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CONCEPTS IN SOCIOCULTURAL SPACE

THE BALKANS AND THE CAUCASUS IN FOCUS

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The World Through the Prism of Language: Noun Categorization Devices and the Ecology of Language

Santa Rosa, Amazonia   Santa Terezinha, Amazonia   Avatip, Papua New Guinea

Every language bears an imprint of the society of its speakers – their beliefs and ways of viewing the world, habitat, subsistence, and physical environment. Many aspects of the grammar of each language will relate to – and will be integrated with – the meanings and the choices which reflect societal practices. These relationships are reflected in the concept of Language Ecology introduced and defined by Einar Haugen (1972) as 'the study of interactions between any given language and its environment', further developed within the framework of the integration of language ad society (Aikhenvald, Dixon, and Jarkey 2021). Language ecology focuses on a number of aspects of language, including the ways in which social factors affect the form and the use of language, and linguistic variation, and spanning various subfields of linguistics. Some parts of a language are particularly reflective of language ecology. Noun categorization devices are a case in point. Further categories which can be considered beacons of language ecology include the expression of possession, and evidentials – obligatory markers of information source.

Gender and classifiers as noun categorization devices classify referents in terms of basic cognitively salient parameters — humanness, animacy, sex, shape, direction and orientation, consistency, and function. The choice of gender and classifiers tends to relate to cultural conventions and to the environment. Their meanings may reflect the societal status of a person and their perceived value. Classifiers in possessive constructions may have terms for domesticated animals or plants, reflecting speakers' livelihoods. Languages spoken in riverine environments will be likely to have a special classifier for 'canoe'. Rather than categorizing entities in terms of general features, classifiers with specific meanings — and limited applicability —highlight items important for the socio-cultural environment of the speakers and their means of subsistence. Introduction of new objects and new concepts results in semantic extensions of existing terms and even the emergence of new classifiers. A specific classifier is likely to be lost, if a practice or a societal hierarchy it reflects undergoes attrition.

Specific classifiers can be seen as linguistic correlates to focal points in the socio-cultural and physical environment: they categorise the unique world of each group of speakers. This is in contrast to classifiers whose choice is based on universal and general properties — including animacy, shape, form, and consistency — which reflect pan-human perceptual categories. Classifiers based on general properties offer a window into the general workings of people's minds. Specific and unique classifiers offer a snapshot of people's ways of life and their predilections. I focus on the dynamics of language ecology reflected in noun categorization in the first place, with a focus on a selection of minority languages and my own fieldwork.

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Reconsidering Dimitar Matov's Late Romanticism of Greek-Bulgarian Studies in the Light of Cognitive Sociolinguistics

The study of Greek-Bulgarian language contact has a relatively long history. Among this type of comparative analyses from the end of the 19th century, the work of D. Matov, which has a programmatic character, stands out (Matov 1893). It is obvious that a very large-scale project was conceived, which was even to develop as an academic school in the following decades, however, the early death of the author was a great loss for Balkanology, as was noted even then by a number of his contemporaries. He was educated in city of Kharkov, and his analyses reflect the level of late 19th-century linguistic scholarship, as they focus mainly on word etymology and historical reconstructions in the tradition of Franz Miklosić, August Leskien, Gustav Weigand and Vatroslav Jagić.

The new reading proposed here, takes a cue from Matov's work to seek a new understanding of some mental patterns that are inevitably encountered in comparative linguistic studies. The methods of cognitive linguistics today are significantly different from the linguistics of the 19th century; therefore, the task proposed here is aimed at revealing some common or distinctive semantic concepts, both lexical and grammatical, to draw an integrative binary model of language contact. Next step of such cognitive sociolinguistic approach is to include this schematic description in P. Auer's well-known classical European Typological sociolinguistic model (Auer 2005). In this way, both the differences and similarities in the connotations, in the metaphors, as well as in the figurative language in general stand out. Although the examples in this work are selective and by no means exhaustive, it is hypothesized that a particular culture and mentality is involved. Special attention is paid to the deictic elements in both languages – personal, reflexive and demonstrative pronouns, small particles and semantics of basic verbs. The loss of the infinitive in Greek and Bulgarian presents parallel historical path, which in many ways is shared (cf. Joseph 2000). Lexical material provides significant number of common keywords and similar or matching metaphors. It is obvious that the terms have been used since the time of the medieval Greek-Bulgarian language contacts. Translations of religious texts, biographical literature, parables, as well as secular works provide a basis for building hypotheses about linguistic unity and grammatical and lexical proximity. It is indisputable that the penetration of linguistic elements, even including grammatical rules, takes place both through written and oral communication. Of course, the research also encounters asymmetries, false friends of the translator, and words with ambiguous or 'fuzzy' meaning (Janicki 2008), and such examples are no less interesting objects of observation, and some of them are also discussed here. The common spiritual culture of Greeks and Bulgarians was built not over decades, but over centuries, and therefore the terminology, both at the highest sacred level and at the level of everyday life, which contains many superstitions and taboos, outlines a very active and continued exchange of linguistic and behavioral patterns.

Although both Indo-European languages have structural differences, their common grammatical features are defined as Balkanisms (Assenova 2002). Even Matov reveals striking grammatical unity, and according to him, however, the loanwords in the lexicon (like noun "hora", verbs "mirisha", "mjazam", "navaksam" etc.) are no less important. If this study of D. Matov has weak points, they are rather related to some interpretations of historical and ethnographic facts, although the author strives for objectivity in this part as well. The task of this new reading is far from the interpretation of facts from history or even the discovery of historical regularities in language. The proposed analyses offer a logical rethinking of historical lexicology in the paradigm of cognitive models, semantic relations, and the mental lexicon.

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Ups And Down: The History of Elevational Marking in East Caucasian

Elevation is a prominent category in the grammar of East Caucasian languages, contrasting with its near absence in the grammar of surrounding Turkic or Iranian languages. It is usually marked on adverbs and demonstratives, and some branches have elevational morphology on verbs, as prefixes, and on nouns as parts of complex spatial cases. Two distinct but adjacent branches also have deictic copulas which include elevational meaning. One subbranch has all these devices, while other branches and languages have lower density of elevational marking, with geographic clines suggesting that elevational marking tends to cluster both genetically and areally. Our paper will first give a broad overview of elevational markers across branches and assess the possible relatedness of those meaning 'up' and 'down' with the concrete case markers 'on' and 'under', which reconstruct for all but one branch (Nakh).

We will then show that synchronically horizontal systems often contain traces of elevational systems as found in related languages, suggesting that elevation was lost at some stage in various single languages and one branch characterized by a more peripheral geographic or sociolinguistic situation.

Finally, we will present branch-level or language-specific cases in which elevational markers have become grammaticalized in culturally relevant contexts, conveying social hierarchies, etiquette, and the encoding of communicative acts.

