Rocznik Komparatystyczny – Comparative Yearbook
6 (2015)
DOI: 10.18276/rk.2015.6-13

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The Annexation of Crimea in Russian Literature of the 18th and 21st Centuries*

The Russian occupation of Crimea, which began on February 26, 2014, evoked not only protestations from the Ukrainian government and the European Union, but also memories of the first Russian annexation of Crimea in 1783. In the 18th century the annexation became the subject of panegyrics addressed to the empress Catharine II as well as to her favorite Prince Potemkin; this time Russian authors have responded to the event in essays, articles and commentaries. This paper aims at a comparative analysis of the representation of the annexation by Russian (and Ukrainian) authors of the 18th and 21st century, and the analysis is preceded by a short survey of the historical events leading to the annexation of Crimea.

Crimea had been conquered and settled by Tatars in the course of the Mongol-Tatar conquest of Eastern Europe in the 13th century (1239–1242). At first a part of the Golden Horde, the Crimean Tatars had separated from the Horde in 1443 and formed the Khanate of Crimea, which became a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire in 1475. In the following centuries the Crimean Tatars at first strove to build alliances with Russia against the Khanate of Kazan', but after the incorporation of the latter into Russia in 1552 they turned against Russia and more than once burned down Moscow, which paid tribute to them till the end of the 17th century (Fisher 1970: 19–22). Moscow waged direct

* I have to thank Hartmut Lutz for his kindness to read and correct my English text. All remaining errors are, of course, my own. U.J.

offensives against them for the first time in 1687 and 1689, but without success. Subsequently the eviction of Tatars and Turks from the Northern coasts of the Black Sea and Crimea was the aim of Russian policy in the South. In 1720s – 1730s, Russian troops gained for a short time the isthmus of Perekop, an important strategic point as the gateway to Crimea; finally, in the course of the Russian Turkish war 1769–1774, the Russians conquered the Northern Coast of the Black Sea and Crimea. In the peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, the Ottoman Empire lost its protectorate over the Crimean Khanate, which was declared independent under Russian protection.[1] This was the first step to annexation. Three years later, Russia took the second step by installing a convenient Khan. When the Crimean Tatar nobility revolted against measures taken by the new Khan, prince Potemkin deployed Russian troops to Crimea and Catherine II took the chance to officially annex the peninsula to Russia.[2] This was achieved without more definite military actions on Crimea and without provoking the Ottomans to war (Fisher 1970: 137), successes which became standard items in the panegyrics written to Potemkin up to the end of his life in 1791. When the military domination over the peninsula had been secured, and the necessary measures for its administrative integration as a province to the Russian state had been taken, the tsarina first used the policy of winning the Tatars over by treating them carefully. The inhabitants of Crimea were promised equal rights with Russian subjects – integrity of person, property, temples and religion, they were to share the same rights as the peoples of the Empire. The landed properties and privileges of the Tatar nobility were guaranteed, and the Muslim aristocracy was coopted into the hereditary nobility of the Empire. The Crimean Tatar peasants also retained their land and their status as free peasants. The administrative structure of the Khanate was taken over and subordinated to a Russian governor, and the Russian administration cooperated with the Tatar nobility and integrated the Islamic clergy and their institutions

[1] This did not mean full independence from Turkish hegemony: In spiritual matters the Ottoman Sultan still retained his sovereignty." And this included in Ottoman interpretation the nomination of the Khan; Fisher 1970: 55.

[2] The annexation manifesto was proclaimed on 8 April 1783 (Fisher 1970: 135 f.; Družinina 1959: 92 f.).

into the secular bureaucracy.[3] This policy proved to be successful, at least, as far as it is demonstrated by the absence of armed uprisings against Russian rule. However, as early as 1774, and especially after 1783, many Crimean Tatars left the peninsula and emigrated to the Ottoman empire[4] – a process which never stopped until the end of the 19th century.[5] Lands and properties left behind by the emigrants were taken over by the Russian government and land donations were used stimuli to recruit Russian nobles for the development of the area. From the beginning of the 19th century, Eastern Slavic peasants and foreign colonists came to settle on Crimea and dislodged the Tatars from the cities to the rural areas. Within the Crimean population the Tatars became a rural minority on the peripheries of the peninsula (Lazzerini 1988: 128 f.).

