

INTRODUCTION

Constructing a Rampart Nation

Conceptual Framework



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Nowadays, images of fences, walls, bastions, and fortresses are popular metaphors in the political sphere. They polarize and divide societies into ideological camps as we can observe in contemporary Europe. The old topos of Europe as a fortress has been reintroduced in numerous forms in the media and has once again found its way into various political agendas, for example in the present Polish and Hungarian right-wing governments.

Bulwark myths, otherwise called *antemurale* myths, are widespread in East European countries today but also have a tradition dating back to early modern times. Such myths contain several components:

The claim of a perennial menace caused by an “Other” as enemy on a territorial or cultural basis. . . ; the call to defend, not only oneself, but also one’s own people against the threat of the “Other”. . . ; the claim of being chosen to defend a higher or greater entity, of which one is a part.¹

They also contain the claim of a civilizing mission. The *antemurale* myth is often instrumentalized, not only against foreign enemies but also in order to mobilize and unite the community inside the bulwark.

During the nationalizing processes in nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, bulwark myths gained particular importance in the southern and western borderland territories of continental empires, mainly today’s Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine but also in neighboring states. Being a “rampart nation” was one of the main motifs in national claims to be part of Europe. *Antemurale* mythology was also crucial for the creation of national identity and coherence in Eastern European borderland societies.

Our volume deals with bulwark (*antemurale*) myths as securitizing and spatial myths in East European border regions in the age of nationalism, focusing on their definition, how they functioned and were spread, and the key figures and groups who played a role in their dissemination. Despite

Rampart Nations

Bulwark Myths of East European Multiconfessional Societies in the Age of Nationalism

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the obvious popularity of these narratives in European history, historiography has not yet paid enough attention to bulwark myths in modern Eastern European history. Above all, transnational studies have until recently ignored the field of political myths in multiconfessional and multiethnic East European regions, although a few comparative studies provide incentives for further research.²

The very notion of “transnational history,” other than being a possible alternative to dominant national narratives, remains quite vague. Some identify it as an umbrella term for historical debates, whereas others give a rather open definition: transnational history deals with the “people, ideas, products, processes and patterns that operate over, across, through, beyond, above, under, or in-between polities and societies.”³ Notably, transnational history goes further than comparative history, as it suggests tracing interaction and transfer not only between direct neighbors but also between entities and institutions far away from the borderline.⁴ Urban and religious history is particularly fruitful for these purposes.

In particular, present-day Ukraine exemplifies contact and conflict regions in Eastern Europe. Recently, the collection of articles by Philipp Ther and Georgiy Kasianov⁵ described a way in which transnational history could be used by historians dealing with Ukrainian borders and contact zones. Importantly, such an approach allows placing Ukrainian history within the general European context. While advocating Ukraine as a laboratory of transnational history “that deliberately transcends the boundaries of one culture or country,” Ther and Kasianov suggest focusing on agents of cultural exchange.⁶ Notably, the recent collection of articles edited by Serhii Plokhyy on the outlook of historical writing in post-Soviet Ukraine contains a section on the “transnational turn” and goes beyond the cultural focus. Its contributors elaborate on, among other things, military history, cartography, art and Jewish studies as possible “transnational fields” of Ukrainian historiography.⁷

This is indeed relevant, not only to Ukrainian history but also to the neighboring territories.⁸ Moreover, the application of transnational history—with its emphasis on agents of *antemurale* rhetoric—in combination with the study of political myths offers an unusual and rather new perspective. Our book, which can neither cover the whole geographical range nor address all possible thematic affiliations, aims to bridge this research gap at least partly.

In this introduction, we shall first dwell upon the general definition of political myth, then highlight the features of bulwark myths as securitizing and spatial myths, and finally outline the history of *antemurale* myths in modern Eastern Europe as reflected in the structure and the major conclusions of this book.

Political Myths: General Definitions

Bulwark myths belong to the category of the so-called political myths. These are simplifying and meaningful narratives in which the mental frame of reference is based on a set of prior assumptions. Myths always delineate “an eternal fight between the good and the evil,”⁹ between “Self” and “Other.” In contrast to religious myths, they do not necessarily have a transcendental component. A political myth thus refers to a politically constituted community and interprets its origins and character. In order to achieve this goal, it constitutes an emotionally charged narration that constructs the past quite selectively, stereotypically idealizing past and present.¹⁰ According to Peter Niedermüller, it “purges the memory symbolically” and becomes a “collective autobiography.”¹¹ The semantic structure makes a political myth changeable, which is necessary in the long run. Thus, the mythical narration could be varied and also adapted to the audience.¹² Through its message, a political myth provides the community with orientation that it also shapes at the same time. It paraphrases and verifies modes of behavior and values by means of this functionality. Hence, a political myth explains existing collective problems and designates binding goals for the community.¹³