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Legal Authority, Legal Pluralism and Legal Culture: A theoretical proposal for a comparative approach with reference to customary laws among Albanians

This presentation aims to give an insight into a larger project I am developing in comparative legal anthropology. More specifically, the concept of "legal authority" articulated in anthropological theory is addressed. The definition of legal authority reviewed here was proposed decades ago by Leopold Pospisil, whose research can be regarded as one of the most solid in the field of comparative legal anthropology. His approach takes legal authority to be an individual or group of individuals who are known for their power to induce the law. Legal authority is only one of four attributes that a social phenomenon must have in order to be considered law. The other attributes of *law* are 1.) The intention of universal application 2.) *obligatio*, 3.) sanction.

In his subsequent work, Pospisil considered law from a universal perspective and strove to promote the following observations. First, there is no society without law and the Western *primitive-modern* dichotomy does not help to understand the universalities of law. Second, law (*jus*) represents the norms that are applied to solve practical problems rather than simply abstract concepts of norms (*leges*). Third, laws can be authoritative or customary. The application of the first premise is mostly based on fear, the second on a feeling of guilt. Customary norms can be transformed into authoritative norms and vice versa. Furthermore, norms can also change from living practices to fossils. Fourth, there are as many legal systems as there are groups and subgroups in a society. These observations laid the foundation for legal pluralism, which together with subsequent critical approaches (Griffiths, 1986, 1998; Moore, 2000; Goodale, 2013, etc.) represents one of the main lines of thought in contemporary legal anthropology today.

Inasmuch as the existence of two or more legal systems is accepted theoretically, duality or plurality of 'legal authority' exists as well. Different legal authorities may be in opposition to one another, but they can also be negotiated and integrated within another superimposed system. This sphere of exchange, negotiation, and conflict for legitimacy and implementation is fundamental to our project that aims to understand: a) the political and legal culture around legitimacy of legal authority, b) the social production of conflict between different legal authorities, and c) legal culture itself.

The ethnographic and historical data that will be used as instructive case in this talk are those on customary law among the Albanians that bear on these aspects of legal authority. The data encompasses the late 19th century up to the present day. They include previously unpublished data, hitherto unattracted data, as well as materials gathered in my fieldwork.

During the presentation, the nature and cultural meaning of the legal authority in Albanian customary law, imagined or real, will be identified, focusing on their role in

the creation and then in the implementation of the law, as well as the links between the legal authorities and the main precepts of the legal system. Furthermore, some notes on the nature of legal pluralities and the possibilities and impossibilities of comparing legal cultures in different societies will be outlined.

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Cultural and Religious Codes of Identity Formation in the Balkans and Caucasus.
Byzantine and Ottoman Imperial Legacies Embraced and Rejected

The space of Anatolia and the Balkans was centre of at least two empires from the Late Antiquity on. These are the Roman/Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Both of them are strongly interrelated and shared partially common heritage despite having been essentially Christian and Islamic. Balkans and Caucasus, perceived as cultural entities, are situated geographically at both edges – Eastern and Western – of the above mentioned "imperial area". Encompassing different peoples, Christian and Muslim, they were strongly influenced by Byzantines and by Ottomans via different ways, to varying degrees and with diverse results. Of course, the different peoples of both regions had different opinions about the "imperial legacies".
The Byzantine as well as the Ottoman legacy was during the history embraced or rejected by diverse reasons. In this paper I would like only to launch some topics of reflection on the imperial legacy and the reasons to embrace or to reject it. The Byzantine or Ottoman legacy could be welcome or banned mostly by religious, but also by national, cultural, or other concrete reasons. I shall try briefly to follow a part of them, but the main question is if they embrace or reject the imperial, i. e. "universal", heritage of the empires. So, have the cases of embracement or rejection a signification of opposition particularism vs. universalism. In case of positive answer, we could ask if there is a difference of the "legacy" or "affiliation" during different époques from the Middle Ages on.

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Semantic and Cognitive Transfer

1. The Linguistic Transmission Hypothesis – This presentation reviews the evidence in support of the Linguistic Transmission Hypothesis (LTH; Bohnemeyer et al. 2015) in the domain of spatial frames of reference. The LTH states that (i) practices of nonverbal cognition are transmitted and diffused via observable carrier behaviors from which they can be inferred; consequently, (ii) language contact may facilitate the diffusion of such practices across populations. What makes language a particularly powerful conduit of cognitive transfer is its extraordinary versatility as a representational engine, the frequency with which we use it, and the fact that it is itself a (socially shared) cognitive system (unlike, say, ritual or agricultural practices).
2. Linguistic evidence – Bohnemeyer et al. (2015) show that speakers of eight indigenous languages of the Mesoamerican linguistic area and adjacent regions use 'relative' frames of reference (egocentric frames that project the speaker's/observer's body coordinates onto another entity) the more frequently in their first languages, the more frequently they use Spanish as a second language, suggesting that Spanish serves as a conduit for the transmission of relative frame use. Lin (2022) finds a similar effect in Taiwan: bilingual speakers of Taiwanese Min Nan use relative frames significantly more frequently than monolingual Min Nan speakers, but significantly less frequently than monolingual speakers of Taiwanese Mandarin. Bohnemeyer et al. (in prep.) provide additional evidence from Vietnam, where the frequency of use of English as a second language significantly predicts relative frame use in a predominantly geocentric population.
3. Nonverbal cognition: alignment and mismatches – A long line of studies has reported that a population's practices for reference frame use in discourse tend to align with its practices in recall memory and inferences (Bohnemeyer et al. 2014, in prep., and references therein). Together with the evidence for linguistic transfer and the direct role of language as a predictor in models of recall memory data (Bohnemeyer et al. 2014, in prep.), this alignment pattern represents the empirical basis of the LTH. However, a recent meta-analysis (Bohnemeyer et al. 2022) found

a striking exception to this alignment pattern: populations that show no clear linguistic bias in favor of a particular extrinsic (i.e., egocentric or geocentric) frame type universally prefer geocentric solutions in nonlinguistic tasks.

4. Areality and evolution – Bohnemeyer et al. (in prep) hypothesize that humanity is in the midst of an ongoing worldwide shift away from a preference for allocentric reference frames and toward egocentric ones. They draw on three sources of evidence: typological distributions, developmental data (Haun et al. 2006; Nardini et al. 2006; Shusterman & Li 2016), and the misalignment pattern reported by Bohnemeyer et al. (2022). On this hypothesis, the prevalence of geocentrism throughout Mesoamerica, reported as a possible areal phenomenon in Donelson et al. (2012), turns out to be the result of a universal tendency instead.