In 1783, Crimea had become the subject of manifestoes, political projects, writings and panegyrics written for this occasion. One of the panegyrics, which is remarkable for its experimental boldness and its imperial outspokenness, was written by the poet and high-ranking civil servant Gavrila Deržavin, who had become famous with his ode to Catherine II, *Felica*. *Felica* had broken with the model of the panegyric ode, established by Lomonosov, and outlined a new form, which combined the praise of the tsarina with a satirical description of her high-ranking servants. The Countess Daškova invited Deržavin to cooperate in Catherine's semi-official literary journal *Sobesednik ljubitelej rossijskogo slova*, which propagated the new ode. Among other poems of Deržavin, his ode "Na priobretenie Kryma"[6] (On obtaining Crimea, 1783) was published in *Sobesednik*, and it was prefaced with a note by its author pointing out the new experimental form of the ode: It was written in the traditional ode stanza of ten four-feet-jambic lines, but without rhymes. The omission of the then almost

[3] Fisher 1970: 140–150; Lazzerini describes this process as the "establishment of a new political structure that initially combined a Russian military administration with a native civil government" (Lazzerini 1988: 125).

[4] The estimated sums, given of the Tatar emigration 1772–1783 by various scholars, differ between 300 000 and 150 000 (the total number of the Crimean population in 1770 had been estimated at "a little less than half a million" (Fisher 1970: 145 f.).

[5] Lazzerini gives the estimated number of 150 000 Tatar inhabitants in 1784, which had diminished to 129 000 in 1805–1806 (Lazzerini 1988: 126 f.). The percentage of Crimean Tatars among the population sank from ca. 80 % in 1783 to 35% in 1897 (Jilge 2002: 246).

[6] Deržavin 2002: 84 f. The text will be quoted after this edition.

obligatory rhyme was intended as a connection to the unrhymed verse of the ancients.[7] For Crimea was thought of primarily as a land of ancient Greek culture and Greek myths: Its very name evoked classical literature.[8] Deržavin's ode also lacks other traits obligatory to the panegyrical ode: it was rather short – seven stanzas; the first four stanzas depict the joy of the families whose husbands, fathers and sons return from Crimea without having had to fight in war, and the anger of Mars, who feels cheated of his prey. The fifth and the first part of the sixth stanza state the profit won by Russia:

Россия наложила руку
На Таврь, Кавказ и Херсонес,
И распустя в Босфоре флаги,
Стамбулу флотами гремит;
Не подвиги Готфридов храбрых
И не Крестовски древни рати,
Се мой теперь парит орел!
Магмет, от ужаса бледнея,
Заносит из Европы ногу, –
И возрастает Константин!

Цирцея от досады воет,
Волшебство все ее ничто;
Ахеян, в тварей превращенных,
Минерва вновь творит людьми;[9]

The annexation of Crimea does not only signify the occupation of the peninsula, but is seen in the context of the predominant aim to expel the Ottomans from the European continent.

Deržavin emphasizes that now it is Russia's turn to win European glory by fighting back the Ottomans. As Russia "lays her hand" on Crimea, the Sultan

[7] See annotations to the poem in: Deržavin 2002: 562.

[8] Jobst 2001: 138.

[9] Deržavin 2002: 85; "Russia has laid her hand / On Tauris, Caucasus and Chersones, / And, hoisting her flags at the Bosporus, / Threatens Istanbul with fleets;/ [Now here are] neither heroic deeds of the brave Gottfrieds / Nor the old armies of the Crusaders, / It is my eagle which flies up high here! / Mahmet turns pale with terror / And withdraws his foot from Europe, – / And Konstantin is growing! // Circe weeps for anger, / Her witchcraft is nothing here; / Minerva retransforms the Achaian, who had been transformed into creatures,/ Into human beings again;" (Translations from the Russian, if not given otherwise, are my own, U.J.).

"withdraws his foot" from it. The "growing Konstantin" alludes to Catherine's grandson and her so-called 'Greek project' (Hösch, 1964: 183; Ragsdale, 1988; Zorin, 1997): The military achievements of the Russian armies and fleets in the Russian-Turkish war 1769–1774 had nourished plans for freeing the Greek people from the long Ottoman oppression and for resurrecting a Greek state, the monarch of which was to be Catherine's grandson Konstantin Pavlovič. Konstantin had been born in 1779, when the Greek project began to flourish, and had been given his name for a purpose: He was to become the new Konstantin of a renewed free Greece, which would be bound to Russia by religious and dynastic bonds. And the Greek people, who through Ottoman rule had become sadly deficient in courage and spirit – as their behaviour in the war had amply demonstrated – were to be transformed from "creatures" (which in the poem's context refer to the transformation of Ulysses' companions into pigs by Circe) to men again by the enlightened rule of Catherine-Minerva.

