Ambiguous Attachments and Industrious Nostalgias

Heritage Narratives of Russian Old Believers in Romania

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Abstract: This article questions notions of belonging in the case of displaced communities' descendants and discusses such groups' efforts to preserve their heritage. It examines the instrumental use of nostalgia in heritage discourses that drive preservation efforts. The case study presented is focused on the Russian Old Believers in Romania. Their creativity in reforming heritage practices is considered in relation to heritage discourses that emphasise continuity. The ethnographic data presented in this article, derived from my doctoral research project, is focused on three major themes: language preservation, the singing tradition and the use of heritage for touristic purposes.

Keywords: belonging, heritage, narratives, nostalgia, Romania, Russian Old Believers

It was during a hot summer day in 2015 when, together with a group of informants, I visited a Russian Old Believers' church in Climăuți, a Romanian village situated at the border with Ukraine (Figure 1).[1] After attending a church service, our hosts proposed to visit a monument, an Old Believers' cross situated a couple of kilometres away from the village. This ten-metre tall marble monument erected in memory of the forefathers, represents the connection with the past for Old Believers (Figure 2). At the base of the monument the following text is written in Russian: 'Honour and glory to our Starovery Russian ancestors that settled in these places in defence of their Ancient orthodox faith' (my translation). The text points to a precious memory central for the heritage narratives of Old Believers in Romania today that will be discussed in this essay.

Figure 2 around here

It is this relationship with a mythical past and the various forms in which it is embodied in current heritage practices that is of concern in this article. The analysis considers the markers of 'past-presencing' (Macdonald 2013: 17), such as the cross discussed above, the discourses of continuity together with the challenges of preserving heritage today. A discussion of multiple place-attachment towards their homeland and the host community is also problematised. This analysis is centred on three interrelated practices: language maintenance and acquisition, the Old Believers' singing tradition and tourism.

[Figure 1 around here]

The data considered in this article derives from multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork undertaken for my doctoral research project in a 'yo-yo' (Wulff 2002) manner during 2014 and 2015. The fieldwork engagements included periods of extended participant observation in different settings in the community of Russian Old Believers in Romania (Figure 1) as well as ethnographic interviews. Analysed within an interpretive framework, these data were correlated with archival research and an analysis of ethnic media publications. The case study presented will be discussed following a short review of the theoretical framework in the following section.

Nostalgia and Belonging

Many researchers agree today that 'heritage is a value-laden concept' (Kuutma 2013: 21), it is highly selective (Deacon et al. 2003) and subject to continuous reinterpretation (Bendix 1999; Nic Craith 2013). Certain ideas become institutionalised as authoritative or correct interpretations of heritage, 'authorised heritage discourses' (Smith 2006: 116) based on top-down specialised assessment. Moreover, heritage is often entangled with nostalgia in its orientation towards the past, and researchers have noted an increased passion for nostalgia today (Angé and Berliner 2015), especially in the post-socialist states (see for instance Boyer

2010; Spaskovska 2008). Nostalgia can thus be used actively (Smith and Campbell 2017) as a legitimising device whereby claims to belonging support 'a particular regime of truth' (Hafstein 2007: 76) enforced through heritage discourses (Macdonald 2008). This can have especially powerful effects for displaced groups, whose knowledge of the homeland is mediated through the memories of previous generations (Čiubrinskas 2009). Nostalgia for such groups is infused with a romantic view of the once grandiose past and is paired with feelings of loss.

Originally considered a medical condition (Boym 2001; Pickering and Keightley 2006), nostalgia has now become a common feeling that David Berliner (2012: 770) discusses as 'a set of publicly displayed discourses, practices, and emotions where the ancient is somehow glorified'. Nostalgia is 'heteroglossic' (Boyer 2010: 19), it can have different vantage points and different 'tones' (Berliner 2015: 20), and can even point to a past one has not experienced, 'exo-nostalgia' (Berliner 2012). Svetlana Boym has differentiated between different forms of nostalgia, depending on the type of engagement with the past but also the actions taken:

> *Restorative* nostalgia stresses nostos and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. *Reflective* nostalgia thrives in algia, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity (Boym 2001: xviii, my emphasis).