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Size matters? How Size Affects Gender Assignment in East Caucasian

Kibrik et al. (1977) suggests that in Archi, Lezgic, assignment of nouns to the non-human genders 3 and 4 is at least partly based on referent size. The idea has been echoed in Corbett (1991) and Corbett & Fedden (2018) who suggest, more specifically, that, in Archi, big entities are assigned to Gender 3. For Lak, another East Caucasian language, in his discussion of the reconstruction of the proto-Lak gender assignment, Zhirkov (1955) proposes that historically Gender 3 was assigned to all animals, natural phenomena, round-shaped and also large objects. To our knowledge, for other Lezgic languages that are genealogically related to Archi and show a similar four-way classification (i.e. have two non-human genders in addition to feminine and masculine), no such effects have been reported. It is a priori unclear whether this is because size effects in these languages are weaker or absent altogether. The aim of this talk is to statistically test the hypothesis of the effect of size on gender assignment for Lak, Archi, Rutul, Tsakhur, Kryz, Budukh and Khinalug. What we want to see is whether Archi is indeed so different in this respect from its sister Lezgic languages, and whether it is similar to Lak, its more distant cousin and neighbor.

We start with a theoretical discussion that helps us to put forward a falsifiable hypothesis. We argue that three different types of size effects can be expected, including absolute size effects observed in the lexicon at large (as formulated by Corbett and Zhirkov), categorial size effects observed within specific conceptual domain (such as animals, as argued by Kibrik) and, finally, flexible gender assignment based on referent being conspicuously smaller or larger than expectations (see e.g. Aikhenvald 2012, Di Garbo 2014), the latter functionally akin to diminutives and augmentatives.

Next, we will propose a method to detect such effects in a statistically meaningful way. Unlike categories of shape ('is.round') or kind (e.g. 'is.human'), size is not based on a (nearly) categorical judgment, but is a relational scalar category based on judgments like 'is.bigger' or 'is.smaller'. It is not immediately clear how to manually annotate referent size or establish thresholds for entities to be judged big or small in an absolute way. We build several datasets based on our own experimental data and the data from McRae et al. (2005) and Binder et al. (2016). To test for correlations between being small and Gender 4 and being large and Gender 3, we mapped

the concepts of the datasets onto nominal vocabularies of the four languages. We conclude by suggesting that our methodology (including our datasets themselves) allows checking for size effects not only in the seven languages in the analysis, but also, in principle, for any language.

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Discourse Phenomena Channel the Diffusion of Grammatical Phenomena: The Case of Wishes and Optatives

Optatives express a wish or a hope of the speaker that something would happen. Cf. an example from Mehweb (Nakh-Daghestanian): qu b-alq-a-b field N-grow.IPFV-IRR-OPT 'May the field grow!'

Inflectional optatives are present in almost all languages that belong to different families of the Caucasus (Nakh-Daghestanian, West Caucasian and South Caucasian), and also in Caucasian Turkic (Kumyk and Nogai) and Indo-European (Tat) languages (Dobrushina 2021). Remarkably, in a long discussion of the Caucasus as a linguistic area, optatives have not been mentioned (Klimov 1986, Tuite 1999, Alekseev 2005, Chirikba 2008), although there are no linguistic phenomena shared by all indigenous families of the Caucasus apart from ejective consonants and ergative alignment. In Daghestan, Russia's most multilingual republic, optatives bear apparent features of areal spread. They are found in the whole area including genealogically unrelated languages; they may use old (non-analyzable) and new (transparent) marking within the same family and even branch; one language can have several optatives with the same function. Meanwhile, inflectional optatives are cross-linguistically infrequent (as was shown in WALS - Dobrushina et al. 2013), which decreases the chances of their independent development.

At the same time, there seem not to be many cases of material borrowing or cognacy in the domain of optative markers: the development of new markers is an independent process within each branch and sometimes within individual language. It can also be noted that wishes can be expressed by other means beyond inflectional optatives, and several competing strategies often coexist in the language.

High diffusibility of the optative and abundance of other wish expressions points to a special scenario of language contact. I believe that inflectional optatives are an inherited feature of Nakh-Daghestanian languages, whose maintenance and diffusion is supported by the discourse practice of blessings and curses, thus showcasing the link between structural linguistic phenomena and cultural environment. In this talk I will show that blessings and curses are very prominent in Daghestanian speech communities, and their cultural importance might be the reason for the representation of the optatives in the languages of the area.

In this study, together with the spread of the optatives, I also consider the spread of wish formulas (such as Have a nice trip!) across Daghestan, thus contributing to the study of the interaction of language and culture through discourse practices. I will aim at comparing the mechanisms of spread of morphological affixes and discourse formulas in order to answer the following questions:

Are the areas of diffusion of grammatical (optatives) and discourse formulas (wish expressions) the same or different?

To what extent their diffusion correlates with genealogical boundaries, and are optatives and wish expressions similar in this respect?

Are the linguistic mechanisms of diffusion of optatives and wishes the same in terms of matter and pattern borrowings?

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Network Ecologies, Flow Regimes, and the Textured Dynamics of Language

The multilingual village of Poung, in the Nakai Nam-Theun Watershed, central Laos, catchment area of the NT2 hydropower megadam project.

Networks and their properties have long been implicated in our understandings of the dynamics of language contact and change, from Bloomfield to Milroy and beyond. I argue that the concept of "network" has been overly restricted to social networks and their properties (e.g., personal distance, co-identity, etc.). These networks are important but they are only a subset of the networks that matter in the causal processes that underlie language contact and change. I advance the view that our conception of "network" in thinking about language must be broadened to include all distributional infrastructures that impact the transmission of language in populations. This transmission occurs in the context of massive systems of uneven flow, where the tentacle tips of these sprawling systems are human social interactions. Each system— including natural infrastructures such as river drainage systems and technological infrastructures such as road transport systems—has its own internal set of interacting flow regimes, and in turn there are interactions across and between infrastructures and other networks that play a role in the dynamics of language.

Here I present a network ecology model in which the mechanisms and outcomes of language contact are outcomes of complex interactions among flow regimes in ontologically diverse networks. Distributional networks of very different kinds interact in ways that can accelerate, dampen, or reshape the flow of language and languages.

I present findings of long-term field research in upland central Laos, examining the rapidly-changing dynamics of language among multilingual Indigenous communities in the upper reaches of the massive Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Project. The paper uses a study of language and social change in this hydropower project area to develop a conception of infrastructures as horizon-exceeding distributional networks. Language is one such infrastructure. The paper distinguishes infrastructures at three main, inter-articulated levels: natural, technological, and institutional. The conception of language as an infrastructure helps to understand its spatialized dynamics; it adds language as a new empirical domain to the literature on infrastructure, and at the same time it broadens our understanding of the kinds of network that are relevant to language.

Focusing on sudden language shift in the context of new transport infrastructure, I develop a conception of nested infrastructures that captures the notion of distributional flow at multiple levels, from natural forces to built networks to the circulation of communicative norms and social encounters. In this case study, we focus on two defined flow-regime dynamics: (1) flow piracy (intercepting flows and transforming them for new purposes) and (2) percolation (the denuding of networks and their subsequent critical reconfigurations).

This offers a new perspective on the relation between networks and language in the context of complex ecologies of flow.

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At the Crossroads of Occident and Orient: What is on and in the Hinuq Heart?