Because of its function in providing sense and orientation, political myths are an inherent element of a political system. To put it briefly, they are “narratives, that is, stories that deal with the origins, the sense and the historical mission of a political community so as to enable orientation and options for action.”¹⁴ Moreover, they are important elements of cultures of memory and provide a unifying storyline for “imagined communities.”¹⁵ In showing historic achievements and heroes, political myths explain why one should be a member of this or that community. Hence, they contribute mainly to the self-confidence of a political association, being “the narrative foundation of the symbolic order of a community.”¹⁶

These myths possess conveying, legitimizing, and integrating functions and contribute to the coherence of the society. Their communicative and mobilizing mission proves to be of great importance when the community undergoes phases of collective uncertainty, for example during political, economic, and social crises, when it experiences deficiencies regarding integration, identity, and legitimization.¹⁷ Because of these functions, it becomes clear why political myths give a heroic account of merits and tell of the successful defense of the community against various dangers. This historic achievement provides the feeling of security.

Each political community has its own myths. According to George Schöpflin, difficulties in categorizing political myths are caused by the nature of myth itself. Its function is to construct coherence; therefore, “different myths receive emphasis at different times to cope with different

challenges.”¹⁸ Whereas the individual myth’s narration depends on historical context, political myths share common characteristics. Most of them give an account of the origins of the community. Additionally, myths deal with transfiguration, authentication, and/or a catharsis. Each community has a certain repertoire of political myths that can be adjusted to the collective needs and activated if there is a need for articulated collective identity, coherence, cohesion, or legitimation. The case of the Jewish ghetto, discussed by Jürgen Heyde (Leipzig) in this volume, demonstrates that through the erection of “inner walls,” society itself can be aggregated by excluding national and religious Others.

John Armstrong labeled the most constitutive myths as “mythomoteurs” that help to define group identities in relation to the polity, which they already did in premodern times. A mythomoteur “arouses intensive affect by stressing the individuals’ solidarity against an alien force, that is, by enhancing the salience of boundary perceptions.”¹⁹ When the conditions within a society are perceived as threatened and insecure, concepts of danger become virulent.²⁰

This mosaic of myths is implemented in a society through elements of memory and political culture, such as political rituals and festivities, symbols, and memorials that nonverbally paraphrase the mythical narrative. This helps to present political myths as first-order truths that “cannot be perceived to be inventions.”²¹ However, it is also possible to communicate the general story verbally, for example through various media that are aptly discussed in the individual chapters of this book (e.g., historical texts, schoolbooks, maps, travel guides, but also theatrical performances, songs, and so on).

Such forms of media are assumed to be “objective” and communicate values through a normative mythical “story.” This issue is highlighted in many contributions in this volume: Volodymyr Kravchenko (Edmonton) scrutinizes it using the example of Ukrainian and Russian historiography; Liliya Berezhnaya (Münster) demonstrates the role of Ukrainian monasteries in the formation of political myths; Kerstin Weiland (Frankfurt) addresses the issue in the writings of Renaissance and Baroque authors and in the documents of Imperial Diets; Zaur Gasimov (Istanbul) highlights the story of émigré politicians; and Paul Srodecki (Kiel/Ostrava) examines the interwar Catholic Right and the contemporary press as the key agents in the myth-making process. These and other contributions reveal that the texts popularizing bulwark myths were often produced in political and academic milieus. From the late Middle Ages on, various historians, politicians, Church hierarchs, and later also journalists were actively involved in the formation and dissemination of bulwark rhetoric.

Importantly, there were many other influential intermediaries that helped to transfer *antemurale* myth to the lower layers of society in the age of nationalism. This becomes clear by looking at schoolbooks in Philipp Hofeneder's (Graz) contribution and at travel guides from Heidi Hein-Kircher's (Marburg) chapter. Besides these, maps and painted artworks were also crucial in this process, to name just a few examples discussed by Steven Seegel (Greeley, CO) and Stephen M. Norris (Oxford, OH). Both genres, maps and paintings, promoted the popularity of the bulwark mythical narrative, providing it with visual attributes. For instance, Seegel argues that modern mappers (Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian, and German) often regarded themselves as public servants and scientific experts; maps were a form of graphic media deployed by geographers as historical actors, who often presupposed Europe's uniqueness.