The description of the Russian triumph given by Deržavin, gives an imperial Russian perspective on the newly gained areas and on the Crimean Tatars and Turks: while the Crimean Tatars are wholly absent from his picture, the Ottomans are depicted as a people who are not able to civilize the subjugated men.[10] By annexing Crimea, Russia accepts a civilizing mission it will have to accomplish. But though Deržavin expresses the Russian imperial viewpoint on Crimea with all the self-confidence of power, the opening stanzas of his ode betray the real situation: he celebrates the relief and happiness of Russian families, whose fathers, brothers, sons – unscathed by any battles – return from an averted war, which forced Crimea to accept its incorporation into Russia by the deployment of Russian troops near its borders.

The annexation of Crimea had attracted the attention of the European states, because this was not only seen as a victory over the Ottoman empire. For the first time, Russia had taken over a region known from classical times, a place of ancient Greek myths and culture (Jobst, 2001: 138 f.), but also a region, which Ottoman and Tatar rule had ruined, which had become

[10] Lazzerini points out the opposition between the negative Russian presuppositions about the alleged barbarism and primitivity of the Crimean Tatar society and the reality of its once highly developed culture, which had reached its peak in the 17th century and had lost some of its glamour in the decline of the state in the 18th century; Lazzerini 1988, 123 f.

uncivilized in European eyes. Europe felt that this region had to be civilized again, but the Europeans doubted the Russian ability to do it – Russia itself was seen as a half-Asiatic country (Jobst, 2001: 125–127). It became an aim of Russian policy in the following years to demonstrate their endeavours to fulfil their civilizing mission. Prince Potemkin, Catherine's favourite, who had been appointed namestnik (general governor) of Novorossija in 1776, devoted himself to this task, in close coordination with the tsarina. He planned the construction of new cities, among them Cherson as the new cultural centre of South Russia, which in analogy to St. Petersburg was to have an academy of sciences and of arts, a university, a highschool, a philharmonia, theatres and operas. Potemkin invited eastern Slavic and foreign peasants to settle on the vast steppes of New Russia and Crimea.[11] Crimea was to become the core of this region and the centre of the Russian navy and shipbuilding. Potemkin planned and organized the famous journey of the Tsarina through Novorossija and Crimea in 1787. The Tsarina was accompanied by: the Austrian emperor, Joseph II, by the French, Austrian and Saxon ambassadors, as well as by many nobles. They visited the isthmus of Perekop, Karasubazar, Bachčisaraj, Laspi and Sevastopol' (Jobst 2001, 127 f.). Potemkin turned the voyage into a show of riches, feasts and luxuries, he proudly presented the cities and settlements he had began to build – some of them, naturally, in the form of models and casual architecture, made of cardboard and canvas.

The Tauric journey of Catherine partly achieved the propagandistic goal it had been aimed at – it was to serve as a measure to propagate the successes of the civilizing Russian mission in South Russia and to convince Europe of them (Jobst, 2001: 135–138). It became widely known by the publicist discourse it aroused in Europe both via its official descriptions, published in the same year, as well as via the published reports, articles and letters of the ambassadors. While the reports of the prince de Ligne and the count de Ségur gave proper attention to the Russian efforts, Joseph II and the Saxon ambassador G.A.W. Helbig tended to point out the negative aspects of the Russian engagement in the South – the phrase "Potemkin's villages" was coined at that time (Jobst, 2001:

[11] Sevastopol', founded in 1783 on the place of the insignificant Tatar village Achtiar, soon became the dominant port on the peninsula and site of Russian military shipyard.

135). The European and the Russian perspective on Crimea were rather similar: Both saw the peninsula as a region of classical culture which had been destroyed and had degenerated in Tatar times, and which had to be built up again. Both disregarded the civilization of the Crimean Tatars, who then represented 80% of the inhabitants of the peninsula; to put it in Edward Said's terms, Europe and Russia dispossessed the Crimean Tatars of their history and their civilization in the true colonial manner.

This tendency is taken to an extreme in Semen Bobrov's long descriptive poem on Crimea, which was published 1798 under the title *Tavrida*. The poem adopted the archaic name of the region, which was beloved by Catherine II, and which served as the official name in her time.[12] While the first edition of the poem received little attention, the second revised and augmented edition, when published in 1804 under the title *Chersonida,* became a literary sensation and made its author famous (Bobrov, 2008: 522 f.). The Russian reading audience was enthusiastic about the description of the exotic, oriental peninsula, which had become Russian.