Magomed Dandilaw, A Hinuq story teller

All human beings share a similarly structured body, similar needs connected to this body and comparable (sensorimotor) experiences of the human body, and this universality probably explains the many similarities that we find in linguistic expressions involving body parts and organs. At the same time, human cultures and languages show a huge range of variation and thus we find numerous cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences. This makes body part expressions a fruitful domain for discussions about the interplay of the universal cognitive basis and the highly diverse sociocultural embeddedness of languages (e.g. Sharifian et al. 2008). Among the most ubiquitously employed metaphors are probably heart expressions.

The aim of my presentation is a comprehensive analysis of heart expressions in Hinuq, by which I refer to the idioms and collocations with the noun rok'ʷe that refer to positive and negative emotions, and volition (1), to character traits (2) and to certain types of cognitive activities, mainly those connected to memory (3).

(1) hało   uži-š   rok'ʷe   k'oλ-o   iduddo   ijo-obu-λ'o-r
     this.OBL boy-GEN   heart   run-PRS   home   mother-father-SPR-LAT
     'The boy wants to see his parents at home.' (lit. the boy's heart runs home onto his parents)

(2) mihna-s   (r-iłi)   rok'e
     bird-GEN   V-similar   heart(V)
     'happy heart/person' (lit. bird's like heart)

(3) ce   rok'-λ'o   gom   diž   hawsaʕat
     name   heart-SPR   be.NEG   I.DAT   now
     'I do not remember the name now.' (lit. not on my heart)

The noun *rok'e* is a cultural key word in Hinuq; there are more than 80 heart expressions used by Hinuq speakers. No other body part term or the like is used with such a high frequency and regularity in everyday speech, in idioms and in traditional sayings. Its figurative usage far surpasses its literal usage. Data for this paper comes from my own fieldwork in the village of Hinuq

In this paper I will show that heart expressions in Hinuq are not a chaotic assemblage of lexical items but that they form a system or network and are structured by general cognitive principles like conceptual metaphors and metonymies, and that they are embedded into a local sociocultural context in the form of cultural models. I will also analyze the morphosyntactic properties of *heart* expressions and show how they employ certain case suffixes to mark different grammatical functions and thus convey different meanings. Finally, I will embed Hinuq heart expressions and the underlying cultural modal into an areal and cross-linguistic perspective and explore them with respect to the certain types of dualisms (HEART vs. MIND/BODY/SOUL). In particular I will explore the impact of contact languages such as Turkic (Baş 2017), Persian (Sharifian 2008) and Arabic (Maalej 2008). My investigation is based on lexicon and grammar, in particular on data collected during field work among the Hinuq people, and on printed sources, such as the Hinuq-Russian dictionary by Khalilov & Isakov (2005). I thus combine a lexical approach with a corpus approach because context plays an important role for the investigation of figurative language.

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Comparing the Balkans and the Caucasus: Sprachbunds, Restricted Coherences, Differential Bindings, Accretion, and Spread

Albania (Melan)   Daghestan (Inkuchimakhi)

This year (2023) marks the 100th anniversary of Trubetzkoy's (1923) introduction of the Russian term *jazykovoj sojuz*, which he translated into German as *Sprachbund* at the First International Congress of Linguists in 1928 (Trubetzkoy 1930). This paper follows Friedman and Joseph (2017, 2023) and treats *sprachbund* as a nativized loanword from German, like gestalt or pretzel, with a plural *sprachbunds*. The Balkan languages were Trubetzkoy's original example of a *sprachbund*, which he defined as: *"Groups comprising languages that display a great similarity with respect to syntax, that show a similarity in the principles of morphological structure, and that offer a large number of common culture words, and often also other similarities in the structure of the sound system, but at the same time have no regular sound correspondences, no agreement in the phonological form of morphological elements, and no common basic vocabulary…"*
Friedman & Joseph (2017, 2023) have suggested a significant modification to the feature of vocabulary, namely what they call ERIC (Essentially Rooted In Conversation) loans, which are loans arising from sustained, intense, intimate contact among speakers, with multilateral, multigenerational, mutual, multilingualism. Such vocabulary goes beyond culture words and includes items such as discourse particles, kinship terms, etc. Friedman & Joseph also observe that Trubetzkoy's "similarities in the structure of the sound system" only characterize Balkan languages at local levels of dialect

contact rather than across the sprachbund, and one can speak of Balkan phonologies — with various centers of contact induced effects — rather than Balkan phonology. By contrast, for the Caucasus as a larger area, the main structural effects appear to be phonological, and these show a center-periphery type spread (Grawunder 2017). Tuite (1999) argued convincingly against ergativity as a Caucasianism (pace Chirikba 2008, although some of his other observations may be worth pursuing). However, for culture words, the Islamic influence of Turkic and Arabo-Persian lexicon is a binding factor in both the Balkans, the Caucasus, and beyond (Friedman 2012, cf. also Džidalaev 1982, 1985). In comparing the Caucasus to the Balkans, Hamp's (1989) *restricted coherences and differential bindings* are useful concepts. In addition to the phonologies noted above, the area around Lakes Ohrid, Prespa, and Kastoria (Macedonian Kostur) shows a significant concentration of contact induced changes in dialects representing all six of the Balkan linguistic groups, while North Albanian (Geg) is much less of a participant. Still, even Geg shows more Balkanisms in some subregions than in others. Meglenoromanian is another specific contact zone and is reminiscent of the situation for Archi described by Authier (forthcoming). In line with Hamp's distinctions, Caucasus contain numerous smaller contact zones such Zaqatala/Saingilo, the mountains of Georgia bordering on Daghestan and Chechnya, and the Transcaucasian region insofar as it participates in Stilo's (2018) Araxes sprachbund. Nichols (2015) distinguishes mountain from lowland spread zones using the Caucasus and the Pannonian plain, respectively, among her examples. The Balkans represent a complexity for this typology, as the combination of mountain ranges (which are only half as tall as the Caucasus), river valleys, and fertile plains has seen both an accretion of linguistic complexity but also spreads that have eliminated remnants, e.g., all the languages preceding various Indo-European migrations into the region. Another difference between the two regions is that many villages in the Balkans are or were multi-ethnic (Kănčov 1900) rather than the mono-ethnic norm of the Caucasus, and, moreover multilingualism, while sometimes gendered (Récatas 1934), as in, e.g., Daghestan (Dobrushina, Kozhukhar & Moroz 2018), tended to be multilateral rather than vertical (Nichols 2015), although social factors did place some limits in both regions. This paper will elaborate on these and other factors, including religion, in constructing a useful model for comparing the Balkans and the Caucasus.