In contrast, Norris focuses on the *longue durée* "life" of a single painting, Viktor Vasnetsov's famous *Bogatyri* ("Warriors," 1898) in Russian/Soviet cultural memory. For Norris, Vasnetsov's painting, frequently popularized in the press, on postage stamps, on cigarette cases, and on postcards, functioned as an expression of a bulwark myth while it was used as means to call for unity. In this way, visualized *antemurale* mythical narration was used for the consolidation of a society.

Bulwark Myths as Securitized and Spatial Myths

Bulwark myths have two important distinctive features as political myths. First, they interpret heroic performances in securing a community faced with a great threat that came from outside. This surmounted threat, the "evil," is a point of reference for present and future times. Through focusing on a past threat, which is interpreted quite selectively in favor of the group, a threat for present and future times is derived. This bulwark mission becomes a promise to the members of the community to protect them, their values, and their faith against threats that are coming or will come from outside the bastion. At the same time, the narrative of the heroic defense, of being a rampart, is invoked in order to incite the community to future heroic performances. The implication is that the community will only be saved by following the bulwark myth's message. So, a bulwark myth quite heavily distinguishes between community members and nonkinsmen, the Other. It describes a threat scenario and a process of creating security as one of managing the threat.²²

If a threat to the community is indicated, the necessary answer is the promise to secure the community. Thus, we can understand "security" as a

discursively communicated political notion of value and of societal order to which political myths and particularly bulwark myths contribute.²³

This is most prominently demonstrated in Weiland's chapter. Military phrasing has adhered to bulwark rhetoric from its very beginning. Renaissance authors were already using the *antemurale* metaphor to underline the impression of an isle under siege, of inner peace and outer war. The idea of an existential threat to the community shielded by a bulwark linked European borderland peripheries with the core of the Holy See.

The securitizing mythical narratives often deal with both the threat and the ways to overcome it. The example of the "Turkish wall" against the (Russian/Soviet) Communist danger, introduced in Gasimov's chapter, makes clear the mobilizing potential of the bulwark myth. Gasimov's study is also paradigmatic for understanding the common mechanisms of the *antemurale* myth's functioning on both sides of the historical Christian/Muslim border.

Second, bulwark myths clarify which territory belongs to the community. They are thus spatially oriented narratives, defining a specific claimed territory that should be defended. Through such a narrative, they create a specific idea of a space. The imagined territory acquires a symbolic function and represents a community. Thus, bulwark myths as myths of space can function as emotional glue.²⁴

Contested borderland regions are a particular focus of the myths of space in general and of the bulwark myths in particular. These narratives are particularly prevalent in multiethnic regions where a specific territory has been claimed. Pål Kolstø (Oslo) points out in this context that *antemurale* myths constitute a special case of a boundary-creating mechanism relying to a large extent on civilizational thinking. Because it belongs to a greater civilization, the in-group is defined as superior to certain adjacent groups. Focusing on the national states in Eastern Europe (Georgia, Ukraine, and Russia), Kolstø asks how the *antemurale* myth can play out in situations in which two groups belong to the same Christian confession. In these cases, he concludes, power differentials are just as important as civilizational perceptions for the construction of *antemurale* myths, and stronger and more resourceful groups (nations, ethnic groups) tend to downplay differences while the smaller and less resourceful group will emphasize the differences.

Bulwark myths as myths of space function as narrative "border posts," if we understand space as a cognitive construct functioning as a base for the community.²⁵ Hence, these myths define and justify the claims on the collective territory. This observation fits Georg Simmel's classical definition that, "the boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially."²⁶

The role of a bulwark myth in modern societies is not necessarily limited to the creation of meaning. Often, these myths provide the basis for the sacralization of political ideologies. Contemporary historiography argues that, despite various manifestations of secularization in economic and cultural spheres (like the “nationalization” of Church property in nineteenth-century Western Europe), the “symbiosis of religious and national” remained intact in ideological and mental spheres.²⁷ In the modern period, myths were above all an important instrument of the sacralization of nation/empire/multistate entities and also of the nationalization of religion.²⁸

Many of the authors of this book, with the help of *antemurale* mythology, have been able to trace the theme of the sacralization of nation/empire and the nationalization of religion. It is analyzed in Norris’s text, which describes the transformation of sacralized Russianness into secular Sovietness. It is also scrutinized in Seegel’s chapter on maps as a modern tool to sacralize and instrumentalize the past, and in Hein-Kircher’s case study, which reveals how the Polish rampart Lviv was stylized as a martyr for Western Christianity. But the role of *antemurale* myths in the process of sacralization within modern nations and empires is presented most vividly in the chapters by Berezhnaya, Kerstin Jobst (Vienna), and Srodecki.

