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# POTS, SLAVS AND 'IMAGINED COMMUNITIES': SLAVIC ARCHAEOLOGIES AND THE HISTORY OF THE EARLY SLAVS

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*Abstract:* Despite recent emphasis on the impact of nationalism on archaeology, the discussion has centered more on the ideological framework of the culture-historical school of archaeology, particularly on the concept of archaeological culture. Comparatively little attention has been paid to how archaeologists contributed to the construction of the national past. This article examines Slavic archaeology, a discipline crisscrossing national divisions of archaeological schools, within the broader context of the 'politics of culture' which characterizes all nation-states, as 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1991). Indeed, the current academic discourse about the early Slavs in Ukraine, Russia, and Romania appears as strikingly tied to political, rather than intellectual, considerations. In eastern Europe, the concept of archaeological culture is still defined in monothetic terms on the basis of the presence or absence of a list of traits or types derived from typical sites or intuitively considered to be representative cultural attributes. Archaeologists thus regarded archaeological cultures as actors on the historical stage, playing the role individuals or groups have in documentary history. Archaeological cultures became ethnic groups, and were used to legitimize claims of modern nation-states to territory and influence.

*Keywords:* Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, 'imagined communities', nationalism, Poland, Romania, Slavic archaeology, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia

## INTRODUCTION

Despite so much recent emphasis on the impact of nationalism on archaeology, the discussion has centered upon either the 'politics of archaeology' (Plumet 1984; Kohl and Fawcett 1995) or the ideological framework of culture history (Brachmann 1979; Shennan 1989; Hides 1996). The current focus is more on the history of archaeological thought and less on the contribution of archaeology to the construction of the national past. Most case studies are restricted to individual countries and the specific application of a general approach based on diffusion and migration. The assumption is that, from Nazi Germany to post-war Korea, archaeologists have tried to write (pre)histories of specific groups in similar ways (Veit 1989; Nelson 1995). Commonality of methods and techniques is often viewed as sufficient evidence for identical goals. As a consequence, macro-regional studies lump very

different uses of archaeology under supposedly common denominators, such as 'Balkan archaeology' (Kaiser 1995:108–109). In fact, the study of archaeologies, rather than of archaeology, can show that, far from copying from each other, archaeologists manipulated such concepts as migration, diffusion, and culture to reach very different, often conflicting conclusions. Focusing on Slavic archaeologies, this paper will attempt to establish criteria for distinguishing readings of the past, which were appropriated by identity politics.

### POTS AND SLAVS

The rise of Slavic archaeology is often associated with the name of Lubor Niederle (1865–1944), who believed that the nature of the original homeland of the Slavs in Polesie (Ukraine) forced them into a poor level of civilization, and that, like the ancient Germans and Celts, the Slavs were *enfants de la nature*. Only the contact with the more advanced Roman civilization made it possible for the Slavs to give up their original culture based entirely on wood and to start producing their own pottery (Niederle 1923:49; 1925:513; 1926:1–2, 5). Niederle's emphasis on material culture pointed to a new direction in the development of Slavic studies. Inspired by him, Vykentyi V. Khvoika (1850–1924) ascribed the fourth-century-AD Chernyakhov culture to the Slavs (Khvoika 1901, 1913:43–47; see also Lebedev 1992:260–262; Shnirel'man 1996:225; Baran et al. 1990:33). Similarly, the Russian archaeologist Aleksei A. Spicyn (1928) first attributed to the Antes hoards of silver and bronze from Ukraine. But the foundations of a mature Slavic archaeology were primarily the work of Czech archaeologists. It was a new type of pottery that caused the greatest shifts of emphasis in the early years of the twentieth century (Sklenář 1983:95, 125). Ivan Borkovský (1940) called it the 'Prague type' – a national, exclusively Slavic, kind of pottery. He defined this as a hand-made, mica-tempered pottery with no decoration. The Prague type was the earliest Slavic pottery, the forms and rims of which slowly changed under Roman influence. In his book, Borkovský boldly argued that the earliest Slavic pottery derived from local Iron Age traditions. Although he laid more emphasis on culture than on race, Borkovský's book coincided with the first failure of the Nazis to pigeonhole the Czechs as racially inferior. Despite his caution and use of a rather technical vocabulary, Borkovský's work was denounced as anti-German and immediately withdrawn from bookshops (Preidel 1954:57; Mastny 1971:130–131; Sklenář 1983:162–163; Chropovský 1989:23).

