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TSARIGRAD/ISTANBUL AND THE SPATIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BULGARIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The starting point of the following paper is the question how and why Istanbul, or Tsarigrad, as Bulgarians used to call the capital of Ottoman Turkey in 19th century and later, has been inscribed in different spatial frameworks during the second half of 19th century. My interest is how representations of big cities, i.e. Tsarigrad/Istanbul, participate in the construction of a unified national identity or, to put it another way, how the multiethnic city of convergent cultures has been appropriated in the imaginary geography of the diverging culture of nationalism.

1. Tsarigrad -- "The World Upside-Down"

During the 1860s and 1870s, the largest urban population of Bulgarians was found in Tsarigrad/Istanbul. According to different accounts, during that time around 30,000-40,000 Bulgarians lived -- on a temporary or permanent basis -- in the capital of Ottoman Turkey. The importance of Tsarigrad in the decades preceding the establishment of an independent Bulgarian state was more than economic and social; both before and after the Sultan's 1870 Firman that proclaimed the separation of the Bulgarian Church (called "Exarchate") from the Orthodox Patriarchate in Constantinople, Tsarigrad was the center of the movement for ecclesiastic independence. The struggle for an independent church proved vital for the formation of a new collective identity, providing a sense of common belonging at the abstract level (a brotherhood of all Bulgarians) and concrete level (everyday practices). It could be argued that the independent ecclesiastic organization of the Bulgarian population produced the first detailed mapping of the Bulgarian lands, providing Bulgarians with a nation space. I conceive of "nation space" as a discursively produced entity that combines two spatial frames -- the territory (bounded by clear, institutionalized borders) and the homeland (the spatial framework within which the sense of belonging to "our" space and "our" lands developed).

Paradoxically, while functioning as a center for the Bulgarian national movement, Tsarigrad was represented in the Bulgarian public space for the most part in a negative way. Depictions of Tsarigrad in the writings of the leading figures of the late Bulgarian Revival, such as Hristo Botev (1848-1876), Lyuben Karavelov (1834-1879) and Petko Slaveikov (1827-1895), are dominated by two main figurative strategies:

a) Tsarigrad as an un-homely place, with inhabitants not dwelling but wandering, hiding, shouting, quarreling, displaying riches or poverty, but generally lacking the quality of being proper human beings. This "inhuman" aspect of the inhabitants of the Ottoman capital allegedly issues from their belonging to different ethnic groups and from their broken ties with the "fatherly hearth."

b) Tsarigrad as a heterogeneous space, full of "dark places" haunted by shameful and perverted deeds, and replete of dangerous obstacles to the all-penetrating gaze of ideological discourse.

These figurative strategies draw us closer to the implicit spatial framework of the national ideology. Within them, we can distinguish the following basic

correlative oppositions that construct the positive image of "Us" as different from the "Others" during the late Bulgarian Revival:

Productive Labor		vs.	Non Productive Labor and Idleness
Honesty		vs.	Dishonesty and Hypocrisy
Village	vs.	City	
Monogamy	vs.	Polygamy or Promiscuity	
Order	vs.	Chaos	
Home	vs.	Non-Home	

It should be noted, however, that this type of "divergent" national identity is not reducible to the simple "we vs. they" relation, drawn on purely ethnic grounds. Botev and Karavelov included within the negative half of the paradigm not only the Greeks and Turks -- who were represented as idle, dishonest, and promiscuous city tricksters – but also the leaders of the Bulgarian national movement.

The master signifier of this spatial framework was the home. It could be argued that the operation of national ideology requires a transition from home to homeland as spatial frame of identity. I would like to go further and question the idyllic picture of innocent peasants, loving their native place, upon which Bulgarian ideologues have imposed the artificial map or image of the homeland. To stipulate that national ideology uses and transforms the natural feelings towards the home and native place, projecting them onto the abstract idea of homeland, is only half of the truth. My hypothesis is that national ideology, especially in the case of the Bulgarian Revival, invents not only the homeland, but the home as well, understood as an identity pattern knitting together man and the space in which he dwells.

Thus, in the transition home-homeland we have a discursive technology of double invention, positing the essence of the Bulgarian-ness (or of any other national identity constructed under similar conditions) as intrinsically connected with the home (or "hearth") and the homeland (fatherland) -- two figures, which mutually reinforce and condition each other. This is the framework that persistently represents Tsarigrad as a foreign, un-homely place, the negative other of the true homeland. Tsarigrad was forced from the beginning to participate in the articulation of a normative standard of what Bulgarian(s) should be. The general claim was that the essence of "Bulgarian-ness" is the opposite of that "upside down world" -- Tsarigrad.