Berezhnaya’s study compares the history of three Ukrainian monasteries—the Orthodox Pochaiv Holy Dormition Lavra (Volhynia), the Greek Catholic Nativity Monastery in Zhovkva (near Lviv), and the Orthodox Holy Dormition Monastery (the Crimea). Despite denominational differences, the leadership of these three monasteries shows the same pattern in interpreting the challenges of nationalism. The dissemination of national and imperial ideology with religious overtones occurred with the help of new mass media, actively used by Church hierarchs in political propaganda. It was enhanced by the notions of a “true faith,” a “national Church,” and the new “nationalized” images of enemies.

This “mutual conditioning” between religion and nation as social systems of interpretation is based on political mythology. For some experts, like Anthony Smith, nationalism itself is a product of a hybridization between “the earlier religious myth and the nationalist ideal.”²⁹ Others pay attention to how threats to the national identity are mythologized and sharpen the sense of us and them. As Srodecki discusses in his chapter on East European Catholic Right movements, thanks to that hybridization, bulwark myths in interwar Poland and Hungary stylized both countries as the most important bastions of European freedom and Christian civilization against “godless Bolsheviks.”

It is the borderland situation, the feeling of a “contested frontier,” that determines the specificity of the religious-national bond: “The political conflict is likely to have superimposed upon it a sense of religious conflict,

so that national identity becomes fused with religious identity.”³⁰ The case of Crimea, discussed by Jobst, is perhaps one of the most striking. The absorption of the Crimea into the Russian collective memory was not only a result of organic colonization but a much more complex and multifaceted process of unification. It was accompanied by the ideology of the sacralized and nationalized empire that actively grew on the basis of the bulwark myth and the topos of the Crimea as the cradle of Russian civilization.

One case study in this volume looks at an opposite development: the way the *antemurale* rhetoric was secularized in the twentieth century. As demonstrated by Gasimov, the role of religion in the development of the idea of the Turkish wall was just secondary. Both the exiled intellectuals and their Turkish counterparts were able to combine laicism with Turkish nationalism by developing the idea of an anti-Communist bulwark. In this way, the Turkish rampart nation differed from most European projects on *antemurale*, demonstrating parallels with the contemporary Soviet model.

In public perception, bulwark myths are often mixed with other political myths like that of the “Golden Age” (glorious past) or of common origin.³¹ In the taxonomy of political myths provided by George Schöpflin, *antemurale* myths are placed in the category of redemption and suffering. They could also be situated among the myths of territory, civilizing mission, or national character. The third option contains some contradictions: the *antemurale* myth postulates the inclusion of a single ethnic group into a broader community that is presumably more culturally developed.³² By narrating a heroic achievement of the border community, this myth also claims this community to be an equal part of the core community, which in turn brings it into contradiction with the myth of national character, also quite popular among the borderland communities. The topos of a civilizing mission inherent in bulwark myths suggests a possible resolution to this dilemma. On the one hand, the bulwark myth narrates how the given borderland society defends itself and the core communities. On the other hand, it claims a mission of bringing the communities living on the other side of the “bulwark” the advantages and privileges of a presumably higher and culturally more developed civilization.

In this way, the notion of a civilizing mission, having been a constitutive part of imperial and colonial discourses since the second half of the nineteenth century, also contributes to the popularization of bulwark myths. Yet, several other aspects of its use are important here. The general definition of the civilizing mission refers to the conviction that one’s own society has the right and the duty to intervene in less developed societies in order to promote more progress there.³³ Four basic components are inherent to such a definition: the idea of progress, the idea of the superiority of one’s own society, the notion that the civilizing society is able to reach the highest

level of civilization, and, finally, the conviction that progress in other societies can be accelerated through intervention.³⁴ This secular definition of a civilizing mission, however, is deeply rooted in the old concept of Christian mission, which did not disappear with the rise of modernity. As the studies of bulwark myths reveal, the general idea of progress and civilization is often enriched here by messianic overtones and the notion of moral progress (as, for instance, demonstrated in Seegel's study of the 1883 Polish map). It is associated with Divine Providence and religious conversions.³⁵

Another consistent feature of bulwark myths is the constant reference to common places of memory. Our book provides a variety of examples of East European *antemurale* places of memory. These include historical personalities (e.g., the Polish King Jan III Sobieski in Hein-Kircher's study) and events (e.g., the "Miracle on the Vistula" and the "Red Terror" in Srodecki's chapter) and sacral places (e.g., Pochaiv Holy Dormition Lavra and Crimea) and artifacts (Vasnetsov's "Warriors" and Butsmaniuk's frescoes in western Ukrainian Zhovkva).