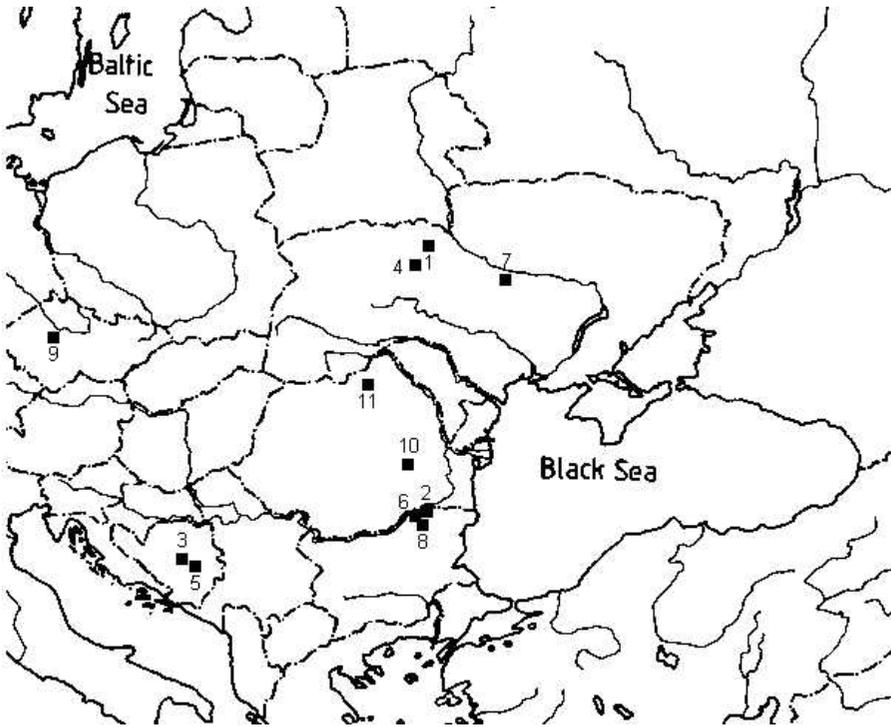
### SLAVIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SOVIET UNION

The association between Slavic archaeology and Nazi ideology is even stronger in the case of the Soviet Union. Until the mid-1930s, Slavic studies were viewed as anti-Marxist and the dominant discourse about the early Slavs was that inspired by N.I. Marr (Goriainov 1990). Marr's supporter in the discipline, N.S. Derzhavin (1877–1953), believed that the Slavs were native to the Balkans and that sources began to talk about them only after AD 500, because it was at that time that the

Slavs revolted against Roman slavery (Derzhavin 1939). According to Derzhavin, the term 'Slavs' was just a new name for the old population exploited by Roman land-owners, not an ethnic label. Derzhavin's interpretation of early Slavic history was very popular in the early years of Soviet archaeology, because he interpreted cultural and linguistic changes as the direct results of socio-economic shifts.