> In the Bulgarian prose of the 1860s and 1870s Tsarigrad was depicted as a space of structural homelessness -- a space of houses that do not provide a home for the "true Bulgarian." The impossibility of living a normal life outside "Bulgarian lands" is discussed in one of Karavelov's early short novels, *Turski pasha* (*Turkish Pasha*) (1866). This story focuses on the fate of two Bulgarian children, a boy and a girl, kidnapped and sold as slaves in Tsarigrad. Karavelov tries to persuade his readers that entering Turkish social and family life is devastating for Bulgarians. Once separated from their home, the heroes are doomed: marriage in the foreign environment is no real marriage, the home is a place of estrangement and vice, even the food is different: The Turkish dinner is comprised of sweat things only, of herbs, *pilafs* -- there is nothing spicy, or salty, or bitter. It is not for us, this oily Turkish meal. (Karavelov, *Turkish* 68)

For anyone at least partially familiar with the mixed Balkan cuisine, this statement sounds absurd.

The "unhomely" foreignness of Tsarigrad for Bulgarians is exemplified in a magazine piece entitled "Pisma na edno desetgodishno dete, koeto sega pruv put e doshlo v Tsarigrad" ("Letters of a Ten-Year-Old Boy, Who Travels to Tsarigrad for the First Time"), published by Petko Slaveikov in 1864, at the time of a fierce Bulgarian-Greek dispute. Using an elaborate narrative technique, this text presents

2

Tsarigrad as a strange place with unintelligible, non-natural rules. The narrator addresses this strangeness at the very beginning of the text. The first houses described are Greek, inhabited by creatures that Slaveikov associates systematically with animalistic imagery:

> [T]he mothers are real dried mackerels, while the kids are like thread worms. You can see them in the morning, craning their heads forward from their windows, like thread worms before rain; lanky, disheveled, thin-necked like hounds, if one of these children happened to shout "simitsi," the sound would remind you of a sizzling snail when you roast it in the oven over the coals. (Slaveikov, *Pisma* 126)

The main argument in the alleged "un-homeliness" of Tsarigrad for the Bulgarians is the fact that they are deprived of family life. No Bulgarian women could be seen in the city, proving that the houses in which Bulgarian men lived were not real homes. In the story, the young boy asks his father if there were any Bulgarians who owned houses in Tsarigrad. The answer is "Yes." "But where are their wives?" insists the boy. "Most of them are married to Greek women, that's why no Bulgarian women can be seen there" (p.131). The father's answer elicits again a response of astonishment from the boy: "Strange thing," the boy mutters to himself, "very strange."

Marrying a Greek woman is seen as strange, similar to the other oddities of metropolitan life. We are told that in Tsarigrad fish-mongers offer stinking fish while shouting *taze baluk!* (fresh fish!), that flatterers are your worst enemies, and so on. The disagreement between words and things makes the young boy exclaim:

> I'm sure you've heard in some fairy tales of an upside-down world, where everything goes topsy-turvy. As for Tsarigrad, it may not yet belong in that upside-down world, but it is on its way there. ... [M]ost of the things here, even if not all, are upside down. (Slaveikov, *Pisma* 134)

Romantic oppositions of "nature vs. society" and "city vs. countryside" were commonplace in nineteenth-century popular literature. Sentimentalized romanticism was well-known to Petko Slaveikov. But our concern here is with the way in which the city of Tsarigrad was employed as a repository of images for the negative construction of collective identity; negative in the same way that a photograph is a negative. Tsarigrad was forced to participate in the formation of a normative standard of what Bulgarian(s) should be. The essence of "Bulgarian-ness," Slaveikov claims, is the negative of that "upside down world" -- Tsarigrad.

For Petko Slaveikov, and even more so for Botev and Karavelov, life in the capital city is defined by a most dangerous feature: heterogeneity, "the mixture" of different ethnic groups, of rulers and subjects, of "us" and "them." If we were to sum up the main strategy of Bulgarian literature at that period, an apt definition could be "sentimental separatism."