The author, Semen Bobrov had served in the Russian civil service in Sankt Petersburg till 1791 when he was transferred to Crimea. There he became acquainted with the Admiral Nikolaj Mordvinov, the commander-in-chief of the Administration of the Russian Black Sea Navy. Bobrov became an employee and staff member of Mordvinov. He accompanied the admiral on his tours of inspection through the harbours, dockyards and garrisons of the Black Sea Navy on Crimea and the adjacent coasts, he compiled and drafted the reports about the development of the land and the cities to the tsarina resp. the tsar. He had read extensively on the geography, mineralogy, biology, economy and history of Crimea and was exceedingly well informed on this subject. He intended his long poem *Chersonida* to inform the Russian readers about the beauties and riches of Crimea in order to make them understand how valuable and beautiful a piece of land they had gained (Bobrov, 2008: 18); he wanted to acquaint them with this foreign, strange and oriental part of Europe.

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[12] "In early February 1784, the area of the former Crimean Khanate from the Dnepr River to Taman was […] given the name of 'Tavricheskaia oblast'" (Fisher, 1970: 142). On the change of the poem's title from *Tavrida* to *Chersonida* see Bobrovs explanation in the preface to *Chersonida* (Bobrov, 2008: 17 f.).

Chersonida consists of eight cantos, written in unrhymed verses. The cantos are followed by "Imn carju carstvujuščich" ("Hymn to the King of Kings"). Bobrov gave his long poem the subtitle "Liro-ėpičeskoe pesnotvorenie" (Lyrical-epic song-creation). It was modelled on the example of English sentimental poets and their descriptive poems – especially on Thomson's *The Seasons* and Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* (Bobrov, 2008: 449). But Bobrov transgresses the limitations of the descriptive poem by giving his work a minimal plot: the poem narrates the last day of the return pilgrimage from Medina of two Crimean Tatars, the old sharif Omar and the young morza Selim. The narration begins with the arrival of the two pilgrims at Crimea on a fine July morning and accompanies them, as they climb up into the mountains to the home village of Selim, which they reach in the evening. There, Selim weds his bride, while Omar dies. Their wandering through Crimea provides the opportunity to describe *in extenso* the geography, topography, mineralogy, the climate, flora and fauna, horticulture and agriculture, economy, villages, towns and the history of Crimea from the ancient Greek times up to the annexation by Russia.

Though the history of Crimea is told by the old sharif Omar, it is told with a clearly marked Prorussian bias: He talks admiringly about the mythical past, the veneration of the Goddess Diana and her priestess Iphigenia, about Agamemnon, Orestes and Pylades; he tells the history of the Greek and the Genoese on the peninsula with full appreciation of their high culture. He depicts the Genoese times as those of wealth and affluence, of flourishing arts, trades and sciences, he admires their architecture, sculpture and horticulture, when the gardens gave rich harvests of apricots, peaches, figs etc. The arrival of the Mongols and their descendants, the Tatars, however, is described as a radical change to a rapid deterioration of wealth and culture: The inhabitants are slaughtered, oppressed and robbed, they live in trouble and misery, they lose their craft and knowledge, the land stops giving fruits. The coming of the Mongols is pictured as a phenomenon of nature: they are compared to locusts which propagate, make a stir, rise up in the air and raid Crimea; they overflow and destroy the land like lava. But they cannot wholly ruin the cities built by their predecessors, whereas their descendants, the Tatars ("the iron offspring of Attila, … of the terrible Genghis khans, … of the cruel Tamerlans") are said not

only to surpass the Mongols in brutality, they are also much inferior to them, for "they were but tributaries of Istanbul"[13]. In their time not only civilization deteriorates, but nature itself fades:

О, сколь ужасна перемена
Во всем была во дни их буйств! –
Тогда ни виноград, ни смоквы,
Ни персики, ни абрикосы
Природных вкусов не имели. –
[...]
Все стало горько; все постыло;
Все грозды крыли яд змиев
Иль аспидов лютейшу желчь.
[...]
Не вились кудри на главах;
Упал румянец на щеках;[14]

The narrator Omar is made to slight his own nation: In the "three terrible centuries"[15] of Tatar rule the people despair, they hide in caverns in the mountains, they think of suicide, they lament their losses and argue with God. The only relief for them is brought by Russia, which frequently tames "these bloodthirsty and impudent tigers"[16], who kill and tear the skin of their unarmed victims and depopulate the peninsula. All this is told by the Crimean Tatar Omar, who is justified with the remark that everyone has to admit that, "the

[13] Bobrov 2008: 167: «Железны отрасли *Аттил*, / Потомки грозных *Чингисханов*, / Потомки лютых *Тамерланов* / Лишь были данники *Стамбула*.» Italics given in the text – by giving the names of the Hun and Mongol conquerors, Attila and Tamerlane, Bobrov underlines the aspect of horror in the descendency of the Crimean Tatars and at the same time strips them of the greatness of their ancestors.