Another interpretation, however, was abruptly put forward in the late 1930s. The shift 'from internationalism to nationalism' has been described by Viktor Shnirel'man (1993, 1995a) and its impact on Slavic archaeology is currently under study (Aksenova and Vasil'ev 1993; Curta in press). As Stalin set historians the task of active combat against fascist falsifications of history, the main focus of archaeological research shifted to the prehistory of the Slavs. Archaeologists involved in tackling this problem had been educated in the years of the cultural revolution and were still working within a Marrist paradigm. Mikhail I. Artamonov was the first to attempt a combination of Marrism and Kossinnism, thus recognizing the ethnic appearance of some archaeological assemblages while, at the same time, rehabilitating the concept of 'archaeological culture' (Artamonov 1971; Klejn 1977:14; Ganzha 1987:142; Shnirel'man 1995a:132. For Kossinna see Klejn 1974). During the war, as the Soviet propaganda was searching for means to mobilize Soviet society against the Nazi aggressor, Slavic ethnogenesis, now the major, if not the only, research topic of Soviet archaeology, gradually turned into a symbol of national identity (Shnirel'man 1995b). As Marr's teachings were abandoned in favor of a culture-historical approach, the origins of the Slavs (i.e. Russians) were pushed even further into prehistory. The only apparent problem was that of the 'missing link' between the Scythians and the Kievan Rus'. Boris Rybakov, a professor of history at the University of Moscow, offered an easy solution. He attributed to the Slavs both Spitsyn's 'Antian antiquities' and the remains excavated by Khvoika at Chernyakhov (Rybakov 1943). Many embraced the idea of a Slavic Chernyakhov culture, even after this culture turned into a coalition of ethnic groups under the leadership of the Goths (Klejn 1955; Korzukhina 1955).

The 1950s witnessed massive state investments in archaeology (see Fig. 1 for the main sites mentioned in this article). With the unearthing of the first remains of sixth- and seventh-century settlements in Ukraine, the idea of the Chernyakhov culture as primarily Slavic simply died out. Iurii V. Kukharenko (1955) called the hand-made pottery found on these sites the 'Zhitomir type' which he viewed as a local variant of the Prague type established by Borkovský in 1940. Later, Kukharenko (1960) abandoned the idea of a variant in favor of a single Prague type for all Slavic cultures between the Elbe and the Dnieper. Others, however, argued that since the pottery found at Korchak, near Zhitomir, derived from the local pottery of the early Iron Age, the Zhitomir type antedated Borkovský's Prague type. As a consequence, the earliest Slavic pottery was that of Ukraine, not that of Czechoslovakia (Petrov 1963:123). Irina P. Rusanova (1976, 1984–1987) first applied statistical methods to the identification of pottery types. Her conclusion was that vessels of certain proportions made up what she called the Prague-Korchak-type. To Rusanova (1978:148), this type was a sort of symbol, the main and only indicator of Slavic ethnicity in material culture terms. In contrast, Valentin V. Sedov (1970, 1979, 1987, 1988)



**Figure 1.** Location map of principal sites mentioned in the text: 1. Chernyakhov; 2. Dzhedzhovi Lozia; 3. Jazbine; 4. Korchak; 5. Mušiči; 6. Nova Cherna; 7. Pen'kovka; 8. Popina; 9. Prague; 10. Sârata Monteoru; 11. Suceava-Şipot.

spoke of two types of Slavic pottery with two separate distributions: the 'Prague zone' and the 'Pen'kovka zone,' fall-out curves neatly coinciding with the borders of the Soviet republics.

### SLAVIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN POST-WAR EUROPE

The establishment, between 1945 and 1948, of Communist-dominated governments under Moscow's protection profoundly altered the development of Slavic studies in eastern Europe. The interpretation favored by Soviet scholars became the norm even in countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia, where such studies had longer traditions than in Soviet Russia. In countries with less developed Slavic archaeologies, the Slavs were now given the most important role in the study of the early Middle Ages (Bálint 1989:191; Curta 1994:238–239). In Czechoslovakia, Borkovský's ideas about Slavic origins were rejected in favor of an interpretation stressing the Slavic immigration from Ukraine (Pouliík 1948:15–19). Others argued that there were two migrations to Slovakia, one from the west (Moravia), the other from the