A poetic emanation of this "sentimental separatism" is the Petko Slaveikov's famous poem "Izvorat na Belonogata" ("The Spring of the White-legged", from 1873). In the main section of the poem, the young and beautiful Bulgarian girl Gergana encounters the *vizier* (the highest Ottoman official), who tries to seduce her with promises of a luxurious life in Tsarigrad. Of course, Gergana politely declines, claiming that she prefers the modest beauties of her small rustic world -- her family, garden, her beloved Nikola, etc. The poem has a much richer texture than this retelling conveys, but nevertheless it could be said that in it Slaveikov succeeds in representing the perfect division between Tsarigrad and the Bulgarian countryside, between palace and home, civilization and patriarchal idyllism. Gergana's words reinforce this figurative contrast:

> Stambul, my Lord, for me
> is there, where I was born,
> and the most beautiful palace
> is my paternal roof. (Slaveikov, *Izvorat* 138)

This passage reverses the figuration of the "upside down world" of Tsarigrad. Stambul is here, and the true, authentic center for Bulgarians should be their native place.

The perception of the Bulgarian Revival in Bulgarian culture is characterized by a tendency to present the process of modernization as "domesticated" within the framework of supposed patriarchal values. According to Ernest Gellner, "nationalism creates the common culture and social homogeneity needed for the complex and constantly changing division of labor in modern societies" (qtd. in Kemper 4). Thus industrialization begets nationalism, and nationalism begets nations, while pretending that nations are old entities with roots in ancient times. Nationalism conceals not only the newness of the nations but also the emergence of mobile individuals within the framework of the homogeneous "high culture." The national ideology presents the nation as "old" and in a similar way insists on the "constancy" of the individual member, while in fact creating conditions for his/her social mobility and flexibility

Where does the need for such dissimulation come from? My hypothesis, based on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, is that modernity changes *habituses* while suggesting (by way of the ideological implications of different discourses) that it actually preserves them. The home becomes master-figure of this dissimulation. The Bulgarian literature of the nineteenth century presents many examples of this specific "economy of images," associating the idealized patriarchal home with qualities like modesty, moral strength, natural simplicity, tender feelings towards the other members of this intimate social circle, etc. The theme of the "misunderstood civilization" was very popular in Bulgarian culture, and it was precisely the home that was depicted as devastated by false westernization. This problem was not limited to Bulgarian society. Serif Mardin has noted similar concerns within the dominant culture of the Ottoman Empire, such as the:

> critical attitude of much of the Ottoman middle- and lower-class population towards the behavior of westernized Tanzimat statesmen. Ottoman grandees who bore the responsibility and risk of initiating new policies also developed Western European patterns of consumption. Crinolines, pianos, dining tables and living-room furniture were new features, which the dominant class soon adopted. These new adornments were often seen as foolish luxuries by the portion of the population that had lived according to the modest standards imposed by traditional values. (Mardin 18)

I want to distinguish here between the social inequities, which the new capitalistic economy introduced, and the ideological use of the experience of these inequities. The intelligentsia made use of the unarticulated discontents of the lower classes towards modernity, translating them into the romantic discourse of the "folk" as an antithesis to corrupt civilizations. This type of discourse had many artistic, philosophical and political results, but it suffices here to say that one of its effects was unfavorable to Tsarigrad.

2. Tsarigrad -- City of Secrets

If the figure of the idyllic home is the cornerstone of the symbolical interpretation of the Bulgarian lands as homeland, then Tsarigrad -- the site of homelessness -- stands as the homeland's symbolic Other. Where Petko Slaveikov, a

leading figure of the Bulgarian community in Tsarigrad, considered the capital as an "upside-down world," and Botev and Karavelov, at the time residing in Romania, viewed Tsarigrad as being at the center of map of dark, "perverted places." This map comprised the whole imaginary territory of Ottoman Turkey. Bulgarian writers depicted harems and coffeehouses, but also monasteries, brothels (brought to life with the progress of the railroads) and even factories as *topoi* of sexual excess and perversion. Tsarigrad, with the Sublime Porte, its palaces, and the Phanar quarter (which became metonymically synonymous with the Holy Synod and the Constantinople Patriarch located there), epitomized the world of human vice.

The spatial modeling of vice in Tsarigrad relied upon two main figures -- the harem and the palace. The harem was an emblematic counterpart to the patriarchal home in the Bulgarian writings of the period. What was perceived as wrong with the harem was not polygamy or lust as such, but its concealed nature. One of the most representative figures of the Enlightenment spirit of the Bulgarian Revival, Hristo Stambolski, explained that what was unacceptable for the "enlightened mind" in the harem was the *separation* of the male and female inhabitants of the home (Stambolski, 635-6). According to Stambolski, such a separation was unknown in Christian homes. And in the poorest of Muslim domiciles this separation of the sexes was purely symbolic, because the actual physical separation of the male and female was restricted due to the size and nature of the modest homes. As a result, poor Muslims forms habits of living more akin to Christians or to their normative idea of equality. The richer the Muslim household, the greater the separation became, such that the wealthiest of Muslims kept women in a separate house. The most extreme case was, of course, the Palace of the Sultan, where the harem took the form of an architectural labyrinth, full of hidden entrances and secret rooms.