These are symbols that serve as building blocks of political myths, including the bulwark ones. As formulated by George Schöfplin, "Reference to symbols could be quite sufficient to recall the myth for members of the community without needing to return to the ritual."³⁶

Generally, cultures of memory consist of various historically and culturally variable practices and concepts. They (re)produce a certain image of the past in the collective memory and transform it into the present. Moreover, they produce suggestive interpretive patterns and imagined traditions that are used as a message for the respective society. In this way, the culture of memory is potentially charged with political myths.³⁷

In sum, bulwark myths are an interpretation of the historic achievements of a society and its territorial shape. At the same time, they not only claim a territory but also define the society's relation to its territory. Bulwark myths quite paradigmatically demonstrate the interrelation between identity formation and territorial claims. They also provide legitimacy to the "borders in the mind."³⁸ As a result, one can find bulwark myths where it is necessary to strengthen identity and culture, to define a society in demarcating it from Others and to imagine a territory.³⁹

Bulwark Myths in Modern Eastern Europe

These narrative strategies are often to be found in East European history, and they contribute to the imagination of Eastern Europe in a specific way. As discussed in Weiland's chapter, the concept of *antemurale christianitatis* emerged in the high Middle Ages against the background of the Mongol

raids and reached its peak between the late fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly during the anti-Ottoman wars.⁴⁰ The notion of being a bulwark against the Muslim threat was widespread in early modern Croatia, Hungary, and Venice; the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; and the lands of the Habsburg monarchy.⁴¹

From the very beginning, the (self-)definition of *antemurale* was mostly limited to the Catholic lands. Territories dominated by the Eastern Rite believers—such as Serbia, Muscovy, Rhodes, and Crete—were granted this title by the Holy See only with certain reservations. Although typical for the Christian-Islamic border, *antemurale* myths can also be found in the regions where different Christian faiths meet. Here, the extrapolation “civilization/barbarism” is often enriched with thoughts about the “true faith.” In this way, the *antemurale* myth is used as a source of legitimation for different kinds of missionary activities (religious, political, and cultural), perhaps with the only exception being the Transylvanian case Ciprian Ghisa (Cluj) discusses in this volume.

The *antemurale* rhetoric is by no means a prerogative of East European elites and media. However, *antemurale* myths acquired particular relevance and meaning in East European frontier zones. By frontier zones, we mean the territories that are situated along the southern, southwestern, and western borders of the former Russian Empire, encompassing the lands of modern-day Ukraine and the Black Sea region. These lands have been contested since antiquity, and they have contributed to the growth of the Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian empires as multiethnic and multifaith communities. For some, these territories, with regard to their historical legacies, fit the category of the so-called mesoregions,⁴² or even “borderland-type civilizations” (e.g., the Black Sea region, the so-called East European borderland including Belarus and Moldova),⁴³ or, more traditionally, East Central Europe, otherwise defined as New Central Europe.⁴⁴

It is remarkable, though, that many of these regional attempts to reconsider European geography within the so-called spatial turn combine the positively charged borderland’s “pluralistic image” with the narratives of “victimization” and “resistance.” The concept of the “frontier civilization” as a precondition of the democratic development in post-Cold War Europe also found its promoters.⁴⁵ Clearly, such methodological approaches “are neither harmful nor innocent. Imagined spaces on mental maps can be ascribed not only as ‘spaces of perception,’ but also as ‘spaces of action.’”⁴⁶

Although we are aware of the shortcomings of regionalization in modern historical writing,⁴⁷ we define the geographical focus of our volume as mesoregional. Our book deals mostly with the lands of modern Ukraine and its neighbors (Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Habsburg, and

Ottoman lands) in the age of nationalism. This includes border regions as well as some of the so-called core imperial areas (e.g., Russian in Norris's and Kolstø's chapters and Ottoman/Turkish in Gasimov's text). The mesoregional approach permits looking "at de-territorialized yet not timeless units of analysis by way of intra-regional and inter-regional comparison in order to identify clusters of *longue durée*-like structural markers."⁴⁸ We are also fully aware of terminological intricacies in this sense (Ukraine and its many neighbors did not have sovereignty in this period and, thus, had no clearly defined state borders). Still, it is on the one hand fruitful to start from the classical view of *antemurale* rhetoric as the prerogative of Catholic countries. On the other hand, our approach allows us to introduce various multiconfessional and multiethnic perspectives on the whole region beyond the narrow scope of specific national discourses.

