Army during the Second World War, chairman of the Council of Ministers until 1981, and Enver Hoxha's closest collaborator for several decades. He was denounced post-mortem as a traitor and as an agent of foreign imperialist states, which in turn brought about another considerable rewriting of historical events in which he had been involved. This history textbook was first published in 1973 and reprinted with later revisions. It was also published in a period of total international isolation of Albania, following the break-up with China in 1978. This total isolation contributed to the intensification of myths in narratives by socialist historiography.

The events which occurred in Albania during World War II are currently subject to fierce debate, not only among historians but also in Albanian public discourse. The representation of the National Liberation War by socialist historiography and the myth-inspired narrative of the War of Resistance have contributed significantly to the contemporary debate, since many myths continue to be perpetuated. It is not the purpose of the author to shed light on concrete events of this period of Albanian history, but rather to analyze some of the key myths within the historical narrative that emerged during the socialist period. A text analysis of history textbooks reveals various political myths regarding World War II in Albania and how they have evolved over time as a response to purges of political opponents within the party.

Myth and History

George Schöpflin has argued that 'myth is a particular set of ideas with a moral content told as a narrative by a community about itself. Myth may or may not be related to historical truth, though those who rely on the narrative generally believe that it is. Myth is a way of organising history so as to make sense of it for that particular community'.³ Ifversen has proposed that the mythical narrative should be viewed as a particular discourse, the purpose of which is to justify

3 George Schöpflin, 'The Nature of Myth: Some Theoretical Aspects', in *Albanian Identities*, ed. by Schwandner-Sievers and Fischer (2002), pp. 26–32; here, p. 26.

order and authority in a community. Since myths, he explains, have the important function of legitimizing political acts, modern myths are to be considered as political. Political myths are usually considered as foundation myths because they symbolize the constitution of a new political community⁴ and they are instrumentalized in order to 'legitimize the existence of a political community'.⁵

According to Chiara Bottici, 'what renders a myth specifically *political* is not an already political content of the story that it tells, but the fact that the story that it tells comes to "make significance" of the specifically *political* conditions for a certain social group or society'.⁶ Therefore, in order to catch the specifically political connotation of a myth she proposes that we must look at the whole 'work on myth'.⁷ Schöpflin has argued that communication is an important aspect of myth because myth is a means of intensifying communication within the community and simplifies the transmission of political messages.⁸

Historiography plays an important role in myth-making processes because new political systems usually engage in what Hobsbawm has described as the 'invention of tradition',⁹ a process that includes the invention of new public ceremonies and the production of public monuments which represent the new political system. As Hobsbawm has argued, historians are engaged in the process of the invention of tradition, as they contribute to 'the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past'.¹⁰ In addition to the glorification on the part of the official historiography, the National Liberation Movement in Albania also became an inspiration for writers and artists during the socialist period, which resulted in a huge number of written and artistic works representing this event of contemporary Albanian history.

Bernd Fischer, in his analysis of the political use of World War II in Albania during the socialist period, identifies the following as main aspects of the socialist historiography: the central role of Hoxha and the partisans in resistance against foreign armies; the rejection of the existence of a civil war in Albania; the

4 Jan Ifversen, 'Myth in the Writing of European History', in *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), pp. 454–457.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 457.

6 Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 180.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 181.

8 George Schöpflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths', in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst, 1997), p. 24.

9 Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing Traditions: Europe 1870–1914' in: *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 271.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

minimization of the British assistance to the partisans, and the cleansing of specific events during the war.¹¹

There have been various classifications of myths. Schöpflin identifies various myths to be found in Central and Eastern Europe.¹² Following his taxonomy, we can identify myths of foundation, myths of military valour and myths of rebirth and renewal regarding the representation of the National Liberation War in the history textbooks analyzed for this study.

Myths of Foundation: The Leader Cult

The establishment of new political systems is usually accompanied by the creation of various myths of foundation which aim to distinguish the new system from the previous ones and represent a better future ahead.¹³ One crucial element of the legitimation of new political systems is the leader cult, an 'established system of veneration of a political leader',¹⁴ which should be placed in the context of the various strategies towards the legitimation of communist rule. Rees proposes three fundamental strategies of legitimation: the symbolic attachment, based on the identification of the population with representative symbolic elements of the new political system; ideological support, based on the ideological aims of the regime; and performance attainment, based on how the capacity of the state to accommodate society's needs is perceived by the public.¹⁵

The National Liberation Movement in Albania during World War II was the major event in Albanian history to subsequently be used as a strategy for legitimating communist rule as established in 1944, and a key function within this strategy was given to the leader cult of Enver Hoxha. The historical narrative during the socialist period focused extensively on the National Liberation Movement during World War II and the role played by both the Communist Party of Albania and its leader Enver Hoxha. It was the starting point for the construction of the leader cult surrounding Enver Hoxha in the decades following World War II. Rees has pointed out that the communist leader cult in communist

11 Bernd J. Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, edited by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009), pp. 122–125; Bernd J. Fischer, 'Politizimi I histories: Rasti i Shqipërisë në Luftën e Dytë Botërore', in: Fatos Tarifa, Romeo Gurakuqi and Ermal Hasimja, *Politika dhe Historia* (Tirana: UET Press, 2012), pp. 185–195.

12 Fischer, 'The Second World War in Albania', pp. 28–34.

13 Schöpflin, 'The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths', p. 33.

14 E. A. Rees, 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions', in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by Balázs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones, and E. A. Rees (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 4.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

countries served three primary functions: the legitimation of the power of the ruling group around the figure of the leader, the management of potential conflicts within the ruling elite, and the management of relations between the ruling elite and society.¹⁶ Standish has argued that the role of Enver Hoxha in the establishment and development of myths during the socialist period was two-fold, since he was both the central subject of the myth-making process and the principal myth-maker through his own numerous publications.¹⁷ The emergence of the leader cult of Enver Hoxha was initially closely related to the foundation of the Communist Party in November 1941 and its role during the resistance to the Italian and German occupation. Albanian historiography during socialism emphasized the contribution of the communist movement prior to and during the first months of the Italian occupation in Albania on April 7th 1939.

The analysis of the history textbooks shows that the representation of the first groups and forms of resistance changed. In the history textbook of 1963 we find information on the establishment of a revolutionary committee for public rescue in Korça prior to the Italian occupation.¹⁸ While not mentioned in the textbook of 1963, the role of Enver Hoxha within the committee is explicitly stated in the textbook of 1985:

In Korça the revolutionary committee of public rescue was established, where an important role was played by comrade Enver Hoxha, who at that time was a teacher at the Lyceum in Korça and a member of the communist group of Korça.¹⁹

Early resistance to the Italian occupation was attributed first and foremost to the leadership of communists. In the history textbook of 1963 we read:

But while the government of Zogu was trying to hide the truth from the people and officially denied the news on the preparations for aggression against Albania, the popular masses of the country, under the leadership of the communists, started demonstrations in towns on April 1st, protesting against the aggression and expressing their will to fight to protect their country.²⁰

Communists were represented as the leaders of the resistance against the invasion in 1985, as the following description shows:

16 Ibid., p. 21.

17 Alex M. J. Standish, 'Enver Hoxha's Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths', in *Albanian Identities*, ed. by Schwandner-Sievers and Fischer (2002), p. 116.

18 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 227.

19 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 168.

20 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 227.

Powerful demonstrations spread everywhere in the country, especially in Tirana. The people asked their government to take measures for the protection of the country and distribute arms to them. The demonstrations were led by communists.²¹

What both history textbooks fail to mention is that the resistance on the invasion day was organized by gendarmerie troops in Durrës. Regarding the resistance on the day of the Italian invasion (April 7th 1939), both texts mention the resistance of Albanian patriots, without mentioning the name Abaz Kupi.²² Kupi was the gendarmerie commander in Durrës and was to become one of the most important representatives of the non-communist resistance in Albania during World War II.

The role of communists in the first year of occupation is described as follows in the textbook of 1963:

Under the leadership of communists, workers, patriots and Albanian youth started demonstrations, strikes, protests, sabotages, and assassinations of fascists. Wide-scale propaganda began efforts to unveil the fascism.²³

The same importance is attributed to communists regarding the organization of the resistance in the textbook of 1985. The communists are represented as leaders of various acts of resistance and sabotage against the Italian occupation:

The popular resistance against the foreign invaders began in various forms in the first months of the occupation. The organizers of the resistance were the communist groups. Antifascist demonstrations and protests were arranged with their initiative.²⁴

The textbooks show an effort to invest ideological motives behind the various early forms of protests which in many cases were in reality fuelled by economic motives or the arbitrary behaviour of the administration. Albanian communists were too divided to be able to take organized action against the Italian occupation and an effort to reach an agreement on the establishment of a Central Committee between the communist group of Korça and the communist group of Shkodra failed.²⁵ Before the foundation of the Communist Party of Albania in 1941, several communist groups had been active in Albania, and the representation of the activities of the various communist groups and their role in the resistance against the Italian occupation differs rather significantly.

In the textbook of 1963, there are separate subchapters for each of four main communist groups that were active in Albania in the 1930s. The Korça group was

21 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 168.

22 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 227; Frashëri/ Pollo (1985), p. 168.

23 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 232.

24 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 170.

25 Reginald Hibbert, *Fitorja e hidhur: Lufta Nacionalçlirimtare e Shqipërisë* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Lidhjes së Shkrimtarëve, 1993), p. 33.

described as the most important, adhering to the most righteous of Marxist views as compared to the other groups. The Shkodra group was criticized because of the lack of unity, important political and ideological ambiguities, and the inclusion of members who were not actively involved in communism. Nevertheless, the text continues that 'Despite these mistakes, in the days of the fascist occupation of Albania both groups showed the right attitude. They were ahead of the masses and asked for guns to fight against the foreign occupation'.²⁶ The other two communist groups (the Youth group and the Fire group) were considered fractions and enemies of Marxism, and were heavily criticized as supporters of the fascist occupation and collaborators.²⁷

In the textbook of 1985 there is less information on the existing communist groups prior to the foundation of the Communist Party of Albania. The stances of the communist groups are expressed as follows:

The leaders of the Shkodra group hesitated to lead the members into a frontal war with the fascist invaders. Nevertheless, the majority of the members, including some of the leaders, headed antifascist demonstrations, as did the majority of the members of the Youth group, unlike their group leaders. The Korça group expressed a preference for antifascist activities and the organization of the armed national liberation war.²⁸

In both textbooks the Korça communist group (of which Enver Hoxha was a member) is represented as the most compact group and the one that called for war against the Italian occupation. The descriptions of other communist groups imply that there were inner conflicts among the members and the group leadership. The identification of the leaders of the Youth and Fire groups as traitors and imperialist agents resulted in influential names of the communist movement being neutralized, and thus serving the later representation of Enver Hoxha as the historical leader of the communist movement in Albania.

Stretenovic and Puto have argued that the only rival to the leader cult of Hoxha was provided by the cult of the Party. Hoxha himself was careful to publicly acknowledge the authority of the Party, although in practice he was making the decisions.²⁹ I argue that the myth of the Communist Party actually served the legitimation of Enver Hoxha as the leader of the resistance against the foreign occupation. For this purpose, the myth of the Communist Party was strongly connected to the leader cult surrounding Enver Hoxha as its founder. In the

26 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), pp. 219–220.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 220.

28 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 172.

29 Stanislav Sretenovic and Artan Puto, 'Leader Cults in the Western Balkans (1945–90): Josip Broz Tito and Enver Hoxha' in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships*, ed. by Apor et al. (2004), p. 218.

history textbook of 1963, Hoxha's leading role in the foundation of the Communist Party is explicitly stated:

Since its foundation the Communist Party tied the destiny of our people to the Soviet people; it became the blacksmith of the unbreakable Albanian-Soviet friendship, the foundation stone of all victories of the Albanian people. For the foundation of the Communist Party of Albania a decisive and principal war was waged by comrade Enver Hoxha, who is its founder and leader.³⁰

The participation of the two delegates of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in the meeting at which the Communist Party of Albania was founded is not mentioned in either of the texts,³¹ a fact that can perhaps be explained by the interruption of relations between Albania and Yugoslavia in 1948.

The changes of titles of chapters between the textbooks of 1963 and 1985 aim to underline the leadership of the Communist Party in the National Liberation War. In the textbook of 1963, the chapter on the liberation war was entitled 'The National Liberation War of the Albanian People (1939–1944)', while in the textbook of 1985 the title was changed to 'The Albanian Antifascist National Liberation War under the Leadership of the Communist Party of Albania against the Fascist Italian Yoke (1939–1944)'.³² The title of a subchapter in the textbook of 1963, 'The Beginning of the Armed War'³³ implies that the armed resistance began after the formation of the Communist Party, while in reality armed local bands had already been organizing actions against the Italian occupation.

As the individual cult of Enver Hoxha evolved, there is a stronger emphasis on the personal role of Enver Hoxha in the war of resistance. In the textbook of 1963 we read: 'On November 28th 1941, under the leadership of the party, demonstrations were organized in all Albanian towns where the patriots fought the fascists.'³⁴ In the textbook of 1985, the leading role was attributed directly to Enver Hoxha,³⁵ depicting him as the Great War leader who resisted the foreign occupation armies. His image as the architect of the great victory of the Albanian people during World War II constituted a central aspect of historiography on the National Liberation Movement.

One important change between the two textbooks is the omission of various historical figures in the textbook of 1985. The textbook of 1963 mentions partisans who were heroically killed in battles with the invaders, of communist leaders and political opponents described as traitors or agents of imperialist

30 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 236.

31 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), pp. 234–236; Frashëri/Pollo (1985), pp. 173–174.

32 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 226; Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 169.

33 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 236.

34 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 236.

35 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 173.

countries, and a few collaborators of Enver Hoxha, such as Mehmet Shehu. The textbook of 1985 includes far fewer names and former collaborators; the most prominent of these, Mehmet Shehu, had become a traitor.

The death of Mehmet Shehu brought about an abrupt change in the historical narrative on the Second World War in Albania. Standish has argued that it was an event that disrupted the myth-making process. Previous purges within the Party had not questioned Hoxha's role during the National Liberation War mainly because the purges happened before the consolidation of Hoxha's myth. Shehu, on the other hand, had been a co-fighter and collaborator of Hoxha for a long time and was therefore an important figure of the myth depicting that Enver Hoxha and his wartime collaborators had been responsible for the liberation of the country and also living symbols of that accomplishment.³⁶

The measures taken after the death of Mehmet Shehu included the removal of Shehu's publications from circulation, the erasure of positive references to him in all official publications, the publication of a new edition of Hoxha's memoirs, and the denunciation of Shehu as a traitor and a secret agent.³⁷ These developments in the official Albanian historiography were reflected in school history textbooks. In the textbook of 1963, for example, where Mehmet Shehu is not explicitly mentioned in the subchapter dedicated to the liberation of Tirana, in 1985 he had become the enemy who had allowed the German troops to leave the city:

After 19 days of bloody fighting, on November 17th 1944 Tirana was liberated. The enemy suffered about 2000 casualties. The damage would have been much higher, but Hitler's troops left the capital through an open escape route left by the enemy Mehmet Shehu, in contradiction to the orders of the General Commando to completely surround Tirana.³⁸

In the textbook of 1963, Mehmet Shehu is mentioned as the Commander of the First Brigade of the National Liberation Army, which was created on August 15th 1943.³⁹ In the textbook of 1985, a footnote was added on Mehmet Shehu noting that:

Mehmet Shehu was appointed the Commander of the First Brigade. He had returned from abroad where he was put on the service of British-Americans, took part in the National Liberation Movement, was recruited as an agent of the Yugoslavs, and acted in Albania following their orders. Often criticized by the Party for grave mistakes, he managed to conceal his true intentions.⁴⁰

36 Standish, 'Enver Hoxha's role in the development of socialist Albanian myths', pp. 117–118.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 118–119.

38 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 194.

39 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 246.

40 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 180.

In the textbook of 1963, the role of Mehmet Shehu during the German offensive in the winter of 1943–1944 is described as the leader of eighty partisans who eliminated a German company and forced the enemy to advance slower, giving time to the First Brigade to pass to the region of Vlora.⁴¹ While in 1963 Mehmet Shehu was praised as the saviour of the First Brigade which was surrounded by German troops in the region of Mallakstra, the historical narrative changed in 1985, when Mehmet Shehu was accused of ‘deliberately delaying the departure of troops and leading them onto dangerous routes where many fighters were killed’.⁴²

The cult of Enver Hoxha is also visually represented in various forms, often in images of Hoxha wearing a military uniform. In his analysis of the individual cult of Enver Hoxha in images and its evolution overtime, Ursprung has argued that, during the 1950s, the central position in the visual state propaganda was dedicated to the construction of socialism, and it was only in the 1960s that the state propaganda concentrated on Enver Hoxha.⁴³

The comparison of the two textbooks shows the evolution and consolidation of the leader cult of Enver Hoxha from the 1960s onwards, expressed in the stronger emphasis on Hoxha’s individual contribution during the war as well as his representation as the founder of the Communist Party and the great visionary leader of the National Liberation War.

Myths of Military Valour

There were two essential aspects in the myths of military valour during World War II in Albania: partisan warfare and the absence of foreign aid in defeating the foreign invaders. Regarding the first aspect, the history textbooks include lively descriptions of the courage and heroism of the partisans, who are described as brave and determined:

In cities and villages guerrilla partisan units were created. They were composed of brave and determined persons, communists and persons without party affiliation, especially poor workers and peasants.⁴⁴

There is a tendency to exaggerate the number of soldiers fighting in the battles by juxtaposing a small number of partisans against a large number of enemies. In

41 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 251.

42 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 185.

43 Daniel Ursprung, ‘Personenkult im Bild: Stalin, Enver Hoxha und Nicolae Ceaușescu im Vergleich’, in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Heidi Hein-Kircher and Benno Ennker (Marburg: Herder 2010), pp. 61–62.

44 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 236.

the textbook of 1963 we find descriptions of partisan heroic efforts such as the following: 'During combats in June, partisans once again showed examples of legendary heroism. The hunger, the sleeplessness and long marches did not bend them'.⁴⁵ Descriptions in the textbook of 1985 focus to a larger extent on the qualities of the National Liberation Army:

During the offensive of the enemy, which enjoyed a large numerical and technical superiority, the National Liberation Army with its heroic resistance and agility proved itself as an army with an excellent morale and with strong organizational abilities, an army loyal to the end to the interests of the people and the fatherland.⁴⁶

Fischer has argued that the military myth aimed to increase Albanian participation in the expulsion of German troops from Albanian territories. It was an element that would contribute to unity around the new regime and also legitimize the coming to power of Enver Hoxha and the Communist Party.⁴⁷

The second aspect of the myth of military valour regards the omission of information on the foreign aid for the National Liberation War in Albania during the Second World War. In reference to the military aid and material supplies given to the National Liberation Movement by the British missions in Albania, the book *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963) portrays the activities of the British military missions as 'efforts to activate Albanian political reactionary groups in order to use them as tools in favourable conditions',⁴⁸ and as 'agents of British imperialism who were trying to re-establish the Albanian reaction'.⁴⁹ There is no mention of the support given to the National Liberation Army in the textbook of 1963:

Close to the reactionary heads of *Legaliteti*⁵⁰ and *Balli Kombëtar*⁵¹, British and American military missions were appointed who, instead of supporting the National Liberation Army, who were fighting a fierce war against the Nazi Germans, with military materials, were secretly supplying the traitors who collaborated with the enemy. [...] Understanding the real intentions of British and American military missions in Albania, the Central Committee of the Party ordered the party members and the partisan

45 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 257.

46 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 186.

47 Fischer (2002), p. 141.

48 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 247.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 249.

50 *Legaliteti* (Legality) was formed by Abaz Kupi in November 1943. Abaz Kupi had been a member of the General Council of the National Liberation Movement, who established *Legaliteti* after the rejection of Mukja agreement by the Communist Party. In addition to war against the occupations, the programme of the organization included the return of King Zog under a democratic kingdom.

51 *Balli Kombëtar* (National Front) was formed in November 1942 by liberal nationalists. For more information on the organization see Fischer, *Albania at War*, pp. 132–136.

formations to maintain a correct and righteous attitude to the military missions, which should not be allowed to be an arbiter in domestic affairs and hinder the war effort.⁵²

Nevertheless, a later passage in the text, which describes the Allies threatening to cut the material supplies for the National Liberation Army, thus indirectly implies that the British military missions had in fact supported the National Liberation Army with supplies after all:

The British and American imperialists started to openly interfere with the National Liberation Movement. In July 1944 the Mediterranean Allied Command required from the National Liberation Army not to attack the traitor Abaz Kupi, otherwise it would cut the material supplies. The General Command rejected this demand of the British imperialists.⁵³

While according to the textbook of 1963 it was the Central Committee of the Communist Party that warned party members and partisan formations to be careful with the British military missions, in the textbook of 1985, this role is now attributed directly to Enver Hoxha:

It was the courageous and righteous attitude of the General Commander Comrade Enver Hoxha, in his protection of the vital interests of the Albanian people, that saved the Antifascist National Liberation Movement and indeed the country.⁵⁴

Fischer has argued that the myth of the heroic partisan war was an important factor for the legitimization of Hoxha's regime.⁵⁵ The emphasis on the glorious partisan war strengthens the representation of the National Liberation Army as the only organization fighting for the liberation of the country against the foreign armies. The negation or minimization of the foreign aid in turn strengthens the myths of military valour of the National Liberation Army, and therefore constitutes a central aspect of the myth-making process during the socialist period.

Myths of Rebirth and Renewal: The National Liberation War as a Popular Revolution

Myths of rebirth and renewal are linked to revolutions and are, as Schöpflin has argued, 'a way of legitimating change, of understanding far-reaching transformation, of creating mythic order in the chaos of a major political shift'.⁵⁶ During World War II a political shift took place in Albania which laid the

52 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 253.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 259–260.

54 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 191.

55 Fischer (2002), p. 142.

56 Schöpflin (1997), pp. 32–33.

foundations for the establishment of the communist system after the war. The Communist Party took steps towards establishing itself as the legitimate political force to claim power after the war. Two meetings during the war represented important steps in this direction and showed the intention of the Communist Party to assume power even while the liberation war was still ongoing. The two meetings were organized with the participation of different groups of resistance active in Albania during the war. By focusing on these two meetings, I aim to analyze how the relationship between the Communist Party and other resistance groups during the war is represented in the textbooks, and how this representation serves to legitimate the establishment of the communist regime. There were several other plenums and conferences of the Communist Party organized during the war which represent attempts to establish the power of the Communist Party in the post-war state, but these will not be analyzed for the purposes of this chapter, since they represent unilateral actions undertaken by the CPA.

The first meeting was organised in Peza, a village near Tirana, on September 16th 1942, with the participation of representatives of various resistance groups. The textbooks attribute the initiative for the organization of the meeting to the Communist party:

On September 16th 1942 and on the initiative of the Communist Party, a conference was organized in Peza with representatives of the Communist Party of Albania, the anti-fascist youth and women, and representatives of various non-organized fractions within the National Liberation Movement.⁵⁷

The description of these participants in the textbook of 1963 indicates that, despite the representation of the Communist Party as the initiator for the meeting, other groups existed within the liberation movement. The picture changes in the textbook of 1985, where the nationalists are presented either as having accepted the directives of the Communist Party or as having a passive attitude toward the Italian occupation:

The conference of Peza was attended by representatives of the Communist Party and of different nationalistic fractions. Among these nationalists, some had accepted the political directives of the Party and were fighting against the occupation. The others appeared to be biding their time for the moment.⁵⁸

The principal decisions of the Peza meeting were to wage an uncompromising war against the fascist invaders and the domestic traitors for a free, independent and democratic Albania, to organize all patriotic forces into a united national liberation front, to prepare for the people's armed uprising as the ultimate stage of the partisan war, and to establish national liberation councils in all regions of

57 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), pp. 237–238.

58 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), pp. 175–176.

the country.⁵⁹ The textbook of 1985 stresses the importance of the Communist Party in the decision-making processes. While the 1963 textbook only mentions the most significant decisions made, in 1985 learners read that ‘The conference of Peza unanimously approved the platform of the Communist Party’,⁶⁰ assigning to the Communist Party the leading role within the newly established National Liberation Front. The meeting is represented as,

a result of the war of the Party, since its foundation for the unification of all antifascist forces, without any differentiation on the basis of religious, regional or political convictions, for the extension of the national liberation war and the leading role of the Communist Party in this war. The National Liberation Front was led by a single party, the Communist Party.⁶¹

The conference was considered an event which ‘laid the foundations for the organization of the new popular power’.⁶² The textbook of 1985 considered the decisions of the meeting ‘a great political victory for the Communist Party’,⁶³ and it stressed the role played by Enver Hoxha during the meeting. The decision to establish National Liberation Councils was attributed to his speech titled ‘The national liberation councils as organs of unification and war of the Albanian people’,⁶⁴ and a separate part of the section in the 1985 textbook is dedicated to the revolutionary activities of Enver Hoxha.⁶⁵ Albanian historiography did not mention the eighteen individuals who organized the conference, which was later glorified as certain names were not to be related to the conference. While everyone who was in Peza had shown willingness to accept other ideologies and to fight together against the Italian occupation, it was not possible for certain persons to become part of the collective memory.⁶⁶

A strongly debated event which occurred during World War II is the meeting of Mukja that took place on 2 August 1943 with the participation of representatives of the National Liberation Front and Balli Kombëtar. The Mukja Agreements called for the construction of a new national committee for the salvation of Albania, which would be made up of equal numbers of representatives from both organizations and would function as a provisional government. The delegates supported the concept of an ‘ethnic Albania’ based upon the enlarged frontiers of 1941 and proclaimed Albania’s independence by annulling

59 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 238; Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 176.