Stambolski's criticism focuses on how the separation of the house into a female (*harem*) and male (*selyamluk*) part makes the home uncontrollable. The larger and more convoluted the *harem*, the less the head of the family can control it. Instead of forming a mini-panopticon internalizing the ubiquitous gaze and power of the father, the harem is a "pandemonium" of obscure, dark places where adultery and other lascivious behavior flourishes. As a physician, Stambolski was allowed to enter harems. He was struck by how the lack of transparency concealed excessive sexuality, idleness, and other illegitimate pleasures, such as excessive eating and various forms of entertainment, such as dance performances, gossiping, or readings of fairy tales, adventure novels and romance literature

The most extended depiction of harem life in Bulgarian fiction can be found in Karavelov's short novel *The Turkish Pasha*. The chapter depicting life in a harem starts with a didactic assertion how hatred and revenge are considered to be morally acceptable. In a passage immediately preceding the harem scenes, the main heroine informs us that "In Turkey you cannot think in a French manner" (p.67). According to the narrator, harem life is marked by idleness, gluttony, lust, and maliciousness. In *The Turkish Pasha*, the harem is located, of course, in Tsarigrad. The harems Dr. Stambolski refers to are also the Tsarigrad harems of his medical practice.

The relation between Tsarigrad and the image of the harem is far from arbitrary. In late 19th century Bulgarian literature we find a figurative strategy of what we can describe as "condensation": features identifiable as "Turkish," "Ottoman" or "Greek" are condensed onto a topographic figure linked to Tsarigrad -- be it the Sultan's palaces and harem, the residence of the Greek Patriarchate, or others in the city. Bulgarian literature depicts the most characteristic harems as located in Tsarigrad since that is where the richest Muslims resided. Similarly, the figure of "Phanar" represents a condensation of images of the corruption of Greek

clergy, the Holy Synod and Patriarch. Indeed, "Phanar" became one of the most potent negative ascriptions in the Bulgarian political dictionary from the 1840s to the 1870s.

The same strategy of condensation can be observed in another theme, which was popular in the radical Bulgarian press published outside the Empire –sexual perversion (sodomizing and procuring one's own wife). In journalistic articles of Botev and Karavelov, this topic proved to be a powerful rhetorical weapon. Three important attributes underlie it: first, sexual deviation is regarded as an intrinsic ethnic quality. Second, this behavior is attributed to "non-circumcised Turks" -- i.e., the wealthy Bulgarians viewed as traitors and parasites by the revolutionary ideologues. Third, and most importantly, perversion becomes a marker for "progress" and "reforms" -- notions always placed in quotations by Botev and Karavelov. This represents a significant recoding of pre-modern, archaic prejudice concerning the religious Other. In extremist nationalist writings, bestiality becomes a characteristic of Turkish *reformers*. The prototype of this attitude can be found in Georgi Rakovski's (1821-1867) feuilleton essay, "Pirshestvo na turski velmozhi ("Feast of Turkish Nobles"), published in the brochure *Predvestnik Gorskago putnika* (*Forerunner of the Highlander*; 1856).

The negative depictions of Tsarigrad were part of a discursive practice covering all the larger cities in Ottoman Turkey. Karavelov treated Plovdiv and the lasciviousness of its non-Bulgarian locals in similar ways in his "Zapiski za Bulgaria i za bulgarete" ("Notes on Bulgaria and Bulgarians"). He is not satisfied with merely depicting scenes of lewdness and sodomy (in this case in the coffee-houses); he asserts that the entire Ottoman administration was recruited through "initiation" practices of sodomy. The center of this social prostitution is, of course, Tsarigrad with the Sultan's palace as the central place of initiation, but perversion in Karavelov's view spreads out concentrically over the entire Empire:

> I don't know if there is anything more abominable and disgusting in the whole world than these lewd idiots who sell their bodies to the influential Asian lechers and in this way try to get appointed to high office, while entertaining themselves with *olani* and sodomy in their turn. (Karavelov, *Zapiski* 287)

