Between Science, Politics and Propaganda

Emmanuel de Martonne and the debates on the status of Bessarabia
(1919-1920)

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statut de la Bessarabie (1919-1920)*

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BETWEEN SCIENCE, POLITICS AND PROPAGANDA

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“A map – a pencil – tracing paper”

At the beginning of 1919, in Paris, the peace treaties establishing the new post-World War One order were expected to be signed and new frontiers to be drawn. “Promises had been made, expectations and aspirations raised, either deliberately or by accident, and now these pledges had to be redeemed.”² Redesigning the post-war borders of Eastern Europe proved extremely difficult for decision-makers. Wilson’s “New Diplomacy”³ for the durable peace settlements brought professionalization and specialization into foreign policy, so that the knowledge of experts—historians, lawyers, economists, geographers, and cartographers⁴—was expected to support decision-makers in establishing “just” and durable settlements. While dealing with a specific temporality, “celle de la

1. The research for this article was accomplished by the author during the Fulbright fellowship at CREEES, Stanford University (2009-2010) and the Humboldt research fellowship at IOS Regensburg (2012-2014). I thank the anonymous reviewers, as well as my IOS colleague Luminița Gătejel, for their valuable feedback on the earlier version of the article.

2. Alan Sharp, *The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking after the First World War, 1919-1923*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke – New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 196.

3. On the origins of “new diplomacy” and the attempts to implement it during the Paris Peace Conference and after, see, Alan Sharp, “The New Diplomacy and the New Europe, 1916-1922,” in Nicholas Doumanis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Europe, 1914-1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 119-137.

4. The terms “expert,” “territorial expert” or even the syntagm “the so-called ‘experts’” are used in the publications of the peace conference and immediately after (see, for ex., Edward Mandell House, Charles Seymour, *What really happened at Paris: The Story of the Peace Conference, 1918-1919* (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1921).

territorialisation des identités nationales et des entités étatiques, que l'on sait fortement problématique dans le monde balkanique,"⁵ the experts had to take into account that a "just" settlement had different meanings for political actors: either drawing boundaries along nationality or providing defensive borders, railway networks or trade routes.⁶ After the war, self-determination was declared as an "imperative principle of action"⁷ for the creation of a peaceful and stable Europe. Concepts such as "national consciousness," "self-determination," and "free will of people" were placed at the forefront of the debates, both at the conference and in public forums. The experts who gathered in the territorial commissions shared similar expertise and common knowledge that had been acquired within state institutions, such as the American Inquiry, the French Comité d'Étude or the British Inquiry. Despite varying disagreements, the experts were guided by their respect for the 14 points of Woodrow Wilson that presented the nation-state as the organizational model of societies. Other guiding principles of the conference were derived from the outcomes of the war, i.e., the efforts of the Allies to "punish" the Germans and to defeat the Bolsheviks.

The experts found it difficult to pin identities and aspirations on the territory :

A disheartening job. How fallible one feels here! A map – a pencil – tracing paper. Yet my courage fails at the thought of the people whom our errant lines enclose or exclude, the happiness of several thousands of people,

wrote Harold Nicolson in his memoirs.⁸ Before the war, space had begun to be perceived not simply as a rigid container, but rather as something imagined and created—culturally, mentally and socially.⁹ Since the Wilsonian principles encouraged nation-state perspectives, space was debated as a cultural/ethnic/economic means of a nation's survival. Here is where scientific knowledge was expected: not

5. Emmanuelle Boulineau, "Fronts et frontières dans les Balkans: les géographes et les enjeux frontaliers sur le Danube en 1919-1920," *Balkanologie*, X, 1-2 (2008): 2.

6. Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York, Random House, 2003), 132.