60 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 176.

61 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 238.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 238.

63 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 176.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 172.

66 Hubert Neuwirth, *Widerstand und Kollaboration in Albanien 1939–1944* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), p. 77.

the decisions of the fascist assembly of 12 April 1939, which had constructed the first puppet Albanian government after the Italian invasion. The assembled delegates agreed to fight against the Italians.⁶⁷

The decisions made in the meeting of Mukja were rejected by the Communist Party shortly after the meeting. This rejection of the Mukja decisions is considered by several historians as the starting point of a civil war in Albania during World War II, when the existing political parties in Albania fought each other in an attempt to secure power after the larger war. Reports also indicate that the release of the order from the Central Committee of the Communist Party to cease all collaboration with Balli Kombëtar rendered a civil war between the National Liberation Movement and Balli Kombëtar inevitable.⁶⁸ The following description of the meeting is given in the textbook of 1963:

The representatives of the [Communist] Party in this meeting were Ymer Dishnica and Mustafa Gjinishi, who, in open contradiction to the party line, agreed on a compromise with Balli Kombëtar, establishing 'The committee for the salvation of Albania', comprised of six representatives of the Front and six from Balli Kombëtar. In this way, the traitor organization of Balli Kombëtar was put in an equal position with the National Liberation Front. The Central Party Committee rejected the decisions of Mukja and withdrew its representatives who had ignored the party directive.⁶⁹

The two representatives of the Communist Party were held responsible and accused of not following the Party directive. Through their compromise in the meeting, it was maintained, they had acknowledged Balli Kombëtar as a political organization of equal standing to the National Organisation Front headed by the Communist Party. The language is far more dramatic in 1985:

In order to avoid the fratricidal war fuelled by the fascists, the National Liberation General Council decided to start negotiations with Balli Kombëtar, inviting it to fight against the enemies and to recognize the National Liberation Council. The meeting was held in Mukja. But Ymer Dishnica, who headed the delegation of the General Council, accepted the division of the leadership of the war and the popular power with Balli, an organization that had not only not fought against the enemy, but had even been put under its service. This was an act of treachery which was condemned immediately by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the General Council.⁷⁰

One of the hottest debated issues regarding World War II in Albania since the 1990s is whether the liberation war was combined with a civil war after the denunciation of the meeting of Mukja by the Communist Party. Both textbooks analyzed reflect the will of the Communist Party to take power after the end of the

67 Fischer, *Albania at War*, p. 150.

68 Hibbert, *Fitorja e hidhur*, p. 93.

69 *Histori e Shqipërisë*, p. 247.

70 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), pp. 180–181.

war, and the steps made during the war for the fulfilment of this purpose. Surprisingly, in the textbook of 1985 we read that the National Liberation Movement actually conducted a civil war:

By joining the foreign occupations and fighting openly with them against the National Liberation Movement, big landowners, the reactionary urban bourgeoisie and rich peasantry imposed the civil war upon this movement. By destroying these reactionary social forces with military might during the Antifascist National Liberation War and by thus removing them from political life, the revolutionary popular forces, led by the Communist Party of Albania, took over total power.⁷¹

This paragraph is included in a separate subchapter dedicated to the transformation of the National Liberation War into a popular revolution and the line of argument aims to convince the reader that the responsibility for the civil war lies with the reactionary classes (landlords, big bourgeoisie, and rich peasantry). Both textbooks clearly describe the aim of the Communist Party during the war to prepare for the political power takeover after the liberation of the country:

The Party did not separate the liberation war from the war to take over power. Along with the national liberation war, the power of the bourgeoisie was disappearing; a new popular power was becoming established.⁷²

In the textbook of 1985, a separate subchapter shows how the Antifascist National Liberation War was transformed into a popular revolution:

The Antifascist National Liberation War marked a higher phase in comparison to earlier movements for national liberation and an essential turn in the history of the country. This war took place on a far larger scale; it was more organized and conscious. It brought about not only national liberation; the political and social events that evolved during the war gradually lent it the features of a popular revolution, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and essentially democratic with socialist elements, which especially evolved after the complete liberation of the country.⁷³

In the textbook of 1963, the conference of Peza and the meeting of Berati were considered important steps in the establishment and consolidation of the popular power.⁷⁴ The meeting of the Antifascist National Liberation Council⁷⁵ in Berat on October 22 1944 decided the transformation of the Antifascist National

71 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 196.

72 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 266.

73 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 196.

74 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), 268.

75 The Antifascist National Liberation Council was created by the Congress of Përmet (May 24, 1944) and had executive and legislative powers. The Council decided the establishment of the Antifascist National Liberation Committee headed by Enver Hoxha and had the attributes of a provisional government.

Liberation Committee into a provisional democratic government of Albania, headed by Enver Hoxha.⁷⁶

The National Liberation War was considered ‘the greatest war fought by the Albanian people in the course of history’,⁷⁷ and as ‘the most heroic and bloody that the Albanian people have fought in the course of history. This war brought, on November 29 1944, true freedom and full national independence’.⁷⁸ The leadership of the Communist Party was considered the most important domestic factor for the liberation of the country, since it had been the first to call for war against the fascist invaders and their collaborators.⁷⁹

Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the two history textbooks shows that there were several myths surrounding the National Liberation War, which evolved mainly around the role played by the Communist Party and Enver Hoxha during the Second World War. The figure of Enver Hoxha and the Communist Party were central to the myths of foundation. The leader cult of Enver Hoxha strongly aimed to mark the emergence of a new political system and the integration of the latter around the figure of its leader. The leader cult and the cult of the Communist Party were strongly related until the 1970s. Gradually, the emphasis was placed on Enver Hoxha as the founder of the Communist Party, giving him a central position within the National Liberation Movement. The establishment of Enver Hoxha’s cult also functioned as a mechanism to avoid eventual conflicts between higher-ranking party members. The continuous purges within the Communist Party followed by changes in the historical narrative of the official historiography strengthened the position of Enver Hoxha, and the leader cult evolved around him.

There are several interesting elements in the construction of the myths. One important strategy is the omission of prominent figures of the resistance in textbooks, and the labelling as traitors or agents of the few actors mentioned. On the other hand, the emphasis on the contribution of Enver Hoxha, especially in the 1980s when the Hoxha leader cult even surpassed the cult of the Communist Party. The textbooks analyzed reveal two phases in myth construction regarding the role of the Communist Party during the war. During the first phase in the 1960s, the leading role was attributed to the Communist party. From the 1970s onwards, emphasis was placed on Enver Hoxha as the founder and leader of the

76 Valentina Duka, *Histori e Shqipërisë 1912–2000* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Universitar, 2007), p. 226; *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, p. 100.

77 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 266.

78 Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 195.

79 *Histori e Shqipërisë* (1963), p. 266; Frashëri/Pollo (1985), p. 197.

Communist Party and of the National Liberation War against the Italian and German occupation forces.

The myths of military valour involved two principal aspects: partisan warfare and the absence of foreign military aid, a strategy which aimed to foster identification of the population with the liberation war, and to emphasize the glorious victory of the Communist Party in the absence of foreign aid. The National Liberation War was also represented as a popular revolution which laid the foundations for the establishment of communist rule after World War II.

The establishment of various myths relating to World War II served as a strategy with which to legitimate communist rule in Albania and the partisan struggle against the Italian and German occupiers and their domestic collaborators, and took up a central position in the historical narrative. The war of resistance is represented as an antifascist national liberation war but at the same time the aim of the Communist Party to seize power even during the war was clearly expressed. The popular identification with the leader and the national liberation movement also served the legitimization of communist rule. In addition to glorification on the part of the official historiography, the National Liberation Movement also became an inspiration for writers and artists during the socialist period, which brought about a wealth of works representing this event of contemporary Albanian history. The total international isolation of Albania after the break-up with China in 1978 contributed to the intensification of mythical narratives by Albanian historiography, equally reflected in school history textbooks.

Bibliography

List of textbooks cited

Frashëri, Kristo, and Stefanaq Pollo, *Historia e Shqipërisë (për shkollat e mesme)* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1985).

Histori e Shqipërisë (për shkollat e mesme- dispensë) (Tirana: Drejtoria e Botimevet Shkollore, 1963).

Other References

Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë [Academy of Sciences of Albania], *Historia e popullit shqiptar*, IV (Tirana: Toena, 2009).

Bailey, Roderick, "Smoke Without Fire? Albania, SOE and the Communist 'Conspiracy Theory'", in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. by Stephanie Schwandner-

- Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 143–56.
- Bottici, Chiara, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).
- Duka, Valentina, *Histori e Shqipërisë 1912–2000* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Universitar, 2007).
- Fischer, Bernd J., 'Perception and realities in Twentieth Century Albanian Military Prowess', in *Albanian Identities*, ed. by Schwandner-Sievers and Fischer (2002), pp. 134–42.
- Fischer, Bernd J., *Albania at War (1939–1945)*, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999).
- Fischer, Bernd J., 'The Second World War in Albania: History and Historical Agendas', in *Albanische Geschichte: Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung*, edited by Oliver Jens Schmitt and Eva Anne Frantz (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2009).
- Fischer, Bernd J., 'Politizimi I histories: Rasti i Shqipërisë në Luftën e Dytë Botërore, in: Fatos Tarifa, Romeo Gurakuqi and Ermal Hasimja, *Politika dhe Historia* (Tirana: UET Press, 2012), pp. 185–200.
- Hibbert, Reginald, *Fitorja e hidhur: Lufta Nacionalçlirimtare e Shqipërisë* (Tirana: Shtëpia Botuese e Lidhjes së Shkrimtarëve, 1993).
- Hobsbawm, Eric, 'Mass-producing Traditions: Europe 1870–1914' in: *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Ifversen, Jan, 'Myth in the Writing of European History', in *Nationalizing the Past: Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. by Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), pp. 452–79.
- Neuwirth, Hubert, *Widerstand und Kollaboration in Albanien 1939–1944*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008).
- Rees, E.A., 'Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions', in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. by Balázs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones, and E. A. Rees (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 3–28.
- Schöpflin, George, 'The Nature of Myth: Some Theoretical Aspects', in *Albanian Identities*, ed. by Schwandner-Sievers and Fischer (2002), pp. 26–32.
- Schöpflin, George, 'The functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths', in *Myths and Nationhood*, ed. by Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (London: Hurst, 1997), pp. 19–35.
- Standish, Alex M.J., 'Enver Hoxha's role in the development of socialist Albanian myths', in *Albanian Identities*, ed. by Schwandner-Sievers and Fischer (2002), pp. 115–26.
- Sretenovic, Stanislav, and Artan Puto, 'Leader Cults in the Western Balkans (1945–90): Josip Broz Tito and Enver Hoxha' in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships*, ed. by Apor et al. (2004), pp. 208–26.
- Ursprung, Daniel, 'Personenkult im Bild: Stalin, Enver Hoxha und Nicolae Ceaușescu im Vergleich', in *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Heidi Hein-Kircher and Benno Ennker (Marburg: Herder 2010), pp. 50–73.

Part II:
'Othering' in Textbooks from Albania and Macedonia

Fortifying the Nation: The Image of the Greeks in Albanian History Textbooks (1945–1990)

Introduction

On Sunday, April 27, 2014 the first author of this paper¹ took his son to a book festival at the National Historical Museum, Tirana, where he by chance had the opportunity to attend a puppet theatre performance organized by the National Children's Theatre on the museum's premises. The play was a variation on a 'Sleeping Beauty' theme, only that the role of Sleeping Beauty here was assumed by the Illyrian Princess Teuta. The performance combined history with fiction: as the wife of Agron, Illyrian King and ruler of Shkodra (ca. 250–231 B.A.),² princess Teuta in her youth was allegedly cursed to a death-like sleep by a 'bad fairy' (Alb. *shtriga*), who then offered to wake her on the condition that Teuta be subjected to slavery. Her father rejected the offer and announced that his daughter would be married to him who might wake her from death's sleep. After two brave men fail to wake her by singing or dancing, a third succeeds by playing the clarinet. Filled with rage, the bad fairy turns into a dragon, which is then promptly killed by the brave man (Alb. *trimi*) who had saved her (Figure 2). The setting was decorated lavishly with Albanian flags and the national colours, red and black. It is interesting to note not only the alleged historical linearity from Illyrian history to modern Albania, but also the existence of a 'bad fairy', whose attributes are unclear despite her obviously playing a significant role in the allegory of national identity building that is this play.

One could attribute the bad fairy to Teuta's enemies, identified either as the Greeks or the Romans in some Albanian history textbooks of the period in focus. One textbook, for instance, recounts that 'within a very short time, Teuta oc-

1 This study owes much to a research fellowship provided by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Brunswick, Germany, to the first of the authors. The paper also benefited a great deal from the critical comments of two anonymous reviewers, to whom we are grateful.

2 Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, 2nd edition (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), p. 439.



Figure 1: Princess Teuta is cursed to a death-like sleep by a 'bad fairy'. An episode from an open-air performance of puppet theatre. © K. Giakoumis.



Figure 2: The brave man who saved Princess Teuta kills the dragon. © K. Giakoumis.

cupied the Taulantians, Foinice, the capital of Epiros and in 229 B.C.E. Corfu'.³ The same book continues: 'After the occupation of Corfu by the Ardiaei, Teuta sent her fleet and besieged the isle of Hvar, another Greek colony in the Dalmatian Sea. Hvar's inhabitants asked for Rome's help [...] The Roman fleet

3 "Teuta ... në një kohë shumë të shkurtër pushtoi Taulantët, kryeqytetin e Epirit Finikin, dhe në 229 p.e. re Korkyrën (Korfuzin)", *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e VII të Shkollës Shtatëvjeçare*, 1959, pp. 7-8.

occupied Corfu [...] and went there from to Apollonia and Epidamnus, where the Greeks of these cities opened the doors to the fleet and army of Rome. The Romans fought the Illyrians, who broke down.⁴ Another textbook continues the story thus: 'The next year, in 229, Teuta moved against the coastal cities. As Durrës and Hvar resisted, the Illyrian fleet [...] headed towards Corfu. Aetolia's and Achaia's fleet came to the assistance of Corfu. The naval battle between the two fleets developed close to the isle of Paxos. The Greek fleet was defeated, while the Illyrians occupied Corfu.'⁵ The same textbook concludes the account with the ominous summary: 'The swift strengthening of the Illyrian Kingdom caused concern not only to the Greek states, but also the Republic of Rome'.⁶

Regardless of the effectiveness of symbolic nation-building strategies⁷ manifested in forms of banal nationalism⁸ in the twenty-first century, the notion of an enemy covetous of Teuta's (i. e. Albania's) freedom is strikingly similar to the 1976 preamble to the amended Constitution of Albania, authored by Enver Hoxha himself:⁹

The Albanian people have blazed the path of history sword in hand. In the struggle with domestic and foreign enemies, they have defended their existence as a people and as a nation and fought for national freedom and independence, for their native land and mother tongue, for their livelihood and social justice.¹⁰

This strong proclamation in the preamble to the 1976 Constitution of Albania displays the concerned and concentrated preoccupation of Albania's Stalinist dictator and the communist nomenclature around him to exercise strict control over the population of this self-isolated country by creating and exploiting an environment of existentialist fears from imagined domestic and external enemies.

4 Pasi u pushtua Korkyra nga Ardianët, Teuta dërgoi flotën e saj dhe rrethoi ishullin Isa, një tjetër koloni greke në Dalmaci. Banorët e Isës, kërkuan ndihmën e Romës ... Flota romake ... pushtoi Korkyrën dhe prej andej u drejtua në Apolloni e Epidamnus, ku grekërit e këtyre dy qyteteve i hapin portat flotës dhe ushtrisë së Romës. Romakët u ndeshën me Ilirët, të cilët u thyen. Ibid., pp. 7–8.

5 'Vitin tjetër, më 229, Teuta iu drejtua qyteteve bregdetare. Meqenëse Durrësi dhe Isa rezistuan, flota ilire ... iu drejtua Korkyrës. Në ndihmë të Korkyrës erdhi flota e Etolisë dhe e Akaisë. Beteja navale ndërmjet dy flotave u zhvillua në afërsitë e ishullit Paksos. Flota greke u shpartallua kurse ilirët pushtuan Korkyrën' *Historia e Shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 2nd edition, 1974, p. 20.

6 Ibid.

7 Pål Kolstø, 'Introduction' in *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-Building in South Eastern Europe*, edited by Pål Kolstø (Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 7–9.

8 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

9 Peter R. Prifti, *Socialist Albania Since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), p. 9.

10 William B. Simons, ed., *The Constitutions of the Communist World* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff and Noordhoff International Publishers B.V., 1980), p. 8.

This chapter investigates one manifestation of this perspective in the image of the Greeks in Albanian history textbooks from the time of the communist regime (1945–1990), thus continuing and expanding upon previous work on the image of the Greeks in the course of Albania’s national identity building process (1886 to 1939).¹¹ Having explored the volatility and versatility of ethnic identifications in the regions of Epiros and Albania until well into the twentieth century, we have demonstrated how the construction of a national identity by the nascent Albanian state passed through the demonization of the enemy,¹² a process which inevitably dictated the content of history textbooks,¹³ whose emphasis on political and military events rather than on social or cultural history portrayed a hostile image of the Greeks as the ethnic Other and neighbour. As this chapter will show, the legacy of the demonization of the enemy was taken up and intensified to the extreme by the communist regime, especially in the final stage of Albania’s self-isolation in the second half of the 1970s. It should be noted, however, that the tendency to view the Other as a potential enemy is not an exclusive trait of communist regimes,¹⁴ as research on the image of Albanians in Greek¹⁵ or Macedonian¹⁶ school textbooks has shown.

-
- 11 Cf. Konstantinos Giakoumis and Ilir Kalemaj, ‘The Perception of the Greek in the Albanian National Identity-Building Process (1886–1938)’: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2602565> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2602565>; and Kalemaj, Ilir and Giakoumis Konstantinos. ‘The Image of Greek-Albanian Lingual and Cultural Relations in Albanian School History Textbooks (1886–1939)’. *Albanohellenica* 6 (2015) [2]: http://media.wix.com/ugd/5c39e7_e8db7b67f37648479608009aef19b559.pdf.
- 12 See Konstantinos Giakoumis, ‘The Policy of the Orthodox Patriarchate Toward the Use of Albanian in Church Services’, *Albanohellenica* 4 (2011): pp. 137–71; and Konstantinos Giakoumis, ‘Against the Imperial Past: The Perception of the Turk and Greek “Enemy” in the Albanian National Identity-Building Process’ in *Balkan Empires: Imperial Imagined Communities in Southeastern Europe, 18th–20th c.*, edited by Dimitris Stamatopoulos (Budapest: CEU Press, 2017).
- 13 Giakoumis and Kalemaj, ‘The Perception of the Greek’.
- 14 Cf. Simona Szakács, ‘Now and Then: A National Identity Construction in Romanian History. A Comparative Study of Communist and Post-Communist School Textbooks’ *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007): pp. 1–25; Darko Stojanov, ‘In Search of Autochthony: A Case Study of the Great Migrations Period as Presented in History Textbooks in Macedonia’ *Der Donauraum* 50 (2010): pp. 225–34.
- 15 Panagiotis Xochellis, Kapsalis Achilleas, Andreou Andreas, Ismyrliadou Adela, Loukidou Despoina, Bonidis Kyriakos, Hatzisavvidis Sophronis. ‘Η Εικόνα του “Άλλου” στα Σχολικά Βιβλία Ιστορίας των Βαλκανικών Χωρών’. In *Η Εικόνα του “Άλλου” στα Σχολικά Βιβλία των Βαλκανικών Χωρών. Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου, Θεσσαλονίκη, 16–18 Οκτωβρίου 1998*, edited by Achilleas Kapsalis, Kyriakos Bonidis, Athena Sipitanou (Athens: Typothito, 2000); Konstantina Papakosta, ‘Ο Λόγος της σχολικής Ιστορίας για τους γειτονικούς λαούς: η περίπτωση των Αλβανών στα σχολικά εγχειρίδια νεότερης ιστορίας της υποχρεωτικής εκπαίδευσης κατά τη μεταπολίτευση’. *Συνέδριο ΠΙΕΕ Αναλυτικά Προγράμματα και Σχολικά Εγχειρίδια: Ελληνική Πραγματικότητα και Διεθνής Εμπειρία*, Conference Proceedings 2 (2009): pp. 578–589.
- Konstantina Papakosta, ‘The Albanians in Greek Textbooks of Modern History in Com-

As part of a longitudinal study of textbooks spanning the entire history of Albanian history textbooks (1886 to date), our work provides a dynamic retrospective of stereotypically and, hence, uncritically reproduced historical constructions, which seem to still be affecting the attitudes of Albanians towards Greeks, as demonstrated in recent surveys.¹⁷ We seek to break new ground by linking the image of the Other in school textbooks of the Balkans with the political implications of Terror Management Theory (TMT), which explains human behaviour under the effect of death anxiety, including in conditions of mortality salience.¹⁸ The Balkans have witnessed some of the most horrific cases of prejudice against other ethnic groups having intensified to the point of violence and ethnic cleansing, thus rendering fear of the Other a fear of extinction.¹⁹

pulsory Education: Discursive Representations'. 16th International Conference of the Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education "The image of the "other"/the Neighbour in the Educational Systems of the Balkan countries (1998–2013)", *Education and Pedagogy in Balkan Countries*, pp. 134–148 (Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia, 2013), and cf. Lambros Baltiotis and Elias Skoulidas, 'Aspects of Greek "Myths" related to the Albanians during the Age of Nationalism'. In *Myths of the Other in the Balkans. Representations, Social Practices, Performances*, edited by Fotini Tsiibiridou and Nikitas Palantzas (Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia Press, 2013), pp. 66–74.

- 16 Petar Todorov, 'Teaching History in Macedonia After 2001: Representations of Armed Conflict Between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians' in *History Can Bite. History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies*, edited by Denise Bontrovato, Karina V. Korostelina and Martina Schulze (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016), pp. 111–124.
- 17 IPSOS Strategic Marketing, *Report: Nation Building – Albania* (October 2011). See in particular tables 60–62, 70–72 and 73–75: http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/forskning/prosjekter/nation-w-balkan/dokumenter/nb_albania-wine-summer.pdf, accessed on July 16, 2017; Ridvan Peshkopia, Arrita Deva, Saranda Fazliu, Lekë Hoxha, Drin Konjufca, Shkëlqim Mehmeti, Shkëlzen Musliu, Gresa Sheqiri, Blerina Zeqiri, and Antoneta Zjeçi, 'Intergroup Contact Theory and the Colorful Role of Education in Intergroup Prejudice Reduction: The Case of the Albanians'. Paper delivered at the DisCo Conference *Open Education as a Way to a Knowledge Society*, Prague, June 26–27, 2017; and Ridvan Peshkopia, Stephen V. Voss and Kujtim Bytyqi, "Intergroup Contact Theory and Albanians' Feeling Temperature Towards Greeks: Ethnicity, Fear, Class, and Exposure." *Universum College Working Paper Series 006 / 2013*, at <https://universum-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Peshkopia-Voss-and-Bytyqi-006-2013.docx>, accessed in July 16, 2017.
- 18 Jeff Greenberg, and Jamie Arndt, 'Terror Management Theory' in *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, edited by Paul A.M. Van Lange, Arie W. Kruglanski, and E. Torry Higgins (London: Sage, 2012), pp. 398–415.
- 19 Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); cf. also Eleftherios Klerides, 'Imagining the Textbook: Textbooks as Discourse and Genre', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 2/1 (2010), 31–54; Barbara Christophe, 'Erinnerungen an Helden und Feiglinge. Vergangenheit und Gegenwart im litauischen Schulbuch', *Östeuropa*, 8 (2010), 71–90 and Barbara Christophe, 'Remembering Communism – Making Sense of Post-Communism. An Analysis of Discursive Strategies in Lithuanian Textbooks' *Eckert. Beiträge 2010*. Stable URL: http://www.edumeres.net/fileadmin/publikationen/beitraege/2010/Christophe_Remembering.pdf, accessed in December 10, 2014.

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

Every textbook is a construct with some social character aiming to establish a relationship between itself, other texts, and the world around them. Staffan Selander has argued that, while knowledge is transformed in a textbook, the textbook in turn conveys a specific worldview.²⁰ The epistemological assumptions of many theories in the field of textbook research are that, as reconstructions of an 'objective' world, textbooks are socially determined by power structures to serve institutionally defined ends. It is therefore possible to analytically reframe textbooks to identify power constructions between the text, the outside world and other texts, thus analysing patterns of paradigmatic thought (perspectives, explanatory models, etc.).²¹ The school textbook stands at the critical juncture between the 'theory' of history teaching and teaching practice. While textbook research cannot, on its own, measure the impact of textbooks on their users, it can assess the quality of ideological inculcation anticipated by institutional power structures, as textbooks are used as means to intensify dominant ideologies of their times.²²

Our textbook research is grounded in the theoretical foundations of peace education²³ and textbook studies.²⁴ 'Originally a study of the causes of war and its prevention, peace education since has evolved into studying violence in all its manifestations and educating to counteract the war system for the creation of a peace system'.²⁵ In the context of this chapter we look at dominant, divisive issues of 'We' versus 'Other' differentiation (instead of a unity-based worldview), in-

20 Staffan Selander, 'Towards a Theory of Pedagogic Text Analysis' *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research* 34 (2) (1990): 143–50; Christina Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία στα Ελληνικά Σχολεία (1834–1914). Γνωστικό Αντικείμενο και Ιδεολογικές Προεκτάσεις* (Athens: Geniki Grammateia Neas Genias, 1988), p. 9.