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Processes and dynamics of ethnic identity and attitude formation among Islamized Macedonians and Georgians in their homelands and Turkey. Comparisons and categorizations from ethnological-social psychological perspectives

The centuries-long rule and the social, religious and consequently cultural influence of the Ottomans in South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus brought about long-term developments that resulted in increased diversity in the emergence of religious, ethnic and (sub-)national groups. These processes have had a lasting influence on the formation of identities and minorities as well as the multifaceted characteristics of these groups in these regions and in Anatolia as a geographical-historical-cultural bridge between the Balkans and the Caucasus. The phenomena of the Islamised Georgians and Macedonians, which have not yet been examined in a comparative way, prove to be particularly informative and interesting. Although these two groups are more than 1,500 kilometres apart, they show many structural parallels in their genesis as well as in the developments, characteristic features and group-internal differentiations of their religious, cultural, ethnic and national identities and their self-assignments and assignments to others with regard to the question of their positioning as social minorities in the context of the various social and political embeddings of their respective current home states since the emergence of modern nation-building processesin the 19th century until today.

The constantly changing historical, political and social environments, preconditions and conditions under regionally divergent, shifting state-system and national-ideological paradigms come to light in such concepts as "Islamic religion", "mother tongue", "national versus cultural identity" and "ethnic and religious mimicry versus flexibility". Here, the aspect of the cognitive causes of these processualities in the respective members of the individual "groups" plays a very important role.

In this context, an extraordinarily wide range of different and partly contradictory, multiply differentiated but also similar attitudes, flexible and ever-changing identity formation processes and attitudes can be observed among the groups in Southeast Europe, the Caucasus and modern Turkey.

In the following study, the various ethno-religious, social and political identities and attitudes (including the minority aspect) and the flexible processuality of these among the Islamised Georgians and Macedonians in their Balkan and Caucasian homelands and in Turkey will be analytically recorded, categorically presented and compared with one another. Based on this, these phenomena, which can be traced back to individual and collective cognitive processes in the "group members", are classified, interpreted and analysed on the basis of various social-psychological and thereby behaviourist and not biologically oriented theories and findings on psychological minority, ethnicity, identity and group formation research (see e.g. Hutnik 1991, Simpson & Yinger 1965, Tajfel 1982, Verkuyten 2018), and commonalities and differences are presented and brought into a context.

The cognitive aspects or reasons of processual adaptation and flexibility as a reaction to social, cultural, economic and political conditions, changes, necessities and threats as well as the question of the balance between 1. the struggle for self-assertion, 2. strategic adaptation, 3. social and cultural mimicry and 4. stronger assimilatory adaptation play an important role. In other words, it will be worked out under which different historical, cultural, political and social conditions these groups develop into ethnic and national identities and minorities and which different variants can emerge within groups for cognitive reasons.

The main sources are numerous data obtained through interviews and participatory

observations and, secondarily, information from the specialist literature. These are analysed, classified and evaluated under the main focus of cognitive processes and causes for the formation of multifaceted and variable identities and attitudes as well as the role of the divergent weighting factors.

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The Application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the Balkans and the Caucasus Region

Between 1991 (*Poland*) and 2007 (*Montenegro*) most successor states of *Yugoslavia*, the Soviet Union and its European allied states became members of the *Council of Europe*. The *Russian Federation* joined in 1992 but was excluded in 2022 because of the war in Ukraine. One of the conditions of accession was the implementation of the Council of Europe's minority protection instruments, i.e., the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM) and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ECRML). While the FCNM has been signed by 41/42 and ratified by 39 of the 46/47 member states, the ECRML has been ratified by 25 member states with nine more, among them the Russian Federation, having signed it. To inform states about the possibility and benefits of ratification, the ECRML developed and published guidance, so to speak, in this regard in collaboration with the *European Centre for Minority Issues* (Chylinski & Hofmannová 2011). Additionally, the ECRML offers the possibility of so-called promotion events in countries that have committed themselves to ratify the Charter or expressed their interest in doing so.

In the Balkans, or rather South-Eastern Europe five countries – *Albania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Greece*, and *Turkey* have not ratified the ECRML, however, in three of them – *Albania, Bulgaria*, and *North Macedonia* – the FCNM regularly monitors the minority language situation. In 2019 a promotion event in Albania suggested the ratification of the ECRML for *Bosnian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Romani*, and *Serbian/Montenegrin*. With 17 languages under Charter protection in Romania and 15 in Serbia, the countries with the highest numbers of regional or minority languages so far are in the Balkans. Due to the ethnolinguistic situation in the region, the Charter also changed from a primarily cultural agreement to protect Europe's traditional linguistic diversity to a politically (mis)used instrument.

All countries of the Caucasus region – *Armenia, Azerbaijan*, *Georgia*, and the *Russian Federation* – have ratified the FCNM, while the ECRML is only valid in Armenia. Between 2009 and 2012, the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Russian Federation implemented a joint programme which aimed, among others, at assisting the future ratification of the ECRML. During the programme, the application and monitoring of the ECRML has been simulated in pilot regions, for example in the *Republic of Dagestan*. The project resulted in a draft ratification instrument listing, among others, the 22 regional languages of the *Republics of Adygea, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachay-Cherkessia,* and *North Ossetia* (see Kozhemyakov & Sokolovskiy 2012). Following a promotional event in *Georgia* in 2013 the *Council of Europe* (2016) published a short description of 14 prospective regional or minority languages of the country.

The mainly descriptive talk presents the ratification situation in the two regions, analyses its consequences for minority languages and summarises the latest monitoring results. This should lay the foundation for a discussion on the relevance of the *Council of Europe's* minority protection instruments for research.

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Getting into the Serbian National Propaganda in the Ottoman Empire: Fluid Identities and "Imperial Biographies"

In the 19th-century nationalist movements and nation-state irredentistic politics politicized the ethnic composition of societies. But the interaction of target societies with this new conceptualization reveals both national and transnational, crossnational, supranational, and even antinational details (tim Buchen 2015). The perception and application of the concept of nationality by individuals and its

diffusion into society brings a new perspective to the history of national movements. The main subject of this study is the perception of Ottoman society (*Reaya*) in Ottoman Kosovo and Macedonia after 1878, which was targeted by the propaganda activities of the Serbian State. The sources of this study are the letters written by Slavic and Muslim-Turkish names to the Political-Educational Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbia (Političko-Prosvetno Odelenje Ministarstva Inostranih Dela) and to the Saint Sava Society (Društvo Sveti Sava). What did the authors of these letters expect from the Serbian ministry and the Saint Sava Society? How did they perceive the Serbian national concept? In this way, it aims to refer protean and diverse structures of national movements, which were perceived as homogeneous, but were not built on pure national feelings.

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Letters from Archive of Serbia (Arhiv Srbije, Beograd)

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The Role of Meaning in Language Contact – The Case of the Balkans

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Language contact effects are pervasive and can be found in all structural domains of grammar, especially phonology, morphol¬ogy, and syntax. The validity of this observation is evident in numerous studies of language contact from all parts of the globe, but it is especially so in cases of sprachbunds, where there is convergence along various dimensions among several languages — minimally two but typically far more — based on *Multi-lateral Multi-generational Mutual Multilingualism*, the "FOUR-M" model of Friedman & Joseph 2023, as posited for the Balkans.