7. H.W.V. Temperley, ed., *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920-1924), vol. I, 438.

8. Harold G. Nicolson, *Peacemaking* (Boston – New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1933), 219.

9. Space, spatial concepts, and space representations gained serious reflection in Western, as well as Eastern intellectual traditions, mutually influencing each other. See, Mark Bassin, Sergey Glebov, and Marlene Lacruelle, eds., *Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013). On Russian/Soviet imperial legacy through intellectual traditions and everyday social practices, see, Maxim Waldstein, Sanna Turoma, eds., *Empire De/Centered: New Spatial Histories on Russia and the Soviet Union* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013). The interrelatedness between "Eurasianists" and Western "Structuralists," with a focus on the works of the geographer and economist Petr Savitskii and the linguist Nikolai Trubetskoy, is discussed in: Sergey Glebov, "The Empire of Language: Space and Structuralism in Russian Eurasianism," in Waldstein, Sanna Turoma, eds., *Empire De/Centered*, 31-61.

only to describe the possessed or questioned area of “survival,” but also to clarify the meaning of space and spatial structures, why certain ethnic groups identified with them, and how the borders were to be redesigned so that these would coincide with a nation’s space.¹⁰ With regard to the task assigned to experts, the American geographer Isaiah Bowman observed:

In the modern, closely organised, strongly commercialized world it is virtually impossible to make a clear-cut distinction to what is right from the standpoint of ethnography, nationalistic sentiment, and abstract justice, and what is fair from the standpoint of economic advantage.¹¹

Nevertheless, experts

got out the maps, read the submissions, heard the witnesses and tried to impose a rational order on an irrational world.¹²

During the peace conference, the production of maps as utilitarian objects, means of information and exchange, but also as means of identity construction, intensified. Similar to the modern age, when an “intimate relationship between the production of geographical knowledge and the exercise of imperial power” was established,¹³ maps served political goals by justifying the existence of nation-states.¹⁴ In order to sustain political arguments, each delegation brought its own arsenal of statistics and maps, and

when statistics failed, use was made of maps in colour. [...] A new instrument was discovered—the map language. A map was as good as a brilliant poster, and just being a map made it respectable, authentic.¹⁵

10. See, in this regard, Jörg Dünne, “Die Karte als Operations- und Imaginationsmatrix. Zur Geschichte eines Raummediums,” in Jörg Dühring, Tristan Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: Transcript - Verlag für Kommunikation, Kultur und soziale Praxis, 2008), 49-69; Anti Randviir, “Space and place as substrates of culture,” in V. Sarapik, K. Tüür, M. Laanemets, eds., *Koht ja Paik/Place and Location II* (Tallinn: Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Arts, 2002), 140-154.

11. House, Seymour, *What really happened at Paris*, 154.

12. Macmillan, *Paris, 1919*, 132.

13. See, for instance, Morag Bell, Robin Butlin, and Michael Heffernan, eds., *Geography and Imperialism, 1820-1940* (Manchester – New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).

14. Steven Seegel characterised the post-World War I period as one of continuity rather than rupture in the process of creating maps as representations of retrospective historical conditions, events and processes, on the one hand, and visualized political statements, on the other. Steven Seegel, *Mapping Europe’s Borderlands: Russian Cartography in the Age of Empire* (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

15. Peter Haslinger, Vadim Oswald, eds., *Kampf der Karten: Propaganda- und Geschichtskarten als politische Instrumente und Identitätstexte* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2012).

Thus, maps became “swords” in the hands of either (state) actors who advocated for the nation-state perspective, or those who contested the nation-state perspective, instead looking for political alternatives to the status of contested regions.

National delegations expected the expert-geographers, who created knowledge with the help of maps and statistics, to support national propaganda, or counter anti-national propaganda materials with the help of these tools.¹⁶ Propaganda, understood here as information of a biased manipulative nature, with the aim to persuade public opinion on a certain (political) cause,¹⁷ flourished during wartime. There was a “major raise of the power of the press, particularly in regard to its relationship with the political leaders, who feared defeat and groped for any path to victory.”¹⁸ In the circumstances, when the European public feared the spread of Bolshevism and awaited measures from their governments to tackle the “Red menace,” it was often manipulated and misled. In this context, the public also sought and valued experts’ opinions on the matter. Conscious of the opportunity to gain career benefits and public notoriety, some experts, whose activity during the conference was confidential, decided to reach out to the public through newspapers and other publications after their mission was over.