[14] Bobrov 2008: 168; "O, how terrible is the change / In all things in the years of their violent power! / Then neither wine nor figs, / Nor peaches, nor apricots/ did have a natural taste […] Everything became bitter, everything faded, / All grapes concealed the poison of vipers / Or the cruel bile of adders. […] No ringlets curl on their heads; the red on their cheeks has vanished." That is a description of Crimea under Tatar rule which grossly detorts the historical facts: The Crimean Khanate had a highly developed Muslim culture, see Kappeler 1993: 48.

[15] Bobrov 2008: 169: «Три страшных веков».

[16] Bobrov 2008: 183: «сих хищных и продерзких тигров».

noble power [of the North] has always justice on its side against the South".[17] Omar also describes the Tatar nobles who fought against the Russians in the war 1769–1774, as insolent and ungrateful insurgents, who were rightly cast down and punished by the Russian general, the "почтенный старец" (Bobrov, 2008: 184) (venerable old man) prince Vasilij M. Dolgorukov. Bobrov makes Omar outline a vision of Crimea, resurrected by the Russian tsars in its old glory:

Но если б росски Геркулесы,
Одушевленные Минервой;
Ступая на сии хребты,
Здесь лики водворили муз
И преселили в мирны сени
Столетни опыты Европы
Не помощь медленной природе,
Тогда бы гордый Чатырдаг
Меонтией прекрасной был;[18]

When Russian power and Russian wisdom bring the muses back to their country of origin, the arts and sciences shall flourish again on Crimea. Thus, Bobrov depicts the old Crimean Tatar Omar as a man who, as an entirely colonized subject, binds his hopes for the welfare and cultural development of his own country to its conquerors, the Russians, whose cultural superiority he has internalized.

The praise of the development of Crimea by the Russians is not only given through Omar, but is also to be found in the framing parts of the poem. In "Preparatory thoughts", the poet speaks of the light of the dawn of the 'North' – a frequently used metaphor for Russia (Boele, 1996: 22–47) – which has called the peninsula out of its darkness; Russia appears as the personification of enlightenment. The dedication to Mordvinov praises the beauty of Crimea, which the poet compares to those of the Alps, Italy and England, that is, an "orientalised" Crimea is inscribed in a European context. Crimea is not

[17] Bobrov 2008: 183: «благородна власть ея [полунощи] / всегда возмет над югом право» .

[18] Bobrov 2008: 189; "But when the Russian Herculeses, / Inspired by Minerva, / Step onto these hills, / Erect Statues here to the Muses / And resettle into the peaceful fields / Europe's centuries old knowledge / In order to further slow nature / Then the proud Chatyr-Dag will become the beautiful Meontias".

only pictured as the place where Catherine II descended like Minerva, the Greek goddess of wisdom and leader of the nine muses, but also like a reborn Ol'ga – the chronicles report that princess Ol'ga returned from her baptism in Constantinople via Crimea, and that her grandson, prince Vladimir, was christened there.[19] Thus, the peninsula is not only connected to classical culture and myth, but also to the beginnings of Eastern Slavic Christian culture and Kievan Rus'. It is suggested as a holy place of Russian Orthodox Christianity and of the Russian nation.[20] The concluding *Hymn to the king of kings* inscribes Crimea into the ancient topos of the world ages: The peninsula has finished the circle from the first golden age through the iron and back to a new golden age under Russian rule.[21] The *Hymn* ends with this intercession to the Almighty:

Храни во всякий век грядущий,
Изникший сей из бездн *Эдем*! –
Да *Херсонис* в святом восторге
Ввек славословит и поет
Твое в нем имя, – как в чертоге, –
Доколе *россам* лавр цветет![22]

Paradise and Cherson, the ancient city of high culture, arts and sciences, flourishing nature, a warm climate and a holy place of Russian culture – that was the vision of the future Crimea Bobrov depicted in his poem.

In the following decades, the governors of Crimea and South Russia, the commanders-in-chief of the Russian navy and its administration, the members of the Russian administration, the Russian nobles all played their part to change the image of the peninsula and to transform it into a Christian land by building new cities, harbours, new quarters, orthodox churches, administrative buildings as well as private palaces and houses. In the course of the following century the Russian perception of Crimea changed radically: the peninsula lost its

[19] As Korovin points out, Catherine II was the first Russian monarch to visit the peninsula since the times of Ol'ga and Vladimir; Korovin, Primečanija, in: Bobrov 2008: 529.

[20] On the myth of Crimes as a "cradle of Russian orthodoxy" see Jilge 2002: 244 f.