21 Selander, 'Towards a Theory of Pedagogic Text Analysis'.

22 Koulouri, *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία στα Ελληνικά Σχολεία (1834–1914)*.

23 Hermann Röhrs, *Erziehung zum Frieden* (Stuttgart: Verlag w. Kohlhammer, 1971); Hermann Röhrs, *Frieden- Eine pädagogische Aufgabe* (Braunschweig: Agentur Pedersen, 1983); Hermann Röhrs, *Idee und Realität der Friedenspädagogik. Frieden, eine pädagogische Aufgabe, Gesammelte Schriften* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1994); David Hicks, *Education for Peace – Issues, Principles, and Practice in the Classroom* (London: Routledge, 1988); Gavriel Salomon and Ed Cairns (eds) *Handbook on Peace Education* (New York: Psychology Press, 2010); Cyriakos Bonidis, T. *Το Περιεχόμενο του Σχολικού Βιβλίου ως Αντικείμενο Έρευνας* (Athens: Metaichmio, 2012); Karina V. Korostelina, *History Education in the Formation of Social Identity: Towards a Culture of Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Karina V. Korostelina and Simone Lässig, *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbooks Project* (London: Routledge, 2013).

24 Höpken, *Öl ins Feuer?*; Xochellis et al., 'Η Εικόνα του "Άλλου" στα Σχολικά Βιβλία Ιστορίας των Βαλκανικών Χωρών'.

25 Leonisa Ardizzzone, 'Generating Peace: A Study of Nonformal Youth Organizations' *Peace and Change* 28/3 (2003): pp. 420–45; here, p. 430.

tergroup tension (rather than a culture of peace and wounds-healing) and on-going preparation for defence against real or imagined enemies.²⁶ Such issues stand at the roots of interethnic tensions in school textbooks for the purpose of helping students to deconstruct enemy images of the 'Other' via peace education.²⁷

The role of textbooks in the generation of direct or indirect ethnic tension and prejudices has long been recognized:

[I]n both authoritarian and democratic countries, history textbooks tend, strongly or moderately, to trace specific self-images and images of alleged 'others' back into the past and to lend them specific validity, in specific cases to the point of constructing and legitimizing national superiority, collective victimhood, or hostility. History textbooks are usually seen as a key resource for shaping collective memories and fostering social cohesion. Regardless of the reluctance with which many students use textbooks and the limited impact that such 'old media' might actually have on identity formation for today's adolescents, textbooks nevertheless inherit a specific *potential* to freeze or even cause conflicts that can reach far beyond the field of education.²⁸

School textbooks are mass media products for the dissemination of officially approved reconstructions of the past, as well as mirrors of societal controversies, and they therefore echo the political, cultural and ideological convictions of a nation's political elite.²⁹ With this in mind, we formulated two hypotheses: First, that the transformation of the image of the Greek in Albanian history school textbooks from 1945 to 1990 reflects the principal phases of bilateral relations, echoing histories of conflict, neighbourhood and partnership; and, secondly, that the image of the Greek is more negative upon the complete self-isolation of Albania from the rest of the world after the Sino-Albanian split (1972–1978) than before; for seclusion could be sustained only upon the systematic terrorization of the population on the pretences of foreign existentialist threat.

In order to understand the latter hypothesis, we need to contextualize the political exploitation of terror, as has been demonstrated in studies investigating the applications of the Terror Management Theory (TMT). The threat of extinction of the nation portrayed in history textbooks, exemplified by such statements as 'under the pressure of Greeks, the Illyrians [i.e. ancestors of

26 Clive Harber and Noriko Sakade, 'Schooling for Violence and Peace: How Does Peace Education Differ from "Normal" Schooling?' *Journal of Peace Education* 6/2 (2009): pp. 171–87.

27 Ian M. Harris, 'Peace Education Theory'. *Journal of Peace Education* 1/1 (2004): pp. 5–20; here, p. 6; Hossein B. Danesh, 'Towards an Integrative Theory of Peace Education', *Journal of Peace Education* 3/1 (2006): pp. 55–78.

28 Simone Lässig, 'Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Joint History Textbook Projects' In *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation*, pp. 1–2.

29 Sarah Graham-Brown, 'The Role of the Curriculum' in *Education Rights and Minorities* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994).

modern Albanians] who were established in the Balkan South gradually disappeared as an ethnic group' or 'the armed Greeks stated that, if this place is given to Albania, they will massacre all Albanians'³⁰, enhances in-group coherence. To formulate the hypothesis above we build on the work of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker,³¹ as, from the 1980s, did the prominent social psychologists Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski and Sheldon Solomon who developed a 'Terror Management Theory' (TMT), studying 'the role of the unconscious fear of death in just about everything'.³² Observing that human beings have developed systems to avoid death, and yet also a cognitive ability to understand its inevitability, the theory suggests that terror produced from the confrontation of human desire to live with mortality salience is managed through culture as a symbolic system containing values providing meaning to human life.³³ We are therefore suggesting that, similar to the political purpose of establishing a National History Museum, death salience via the generation of hostile narratives in history school textbooks fostering fear of the 'other' was politically utilized 'for an ideologically deep and correct appropriation of our people's history'; and for hammering 'faith into the righteousness of the Party line, love of the party and the popular rule, our national pride, faith in [our] own forces, determination to defend the country and certainty for an ever-brighter future of socialist Albania'.³⁴

Humans thus develop various mechanisms such as 'self-esteem and the worldview upon which it is predicated' and 'strive for and defend [these] in the service of psychological security' to reduce fear of death. They are expected to 'react negatively to anyone or anything that undermines faith in their worldview',³⁵ especially when this worldview has been formed by an utter absence of

30 *Historia e Shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 2nd edition, 1974, pp. 5 and 157.

31 Ernest Becker, *The Birth and Death of Meaning*, 2nd edition (New York: Free Press, 1971); Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Academic Press, 1973); Ernest Becker, *Escape from Evil*, 2nd edition (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

32 Jeff Greenberg and Jamie Arndt, 'Terror Management Theory', p. 400.

33 Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski and Sheldon Solomon, 'The Causes and Consequences of a Need for Self-Esteem: A Terror Management Theory' in *Public Self and Private Self*, edited by Roy F. Baumeister (New York: Springer, 1986), pp. 189-212 and Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon and Jamie Arndt, 'A Uniquely Human Motivation: Terror Management' in *Handbook of Motivation Science*, edited by James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner (New York: Guilford, 2008), pp. 113-34.

34 Cf. Sotir Temo, *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania* (Tirana: The 8 Nëntori Publishing House, 1985), p. 4.

35 Jeff Greenberg and Jamie Arndt, 'Terror Management Theory' in *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, edited by Paul A.M. Van Lange, Arie W. Kruglanski and E. Torry Higgins (London: Sage, 2012), p. 403; Jeff Greenberg et al., 'Evidence for Terror Management Theory II: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Reactions to those who Threaten or Bolster the Cultural Worldview', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58/2 (1990): pp. 308-318.

intergroup communication, combined with such statements [cited in Kofos 1993, 89 and 92] as, for example, ‘the Turkish conquerors and the lackeys of the Greek government in Albania were furious. ... The Greeks, for their part, started murdering people. They poisoned Petro Nini Lurasi, the teacher in Kolonia, and they butchered the patriot Papa-Kristo Negovani’.³⁶ Or, only a few pages later in the same textbook:

The people of Dropull, however, cannot forget that beyond our borders there stretches a vast darkness. And that this darkness hates the light, hates life, hates Dropoli and hates our land of Albania. Among its shadows, wolves in human form, their spawn ... howl with rage ... But in vain. Our land of Albania keeps its sword blade sharp, to smite off the head of any wolf that dares to approach with fangs bared.³⁷

Another textbook elaborates that ‘in only one day these [Greek] bands massacred 217 innocent Albanian peasants at Hormova’.³⁸

Since the 1980s, several scholars have tested various hypotheses stemming from TMT demonstrating that ‘[r]eminding people of their mortality (mortality salience...) increases positive reactions to people who validate aspects of participant’s worldviews...’³⁹ Simply put, fear of death or mortality salience enhances in-group solidarity.⁴⁰ There is no doubt that the communist regime was empirically aware of the potential of mortality salience to strengthen solidarity in the in-group’s worldviews and attitude to life. Several studies have demonstrated that fear of death increases negative feelings towards out-groups and positive feelings towards the in-group.⁴¹ As Giakoumis [2017] has demonstrated for the Albanian context, the demonization of the enemy was instrumentalized for these very ends in the process of construction and consolidation of the Albanian national identity. There is therefore evidence to support the application of TMT to situations of ethnic conflict, and this chapter seeks an extension of this application in the interpretation of research findings in Albanian history textbooks. Ultimately, this chapter also seeks to investigate why education is not always successful in reducing prejudice in Albania, contrary to the conclusions

36 Evangelos Kofos, ‘The Greek Minority School Textbooks During the Enver Hoxha Period’ *Balkan Studies* 34(1) (1993): 85–104; here, p. 89.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

38 Ministria e Arësimit dhe Kulturës, *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e VII të Shkollës Shtatëvjeçare* (Tirana: Botim i Ministrisë së Arësimit dhe Kulturës, 1959), p. 43.

39 Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon and Jamie Arndt, ‘A Uniquely Human Motivation: Terror Management’ in *Handbook of Motivation Science*, edited by James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner (New York: Guilford, 2008), pp. 113–34.

40 Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole and Tom Pyszczynski, *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004) and Michael Kearl, ‘Death, Sociological Perspectives’ in *Encyclopedia of Death & Human Experience*, edited by Clifton D. Bryant and Denis L. Peck (London: Sage, 2009), pp. 291–6.

41 For an overview, see Greenberg and Arndt, ‘Terror Management Theory’, pp. 408–9.

of intergroup communication theory scholars. While an increasing body of literature presents evidence that more education leads to less intergroup prejudice,⁴² Peshkopia et al. have shown that this conclusion, drawn on the basis of evidence from western countries implementing multicultural education, does not apply in most Balkan countries, which, like Albania, have set the primary goal of their education systems to be the instilling of a sense of national identity and belonging,⁴³ in the belief that enduring notions of national identity are formed in the course of primary socialization years as also indicated by the US paradigm.⁴⁴ Peshkopia found that, while in the case of Albania more education brings about a reduction in prejudice towards homosexuals, at the same time it tends to increase prejudice towards Greeks, i. e. a group targeted as the hostile Other by ethno-nationalist narratives. With this in mind, our research casts light on the types of narratives that intensify prejudice against Greeks and found to challenge hitherto accepted intergroup theories of prejudice reduction on the basis of education.

Research Sampling & Methodology

To test our hypotheses, we applied critical discourse analysis to explore the power structures and goals that lie beneath the history textbooks used as samples for the period 1959–1983.⁴⁵ Our sampling units were stochastically selected for

42 Cherry A. McGee Banks and James A. Banks, 'Equity Pedagogy: An Essential Component of Multicultural Education' *Theory into Practice* 34/3 (1995): 152–8; Bernadette C. Hayes, Ian McAllister and Lizanne Dowds, 'Integrated Education, Intergroup Relations, and Political Identities in Northern Ireland' *Social Problems* 54/4 (2007): 454–82; DOI: 10.1525/sp.2007.54.4.454; Steven P. Camicia, 'Prejudice Reduction through Multicultural Education: Connecting Multiple Literatures' *Social Studies Research and Practice* 2/2 (2007): 219–27; Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2011) and Geoffrey T. Wodtke, 'The Impact of Education on Inter-Group Attitudes: A Multiracial Analysis' *Social Psychology Quarterly* 75/1 (2012): 80–106. DOI: 10.1177/0190272511430234.

43 Ridvan Peshkopia et al., 'Intergroup Contact Theory and the Colourful Role of Education in Intergroup Prejudice Reduction: The Case of the Albanians', Paper delivered at the DisCo Conference *Open Education as a Way to a Knowledge Society*, Prague, June 26–27, 2017. Cf. Robert Thorp, *Uses of History in History Education* (Umeå: Umeå Universitet, 2016).

44 Bruce VanSledright, 'Narratives of Nation-State, Historical Knowledge, and School History Education' *Review of Research in Education* 32 (2008): pp. 109–46.

45 The sampling units below were coded by the first author and Enida Prespa, to whom we are indebted. It should be noted that the production of history school textbooks by Albanian authors did not begin immediately after the end of World War II, and pupils were initially taught history by means of Soviet textbooks in translation. The 1959 textbook in our sample is thus one of the first textbooks to be produced by Albanian historians on the basis of a curriculum developed by the Albanian Ministry of Education and Culture. Samples of post-

the purpose of relating the data to the representativeness of the population in Albania.⁴⁶ The textbook by Minga et al. (in the official Greek translation) was selected to investigate how history was taught to non-majoritarian groups. A compact ethnic Greek minority, the most populous minority group in Albania accounting for 0.9 % of Albania's population, after the disputed 2011 census (1.8 % in 1989⁴⁷) lives in the south. In our previous work⁴⁸ on the subject we used nine textbooks on account of the period's diversity and power shifts. In the post-1945 era, theoretical saturation⁴⁹ was reached for both the pre- and the post-1970s periods, rendering further samples unnecessary for the study. The textbook by Minga et al. (1983) remained in use until the regime change in 1990. Our 1959–1983 sampling units are thus representative of the entire communist period in Albania (1945–1190).

We approached our samples through a combination of hermeneutics⁵⁰ and text analysis methods.⁵¹ In doing so, we utilized a spiral, qualitative-quantitative-qualitative research design, which is both established and appropriate in this type of research.⁵² The general categories were as follows:

Code	Language	Place of Publication
10	Albanian	Albania
20	Greek	Albania

1983 textbooks present virtually no difference; for example, the 1983 Grade 4 history textbook by Minga et al., itself a reprint of the 1978 edition, remained in use until the end of communist rule.

46 See Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (London: SAGE, 1980); Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002); Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1952) and Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969).

47 See: <http://open.data.al/en/lajme/lajm/lang/en/id/673/Minorities-in-Albania> (accessed November 2017).

48 Giakoumis and Kalemaj, 'The Perception of the Greek in the Albanian National Identity-Building Process (1886–1938)', pp. 3–4.

49 Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1998).

50 Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik' in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart/Goettingen: Teubner, 1961), pp. 317–338; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke 1, Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, 6th edition (Tuebingen: Mohr, 1990); Stefan Titscher et al., *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, trans. B. Jenner (London: SAGE, 2000); Cyriakos T. Bonidis, *To Περιεχόμενο του Σχολικού Βιβλίου ως Αντικείμενο Έρευνας* (Athens: Metaichmio, 2012).

51 Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*; Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* and Bonidis, *To Περιεχόμενο του Σχολικού Βιβλίου*.

52 Kochellis et al., Η Εικόνα του "Άλλου" στα Σχολικά Βιβλία Ιστορίας των Βαλκανικών Χωρών.

Within these codes, the following secondary categories were defined:

Greek(s)	In this category, we included all references to Greece and Greeks or any other toponym or expression implying these concepts, syntactically referred (or potentially implied) as subject or object in a sentence.
Civilization or culture	Any reference to religion, education, morality and ethics, science, customs, feasts, ways of life and organisation of life, language and linguistic influences
Social and political developments	Any reference to internal developments, administration (taxes, etc.), organisation, economic life and public policies. Anything that makes reference to the legal framework regulating power relations involving citizens. Any reference to ideology, national, social movements and social reconfigurations in the state's interior or broader geopolitical developments.
Traits	Any adjective or other characterisation of the Greek people, stereotypical references, behaviour or mentality.
Foreign Policy	Anything related to international treaties, negotiations, diplomatic relations, alliances, truces and ceasefires, irredentism, imperialistic ambitions, visions of a greater nation.
Relations to other peoples	Any reference to the day-to-day relations of the people with other peoples, national and religious groups in the past or the present, or relations with minorities after the establishment of the nation-state.
Territory and imagined geography	Any reference to territory or territoriality of the Greek people or state, including an imagined geography of another people that includes territories of the modern Greek state.
Military organisation, military operations	Any reference to military organisation or warfare in which the Greek people are involved.
...and Greece in European, US and other states' foreign policies	Any reference to the policies or other measures of European countries, the USA or other states towards Greece or the Greek people.
Other references to...	Any other reference not classified in any of the categories above.

Recording units considered the number of rows and the number of words used in each reference. Qualitative directions were further provided with the triple scale 'Negative - Neutral - Positive', with clear definitions for neat distinctions checked with the double control method (test-test) with a ≥ 0.80 rate of agreement and a 0.91 reliability index.

Positive	Positive adjectives referring to the 'Other' (e. g. famous, marvellous, etc.). Verbs of a positive connotation (e. g. to aid). Names referring to the 'Other's' image in a positive way. Actions and attitudes described in a positive fashion. Peaceful, humanistic, philanthropic and anti-racist perceptions for the nation.
Neutral	Discourse without adjectives. Descriptive character of daily life.
Negative	Negative adjectives referring to the 'Other' (e. g. barbarian, savage, etc.). Verbs of a negative connotation (e. g. to slaughter). Names referring to the 'Other's' image in a negative way (e. g. violence, pillage, poisoning, genocide, etc.). Actions and attitudes described in a negative fashion (e. g. ...invaded ... and destroyed everything). Warlike, chauvinist, racist, fascist perceptions for the nation.

Historical Background

It is impossible to contextualize the findings of this research without a brief account of the historical circumstances that formed the international and bilateral political relations in the period under study. The dawn of the post-World-War-II era found Albania's Democratic Front in complete control of the country's Constituent Assembly, which abolished the monarchy and established a Stalinist-type communist regime. In the course of this period, Albania was more internationally oriented as a fully integrated ally of the USSR.⁵³ Memories of Albanian partisans, in whose ranks there were also members of the ethnic Greek minority, fighting together with Greek partisans and fighters, are often tenderly recalled in the memories of Enver Hoxha,⁵⁴ primarily quoted as evidence of Albania's engagement in socialist internationalism.

Bilateral relations between the Athens and Tirana governments deteriorated after the Corfu Channel Incidents in 1946⁵⁵ and the subsequent World Court case in 1949, which ruled against Albania and sanctioned compensation to Great

53 Paskal Milo, 'Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë në Vitet 1979–1990' in *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 4 (Shqiptarët gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe Pas Saj, 1939–1990), edited by Xhelal Gjeçovi (Tirana: Botimet TOENA, 2009) pp. 346–62.

54 Enver Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples: Excerpts from the Political Diary and Other Documents on Albanian-Greek Relations, 1941–1984* (Toronto: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Institute, 1985), pp. 9–22, 23–6, 85–90, 115–8.

55 Owen Pearson, *Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy: From Isolation to the Kosovo War (1946–1998)*, vol. 3 (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006) pp. 32–216; cf. Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, p. 96.

Britain. This was only indirectly related to Greece, mainly because the Corfu Channel itself is located to the east of Kassiope, which demarcates the Greek-Albanian border. The level of enmity between Athens and the Tirana government greatly increased following the Greek Civil War (1945–1949) and Tirana's support of Greek communists seeking refuge in Albania,⁵⁶ which was seen by the Greek government as an intervention in domestic politics. These developments provided the impetus for Hoxha and his aides to start articulating a strong-language discourse against Greek 'reactionary' or 'chauvinist' circles.⁵⁷ Such discourses, as we shall demonstrate below, included not only the present state of affairs between the two countries, what was contested regarding borders, domestic political influences, geopolitical games and other hot topics of the day, but also history textbooks which also reflected how the countries recreated their narrative in relation to the neighbouring 'other'.

The year 1961 marked a serious deterioration of Albano-Yugoslav diplomatic relations, as well as the final breach of Albano-Soviet cooperation.⁵⁸ The gradual reorientation of Albania's foreign policy and Enver Hoxha's rapprochement with Mao's China in the context of the Sino-Soviet split had a negative impact on bilateral relations between Albania and Greece.⁵⁹ In spite of short-lived discussions over instituting bilateral trade relations,⁶⁰ this persisted until the 1971 re-establishment of Albanian-Greek diplomatic relations⁶¹ in the midst of the military junta in Greece (1967–1974). Diplomatic relations between the two countries resumed after thirty years of war and were intensified after the 1972 and 1976 bilateral trade agreements,⁶² as well as the 1977 exchange of cultural ensembles.⁶³ In spite of these developments, society and political life in Albania had been drawn into the Chinese orbit, whose 'cultural' revolution drove a similar top-bottom 'revolution,' atheism becoming state and party dogma. After the Sino-Albanian split (1972–1978) and especially from the latter half of the 1970s until its fall in the 1990s, Albania's communist regime pursued a desperate policy of self-seclusion from the rest of the world. In spite of diplomatic relations,

56 Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, pp. 72–6.

57 *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 23–126.

58 Pearson, *Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy*, pp. 583–615.

59 Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, pp. 93–5 and 98–108; for another view, see Elias Skoulidas, 'Συνέχειες και ασυνέχειες στις ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις: η ελληνική πολιτική σε περιφερειακές εντάσεις' in *Continuities, Discontinuities, Ruptures in the Greek World (1204–2014): Economy, Society, History, Literature*, edited by Konstantinos A. Dimadis, vol. 1, 575–92 (Athens: European Society of Modern Greek Studies, 2015), p. 582–3.

60 Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, pp. 165–70.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 178–91.

62 Skoulidas, 'Συνέχειες και ασυνέχειες στις ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις', p. 583.

63 Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, pp. 243–5, 248–58.

the actions of nationalist circles in Greece did affect Greek-Albanian relations,⁶⁴ only temporarily relieved by diplomats' visits. The communist regime's need to keep the population under control dictated the intensification of a sense of isolation, which was also given proud, nationalist overtones.

The ethnic Greek minority living in the Albanian South has always been a barometer of Greek-Albanian relations. The Albanian state was certainly aware of this and took measures to integrate members of the ethnic Greek minority into state authorities, the public administration, the security forces and the political life of the state. Enver Hoxha himself paid numerous visits to Dropull, Gjirokastra, the region with the largest Greek population in Albania, recorded his memories and had them published. In spite of the cautious treatment of the minority on the part of the Albanian state, in an attempt to integrate it into the majority group and prevent any potential rapprochement with its neighbouring kin-state,⁶⁵ Greece often raised complaints about human rights violations. The degree of accuracy of such allegations being beyond the scope of this paper, one should note that in a harsh, Stalinist-type communist regime like that of Albania, all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, were 'equal' in the context of human rights violations.

On the basis of this brief historical outline, we can distinguish three principal periods: from the 1950s, when the first Albanian history textbooks were published in Albania (history school textbooks of the first post-World-War-II years had been translations of Soviet textbooks) until the Albanian-Soviet split (1961). The second period identified continues until 1978, when the Sino-Albanian breach gradually reconfigured Albania's domestic and international policies towards ethnic Others. From 1978 until the fall of the communist regime in 1990, we can distinguish a third phase of complete self-isolation. The selection of textbook samples was therefore roughly proportionate to the time spans of these periods.

Analysis

The communist regime in Albania, featuring some of the same totalitarian features of Stalin's Soviet Union, was rather different from post-totalitarian regimes of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, authoritarian regimes such as that in Poland, not strongly committed to ideology and with the flexibility to play both East and West like Tito's Yugoslavia or even Romania in the pre-Ceaușescu era. The totalitarian regimes typically see no distinction and fuse the public and

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 400–8, 411–5.

65 Kofos, 'The Greek Minority School Textbooks'.

private areas of societal life in one⁶⁶ under the ubiquitous eye of a sophisticated structure which George Orwell famously names 'Big Brother' in his novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The totalitarian state, be it fascist or communist, acquired an articulated political ideology translated to sets of ideals that were meant to drive the 'New Man' of socialism.

The totalitarian state seeks to control every aspect of social life, from the morals of its citizens to the arts and sciences, the education and economy. It is a state where 'the officially proclaimed ideology penetrates into the deepest reaches of societal structure and the totalitarian government seeks to completely control our thought and actions of its citizens'.⁶⁷ In Enver Hoxha's regime such a totalitarian state existed in an almost perfected form. To survive, the state needed to constantly create real or imagined domestic and foreign enemies. From the internal purges that guaranteed its staying at the helm of power subsequent to every geopolitical move that might endanger his own position (i. e. Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalin's crimes which signalled a shift in power politics within the Soviet bloc), Hoxha would react with a counter-move that would blame some of his opponents for siding with the foreign enemy. This is the reason why school history textbooks were deeply isolationist and reflected a high level of antagonism towards all perceived foreign enemies, particularly immediate neighbours such as Greece and the Greeks [see Graph 1.1].

The historical circumstances outlined above, as well as the particular Albanian variant of Enver Hoxha's totalitarian regime have left their footprints on history textbooks. Findings will initially be presented in a quantitative (Graphs 1.1–2, 2.1–2, 3.1–2) and then in a qualitative fashion. The researched sampling units recorded in references contained 1228 rows and 8194 word references to Greece and Greeks. Their distribution can be viewed below (cf. Graphs 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1). Of these, 97.60 % are part of the main text of a textbook, 1.33 % are part of secondary texts and 1.07 % were taken from sources published in the textbooks.

With regards to the qualitative direction of these references, 301 references or 78.39 % were negative, another 59 (15.36 %) were neutral, while 24 (6.25 %) were positive [Graph 1.1]. While the data analysis of subcategories is beyond the scope of this paper, generally speaking the most hostile references are related to 'military organization and operations' (Category 17) and 'territory and imagined geography' (Category 16), while an unexpected subcategory from this sample was that one of the largest number of negative references is 'Greek civilization and culture' (Category 11), with the exception of the Grillo textbook (1968). This

66 Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (London: John Murray, 1999), p. 74.

67 Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 43.

was unexpected because the same category had been looked upon largely in a positive light in the period from 1886 to 1939 in our previous study.