Recent historiography emphasizes that "mesoregion" is an analytical category, not an ontological one. As Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi argue in their latest book, "Regions thus do not emerge as objectified and disjointed units functioning as quasi-national entities with fixed boundaries and clear-cut lines between insiders and outsiders, but rather as flexible and historically changing frameworks for interpreting certain phenomena."⁴⁹

We assume that Eastern Europe as a mesoregion could be described in terms of multilayered, complex interactions of the steppe, of Rus, Polish, Habsburg, Russian, Ottoman imperial, and Soviet traditions.⁵⁰ We are aware that—with reference to long and intensive research debates—some of our authors (e.g., Seegel and Srodecki) could not follow the geographical term "Eastern Europe" and define these territories more concretely as East Central Europe, which includes German territories, or Central Europe, which also encompasses Austrian lands.

Whether called Eastern, Central, or East Central Europe, these were the lands of "several nested geographies,"⁵¹ at the same time being "a contact zone possessing a quite differentiated spectrum of social and cultural phenomena."⁵² Mary Louise Pratt defines contact zones as social arenas in which cultures "meet, clash, and grapple with each other within spaces of asymmetrical power relations."⁵³ These territories could otherwise be called a communication region that is characterized by dense internal interaction and multiple cultural practices and experiences.⁵⁴

The logic of the *antemurale* functioned on both sides there. For the local population, living on a front line required both cooperation and confrontation with close neighbors. In the case of danger, bulwark rhetoric was often in use, while the logic of cooperation across the border emerged in peaceful times. This region was seen both as a bulwark and as a bridge. Border conflicts gave rise to the formation of semi-independent military units, such

as the Ukrainian Cossacks, who were often portrayed as frontiersmen defending the Orthodox faith, the Ukrainian nation, or the Russian Empire.⁵⁵ The boundary between Christian and Islamic cultures, which is rooted in history, also influenced various interdependent debates about civilization, barbarism, religious missions, and self-identification with the role of a “chosen people” (e.g., as defenders of faith or culture) in the region.⁵⁶

Since the nineteenth century, the mythic narrative of bulwarks has undergone considerable change due to the rise of nationalism and the transformations of political borders. *Antemurale* myths have therefore experienced a revival as modern rampart nations were born. Recent statements by East European politicians and journalists, as analyzed in Kolstø’s chapter and Srodecki’s concluding remarks on the legacies of the *antemurale* rhetorics at the end of the book, show that ancient topoi of a chosen people and the civilization/barbarism divide remain intact today. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, anti-Islamic rhetoric has sometimes been replaced by a sharp anti-Russian/Soviet vocabulary.

This is aptly demonstrated in several case studies in this volume, particularly in those of Kolstø, Gasimov, and Srodecki. Political myths of *antemurale*, due to their semantic flexibility, are essential elements of national ideologies. A certain chain effect has been crucial in this respect. Despite the obvious “dividing function” of bulwark myths, many national traditions in the region have been determined in their modern (i.e., mainly nineteenth-century) development by the inclusion of mirroring images of the enemy from the other side of the border. Since the nationally motivated and accelerated enhancement of bulwark narratives in the nineteenth century, they have become an important source of legitimation for the ideologies of nation-states and empires in the region. Consequently, they are deeply engraved in today’s national consciousness.

One focus of our book rests upon the *longue durée* processes in national consciousness from the end of the eighteenth century until World War II. In the historical literature, this period has been given the name of “the age of nationalism.” It is generally supposed that this time witnessed the rise of nationalism, which became a generally recognized sentiment molding public and private life. However, such a universal definition is questionable. In the abovementioned region, the expression of nationalism had different forms. Some scholars define an “Eastern type of nationalism” as ethnic, as opposed to “Western nationalism,” which they say was a civic one. Hans Kohn, who coined this typology around World War II, described ethnic nationalism as inherently backward, while civic (political) nationalism was allegedly progressive.⁵⁷ The critique of such assertions concerned mostly the equation of nation and state, which in some East European cases is rather problematic. The often postulated equation

of nation and modernity also does not seem to work in Eastern European contexts in the “long” nineteenth century.⁵⁸

