

Balázs Trencsényi, Márton Zászkaliczky (eds.), *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe*, Brill, 2010, pp. viii 784, €129.00, ISBN 9789004182622

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This collection is the fruit of the collaboration between various scholars within the framework of an international research project entitled “The Intellectual History of Patriotism and the Legacy of Composite States in East Central Europe”, coordinated by Balázs Trencsényi. The aim of the project, as the co-editors of the volume write, was to “critically reconsider some of the common presumptions concerning patriotism and proto-nationalism and analyze the complex process of formation, reception and transmission of early modern discourses of collective identity in a regional context” (p.3). In accordance with this aim, the single articles in the volume challenge both the classical view, according to which patriotism and its correlative nationalism are phenomena that one can meaningfully talk about only from the late eighteenth century onwards (ibid.), and contemporary studies on early modern patriotic discourses, which fail to include eastern Europe within their scope (the authors specifically refer to “*Patria*” und “*Patrioten*” vor dem *Patriotismus. Pflichte, Rechte, Glauben und die Rekonfigurierung europäischer Gemeinwesen im 17. Jahrhundert* edited by Robert von Friedeburg). The volume thus makes an important contribution to the research into a chronological and geographical sector of the history of political ideas that until very recently has been almost completely neglected.

The volume contains an introduction by the co-editors Balázs Trencsényi and Márton Zászkaliczky, twenty-five chapters and an afterword by Robert John Weston Evans.

The preface outlines the historiographical parameters for the following chapters and provides short summaries of them. It opens with an overview of the main ideological concepts and narrative models which had been elaborated in the western European context and which were available to east-central European patriotic writers. As stated by the co-editors of the volume, the development of

patriotic and proto-nationalist discourses in east-central Europe followed the western pattern (p.45). The book is in actual fact structured according to the conceptual framework expounded in this first part of the introduction.

Co-editors Trencsényi and Zászkaliczky also devote a few pages to a methodological discussion in order to bring to the reader's attention the historiographical principles applied in the preparation of the volume. The principle that I believe should be most acclaimed, and to which I personally ascribe the achievement of the volume, is the effort to "recontextualize from a *comparative perspective*" classical texts of particular national patriotic traditions, texts that until recently have only been "studied from the *linear perspective* of the "formation" of modern nationhood", and to explore their "common European cultural references" (p.52, my italics). In accordance with this principle, the single chapters follow the common interpretative vein of the volume and argue non-traditional readings of such classical texts and new interpretations to famous, in some cases emblematic, historical facts and events.

The twenty-five chapters are chronologically and thematically organized into four parts. Part I, "Humanist Visions of the Patria" (chapters 1-8), examines late Renaissance and early modern developments of east-central European political thought, which were conditioned by the political ideas of Renaissance Humanism. In this section, there are studies on the spread of Humanism in terms of literary style and, later, of political theory in the Hungarian free cities (Farkas Gábor Kiss), on the introduction of Erasmian biblical Humanism into Hungary with regard to the formation of a "national Humanism" in the Hungarian language (Pál Ács), and on the construction of the "barbarian" image of the Wallachs (proto-Romanians) as "others" in the context of Transylvania's early modern history (Gábor Almási). Articles by Lovro Kunčević, Domagoj Madunić and Zrinka Blažević focus on Southern Slavs' discourses of identity, such as civic patriotism in Renaissance Ragusa and the complex ideological paradigm of early modern Illyrism. In the last two chapters, Lucie Storchová examines how sixteenth-century Humanist texts were "re-written" and repeatedly recycled by the modern Czech national movement, while for her part Anna Grześkowiak-Krwawicz gives an overview of the history

of the political use of concepts such as ‘citizen’, ‘fatherland’ and ‘patriotism’ in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Parts II and III cover the “long seventeenth century”, arguably extended to include the last decades of the preceding century and the first decades of the following one.