The two forms of nostalgia, as Boym notes, can be present simultaneously and given the different aims sought it can lead to diverse heritage processes. Moreover, several researchers

have noted the power of nostalgia to drive social change (Angé and Berliner 2015; Smith and Campbell 2017) and its role as central motivation for tourism (Chhabra et al. 2003; Wang 1999). Nostalgic conditions are created only when there is a distancing from the past (Boym 2007) and whereas the reference is to the past, the interpretation of such nostalgic engagements speaks for the present (Macdonald 2008, 2013) and the 'politics of the future' (Boyer 2010: 25). Such an interpretation highlights 'the transformative aspects of nostalgia in the production of heritage' (Berliner 2012: 771) which can be perceived in a positive light (Cashman 2006).

Nostalgia is commonplace for displaced groups whereby descendants 'are the living embodiment of continuity and change' (Fortier 1999: 56) and claims to authenticity are readily invoked. In their efforts to preserve identity they thus become a 'conscious inheritor' (V. T. Hafstein 2012: 511) that carefully considers the implications of its heritage-related decisions. Heritage preservation efforts and discourses are then projected in reference to roots and belonging, and movements across borders create new opportunities for self-definition. Nostalgia, in this sense, is an industrious practice that can reinforce such heritage-preservation efforts. These ideas will be considered hereafter in reference to the case study of Russian Old Believers in Romania.

Old Belief and Continuity Claims

Russian Old Believers are a religious and ethnic group which is part of a widespread loosely connected diaspora, sharing 'common histories and struggles, language, material culture, and Old Rites of a bygone Russia' (Lee Silva 2009: 105). These struggles are rooted in the schism that took place in the seventeenth century in the Russian Orthodox Church, following the 1654 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. The schism resulted from a process of realigning Russian Orthodoxy of the time with Byzantine Orthodoxy after a period of

deviance. This change was met with a strong reaction from a faction of the population who 'argued that the smallest modifications in liturgical text and ritual will alter their relationship to the divine' (Naumescu 2013: 105) and claimed continuity with a form of orthodoxy preserved since the Christianisation of Russia in the ninth century (Lupinin 1984). In reaction to the growing friction with determined believers, the state instated a system of persecution and Old Believers started moving across the border to preserve their traditional ways of practicing Orthodoxy outside Russia. Old Believers groups[2] exist in different countries on the European continent (Estonia, Latvia, Moldova) as well as the Americas (Canada, United States), even New Zealand or Australia and their adaptation to modern contexts has been researched in different countries (see for intance Aidarov 2006; Crummey 2011).

Of concern here is the community of Old Believers who migrated towards the current territory of Romania starting in the seventeenth century, grafting new and old ways of life on this foreign land. Following the 1989 change in political regime, several ethnic groups created dedicated structures of representation at national level. Old Believers formed a non-governmental organisation which aims to defend the rights of the more than 20,000 Old Believers living in Romania today and preserve their heritage and identity (CRLR 2008). After a caveat of several hundred years, in 2006, the organisation was recognised as part of the official Russian diaspora and cross-border cooperation with the homeland was increased (Clopot 2016b), giving new impetus to claims of belonging (Anttonen 2008).

Old Believers have maintained their distinct character over centuries and continuity claims are still reflected in the narratives of today's Old Believers in Romania, as shown in the example presented at the beginning of the article, the cross monument. The official view of heritage emphasises the continuity and authenticity claims, as reflected in a recent brochure presenting the community:

the customs, traditions as well as the religious belief of Lipovan Russsians, preserved unaltered, represent a living remnant, not negligible, of the old Russian culture, the culture that was formed during the period from the creation of the Kievan Russ state (Киввская Русь), during the time of Prince Vladimir in the 10th century until the era of Peter the Great in the 18th century (Chirilă et al. 2015: 47).

Yet, as the following sections will consider, such claims are not necessarily as definitive as such phrasing might indicate.