However, the most critical point deals with the dichotomy between nation-state and empire. For decades, historians have seen empires, in contrast to nation-states, in the, “tradition of negativity, which perceived social reality through a framework defined by the characteristics of the modern world of nation-states and its historicity. Empire within this old trend has been defined as the opposite and the subordinate: a historical archaism before the advent of the age of nationalism.”⁵⁹

Instead, we opt for a more balanced solution: one should not sharply oppose the nationalization of empires to the formation of nation-states during the long nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Both processes took place in the region; both were legitimized by bulwark myths. The examples discussed by Kravchenko and by Ghisa in this book demonstrate this statement *ex negativo*. Kravchenko and Ghisa raise the issue of historical contexts that prevent the spread of bulwark rhetoric. In Kravchenko’s article, these were territorial divisions that prevented the formation of *antemurale* mythology.

Early nineteenth-century Ukrainian territories were often perceived as “lands-in-between” suffering from “fatal geography.” Because Ghisa describes a rather peaceful coexistence in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Transylvania, one can presume that this particular situation was also the reason for the absence of the *antemurale* rhetoric. A “confessional security” could indeed prevent the feeling of threat and in this way hinder the dissemination of bulwark rhetoric in confessional polemics. For the Greek Catholic elites in Transylvania, the only apparent danger was that coming from inside, as the Orthodox threat. Although the rhetoric of belonging to the greater and more civilized Roman Catholic community was quite popular at the time, bulwark mythology did not find fertile ground in Transylvania. From these counterexamples, we can assume that a threat scenario from outside is one of the absolute prerequisites for the formation and popularization of bulwark myths.

The second focus of our book is on a synchronic perspective, allowing the tracing of reciprocal transfers and multisided national and interconfessional ideological competition and the intertwining of mythical narratives. The emphasis on transfers and the media of myth making allows us to apply the approach of transnational history to our subject. One of our key arguments is that, since the late Middle Ages, the main agents of *antemurale* mythology’s dissemination in Eastern Europe have been transnational actors. This is apparent in the studies of Weiland, Gasimov, and Seegel: whether in the case of Renaissance theologians, historians and diplomats, or modern émigré politicians and cartographers, these were all the stories of transnational lives, contacts, and careers. Our book is the history

of transfers and borrowings that demonstrate how *antemurale* rhetoric, colored with the stains of separation and delineation, has always been popularized by transnational actors.

In this book, we have scrutinized the peculiarities of *antemurale* rhetoric's application to various national and imperial ideologies and the respective processes of "mental mapping" in the region. We thus decided to focus on two important aspects: the abovementioned role of *antemurale* mythology in the (de-)sacralization and nationalization of borderland regions and the major forms, media, and actors of *antemurale* discourses. Our volume is hence organized in four parts: Background (Part I), (De-)Sacralizing and Nationalizing Borderlands (Part II), Promoting *Antemurale* Discourses (Part III), and Reflections on the Bulwark Myths Today (Part IV).

After an introduction by Berezhnaya and Hein-Kircher and a historical reframing presented by Weiland in Part I, all chapters of Part II deal with the (de-)sacralization and nationalization of the Eastern European borderlands. As explained above, Ghisa's chapter provides a counterexample and demonstrates that the denominational Othering functioned only within the ethnic community and not outside of it. As he discusses the early stage, it seems that this process embossed the further development of the national movement of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hein-Kircher explains then, that due to the negative image of the Ruthenians/Ukrainians, the Polish *antemurale* topos picked up the denominational differences between these groups and lead finally to a legitimization of the national conflict within the city of Lviv and Galicia and to a de-sacralization of the *antemurale* topos.

In the next chapter, Heyde explains the inner-Jewish discussions on excluding or integrating the Jews mainly in postemancipational times in Galicia. One important finding is, like that of Ghisa, that innergroup conflicts using religious arguments also lead to the erection of inner walls. The same phenomenon is discussed in Berezhnaya's chapter, which demonstrates that through religious *antemurale* argumentations, nationalizing processes lead to national differentiations. Gasimov's chapter concludes the section by showing through the Turkish case—the imagination of an anti-communist and anti-Russian bulwark—that *antemurale* rhetoric does not necessarily lead to the sacralization of the nation. (De-)sacralization and nationalization of the Eastern European borders are hence highly entangled, possessing legitimizing and coherence-giving functions.