south (Zábojník 1988:401–402; Čilinská 1989–1990; Jelinková 1990; Habovštiak 1992–1993). Similar theories were advanced for Bohemia (Zeman 1968:673, 1984–1987). The Slavs were archaeologically identifiable by means of the Zhitomir-Korchak type, with its, now local, variant, known as the 'Prague type.' But in the 1960s, Borkovský's thesis that the Slavs were natives to the territory of Czechoslovakia resurfaced (Budinský-Krička 1963; Bialeková 1968; Chropovský and Ruttkay 1988:19; Chropovský 1989:33). The Polish linguist, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński (1946), first attributed the Przeworsk culture to the Slavs, an idea developed in the Soviet Union by Rusanova and Sedov. Lehr-Spławiński's thesis was widely accepted by Polish archaeologists during the 1950s and 1960s, as well as later (e.g. Hensel 1988). By that time, Jozef Kostrzewski (1969) was still speaking of the Slavic character of the Lusatian culture of the Bronze Age. With the elaboration of the first chronological system for the early medieval archaeology of central Europe (Godłowski 1970), it became evident, however, that no relation existed between the early Slavic culture and its predecessors. Moreover, like Jiří Zeman (1976, 1979) in Czechoslovakia, Kazimierz Godłowski insisted that, besides pottery, sunken huts and cremation burials were equally important for the definition of Slavic culture. The specific combination of these cultural elements first appeared at the end of the *Völkerwanderungszeit* in those areas of eastern and central Europe which had recently been abandoned by Germanic tribes. To Godłowski (1979, 1983), the Slavs did not exist before *c.* 500 as a cultural and ethnic group. Godłowski's student, Michał Parczewski (1988, 1991, 1993), dealt the final blow to traditional views that the Slavs were native to the Polish territory through his argument that the early Slavic culture spread from Ukraine into southern Poland during the second half of the sixth century and the early seventh century.

During the 1950s, many Yugoslav historians and linguists supported the concept of a Slavic homeland in Pannonia (e.g. Popović 1959). Similarly, some archaeologists derived the Slavic Prague type from Dacian pottery (Garašanin 1950). Others, however, maintained that no Slavic settlement in the Balkans could have taken place before *c.* 500 (Barišić 1956; Ljubinković 1973:173). When the Croatian archaeologist Zdenko Vinski (1954) published a number of pots from the collections of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, interpreting them as Prague-type pottery, many replied that the earliest Slavic pottery in Croatia was not earlier than the eighth century and had nothing to do with the Prague type. Ljubo Karaman (1956:107–108) criticized Borkovský for having made this pottery exclusively Slavic. Josip Korošec (1958:5, 1958–1959, 1967) further criticized Soviet archaeologists for their attempts to link the Slavs to the Scythians or to the Chernyakhov culture, an accusation well attuned to the Yugoslav-Soviet relations of the late 1950s. He rightly pointed to the need of the Soviet archaeologists to create a pottery type that would both be earlier than Borkovský's Prague type and certify the presence of the Slavs in the Dnieper basin before the rise of Kievan Rus'. According to Korošec, however, there was no relation between the pottery found in Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and the Prague type. But Korošec's skepticism does not seem to have deterred historians from 'discovering' the earliest Slavic settlement. Franjo Barišić (1969) posited a massive Slavic settlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina

after the raids of 550 and 551. He argued that the first Sklavinia to be established south of the rivers Danube and Save was that of Bosnia. In support of his contention, he cited the site excavated by Irma Čremošnik at Mušići, near Sarajevo (Čremošnik 1970–1971). The choice was well founded. Čremošnik had compared the pottery found there with that from the Romanian site at Suceava, thought to be of an early date. Although Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Bulgarian archaeologists pointed to the rectangular sunken pit-house as typically Slavic, Čremošnik (1980) believed the yurt-like huts found at Jazbine (Bosnia) to be Slavic and traced their origin to Neolithic house forms. Others, in an attempt to legitimize the antiquity of the Slavs in Yugoslavia, believed that the materials found at Mušići were older than any other find from Romania or Bulgaria (Čorović-Ljubinković 1972:52). A recent attempt to legitimize Serbian claims to territory in the context of the war in Bosnia relied on the re-attribution of the finds from Mušići to the Serbs (Janković 1998:111).