The above description refers to the context in which one of the experts at the Paris Peace Conference, the French geographer Emmanuel de Martonne, acted on behalf of the Comité d’Étude as a technical expert within the Territorial Commission for Romanian and Yugoslavian affairs. De Martonne’s expertise was sought by French delegates¹⁹ in order to clarify the statuses of the regions of Transylvania, Banat, Dobrudja, as well as Bessarabia, which had been acquired by Romania in 1918 (Annex 1). Bessarabia presents an interesting case study on the interplay of main and secondary political actors during the peace conference, who supported either Russia’s or Romania’s interests in the region. Regardless of which side of

16. Several works emphasize the role of experts in shaping the public’s understanding of post-war territorial changes and their geographic, economic and commercial interconnections. See, Gilles Palsky, “Emmanuel de Martonne and the Ethnographical Cartography of Central Europe (1917-1920),” *Imago Mundi. The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, 54, 1 (2002): 111-119; James R. Akerman, ed., *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire* (Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 298.

17. On the way propaganda influenced public opinion during and after the war, see, at large, Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (MacMillan Company, 1922). On Greece’s governmental propaganda during the Peace conference, see, Dmitri Kitsikis, *Propagande et pressions en politique internationale: La Grèce et ses revendications à la Conférence de la Paix (1919-1920)* (P.: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), 9 et sqq.

18. J. Lee Tompson, *Politicians, the Press & Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe & the Great War, 1914-1919* (Kent, OH – London: The Kent State University Press, 2).

19. Besides Tardieu and Laroche, the expert committee was comprised of two American representatives (Clive Day and Charles Seymour), two British (Sir Eyre Crow and A.W.A. Leeper), and two Italian (Giacomo de Martino and Count Luigi Vannutelli Rey). According to a source, “no territorial boundaries could be settled until after the detailed examination of each case by the expert committees, which could hardly be expected to produce unanimous recommendations in such controversial matters as national boundaries.” Donald Hankey, *The Supreme Control at the Paris Peace Conference, 1919: A Commentary* (Routledge Revivals, 2015), 76.

the barricade one was on, references to history, language, ethnicity, culture and economic interests, as well as claims for the respect and defence of the will of local inhabitants were made. Rather than contesting pro-Russian or pro-Romanian argumentation, the conference's delegates followed mutually agreed goals and principles,²⁰ relying on their own experts who produced maps and other reliable sources of information on the region.

There are numerous studies that explore in depth the role of de Martonne as an expert-geographer during the peace conference.²¹ His contribution to the clarification of the borders of Romania, which after the war doubled in size and population, was researched in France, Romania and elsewhere. In recent years, de Martonne's activity vis-à-vis Romania has been analysed from a more critical standpoint. Gilles Palsky questioned de Martonne's neutrality in designing Romania's ethnographical map, whereas Gavin Bowd, who dedicated a monograph to de Martonne's relationship with Romania,²² asserted that geographical arguments and practices, as well as ethnographic mapping, to which de Martonne contributed after the war, became subsequently linked to Romanian nation-building during the interwar and WWII period.²³ This study intends to deepen knowledge of de Martonne's role in clarifying the status of Bessarabia both as an expert at the conference and as a contributor to public forums. One can find his name not only in conference minutes with regard to Bessarabia, but also in newspapers and in private correspondence between the Romanians, the Russians and the Bessarabians who lived in Paris, Bucharest, Chişinău or Odessa. This served as a point of departure for my study, which aims to clarify de Martonne's argumentation on the status of Bessarabia as part of Romania, how his expertise merged with the position of France, as well as his reasons for taking a stance in public on the matter. Acknowledging that the press was used as a battle ground between marginal Bessarabian actors engaged in pro-Romanian or pro-Russian propaganda, I show how de Martonne's intervention in the press was received by both Russian and Romanian supporters, in what ways his public argumentation as scholar was different from the arguments of regional actors, and lastly, what his position on Bessarabia says about the interconnectedness between science, politics, and propaganda during the conference. Finally, I will formulate

20. For a consistent and balanced analysis of the interplay between the Great Powers with regard to Romania's interests in Bessarabia, see, Marcel Mitrasca, *Moldova: A Romanian Province under Russian Rule. Diplomatic History from the Archives of the Great Powers* (Algora Publishing, 2002).

21. See, among others, the study on de Martonne's contribution in shaping the new post-war Franco-German borders, with bibliography: Gaëlle Hallair, *Le géographe Emmanuel de Martonne et l'Europe centrale* (Grafigéo. Mémoires et documents de l'UMR PRODIG. Jean Marie Théodat. <hal-00282068>, 2007, <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00282068>.