In Graphs 1.2, 2.2 and 3.2 we observe how the references to Greeks have developed from 1959 to 1983. Within the first two decades of communist rule (1959 and 1968) we find a pervasive use of negative references in the Albanian history textbooks regarding Greece and Greeks and less than 9 % of positive remarks (1959). The results became even more dramatic with a reported data of positivity not even amounting to 2 % in 1968 where the negativity reports increased to 87 % per cent. In our analyses this also reflects the high levels of enmity between the Tirana communist government and Athens after the end of the Greek Civil War (1945–1949), the purge of many communists from Greece, and their forced flight into Albania following the Truman Plan.

Dominant political leitmotifs, such as class struggles, the ancient slave-ownership system and ‘socialist’ solidarity, were incorporated in history teaching, combined with a degree of isolationism and xenophobia.⁶⁸ The alleged plans of Italy, France and England to play a role in the Balkans, often siding with ‘the chauvinists of Greece, Serbia, Montenegro’⁶⁹ are thus not surprising. However, in the coverage of ancient history, while noting that ‘many Greeks, especially the poor, to avoid being reduced to slavery out of debt, left Greece and spread through the littoral parts of the Mediterranean, where they established many colonies with the help of Greek traders’, the 1959 history textbook for Grade 7 notes that ‘in the cities where Greeks were installed they found Illyrian populations, whose majority they turned to slaves, thereby introducing their slave-ownership rule’.⁷⁰ As was to be expected, there are many other negative references in the period after the establishment of the Albanian communist regime. Yet we also noted positive references in the 1959 textbook. Addressing the benefits of colonization, the same textbook informs us that ‘Apollonia was a city with Greek and Illyrian population and not only a commercial, but also a cultural and scientific centre’. It is also noteworthy that, on occasion, a reference context aimed at expressing sympathy towards Greece and Greeks promotes militarist values, as in the case of Albanian soldiers ‘forcefully’ recruited by fascist Italians, whose battalions ‘Tarabosh and Tomorr left the front [of the Greek-Italian war of 1939] and defected to the Greek side’.⁷¹

Such remarks, however, become rarer in the 1968 textbook, after the Soviet-Albanian split (1961) and Enver Hoxha’s rapprochement with Mao’s China in the context of the Sino-Soviet split. In this period we find almost exclusively negative

68 Kofos, ‘The Greek Minority School Textbooks’, p. 86.

69 Ministria e Arësimit dhe Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e VII të Shkollës Shtatëvjeçare* (Tirana: Botim i Ministrisë së Arësimit dhe Kulturës, 1959), p. 48.

70 Ibid., p. 6.

71 Ibid., p. 61.

references, such as that Greece ‘was anxious to occupy all of Southern Albania once the Turks had left’.⁷² In some instances, the hostility is voiced loud and clear, without much attempt at diplomacy: ‘The Turkish and Greek teachers were saying to the children that they should be ashamed to call themselves Albanians’⁷³, or ‘Greeks, once they had said that priests’ threats were empty and did not frighten anyone, started to commit murders.’⁷⁴ The use of textbooks ensured that such lessons were repeated, recalled and reinforced by using ‘questions’ aimed at having pupils reproduce selected parts of the text. ‘What did the Turkish and Greek governments do to fight Albanian-speaking schools?’, asks an exercise, for example.⁷⁵

Another textbook of the same year, however, provides somewhat different quotations, mostly positive or neutral, especially when it comes to Greek culture and civilization: ‘These towns [across Albania’s coastline] were constructed after the example of the Greek towns, with strong walls and pretty buildings, meeting places, theatres, gyms and other entertainment venues’.⁷⁶ And later we read: ‘In the few schools that were dependent on the Church, Greek and Latin were taught’.

In 1974, at the beginning of the Sino-Albanian split, we observe a slight decrease of enmity and a corresponding increase in positive references (Graphs 1.1–3.2). For instance, in a strange interpretation of Ali Pasha’s aggression in ethnic terms, the 1974 textbook states that ‘for almost twenty years he [Ali Pasha of Tepelena] attacked and ransacked villages and caravans in Albania and Greece in order to reinstate the serenity which had been disturbed by Greek brigands and *armatoloi*’.⁷⁷ The dominance of negative references notwithstanding, the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations left its mark on the 1974 textbook; ‘It is our most heartfelt desire to live in peace with our neighbours, Montenegro, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria’.⁷⁸

72 Ministria e Arësimit dhe e Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për klasën e IV*. Reprint of edition from the same year (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1968), p. 45.

73 Mësuesit turq e grekë u thonin fëmijëve se ishte turp ta quanin veten shqiptarë (41).

74 Nga ana tjetër grekët, kur panë se mallkimet e priftërinjve nuk frikësonin njeri, filluan të bëjnë vrasje (46).

75 Ç’bëri qeveria turke dhe ajo greke për të luftuar shkollat shqipe? (ibid., p. 46).

76 ‘Këto qytete ishin ndërtuar në shembullin e qyteteve të Helladës (Greqisë) me mure të forta dhe ndërtesa të bukura, vende për mbledhje, teatro, palestra e vende të tjera dëfrimi’, or Njëpër shkollat e pakta që varehin nga kisha, mësoheshin greqishtja dhe latinishtja. Dhimitër Grillo, *Historia e Shqipërisë për Klasën VIII* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1968), pp. 11 and 23.

77 Për gati njëzet vjet ai (Ali Pashë Tepelena) sulmoi dhe plaçkiti fshatra dhe karvane në Shqipëri dhe në Greqi për të vendosur qetësinë e tronditur nga hajdutët dhe martalozët grekë. Frashëri and Pollo 1974, p. 87.

78 Ne dëshirojmë nxehtësisht të jetojmë në paqe me të gjithë fqinjët tanë, me Malin e Zi, Greqinë, Serbinë e Bullgarinë.

Although Albanian-Greek relations were not aggravated to an unmanageable degree, Albania's complete self-isolation from the rest of the world as of the late 1970s and its need to keep its people united under the nation and the party by force of fear of extinction rendered history a highly antagonistic element in the relationship between the two countries. We also suggest that the deteriorating mental health of Enver Hoxha (d. 1985) probably also played some part in pushing references to Greece and Greeks to their peak in 1983. There appears to be no other explanation for the textbook's spectacular regression to the pre-independence claim that Illyrians are descendants of Pelasgians, an old and unproven thesis that was persistently avoided by communist ideological dictates on Albania's past, and a subject that had interested Hoxha in his later years.⁷⁹

The following excerpts are interesting evidence of various ideological constructs of the communist regime: Minga and colleagues write:

The great struggle and effort to open Albanian schools met with many obstacles. The Turkish occupiers, the clergymen who served the interests of foreigners, and all other enemies of the people did all they could to close the Albanian schools. They used threats, slander and intimidation of teachers and parents in order to keep the children away from Albanian schools. They also killed many Albanian language teachers, such as Pandeli Sotiri, Kristo Negovani, and Petro Nini Luarasi.⁸⁰

The same textbook asks in the exercises section: 'Why did the enemy persecute and kill the patriots and the Albanian language teachers? [...] Watch at the cinema or on the television the Albanian artistic film, *The School*. Discuss with your parents and teacher and say in which time period the movie is set'.⁸¹ And a few pages later, the textbook confirms: 'During this [First World] War our place was occupied by the armies of Montenegro, Serbia and Greece and later by the Austrian, French and Italian armies'.⁸²

These excerpts point to several communist and nationalist myths, whereby

79 Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples*, pp. 296–9.

80 'Η μεγάλη δουλιά και οι προσπάθειες για τό άνοιγμα άλβανικών σχολείων συνάντησαν πολλά έμπόδια. Οί Τούρκοι κατακτητές, οί κληρικοί, που ύπηρετούσαν τά συμφέροντα τών ξένων, και όλοι οί άλλοι έχθροί του λαού έκαμαν ό,τι μπορούσαν για να κλείσουν τά άλβανικά σχολεία. Αύτοί χρησιμοποίησαν άπειλές, συκοφαντίες, και φοβέρες προς τούς δασκάλους και γονείς για να μήν πηγαίνουν τά παιδιά στα άλβανικά σχολεία. Αύτοί σκότωσαν και πολλούς δασκάλους τής άλβανικής γλώσσας, όπως: τόν Παντελί Σωτήρι, τόν Κρίστο Νεγκοβάνι, τόν Πέτρο Νίνι Λιουαράσι. Minga et al., 1983, p. 49.

81 Γιατί ό έχθρός καταδίωκε και σκότωνε τούς πατριώτες και τούς δασκάλους τής άλβανικής γλώσσας; 3. Δείτε στόν κινηματογράφο ή τήν τηλεόραση τήν άλβανική καλλιτεχνική ταινία "Το διδάσκαλειο". Συζητήστε μέ τούς γονείς και τό δάσκαλο και πείτε για ποιόν καιρό γίνεται λόγος σ' αύτήν τήν ταινία. Ibid., p. 50.

82 Στή διάρκεια αυτού του [Πρώτου Παγκοσμίου] Πολέμου ό τόπος μας καταλήφθηκε από τά στρατεύματα του Μανροβουνίου, τής Σερβίας και Έλλάδας και άργότερα από τά αυστριακά, γαλλικά και ίταλικά στρατεύματα. Ibid., p. 58.

myth is defined as an ideological construct, true or false, holding quasi-sacred, identity-shaping value and validity for its bearers. The first passage claims that the clergy operating in Albania were agents or saboteurs of foreign powers, an anti-clerical myth that fits the ideological precepts of the officially atheist state since the 1976 Constitution. It also makes direct mention of foreign and domestic enemies of the people who acted against the fatherland, an ideological myth that was used as a pretext by the communist regime to purge dissidence. The second passage, used to reinforce and consolidate 'lessons' learnt in the first passage, also presents a third communist myth, that of the ever-popular defence of the fatherland, by asking students to disclose their parents' views on the first excerpt's 'lessons' to their teachers. All passages promote nationalist, existentially threatening myths, such as that of permanent national struggle against foreign and domestic enemies; the 'myth of victimhood'; and the myth of vilifying the enemy. The latter are the Greeks in this case, not named in the first excerpt yet continuously portrayed as the perpetrators. This linear narrative is often monolithic in its interpretations of various events that have influenced the relationship between these two countries over the course of history.

Conclusion

This chapter has followed up on previous research on the image of the Greeks in the course of Albania's national identity-building process and its first decades as independent state (1886–1939). The transformation of the image of the Greek in Albanian history school textbooks from 1945 to 1990 reflects the principal phases of bilateral relations, echoing histories of conflict, neighbourhood, but also partnership. From the second half of the 1970s, Albania's communist regime pursued a desperate policy of self-seclusion from the rest of the world. The image of the Greek, therefore, similar to that of many perceived 'Others', is much more negative than before. Seclusion could be sustained only upon the systematic terrorization of the population on the pretences of a foreign existentialist threat. The instrumentalization of school textbooks in fostering a hostile ethno-nationalist environment towards the ethnic Other intensified in the last two decades of the communist regime. We are clearly dealing with an ethnocentric educational system aiming at shaping national and political identity through the vilification of the neighbouring Other.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Ministria e Arësimit dhe Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e VII të Shkollës Shtatëvjeçare* (Tirana: Botim i Ministrisë së Arësimit dhe Kulturës, 1959).
- Ministria e Arësimit dhe e Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për klasën e IV*. Reprint of the same year's edition (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1968).
- Grillo, Dhimitër. *Historia e Shqipërisë për Klasën VIII* (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1968).
- Frashëri, Kristo and Pollo, Stefanaq. *Historia e Shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 2nd edition (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1974).
- Minga, Elsa, Demiraj, Vendat and Malile Teuta. *Ιστορία της Αλβανίας* 4. Reprint No. 3 of the 1978 edition (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1983).

Further References

- Ardizzone, Leonisa. 'Generating Peace: A Study of Nonformal Youth Organizations'. *Peace and Change* 28 (3) (2003): pp. 420–45.
- Baltsiotis, Lambros and Elias Skoulidas, 'Aspects of Greek "Myths" related to the Albanians during the Age of Nationalism'. In *Myths of the Other in the Balkans. Representations, Social Practices, Performances*, edited by Fotini Tsiibiridou and Nikitas Palantzas, pp. 66–74 (Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia Press, 2013).
- Banks, Cherry A. McGee & Banks, James A. 'Equity Pedagogy: An Essential Component of Multicultural Education'. *Theory into Practice* 34 (3) (1995): pp. 152–8.
- Becker, Ernest. *The Birth and Death of Meaning*, 2nd edition (New York: Free Press, 1971).
- Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death* (New York: Academic Press, 1973).
- Becker, Ernest. *Escape from Evil*, 2nd edition (New York: Academic Press, 1975).
- Berelson, Bernard. *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1952).
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).
- Bonidis, Cyriakos T. *Το Περιεχόμενο του Σχολικού Βιβλίου ως Αντικείμενο Έρευνας* (Athens: Metaichmio 2012).
- Bottici, Chiara. 'Towards a Philosophy of Political Myth'. *IRIS, European Journal of Philosophy and Public Debate* III (April 2011): pp. 31–52.
- Camicia, Steven P. 'Prejudice Reduction through Multicultural Education: Connecting Multiple Literatures'. *Social Studies Research and Practice* 2 (2) (2007): pp. 219–27.
- Christophe, Barbara. 'Erinnerungen an Helden und Feiglinge. Vergangenheit und Gegenwart im litauischen Schulbuch', *Östeuropa*, 8 (2010), pp. 71–90.
- Christophe, Barbara, 'Remembering Communism – Making Sense of Post-Communism. An Analysis of Discursive Strategies in Lithuanian Textbooks', In: *Edumeres*. 2010. Stable URL: http://www.edumeres.net/fileadmin/publikationen/beitraege/2010/Christophe_Remembering.pdf (accessed November 2017).

- Cohen, Florette, Solomon, Sheldon, Maxfield, Molly, Pyszczynski, Tom and Greenberg, Jeff. 'Fatal Attraction: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Evaluations of Charismatic, Task-Oriented, and Relationship-Oriented Leaders'. *Psychological Science* 15 (12): pp. 846–51.
- Conquest, Robert. *Reflexions on a Ravaged Century* (London: John Murray, 1999).
- Danesh, Hossein B. 'Towards an Integrative Theory of Peace Education'. *Journal of Peace Education* 3(1) (2006): pp. 55–78.
- Dilthey, Wilhelm. 'Die Entstehung der Hermeneutik'. In Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5 (Stuttgart/Goettingen: Teubner, 1961). pp. 317–338.
- Elsie, Robert. *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, 2nd edition (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010).
- Flick, Uwe. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (London, UK: Sage, 2002).
- Frashëri, Kristo and Pollo, Stefanaq. *Historia e Shqipërisë për shkollat e mesme*, 2nd edition (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1974).
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke, 1: Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. 6th edition (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990).
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 'The Policy of the Orthodox Patriarchate Toward the Use of Albanian in Church Services'. *Albanohellenica* 4 (2011): pp. 137–71.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 'Contesting the Sacred: Albanian Anthroponymy in Votive Inscriptions of 18th to 20th Century Artworks at the "Onufri" Museum, Berat'. *Albanohellenica* 6 (2015). Online edition at <http://albanohellenica.wix.com/greekalbanianstudies#!albanohellenica-6-contents/c1md3> (accessed November 2017).
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 'Self-Identifications by Himarriots, 16th to 19th Centuries'. *Erytheia. Revista de Estudios Bizantinos y Neogriegos* 37 (2016): pp. 205–246.
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 'Against the Imperial Past: The Perception of the Turk and Greek "Enemy" in the Albanian National Identity-Building Process'. In *Balkan Empires: Imperial Imagined Communities in Southeastern Europe, 18th-20th c.*, edited by Dimitris Stamatopoulos (Budapest: CEU Press, 2017).
- Giakoumis, Konstantinos and Kalemaj, Ilir. 'The Perception of the Greek in the Albanian National Identity-Building Process (1886–1938)'. Available at SSRN (May 4, 2015): <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2602565> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2602565> (accessed November 2017).
- Graham-Brown, Sarah. 'The Role of the Curriculum', in *Education Rights and Minorities* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1994).
- Greenberg, Jeff, and Arndt, Jamie. 'Terror Management Theory'. In *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology*, edited by Paul A.M. Van Lange, Arie W. Kruglanski, and E. Torry Higgins (London: Sage, 2012), pp. 398–415.
- Greenberg, Jeff, Koole, Sander L., Pyszczynski, Tom. *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004).
- Greenberg, Jeff, Pyszczynski, Tom, Solomon, Sheldon, Rosenblatt, Abram, Veeder, Mitchell, Kirkland, Shari, and Lyon, Deborah. 'Evidence for Terror Management Theory II: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Reactions to those who Threaten or Bolster the Cultural Worldview'. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58/2 (1990): pp. 308–318.

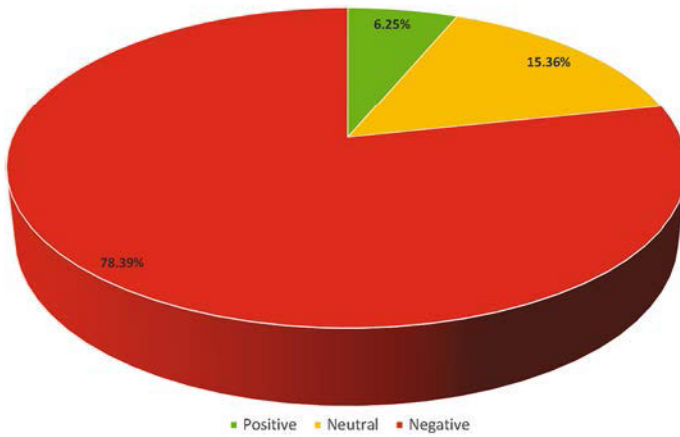
- Greenberg, Jeff, Solomon, Sheldon, and Arndt, Jamie. 'A Uniquely Human Motivation: Terror Management'. In *Handbook of Motivation Science*, edited by James Y. Shah and Wendi L. Gardner (New York: Guilford, 2008), pp. 113–34.
- Greenberg, Jeff, Pyszczynski, Tom, and Solomon, Sheldon. 'The Causes and Consequences of a Need for Self-Esteem: A Terror Management Theory'. In *Public Self and Private Self*, edited by Roy F. Baumeister (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986), pp. 189–212.
- Harber, Clive and Sakade, Noriko. 'Schooling for Violence and Peace: How Does Peace Education Differ from "Normal" Schooling?' *Journal of Peace Education* 6(2) (2009): pp. 171–87.
- Harris, Ian M. 'Peace Education Theory'. *Journal of Peace Education* 1(1) (2004): pp. 5–20.
- Hayes, Bernadette C., McAllister, Ian and Dowds, Lizanne. 'Integrated Education, Inter-group Relations, and Political Identities in Northern Ireland'. *Social Problems* 54(4) (2007): pp. 454–82. DOI: 10.1525/sp.2007.54.4.454.
- Hicks, David. *Education for Peace – Issues, Principles, and Practice in the Classroom* (London: Routledge, 1988).
- Holsti, Ole R. *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969).
- Höpken, Wolfgang (ed.). *Öl ins Feuer? Oil on Fire? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa – Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-Eastern Europe*, in the book series *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung* (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996).
- Hoxha, Enver. *Two Friendly Peoples. Excerpts from the Political Diary and Other Documents on Albanian-Greek Relations, 1941–1984* (Toronto: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Institute, 1985).
- IPSOS Strategic Marketing. *Report: Nation Building – Albania*. October 2011. Stable URL: http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/forskning/prosjekter/nation-w-balkan/dokumenter/nb_albania-wine-summer.pdf (accessed July 2017).
- Kalemaj, Ilir and Giakoumis, Konstantinos. 'Oscillating between Inclusionary Autonomy and Secessionist Independence: Identification Shifts and the Dynamics of Albanian Perceptions of the Young Turks Movement'. In *Balkan Nationalism(s) and the Ottoman Empire, III (The Young Turk Revolution and Ethnic Groups)*, edited by Dimitris Stamatopoulos (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2015), pp. 155–71.
- Kalemaj, Ilir and Giakoumis Konstantinos. 'The Image of Greek-Albanian Lingual and Cultural Relations in Albanian School History Textbooks (1886–1939)'. *Albano-hellenica* 6 (2015). Online edition: http://media.wix.com/ugd/5c39e7_e8db7b67f37648479608009aef19b559.pdf (accessed July 2017).
- Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- Kearl, Michael. 'Death, Sociological Perspectives'. In *Encyclopedia of Death & Human Experience*, edited by Clifton D. Bryant and Denis L. Peck (London: Sage, 2009), pp. 291–6.
- Klerides Eleftherios. 'Imagining the Textbook. Textbooks as Discourse and Genre', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, 2/1 (2010), pp. 31–54.
- Kofos, Evangelos. 'The Greek Minority School Textbooks During the Enver Hoxha Period'. *Balkan Studies* 34(1) (1993): pp. 85–104.

- Kolstø, Pål. 'Introduction'. In *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-Building in South Eastern Europe*. Edited by Pål Kolstø (Farnham & Burlington, Ashgate, 2014).
- Korostelina, Karina V. *History Education in the Formation of Social Identity: Towards a Culture of Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Korostelina, Karina V. and Simone Lässig, *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbook Projects* (London: Routledge, 2013).
- Koulouri, Christina. *Ιστορία και Γεωγραφία στα Ελληνικά Σχολεία (1834–1914). Γνωστικό Αντικείμενο και Ιδεολογικές Προεκτάσεις* (Athens: Geniki Grammateia Neas Genias, 1988).
- Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content Analysis. An Introduction to Its Methodology* (London: SAGE, 1980).
- Lässig, Simone. 'Post-Conflict Reconciliation and Joint History Textbook Projects'. In *History Education and Post-Conflict Reconciliation: Reconsidering Joint Textbooks Project*, edited by Karina V. Korostelina and Simone Lässig (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 1–18.
- Milo, Paskal. 'Marrëdhëniet Ndërkombëtare (1945–1960)'. In *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 4 (Shqiptarët gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe Pas Saj, 1939–1990), edited by Xhelal Gjeçovi (Tirana: Botimet TOENA, 2009), pp. 231–259.
- Milo, Paskal. 'Politika e Jashtme e Shtetit Shqiptar (1962–1979)'. In *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 4 (Shqiptarët gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe Pas Saj, 1939–1990), edited by Xhelal Gjeçovi (Tirana: Botimet TOENA, 2009), pp. 301–20.
- Milo, Paskal. 'Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë në Vitet 1979–1990'. In *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 4 (Shqiptarët gjatë Luftës së Dytë Botërore dhe Pas Saj, 1939–1990), edited by Xhelal Gjeçovi (Tirana: Botimet TOENA, 2009), pp. 346–62.
- Ministria e Arësimit dhe Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për Klasën e VII të Shkollës Shtatëvjeçare* (Tirana: Botim i Ministrisë së Arësimit dhe Kulturës, 1959).
- Ministria e Arësimit dhe e Kulturës. *Histori e Shqipërisë për klasën e IV*. Reprint of the edition from the same year (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese e Librit Shkollor, 1968).
- Neuendorf, Kimberly A. *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).
- Papakosta, Konstantina. Παπακόστα, Κ. 'Ο Λόγος της σχολικής Ιστορίας για τους γειτονικούς λαούς: η περίπτωση των Αλβανών στα σχολικά εγχειρίδια νεότερης ιστορίας της υποχρεωτικής εκπαίδευσης κατά τη μεταπολίτευση'. *Συνέδριο ΠΙΕΕ ,Αναλυτικά Προγράμματα και Σχολικά Εγχειρίδια: Ελληνική Πραγματικότητα και Διεθνής Εμπειρία (20–22/11/2009, Γιάννενα), Conference Proceedings 2 (2009): pp. 578–589.*
- Papakosta, Konstantina. 'The Albanians in Greek Textbooks of Modern History in Compulsory Education: Discursive Representations'. *16th International Conference of the Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education 'The Image of the "other"/the Neighbour in the Educational Systems of the Balkan Countries (1998–2013)'*, *Education and Pedagogy in Balkan Countries*, pp. 134–148 (Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia, 2013).
- Pearson, Owen. *Albania as Dictatorship and Democracy. From Isolation to the Kosovo War (1946–1998)*, vol. 3 (New York: The Centre for Albanian Studies in association with I.B. Tauris, 2006).
- Peshkopia, Ridvan, Deva, Arrita, Fazliu, Saranda, Hoxha, Lekë, Konjufca, Drin, Mehmeti, Shkëlqim, Musliu, Shkëlzen, Sheqiri, Gresa, Zeqiri, Blerina and Zjeçi, Antoneta. 'Intergroup Contact Theory and the Colorful Role of Education in Intergroup Prejudice

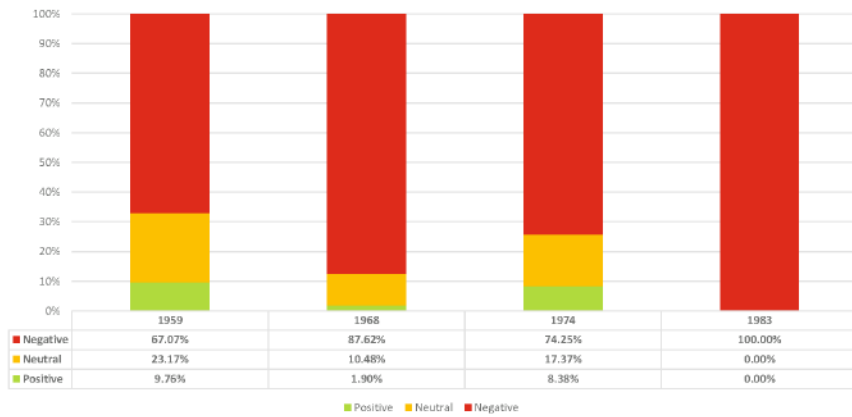
- Reduction: The Case of the Albanians'. Paper delivered at the DisCo Conference *Open Education as a Way to a Knowledge Society*, Prague, June 26–27, 2017.
- Peshkopia, Ridvan, Voss, Stephen V. and Bytyqi, Kujtim. 'Intergroup Contact Theory and Albanians' Feeling Temperature Towards Greeks: Ethnicity, Fear, Class, and Exposure'. *Universum College Working Paper Series 006 / 2013*, at <https://universum-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Peshkopia-Voss-and-Bytyqi-006-2013.docx>, accessed in July 2017.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F. and Tropp, Linda R. 'A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory'. *Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes* 90(5) (2006): pp. 751–83.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F. and Tropp, Linda R. *When Groups Meet: The Dynamics of Intergroup Contact* (New York, NY: Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011).
- Pipes, Richard. *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Vintage Books, Random House Inc. 1995).
- Prifti, Peter R. 'Albania and the Sino-Soviet Conflict'. *Studies in Comparative Communism* 6(3) (1973): pp. 241–66.
- Prifti, Peter R. *Socialist Albania Since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1978).
- Röhrs, Hermann. *Erziehung zum Frieden* (Stuttgart: Verlag w. Kohlhammer, 1971).
- Röhrs, Hermann. *Frieden- Eine pädagogische Aufgabe* (Braunschweig: Agentur Pedersen 1983).
- Röhrs, Hermann. *Idee und Realität der Friedenspädagogik. Frieden, eine pädagogische Aufgabe, Gesammelte Schriften. vol. 4* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1994).
- Salomon, Gavriel and Cairns (eds.). *Handbook on Peace Education* (New York: Psychology Press, 2010).
- Szakács, Simona, 'Now and Then: A National Identity Construction in Romanian History. A Comparative Study of Communist and Post-Communist School Textbooks'. *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007): pp. 1–25.
- Selander, Staffan. 'Towards a Theory of Pedagogic Text Analysis'. *Scandinavian Journal of Education Research* 34 (2) (1990): pp. 143–50.
- Simons, William B., ed. *The Constitutions of the Communist World* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Sijthoff and Noordhoff International Publishers B.V., 1980).
- Skendi, Stavro. 'Albania and the Sino-Soviet Conflict'. *Foreign Affairs* 40 (3) (April 1962): pp. 471–8.
- Skoulidas, Elias. 'Συνέχειες και ασυνέχειες στις ελληνοαλβανικές σχέσεις : η ελληνική πολιτική σε περιφερειακές εντάσεις.' In *Continuities, Discontinuities, Ruptures in the Greek World (1204–2014) : Economy, Society, History, Literature : 5th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies of the European Society of Modern Greek Studies* (proceedings), edited by Konstantinos A. Dimadis, vol. 1 (Athens: European Society of Modern Greek Studies, 2015), pp. 575–92.
- Stojanov, Darko. 'In Search of Autochthony: A Case Study of the Great Migrations Period as Presented in History Textbooks in Macedonia'. *Der Donauraum* 50 (3–4) (2010): pp. 225–34.
- Strauss, Anselm L. and Corbin, Juliet M. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, 2nd ed. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1998).
- Temo, Sotir. *Education in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania* (Tirana: The '8 Nëntori' Publishing House, 1985).

