

## GUEST EDITORIAL: BORDERS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE GREAT WAR

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Throughout the European history, borders have emerged and disappeared, united and separated, called or driven away, influencing social practices and actions. At the same time, the changed borders have never been forgotten. But as if never in history, the world has been “rearranged” as differently as it happened at the end of World War I. After four years of conflict, not only borders have changed radically, but also political regimes, mentalities, legislation, new practices and principles have emerged.

The queries on the meanings of the “border” concept at the end of the Great War were the basis of friendly discussions introduced by a historian (Claudia Septimia Sabău) to a geographer (Oana-Ramona Ilovan). Since various keys were expected to be decoded by the wide range of meanings, the discussions materialised in a proposal for a section called *Borders and Their Representations Before and After the Great War* organised at the International Conference *1919 in Europe. Between War and Peace*, held in Cluj-Napoca between October 9-11, 2019. At the end of the conference, we decided to gather some of the works presented (and not only these) in a special issue of the *Territorial Identity and Development* (TID) Journal dedicated to the challenging topic of borders before and after the World War I.

The articles published in the volume belong to researchers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova. These are successfully completed with two reviews signed by Adrian Onofreiu and Anca Doce. The studies offer an interdisciplinary perspective on the topic of borders analysed and interpreted by applying methodologies and sources specific to History, Geography, International Relations, Literature, etc. They approach not only the way changing borders reconfigure attitudes, but also how old and new borders and their various representations influence people’s identity, mentality and daily life both before the World War I and especially after the peace treaties (1919-1920). Whether it is a general analysis or case studies, the authors used different types of documents and put forward working hypotheses that could enrich the interdisciplinary area of border studies.

The first study in the volume belongs to the researcher Andrei Emilciuc. Using the Russian press as a source, the research illustrates the oscillating attitude of the Russian state towards Romania’s territorial claims during the World War I. The author highlights the radical change of attitude of the Soviet state and the propagandistic and denigrating discourse towards Romania after the reconfiguration of the borders, at the end of the war, and after the annexation of Bessarabia by Romania.

The following study, signed by Valeria Chelaru, focuses on the same issue of changing the borders of the Soviet state at the end of World War I and the conflict between the Romanian

and Soviet states, which escalated after the unification of Bessarabia with Romania. The author discusses the context of the emergence and evolution of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic, which existed between 1924-1940, i.e. the “ancestor” of modern-day Transnistria.

In the third study, Olga Grădinaru analyses and compares the four screenings of Mikhail Sholokhov’s novel, *And Quiet Flows the Don*, proving that the territorial identity of the Cossacks and the process of withdrawing borders during the Russian Civil War are reflected differently in the subsequent adaptations of the novel, depending on when the films were made (Soviet or post-Soviet period).

Using archival documents, memoirs and parish chronicles and mainly following the identification of symbolic gestures, in the fourth study, Claudia Septimia Sabău reconstructs the way in which the mental border was crossed by the Transylvanian Romanians at the end of 1918, in the context of the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the creation of Greater Romania. This research focuses on a clearly delimited geographical area, with a special historical past: the Land of Năsăud.

In the fifth study, using discourse analysis of written texts, as well as critical visual analysis of the images, Oana-Ramona Ilovan conducts a research focused on the representations of borders in the Romanian Geography textbooks during the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author described the representations of borders and of the nation and underlined the identity features of the Romanian borders.

To sum up, the authors designed the studies included in this thematic issue on the coordinates of the stated topic: borders before and after the World War I. The content of the volume shows us not only how diverse the perspectives on the concept of border can be, but also the potential of a topic which although geographically “separates”, it is scientifically able to “unite” historians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, etc. We hope that by publishing this volume we will be able to open new directions of research and analysis in such an exciting field of border studies.