Part II (chapters 9-15) is entitled “The Politics of the Estates and the Love of Fatherland”. It opens with an investigation into how corporate ideas and Humanist political theory merged in the late sixteenth-century Hungarian version of nation and patria (Benedek Varga). Kees Tszelszky and Hanna Orsolya Vincze focus on Hungarian political discourses in the first half of the seventeenth century. While the former traces signs of the changing political situation in a contemporary chronicle, the latter analyses the two languages of patriotism (pious patriotism and a neo-Stoic one) in use in the 1640s. Two competing, yet on some occasions collaborative, types of patriotic discourse are also analyzed in a chapter by Sándor Bene: the “patriotisms” of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli (1658-1730) and of Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1652-1713). The chapter by Peter Maťa concentrates on the political struggle within the Bohemian ruling elite in the second half of the seventeenth century and the role patriotic reasoning played in it. The last two chapters of Part II both concern the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Stanisław Roszak describes the changing forms of patriotic discourse in the Commonwealth during the early modern period, and Ursula Augustyniak offers a discussion on patriotic feelings manifested by those Polish patriots who did not belong to the “political nation”, i.e. the nobility, but were townsmen and soldiers.

Part III (chapters 16-20), probably the most speculative one, is dedicated to the theme of “Political Theology and Discourses of Identity” and treats the role of religious identity and a theological type of argumentation in the elaboration of certain political speeches. In this context, Vladimír Urbánek presents his research into the different theological models adopted by exiled Protestant Bohemian and Moravian authors between the 1620s and 1640s. The following three contributions all concern Hungary; of them the second and the third are more strictly case studies. Balázs Trencsényi carries out a survey of early modern Hungarian texts

with respect to the use of the “providential scheme” as a “metahistorical” tool for the establishment of religious and political allegiances. An account of Imre Thököly’s exile written by János Komáromi, Thököly’s most faithful servant, is examined in an article by Zsombor Tóth in order to show its dependence on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Protestant and Calvinist homiletic tradition. Finally, Regina Pörtner seeks to illustrate the conflict between universal mission and nascent national sentiments which put the unity of the Jesuits’ Austro-Hungarian province to the test during the seventeenth century.

The chapter by Alexander Nikolov is the most problematic one in this volume or, as Prof. Evans puts it, is “the one more exotic contribution to this collection, hardly relating directly to east-central Europe at all” (p.767). Nikolov focuses on Paisij Hilendarski’s *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya* (“Slavo-Bulgarian History”, completed about 1761-1762), a crucial text for the process of the construction of a Bulgarian national identity. The aim of the article is explicitly worded as “to seek the domestic sources of Paisij’s nationalist fervor” (p. 612), that is to say, to search for medieval Slavonic sources which show patriotic and “proto-national” motifs. Notwithstanding this explicit definition of his aim, the author does not explain exactly which ideas were transmitted in Paisij’s chronicle and in which way, being content to state: “As for how he came to his knowledge of the medieval Bulgarian past, Paisij was well educated in the Old Church Slavonic tradition [...]” (p.622).

Part IV, “Enlightenment Modalities of Patriotism” (chapters 21-25), considers eighteenth-century developments of patriotic discourses. Teodora Shek Brnardić explores the different forms of enlightened patriotism that coexisted under the Habsburg Monarchy in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763), and Borbála Zsuzsanna Török’s essay deals with the “scientific turn” in the passion for the fatherland in late eighteenth-century Transylvania and the presumed “modernizing potential” of such a patriotism. The last three chapters are all connected with one of the most dramatic events in east-central European politics in the eighteenth century: the three consecutive partitions and the final abolition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In their contributions, both Arkadiusz Michał Stasiak and Teresa Kostkiewiczowa trace the

transformations in the meaning of patriotism in Poland in the period between the 1730s and 1790s. In the last chapter, Miloš Rezník examines the type of patriotism and patriotic program developed by the Galician nobility, set out in the famous *Charta Leopoldina* (1790).

Taken as a whole, the collection affords a comprehensive, multifaceted picture of the patriotic discourses in early modern east-central Europe and enables the reader to grasp the interconnections and the exchanges of ideas between processes occurring simultaneously in different countries. However illuminating or innovative the single chapters in this volume may be, its most valuable contribution is, in my opinion, that it gathers together all these case studies, the outcomes of research on the functioning, historical development and regional adaptations of concepts and many different stimulating interpretations of historical processes and events, thus offering both a meaningful contextualisation and a comparative perspective for any future investigation into the subject.

Bibliography

Robert von Friedeburg (ed.), *“Patria” und “Patrioten” vor dem Patriotismus. Pflichten, Rechte, Glauben und die Rekonfigurierung europäischer Gemeinwesen im 17. Jahrhundert*, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005.