[21] On functionalizing the topos of "Golden age" in Russian political and panegyric discourse see Proskurina 2006: 57–104.

[22] Bobrov 2008: 388; "Keep in every future century / This *Eden* risen from the abyss! / May *Cherson* in holy enthusiasm / Praise and eternally sing / Your name – as in a temple, – / As long as the *Russian* laurel blossoms!" Italics given in the text.

strangeness, it became the Russian earthly Paradise, a place of beauty with an ideal mild climate by a Southern Sea, it became the "pearl of the empire" (Jobst, 2007), a region which was felt to have always been Russian. This perception has not altered to this day: since the second half of the 19th century, Crimea has been viewed as a region with a definite Russian cultural identity.

When Chruščev donated Crimea to Ukraine in 1954, this did not mean much, because Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union. But when, in 1991, Crimea became part of the independent Ukraine, Russia and many Russians could not accept it. One part of the problem – besides the cultural identification of Crimea as inborn Russian – was the military-strategic question: The Russian Black Sea Navy was stationed at Crimea, Sevastopol' was its most important military port. In 1992, the Verchovnyj sovet of Russia questioned the legitimacy of the donation, and it took five years of difficult negotiations to come to an agreement between the two states (Jilge, 2002: 247 f.). Since 1989, the Crimean Tatars, who in 1944 had been deported by Stalin's orders to Siberia, began to return – their share of the population rose from 1.2% in 1989 to 10% in 2000.[23] The last – and still ongoing – crisis came in 2013, when the Ukrainian people fought on the Majdan for admission into the European Union, the success of which moved Vladimir Putin to occupy Crimea in a surprise coup at the night of February 26–27, 2014. The installation of a new government and its petition to Russia to incorporate Crimea followed immediately. The occupation was clearly an illegal act under international law, but Russia had created facts, which Ukraine has not yet been able to alter.

As far as I know, there are hitherho no serious fictional responses – and certainly no panegyrical odes – to the events of the occupation of Crimea in Russia or Ukraine.[24] There were and are numerous reactions – commentaries,

[23] The share of the Russian inhabitants in 2000 was: 67%, the share of the Ucrainians 25,8%; see Jilge, 2002: 248.

[24] This paper was written in november/ december 2014; it is based on materials published before these months. References to works which were published since then are given in the following footnotes. Here Aleksandr A. Prochanov's patriotic novel "Krym" has to be mentioned, which was published in november 2014 in the series "Imperial collection". The novel constructs the 'return' of Crimea to Russia as a "Russian miracle" (see http://www.dynacom.ru/content/articles/3974; Šamil' Kerašev, "Krym" Prochanova: poluostrov kak Russkoe čudo, http://www.rg.ru/2014/11/24/prokhanov-site.html). The following part

applause, critique and satires – in the Russian, Ukrainian and world wide web, there are documentary or quasi-documentary reports and films.[25] Hundred Russian authors published a list of signatures by which they declared their full approval and enthusiastic applause for the return of Crimea, this forever-Russian land, to Russia. The Ukrainian author Jurij Adruchovyč edited a volume with articles by Ukrainian, Russian, German, Polish, English authors, historians and journalists about their experiences or commentaries on the Majdan in December 2013 to March 2014 (Andruchowytsch, 2014).[26] Here I will confine myself to some articles by Viktor Erofeev, Vladimir Sorokin, and a book written by the Russian-born and Russian-writing Ukrainian author Andrej Kurkov.

Kurkov, who lives in Kiev near the Majdan, is a Ukrainian democrat who sides with the majdanists. He published the notes on the events he had written in the course of the last year.[27] They start on November 21, 2013, and go up to April 24, 2014. His notes suggest that at the beginning of the protestations Crimea did not play a role in the confrontations; Kurkov spent the New Year

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of the paper concentrates on some articles and one book by serious Russian and Ukrainian authors, which were written for western readers in order to inform them about the issues being at stake between Russia and Ukraine.

[25] An example of a (quasi-)documentary film, which intends to justify the occupation of Crimea from the Russian national perspective, is Andrej Kondrašovs film about the events on Crimea in March-April, 2014; the title already points at its intention: "Krym. Put' na rodinu" (Crimea. Way back home; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42-71RpRgI). The first run was March 15, 2015; the film contains a long interview with Vladimir Putin (see Veser, 2015: 8). It evoked numerous commentaries by Western, Ukrainian and Russian media (see f.e. the article in Russian Wikipedia which offers links to users' and media's responses: https://ru.wikipedia.org/.../Крым._Путь_на_Родину, and Stephen Ennis, Russian TV's Crimea film falsifies hero story, www.bbc.co.uk/.../russian-tvs-crimea-film-falsifies-).