This observation in itself is interesting since the focal point in any linguistic contact, whether between speakers of different languages or between speakers of different dialects, is not structure per se, but is rather the conveyance of meaning, the carrying out of an act of communication. The predominance of lexical borrowing in contact situations does in fact speak to the importance of conveying meaning; after all,

without knowing what individual words in an utterance mean, it is hard to have a clear idea of what the utterance itself means. Nonetheless, other than extensive studies to be found of loanwords, the role of meaning in linguistic contact remains under-examined.

With a focus on the Balkan sprachbund, encompassing Albanian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Judezmo, Macedonian, Meglenoromanian, Romani, Romanian, Torlak Serbian, and West Rumelian Turkish, my aim here is to discuss the ways in which considerations of meaning emerge as playing a key role in language contact. Meaning here is construed in a broad sense, taking in lexical semantics, i.e., the range of meanings found with individual words, including calques; extended meanings, i.e., typically involving metaphor; idiomatic and phraseological convergence, including proverbs, traditional sayings, greetings and related formulaic utterances; speaker expressiveness, i.e., affective and emotive meanings; and pragmatics, i.e., the interpretation of utterances in context.

In this survey of such semantic parallelism, I draw on various treatments of shared proverbial sayings (Djamo-Diaconiţa 1968, Ikonomov 1968), discussions of isosemy among expressions in different languages in contact (Sandfeld 1930, Haugen 1950, Newton 1962, Tannen & Öztek 1977, Feuillet 2012, Kyriazis 2012, Bortone 2010, among others), and the important observation in Weinreich 1965 that multilingualism expands a speaker's expressive range. Moreover, by examining cases where the lexical items and other elements involved in such semantic parallelism are at least somewhat grammatical in nature, as with the convergence seen in the Balkans of locatival 'where' and directive 'whither', e.g. Greek πού ~ Macedonian *kade* 'in which place? to which place?', or with the complex uses of verbal forms expressing nonconfirmativity (Friedman 2000), we gain some insight into the mechanisms of grammatical convergence through an consideration of lexical and semantic convergence. Thus, exploring semantic dimensions to conceptual convergence in Balkan sociocultural space provides important perspectives on grammar in contact.

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Areal Typology of Lexico-Semantics

© Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm

Contact lexico-semantics and areal lexico-semantics (Ameka & Wilkins 1996, Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Liljegren 2017, Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Schapper & Ameka (eds.) 2022) are concerned with the diffusion of semantic features across language boundaries rather than with lexical borrowing. Lexico-semantic phenomena have, with a few exceptions (e.g., Matisoff 2004, Enfield 2003, Smith-Stark 1994, Hayward 1991, 2000, Sobolev 2001), received remarkably little attention from areal linguistics and areal typology, as opposed to morpho-syntactic and phonological features and to loanwords, and not much is known about the geographical variation they display. As outlined in Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Liljegren (2017), at least the following groups of lexico-semantic phenomena may serve as indicators of areality:

– lexico-semantic parallels – shared colexification patterns and/or shared lexico-constructional patterns/calques, such as the colexification of 'fruit' and 'child' or 'fruit' being expressed as 'child of tree' across many West African languages, both cases involving a semantic association between 'child' and 'fruit'

– shared formulaic expressions, such as the farewell expressions au revoir (French), auf Wiedersehen (German), *på återseende* (Swedish), *do svidanija* (Russian) and *näkemiin* (Finnish), which follow the same model across a number of European languages

– area-specific lexicalizations and a shared or similar-looking internal organization of certain semantic domains, such as a highly specialized vocabulary describing dairy practices and dairy products across the languages of the Greater Hindu Kush (Koptjevskaja-Tamm and Liljegren 2017: 218).

The fact that the lexico-semantic patterns are often closely tied to cultural patterns suggests that they can be useful as a barometer of innovation and diffusion in cultural practice. The possibility of using lexico-semantic patterns to track deep time connections between groups and to establish new areas has also been put forward.

In my talk I will focus on various approaches to the study of areal patterns in lexico-semantics. Among other things, I will discuss to what extent cross-linguistic lexical databases can be used to gain a better understanding of global patterns of lexical organization and of their areal distributions (following Gast & Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2018, 2022).

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IRMA KREITEN
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Dreamscapes and Imperial Borderlands: Inculcating "Russian" Identities into Northern Caucasus through Theme Parks

Theme parks in the Russian Federation are a relatively recent development. Russian officials treat them as "objects of desire" and endow them with a competitive element; they are meant to offer original "Russian" versions of preceding US models. "Russian disneylands" also comment directly or in implicit ways on the RF's position with regard to its "subaltern" or non-Russian populations. Anchored in broader popular culture, they work through double colonial difference, which is a by-effect of the post-/Soviet realm constituting a "second-rate empire" (Tlostanova 2015).

Theme parks can be understood as a genre of landscape design and as such they are artificial arrangements by which social and individual identities are produced. They constitute both real places and simulacra and their double existence as material-semiotic practices offers itself as a rewarding prism for sociocultural analysis (Mitchell 2002; Niewöhner 2015). Regime-friendly circles regard them as expedient machines for cultivating those identities and community values commended by the Russian state as well as solicited conceptions of space.

If ideologies are "in space, and of it", constructed space also encodes the dark underside of social existence; it "wreaks repression and terror even though it may be strewn with ostensible signs of […] contentment, amusement or delight […]" (Lefebvre 1991). The Black Sea coast, after the annihilation of part of the indigenous people, was rewritten as a destination for holidays and leisure or heterotopia (Foucault 2004); it now boasts some of largest theme parks in Russian Federation. By making use of Agamben's (2005) notion of "space of exception" and Diken and Laustsen's (2004) elaborations on vacational camps as places for transgressions (liminal experiences) and excess, it will be shown how theme parks at the geographical margins of the ex-Soviet realm build on an intricate interrelation between (hegemonial) jouissance and violent repression. Russian imperialism here succeeds in harnessing a distinctive brand – V. Surkov's brainchild – of postmodernism and propounds conservative values in playful or also deliberately ambivalent modes and with ample references to international pop culture (Anisimova 2018).

The first theme park in Northern Caucasus prominently offers dark theming – elaborating on the uncanny vs. identity and the familiar. Neighboring peoples were portrayed as dangerous, coarse humans in the course of Russian colonization and Othering provided a basis for the destruction of pre-existing social orders. I will focus on zombies as examples for colonial metaphors which also divulge the ambivalences and instability of colonial discourse. Uncanny figures and monsters form part of negotiating resemblance and alterity and thus the "dreamwork" of imperialism; they reveal fault-lines in colonial culture which expects the colonized to emulate the white overlords, but not become "quite" like them (Bhabha 1984). The rhizomatic proliferation of meaning makes it potentially unfeasible to predetermine how e.g., cross-medium installations will be received and thus offers apertures for subversive developments.