In his paper, "Plovdiv I dalechnoto. Kam otnoshenieto mezhdu kulturna urbanistika I imaginerna geographiya" ["Plovdiv and the Distant. On the Relation between Urban Studies and Imaginary Geography"], Alexander Kiossev writes:

> The Bulgarian literature of the Revival period generally fails to "grasp" within its imaginary geographies the large multicultural centers of the Ottoman Empire. [...] The city is located inside the territory and at the same time outside it, because it is foreign, mixed, unclean, threatening to "disgrace" the ideal center of the territory: in short, the city is a scandal at the very heart of the ideal territorialization. Where does this fear and disgust come from? (Kiossev 160-161)

It could be argued that a crucial feature of such "dark" places as the harem and the palace is their presumed resistance to the gaze of normative public discourse. What happens "secretly" cannot be legitimized as long as the modern legitimation of power is rooted in public opinion. Legitimation is a crucial issue within the political field -- and the political field is the space wherein national identity is forged. If we accept Benedict Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined political community, then national identity would consist of a sense of belonging to this imagined community, a belonging performed as an involvement in the political field. The struggles within the political field are closely connected with the "right to represent", to speak in the name of something. As Bourdieu points out, however,

there is a "circular relation" between the "representatives" and "the represented." The discourse of the "delegate" actually creates the group it claims to represent:

> A whole series of symbolic effects that are exercised every day in politics rest on this sort of usurpatory ventriloquism, which consists in giving voice to those in whose name one is authorized to speak (Bourdieu 211-12).

In a self-legitimizing gesture, "the right to represent" was appropriated by the Bulgarian intelligentsia of the Revival period in the name of knowledge and progress. Knowledge and progress in modern times, however, require empirical verifiability and transparency:

> This reign of "opinion", so often invoked at that time, represents a mode of operation through which power will be exercised by virtue of the mere fact of things being known and people seen in a sort of immediate, collective and anonymous gaze. A form of power whose main instance is that of opinion will refuse to tolerate areas of darkness. (Foucault 154)

The partitioning of the world into "light" and "dark" zones, "developed" and "underdeveloped" regions, predictable and contingent social orderings, is a product of the normative grid of modernity, organized around the notion of homogeneous, fully observable and controllable space. Quite revealingly, Karavelov equates ignorance (not knowing who you are and what should you do) with sexual promiscuity and dubious liaisons between ethnically different subjects. At the same time, the presence of "dark places" serves as positive feedback for Enlightenment discourse -- these discredited spaces, which are a product of the normalizing power/knowledge, confirm with their presence the legitimacy of that very power/knowledge.

Returning to Bourdieu's notion of the "circular relation" upon which the political field, or the field of representation, is built, we can stipulate that ideal transparency -- the goal of Enlightenment discourse -- actually has to conceal the usurpatory character of symbolic power, making it natural and self-evident. The naturalization of normalizing power leads to the annihilation of representatives or intermediaries. It is not surprising, then, to find radicals like Karavelov and Botev show a passionate dislike for "intermediaries" -- all those "learned men" performing a mediating function between "poor people" and the authorities, or between the "uneducated" and the "scientific." Neither Karavelov nor especially Botev thought of themselves as "representatives." At the center of Botev's poetry we find the heroic, self-sacrificing figure, whose tragic vision transcends the representational relation between people and hero.

In that context homogeneity and transparency proved to be a necessary framework for the nationalist discourse. The city is a "scandal" because its ethnic heterogeneity threatens the legitimacy of the Bulgarian intelligentsia. National ideology is a distinctly modern phenomenon for this very reason: it involves the imposition of Enlightenment techniques for the creation of homogeneous spaces of perfect ordering onto geographical space. Of course, the "ideal" and "real" spaces will never fully coincide, because it is exactly their discrepancy that legitimizes the ideology and makes it work. It is the presence of such an "ideal," "imagined" space as a normative horizon that is most important here. The national identity itself is nothing more than the recognition of this normative horizon.