Affirming Belonging

Anne-Marie Fortier noted that 'immigrant populations often project themselves in relation to specific origins that do not necessarily undermine multi-locality or transnational connections' (1999: 41). The link with the homeland is often mentioned in the Old Believers' identity discourses, sometimes with emotional undertones of a bittersweet feeling. In the Old Believers' ethnic media publication, *Zorile* magazine, the cultural and political theme of 'mother Russia' (V. Ivanov 2011: 3) is often featured in articles. The publication relies on contributions of members of the community as well as an in-house small team of journalists. The image presented from both established journalists and Old Believers' contributors from across the country is that of a 'symbolic Russianness' (Haarmann 2002), a construction that has little to do with current realities. This is a Russia that is recreated through projection and appeals to emotion. For example, in an article with an emphatic title, 'Moscow Is the Place Where All Dreams Come True', an Old Believer woman remarked:

I was quite small when I started to realise that I am different from the others, that the language I speak at home is not compatible with that heard at school or on the street,

that my church is different from my colleagues, that I have different holidays and a different culture. Since then, I developed an insatiable taste for Russia and all that is Russian (A. Ivanov 2010: 15).

Such an often-unrequited longing is echoed in other instances as well. Referring to the hymn dedicated to Old Believers, created by the representative organisation, another author mentioned: 'Russia must be loved, it is the homeland of our ancestors, it is and will be the land of our soul' (Anore 2011: 11). The lack of agency is sometimes combined with romanticised statements: 'A man cannot choose 2 things in his life: his parents and his homeland. These two things we accept unconditionally, as they are part of our being. Love for homeland is the most noble feeling that a human being can feel' (Neculai 2014: 7). Whereas the quotes above are extracted from the internal publication mentioned, I have come across similar arguments during my fieldwork as well. A middle-aged woman argued: 'We were born here, Romania is our country. Are we guilty that our roots are Russian?'. Her sentimental reaction was not a reflection of my question but rather a more general comment to the tendency of majority population to vilify anything Russian, associated with socialism and the negative stereotyping to which the Old Believers were subjected. Another informant once told me during an observation: 'We come from Russia, we are Russian by blood. We are only different from them through religion. Romania is our second homeland'. Such a duality of attachments is commonplace amongst Old Believers in Romania, driving multifaceted heritage transmission processes. This is not surprising as acknowledging the complex composition of communities (Waterton and Smith 2010) has led researchers to consider a multiplicity of heritage claims (Kuutma 2013) in other cases as well. Old Believers present such an example where constant negotiation takes place of what to adopt or reject from Romanian culture (Clopot 2016b) and other external influences (Clopot and Nic Craith

forthcoming). Moreover, as discussed below, a generational gap exists that reinforces the previous discussion of heteroglossic nostalgia, whereby discourses that emphasise the duty to preserve heritage are coupled with feelings of inadequacy and of loss of knowledge.

Language and Belonging

When Old Believers travelled to the current territory of Romania they took their language with them, as languages migrate alongside people (Nic Craith 2012). The link between language and identity seems to be embedded in the consciousness of the community, for its 'essential role in the preservation of our ethnic identity' (Vișan 2006). Discourses on the importance of language preservation were commonplace during fieldwork and referred both to the language of the church, Slavonic, and the secular day-to-day Russian.

[Figure 3 around here].

The former is essential for the practice of religion, to the extent that Robert Crummey (1993: 707) described the Old Believers as a 'textual community'. Vlad Naumescu (2011: 61) labelled 'textualism' the tendency of Old Believers to turn reading practices into a devotional activity, explaining the central role of religious books for religious practice and emphasising the important role of rendition (see Figure 3). Moreover, he outlined the link between transmission and continuity claims as 'Old Believer textualism generates a sense of continuity, of an uninterrupted tradition of faith' (Naumescu 2013: 106). A severed transmission process would have dire circumstances as it could lead to 'exclusion from the textual community that makes Old Belief' (Naumescu 2011: 62). The tendencies I observed in the community align with his comments, as informants emphasised repeatedly the importance of Slavonic, the scriptural language, necessary for the practice of religion. During every religious service, parts of the texts are read aloud by younger or older people, who stand in front of the congregation in a special section of the church. The availability of