- Thorp, Robert. *Uses of History in History Education* (Umeå: Umeå Universitet, 2016).
- Titscher, Stefan, Meyer, Michael, Wodak, Ruth and Vetter, Eva. *Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis*, trans. B. Jenner (London: SAGE, 2000).
- Todorov, Petar. 'Teaching History in Macedonia After 2001: Representations of Armed Conflict Between Ethnic Macedonians and Ethnic Albanians'. In *History Can Bite: History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies*, edited by Denise Bentravato, Karina V. Korostelina and Martina Schulze (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht unipress, 2016), pp. 111–124.
- VanSledright, Bruce. 'Narratives of Nation-State, Historical Knowledge, and School History Education'. *Review of Research in Education* 32 (2008): pp. 109–46.
- Wodtke, Geoffrey T. 'The Impact of Education on Inter-Group Attitudes: A Multiracial Analysis'. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 75 (1) (2012): pp. 80–106. DOI: 10.1177/0190272511430234.
- Xochellis Panagiotis, Kapsalis Achileas, Andreou Andreas, Ismyrliadou Adela, Loukidou Despoina, Bonidis Kyriakos, Hatzisavvidis Sophronis. 'Η Εικόνα του "Άλλου" στα Σχολικά Βιβλία Ιστορίας των Βαλκανικών Χωρών'. In *Η Εικόνα του, Άλλου' στα Σχολικά Βιβλία των Βαλκανικών Χωρών. Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου, Θεσσαλονίκη, 16–18 Οκτωβρίου 1998*, edited by Achileas Kapsalis, Kyriakos Bonidis and Athena Sipitanou (Athens: Typothito, 2000), pp. 67–99.

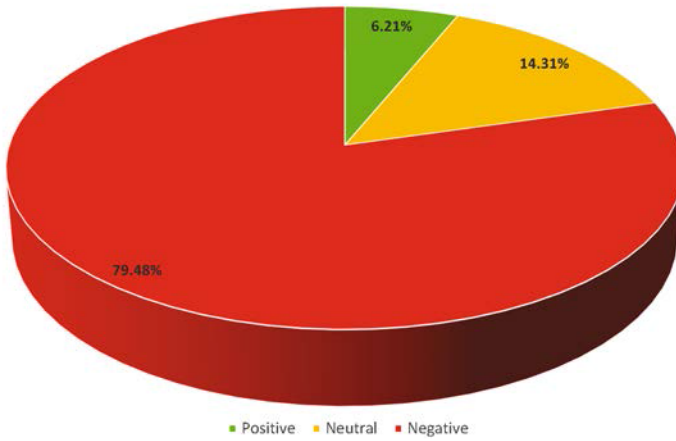
Graphs



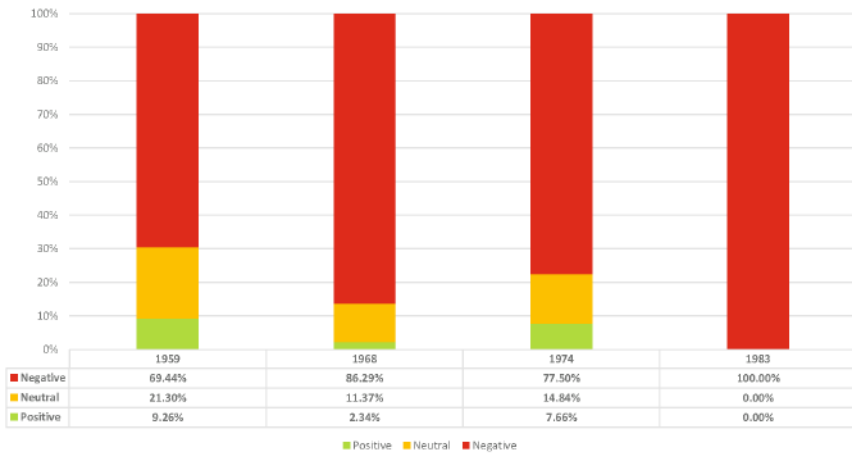
Graph 1.1: References to the Greeks, 1959–1983



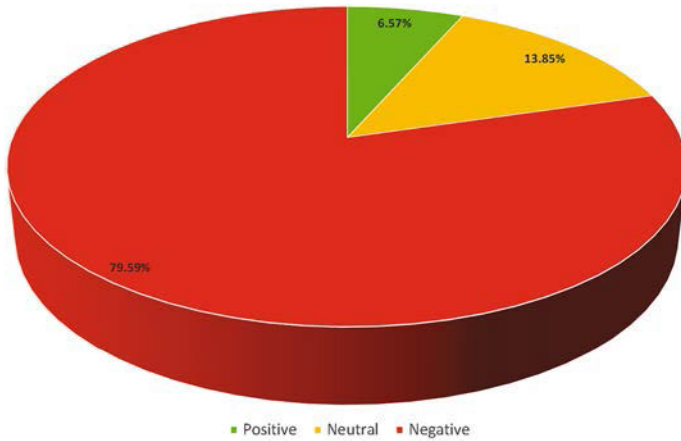
Graph 1.2: References to the Greeks, 1959–1983



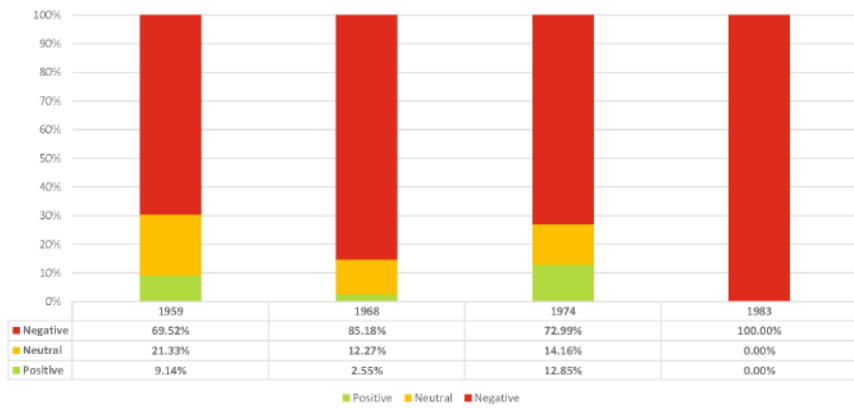
Graph 2.1: References to the Greeks, 1946–1990



Graph 2.2: References to the Greeks, 1959–1983



Graph 3.1: References to the Greeks, 1946–1990



Graph 3.2: References to the Greeks, 1959–1983

'Fierce Warriors' or 'Bloodthirsty Savages': Albanians in Serbian Textbooks (1882–1941)

Introduction

Only a handful of Serbian textbooks from the period 1882 to 1941 make any lengthy reference to Serbia's ethnic Albanian minority. Previous scholarship on Serbian textbooks from the period before and during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–41) concentrates for the most part on the educational role of Serbian nationalism, and later on Yugoslavism as an official educational policy, without any particular focus on the representation of minorities in textbooks.¹ In a recent study on interwar textbooks, Pieter Troch emphasizes the exclusiveness of the concept of Yugoslavism, which applied only to Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and failed to account for other ethnicities, most notably Albanians and Muslims in general:

Apart from the three accepted 'tribes', no significant attempts were made to include symbolic resources linked to other South Slav collective identities in Yugoslav national culture. Thus, we encounter very few elements that could mobilize Montenegrin, Macedonian or Bosnian Muslim collective identities as constituent parts of Yugoslav nationhood [...] Non-South Slav minorities, including Germans, Hungarians, Rumanians, and Albanians, were completely excluded from Yugoslav national identity in the curricula.²

Albanians were indeed marginalized or excluded entirely from these narratives, and they had little involvement in shaping Serbian and Yugoslav educational policy or curricula. As true as Troch's remarks about the general lack of material on Albanians in the textbooks of the time might be, the period from 1882 to 1941 still offers sufficient content for a more thorough and nuanced discussion of the perception of Albanians in Serbian education and textbooks. After providing

1 See: Charles Jelavich, 'Education, Textbooks and South Slav Nationalisms in the Interwar Era', in *Allgemeinbildung als Modernisierungsfaktor*, ed. by Reiter and Sundhaussen (1994), pp. 127–42.

2 Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia* (2015), p. 133.

some context on Serbian and Yugoslav national educational policy, we will argue that Albanians were represented in textbooks with much the same ambivalences and contradictions that marked the official Serbian and Yugoslav policy towards them. Our sample in this chapter is limited to three revised editions of a history textbook by Mihailo Jović, published from 1882 onwards, and two reading books published by Miloš Matović and Milorad Vujanac in 1938. All these texts were written for use in the fourth grade of primary education, the final education level for the vast majority of pupils at the time.³ All textbooks used in Serbian schools from 1880 to 1918 were printed by the state, and only after being approved for use by the Main Education Council (*Glavni prosvetni savet*). Jović's textbook, of course, had this approval and was continuously used in school from 1882 to 1918, printed in fifty-six editions, and significantly revised three times. It can therefore be considered representative of the period under consideration here.

Education policy was more liberal in the interwar period than before; some privately published textbooks were approved for use in schools in addition to those published by the state. The Main Educational Council ceased its rigorous control of textbook content, which gave the authors more freedom in handling certain subjects, and in this respect the reading books by Matović and Vujanac constitute a representative sample.⁴

Nation, Education, and the Textbook

Education in the spirit of nationalism has a long history. By the nineteenth century, the idea of nationhood as fundamental to any form of community and as the highest achievement in the evolution of mankind, was firmly established. Scholars have long observed that education was at that time considered to play an active role in protecting, preserving, and improving a given society; as such, national coherence and organization were functions of proper education.⁵

The concept of nationhood was of concern to Serbians decades prior to the country's independence, having been introduced by the first generations of scholars educated abroad, and the works of Vuk Karadžić (1787–1864). However, it was not systematically incorporated into education policy until after full national independence was secured at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Integral to that process was the reform of the education system that followed in 1882, which

3 Aleksandra Ilić, 'Školski sistem, nastavnici i učenici u Srbiji (1804–2004)', in *Dva veka obrazovanja u Srbiji*, ed. by Avramović (2005), pp. 109–64.

4 Aleksandra Ilić Rajković, 'Albanci i srpsko-albanski odnosi u srpskim udžbenicima (1887–1987)' [Albanians and Serbian-Albanian Relations in Serbian Textbooks (1887–1987)], in *Figura neprijatelja*, ed. by Pavlović et al., (2015), pp. 177–95.

5 See: John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916).

saw the introduction of mandatory education. Contemporary Serbian pedagogues maintained that education in the Age of Nations should be national; similar views were emerging elsewhere in Europe at the time.⁶ Evidence that it was concepts like nationhood that inspired the reformers of the school system can be found in the words of Stojan Novaković, the leading figure in the reform and modernization of Serbian education. In line with views he later expressed during the debate over the high school curriculum in 1881, Novaković emphasized in his opening speech to the Main Education Council in 1880 that 'education is the crucial factor in the unification of Serbdom'.⁷ Reports from other discussions and debates regarding curricula and school programmes show that Serbian teachers and teachers' associations agreed.

Thus in the period prior to the First World War, Serbian pupils were typically taught that language is the most fundamental and obvious evidence of a common origin and past, that nationhood is a natural way of grouping people, and that all those who speak the same language wish to and should live together in their national state. Accordingly, the primary task of Serbs should be to fulfil their centennial legacy of liberating and uniting all Serbdom. The development of the idea of united Serbian statehood can be observed chiefly in history textbooks, but pupils encountered events and figures from Serbian history in geography textbooks and reading books as well. In a nutshell, pupils were taught that Serbian nationhood was as old as the Serbian presence in the Balkans, truly understood at first only by a few, but later widely adopted and strengthened from the medieval Serbian expansion onwards.⁸

It is within such a context that one should frame Serbian and Yugoslav educational policy and policy in general towards the Albanians. The Congress of Berlin in 1878 provided international recognition of Serbian independence, but was nevertheless a traumatic event for contemporary Serbs, who were shocked by the Austrian takeover of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which the Serbs perceived as their own land. Serbia was surrounded on three sides by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and thus turned its attention to the southern lands that still belonged to the Ottoman Empire: primarily present-day Kosovo and northern Albania. Once part of the medieval Serbian Empire, these lands had been inhabited in the meantime by a largely Albanian population. This lent the Albanians a new relevance in the eyes of Serbian textbook authors.

6 See: Roy Lowe, 'Education and National Identity', *History of Education*, 28(3) (1999), 231–3.

7 'Zapisnika sa sednice Glavnog prosvetnog saveta', *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1 (14) (1880), 533.

8 Aleksandra Ilić, *Udžbenici i nacionalno vaspitanje u Srbiji 1878–1918* [*Textbooks and National Education in Serbia 1878–1918*] (2010).

Albanians in the History Textbooks of Mihailo Jović (1882–1918)

The textbook most representative of the wider trends of the time, Mihailo Jović's *Srpska istorija* (Serbian History), illustrates this general framework in its depiction of national history as a perpetual struggle for national liberation and unification, and its emphasis on heroism and bravery. Thus as early as in the foreword, Jović advises the pupils to 'always be heroes like Obilić and the brigand Veljko'.⁹ This corresponds perfectly with the methodological instructions of the Ministry of Education, who expected Serbian history education to inspire 'love for our nation and feelings that would strengthen the will to carry out heroic moral actions'.¹⁰ Written in 1882 during the aforementioned education reform, Jović's textbook served as the dominant history textbook prior to the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the Great War, and appeared in dozens of editions. Throughout this period, the author repeatedly adjusted and revised *Serbian History* in accordance with official curricula. This makes it ideal for analysis, as it is highly representative of educational tendencies in Serbia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in general, as well as of the perceptions of Albanians in particular. We will focus on the negative evolution of perceptions of Albanians in the various editions of this textbook.

As one would expect, Albanians occupy a rather marginal role in Jović's textbook. They are mentioned only occasionally and in passing, in relation to two historical episodes: the reign of the Serbian Emperor Dušan (1331–55), who ruled Albania as well, and the Great Migration of the Serbs from 1690, which, according to Jović, triggered a major demographic shift in the territories of Kosovo and Sandžak. It is equally telling that there is no reference to the Albanians in the discussion of the Battle of Kosovo, even though it took place in a territory inhabited for centuries by both Serbs and Albanians. An Albanian named Konda is, however, regularly mentioned and credited for his help in the takeover of the Belgrade fortress by the Serbs during the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire (1804–13). Yet no mention is made of any of the previous insurrections and insubordinations against the Ottomans that saw the Serbs, Montenegrins, and Albanians fight on the same side. This may indicate an implicit tendency to give preference to those episodes that present the Albanians as Serbian subjects or adversaries, rather than friends or allies.

The scarcity of references to Albanians should come as no surprise if one bears in mind that in the nineteenth century knowledge about southern lands still under Ottoman rule was limited even among educated people in Serbia. In

9 This term is a translation of *Hajduk*, which means brigand, highwayman, or outlaw, but is used to refer to South-Eastern European 'freedom fighters'. Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1882).

10 Ministry of Education, *Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba* (1895), p. 808.

the opening section of his textbook, Jović himself admits with regret that 'pupils were unfamiliar with and vague on Kosovo and other places'.¹¹ This utter lack of knowledge about the Albanians can be illustrated, for instance, by Jović's discussion of Emperor Dušan:

Dušan took the title of Emperor of the Serbs, Bulgarians (for they submitted to him), Greeks (for he had taken much of the Greek lands), and Albanians. Albania lies to the south of us and is inhabited by the Arnauts¹²; [he called himself the] Albanian Emperor because the Albanians always obeyed him and assisted him with their armies [...] There were Serbs as well as Greeks and Bulgarians. Fierce Arnauts were also in his army.¹³

Jović readily lists all the nations that Dušan ruled over, but feels the need to provide basic information only about the Albanians, implying that his readers are familiar with the Serbs, Bulgarians, and Greeks, but not with the Albanians.

As early as in Jović's 1886 revision of his textbook one finds claims that stand in stark contrast with those quoted above. Examples include those about Albanian violence against the Serbs who remained in Kosovo after the Great Migrations to the north that took place from 1690 to the first decades of the eighteenth century: 'These migrations were bad for the Serbs, for the Serbs were spread across faraway lands, and the Turks settled the Arnauts, who committed even more terrible crimes against the Serbs than the Turks themselves, on their territory'.¹⁴ What exactly these more terrible crimes might have included is difficult to deduce given that Jović previously described Ottoman rule as slavery for the Serbs:

The Turks molested the Serbs as Christians and called them *rayah* [slaves¹⁵] [...] Every fifth year the Turks would come to the Serbian lands to take the healthiest and most beautiful boys for their army of Janissaries [...] The Janissaries were the greatest evildoers. When a Serb could not pay the tribute, they would pass him over a fire, whip him, or pull him by horses' tails.

Thus, the phrase 'worse than the Turks' effectively indicates a metaphor for ultimate oppression.

11 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1882), pp. v–vi.

12 *Arnaut* is an archaic ethnonym for Albanians commonly used in Serbia, preceded by the more international ethnonym 'Albanians' in socialist Yugoslavia.

13 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1882), pp. 108–9.

14 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1886), p. 91.

15 It is worth clarifying that the actual meaning of the term *rayah* is not 'slaves' but 'flock'. It designated the tax-paying lower class of subjects within the Ottoman Empire. While in fact some Muslims were also categorized as *rayah*, and Orthodox priests were exempt from taxation and thus excluded from this category, in the popular belief expressed by Jović *rayah* is used to denote the 'slavery' that Serbs, as Christians, suffered at the hands of the Ottomans. See for instance: Stanford Shaw, 'The Ottoman View of the Balkans', in *The Balkans in Transition*, ed. by Jelavich and Jelavich (1963), pp. 56–78 (esp. pp. 58–60).

However, this new, drastically negative perception of the Albanians in the 1886 edition remained somewhat opposed to their depiction in other parts of *Serbian History*. Thus, for instance, in the section about Emperor Dušan, the author retains the first edition's positive evaluation of the Albanians as brave warriors:

The land between the river Drim and the Adriatic Sea is called *Albania*. It is inhabited by the Arnauts. The *Arnauts* are good heroes [...] Dušan penetrated with his Serbs and, little by little, conquered all of Albania and took the title of King of Albania.¹⁶

Since this evaluation obviously contradicts the statements about Albanian barbarism, it thus comes as no surprise that the next revision, in 1894, provides an interpretation more in line with the negative trend in the rest of the portrayal:

Two years after this war, Albanian leaders clashed and fought against each other. While they were fighting among themselves, Dušan gathered an army and struck the Albanians, defeating some and attracting others to his side with promises and gifts, thus spreading his rule over all of Albania.¹⁷

In the third revision of this textbook the explanation of who the Albanians are is excluded; it appears that the rising interest in the Albanians and their lands made such elementary information obsolete. Jović also left out his previous statement about Albanian heroism, as it contradicted the picture of Albanians as torturers of the Kosovo Serbs. Instead the author discusses the relationship between Dušan and the Albanians in further detail. Thus, while his 1882 textbook implies that the reason for the success of Dušan's campaign among the Albanians was their good relations ('because the Albanians always obeyed him and assisted him with their armies'), the 1894 edition places an emphasis on Albanian discord, greed, and corruption as the reasons for the establishment of Dušan's rule over the Albanians. It is this third revised edition from 1894, which continued to be reprinted without changes in 1900 and thereafter, that appears to be more in line with the official Serbian policy that increasingly relied on force and hostility towards Albanians.

Shifts in the portrayal of issues around Serbian land and migration, and how they might relate to the Albanians, can be observed in the following three quotes from the 1882, 1886, and 1894 editions respectively:

[Serbian Patriarch] Arsenije Čarnojević did wrong by the Serbs by leading this migration. The Serbs that he took with him suffered greatly at the hands of the Austrians and still do, because the Austrian Emperor rules over them. Yet it was even worse for those who stayed here in Serbia. The Turks settled the Arnauts on the empty estates, and

16 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1886), p. 53.

17 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1894), p. 46.

so nowadays only a few Serbs remain in Serbia south of us (around Prizren and Peć); all people there are Albanians, even though they were not there before.¹⁸

A mass migration of Serbs took place in 1690. Arsenije Čarnojević, a Serbian patriarch, summoned the Serbs from Old Serbia and fled with them to Banat and Bačka. These migrations were bad for the Serbs, who became spread throughout faraway lands, and the Turks settled the Arnauts, who committed even greater crimes against the Serbs than the Turks themselves, on their territory.¹⁹

Arsenije did wrong by the Serbs, for those that he took with him obey the Hungarians and Germans nowadays, while those that remained are scattered, abandoned and weakened; thus neither we nor those in Bačka and Banat can become strong, because we are small in number.²⁰

The Ambivalence of the Interwar Years (1918–41)

The following is an analysis of two literary short stories portraying radically different depictions of the Albanians, included in two Serbian fourth grade reading books from the interwar period. These stories had both been published previously. While 'Lazar the Brigand and his Mother', published in Miloš Matović's reading book from 1938, provides a picture of the Albanians as Serb-hating and treacherous, 'The Albanian Woman', included in Vujanac's 1938 reading book, praises them as heroic and brave. They testify both to attempts at a more inclusive approach regarding the Albanians, and to the ambivalences towards them in the interwar period.

These inconclusive depictions are illustrative of the general ambivalences and contradictions of official policy towards the Albanians after the First World War in the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. On the one hand, one can certainly give good reasons for considering Yugoslav policy towards Albanians and Muslims as the continuation of earlier (post-1878) Serbian attempts to encourage their migration.²¹ Albanians were presented in several textbooks as puppets of the Great Powers, and the independence of Albania as a regretful outcome.²² On the other hand, a cornerstone of the official Yugoslav education policy was its emphasis on the liberation of brotherly nations from the imperial yoke of both the Austro-Hungarians and the Ottomans. Serbian and/or Yugoslav rule over a significant

18 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1882), p. 187.

19 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1886), p. 91.

20 Jović, *Srpska istorija* (1894), p. 74.

21 See: Vladan Jovanović, *Slike jedne neuspele integracije* (2014).

22 See: Ilić Rajković, 'Albanci i srpsko-albanski odnosi', in *Figura neprijatelja*, ed. by Pavlović et al. (2015), pp. 177–95.