22. Gavin Bowd, *Un géographe français et la Roumanie: Emmanuel de Martonne (1873-1955)* (P.: L'Harmattan, 2012).

23. Gavin Philip Bowd, Daniel Clayton, "Emmanuel de Martonne and the wartime defence of Greater Romania: circle, set-square and spine," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 47 (January 2015): 50-63.

a conclusion on the relevance of the case study for the overall understanding of the trajectory, character and role-play in the debates on the contested East European borderlands.

The Bessarabian question at the Paris Peace Conference: actors and ambitions

By the time the peace conference was launched in Paris, the former Russian gubernia of Bessarabia had become part of Romania. The union of Bessarabia with Romania, voted for by the regional diet “Sfatul Țării” on April 9, 1918, was favoured by a series of external and internal circumstances. Romania’s claims to Bessarabia were not among the conditions under which the country entered the war on the side of the Entente in 1916. The entrance of Romanian troops into Bessarabia in January 1918 with the aim of protecting the region from the Bolshevik danger corresponded to the military-strategic interests of the Allies, which later tacitly approved the launching of negotiations between the Romanian government and “Sfatul Țării.” It is a well-demonstrated fact that the initiative to vote for the union did not come from “Sfatul Țării,” but rather from the Romanian government.²⁴ The act of the union²⁵ was, nevertheless, a compromise between Bessarabian and Romanian elites, resulting in the region obtaining an autonomous status within Romania under a series of conditions. In the meantime, the “Romanization” of regional and local institutions started; a good part of regional officials and local employees expressed their dissatisfaction with the intention to eliminate Russian language from the administration, education system and cultural institutions and refused to take the oath to the Romanian King.²⁶ On December 9, 1918, during its last session, “Sfatul Țării” cancelled the conditions of the union and ceased its activity.

During the conference, the representatives of the two former war allies, Russia²⁷ and Romania, seemed to agree on the stringent necessity of defeating the Bolsheviks; nevertheless, their interests clashed over the status of Bessarabia. Romania

24. See, at large, Ion Țurcanu, *Unirea Basarabiei cu România 1918: Preludii, premise, realizări* (Chișinău: “Tipografia centrală”, 1998), 165-187.

25. On April 9, 1918, 86 out of 138 “Sfatul Țării” deputies voted for the union. The Romanian politician of Bessarabian origin, Constantin Stere, played a crucial role in persuading the deputies. See, i.a. Andrei Cușco, “Constantin Stere, the ‘Bessarabian Question,’ and the Romanian Foreign Policy Debates in the Early XXth Century,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 60 (2012) : 204-225; Svetlana Suveică, “O microistorie a unirii Basarabiei cu România. Discuțiile dintre Panteleimon V. Sinadino, Alexandru Marghiloman și Constantin Stere (1918)” in: *Constantin Stere – prozator, publicist, jurist și om politic – 150 de ani de la naștere* (Chișinău-Iași: Editura Vasiliană, 98, 2016), 166-196.

26. On the achievements and pitfalls of administrative integration, see, at large, Svetlana Suveică, *Basarabia în primul deceniu interbelic (1918-1928): Modernizare prin reforme* (Chișinău: Pontos, 2010), 193-260.

27. Although Russia did not have an official delegation at the conference, the representatives of Kolchak government were invited at the hearings to present Russia’s position on the territorial