linguistic resources is necessary for regular services, but also for rituals such as Christenings, weddings and burials, which include readings from holy books. The lack of administrative support and recognition at national level means that there are no dedicated classes in formal education. The knowledge of Slavonic, a dead language, is then preserved through informal learning structures. In various villages and cities across Romania, children are schooled in correct pronunciation and reading at an early age, with students as young as seven or eight years old. These are organised either by priests, monks or elderly people or sometimes in the family, if there is a knowledgeable elder. Some critiques of such efforts were voiced by some informants who mentioned that children are only taught how to read – they do not get to learn the meaning of the texts – pointing to the above considerations of Naumescu that outlined the importance of rendition over comprehension. This is problematic for the long-term sustainability of the language as there is a danger of losing interest. Moreover, as not all villages and cities have such structures in place, many churches rely on the older generations for reading during services and place under question the future of the scriptural language, thus endangering the basis of the Old Believer identity, the religious practice. Equally problematic in this respect are the gendered issues in relation to reading Slavonic as in some areas of the countries women and girls are not allowed to read (for a discussion of gendered practices, see Clopot and Nic Craith forthcoming).

The secular language's situation is equally problematic, especially for younger generations. This second language discussed here is the mother tongue, an antiquated form of Russian preserved over time, a locally specific form that includes hybrid and loan words as well. As a middle-aged woman mentioned during a discussion, these hybrid words have been part of the language spoken since old times: 'this is how our great-great-grandparents spoke'. As Old Believers are one of the officially recognised ethnic groups, Romanian legislation allows the integration of maternal language classes in educational settings, and schools in

areas with significant Old Believer population include Russian in their curriculum. Other incentives are in place for students, such as language contents at national and international level, holidays in Russia or participation in events organised by the representative organisation. The efficacy of these efforts is uneven, as some institutions lack resources (human or material) to support learning, leading to numerous discussions of loss. A common view of my informants was that, under pressures of increased secularisation, globalisation and migration, linguistic skills are waning. Moreover, there is a disconnect between these efforts and tradition, as these classes are based on modern Russian language rather than the age-old vernacular language spoken in families. As one contributor to *Zorile* commented: 'Russian language, once the maternal language, is rarely heard in localities, neighbourhoods, even houses of Lipovan Russians. Romanian language has become, unfortunately, a more efficient means of communication for Lipovans of all ages' (Timofte 2010: 16). Several of my informants expressed their doubt in the success of such efforts, pointing to changes in the organic language acquisition in family settings: 'Children no longer speak in Russian with their families and the sense of language is lost; they find it hard to understand', said a middle-aged Old Believer. His view was shared by others as well, and it was linked with a loss of tradition and nostalgia for a time when people would choose Russian rather than Romanian for inter-ethnic communication. Another middle-aged woman reflected in a group discussion: 'This is how grandma spoke, I was thinking yesterday morning. She did not go to school, she did not know how to read or write in Romanian, she spoke what she learned, but she did not know a Romanian word'. As a retired Old Believer primary school teacher remembered, in the past children would first speak Russian and only when starting primary school would they begin to learn Romanian. The irregularities of language maintenance are present in official statistics as well. According to the latest census (National Institute of Statistics 2011), most self-declared Old Believers indicated Russian as maternal language (18,121 people), but a

significant part of the community declared Romanian as their maternal language (5,340 people).

Slavonic reading as well as the vernacular spoken dialect of Russian are distinctive markers of group identity as well. Loss of language equates loss of identity and a severing of ties with their Russian ancestors, lamented in different instances in internal publications as well:

> It's our duty to make an effort to preserve our religious language, not only for its beauty and sanctity, but for the respect owed to our ancestors, that though sacrifice fought for centuries to sacredly keep unchanged the sacred texts and our holy Tradition (Feodor 2012: 16).

The arguments used in this *Zorile* article point again to the referential moment of the past, the Schism.

Whereas official discourses emphasise the necessity to preserve language, as discussed above, fieldwork has shown how difficult it is to implement top-down initiatives on the ground, whereby the lack of teachers, resources or student interest impedes progress significantly.