The problem of the early Slavs was approached somewhat differently in Bulgaria. When V. Mikov (1945–1947) published the first article on early Slavic history that took into consideration the archaeological evidence, he was forced to recognize that, unlike other countries, only few remains existed in Bulgaria that may have been associated with the sixth- to seventh-century Slavs. Shortly thereafter, a group of Soviet archaeologists and ethnographers arrived in Sofia with the mission to teach Bulgarians how to organize the Slavic archaeology, thereafter the main task of the newly created department of the Institute of Archaeology. Krăstiu Miiatev, the director of the Institute, published the first study on Slavic pottery, primarily based on museum collections (Miiatev 1948). Inspired by Derzhavin's theories, Miiatev believed that the Slavic pottery had local, Thracian origins. The main Bulgarian member of the Soviet-Bulgarian archaeological team was Zhivka Văzharova, who had just returned from Leningrad and was closely associated with Soviet scholars, especially with Mikhail I. Artamonov. In an article published in the USSR, Văzharova first linked the ceramic material found at Popina, near Silistra, to the Prague type. She interpreted the neighboring site at Dzhedzhovi Lozia as the earliest Slavic settlement in the Balkans (Văzharova 1954, 1956, 1971a:18). Văzharova put forward a chronology of the Slavic culture in Bulgaria, which equated the earliest occupation phase at Dzhedzhovi Lozia with the Prague and Korchak-Zhitomir cultures (Văzharova 1964, 1966). Her interpretation of the site, however, was criticized by Soviet archaeologists (Rusanova 1978:142). As a consequence, Văzharova began entertaining ideas of a much later chronology, while acknowledging significant differences between the pottery found at Dzhedzhovi Lozia and the Prague and Zhitomir-Korchak types (Văzharova 1968:154, 1971b:268). She later argued that the early Slavic culture in Bulgaria was the result of two different migrations, one from the north, across the Danube, the other from the west, originating in Pannonia (Văzharova 1973, 1974).

But the need to push the antiquity of the Slavs back in time was too strong and the association between Slavs and Thracians too alluring. According to Atanas Milchev (1970:36; 1976:54; 1987), upon their arrival in the lower Danube basin, the Slavs were welcomed by the Thracian population of the Balkan provinces.

To native Thracians, the Slavs were not invaders, but allies against a common enemy – the Roman Empire. Against Rusanova's claims that the first Slavic settlements in Bulgaria cannot be dated earlier than the seventh century, Milchev (1975:388) argued that the archaeological evidence from Nova Cherna, near Silistra, indicated the presence of Slavic federates in Roman service (see Angelova 1980:4). The evidence comes from a refuse pit inside an early Byzantine fort, in which Milchev and Angelova found sherds of hand-made pottery associated with wheel-made pottery and a late sixth-century bow fibula. They promptly ascribed the hand-made pottery to the Korchak-Zhitomir type, as defined by Rusanova (Milchev and Angelova 1970:29). Angelova also ascribed to the Pen'kovka type small fragments of pottery found in a sunken building and spoke of the Antes as the first Slavs in Bulgaria (Angelova 1980:3). As a consequence, Zhivka Văzharova returned to her first thesis and maintained that the site's earliest phase was characterized by sixth-century Prague-Korchak and Pen'kovka pottery (Văzharova 1986:70, n. 1; *contra* Koleva 1992).

To many archaeologists, Romania is the key territory for understanding the spread and development of the Slavic culture (Kurnatowska 1974:55, 58; Vána 1983:25). On the other hand, there is clear evidence that, in post-war Romania, attempts to give Slavs the primary role in national history needed serious encouragement from the Romanian Communist leaders and their Soviet counselors (Georgescu 1991:27). Archaeologists and historians were urged to find evidence for the earliest possible presence of the Slavs. During the 1950s, excavations began on many sites with allegedly Slavic remains, such as Sărata Monteoru and Suceava. Kurt Horedt (1951), a German-born Romanian archaeologist, first introduced the phrase 'Slavic pottery' into the archaeological jargon of his country. He spoke of the Slavic expansion as the most important event in the early medieval history of the region. Maria Comșa (1959:66), Artamonov's student at the University of Leningrad, argued that the stone oven associated with sixth- to seventh-century sunken buildings was a specific Slavic artifact. In 1943, Ion Nestor began excavations at Sărata Monteoru, a large cemetery with cremation burials. He continued to work there after the war (Anonymous 1953). Nestor (1969:145) insisted that the Slavs were primarily recognizable by means of cremation burials, either in urns or in simple cremation pits. Moreover, he did not agree with Comșa's chronology of the Slavic culture in Romania. According to Maria Comșa, the Slavs had already occupied Wallachia during the reign of Justin I. Nestor (1959, 1965, 1973) maintained that an effective settlement could not have taken place before the second half of the sixth century. He accused Maria Comșa of paying lip service to 'Niederle's school' in order to demonstrate that the expansion of the Slavs had begun as early as the fifth century. According to him, 'there is only a slight chance that some Slavic groups settled in Moldavia and Wallachia as early as the first half of the sixth century'. To Nestor, the expansion of the Slavs was inconceivable without the migration of the Avars. During the 1970s, the dating of the earliest Slavic artifacts on the territory of Romania began to move into the late sixth and early seventh century (Teodor 1972b, 1978:40; Mitrea 1974–1976:87; P. Diaconu 1979:167). By 1980, the earliest