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Conceptualizing the Own and the Foreign in Oral Idioms across the Balkans

© Katja Ackermann

Fieldtrips in Kosova, Albania and Northwestern Greece

The world view in any culture possesses a range of categories allocating all humankind a particular position along the axis of 'own' vs. 'foreign' – crucial antithetic notions in the conceptualization of the social environment. The "space" in-between of both poles, hence, encompassing all those neither belonging to the inner circle of a community nor to total strangers, is shared by all "others" who might be further subdivided in closer and farther circles. However, the boundaries separating groups of people of different status (i.e., the circles of various radius with respect to the own community) could be fluid and to a certain extent permeable, which is a matter of each particular cultural context. The degree of permeability is described by the categories *openness* vs. *closeness* of a social community towards "others".

The realization of the conceptual axis 'own' vs. 'foreign' is one of the central topics in linguistic anthropology. It enables deep insights into the dynamics and the driving forces of social interaction. The latter has already been in focus of scientific enquiry into the Balkans, however, in completely different socio-ecological settings.

In recent years, there has been an intense discourse on the view upon and the concept of the Balkans from the outside, which (as often happens) is tainted with stereotypes. The Balkans allegedly serve as a projection surface for the attribution of negative characteristics. In the heated discussions, however, this opinion was put into perspective by also exploring and analyzing the internal view, which itself is very multifaceted and equally also afflicted with stereotypes. While this debate on a macro level counterposes mostly Europe vs. the Balkans, the question of the internal reciprocal counter-perspectives and their conceptualizations, on the other hand, largely remains unknown and in fact unnoticed.

In our talk we provide a preliminary report from a pilot investigation through fieldwork and archive studies in various sociocultural settings at the Balkans aiming to reveal these counter-perspectives and approach the understanding of their immediate contextual motivation. At a further stage we are interested in a systematic analysis of conceptual patterns employed in naming along the axis "own" – "foreign".

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Cognitive Approach to Spatial Organization of Quarantine in 19th Century Serbia – Case of Removing Multicultural Boundaries

In the 19th century Serbia is in a scintillating position on the Balkan peninsula. It is a part of the Ottoman Empire while gaining autonomy during 1830s. Serbia, within the territory of the Principality of Serbia, obtains the right to introduce its own laws, including quarantine and border control laws. The border is a place where people meet and exchange goods, but due to the fear of the plague as well as enemies, the border becomes a place where multiculturality is erased and the border is limited to a small quarantined space. During these times the Principality of Serbia bordered the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Wallachia and Moldavia. In this paper we study the documents connected to the customs, border meetings and quarantine. The Corpus is taken from the Collection of Laws and Decrees (1840, 1845, 1847). The Serbian border law is heavily influenced by border and health laws from

the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially the laws from the 18th century (Ilić 1971; Petaković 1971).

The state of the border is shaped via economic, political and medical discourses. The decrees that deal with the customs are concrete and plain and often refer to a specific (referable) place. The lexemes used in these decrees revolve around money and goods which implicates that there was active trade on the border, primarily during times of peace. The longest document with the subject matter of borders is the Quarantine Decree introduced in 1841 during the short reign of Mihailo Obrenović. Fear of the plague is the main component that influences the structure of the text and the linguistic elements that define the quarantine. One can note that any references to time are unspecific, and there are no direct references to concrete physical space either, hence these remain indistinct as well. In these documents, the lexical expressions could be referring to any place on the border and any in-between place on the territory of the Principality of Serbia. In this fashion the continuity of the physical space is broken and the quarantine space becomes a separate entity, existing outside of the external world.

On the surface level, the descriptive style dominates and includes the description of how police officials need to behave while on border duty. However, there is also a deeper undertone of the text dominated by fear. In the beginning of the text, there is a recommendation that the quarantine should be established on a healthy place near water. Physically the quarantine is divided into two parts, and the division is directly influenced by the fear of the plague. The quarantine is divided into two clear cut parts: the exposed part (unsanitary, unclean) and the unexposed part (sanitary, clean). People who are in quarantine, regardless of other personal characteristics, are separated into those who are sanitary and unsanitary, whereby the second group is almost always layered with demonic connotations. Between these two places a sturdy fence was erected with an exceptionally thick door which furthermore enhanced the fear of mingling. This division is transferred to other segments of the space (two gardens, rooms are divided into two, meeting places are held between two partitions). This spatial division is mirrored in the temporal division; thus, we have the contrast between secure (unsuspicious) and dangerous (suspicious) time. The temporal division is linked with the spatial division, which can be seen in how border control calculated how far the plague was from the Turkish border. Lexical expressions that describe space are not referential and are reduced to deictic expressions that are linked to this side (something belonging to this side) and that side (something belonging to that side). In this way the non-referential nature of places is achieved, which enables the laws and decrees to be applied to any border area in Serbia. However, outside of the context of these laws, the non-referentiality encompasses the whole country into the quarantine space, where simultaneously the things that are in the country (on this side) and things that are outside of the country (on that side) exist, while a constant tacit fear of mingling permeates. There are only a few references to concrete places and in these instances, Serbia is viewed as the European part of Turkey. The only place that indicates that there has been contact is in the goods register which includes goods from faraway lands as well as exotic goods, which further implicates that there has been contact between the two parties.

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TERRY REGIER
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Semantic Categories, Culture, and Efficient Communication

Why do languages have the semantic categories they do? I will review recent and ongoing computational work that addresses this question. Specific issues to be addressed include efficient communication, cultural communicative need, and the evolution of semantic systems. A general theme will be that approaching these sometimes contested questions in computational terms has the potential to resolve some of the tension that surrounds them.

OLIVER REISNER
Jean Monnet Chair, Ilia State University, Tiflis

Localizing Culture between Black Sea and Caucasus Mountains – Negotiating the Soviet Concept of Kraevedenie at the Batumi conference in 1925

Based on Jörn Rüsen's disciplinary matrix of history and Ludwik Fleck's concept of "thinking collectives" I will discuss the ways Soviet power tried to integrate the South Western Caucasus in regional local studies conferences (kraevedenie) of which the first one was conducted 1924 in Sokhum(i), Abkhaziia, the second one and topic of my paper took place 1925 in Batumi, Adjara and the third one on Turkic people of the Caucasus in Baku in 1927. Relying on archival materials from the Archive of the Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara on the conference in 1925 I will do a close analysis of the interactions between political and academic actors among the participants in a remote, mainly Muslim environment, and analyze their contributions to this conference, the discursive frames that they are applying. The conference provides us with a unique insight into the relations between the central Soviet authorities from Moscow, the republican authorities from Tbilisi and representatives of other Caucasian administrative entities as well as scholars of different national backgrounds. As a result, I hope to demonstrate different strategies of accommodation with the new Soviet power and their impact on academic knowledge production.