Manifold Nostalgias: Singing from Ritual to Performance

Nostalgic discourses were also found in relation to heritage practices such as singing which was once a living tradition, part and parcel of Old Believers' way of life. As was the case for another Slavic group, the Seto of Estonia, singing is viewed as 'an epitome of cultural heritage' (Kuutma and Kästik 2014: 230) by Old Believers as well. In various discussions with informants, it was commonplace to hear melancholic thoughts over the lost pace of life

where song was a common occurrence in daily life. Several informants recounted how people met on lazy Sunday afternoons in small groups, spending hours together enjoying drinks, pastries and singing. The nostalgia for these days of yore has thus a different reference point than the nostalgia that links Old Believers' heritage with the beginnings of the group, being directed towards the socialist period rather than the distant past. In this sense, the Old Believers reflect the prevalent tendency of Eastern European countries for nostalgia of socialist times (Gille 2010; Spaskovska 2008).

[Figure 4 around here]

Today, heritagisation has transformed singing from an organic ad hoc ritual practice to a performance (Figure 4), a staged cultural product to be displayed for internal and external audiences during different events. As Dorothy Noyes writes: 'Communities do sometimes maintain traditions that have lost their primary uses because of this sense of belonging and pleasure in participation' (Noyes 2011: 43), which seems to be the case here as well. Thus, singing, dance and costumes are used habitually during festivals but also to entertain tourists in different settings such as touristic resorts and private homes (Clopot 2016a). Recourse to Old Believers' cultural inheritance is often made in the narratives that present such groups whereby 'tradition serves as a reservoir in which one searches for artistic elements and aesthetic features that address cultural and ethnic identities' (Kuutma and Kästik 2014: 285). Identity narratives are combined with references to continuity, as Old Believer singing groups are portrayed as 'authentic' preservers of traditions lost in a modernised Russia today (Fenoghen 2005).

The idea of inheriting and transmitting tradition was often emphasised in my discussion with different choir members across the country:

We have this lady in the group, we call her Teleenciclopedia,[3] she is older than 60, from youth she has sung and learned from her elders. Thus, we pass forward anyway from generation to generation these traditional songs, [these] local songs, that belong to the area.

To promote their Russianness, such groups choose Russian names for their groups and prepare special costumes based on traditional models (Clopot 2016a), sometimes using subsidies from the organisation that represents them. Membership, albeit labelled as Lipovan, seems to be open to others as well, and some of the choir groups have Romanian members as well, who are in no way distinguished from Old Believers. Although most of the choir groups encountered have a short history, founded in the post-socialist period, one of the choir groups I met claimed to be the oldest in the country. Its history went back to 1978, under socialism, when the original choir members were asked to sing during the annual national festival '*Cântarea României*'[4] [*Song of Romania*] which promoted state-approved folkloric performances. Commenting on the large number of groups that exist today across the country, a woman said they 'have appeared as mushrooms after the rain'. Indeed, most Old Believers villages and cities have at least one local singing group, if not several, which regularly travel across the country to participate in different events.

Observing different choir performances across the country, one element that struck me was that many groups present the same repertoire of Russian music, with popular songs such as 'Katiusha' or 'Casatschok', that are Russian but not particular to Old Believers, yet they are well known to most foreign audiences. Explaining the choice of repertoire in an article, an Old Believer woman said:

Now the selection of songs is carefully made, people sing based on the environment

in which they find themselves and the audience mood. For example, on Bucharest

streets they shouted and were happy, they said allegro and they chose a rhythm that

steals smiles. Other times, they knew how to sing close to the ear the entire bitterness

of this life. There are a lot of songs, but the slow ones, sadder, life songs and others,

those are for those who understand. Those that understand the lyrics and the sense of

the song, they like the songs. Otherwise they are too monotonous, too slow

(Ungureanu 2013).

This Old Believer's comments were also echoed by some of my informants who noted that

they consider the audience and their reaction in choosing the repertoire. Differences between

groups are erased by these choices and often difference amongst choir groups comes from

dress rather than choice of repertoire, albeit most of the narratives emphasise authenticity and

locality. With lively rhythms, these songs entertain audiences yet they contrast with the Old

Believers folklore which has many melancholic songs. The 'conscious inheritor' thus adapts

to market expectation and in the process 'the image of the thing replaces the thing itself'

(AlSayyad 2007: 163). A moment when AlSayyad's commentary seemed all too fitting was

when a group I was listening to in a seaside resort sang a lively tune and, to involve the

audience, translated the words of the chorus in Romanian as well.