3. Tsarigrad -- the Political City

In the 1860s and the 1870s, Tsarigrad was the battleground for the Bulgarian-Greek Church dispute. In their struggle for an autonomous Church, Bulgarians had only one ally -- the Ottoman Government, which from the beginning played the role

of a mediator between Bulgarians and the Ecumenical (Constantinople) Patriarchate. The Bulgarian movement for ecclesiastical independence was closely connected to the reformist, modernizing policy of the Sublime Porte. As a legal basis for their demands, Bulgarians used the imperial rescript (*hatt-i-humayun*) of 1839 and especially the decree of 1856, which guaranteed freedom of religion and participation in civil society to non-Muslims. In implementing the 1856 decree, the Ottoman government required all ecclesiastical communities of the Empire to reform their legal and administrative structures in the spirit of Enlightenment. The Bulgarian struggle for an autonomous church hierarchy, separated administratively from the Constantinople Patriarchate, grew stronger. In response to the governmental decree, a Great Church Assembly was held in the Phanar quarter between 1858 and 1860, where all the dioceses of the Constantinople Patriarchate were represented. The claims of the few Bulgarian representatives were discarded as non-canonical and illegitimate. Following the last Assembly where Greeks and Bulgarians would meet as members of one church, the Bulgarians took radical action. During the 1860 Easter Liturgy in the Bulgarian church in Tsarigrad, the Bulgarian bishop Ilarion Makariopolski dared omit the name of the Patriarch. In canonical terms, this was scandalous. In political terms, this "Easter Action" indicated that as a religious community Bulgarians considered themselves as separate from the Constantinople Patriarchate. On a more practical level, this separation was already an established fact. Ten years after the "Easter Action," the Sultan's Firman of 27 February 1870 allowed for the creation of a relatively autonomous Bulgarian Exarchate, which legally formalized the separation of the Bulgarians from the Greek Orthodox Church.

For centuries, the religious communities in *Pax Ottomana* were the beneficiaries of relative autonomy, a kind of self-government in regard to ecclesiastical matters and civic affairs. Bulgarian historiographic literature on this topic claims that Bulgarians had considered the Orthodox Church, dominated by Greek-born clergy, as an oppressor because of its abusive taxes and arbitrary legal judgments. Such policies and reactions were possible in the de-centralized Ottoman Empire of the pre-Tanzimat period. The Tanzimat reforms, initiated with the rescript of 1839, significantly changed the power structure at the local level. What I want to argue is that the "national feeling," objectified in the striving for Church autonomy, was born within these changed conditions of government during the Tanzimat era. The development of a strong central government and elective city councils facilitated the weakening of the economical and political power of large landowners and corporate religious bodies, bringing to life a new type of Bulgarian political intelligentsia. Of course, this process did not proceed smoothly. Wealthy citizens continued to exert strong influence over public matters. Still, with the development of modern civic institutions a new symbolical field appeared -- the question of representativeness (or who should represent the "people") became central to political discourse, and this proved to be crucial in the formation of national identity.

We see a complex interplay between the local and the national in the history of the Bulgarian Church movement. At its inception, it represented a clear case of local struggle against the centralized church authority. During the first half of the nineteenth century local notables could expel a corrupted bishop or even a representative of the Ottoman authorities from their city with a simple petition to the central government. The main task of the rising nationalistic movement was to translate these local struggles into "national" terms and to demand the removal of Greek priests because of their national identity. For this to succeed, at least two things were necessary: First, a public space must exist to enable the vision of a homogeneous "Bulgarian nation." Second, a political center ,must exist to function as

a mediator between local demands and the Ottoman government. The Patriarchate, designated as the "Phanar", had acted for centuries as just such a mediator. But now, the Phanar was to be replaced by a center of "our own." It is not an accident that the Bulgarian municipality in Tsarigrad started to function as such a center; nor is it an accident that most of the Bulgarian newspapers and magazines during the Revival period were published there.

If the political field is indispensable for the elevation of local and personal strategies to a "national" level, then the political engagement of the Tsarigrad Bulgarians with the Ottoman Government was the proper ground for the formation of a national identity. "National self-consciousness" was born in endless negotiations rather than in the legends and folk songs about famous *haiduti*; its birth was marked more with councils' seals than with the blood of the "fighters" and "martyrs." Of course, this kind of "politics" was unacceptable to the revolutionaries Karavelov and Botev, who vehemently contested the centrality of Tsarigrad as the battleground of national consciousness. Characteristically, Karavelov lamented the false "politicization" of Bulgarians, which he thought threatens to make Tsarigrad the symbolical center of Bulgarian public affairs. In his feuilleton essay "Nashite pisateli i zhurnalisti sa bez glavi" ("Our Writers and Journalists are Lacking Heads), he writes: "Our [national] consciousness had left Phanar, moving however not to the Bulgarian hearth, but to the *Babaalie* [The Sublime Porte]" (Karavelov, *Nashite* 179). According to Karavelov, the genuine center of national consciousness should have been neither the Seat of the Patriarchate, nor the residence of the Ottoman Government, but the "hearth," the intimate place of the "Bulgarianness" -- naturally born, not begotten in political negotiations and compromises.