date admitted for the Slavic migration to the lower Danube was either shortly before AD 600 or much later (Teodor 1984a:65).

Nestor was well aware that the earliest information regarding the Slavs was securely dated to the early sixth century. In order to eliminate the apparent contradiction between historical sources and archaeological evidence, he suggested that the Slavic raids into the Balkan provinces originated not in Wallachia but in the regions between the Prut and the Dniester, i.e. outside the present-day territory of Romania (Nestor 1961:431; *contra* Ștefan 1965). In the years following Ceaușescu's bold criticism of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia (1968), Romanian archaeologists directly attacked the idea, shared by many in the Soviet Union, that the Chernyakhov culture represented the Slavs (Teodor 1969, 1972a). Comșa (1974) and others (Daicovicu 1968:89) had depicted the Slavs as peaceful and dedicated to agriculture. Nestor (1961:429) and Teodor (1969:191, 1980:78, 1982:38) insisted that the Slavs were savage conquerors. In their enthusiasm for proving that the Slavs, like Russians, were aggressors, some researchers, such as Mitrea (1968:257), pointed to evidence of destruction by fire on several sixth- to seventh-century sites in Romania. This, they contended, indicated the destruction of native (Romanian) settlements by the savage Slavs. The argument was rapidly dropped when it became evident that it would work against the cherished idea of Romanian continuity. However, during the 1980s, Romanian archaeologists made every possible effort to bring the Slavic presence north of the Danube close to AD 602 (the date traditionally accepted for the collapse of the Roman frontier on the Danube), in order to diminish as far as possible Slavic influences upon the native, Romanian population. The tendency was thus to locate the homeland of the Slavs far from the territory of modern Romania, and to have them moving across Romania and crossing the Danube as quickly as possible. Any contact with the native Romanians could thus be avoided. A content analysis of the Romanian archaeological literature pertaining to the early Slavs has shown that this tendency coincides with the increasingly nationalistic discourse of the Communist government, in particular with Ceaușescu's claims that the Great Migrations were responsible for Romania lagging behind the West (Curta 1994:266–270; see Verdery 1991). During the 1950s and 1960s, the Slavs were viewed as the political and military rulers of the local population and were given the status of the third component of Romanian ethnogenesis. By 1980 no reference had been made to their contribution to Romanian ethnogenesis. Romanian archaeologists now maintained that the Slavs 'had neither the time, nor the force to change the components, the direction and the evolution of the Romanian ethnogenesis' (Teodor 1984b:135). Nestor (1970:104) spoke of a general regression of civilization caused by Slavs. The primitive hand-made pottery brought by the Slavs replaced wheel-made ceramics of much better quality, while the formerly good Christian Romanians had now turned to cremation. Others blamed the Slavs for having caused a return to prehistory (Bârză and Brezeanu 1991:213). Permanently wandering, bearers of a rather primitive culture, always bent on crossing the Danube, the Slavs found their way to civilization only after getting into contact with the native population and the Roman Empire.

