

FP7 – INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP  
WOMEN’S MEMORY OF THE RUSSO-OTTOMAN WAR  
OF 1877/1878

(NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF ARMENIA, YEREVAN, 2014)

ФП7 – МЕЃУНАРОДНА РАБОТИЛНИЦА  
ЖЕНСКОТО СЕЌАВАЊЕ ЗА РУСКО-ТУРСКАТА ВОЈНА  
1877/1878

(НАЦИОНАЛНА АКАДЕМИЈА НА НАУКИТЕ, ЕРЕВАН, 2014)

The Russo-Ottoman War of 1877/1878 played a major role in the formation of national narratives in the Balkans, in Turkey, and in the Caucasus in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The consequences of the war between the Ottoman and the Russian Empires were not limited to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but they are still an important part of the memory cultures and politics of memory today. Beginning in the direct aftermath of the war, the ROW was interpreted in different and often opposing ways, not only by the nations involved but also by different social classes, whose memories of the war often seem forgotten due to stronger official narratives.

The international research project “Politics of Memory and Memory Cultures of the Russian-Ottoman War 1877/1878: From Divergence to Dialogue”, funded by the European Commission’s “International Research Staff Exchange Scheme – Marie Curie Actions” (FP7) and lasting for four years (02/2012 – 01/2016), aims to prepare ground for a revision of conflicting images and to make suppressed memories visible. In order to achieve that, researchers from all countries with relevant ROW memories are cooperating and constantly sharing their transdisciplinary results. With the project being split into six work packages, the first half of the project was dedicated to “National Models of Memory”, “Places of Memory and Celebrations of Heroes of the ROW” and “The Memory of Emigrants and Minorities”. The present and fourth work package “Gender and War Memory” lasted for eight months (02/2014 – 09/2014) and was capped by a workshop held at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia on September 12, 2014.

The workshop was both opened and moderated by the project’s coordinator KARL KASER (Graz), who especially emphasized the need for an increased awareness for gender aspects in the war and its interpretations. A special focus should be put on women’s experiences and memories of the war while male domination in war memories has to be outlined. The project’s aim is to critically analyze the construction of women as heroines, supporters, activists, and victims of the war in various denominational and cultural traditions.

A first approximation to gender aspects related to the ROW of 1877/1878 was given by BILJANA RISTOVSKA-JOSIFOVSKA (Skopje) in her contribution

“*War and Wartime: Women Figures*”. Ristovska-Josifovska made it very clear that women’s memories to the ROW of 1877/1878 can be found in a broad variety of cultural manifestations, thereby setting the tone for the present work package’s research.

GRIGOR AGHANYAN (Yerevan) together with his colleague KARINE BAZEYAN presented their common research on “*The Participation of Women in the ROW of 1877/1878. An Analysis of the Newspaper “Mšak”*”, thereby stressing the Armenian perception of women’s participation in the ROW as a mass participation. Aghanyan argued that, when taking a look at the broad variety of women contributing to the war, it becomes evident that a perceived limitation to a certain field or profession is not valid.

The construction of women as heroines resulted in several heroic female biographies related to the ROW, as the following three contributions illustrated in an interesting comparison. BÜLENT BILMEZ (Istanbul) with his paper on “*Women in the Turkish Collective Memory of the ROW: A timeless Heroine Nene Hatun*” especially analyzed visual materials and outlined the great role of Nene Hatun in Turkish collective memory and its manifestations in stamps, monuments and feature films.

MILENA ANGELOVA (Blagoevgrad) presented her research, elaborated in cooperation with ANASTASIJA PASHOVA and spoke about “*The Heroine from Shipka who took part in four wars and helped thousands of people. The ROW of 1877/1878 as symbolic capital in the female biography*” while NURIE MURATOVA and KRISTINA POPOVA (Blagoevgrad) gave an insight on “*The Lady from Radilovo Village*”, thereby relating to two dominant female biographies in Bulgarian collective memory to the ROW of 1877/1878.

TAMAZ PHUTKARADZE (Batumi) concentrated on “*Women’s Memory of the ROW of 1877/1878 and Muhajirs*” and stressed the importance of *muhajirstvo* in the collective memory of his research’s female respondents. Phutkaradze concluded that both gender aspects and *muhajirstvo* would be massively underrepresented in Georgian memory culture.

The workshop was concluded by OLGA CHERNYSHOVA (Stavropol’) and her presentation “*The Female Face of War. The Sisters of Mercy in the ROW of 1877/1878*”, in which she underlined the activated social activity of women as nurses in the war and their contribution both in the war preparations as well as at the frontlines.

The results of the fourth work package of the project and the related workshop will be published both in printed form and as well on the project’s website (<http://memoryrow.weebly.com>). The project itself will continue with its fifth work package “*The ROW and the Cold War – Use and Misuse of the War Memory*”, which will again last for eight months and will also be capped by a workshop.

*Dominik Gutmeyr*