A strikingly different attitude can be found in one of the petitions presented to the Sultan by the Bulgarian representatives in the 1860s:

> With the spiritual state our country finds itself in, it is important that public life should not add to the darkness of ignorance, temptations, and contradictions to which our people are already prey, but rather descend upon people from the luminous heights of government. In short, it is necessary that the government create Bulgaria and not Bulgaria create itself on its own. (Shopov 57)

This statement, most probably written by Stoyan Chomakov (1819-1893), can easily win the title of the "most wrong" pronouncement in the whole history of the Bulgarian Revival. It is "wrong" because it denies the core value of national ideology -- the self-begetting nature of national consciousness. This core value, however, was articulated in public discourse much later, and Chomakov could not have known about it. It was the young Bulgarian state and its intelligentsia that in the 1880s and the 1890s created the myth of the Bulgarian Revival as a heroic movement, rising from the depths of the "Bulgarian people."

As already noted, the Bulgarian "Church question" unfolded in a context of indisputable loyalty to the Ottoman government. An interesting split between "liberals" and "conservatives" did occur, however, and was most clearly visible during the proceedings of the First National Church Assembly in 1871. The focus of the dispute concerned the principle of elected representation and its application to traditional institutions like the Orthodox Church. The Statute of the Exarchate reflects the victory of the "liberals" over the "conservatives" -- even the Exarch was to be elected with a mandate of four years. In her analysis, Zina Markova points out that the Liberal-Conservative dispute in the National Church Assembly was repeated in similar format in the debates over the first constitution of the Bulgarian state during the Foundational Assembly of 1879.

The split between liberals and conservatives had an even more important aspect, however. Most of the liberals, led by Chomakov, were Turkophiles. They argued that the legitimacy of the Bulgarian Exarchate should come entirely from the Ottoman government, while recognition from the Patriarchate was viewed as irrelevant. From a tactical standpoint, the liberals considered cooperation with the secular authorities as far more efficient than negotiations with Phanar. Strategically, the liberals posited the "Church question" in the Tanzimat context of reforms and modernization. While the "conservatives" were trying to legitimize the Bulgarian Exarchate on traditional, historical and canonical grounds, the Liberals argued that legitimacy could only be based on the notion of "progress." The liberal platform was defended most coherently in the newspaper of Nicola Genovich, *Turkey*. Genovich was perhaps the figure most hated by the revolutionary press; Bulgarian journalists and historians readily accepted Botev's verdict on him and his newspaper as "a group of spies." Turkophiles like Genovich regarded the Ottoman Empire as a dynamic mixture of Oriental and Western elements, situating themselves together with the reformist Government on the Western side of "progress" and "development." Muslim and non-Muslim elites thought in modified spatial terms, which viewed the province-center relation as a relation between "belated" and "advanced." This spatial model of modern center vs. pre-modern periphery was adopted by all the national elites within the Empire. Genovich's primary concern was the education and the improvement of the material conditions of the population. The Turkopfiles' progressive discourse assumed the political framework of the Ottoman Empire as an indispensable condition for the implementation of their goals. Ironically, *Turkey* was suspended by the Ottoman government because of a critical article on the Ottoman legal system and practice.

The opposite attitude was taken by the revolutionary movement. We can quote Botev as an emblematic representative of that attitude, which became dominant after the outcome of the Russian-Turkish war in 1877-1878:

> Turkey has no life, no future, it is nothing but a corpse on its death bed. [...] For us the reforms in Turkey, the promises of cultural dualism, are meaningless words, ghosts and utopias that could be implemented somewhere in China or Japan, but not on the Balkan Peninsula between Bulgarians and Turks -- two tribes with opposite features, mores and customs, with opposite outlooks. (Botev, *"Narodat"* ("The People") 38)

What is significant in Botev and other protagonists of the radical nationalist ideology is the naturalization of the Oriental features, incessantly represented as immanent qualities of the Turks. There is something more at stake here. By naturalizing belatedness, Botev reverted back to an archaic, purely spatial strategy of identification. If the Turks have a fixed character, marked by cruelty and parasitism, the argument goes, and if Bulgarians also have a "national character" that has remained unchanged over the centuries, then these two ethnic groups should be thoroughly divided. In this regressive operation that purges the spatial markers of their temporal dimension, the homeland becomes eternal. Botev and Karavelov were allegedly progressivists, but their writings reveal a conservative streak. The strategy of spatialization, with its implied a-historicism, provides a rich store of images that presents national identity and culture as eternal and distinct from other identities and cultures.