On some of the occasions observed, group internal politics (Bauman 2012) were

revealed as well, as clashes between group leaders and regular members came to the fore.

Given that many of these groups declare their aim is to carry tradition forward, it was

unsurprising that on one occasion a debate was sparked backstage over choices of songs. A

member of a choir asked the leader, 'Are we singing to entertain or to carry tradition

forward?' In this instance, the choir leaders and some of the performers seem to lean towards

the latter and the leader decided to include the above-mentioned popular lively tunes once again.

Other informants commented on the transformation of singing practices in an economic resource (Bendix 2008), arguing that being offered money as opposed to singing for their own enjoyment had brought other deviations as well. Sometimes these commitments, taking place in secular settings, go against old values, as one choir member reflected: 'There is no singing during fasting, but if you have a contract you close your eyes and go forward, that's how our times have become'. During the fasting periods and on holy days across the year, devout Old Believers need to abstain from eating particular food products and even singing and listening to music. These rules, derived from the practice of Old Belief, have led singers to abandon singing, as they did not want to forego religious rules. Old Believers often discussed the rich repertoire of traditional folklore and explained that many songs are lost today. Some melancholically declared their unrealised intentions to collect songs from elder Old Believers before they die as they have a wider knowledge of songs. Meanwhile it is, however, this form of singing for uninformed audiences in restaurants, bars or at festivals that prevails, coupled with emphatic presentations that emphasise belonging and authenticity.

Performing Belonging: Tourism

Cultural heritage as a resource (Bendix 2008) and tourism often go hand in hand and in the Danube Delta area this is a thriving field of activity that Old Believers capitalise on as well. Discourses of belonging in this region often emphasise that the main occupation of Old Believers' ancestors was fishing and Old Believers today continue this activity as long-time recognised fishermen. A wooden boat was once the only means of transportation of Old Believer fishermen, taking them slowly but steadily across waters. Boat-building using wood

is now only a memory as modern, diesel-fuelled boats are used by inhabitants of the Danube Delta and the *lotka* stands as a symbol of a disappearing way of life. As Noel Salazar (2009) observed, the media play an important part in shaping touristic imaginaries. The imaginary presented in numerous instances by Romanian and foreign media is summed up perfectly by this Romanian agency's blog post promoting the Danube Delta: 'Although they have come not that long ago in the Danube Delta, the Lipovans have become emblematic for this area. When you think of the Danube Delta, you imagine pelicans, tarry [wooden boats] *lotkas*, Lipovans with white beards and beautiful houses, white and blue with reed roofs' (Descoperă Delta Dunării 2016). The narratives presented to tourists play on the exoticism of both nature and culture, mainly epitomised by Old Believers in spite of the multicultural composition of the area.

The Old Believer fisherman with a long beard is a stereotype often promoted through media and tourist brochures, albeit villages have lost most of their fishermen as fishing is no longer a sustainable practice in the area (Constantin 2015). Salazar questioned the 'tourismification', what he termed the ethnic tendency to embody such imaginaries, and noted that '[m]any Maasai now portray "traditional" versions of themselves for tourists, maintaining a well-developed sense of self-objectification and self-commoditization' (Salazar 2009: 60). In a similar vein, the Old Believers respond to such stereotypes playing on claims to continuity of traditional life. Capitalising on their exoticism and nostalgic search for the past simpler way of life, a private organisation is currently developing a specific form of tourism, named '*pescaturism*' (literally translated as fishing tourism). The website that promotes this experience notes: 'You can share a day in the life of an authentic fishermen, along with them, in a fishermen village. Come visit a traditional fisherman household in Mila 23, and experience the unique culture and gastronomy, steadfastly considerate with the rich

nature of the Danube Delta' (Rowmania 2015). The proposal offered by Old Believers for tourists is briefly summed up by this passage:

> There are people who are tired of hotel[s] and they want something traditional. We have inns that are filled during the season, but there are also a lot of tourists who want to come and stay with people, Lipovans, to eat a fish soup like mother would cook [homemade] (Curte 2015).