[26] The volume contains 15 articles, written between March and April, 2014, some of which report their own experience on the Majdan. Some of them discuss the presentation of these events in Russian, Ukrainian and western media (see the articles by Prochasko, Ganijewa, Snyder, Rjabtschuk, Shekhovtsov, Pollack). In 2015, the book was followed by a second publication of the Suhrkamp Verlag which discusses the impact of the war in Ukraine for Europe's self-image: Katharina Raabe, Manfred Sapper (ed.), Testfall Ukraine. Europa und seine Werte, Frankfurt a. M. 2015.

[27] The Diary was destined by its author explicitely for readers outside Ukraine and Russia (compare reactions in the world wide web, f.e.: http://russian.rt.com/inotv/2014-06-13/Ukrainskij-pisatel-Ukraina-strana). It was published in German, French and English translation. I used the German translation, quotations will be given after this edition.

holidays 2014 as usual with his family on Crimea. On January 17, he wrote down the first entry about agressions against the Crimean Tatar minority: "Auf der Krim haben Russland-Patrioten das Denkmal zu Ehren der Krimtataren, die Opfer der stalinschen Deportation wurden, zertrümmert." (Kurkov, 2014: 80) The remark about the destruction of a monument in honour of the Crimean Tatars who had become one of the victims of Stalin's deportations indicates a change in the political climate on the peninsula. The next note (February, 4) starts a series of entries, which register proposals of the Crimean regional parliament for separation from Ukraine and incorporation into Russia. Following the day of the Russian occupation of Crimea, February 26, the peninsula becomes a constant subject in the diary – though it is never more than one subject besides the Majdan and, later, Doneck and Luhansk. Kurkov writes down the events, he notes all steps the Russian administration takes to separate Crimea administratively as quickly as possible from Ukraine and to nationalize the inhabitants as Russians. In most cases he lets the facts speak for themselves, or he comments them sparely in a reserved, laconic way. And he points out inconsistencies and contradictions in Russian bulletins and announcements. One example may suffice here: On March 27, he mentions the bestowal of the newly created medal «За возвращение Крыма» (For the return of Crimea) by the Russian Minister of Defence to the self-appointed premier of Crimea, Sergej Aksakov, and other, unnamed, officers of the Russian Black Sea Navy and members of the ill-reputed Berkut (Kurkov, 2014: 192 f.).[28] On April 22, he provides the reader with more information about the medal itself and the manner of its bestowal. "Das Bemerkenswerteste ist", he writes, "dass auf der Medaille die Daten der Operation zur Krim-Annexion eingeprägt sind: '22.02.2014 – 18.03.2014'. Das heißt, die Operation zur Eroberung der Krim hatte Russland bereits begonnen, als Janukowytsch noch in Kiev war und gar nicht daran dachte zu fliehen. Und als die Protestteilnehmer auf dem Majdan noch nicht erschossen worden waren. So kommt, was verborgen war, doch noch ans Licht." (Kurkov, 2014: 237). He does not write more on it, but the meaning of the dates engraved on the medal is clear: Russia had planned

[28] Kurkov notes also that the medal is a near copy of the former medal «За освобождение Крыма» (For the liberation of Crimea), awarded by Stalin to the soldiers fighting back the Germans in World War II.

the occupation of Crimea from the beginning of the confrontations in Ukraine, even before the flight of Janukovych. Kurkov points out how the medal was bestowed: anonymously, the names of the 'heroes' who were decorated with it were not listed, because the publication of the names of Russian officers would betray the officially denied Russian military involvement in the conflict. The absurdity of an anonymous decoration is not commented any further in the book. The cited entries demonstrate that Kurkov bases his narration primarily on telling facts and occurences. But though he often dispenses with explicit interpretation, he makes his point of view clear by reading the signs of the facts. Kurkov also puts down incidents, which signify the beginning of a renewed marginalization of the Crimean Tatars.