Albanian population could be seen as liberation. An interesting example of this latter approach can be taken from the depiction of the 1912 First Balkan War in Miloš Matović's elementary school history textbook, entitled *Osvećenje Kosova* [Revenge for Kosovo].²³ After informing the pupils of the significance of Kosovo for the Serbs, the author offers an explanation of its relevance to Albanians. Of the Serbian army's entry into Prizren (the former capital of the Serbian Empire), the author writes: 'King Petar first went to the Church of the Holy Salvation built in Emperor Dušan's time'. The very next day he attended a service in an Albanian Catholic church, 'in order to assure the Albanians that his army was not coming to conquer another people, but to introduce freedom, justice, and order'. While textbook readers might wonder about the feelings of the Albanian Muslims and Turks who made up the vast majority of the population in Prizren, it seems that both King Petar and the textbook author decided to disregard them. Even after huge territorial enlargements in the course of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, along with the subsequent formation of Yugoslavia, King Petar's kingdom remained somewhat torn between these contradictory policies of integrating the Albanians and compelling their emigration.

The depictions of Albanians in the two stories selected by Matović and Vujanac in 1938 could hardly be more different. Vujanac published the short story 'Arnautka' (Albanian women)²⁴, which tells of a young sixteen-year-old boy returning home as the only survivor of the clash between the Shala Albanians and the Turks from Shkodra to find his tribe and his mother mourning his death. Instead of rejoicing over her son's survival, the mother brands him a coward for not dying alongside his company, telling him to go back and die at the spot where the others did if he wishes to be called her son. The story ends with the Ottoman vizier pardoning him and sending him home to his mother a hero.

This story of the resolute and Spartan logic of heroism was previously published in the famous 1901 collection of heroic tales *Primjeri čojstva i junaštva* (Examples of Manliness and Heroism) by Marko Miljanov. Miljanov was a famous Montenegrin warrior born around 1830 in the Montenegrin-Albanian border zone. He was considered the greatest hero of his time by both Serbo-Montenegrins and Albanians. In his old age, Miljanov became literate in order to be able to record the courageous deeds of his contemporaries. In two of his books published around 1900, Miljanov praises the Albanians as great heroes and honest people. One third of his seventy greatest *Examples* of heroism, courage, and chivalrous deeds were carried out by Albanians, whom he especially praises for their heroism and hospitality.

In contrast to Vujanac's selection, Matović's reading book presents a single,

23 Miloš Matović, *Istorija Jugoslovena* (1939), p. 63.

24 Milorad Vujanac, *Čitanka za četvrti razred osnovni škole* (1938), pp. 61–2.

drastically negative representation of Albanians. Matović includes the last part of a story originally published in the collection *Stories from Old Serbia*, written by the Kosovo Serb and patriotic zealot Zarija R. Popović in 1922. The story is entitled 'Lazar the Brigand and his Mother'.²⁵ Matović explains the setting of the story, which evokes Ottoman violence against the Serbs in Kosovo in the early years of the twentieth century. It tells of a band of Kosovo Serb brigands who ask a local Albanian to safeguard them in the village of Velika Hohxa, where they went to deal with the Turkish evildoer who oppressed the local *raya* (flock), and their subsequent killing by the Albanians.

The treacherous nature of the Albanians who break traditional Balkan patriarchal codes of honour and hospitality is carefully depicted. The company leader, the teacher Lazar from Prizren, asks an Albanian twice for his *besa*, and each time the latter confirms it. *Besa* is an Albanian term meaning a promise or a word of honour, but it also denotes faith and fidelity, and is usually regarded as sacred by Albanians, signalling an obligation to always keep their word at all costs. Breaking *besa* is therefore sacrilege and a grave sin. Moreover, in the story of Lazar, the Albanian invited the brigands into his home, welcoming them with bread and salt, which traditionally evokes another institution of hospitality that ensures care and protection for a guest. There is an abundance of evidence for the almost sacred respect for the guest among the highlanders of the Central Balkans. The aforementioned Marko Miljanov's *Examples* offers many episodes in which hosts are killed while steadfastly protecting their guests even from the host's fellow tribesmen or authorities. Edith Durham and Rebecca West offer lively depictions of their experiences of this unusual Albanian hospitality in their early twentieth century travelogues. The Albanian, therefore, by betraying Lazar and his company after giving the *besa* and receiving them into his house, violates the sacred duty of hosts to protect their guests. In short, it is precisely in the treatment of traditional customs and patriarchal values that the two stories differ the most; the excerpt published by Matović denies the Albanians those values of honour and hospitality most commonly associated with them, and for which Marko Miljanov commends them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the presentation of Albanians in Serbian textbooks throughout this period, while undoubtedly biased and prejudiced, is anything but simple and straightforward. It contains ambivalences that speak to the shifting status of

25 Miloš Matović, *Čitanka za četvrti razred narodnih škola u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* (1938), p. 210.

and attitudes between the two nations. In distinction to earlier Serbian perceptions of Albanians as ‘fierce warriors’ and occasional allies against the Ottomans, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century textbooks are marked by an evident hostility towards Albanians. This enmity arises for the most part out of contemporary disputes over the territory of present-day Kosovo, northern Albania, and northern Macedonia inhabited mostly by Muslim Albanians, but historically part of the Serbian medieval state.

The story included in Vujanac’s reading book exemplifies the attempts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to develop a more inclusive policy towards the Albanians; as such, its author chooses a short story that presents Albanians in line with values that are shared by Serbian narratives, in what the authors would consider a highly positive manner. Matović, by contrast, selects for his reading book a story that presents the Albanians as Serb-hating and treacherous, thus retaining the negative stereotypes towards Albanians typical of earlier historical periods.

While Albanians are largely ignored in the historical material of the textbooks, it is in these literary depictions, and in precisely this rupture between literary and historical textbook content, that one finds a more rounded and nuanced illustration of Serbian and Yugoslav attitudes towards them. These attitudes oscillate between overtly positive praise and the complete denial of Albanians’ traditional customs and moral values. As such, they offer a chance to either escape the vicious cycle of negative perceptions in current textbooks and in society at large whose values they represent, or they may propel us further along that path.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks and Reading Books Cited

- Jović, Mihailo, *Srpska istorija udešena za današnju osnov. školu* (Belgrade: štamparija zadruge štamparskih radnika, 1882).
- Jović, Mihailo, *Srpska istorija za IV. razr. osn. škole* (Belgrade: štamparija zadruge štamparskih radnika, 1886).
- Jović, Mihailo, *Srpska istorija sa slikama za IV. razred osnovne škole po novom programu. Trinaesto izdanje* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1894).
- Matović, Miloš, *Čitanka za četvrti razred narodnih škola u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade: Knjižarnica Jeremije J. Dželebića, 1938).
- Matović, Miloš, *Istorija Jugoslovena za treći razred narodnih škola* (Belgrade: Knjižarnica Jeremije J. Dželebića, 1939).
- Vujanac, Milorad, *Čitanka za četvrti razred osnovni škole* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1938).

Further References

- Dewey, John, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).
- Ilić, Aleksandra, 'Školski sistem, nastavnici i učenici u Srbiji (1804–2004)', in *Dva veka obrazovanja u Srbiji*, ed. by Zoran Avramović (Belgrade: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja, 2005), pp. 109–64.
- Ilić, Aleksandra, *Udžbenici i nacionalno vaspitanje u Srbiji 1878–1918* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 2010).
- Ilić Rajković, Aleksandra, 'Albanci i srpsko-albanski odnosi u srpskim udžbenicima (1887–1987)', in *Figura neprijatelja: preosmišljanje srpsko-albanskih odnosa*, ed. by Aleksandar Pavlović, Adriana Zaharijević, Gazela Pudar Draško, and Rigels Halili (Belgrade: IFDT/KPZ Beton, 2015), pp. 177–95.
- Jelavich, Charles, 'Education, Textbooks and South Slav Nationalisms in the Interwar Era', in *Allgemeinbildung als Modernisierungsfaktor: Zur Geschichte der Elementarbildung in Südosteuropa von der Aufklärung bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, ed. by Norbert Reiter and Holm Sundhaussen (Berlin: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1994), pp. 127–42.
- Jovanović, Vladan, *Slike jedne neuspele integracije: Kosovo, Makedonija, Srbija, Jugoslavija* (Belgrade: Fabrika knjiga i Pešćanik, 2014).
- Lowe, Roy, 'Education and National Identity', *History of Education* 28(3) (1999): pp. 231–3.
- Ministry of Education, *Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba* (Belgrade: Kraljevska državna štamparija, 1895).
- Stanford, Shaw, 'The Ottoman View of the Balkans', in *The Balkans in Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Charles and Barbara Jelavich (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 56–78.
- Miljanov, Marko, *Primjeri čojstva i junaštva* (Belgrade: Čupićeva zadužbina, 1901).
- Tešić, B., ed., *Sto godina Prosvetnog saveta Srbije (1880–1980)* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1980).
- Troch, Pieter, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans Before World War II* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).
- 'Zapisnika sa sednice Glavnog prosvetnog saveta', *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1 (14) (1880).

Ethnocentric History Textbooks in a Multiethnic Society: The Case of the Republic of Macedonia

Introduction

Those who advocate the introduction of a multicultural approach to history teaching conventionally criticize history curricula on the grounds of, among other things, their contribution towards a monolithic view of national history, which nurtures ethnocentrism in the guise of patriotism. Critics disapprove of their role in the justification and support of the ethnic majority's dominance over ethnic minorities, manifested in the latter's exclusion from history.¹ These critics follow a set of shared European values, which decree that history teaching should provide a model for responsible citizenship, contribute to the development of critical thinking skills, and towards peace, stability, and democracy.² History teaching in the Balkans corresponds more closely with the criticized curricular model and deviates substantially from the proposed innovative goals. In the Balkan nations historical events are commonly used as tools to legitimize ethnocentric policies.³ However, the current public and political debate on the role of historical explanations and the development of nations offers an opportunity for history teaching to play an important role in reducing the influence of ideology on historical narratives.⁴

Textbooks are not solely responsible for developing grand nationalistic narratives or hostility towards others in education.⁵ Yet although one can argue that textbook revision will not guarantee more critically oriented and less ethno-

1 Rob Phillips, *Reflective Teaching of History 11–18: Meeting Standards and Applying Research* (2002).

2 Luisa Black, *History teaching today: Approaches and Methods* (2011).

3 Dubravka Stojanovic, 'History Textbooks and the Creation of National Identity', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe* ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 27–32.

4 Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (2003); Jan Germen Janmaat, 'The Ethnic "Other" in Ukrainian History Textbooks', *Compare*, 37(3) (2007), 307–24.

5 Christina Koulouri, 'The Tyranny of History', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 15–25.

centric history teaching, in countries like the Republic of Macedonia, where state institutions are closely involved in creating and approving teaching content and teachers rely solely on the textbooks as teaching tools, high-quality textbooks are an important prerequisite for innovative history teaching.

Nearly fifteen years ago it was concluded that, generally speaking, history textbooks in the Balkan countries reproduced a one-sided ethnocentric version of the truth, and demonstrated an absence of common heritage and wider European values.⁶ Since then, the Republic of Macedonia has made substantial progress in positively recognising multiculturalism and multiethnicity at all levels of society. With regard to education, one of the crucial steps was to identify multiculturalism as a core goal in the national education framework, which provided a basis for changes in all teaching curricula for the first to ninth grade.⁷ With this in mind, the goal of this study is to empirically examine whether Macedonian history textbooks are utilized to facilitate students' acceptance of the multiethnic and multicultural nature of the country, or whether they still reflect the same problematic approach as earlier examples.

A combination of qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative analysis was employed in an examination of the contents of eight textbooks currently in use for history teaching in primary education (grades six through nine) in the Republic of Macedonia.⁸ Two relevant indicators were used as guidelines: the proportion of pages covering specific content, and themes and patterns emerging from the text and visual material.

Failed Attempts to Introduce Multiculturalism

All the textbooks analyzed attempt to introduce a multicultural approach by (a) presenting content related to the history and culture of the distinct ethnic communities living in the Republic of Macedonia; (b) displaying graphic materials typical of the various cultures of the Republic of Macedonia; (c) making it possible for Macedonian and Albanian students to learn about their own history in the form of a continuous timeline; and (d) mentioning temporary alliances between Macedonians and Albanians and other nations with whom they have shared a common enemy. However, an examination of the presentation of history

6 Emilija Simoska, 'The General Problems in the History Textbooks on the Balkans', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 97–102.

7 Bureau for the Development of Education, *Framework for the Nine-Year Primary School Education* (2007).

8 Regardless of the year of publication, all textbooks analyzed were in use from 2005 at the latest. Textbooks published before 2010 are currently in use in the grade stated after the textbook title.

in these textbooks and their application of these categories will reveal that these attempts are more formal than substantive.

At the very outset of the sixth-grade history textbook, Macedonia is explicitly, and positively, described as a multicultural country where members of various ethnic communities live: 'All citizens [Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Serbs, Roma, Vlach, and others] are free to develop their culture, customs, and traditions in their mother tongues within the institutions of education, culture etc.'⁹ This might be considered a good introduction to multicultural life; however, the presentation of multiculturalism in Macedonia is here reduced to the enjoyment of collective rights by the members of the various ethnic communities. The same can be said of the content of the ninth grade textbooks which describe Macedonia after the Second World War using a similar definition of multiculturalism, which denotes it the freedom for members of the various ethnic communities to nourish their own cultures. The dominant message conveyed to children is that Macedonia should be commended for its policy of tolerance, especially given that 'with the new Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia the rights of minorities were expanded further than prescribed by international standards', or that the 'Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia guarantees greater rights and freedoms to citizens and equality to all'.¹⁰

At the same time, the implied comparison between the status of minority groups in the Republic of Macedonia and that of Macedonian minorities in neighbouring countries should not be ignored, since it also serves the purpose of affirming the tolerance of 'our' country as opposed to others:

The democratic processes which started in Bulgaria in 1990 did not result in any change in Bulgarian policy with regards to Macedonian issues. The Macedonian name and Macedonian language continued to be denied and unrecognized, thereby continuing the policy of denial of the nation, and the project of assimilation.¹¹

However, only the Macedonian Christians from Mala Prespa enjoy the status of an ethnic minority; the Muslim Macedonians from Golo Brdo and Gora are denied this right.¹²

An examination of the content of the history textbooks reveals the understanding of multiculturalism present in them to be something along the lines of 'permission for the members of ethnic or cultural minorities to learn about their history and culture', where the minority referred to is the ethnic Albanian community. The Albanian cultural and historical perspective is accounted for in descriptions of historical events in the Balkans, and stands parallel to the pre-

9 Kosta Adževski et al., *Istorija za V Oddelenie* (2009), p. 5.

10 Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 135.

11 V. Velkoski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2008), p. 150.

12 Blaže Ristovski, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 153.

sentation of Macedonian history. The following lesson titles may serve as an illustration: ‘Kingdom of Albania 1928–39’ (for ninth grade), ‘Albanians at the time of the Young Turk Revolution’ (for eighth grade), ‘Albania in the early Middle Ages’ (for seventh grade), and ‘Illyrian Kingdoms’ (for sixth grade).¹³

The results of an examination of the division of content shown in Table 1 below point to the conclusion that the textbooks’ focus in accounts of any given event is on the history of Macedonia and Macedonians. This is clear from the fact that more than a quarter of the lesson content in the sixth grade, and up to nearly half in the ninth, is devoted to these topics. The proportion of content covering the history of Albania and Albanians is lower, yet a tendency for the two sides to ‘compete’ with regards to world history can be observed. However, before this data can be treated as an indicator of a multicultural approach to the teaching of history, we need to take into account the fact that history curricula prescribe, and history textbooks accordingly offer, more content than is expected to be covered in lessons. Officially, teachers are trusted to choose from all the content offered which lessons to work on with their students. Research has shown that when history is taught in the Macedonian language, the content related to the Albanian people is ignored; similarly, when history is taught in Albanian, the content elaborating on the history of the Macedonian people is avoided as much as possible.¹⁴ Students therefore learn only the history of their own ethnic group, although the content of the history books suggests that a multicultural approach has been provided which would enable the two largest ethnic communities in the country to learn about each other.

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
World history	50 %	21 %	17 %	16 %
History of the Balkans	11 %	26 %	38 %	15 %
History of Albania/Albanians	11 %	20 %	23 %	21 %
History of Macedonia/Macedonians	28 %	33 %	32 %	48 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>100 %</i>	<i>100 %</i>	<i>100 %</i>	<i>100 %</i>

Table 1: Rough estimation of contents representation based on number of pages

The history textbooks also include information on the history of Serbs and Turks; yet they are depicted only as occupying two main roles in relation to the history of Macedonians and Albanians: the role of enemy or conqueror, or of ally when opposed with a common conqueror. There are numerous examples of this

13 In this analysis, content relating to the Illyrians is treated as belonging to the history of the Albanians, since Albanian historiography claims Albanians to be direct descendants of Illyrians.

14 Violeta Petroska-Beshka et al., *Multiculturalism and Inter-ethnic Relations in Education* (2009).

kind, particularly in lessons on the Ottoman period and on the wars waged in the region during the early twentieth century.

The history of the other ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia is presented rather more rudimentarily. Thus, for example, when it comes to the history of the Vlach, the seventh grade textbook has only a two-page lesson entitled: 'Vlachs in Macedonia in the Middle Ages'. The Roma are mentioned only incidentally in the role of victims of fascism and as inhabitants of the Republic of Macedonia who enjoy the right to a cultural identity. Members of other ethnic communities are found in the context of the history of the Macedonian people, mainly as accomplices to Macedonians in efforts to defy the common enemy; thus: 'The largest group in the Kingdom of Macedonia were the Macedonians, and apart from them, there were also Greeks, Armenians, Vlachs, Albanians, Serbs, etc.'; and: '[...] the Skopje National Liberation Partisan Detachment was founded in the vicinity of Skopje, and included soldiers of various nationalities (Macedonians, Serbs, Turks, Montenegrins, Croats, and Czechs).'¹⁵

Successful Methods for Nurturing Ethnocentrism

The parallel presentation of Macedonian history alongside Albanian history, each told from its own national perspective, creates the illusion of two independent sets of historical events being discussed, rather than a single set which simultaneously affected all peoples who shared this geographic region. When it comes to most of the thematic units dealing with the history of Macedonia and Macedonians in the wider context of the history of the Balkans, textbooks also offer corresponding titles dealing with the history of Albania and Albanians, as per the guidelines laid down by the curriculum. The following examples illustrate this: 'Macedonia during the Young Turk Revolution' is mirrored by 'The Albanians during the Young Turk Revolution' (eighth grade), while 'Macedonia in the early Middle Ages' corresponds to 'Albania in the early Middle Ages' (seventh grade).

This approach prevents students from developing an awareness of interaction between peoples living in the same territories, and of the common sufferings they share regardless of cultural or ethnic identity. This results in the development of fixed psychological boundaries in the minds of students, as they separate entirely their own ethnicity from that of others. The notion that Macedonia is a land belonging to ethnic Macedonians gains traction, and all significant his-

15 Milan Boškovski et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2009), p. 46.; Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 190.

torical events are linked first and foremost to a conception of Macedonian identity. Equally, the idea that ethnic Albanians should treat Albania as their country and turn to it for their heroes and stories in the search for collective identity is also fostered.

Another important contributing factor to the development of an ethnocentric perception of history is the idea that ethnic identities are immanent in humankind, and that today's states are rooted in the origins of humanity. The best indicator of this is the continuous use of the concept of Macedonia without explicit clarification of whether the territory or state is meant. This leads students to believe in the perpetual existence of a territory called Macedonia, which, by definition, is linked to the ethnic identity of the eponymous people. The titles of the thematic units or lessons serve as a blatant illustration of this, and additional evidence may be found in the presentation of history as inextricably tied to ethnic or state identities even in the case of historic periods in which there were no differentiated ethnic identities or states. For example, as part of the rather extraordinary topic 'The Balkans and Macedonia in prehistory', the territory now called Macedonia is described as follows: 'Macedonia covered the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. Down the valleys of rivers [...] it opened up to the Aegean Sea'.¹⁶ In the section 'Events in Macedonia in the Eleventh Century', students are required to find a connection between the events discussed there and the situation of the Macedonian people under Byzantine rule; however, the chapter is illustrated with three pictures depicting a man, a woman, and a group of people dressed in traditional Macedonian attire that was in reality not worn until several centuries later. Such images were presumably included in an attempt to assert the longevity of the ethnic identity of Macedonians, by inserting a more modern identity into an account of earlier times.¹⁷ The following paragraph appears in another textbook for the same generation, and is one of a number of similar examples:

While settling in Macedonia, the Slavs were faced with the territory's native ancient Macedonians. At the beginning they got along badly, but soon things started to improve. The Macedonians were Christians and had a more elevated culture. Gradually they started cooperating. The Slavs accepted the name Macedonia for their new homeland, and started calling themselves Macedonians. The native Macedonians accepted the Slavic language, and later on, the Slavic alphabet.¹⁸

Probably the most important factor for the construction of an ethnocentric identity through history teaching is the emotional manipulation of the concept of a *victim*. In such narratives, victimhood is regularly followed by a display of

16 Kosta Adževski et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2011), p. 20.

17 Nenad Naneski and Behar Memeti, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2006), p. 54.

18 Milan Boškoski et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2009), p. 32.

heroism. Considering the fact that history tends to be presented as a series of wars, there are many opportunities to discuss the suffering of the population, but emphasis is rarely placed on the message that war atrocities result in mass suffering. It is interesting to note that in the explanation of the effects of war, the ethnicity of the victims is positioned as a decisive factor regarding who will suffer what kind of consequences. Furthermore, an additional criterion in choosing which ethnicity will be presented as having suffered the most is the perspective of the ethnic community for which the content is designed, even if there was in fact no clear differentiation along ethnic lines in the period under discussion.

A rich vocabulary is used to describe the suffering experienced by victim nations. The most frequently used words in this context denote either physical or economic survival efforts, psychological pressure (e.g. 'terror', 'torture', 'suffering', 'persecution'), or the endangerment of ethnic and cultural identity (e.g. 'ethnic cleansing', 'assimilation', 'denationalization', 'forced Islamization'). Policies aiming at the integration of a population with different religious or cultural characteristics are treated as strategies intended to shatter the national identity of the existing population. The following examples illustrate this point:

The Treaty of Bucharest resulted in political, ethnic, and economic difficulties for the Macedonian people. It destroyed the territorial and ethnic unity of Macedonia, initiating the systematic expulsion of the ethnic Macedonian population and colonization of the non-Macedonian population, in order to change the traditional historical ethnic character of Macedonia.¹⁹

In 1919 Albanians started an uprising which resulted in even greater terror and violence against the Albanian population in Kosovo. The authorities employed all means to destroy the Albanian national movement.²⁰

Ethnocentrism is also fostered through the presentation of past events and heroes as a foundation for the construction of the modern ethnic identity of Macedonians or Albanians. The characteristics of the ethnic group concerned, and the events associated with it, are shown in a positive light and appear as unique. Typical examples of this can be seen in the following quotations:

Macedonians in the ancient period had their own separate language which they used to express their feelings, thoughts, wishes and aspirations, worldviews and so on. [...] The Ancient Macedonians, unlike other neighbouring nations, had their own distinct religion. They believed in many supernatural forces.²¹

After the successful raid on Persia, Alexander III of Macedonia conceived of a single world state governed by equality, tolerance, and the coexistence of peoples.²²

19 Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 131.

20 Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 139.

21 Borče Mirevski and Todor Todorovski, *Istorija za V Oddelenie* (2005), p. 89.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

[Skanderbeg] was not only a great statesman and a skilful general, but also a good diplomat. He connected Albania with other European countries and the Albanian anti-Ottoman struggle with the struggles of other peoples.²³

Particularly indicative of an ethnocentric approach is a certain selective vocabulary. Through the selection of words, the same activities, when undertaken by 'our own' people, are assigned a positive connotation, while when undertaken by Others have a negative undertone. This is achieved mainly through the use of different terminology. Thus, for example, 'our' people 'expand their territories', 'contribute towards cultural unification', 'win', 'surrender in order to avoid additional suffering', 'are slyly defeated', etc., while Others 'conquer', 'vanquish', 'subjugate', 'terrorize', 'denationalize', 'colonize', 'assimilate', etc. The Slavs 'settle' in the Balkans, while the Ottomans 'conquer' them; Christianization takes place without coercion, while Islamization is forceful. The following examples can serve to illustrate this tendency as it appears in the introduction to Alexander the Great:

[Alexander of Macedonia] was especially friendly to all the rulers he defeated or those who surrendered to him. But he was cruel to those who did not recognize his power and art of leadership, as well as to traitors and the disobedient. He had a special relationship with other nations and cultures.²⁴

Alexander III of Macedonia liberated West and Central Asia Minor in its entirety.²⁵

An ethnocentric identity is also promoted through the continuous casting of neighbouring countries or nations in the role of enemies with territorial pretensions towards Macedonia seeking to deny the Macedonian national identity. In this context, the current political climate is relevant as it results, deliberately or not, in the assignment of the role of enemy or ally to certain neighbouring countries. Consequently textbook content in which Greece takes on the role of aggressor in any capacity is currently dominant, as opposed to previous discourses, such as on the Ottoman period, in which this role went to the Turks:

For each Macedonian word uttered in public or even within the narrow circle of the family, severe penalties were stipulated by law (fines, forcible drinking of castor oil, beatings, etc.). At the same time, all Macedonians were forced to attend night school and learn Greek. In order to force the Macedonian population to use the Greek language within the family, the Greek police eavesdropped on Macedonians in villages at night and immediately took the stipulated legal measures.²⁶

23 Milan Bošković et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2009), p. 111.

24 Borče Mirevski and Todor Todorovski, *Istorija za V Oddelenie* (2005), p. 87.

25 Ibid., p. 82.

26 Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 101.