This type of 'homely' tourism plays on the growing interest for rural tourism, looking for the 'authentic' by giving up on resorts and luxurious hotels for simpler accommodation; one that brings promises of experiencing old ways of life. Promises of access to the inner life of the village, a 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell 1999) that recreates a homely environment, are accompanied by the exoticism of the Old Believers' food and witnessing different cultural and religious activities. Consuming ethnicity is perceived as a means of offering some 'added value' for the curious 'anthropological gaze' (Urry and Larsen 2011) of the tourist. The designation of the Danube Delta as natural World Heritage site expands the range of visitors from internal audiences to international ones as well.

With small local economies based on fishing destroyed in the last twenty-five years, for some villages tourism seems to be the only hope. In such villages and cities in the region, this external interest is generating an increased interest in Old Believers' heritage, and the revitalisation of rituals and singing was observed in areas with intensive touristic activities.

Industrious Nostalgias and Unexpected Consequences
For Old Believers, the connection with the homeland perpetuates a sense of longing for a country that many have not ever seen, a mythical projection that grounds identities in the

third-space of duality (Bhabha 1994). It is aligned, in this analysis, with a restorative type of nostalgia, based on Svetlana Boym's categorisation, a link to a past that 'is not a duration but a perfect snapshot' (Boym 2001: 49) where religious commitment was strong and practices were naturally passed on across generations. Nostalgia opens an unrequited but productive emotional void and this longing is objectified in different forms, sometimes leading to a monoglossic voice pushing forward orthodox ways of articulating belonging, similar to Boym's ideas about defending particular versions of 'truth'. The normativity of heritage discourses (Kordiš 2015) is foregrounded in such narratives that make recourse to roots and belonging to instil a sense of duty for future preservation. As I discussed here, there is also an ambiguity of attachments, which locates their identity in the curious space of the liminal (Clopot 2016b), whereby creativity is present (Turner 1969). This creativity, a feature attributed by several researchers to Old Believers (Crummey 1970; Paert 2003) has allowed them to adapt to different host cultures and is manifested in Romania today as well. I see the different topics discussed in this article, of language, singing and tourism as examples of such creativity that reinforce the idea discussed elsewhere that change is unavoidable (Clopot and Nic Craith forthcoming) and will continue to transform the heritage practices of Old Believers. With younger generations less moved by feelings of duty, moving away from restorative nostalgias that emphasise truth and continuity, the long-term patterns of these changes are hard to predict.

One of the questions raised by Angé and Berliner (2015) in their study of nostalgia is whether it renders positive or negative effects. The examples provided here exhibit both sides, I believe. The restorative form of nostalgia takes an active part in guiding heritage preservation in the community. It inspires positive action led by a sense of obligation illustrated through the efforts of transmitting language skills and traditions forward. The central role of heritage and its transmission for preserving identity was clear for many of my

informants and in this sense nostalgia can be perceived as transformative (Smith and Campbell 2017).

The Old Believers, however, do not live in a vacuum, separated from the wider world, and are thus embedded in the larger processes at play in Romania and outside the country. Thus, as the discussion of tourism suggests, nostalgia in this sense renders negative effects. Subjected to processes of othering, responding to other people's need for nostalgic engagements, the heteroglossic nature of nostalgia brings uneven processes. People are driven to embody thus the images produced by tourists' own nostalgic engagements and the media, naturalised in villages and cities in the Danube Delta with claims to continuity and authenticity. Such claims need to be considered critically, however, as Hafstein (2007: 75) commented: 'Don't let all the talk about preservation fool you: all heritage is change'. And such patterns of continuity and change are precisely the themes illuminated in analyses of nostalgia (Angé and Berliner 2015).

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Notes

[2] Two main types of Old Believer groups were formed, each divided in several persuasions. The first type is composed of priestly groups that continue to recognise priesthood, the second is represented by priestless Old Believer factions which have rejected the validity of priesthood after Nikon and continue to practice their belief today in the absence of priests.

[3] A popular programme on national television formed by short documentaries which covered a diverse range of fields: biology, technology, history or culture.

[4] The festival was popular during socialism and included folkloric performances that gained the approval of the state.