There were periods, such as that between 1908-1912, when the Turkophile project was reactivated. Knowledge of the Ottoman Empire's economic importance for Bulgarian goods, accompanied by the intuition that other Balkan states and the Great Powers could not be relied upon for realizing Bulgarian national aspirations,

led politicians and intellectuals back to the Turkophile doctrine of Chomakov. But this reactivation of Turkophilia was no longer connected to Tsarigrad. The Balkan wars, especially the Second Balkan War, which had catastrophic effects upon the young Bulgarian state, put an end to all projects of the nineteenth century. The Exarch was forced to move from Tsarigrad to Sofia and the Exarchate lost forever jurisdiction over the "disputed" dioceses. Fifty years of work went to waste.

Coda. Tsarigrad -- the City of Tricksters

The political discourse erased the heterotopical character of Tsarigrad; struggles and filiations in the political field failed to acknowledge the "other space" of the City of Kings. The total subordination of local identities to the national one, which accompanied the subordination of different places to the homogeneous territory of the imaginary "homeland," proved unfavorable to Tsarigrad. The reformist, liberal and Turkophile project centered on Tsarigrad failed for other reasons.

There was another Tsarigrad, however; it was not that of Phanar, the Sublime Porte or *Orta-keui*, but of labyrinthine lanes, secret entrances, and underground hiding places. This image of the city has been used as setting for adventure narratives like those in the popular novel *Mysteries of Constantinople* of Clavdius de Montain (translated by Petko Slaveikov in 1869) or Svetoslav Milarov's *Spomeni ot Tsarigradskite tamnitsi* (*Memoirs from Tsarigrad Prisons*). Tsarigrad features in these fictional works as a place symbolizing mobility -- mobility in a sense of sudden changes and unpredictable reversals between success and failure, freedom and imprisonment, love and death. In contrast to the pastoral-patriarchal images of the "homeland" in the literature of that period, this Tsarigrad could be called the "city of tricksters."

There were two attitudes toward this "city of tricksters." The moralistic stance scorned Tsarigrad, and the whole set of images and values connected with it, regarding them as a deviation from common sense and reason. There was another, more "romantic" position, however, which sought in the extraordinary and sublime of the city an alternative to daily routine. The heroes of Milarov's book (which is called a "memoir" but consists mainly of adventure novellas) are driven by passions, which transgress the limitations of everyday life. This ambiguous position, mixing moral disgust and aesthetic fascination, will mark the Bulgarian attitude to urban life for decades to come. Tsarigrad was the first "real" city to which these representational strategies were applied.

It should be noted that in Bulgarian literature the tricksters inhabiting Tsarigrad are usually those that received the "wrong" education. The theme of "misunderstood civilization" had an interesting offshoot here, which dealt with those young people who educated themselves in a way that made them "inadequate" for Bulgarian conditions. "Inadequate" here meant not fitting the agrarian mode of life and its pastoral fictional representation. An example of this can be found in Karavelov's short story, "Otivat pateta, a se vrashtat kato gaski" ("They Leave as Ducklings, but Return as Geese"). The main protagonist, a father who complains about the "educated ones," including his sons, tells us why he expelled his offspring after they had proven totally inadequate and disrespectful:

> [T]hen my flower-of-a son went to Tsarigrad to saunter around the streets and castrate dogs. ... As for the younger one, he wasted some two hundred thousand *grosha* and went to Tsarigrad, too, to write some books. Be damned with their books and their Europe, hell fall on their heads! (Karavelov, *Ducklings* 335)

"To castrate dogs" is not just a figure of speech, but an idiom still used in some Bulgarian villages, meaning "to do nothing, to indulge in idleness." This idiom possibly originates from the time when the reformist Ottoman government was trying to get rid of the Tsarigrad dogs -- a theme that inspired Botev in one of his most caustic anti-Turkish articles. What is important here is not the history of the idiom, but that of equating "castrating dogs" (i.e., doing nothing) with "writing books". This is the story of the cultural appropriation of Bulgaria's modernization. The nineteenth century was the century of progress, during which Bulgaria's nationalist youth was obsessed with the idea of change. At the same time, however, progress almost always turned out to be "wrong", "misunderstood", "false", etc. This paradox can be explained by the fact that the public discourse of the late Revival period tried to reconcile progress (i.e., the change) with *habitus* (i.e., constancy). The discourse operative with Tsarigrad was an important part of that story; a story without end.

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