During the 1960s, large-scale excavations took place in Romania, some of which remarkably resulted in the total excavation of sixth- to seventh-century villages (Dolinescu-Ferche 1974, 1979, 1986, 1992; Dolinescu-Ferche and Constantiniu 1981; Teodor 1984a, 1984b; Mitrea 1974–1976, 1992, 1994). But the results of these excavations proved very difficult to accommodate to the new orientation of Romanian archaeology. In 1958, the Slavic remains found at Suceava-Șipot were viewed as a perfect match for Slavic finds in the Soviet Union (Teodor 1958:527; see Nestor 1962:1435). Just 15 years later, Suceava-Șipot was a site showing the adoption of the local, Romanian culture by 'a few scattered Slavic elements' (Teodor 1971; Nestor 1973:31). Having decided that there were no genuine Slavic settlements to be found in Romania, Romanian archaeologists were now searching for the native settlements pre-dating the arrival of the barbarians. Nestor's student Victor Teodorescu (1964, 1971) put forward the influential suggestion that archaeological assemblages of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries constituted a new culture, which he called Ipotești-Cândești. Following his example, Dan Gh. Teodor 'discovered' yet another culture, called Costișa-Botoșana (Teodor 1983). Initially, these new cultures were viewed as a combination of Slavic and native elements. Soon, however, the origins of the Ipotești-Cândești and Costișa-Botoșana assemblages were pushed back to the fifth century, before the arrival of the Slavs, and thus identified as the remains of the local Romanian population (G. Diaconu 1978). At this point, most of the archaeological assemblages previously ascribed to the Slavs changed attribution. Romanians had taught Slavs how to produce wheel-made or better-tempered hand-made pottery, and persuaded them to give up their stone ovens and adopt local, presumably more advanced, ones made of clay. Once believed to be a relevant, if not the most important, archaeological index of the Slavic culture, cremation burials were now viewed as the sign of a sixth-century revival of ancient, Dacian traditions (Bârză 1979:85). The large cemetery at Sărata Monteoru, labeled 'Slavic' in the 1950s and 1960s (Matei 1959), now turned into a site of the Ipotești-Cândești culture and was attributed to the Romanian population (Teodor 1985:60).

## CONCLUSION

This sweeping survey of developments in Slavic archaeologies suggests that the relationship between archaeology and nationalism is much more complex than envisaged by recent studies. Borkovský's Prague culture served a purpose very different from that of the Prague-Zhitomir-Korchak type favored by Soviet archaeologists. Issues of chronology and interpretation were given different weight in Poland, former Yugoslavia, and Romania. Moreover, 'text-driven archaeology' was an approach more often associated with Yugoslav and Bulgarian archaeologists, but not with their Czechoslovak colleagues. In addition, in eastern and south-eastern Europe, the political value of archaeology for the construction of historical narratives by far exceeds the significance of its theoretical and methodological underpinnings. In order to understand 'the archaeological machine', it is therefore necessary not only to assess the impact of the culture-historical approach, but

also to examine the contribution of archaeology to the shaping of national consciousness. That Slavic archaeology was dominated by historicist approaches needs no further emphasis. It is not without interest, though, that different and often contrasting interpretations of the archaeological evidence coincided with, and took advantage from, the re-evaluation of nineteenth-century historiographical works of such influential figures as Nicolae Iorga in Romania or Vassil Zlatarski in Bulgaria. The concept of the archaeological 'culture' also carried many assumptions, which were central to nineteenth-century classifications of human groups – in particular, an overriding concern with holism, homogeneity, and boundedness. In eastern Europe, the concept of the archaeological culture is still defined in monothetic terms on the basis of the presence or absence of a list of traits or types derived from assemblages or intuitively considered to be most appropriate attributes ('type-fossils'). Archaeological cultures are actors on the historical stage, playing the role individuals or groups have in documentary history. As shown by the history of Slavic archaeologies, the tendency was to treat archaeological cultures as ethnic groups, in order to legitimize claims of modern nation-states to territory and influence. At the crucial intersection between archaeology and nationalism, archaeologists thus played a decisive role in the cultural construction of 'imagined communities'.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Different versions of this article were presented at the conference 'Vocabularies of Identities in Russia and Eastern Europe' (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1998), the Mellon Seminar in Medieval Studies Program at Cornell University (1999), and in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh (1999). I wish to express my thanks to the organizers of and participants in all three events, as well as to my colleagues at the University of Florida, Maria Todorova, Thomas Gallant, and Frederick Corney, for their help, advice, and encouragement. I am also grateful for the comments and suggestions of Paul Barford (Warsaw), which have greatly enriched the article.