KEVIN TUITE
Université de Montréal

"Maniaques de la taxinomie": Sacred and Ritual Space among the Svans of Northwestern Georgia

© N. Tserediani

Lat'ali women presenting offerings at the site Samt'äiši Lamãria festival of Hǝliš, 7 June 2015)

In a 1987 essay on vernacular religion in the Caucasus, Georges Charachidzé referred to the Svans of northwestern Georgia as "maniaques de la taxinomie". The choice of this extraordinary label was inspired by the evidence, discussed in the essay in question, that the Svans had appropriated the structural principles of the Indo-Iranian pantheon, most probably from the medieval Alans, and then elaborated and refined them in their own religious practice. At the time, I found Charachidzé's characterization rather exaggerated, but since the late 1980s my own study of Svan vernacular religion has convinced me that the Svans, if not quite "maniaques de la taxinomie", at least had an exceptional gift for thinking through and expanding upon the principles underpinning their relation to the supernatural domains of the "gods" (*yertäl*), harmful spirits, and the dead.

The focus of my presentation will be the system of ritual and sacred spaces observed in the Upper Svanetian commune of Lat'ali, where I have conducted fieldwork since 2005. The Lat'ali vernacular religious calendar comprises no fewer than 75 feast-days and observances, of eight major types — four presided by men, and four by women — each of which takes place in a particular type of space. Furthermore, domestic rituals, and most of those performed by women, are accompanied by restrictions on sensory contact with outsiders or people of the other gender. Such rituals take place behind shuttered windows or at remote outdoor sites, and measures are taken to ensure that participants and excluded individuals cannot hear each other's voices. The notion of space, therefore, is to be defined in terms of exclusion as well as inclusion, and exclusion in terms of sensory access as well as physical presence.

In my presentation, I will summarize the principal features of Svan vernacular religion, including the various types of supernatural beings to which prayers and offerings are addressed; the categories of offerings (sacrificed animals, breads of a variety of forms and ingredients, and home-distilled alcohol); notions of purity and impurity; and the roles of women and men. I will also situate the Svan religious system with respect to the various forms of folk Christianity attested in Georgia and neighboring areas, and also the distinct "pagan" religions — with their own religious buildings and castes of religious specialists — of the northeastern Georgian highlands and Abkhazia.

The ritual and sacred spaces of Lat'ali commune will be described and classified according to their parameters of contrast (interior/exterior; public/private; female- or male-presided; purpose of ritual; deity invoked; and whether the site itself is considered sacred, or has been chosen as a ritual venue for other reasons). The spaces include (i) gendered sites within the home, centered on the hearth and the eastern window of the main room; (ii) work places, such as grain-storage areas in the home, threshing-grounds, fields and pastures; (iii) Orthodox churches (and their ruins); (iv) side-buildings attached to churches, known as *ladbäš* or *lamãria*; (v) women's outdoor ritual sites; (v) consecrated land-plots, which are believed to have been "staked out" (*lǝcxät'*) by one of the principal deities. An attempt will be made to identify the models upon which the complex Svan system of sacred and ritual spaces was elaborated, including the layout of the church building and its associated lands, and also the historical and social contexts in which it is likely to have emerged. The talk will

conclude with a brief look at the vernacular religious practice, and the use of ritual sites, in present-day Svaneti, in the context of a resurgent Georgian Orthodox Church, and a local economy increasingly dependent on tourism.

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SUREN ZOLYAN
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The History of Modern Armenia through its Political Symbolism[1]

1. In our presentation we intend to address the semiotic evidence of conceptual shifts in the most influent discursive practices within a political and sociocultural framework of modern Armenia. The political history of independent Armenia is expressed through dominant political symbols and concepts, with a heterogeneous mixture of mythological symbols, mythologized ancient history, Soviet and anti-Soviet ideologies. Attempts to create new symbols or re-interpret old ones led to significant transformations in the main discursive practices, which could form the foundation for the legitimization of the Armenian political identity. (These

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shifts are partially addressed in: Abrahamyan 2006; Goltz 2005; Hofmann 2011; Panossian 2006; Rutland 1994; Zolyan 2005, 2016).

2. Armenia proclaimed its independence in a complex political and ideological context. At that time, the main political objectives and discourses were concentrated on a struggle for Karabakh and the fight against communism. Meanwhile, the founding of an independent state assumes its ideological justification and symbolic representation. This process was accompanied by intense competition between the three main discourses, representing the new status: a) as an unprecedented new reality of (the creation of the nation); b) as restoration of historical justice and return to the normal state of affairs, which was violated by Bolsheviks (the restoration of the Republic of Armenia of 1918 – 1920); c) as a transformation from a semi-independent union republic into an independent state. Thus arose the name never used before: "Second Republic."

3. The dominant concept in Armenian historiography of the regularly lost and then heroically restored statehood has got its manifestation, and this made it possible even to find the exact arithmetic expression for the new reality: the Third Republic implies the existence of it's not only the First but also the Second predecessors. Despite their inconsistency, all three of these concepts were recognized by the state and society, creating a bizarre system of state symbols. The Republic of Armenia is simultaneously considered a legal successor of Soviet Armenia. However, it has inherited the state symbols of the Republic of 1918 - 1920, but at the same time, the main national holiday is Independence Day, the last day of Soviet Armenia.

4. With the legitimization of the Armenian SSR as a "second republic," regarded as a transitional step to the "new" Armenia, the situation was changing: independence became understood as an increase in the degree of state sovereignty. Previous collisions after the collapse of the USSR lost their relevance. In the discourse formed earlier in the context of the conflict with the USSR, everything associated with the Soviet/Communist regime was subject to elimination. Then it has become possible to accept the "Soviet Armenia" but without the "communist" connotations. So, attempts were made to restore, but in a modified form, Women's Day on March 8 and Victory Day on May 9. If at the beginning the inversion mechanisms acted (the positive changed to negative, and vice versa), now the blending and hybridization mechanisms prevail. Both antagonists Aram Manukyan and Alexander Myasnikyan are considered heroes, medals dedicated to Dro and Baghramyan were officially issued, the monument of Spandaryan is still located on the Njdeh square. The situation with monuments, museums, and street and memorial names is very characteristic – not political or cultural, but national and ethnic affiliation became crucial.

5. The political failures of recent years have led to an attempt to entrench the notion of *the Fourth republic*. New holidays were established (citizen's day), new heroes and martyrs were proclaimed. The general trend was the de-ideologization of the former national(-istic) symbolism, but the result was the deconstruction of the entire symbolic system, including the newly introduced one. In general,

if we depart from the substantive aspects, semiotic operations are governed by two main transformational principles: recursion and inversion, precisely those that Levi-Strauss described in relation to myth, when "1. one term be replaced by its contrary; 2. that an inversion be made between the function and the term value of two elements" (Lévi-Strauss 1955: 442). Previous symbols and values are revalued, the positive becomes negative, and vice versa, but at the next stage, they appear already in a transformed form, and are re-evaluated again. At the same time, different cycles of this process can coexist in the same socio-cultural space. According to a sociological survey conducted by our group, approximately 60 % consider the era of king Tigran the Great (1st century BC) to be the most successful period in the history of Armenia. The second successful period was the 70-year period of the Soviet power (22.5 %). Finally, 15% mentioned the legendary times of the mythical progenitor of Armenians the Patriarch Hayk. Only 12 % refer to the current independent Republic of Armenia.

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