The Bulgarians are also discussed in detail, and accused of having assimilated the Macedonian population throughout history. This type of narrative is particularly striking in the chapter on the situation of ethnic Macedonians in neighbouring countries. While the Serbs and Albanians do not escape such accusations entirely, they are not so frequently mentioned in a specifically negative context.

Concluding Remarks

This analysis shows that the potential of history textbooks to develop students' ability to live independently within a multiethnic society, as well as to equip them with the basic critical thinking skills needed to recognize contemporary threats, is not yet fully realized. Findings from previous research on textbooks in South-Eastern European countries (e. g. the widespread tendency to portray one's own people as victims, the concept of a perpetual national territory presented with the current state as a point of reference, the omission of the Other)²⁷ are also applicable to current history textbooks in Macedonia.

How, then, should history textbooks be changed in order to overcome their prevailing ethnocentrism? The solution to the parallel presentation of the histories of the country's largest ethnic groups can be found in the proposal of a *consensus model*; this is based on a compromise between different or even conflicting perspectives through an emphasis on shared aspects rather than differences.²⁸ History textbooks should highlight mutual influences among different identity groups in the country and open up a space for the introduction of multiperspectivity, by making content more diverse and exposing students to conflicting narratives of historical events.²⁹ This is not only because a 'one-sided history – the nationalistic history – is a manipulation'.³⁰ Ideal use of the multiperspectival approach would also provide an opportunity for students to develop their analytical skills by enabling them to look at various concepts, issues, themes, and problems from each other's cultural perspectives.³¹ This approach corresponds to what Banks describes as a level of *social action*, since students

27 Christina Koulouri, 'The Tyranny of History', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 15–25.

28 Falk Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd edn (2010).

29 Robert Stradling, *Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: A Guide for Teachers* (Germany: Council of Europe, 2003).

30 Venkaf R. Palati, *All about History Teaching* (Solapur: Laxmi Book Publication, 2014), p. 33.

31 As mentioned in: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Recommendation 1880: History Teaching in Conflict and Post-conflict Areas* (adopted 26 June 2009) <<http://asembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17765&lang=en>> (accessed 26 September 2016).

would be taught to view events critically, empathize with the perspective of the Other, and make decisions as responsible citizens.³² Since textbooks serve as exclusive teaching resources in Macedonia, it is crucially important that a genuinely multicultural approach is introduced to history textbooks there. This will enable students to understand historical concepts, questions, and events through the perspectives of all ethnic groups concerned, as other social groups will be presented as active participants in a shared culture, history, and tradition.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Adževski, Kosta, Darinka Petreska, Violeta Ačkoska, Naum Dimoski, and Vančo Ćorgiev, *Istorija za V Oddelenie* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2009).
- Adževski, Kosta, Darinka Petreska, Vančo Ćorgiev, Violeta Ačkoska, and Vojislav Sarakinski, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (Skopje: Ministerstvo za obrazovanie i nauka na Republika Makedonija, 2011).
- Boškovski, Milan, Jordan Ilioski, and Nebi Derviši, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo ad, 2009).
- Velkoski, V., H. Sejdi, A. Aljademi, D. Risteska, and Ć. Pavlovski, *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo ad, 2008).
- Mirevski, Borče and Todor Todorovski, *Istorija za V Oddelenie* (Skopje: Makedonska Iskra, 2005).
- Naneski, Nenad and Behar Memeti, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (Skopje: Dzvezda, 2006).
- Ristovski, Blaže, Šukri Rahimi, Simo Mladenovski, Stojan Kiselinovski, and Todor Ćepreganov, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009).
- Ristovski, Blaže, Šukri Rahimi, Simo Mladenovski, Stojan Kiselinovski, and Todor Ćepreganov, *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009).

Further References

- Banks, James A., *Race, Culture, and Education: The Selected Works of James A. Banks* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- Black, Luisa, *History Teaching Today: Approaches and Methods* (Kosovo: Council of Europe, 2011).
- Bureau for the Development of Education, *Framework for the Nine-Year Primary School Education* (Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science, 2007).
- Janmaat, Jan Germen, 'The Ethnic "Other" in Ukrainian History Textbooks: The Case of Russia and the Russians', *Compare*, 37(3) (2007), 307–24.

32 James A. Banks, *Race, Culture, and Education* (2006).

- Koulouri, Christina, 'The Tyranny of History', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 15–25.
- Macintyre, Stuart, and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003).
- Petroska-Beshka, Violeta, Mirjana Najcevska, Nikolina Kenig, Safet Balazhi, and Ana Tomovska, *Multiculturalism and Inter-ethnic Relations in Education* (Skopje: UNICEF, 2009).
- Phillips, Rob, *Reflective Teaching of History 11–18, Meeting Standards and Applying Research* (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- Palati, Venkaf R., *All about History Teaching* (Solapur: Laxmi Book Publication, 2014).
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Recommendation 1880: History teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas* (adopted 26 June 2009) <<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17765&lang=en>> (accessed 26 September 2016).
- Pingel, Falk, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd edn (Paris and Braunschweig: UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2010).
- Simoska, Emilija, 'The General Problems in the History Textbooks on the Balkans' in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 97–102.
- Stojanovic, Dubravka, 'History Textbooks and the Creation of National Identity', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 27–32.
- Stradling, Robert, *Multiperspectivity in History Teaching: A Guide for Teachers* (Germany: Council of Europe, 2003).

Constructing the Image of the ‘Threatening Neighbour’ in Macedonian History Textbooks

History textbooks, like all educational media in subjects inspiring a sense of identity and belonging, reflect what a society wishes to retain of its past, and what its ambitions are for the future. They often form an intersection between such divergent factors as pedagogic traditions, academic historiography, state educational policies, national ideologies, and social constructions of reality. In this sense, textbooks can help to identify the values being fostered in a given society.¹

As is the case in many other countries, in Macedonia history is taught as a distinct subject in primary and secondary schools. The Bureau of Education Development is responsible for the development of history curricula, and authors of history textbooks are obliged to comply with the national curricula. According to officially established criteria, at least one of the authors should be an ethnic Albanian, or a member of the ethnic Turkish community. A textbook commission consisting of historians and ministry officials selects textbooks for each age group from the array of textbooks submitted in response to an open call by the Ministry of Education; finally, the Minister of Education confirms and approves the use of selected textbooks.

The constitutional changes made in 2001 led to the implementation of a new history curriculum in the 2005–2006 academic year.² The goal of the new cur-

1 Christina Koulouri, ‘Introduction: The Tyranny of History’, in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 15–25; Dubravka Stojanović, ‘History Textbooks and Creation of National Identity’, in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 27–32; Niyazi Kizilyurek, ‘History Textbooks and Nationalism’, in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Koulouri (2001), pp. 69–73 (p. 72); Falk Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd edn <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001171/117188e.pdf>> (accessed 15 September 2016); Wolfgang Höpken, *Textbooks and Conflicts. Experiences from the Work of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research* (2001) <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1126807073059/World_Bank.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2016).

2 After the independence of Macedonia in 1991, history textbooks were changed on two occasions; this was the third edition.

riculum, developed by an ethnically mixed working group appointed by the Bureau of Education Development (consisting of five ethnic Macedonians, four ethnic Albanians and one member of the Turkish community), was to include and represent various ethnic communities in history textbooks.³ Their inclusion in the history curriculum has, however, been achieved at the expense of European and world history lessons.

National curricula for history teaching are centred on political and cultural history, the latter being understood in the traditional manner, i. e., as the history of architecture and the arts. The positivistic concept of historicism that is based on the development and transfer of political power and the construction of the 'nation' with its links to the world remains the dominant structuring principle of history curricula.

Macedonian history textbooks are developed around certain core geographical and chronological topics which follow a deductive principle: world and European history, Balkan history, and Macedonian history. While distinct chapters are devoted to lessons on Macedonian ethno-national history, lessons relating to Albanian ethno-national history are incorporated in the chapters on Balkan history. It should be noted that the history of ethnic Albanians taught to students in Macedonia fits into the shared Albanian ethno-national narrative found throughout the Balkans.

Compared with previous editions, the latest generation of textbooks, published in the 2005–2006 academic year, shows a more modern approach. Although the narration is primarily focused on wars, treaties, and the actions of politicians (especially in ancient history lessons), additional information on the economy, social life, and culture is now featured. Some effort has been made to provide a basic understanding of democratic values, as well as of the socio-political and economic processes of twentieth-century history.

The chapters on Balkan history include material on the history of neighbouring countries (Albania, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria), which are presented in a reasonably positive light, while the history of all other Balkan countries, (e. g. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania, etc.) is almost completely absent. The intention appears to be that the Macedonian 'neighbourhood' should represent the entire Balkans and its history.

The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to discuss several examples from history textbooks for the upper grades of primary school (the seventh and eighth

3 For more information on the commission, its composition and the dilemmas related to history curricula development for primary and secondary education, see: Robert Pichler, 'Historiography and Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia' in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009) pp. 217–250. The interviews with commission members and ministry officials are particularly interesting: see pp. 230–233.

grades),⁴ and to provide an overview of the manner in which images of the 'threatening neighbour' are constructed.

It is immediately striking that when neighbouring countries are addressed in their own chapters and lessons (i.e. in the lessons on the Balkan peoples), the texts refrain from using negative imagery or vocabulary, when quite the opposite is true of the chapters and lessons relating to events in Macedonian or Albanian ethno-national history. In the latter contexts, images of the neighbour often bear negative connotations, creating a subtle representation of a 'threatening Other'. It is worth stressing that, regardless of the veracity of the descriptions of historical events, a narrative can still convey stereotypical and anachronistic messages. A valid historical claim can be charged with additional and sometimes contradictory meanings through the style or choice of language used, or the frequency with which certain words are repeated.

Macedonia's modern-day neighbours are often depicted as (historical) enemies with permanent ambitions regarding Macedonia. A good illustration of this is a local variant of a rather universal example: 'the location and natural resources of Macedonia have *always* been attractive to Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Each has tried to conquer Macedonia, but none has been capable of doing it alone'.⁵ In a similar context, lessons dealing with the 'armed propaganda' of neighbouring countries at the turn of the twentieth century at times over-emphasize negative images by repeating words with threatening connotations, such as 'terror', 'violence', 'robbery', 'evil', etc.⁶

Alternatively, some textbooks adopt a selective approach whereby a historical event is read only in relation to one's own ethno-centric perspective. Thus a section purporting to cover the 'Constantinople Conference' during the so-called Eastern Crisis and around the time of the Albanian Question does not contain any information whatsoever about the event itself – the Conference – but rather emphasizes the territorial expansion of Serbia at the expense of what is perceived to be Albanian ethnic lands, and which at that time was in fact Ottoman territory.⁷

An example of the revival of old threats and animosities is the representation of the Bucharest Treaty of 1913, which sanctioned the partition of the geographic (Ottoman) Macedonia among Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. This event is one of the most controversial historical topics in the Republic of Macedonia. Its treat-

4 Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009); Violeta Achkoska et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2005); Blaže Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009); Vlado Velkovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2008).

5 Achkoska et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2005), p. 114.

6 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 125.

7 Achkoska et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2005), p. 52.

ment often appears as being tied to a cycle of eternal collective trauma and victimization. The following extract, with its dramatic wording and use of the historical present, illustrates how narration can perpetuate an inherited suffering, keeping it alive in the collective memory of the 'national Self':

The Peace Treaty of Bucharest had significant political, ethnic, and economic consequences for the Macedonian people, amongst which were the destruction of the territorial and ethnic unity of Macedonia, a process of ethnic exile of the Macedonian population, and colonization by a non-Macedonian population with the aim of altering the traditional historical character of Macedonia.⁸

The suffering and victimization experienced by the Macedonian people after the Bucharest treaty in 1913 is also described in the following sentences: 'The period between the two World Wars left a very deep impression and had great consequences for Macedonia. Macedonian people *everywhere* had been facing economic, political, social, and national problems'. While it is not clear at first glance to what 'everywhere' refers in this context, clarification comes with the next sentence: 'The appetites of the neighbouring Balkan bourgeoisie were directed towards the occupation and exploitation of Macedonia'.⁹ The latent meaning of the umbrella term *everywhere* can be clarified by reference to ideology. It is inherited from the socialist period, as is the term 'the neighbouring Balkan bourgeoisie'. As the last Ottoman province, Macedonia has undoubtedly undergone various transformations with far-reaching social, political, and economic consequences since the Balkan Wars. This does not, however, affect only the ethnic Macedonian population. The other inhabitants of post-Ottoman Macedonia are simply forgotten in the narrative of this textbook, as is their eventual suffering or exile.

In the same manner, the narrative depicts the desperate situation of Macedonians who found themselves within new political and state borders. For instance, Macedonian people in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes 'suffered injustices and had imposed upon them a project of great Serbian national assimilation'.¹⁰ The situation was even worse in northern Greece because 'every Macedonian, regardless of age, was forced to go to school and to learn Greek. Macedonians were forced to speak Greek even in their homes, surrounded and watched by secret police'.¹¹ The image of the 'threatening neighbour' is constructed by the logic of simple binary opposition, creating dichotomies between peoples in the format we/'good' versus they/'bad'. Since the peoples featured in such oppositions are by default delineated with reference to nationality,

8 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 131.

9 Velkovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2008), p. 51.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

this approach hinders students when differentiating between governments and peoples, or between different groups and individuals within the same nation. Given the binary outlook of the narration on the 'neighbour', one could raise the following questions: would students in the country be willing to cooperate or form alliances with these 'bad' peoples (Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians)? Would they be open to the influence of members of these 'bad' communities who are fighting against negative stereotypes and old and new prejudices, and defending democratic values in their own countries today?

It is also worth mentioning that the persistence of the images mentioned above could also be attributed to the continuous conflict regarding the identity markers of the Macedonian ethno-nation. Greece does not recognize the country's name, Serbia rejects the independence of its national church and Bulgaria does not accept the existence of a Macedonian nation and language. The naming issue is the most widely-known dispute. Athens refuses to accept the name 'Macedonia', claiming that it belongs exclusively to Greek history and heritage. Greece has used this assertion to systematically block Macedonia's entry into the EU and NATO, asking that the country change its name before entering into negotiations. Bulgaria, on the other hand, was the first country to recognize Macedonia's independence, yet it still refuses to accept the existence of a Macedonian nation and language. Although Serbia recognizes Macedonia under its constitutional name, the Serbian Orthodox Church does not accept the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, proclaimed in 1967.

Similar expressions of territorial loss and historical injustice at the hands of an eternal aggressor can be found in the Albanian narratives. There, particular emphasis is given to the Berlin Congress of 1878: 'According to its decisions, the Ottoman empire was forced to return to Serbia and Montenegro some of its Balkan territories, inhabited by an Albanian population'.¹² Moreover, Serbs are depicted as permanent Albanian enemies from the Middle Ages onwards. The text states that during the time of the King Stephen Dušan in the fourteenth century,

the Serbian state implemented the Serbian administration everywhere. Albanian feudal lords were replaced by Serbian feudal lords. Several monasteries were built in Kosovo [...] The Catholic Church was replaced by the Serbian Orthodox Church. For anyone disobeying, rigorous measures were taken: seizure of property, expulsion, looting, and death sentences. However the Albanian population retained its traditions and did not succumb to the assimilation process.¹³

An interesting textual solution, whereby the parallel ethno-centric views on the 'threatening Other' are brought together, is found in some textbooks. This is a

12 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 62.

13 Nenad Naneski and Behar Mehmeti, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (Skopje: Zvezda, 2006), p. 74.

compromise in the spirit of the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement. We thus read: 'In their allied agreement, the Balkan allies Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece intended to capture all regions with Macedonian and Albanian populations and to divide them among each other.'¹⁴

Conclusion

Despite the attempts of Macedonian textbooks to ameliorate the image of the country's neighbours through recent reforms, an implicit negative 'threatening' image persists in them. This image is predominantly conveyed in the text and manifests itself in four main ways: (1) the particular wording used to narrate an event; (2) the frequency with which relevant (negative) words or expressions appear in a textual sequence; (3) the selection of topics, or the aspects accentuated in the elaboration on a given historical event; and (4) the use of the historical present (tense) to create a sense of drama around historical events. Further work on these aspects can bring about the changes to history textbooks required for a critically oriented history teaching. These textbooks are not filled with exclusively negative images of the neighbour. On the contrary, one can also find examples of cooperation between neighbouring communities during important historical events, such as certain anti-Ottoman uprisings in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, my intention here has been to point out sections in the textbooks which require further scholarly attention and revision in order to improve intercultural and civic education, an undertaking of great importance for the future of Macedonia.

Bibliography

List of textbooks cited

- Achkoska, Violeta, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2005).
Ristovski, Blaže, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009).
Ristovski Blaže, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Albi, 2009).
Velkovski, Vlado, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2008).
Naneski, Nenad, and Behar Mehmeti, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (Skopje: Zvezda, 2006).

14 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 85.

Further References

- Höpken, Wolfgang, *Textbooks and Conflicts: Experiences from the Work of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research* (2001) <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1126807073059/World_Bank.pdf> (accessed 29 September 2016).
- Kizilyurek, Niyazi, 'History Textbooks and Nationalism', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 69–73.
- Koulouri, Christina, 'Introduction: The Tyranny of History', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 15–25.
- Pichler, Robert, 'Historiography and Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia', in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), pp. 217–250.
- Pingel, Falk, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd edn (2010) <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001171/117188e.pdf>> (accessed 15 September 2016).
- Stojanović, Dubravka, 'History Textbooks and Creation of National Identity', in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Christina Koulouri (Thessaloniki: Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 27–32.

Representations of Ethnic Albanians in Macedonian History Textbooks from 1970 until the Present Day

Introduction

According to recent surveys, the most serious problems citizens of the Republic of Macedonia perceive themselves to be facing are unemployment and the state of the economy. Interethnic relations, particularly between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, appear at the bottom of this list of concerns.¹ However, the state of interethnic relations remains highly contested in the Republic of Macedonia due to the focus placed on it by the political and intellectual elites and the media. Many reports on the progress of the country regularly incorporate complex issues of interethnic relations and their influence on the future development of the country.² Each incident between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians attracts significant attention in the media and among the political elites, while scholars, politicians and foreign observers debate the factors that shape interethnic relationships. The latter feed into the rhetoric of the political establishment and become a political tool at the disposal of the ruling class. This establishment seeks solutions to problems in the economy, all the while looking to secure its own political legitimacy.³ Education in general, and history education in particular, is viewed as a decisive element in this process of legitimization, given the important role it plays in the creation and diffusion of a particular set of values. Thus the complexities of interethnic relations come to the fore in the classroom; the issues of today transcend their periodization and

1 According to surveys carried out by the European Commission (in May 2015) and the International Republican Institute (in June 2015), the most serious problem in Macedonia today, as perceived by its population, is the state of the economy, especially unemployment. Political stability comes second, while less serious problems include the security crisis and inter-ethnic relations. International Republican Institute, *Macedonians Concerned About Economy, Political Stability; Support for Representative Democracy, Euro-Atlantic Integrations Remain Strong* (June 2015); European Commission, *Eurobarometer* (May 2015).

2 See, for example, European Commission, *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Progress Report* (October 2014).

3 See, for example, Koneska, *After Ethnic Conflict* (2014).

seep into children's perceptions of the past, while, reciprocally, past animosities are re-examined and come to influence the treatment of current problems.

Such perceptions of the past lie at the heart of the relationship between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, even outside of history teaching. The Macedonian encyclopaedia published in 2009 by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts represents a clear example of the way in which the two ethnic groups perceive themselves and each other, and their respective pasts and positions within society; it is an example that mirrors the political situation in the country. Although the encyclopaedia was immediately retracted from sale, its publication was met with ardent debate between Macedonian and Albanian intellectuals, with historians at the forefront. Opposing sets of historical nationalistic myths were presented regarding the origin and the historic role of their respective groups. The debate became so heated that members of the international community intervened in order to calm the situation.⁴ This symbolic episode left its mark on interethnic relations in the country, and thus the country's political stability. It is an illustration of the connection between perceptions of the past and today's society.

I expand on this connection in the context of textbooks and how they relate to society in my analysis of the images of ethnic Albanians in Macedonian history textbooks for primary school (fifth or sixth grade, to the eighth or ninth grade⁵), published between 1972 and the present day. A sample of 20 textbooks was selected for the survey. This chapter considers the role of history teaching in the promotion of democratic values and tolerance in Macedonian society and in the critique or reinforcement of stereotypes as potential sources of conflict, as well as the degree to which textbooks reflect the political situation, or vice versa.

A quantitative strategy will be employed first of all to determine the amount of space devoted to the Albanian narrative and history in the textbooks. Secondly, and more importantly, comes a qualitative examination of how the image of 'us' (ethnic Macedonians) versus the Other (ethnic Albanians) is shaped in representations of ancient times to the present day. The construction of an 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy is essential to the creation of ethnocentric and nationalistic narratives. Here the image of the Other plays an important role in the formation of a pupil's sense of group/national identity. In Macedonian history textbooks published since the 1970s, ethnic Macedonians have always been represented as victims of their neighbours' aggressive politics. In the textbooks published between 1970 and 2004, the majority of references to other nations and ethnic

4 For the reaction from society and the foreign state representatives, see for example Deutsche Welle, 'Baranja za povlekuvanje na makedonskata enciklopedija' (22 September 2009).

5 The last reforms of primary education in the Republic of Macedonia replaced a system of eight years of primary schooling with one of nine years.

groups in the Balkans are to the Turks/Ottomans, Bulgarians and Greeks, with fewer references to Serbs and Albanians, who did not belong to this main group of 'enemies'. In terms of defining the Macedonian identity (the identity of ethnic Macedonians) in the context of the nation-building process as it relates to perceptions of neighbouring countries, analyses of the image of Turks/Ottomans, Greeks, and especially Bulgarians seem more important than those of Serbs and Albanians. But from the point of view of interethnic relations *within* the country, an analysis of the image of Albanians is more relevant. The representation of ethnic Albanians is crucial to the stability of internal politics and to the improvement of interethnic relations.⁶ And although Albanians are not depicted as the main 'enemy', their representation is nonetheless contentious. I record instances in which the textbooks' narrative explicitly or implicitly creates negative imagery in connection with ethnic Albanians.

Following an initial examination of the textbooks, it was possible to divide them into three major periods. The first is the Yugoslav period, from the 1970s until 1990. This is followed by the post-Yugoslav period, from 1991 until 2004 (when the first textbooks were published in an independent Macedonia). The last period will be referred to as the post-conflict period, spanning from 2004 to the present day and also reflecting on the resolution of the 2001 conflict, and subsequent textbook revision (from 2002 to 2004).

Space Devoted to Albanian Histories and the Contexts in which they Appear

During the Yugoslav period, the history of Macedonia and the Macedonian people is narrated within the Yugoslav and socialist context. The struggle for national liberation and independent statehood is presented as part of a joint struggle of the Yugoslav peoples, which ultimately led to the foundation of socialist Yugoslavia. Therefore two national narratives co-exist in parallel: the Yugoslav and Macedonian narratives, which are consistent with one another. The history of Albania and the Albanian people is presented as part of the broader Yugoslav narrative. Thus the struggle of the Albanian medieval nobleman Skanderbeg against the Ottomans is presented in the section 'The Fall of our People under Ottoman Rule'. Certain episodes from Albanian history are included in the Macedonian national narrative. For example, the section 'Uprisings in Macedonia' includes the League of Prizren. The only case in which the history of Albania and its people is depicted in a distinct section is the story of 'The

6 According to the last census (in 2002), one quarter of the population in the country identify as ethnic Albanian, and two thirds as ethnic Macedonian.

National Liberation Struggle of the Albanian People', which occupies just three pages.

The first post-Yugoslav Macedonian textbooks published after 1992 devote more space to a distinctly Macedonian historical narrative, separate from Yugoslav history, although the territory of the Republic of Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia from 1918 until 1991. In these books the Yugoslav dimension is subsumed under the Balkan dimension. Albanian history is also depicted in the Balkan context, and the proportion of pages on Albanian history increases compared to pre-1990s textbooks: up to five percent from one percent previously.

The curricula reform implemented in 2004 did not fundamentally affect the conceptualization of textbooks. The history of Albania and the Albanian people is still narrated within the Balkan context, but more space is dedicated to it overall (up from 15 percent at the end of the post-Yugoslav period to 25 percent on average); this changes from textbook to textbook and from school year to school year. The increase in space was achieved by reducing sections on world history and other Balkan nations.

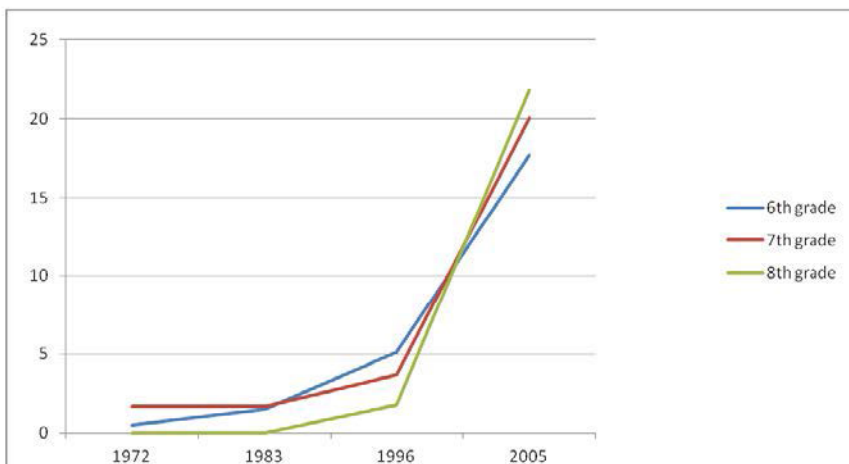


Figure 1: Proportion of space dedicated to the history of Albania and the Albanian people in the textbooks according to year of publication and grade (percent)

From the data presented in this graph we can see that the space dedicated to the history of Albania and the Albanian people has increased. However the devotion of more space to this history does not necessarily guarantee any improvement in the way in which it is presented. On the contrary, using qualitative analysis I will show that the increase in content has also resulted in an increase in negative representations of Albanians.