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**ABSTRACTS****Les slaves et les 'communautés imaginées'***F. Curta*

En dépit de nombreuses études sur l'impact du nationalisme sur l'archéologie, le débat concerne pour l'instant seulement l'idéologie de l'école archéologique d'histoire culturelle et surtout la notion de 'culture' archéologique. Il n'y a que peu d'études sur l'apport des archéologues à l'envisagement du passé national. L'objet de cet article est de mettre en relief l'archéologie slave, en tant que discipline à travers les différentes écoles archéologiques nationales, par rapport à la 'politique culturelle' profondément liée aux manifestations des états nationaux, ces 'communautés imaginées' dont a parlé Benedict Anderson. On a souvent remarqué que les théories actuelles sur les anciens slaves, soit en Ukraine ou en Russie, soit en Roumanie, sont le reflet d'attitudes politiques plutôt qu'intellectuelles. Dans les pays d'Europe orientale, la définition de la culture archéologique reste monothétique et dépend toujours de la présence ou de l'absence d'un nombre de qualités ou de types établis au cours de l'analyse de sites typiques ou considérés intuitivement comme des attributs culturels représentatifs. Beaucoup d'archéologues estimaient par conséquent que les cultures archéologiques étaient des acteurs sur la scène de l'histoire, jouant le rôle d'individus ou de groupes dans l'histoire documentaire. Les cultures archéologiques devenaient des ethnies, utilisées pour légitimer les revendications territoriales et politiques des états-nations modernes.

*Mot-clés:* archéologie slave, Bulgarie, 'communauté imaginée', nationalisme, Pologne, Roumanie, Tchécoslovaquie, Union Soviétique, Yougoslavie

**Slawen und imaginäre Gemeinschaften***F. Curta*

Trotz der kürzlichen Betonung des Einflusses von Nationalismus auf die Archäologie, konzentriert sich die Diskussion weiterhin auf den ideologischen Rahmen der kulturhistorischen Schule der Archäologie, besonders auf den Begriff der 'archäologischen Kultur'. Vergleichsweise wenig Aufmerksamkeit ist jedoch darauf verwendet worden, wie Archäologen zur Konstruktion der nationalen Vergangenheit beitrugen. Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die slawische Archäologie, eine Disziplin, die kreuz und quer durch die nationalen Abteilungen archäologischer Schulen verläuft, im weiten Kontext der 'Kultur-Politik', die alle Nationalstaaten als 'imaginäre Gemeinschaften' (B. Anderson) charakterisiert. Tatsächlich scheint die aktuelle akademische Diskussion zu den frühen Slawen in der Ukraine, Rußland und Rumänien enger mit politischen, als mit intellektuellen Überlegungen verknüpft zu sein. In Osteuropa ist das Konzept 'archäologischer Kulturen' noch immer durch monothetische Begriffe definiert, die auf der Basis der An- oder Abwesenheit einer Anzahl von bestimmten Merkmalen oder Typen basieren, die entweder von typischen Fundplätzen gewonnen wurden oder denen man kurzerhand intuitiv kulturelle Repräsentativität zubilligte. Somit betrachteten Archäologen archäologische Kulturen als Schauspieler auf der historischen Bühne, die eine Rolle spielten, wie es von Individuen oder Gruppen in dokumentarischer Geschichte getan wird. Archäologische Kulturen wurden zu ethnischen Gruppen und damit zur Legitimierung von Ansprüchen auf Territorium und Einfluß moderner Nationalstaaten verwendet.

*Schlüsselbegriffe:* Bulgarien, 'imaginäre Gemeinschaften', Jugoslawien, Nationalismus, Polen, Rumänien, slawische Archäologie, Sowjetunion, Tschechoslowakei