struggled to have her new borders, including territories from the disintegrated Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, recognized. The Romanian delegation, led by the Prime-minister Ion I.C. Brătianu, worked towards convincing the Great Powers that the historic and ethnic rights of Romania over Bessarabia, in which the great majority of the population spoke Romanian,²⁸ should be restored. At the hearings on July 2, 1919, Brătianu turned to historical arguments, stating that Bessarabia was occupied by the Russian Empire in 1812 and that in January 1918 the Romanian army entered the region as a response to the call from the inhabitants. In addition, while emphasizing the supremacy of the principle of self-determination as the basis for the re-designing of post-war borders, the Romanians asserted that the “Sfatul Țării” vote was the expression of the people’s will. Brătianu acknowledged that among those dissatisfied with the new order were Bolshevik sympathizers and Bessarabian landowners, the latter refusing to comply with the agrarian reform. Brătianu opposed the idea of a plebiscite in Bessarabia, insisting that it could lead to disturbances in a province exposed to a high risk of Bolshevik invasion. He firmly stated that promising a plebiscite for the future would lead to constant tensions and mistrust within the region.²⁹ For the decision-makers who considered Romania’s anti-Bolshevik stance to be crucial, the argument that “Romania was in need of the moral support of the Allies, if she was to remain what she had been hitherto—a rallying point for Europe against Bolshevism”³⁰ was a powerful one. With some exceptions, Romania gained the support of the representatives of the Bessarabian “new” elite, which took power after the February 1917 Revolution. Among these was the Bessarabian Minister of Justice, Ioan Pelivan, who reached Paris via Bucharest in his capacity as a “technical expert” within the Romanian delegation to the conference. In contrast to Pelivan and other supporters of the union of the region with Romania, the representatives of the former Bessarabian elite, who during the last days of the empire had played leading political and economic roles, criticized the activity of the regional diet and, in particular, the murky way in which Bessarabian autonomy was abolished on December 10, 1918.³¹ From this chronological point, the hope that Romanian

questions that they claimed affected Russia’s “vital interests,” i.e. territorial issues related to Poland, Baltic States and Bessarabia.

28. According to the Russian 1897 census, the percentage of the Moldovans was 47, 6. In fact, the number was around 64 per cent.

29. Secret. Notes of the Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Powers held in Mr. Pichon’s Room at the Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, July 2, 1919, at 3.30 p.m., F.M. Records 15-29, May 14 – July 2 1919, vol. 2 American Commission to Negotiate Peace. See, as well, Mitrasca, Moldova, 86-89; T.G. Otte, ed., *An Historian in Peace and War: The Diaries of Harold Temperley* (Farnham – Surrey – Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.), 443-445.

30. George David Herron – Georges Derussi, Geneva, January 21, 1920. Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA (further, HIA), George Davis Herron Papers, 1916-1927, Volume IX. Romania, item XXXVII, f. 1.

31. The voting took place in the middle of the night, with the participation of only 44 out of 125 deputies, all 44 voting unanimously for the drafted resolution. A group of deputies participated then in the destruction of the Tsars’ monuments in the center of the city. See, Svetlana Suveica, Virgil Păslariuc, “Gorod Kishinëv: ot zapadnoi okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii k vostochnoi okraïne Velikoi Rumynii [The city of Kishinev: from the Western periphery of Russian Empire

government will integrate them into Bessarabia's political and social life, as well as restore their economic privileges vanished. Being convinced that "nothing is to be done here [in Bessarabia] – everything has to be concentrated there, in the centers where a new world map"³² was designed, the former Marshal of Bessarabian nobility, Alexandr N. Krupenskii, grounded in Odessa the so-called "Bessarabian delegation" to Paris. Its aim was to "achieve the liberation of Bessarabia from Romanian annexation and the realization of the aspirations of the people of Bessarabia."³³ Behind this enterprise were Russian political émigrés and diplomats who launched in Paris and other European capitals the *Russkoe delo* campaign to secure from the Allies military and financial support in the fight against Bolsheviks and, subsequently, to ensure the fulfilment of Russia's interests in preserving pre-war Western borders, including the region of Bessarabia.³⁴

During the conference, Russia's representatives referred on several occasions to the issue of Bessarabia as part of her interest in preserving former western borderlands.³⁵ At the hearings held on July 2, the Russian ambassador to Paris, Vasilii A. Maklakov, argued that Romania lacked rights in the region: when Romania entered the war on the side of the Entente in 1916 she did not claim Bessarabia, so she was not entitled to have it. He backed the idea of a plebiscite as the only "just" solution to the territorial dispute. The conference minutes indicate that Maklakov showed a map of Bessarabia, which was designed by the head of the "Bessarabian delegation," Alexandr N. Krupenskii. Although the original version of the map is missing, the draft provides sufficient information to observe that statistical data of the 1897 census were manipulated, in order to argue that plebiscite was needed only in four out of nine districts with a Romanian majority (Annex 2).³⁶ Maklakov assumed that the rest of districts populated by other nationalities would automatically opt for the return of Bessarabia to Russia. "If there were any Russian subjects of Romanian nationality who wished to unite under one flag with the rest of their

to the Eastern periphery of Greater Romania],” in *Goroda imperii v gody Velikoi Voiny i revoliutsii: Sbornik statei* [Cities of Empire during the Great War and Revolution: A collection of essays] (SPb.: Nestor-Istoriia, 2017), 398-400.