At last, I want to mention two Russian authors who published articles on the occupation of Crimea in the German press. Both Viktor Erofeev and Vladimir Sorokin are postmodern writers with a critical view on their country. Erofeev aims to inform his readers in several articles about the Russian perspective on Crimea and to make them understand its symbolic meaning for Russia (Jerofeew, 2014a; 2014b). He exerts himself to give a rather impartial account of the matter, even when first he showed a tendency to admire Russia's coup de main on Crimea.[29] Vladimir Sorokin, on the other hand, wrote a grotesque-satirical commentary, which is based on the image of pregnancy. He depicts Russia as pregnant with free Ukraine; hers is an unintentional, difficult pregnancy which she tries to abort – but without success. The concluding sentences of the article concern the future of Mother Russia: "But what of the mother? The coming labour will be difficult and there will certainly be complications. Will she survive?"[30] In this context, the occupation of Crimea is explained as a consequence of hormones: Pregnant women are prone to attacks of ravenous hunger and sometimes hunger for

[29] Compare the first article (Jerofejew, 2014a). A third article by Erofeev (Jerofejew, 2014c) can be characterized as a despairing menippaea 1) on the self-demascation of the Russians as a non-European people in the course of the events which was caused by Putin and acclaimed by the majority of the Russian people, and 2) on the insignificance of the Russian intelligentsia.

[30] Sorokin 2014; quotations are given after the Englisch version. Sorokin's article which was published in several languages evoked lively enthusiastic and negative responses in Western, Ukrainian and Russian media and in the world wide web.

meat. "And there it was, a quickly bitten-off chunk of fresh flesh: the Crimea. Russia's worn-down, post-imperial teeth managed to tear it off, but there was little energy left to swallow. The flesh stuck in Russia's throat."[31] Sorokin is one of the 15% of the Russian population who do not applaud the occupation of Crimea,[32] but characterizes it as an imperialistic act of violence against another country. He voices his opinion that the child Ukraine will live and grow, but that it is the fate and future of Mother Russia, which is at a stake.

Looking back at the two annexations of Crimea by Russia as described above, we see definite similarities not only in the manner of annexation: In both centuries, there had been a short period of independence of Crimea (resp. Ukraine) from Russian hegemony, followed by confrontations, and by the imposition and actions of pro-Russian agents in favour of a incorporation of Crimea into Russia. Both annexations were achieved – initially – without (much) bloodshed, and in both cases immediate measures were undertaken to incorporate Crimea as quickly as possible into the Russian administration. Both annexations were accompanied by an enthusiastic applause of the Russian public, almost unanimously in the 18th century, and more diversely in the 21st century. The majority of nowadays Russian reactions can be described as simply and aggressively nationalist and imperialistic, they do not betray the slightest tendency to respect the autonomy and culture of the other – neither of the Crimean Tatars nor of Ukraine. Differences can be observed in the cultural and social contextualization: whereas the Russia of the 18th century knew that it annexed a foreign state and a different, alien country and culture, twenty first-century Russia occupied a part of another autonomous country which it conceived, or rather constructed, as genuinely and forever Russian. In the eyes of the Russian majority, guided by the propaganda of their media, the imperialistic act became a deed of national justice. Another difference can be detected in European and even worldwide reactions to the annexation of Crimea: Whereas the European states of the 18th century did not question the right of the conqueror to annex other states, but did question its ability to civilize Crimea, the democratic states of the 21st century deny or at least question the

[31] Ibidem.

[32] The percentage given in various publications differ between 15% to 20%, compare Jerofejew 2014b; Prochasko 2014: 114; Eidman 2015.

right of Russia to annex Crimea and tend to restrict the conflict as one between Ukraine and Russia. And – in our century, Crimea is nothing but a part of the greater conflict between the two states, which has not been solved till now, and in which Crimea and the Crimean Tatars may be – and have been already[33] – easily marginalized. Marginalization of Crimea also characterizes most of the hitherto published commentaries which tend either to ignore Crimea totally or to mention it in just one or two sentences. And that is not surprising, for the occupation of Crimea was soon thrust into the background by the following war in Eastern Ukraine and the developing discourse on the shaping of a new Ukraine between Putin's Russia and Europe.

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[33] The press and other media reported the political restrictions laid upon the Crimean Tatars by the new Russian-Ukrainian government; one of the last items was the closing of ATR, the television station of the Crimean Tatars, on the night of March, 31, to April, 1 (FAZ, 2 IV 2015, Nr. 78, 15).

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The Annexation of Crimea in Russian Literature of the 18th and 21st Centuries

Summary

The paper outlines the historical facts of the first annexation of Crimea by Russia in 1783 and discusses the first literary reactions by Gavrila Deržavin and Semen Bobrov from the viewpoint of their representation of the Crimean Tatars. The second part of the paper describes the reactions of contemporary Ukrainian and Russian writers to the second annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014.

Keywords: literary representation of history, annexation of Crimea, Russia, Ukraine, Crimean Tatars, literary reactions to the occupation of another country

Słowa kluczowe: literackie reprezentacje historii, aneksja Krymu, Rosja, Ukraina, Tatarzy krymscy, literackie reakcje na okupację innego kraju