Part III is consecutively dedicated to the promotion of these discourses. At first, Kravchenko discusses why the *antemurale* myth had not developed in Ukraine during the first half of the nineteenth century. He concludes that, because of the late nation-building process, the promotion of *antemurale* thinking became possible only when the Ukrainian national movement

began to build its own national space at the beginning of the twentieth century. Hofeneder and Seegel explain in their chapters how seemingly “neutral” media, such as schoolbooks and maps, were used as key instruments for the dissemination of rampart myths and the construction of a national space that excluded Other ethnic and national groups.

The following chapters of Srodecki and Norris discuss the *longue durée* aspects of the lives of myths. Srodecki focuses on the new anti-Bolshevik narrative that emerged after World War I in Hungary and Poland, while Norris discusses the varying perceptions of one painting that represents the Russian founding myth from the nineteenth century until the first decade of the twenty-first century. To sum up the findings of this part, the promotion of *antemurale* myths could be carried out by different media, but they have to narrate the myth’s message verbally, visually, or even ritually.

The consequences of this promotion and implementation of bulwark myths in contemporary Eastern European historical consciousnesses are analyzed in Part IV. Kolstø focuses on the boundary-making *antemurale*, emphasizing their cultural and denominational differences, but concludes that they mostly refer to power relations. Srodecki’s chapter discusses the emergence of today’s *antemurale* rhetoric. The contemporary bulwark myth is experiencing a revival and is often used to legitimize and sharpen political conflicts in the region. It appears to be grounded on the historical legacies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries discussed in this book. Rampart myths have not yet lost their political impact on Eastern European rampart nations.

Our book demonstrates that *antemurale* rhetoric arises from the need of the border society to differentiate itself from a religious (confessional)/ethnic/national/civilizational Other when faced with a real or perceived threat. In modern Eastern Europe numerous actors took part in the dissemination of *antemurale* mythology: political and religious leaders, intellectuals, artists, cartographers, and journalists. As they crossed multiple state and regional borders to popularize threat scenarios, they became real protagonists of transnational history. In the age of nationalism, these actors used various media to reach an audience from schoolbook maps, newspapers, and paintings to historical texts, sermons, and political manifestos.

In a way, by legitimating lines of division, *antemurale* propagators have all worked against borderland traditions of coexistence and cross-border cooperation. By the end of the nineteenth century, as the traditional imperial orders of the Romanovs, Habsburgs, Ottomans, and Hohenzollern gradually waned, nationalizing discourses using *antemurale* rhetoric became dominant. These communicators of *antemurale* rhetoric often used

various religious and secular sites of memory in this mesoregion for the popularization of *antemurale* mythology within the framework of nationalist or imperial ideologies. Because this rhetoric was an effective weapon with high mobilizing potential, it was particularly attractive for the opposing sides during World War I. By the end of the war, East European borderlands had indeed become “bloodlands.”⁶¹

Our book is intended to provide a stimulus for further transnational studies of myth making in this East European mesoregion and to supply historical background knowledge for understanding the revival of bulwark mythology in contemporary Eastern Europe. It includes examples of Jewish and other non-Christian *antemurale* mythology in order to enrich scholarship on bulwark myths. However, our book cannot cover the whole geographical spectrum—for instance, Moldova is only touched on, while the Baltic lands are entirely missing from this book. The sample case studies use various methodological approaches (from art history to theology, with most chapters concentrated at the crossroads of political, social, and religious history) and introduce the diversity of bulwark myths, while also revealing their common foundations.

Nevertheless, our volume does not encompass a systematic or complete investigation of bulwark rhetoric in the region. Several questions remain to be answered: How is the use of bulwark mythology in political and religious ideologies to be distinguished from its abuse? Were there any differences between denominationally homogeneous areas and those that were mixed? Can we find any specifically confessional aspects in bulwark mythology? How did the panmovement ideologies (e.g., pan-Slavism) influence transformations in the *antemurale* myths? Although some questions remain to be answered, our book gives an overview of the way bulwark myths contributed to the “historization” of borderland communities. It also reveals how these myths were, and today still are, appropriated by national movements to demarcate themselves from other denominational and ethnic groups.

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Heidi Hein-Kircher earned her M.A. and her Ph.D. (East European history, modern history, political sciences, and Yiddish) from Heinrich Heine-University in Düsseldorf. In 2018, she earned her habilitation degree at Philipps University in Marburg. Since 2003, she has been on the research staff of the Herder-Institute for Historical Research in East Central Europe in Marburg, Germany, and since 2009 she has been the head of department “academic forum.” In her research, she focuses on political and cultural myths in East Central Europe and on urban history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in East Central Europe, especially on Lviv in the nineteenth century.

Notes

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Rampart Nations

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