The majority of references to Albanians or Albania appear in relation to the Middle Ages, the Ottoman period, and the twentieth century. Most often, Albania and the Albanian people are narrated through their political and military history, that is, by means of an account of the wars and revolutions that aimed at national liberation, especially their struggle against their 'occupiers'. In the post-Yugoslav period the focus remains the same. Only in the first post-conflict textbooks is more space assigned to cultural history. However this only covers 'high culture'; cultural history is always presented as being that of the elite, and is depicted only through a national prism.

The Image of Albanians in the Yugoslav Period

During the Yugoslav period the state ideology of *Brotherhood and Unity* influenced the narration of the history of the Yugoslav peoples and their relations with their neighbours. In this context, Albanians and Macedonians are portrayed as victims of common enemies (Byzantines, Ottomans, Germans, Italians), and Albanians are said to have assisted the Macedonians in their struggle for liberation (for example in the Ilinden Uprising).⁷ This ideology promoted the idea that the Yugoslav people were not responsible for instigating mutual conflicts. In dealing with later periods, the causes for such conflicts are usually attributed to the fascist and Nazi regimes and their collaborators. The Albanians and Macedonians, along with other Yugoslav peoples, are therefore defined as the victims of fascist invaders. Thus in *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie (History for grade 8, 1982)* it is stated that some Albanians, under the influence of Italian fascists, dreamt of a greater Albania.⁸

Towards the end of the socialist period, in the textbooks from the 1980s, there is a strengthening of the Macedonian ethno-national narrative, which also affected representations of ethnic Albanians. The ideology of *Brotherhood and Unity* still dominates the narrative. The ethnic conflict between the Yugoslav peoples, as well the conflicts between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians, is still defined in terms of a foreign enemy seeking to destroy the unity of the Yugoslav peoples. However, in a section dedicated to WW2 and the occupation of Macedonia in *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie (1982)*, there is explicit reference to the Macedonian people as victims of the Albanian authorities and their policies. The occupying regimes are defined ethnically as Bulgarian and Albanian. Thus for the first time Macedonia and Macedonians are explicitly represented as victims

7 Dinev et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie (1972)*, p. 186.

8 Dimeski and Kuševski, *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie (1982)* p. 82.

of an Albanian aggressor, usually characterized as nationalists and *balists* (members of the Albanian nationalist organization Bali Kombetar).⁹

Another example can be found in a 1972 textbook, in a section dealing with the history of the Ottoman Empire entitled 'Feudal Anarchy', which covers the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the introduction of the Tanzimat reforms. It defines the activities of the *aramiski četi* (groups of brigands) as an internal problem for the Ottoman Empire, and stress that the groups consisted of army deserters, Janissaries, Muslims and non-Muslims, and others.¹⁰ No ethnic designation of the members of these groups is provided. Yet *Istorija za VII Oddelenie (History for grade 7, 1983)* defines them as Albanian and/or Ottoman/Turk.¹¹ Moreover, it claims that the victims of these bands were exclusively ethnic Macedonian villagers forced to leave their homes, and that the brigands' activities in turn resulted in the settlement of Albanians in western Macedonia.¹²

This representation of Macedonians as victims of Albanians is just one of many examples of the construction of the myth of victimization. This historical myth is similarly exploited in accounts of the demographics of the western part of Macedonia, which tend to show the Albanians as newcomers. Mainstream Macedonian historiography often claims that the settlement of Albanians in western Macedonia is a recent phenomenon. These claims are central to another historical and political myth: the myth of origin, or the question of 'who came first'.

The Image of Albanians in the Post-Socialist Period

The rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia during the 1980s and the turbulent breakup of the state led to an even greater increase in ethno-nationalistic narratives and negative portrayals of Albanians. Scholars dealing with post-socialist history curricula and textbook revision claim that the removal of Marxist ideology from textbook narratives only strengthened nationalist ideology.¹³

In the textbooks published in the 1990s new topics are introduced covering Albanian history, and that of the Macedonians in Albania. Albania is described as one of the countries that participated in the division of Macedonia after the Balkan wars, due to the fact that it received a small portion of formerly Mace-

9 Ibid., pp. 79–82.

10 Dinev et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1972), pp. 114–5.

11 Dinev et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1983), p. 65.

12 Ibid., p. 65.

13 Dimou, 'Introduction', in *Transition*, ed. by Dimou (2009), pp. 7–44.

donian territory.¹⁴ This is the first time that the Albanians are explicitly presented as enemies and aggressors.

Ethno-nationalistic narratives and negative images of the Albanians are also strengthened through the use of a variety of negative terms. For example, the ethnonym 'Albanian' is usually accompanied by epithets such as 'criminal bands', 'occupiers', 'tribe', and 'mountaineers'.¹⁵ The latter two terms are used synonymously with the more explicitly negative terms 'barbarians' or 'uncivilized people'.¹⁶ Significantly, the Albanians are the only ethnic group from the Balkans not defined as a 'people' in a section of *Istorija za VI Oddelenie (History for grade 6, 2001)* dealing with the Middle Ages. In the same section, the textbook provides a definition of the term *Škiptar*, thus relativizing the use of the pejorative term *Šiptar* by the ethnic Macedonians.¹⁷ One of the proposed definitions for this term is 'mountaineers'. The use of these pejorative epithets in the narrative promotes the message that Albanians are very different to the Macedonians and the other ethnic groups in the Balkans, and essentially culturally inferior. Indeed the textbook for the seventh grade claims that the culture of Albanians was less developed in comparison to the other peoples of the Balkans.¹⁸ Moreover all people living in a given country or region and who speak a different language to the majority are referred to as *inorodno* (non-native) in these textbooks.¹⁹ This leads pupils to the conclusion that the Albanians in Macedonia are a non-native population, and therefore can be considered 'outsiders', not truly part of society.

Another important development is the almost complete omission of the previous narratives relating cooperation between the Albanians and the Macedonians, as well as of passages in which the two peoples were presented as victims of a common enemy. Only a few such examples remain and they can be found in the sections that depict the history of Albania during Ottoman rule. However, even here, instances of cooperation and joint struggle against the enemy are left out. For example, in the section that deals with the Ilinden Uprising, the passage dedicated to the assistance and involvement of the Albanians is excluded altogether.

In *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie (History for grade 8, 1992)*, a clear reflection of the

14 Veljanovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (1995), p. 15; Trajanovski, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1997), p. 123.

15 Panov et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2001), p.41; Trajanovski, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1997), pp. 76–7.

16 Panov et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2001), p. 41; Trajanovski, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1997), p. 58.

17 Panov et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2001), p. 41.

18 Trajanovski, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (1997), pp. 60–2.

19 Veljanovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (1995), p. 46.

political tensions and problems related to the rights of the Albanian community in Macedonia can be observed; here the relationship between Albania and Yugoslavia after 1948 is defined as ‘non-friendly’ and ‘dishonest’. The narrative asserts that those relations were compromised by Albanian claims that the rights of the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia were not being recognized. The textbook adopts a counter-position, stating that, in Albania, the national rights of Macedonians were not recognized.²⁰ In doing so, it marginalizes concerns about human rights and justifies the secondary position of ethnic Albanians in Macedonian society.

To conclude, we can say on the one hand that in the first post-socialist textbooks, Albanians are represented as culturally inferior aggressors who arrived in Macedonia relatively recently, and who frequently committed acts of barbarism and robbery against the ethnic Macedonians. The ethnic Macedonians on the other hand are represented as culturally superior, and the unfortunate victim of their neighbours and co-citizens, the ethnic Albanians. Such narratives lend support to a number of political and historical myths connected with Macedonian national ideology and political culture and exploited by both the political and intellectual elites; these include the myth of victimization, the myth of origin, and the myth of superiority over the enemy.

The Image of Albanians in Post-Conflict History Textbooks

The curriculum reform of 2004, which saw the production of a new set of textbooks, aimed at the elimination of the negative imagery surrounding Albanians and other communities in the older textbooks. Attempts were made to include positive elements of the histories of all communities in the country. The new textbooks were therefore expected to promote democratic values, social inclusiveness, and tolerance in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society; this represents a typical form of textbook revision for post-conflict regions. However many scholars today agree that the Macedonian history textbooks currently in use possess an ethno-national narrative that serves the creation of national identities and supports the dominant national and political ideology.²¹ There is a rift in this narrative, between the Albanian and Macedonian versions of events. The textbooks give the impression that the two ethnic groups lived completely

20 Kiselinovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (1992), p. 134.

21 Pichler, ‘Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia’, in *Transition*, ed. by Dimou (2009), pp. 217–47; Stojanov, ‘In Search of Autochthony’, *Der Donauraum*, 50 (3–4) (2010), pp. 225–34; Petroska-Beska et al., *Integralna analiza na učebnicite po isrorija za osnovno obrazovanie* (2011).

separately in the past, which amounts to tacit support for their continued segregation.

Although negative terms used previously, such as *šiptari*, *inorodno*, and *kačaci* (kachaks) have been removed, the narrative and the messages imparted upon pupils continue to promote negative images in a more subtle way. Moreover, in a change from previous textbooks (those of the 1990s), certain events are no longer defined in ethnic terms. For example, the Albanian radical and nationalistic military units active during the Second World War are termed 'enemy armed formations' or 'counter-revolutionary groups', the ethnic designations of earlier textbooks having been removed.²² Similar changes have been made to descriptions of armed groups prevalent at the end of the eighteenth century, similarly viewed in previous textbooks through an ethnic prism. Despite attempts to avoid the more unpleasant and uncomfortable parts of recent history, there are several cases in which the Macedonians are presented as victims of the Albanians. For example, Albania is again depicted as having participated in the partition of Macedonia.

The Macedonian ethno-national narrative implicitly promotes stereotypes of Albanians. As in the earlier textbooks, it represents the Albanians as a culturally inferior population, as this example from *Istorija za VI Oddelenie (History for grade 6, 2009)* shows: 'During the Middle Ages, in Albania, as well as in other neighbouring countries, the inhabitants of the towns and villages were most often illiterate'.²³ Such characterizations are absent from the Macedonian narrative of the textbook. Another textbook states that until the fourteenth century there was no evidence of an Albanian language, and that the Albanian feudal lords communicated in a Slavic language. Furthermore, the Albanians are represented as having resisted reforms and modernization: 'The Tanzimat reforms were aimed at improving the situation in the Ottoman Empire. But the Albanians were not pleased with them. They were especially opposed to military conscription and paying taxes'.²⁴ Through this kind of characterization, the textbooks promote and strengthen old stereotypes about ethnic Albanians in Macedonian society. Moreover, the stereotypes fit with contemporary political views of some parts of the Macedonian political and intellectual elite concerning their Albanian co-citizens. In this context, the textbooks sometimes offer political statements and explanations regarding the origin of the Albanians, as in the following quote: '[...] the percentage of the Albanian minority is due to the

22 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 97.

23 Boškovski et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie* (2009), p. 79.

24 Ačkoska, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie* (2005), p. 50.

high natural growth of the Albanian population, but also to the excessive immigration of Albanians from Serbia [Kosovo and Southern Serbia].²⁵

There are many instances in which the textbooks reflect a fear among ethnic Macedonians that they are under pressure from ethnic Albanians. The following quote from the same textbook concerns the status and the rights of Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia: '[...] with the new Constitution [post 2001] of the Republic of Macedonia the rights of minorities were expanded further than prescribed by international standards'.²⁶ Not only does the textbook promote the view that Macedonia's ethnic Albanians are strangers in their home country, but it also defines them as a minority, which goes against the constitutionally defined status of Albanians and other ethnic groups, who represent an 'ethnic community' rather than a minority. The term 'minority' is often interpreted as denoting a second-class citizen status.

Despite these negative representations in the first post-conflict textbooks, evidence of cooperation and joint struggle against common enemies can also be found. Some components of socialist-era textbooks are reintroduced into the most recent set of textbooks. Yet these examples are problematic as the narration is incomplete and the political and social context is missing from accounts of certain events. For example, the anti-fascist partisan movement in the Second World War is described as exclusively Macedonian; one case of an ethnic Albanian joining the anti-fascist struggle is mentioned in a subsection outside the main narrative entitled 'you might find this interesting'.²⁷

We can conclude that any inclusion of Albanian figures is an exception that only serves to confirm certain political myths and to manipulate the national feelings of ethnic Macedonians. The narration of post-conflict textbooks creates a dichotomy of 'bad' versus 'good' Albanians in history; the latter assist in the Macedonian national struggle, while the former fight for Albania. This dichotomy is exploited for political gain in the context of inter-ethnic relations in the country. It has been used anachronistically in recent times to explain a number of contemporary problems, depicting Albanians as a traditionally non-loyal element in society.

My analysis shows that ethnic Albanians are still represented in post-conflict textbooks as aggressors and oppressors. At the same time they are depicted as newcomers to Macedonia, as an ethnic group that is culturally inferior and opposed to modernization.

25 Ristovski et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie* (2009), p. 133.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Conclusion

The image of the Albanian Other in Macedonian history textbooks has continuously altered depending on the political and ideological circumstances of the time in which the textbook appears. The general image of Albanians was relatively neutral, with one or two exceptions, until 1990 and they, like all other Yugoslav peoples, were seen as victims of their neighbours' aggression and the enemies of the socialist movement (the bourgeoisie and fascist regimes). However, the marginalization of Albanians and Albania in history textbooks and the omission of any shared past is indicative of the complex position of the Albanian community in Yugoslav society, including in socialist Macedonia.

During the last decade of the socialist period there is a perceptible increase in nationalist rhetoric employed in the textbooks, and the first negative images of Albanians begin to emerge. The rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia and the escalation of interethnic conflicts in Kosovo are reflected in textbooks published after the breakup of Yugoslavia. The first post-Yugoslav textbooks, published in 1992, and those published in 1995 and 1996, contain extremely negative imagery of Albanians. For the first time the latter are explicitly portrayed as aggressors and oppressors of the Macedonians. These textbooks not only promote stereotypes, but also openly and unambiguously use offensive terms. Although the post-Yugoslav reform of the curricula was actually aiming to de-ideologize history education, it rather only served to strengthen the nationalist narrative, adapting to the new political situation and affecting interethnic relations between Albanians and Macedonians. The curricula reform of 2004 aimed to erase the content that had hitherto promoted stereotypes and prejudices. On the basis of my analysis here, which builds on other scholars' examinations, we may conclude that the reform failed to promote peace education, as the textbooks still contain subtle negative imagery of ethnic Albanians.

These are conclusions that ought to be borne in mind in future textbook revision and in attempts to develop peace education. This analysis also reveals something of the general attitude of policy-makers towards the Albanian community living in the country. As such its results go beyond educational policy; they can be employed in political analysis, as well as in broader analyses of the creation of historical memories and the use of history in Macedonian society, both in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav contexts.

Bibliography

List of Textbooks Cited

- Ačkoska, Violeta, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie [History for grade 7]* (Skopje: Tabernakul, 2005)
- Boškoski, Milan, Jordan Ilioski, and Nebi Derviši, *Istorija za VI Oddelenie [History for grade 6]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2009)
- Dimeski, Jordan and Jovo Kuševski, *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie [History for grade 8]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1982)
- Dinev, Risto, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie [History for grade 7]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1972)
- Dinev, Risto, et al., *Istorija za VII Oddelenie [History for grade 7]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1983)
- Kiselinovski, Stojan, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie [History for grade 8]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1992)
- Panov, Branko, et al., *Istorija za VI Oddelenie [History for grade 6]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2001)
- Ristovski, Blaže et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie [History for grade 8]* (Skopje: Albi, 2009)
- Ristovski Blaže, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie [History for grade 8]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 2009)
- Trajanovski, Aleksandar, *Istorija za VII Oddelenie [History for grade 7]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1997)
- Veljanovski, Novica, et al., *Istorija za VIII Oddelenie [History for grade 8]* (Skopje: Prosvetno Delo, 1995)

Further References

- Deutsche Welle, 'Baranja za povlekuvanje na makedonskata enciklopedija' (22 September 2009).
- Dimou, Augusta, 'Introduction', in *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. by Augusta Dimou, Studien des Georg-Eckert-Instituts zur internationalen Bildungsmedienforschung (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), pp. 7–44.
- European Commission, *Eurobarometer* (May 2015) <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_fact_fyrom_en.pdf> (accessed 23 September 2016).
- European Commission, *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Progress Report* (October 2014) <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-progress-report_en.pdf> (accessed 23 September 2016).
- International Republican Institute, *Macedonians Concerned About Economy, Political Stability; Support for Representative Democracy, Euro-Atlantic Integrations Remain Strong* (June 2015) <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/2015-07-13_survey_of_macedonian_public_opinion_june_6-15_2015.pdf> accessed 23 September 2016.

- Koneska, Cvete, *After Ethnic Conflict: Policy-making in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014).
- Petroska Beska, Violeta et al., *Integralna analiza na učebnicite po isrorija za osnovno obrazovanie* [*Integral Analysis of History Textbooks for Primary School in the Republic of Macedonia*], Analyses in manuscript (Macedonia: Foundation Open Society Macedonia, 2011).
- Pichler, Robert, 'Historiography and the Politics of Education in the Republic of Macedonia', in *'Transition'*, ed. by Augusta Dimou (2009), pp. 217–47.
- Stojanov, Darko, 'In Search of Autochthony: A Case Study of the Great Migrations Period as Presented in History Textbooks in Macedonia', *Der Donauraum*, 50 (3–4) (2010), 225–34.

About the Authors

Durim Abdullahu studied medieval history at the University of Prishtina. He completed his master's degree on the notes of travellers and European missionaries writing for Albania and Albanians from the 19th century to the end of World War II, and is the author of several papers on Albanian-language history textbooks in Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia. He currently works as a journalist at KTV Television (*Kohavision*) as the author and host of two television shows, COSMO and CODEX, in Prishtina, and has written more than forty short television documentaries.

Fabio Bego holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a master's in international relations. He is currently completing a PhD in international studies at Roma Tre University and is a member of the Italian association for the study of Central and Oriental Europe (AISSECO). His interests focus on processes of identity formation in relation to state and institutional transformations. His current research topic critically explores how Albanian activists between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries perceived and related to the Southern Slavs.

Jovan Bliznakovski is a political scientist with research interests in the fields of multicultural policies, identity politics and nationalism. He holds an MSc in political science from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. He is a PhD fellow at the University of Milan and an associate researcher at the Institute for Democracy 'Societas Civilis' (IDSCS) in Skopje.

Konstantinos Giakoumis is Associate Professor at the European University of Tirana. He holds a doctorate in Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies from the University of Birmingham, UK, as well as a Bachelor's degree in education from the University of Athens. Giakoumis has published extensively on the history of the West Balkans from late medieval to early modern times. Since 2014 he has been head of a longitudinal research project on the image of

the 'other' in history textbooks in Albania and the Albanian-speaking West Balkans from the National Awakening Movement to the 2010s.

Iilir Kalemaj is Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Relations at the University of New York, Tirana. He holds a doctorate in international relations and European studies from the Central European University, Budapest. His current research interests lie at the intersection of foreign policy analysis, nationalism and ethnic politics. He is the author of three monographs, of which the most recent, *Contested Borders: Territorialization, National Identity and 'Imagined Geographies' in Albania*, was published by Peter Lang in 2014. Kalemaj has also published several articles in peer-reviewed journals, and regularly writes columns on political matters and the analysis of international affairs in Albania's national and regional press.

Nikolina Kenig is Professor of Psychology at Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje. She received an MA degree in International Peace Studies from the Kroc Institute (University of Notre Dame, USA) and a further MA in Social Psychology from Saints Cyril and Methodius University where she also completed her doctorate. She teaches undergraduate and graduate-level courses in the fields of statistics, psychometrics, research methodology, gender violence, and conflict resolution. Her research interests include ethnic and gender identity, gender-based violence, and multiculturalism.

Gentiana Kera is currently a lecturer at the Department of History of the University of Tirana, Albania. She completed her doctorate at the University of Graz, where she was also a researcher in projects related to Albanian family studies and historical demography. Her fields of interest are the history of the family, urban and social history, and the contemporary history of Albania.

Claudia Lichnofsky works with minor refugees and as a teacher of German as a foreign language in Berlin. She studied political science, education, German as a foreign language and Eastern and South-Eastern European history, gaining her doctorate in history from the Humboldt University of Berlin in 2014 on nation-building and anti-Ziganism in Kosovo. She worked at the University of Giessen as an assistant to the Chair of South-Eastern and Ottoman History for five years before coordinating the project on history textbooks in Albanian and other South-Slavic languages at the Georg Eckert Institute from 2013 to 2015. Before working in academia, she taught extracurricular classes in politics and history to young people, and she also taught German as a foreign language to students, women and the unemployed in Berlin and Novi Sad, Serbia.

Enriketa Pandelejmoni studied history at the University of Tirana and gained her doctorate in South-Eastern European History and Modern History from the University of Graz in 2013. From 2000 to 2007 she worked as researcher at the Center for Southeast European History at the University of Graz, and since 2010 she has been a lecturer at the Department of History at the Faculty of History and Philology of the University of Tirana. She has co-edited the edited volumes *Albania: Family, Society and Culture in the 20th Century* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2012), and *The Call for Freedom. Studies on Totalitarianism and Transition in Albania* (Tirana: Maluka, 2016), and published several journal articles on the modern history of Albania and on gender issues in Albania. Pandelejmoni currently works for *INFORM – Closing the gap between formal and informal institutions in the Balkans*, a project of the EU HORIZON 2020 programme.

Aleksandar Pavlović is a researcher at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade. He obtained his BA and MA from the University of Belgrade, and his PhD in Southeast European Studies from the University of Nottingham. He was a visiting fellow at the Centre for Southeast European Studies in Graz and New Europe College in Bucharest, and a lecturer at the University of Nottingham. He has received several grants and awards for his scholarly and civil work, such as the Civil Society Scholar Award, a research grant from the Scholarship Foundation of the Republic of Austria, a Global Supplementary Grant, and an Overseas Research Students Award for England. In addition to a number of articles in Serbian and English, he has published a book, *Epika i politika* (Belgrade 2014) and co-edited *Rethinking Serbian-Albanian Relations* (Routledge, forthcoming; previously published in Serbian [*Figura neprijatelja: preosmišljavanje srpsko-albanskih odnosa*, Beton/IFDT: 2014] and in Albanian [*Figura e armikut: ripërfytyrimi i marrëdhënieve shqiptaro-serbe*, Prishtina: Qendra Multimedia, 2016]).

Violeta Petroska-Beshka is Professor of Psychology at Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia. She is co-founder and co-director of the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution, a training and research centre dedicated to the improvement of interethnic relations through education. She has worked closely with UNICEF, EU, USAID and other developing partners on internationally funded projects as a leading player in efforts to reform the education system in the country.

Aleksandra Ilić Rajković is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, where she teaches the history of pedagogical ideas, the development of pedagogy in Serbia, and the history of schooling in Serbia. She received her PhD from the University of Belgrade. Her areas of speciality include national edu-

cation, the history of textbooks, and new trends in education. She has published widely on these subjects in academic journals, edited volumes and collections from conferences both in Serbia and on an international level. A revised version of her master's thesis was published with the title *Textbooks and National Education in Serbia, 1878–1918*.

Enis Sulstarova holds a doctorate in sociology from the University of Tirana, a master degree in political science and bachelor degree in sociology from the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. From 2013 to 2015 he was a Marie Curie Fellow at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany. Sulstarova's permanent affiliation is with the Department of Sociology, University of Tirana, Albania. His fields of interests are political sociology, nationalism and identity politics. His publications include several books in Albanian about nationalism, the idea of Europe, and Orientalism in the discourses of Albanian intellectuals in the modern history of the country.

Irena Stefanoska is a historian and classicist at the Institute of National History in Skopje, researching the social history of the Middle Ages as well as modern questions such as nations and nationalism, historical narratives and history education. She obtained her MA degrees at the Central European University, Budapest (1993–1994) and at the University of Belgrade (2001), and her PhD at the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje (2007). From 2009 to 2010 she was a Fulbright scholar at the Brown University, USA. She is currently a Member of Parliament for the Republic of Macedonia.

Darko Stojanov is Assistant Professor at the Institute of National History in Skopje and a visiting researcher at the University of New York, Tirana. He was awarded his doctorate in late ancient and early medieval history from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. His research interests include both late ancient history (great migrations, "barbarians", nomadism) and modern perceptions of the ancient past (historical political myths, history education). His current work is focused on myths of ancient origin in history textbooks of South-Eastern Europe.

Petar Todorov studied history at Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, earned his MA degree in Paris from the *Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS) in 2006 and his doctorate from the University of Skopje in 2013. His research interests focus on social and urban history of the Ottoman Empire and South-Eastern Europe of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He also researches in the field of history education and on the use and abuse of history in

contemporary societies. He has held fellowships and research grants from the University of Vienna, the American Research Center in Sofia, and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. From 2014 until 2016 he was Visiting Professor of Balkan history at Istanbul Şehir University. He currently works at the Institute of National History in Skopje, and is also a visiting researcher at the University of New York, Tirana.

Denis Vuka studied philosophy, education and psychology and gained his Master's degree in history and history didactics from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He has been a doctoral candidate at the Free University of Berlin since 2013, writing his PhD thesis on *Ideology and History Teaching* with a focus on Albania's national history textbooks during the socialist era. He addresses the ideological and political practices affecting the subject of history through his analysis of the visual resources included in texts.