32. Panteleimon V. Sinadino – Alexandr N. Krupenskii, Chişinău, December 6, 1918 (Ru.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 1 Correspondence, Folder Sinadino, Panteleimon, V.

33. Deklaratsiia [Declaration], February 10, 1919, Odessa, HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box II Subject File, Folder Bessarabian commission of the Paris Peace Conference (here and further translation belong to the author of this article).

34. "Russian cause" (Ru.).

35. On the contribution of the Russian White forces to the defence of the "Bessarabian cause," see, Svetlana Suveica, "Russkoe delo" and the "Bessarabian cause": the Russian Political Émigrés and the Bessarabians in Paris (1919-1920)," *IOS Mitteilungen* (Februar 2014), 1-53.

36. A draft version of the map can be find in Krupenskii's personal archives (HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 3 Speeches & Writings 1919, Folder Russian Political Conference, Paris). The percentage crossed by Krupenskii coincides with the data obtained in 1897 census. See, N.A. Troitskii, red., *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis' naseleniia Rossiiskoi imperii 1897 goda. T. III Bessarabskaia Guberniia* [The first general census of the Russian Empire of the year of 1897, t. III: The guberniia of Bessarabia], (SPb.: Tsentral'nyi Statisticheskii Komitet MVD, 1905), 2-3.

countrymen, Russia would be well-advised to permit it. Russia was big enough to make a sacrifice of this kind,” concluded Maklakov before the “Big Four”.³⁷

The Bessarabians who did not have access to the conference assumed the task of producing propaganda in defence of the “Bessarabian cause” before the larger public. In contrast to their neighbours the Ukrainians, who opted for the recognition of an independent Ukrainian state, the Bessarabians supported either Romania’s or Russia’s interests in the region.³⁸ Their representatives—from both the Romanian and the Russian camp—claimed that they voiced in Paris “the will of the Bessarabian people.” Both ran active propaganda campaigns that were directed towards the decision-makers as well as the public. An impressive number of pamphlets, journals and newspaper articles were published by the “Bessarabian delegation,”³⁹ similar activities were pursued by Ion Pelivan.⁴⁰ A closer look at the archival sources reveals that the publications were financially supported either by the Russian émigrés or by the Romanian government, both of which also made an effort to spread propaganda material through different channels among politicians as well as the public. The Romanian and Russian officials who were regularly informed on the state of affairs in the region, issued memoranda and addresses to the conference’s delegates and other European and U.S. officials, including Woodrow Wilson,⁴¹ in order to raise the interest of decision-makers on the issue.

37. Secret. Notes of the Meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Powers held in Mr. Pichon’s Room at the Quai d’Orsay, Paris, on Wednesday, July 2, 1919, at 3.30 p.m., F.M. Records 15-29, May 14 – July 2, 1919, vol. 2, American Commission to Negotiate Peace, p. 3-4.

38. On the continuous clash of the two political projects—the Russian imperial and the Romanian national—in the late XIX - beginning of XX century and political/identity/cultural divide of Bessarabian society, see, Andrei Cușco, Viktor Taki (with the assistance of O. Grom), *Bessarabiia v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii (1812-1917)* [Bessarabia as part of the Russian Empire (1812-1917)] (M.: NLO, 2012).

39. *Mémoire sur la situation de la Bessarabie*, par le Comité pour la Libération de la Bessarabie (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, n.d.), Serghei D. Botkin Papers, HIA; *Lettre de Bessarabie recue par la Délégation Bessarabienne à Paris* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, n.d.); *Bessarabie et Roumanie*, Imprimerie Lahure; A.N. Kroupensky, A.C. Schmidt, *Summary of Events in Bessarabia (1917-1918)* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, 1919); *The Roumanian Occupation in Bessarabia: Documents*. Publications of the Bessarabian Delegation (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, 1920); A.N. Kroupensky, A.C. Schmidt, *What is the “Bessarabian Question”?* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, n.d.).

40. See, Ion G. Peilvan, *Le mouvement et l’accroissement de la population en Bessarabie, de 1812 à 1918, et quelques dates concernant la géographie de la Bessarabie* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, 1919); Idem, *L’union de la Bessarabie à la Mère-Patrie la Roumanie* (Bucharest : Cartea Romaneasca, n.d.) ; Idem, *La Bessarabie sous le régime russe* (P., 1919); Idem, *Bessarabia under the Russian Rule* (P.: J. Charpentier, 1920); Idem, *Chronology in the most Important Events of the Life of Bessarabia (1812-1919)* (P.: Imprimerie des Arts et Sports, 1920); *The Economic State of Bessarabia* (P.: Imprimerie des Arts et des Sports, 1920); *The Right of the Roumanians to Bessarabia in the Light of History and Ethnography and on the Basis of Self-Determination*, with 4 cuts and a map (P.: Imprimerie des Arts et des Sports, 1920).

41. President Wilson, White House, D.C., HIA, Vasiliu Maklakov Papers, 1881-1956, Box 27 Subject file, Folder Bessarabia. Paris Peace Conference. Bessarabian Delegation. Protests to President W. Wilson; “Bessarabia Sends Appeal to Wilson,” by A.N. Krupensky and A.C. Schmidt, *New York Times*, September 24, 1919.

The position of France and de Martonne's expertise

France tacitly approved the union of Bessarabia with Romania in April 1918, without issuing an official statement in this regard. Despite Romania's constant belief that France was its main advocate, the latter hesitated in making its position clear with regard to the status of the region until 1920.

France's hesitation to come between the two allies—Romania and Russia—was connected with the development of the anti-Bolshevik front inside Russia, as well as with the willingness of the Great Powers to recognize the Kolchak government. The hesitation became stronger in April 1919, when the White armies achieved a series of victories against the Bolsheviks. France was firmly convinced of the crucial role of the White armies in the defeat of the Bolsheviks and wanted to avoid complications in other matters affecting Russia's interests. At the same time, Romania's 1918 enlargement, both in territory and population, was considered by France as an asset in the fight against Bolshevism. After the defeat of Denikin's Armed Forces of South Russia in Kiev, southern Ukraine and Crimea and its retreat towards the Don river, the enforcement of Romania as a buffer zone was more clearly formulated during the conference meetings. Nevertheless, from January to October 1920, France refused to sign the treaty on Bessarabia, in order to secure further resistance of the White Army in Crimea, led by Baron Wrangel.

In the process of formulating its position with regard to Romania, the French delegation sought the professional knowledge of accredited French experts.⁴² According to Olivier Lowczyk, who thoroughly researched the activity of the Comité d'Étude, the experts were aware of the geopolitical importance of their work, and as a result, consciously stepped out of the academia "pour s'aventurer dans les considérations jusqu'alors prosrites de la fabrication d'un savoir géographique à des fin opératoires et politiques." They considered the offer as an honour, but also as a "patriotic act" towards their country engaged in war.⁴³ The Sorbonne professor Emmanuel de Martonne (1873-1955), a leading specialist in Romanian geography, was well known in international academic circles before and during the war.⁴⁴ From September to December 1918, he was dispatched to the U.S. to work within the Inquiry; the selection was made based on the scholars'

42. On the interconnectedness between science and politics, see, Taline Ter Minassian, "Les géographes français et la délimitation des frontières balkaniques à la conférence de la paix en 1919," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 44-2 (avril-juin 1997): 252-287.

43. Olivier Lowczyk, *La fabrique de la paix: Du Comité d'études à la Conférence de la Paix, l'élaboration par la France des traités de la Première Guerre mondiale* (P.: Economica, 2010), 474, 45-73.

44. The literature on de Martonne's contribution to the tracing of the Balkan frontiers is vast. Besides some biographical essays, on de Martonne's research on Romania, see: Ter Minassian, "Les géographes français"; Gavin Bowd, "Emmanuel de Martonne et la naissance de la Grande Roumanie," *Revue Roumaine de Géographie*, 53, 2 (2011): 103-120; Jacques Bariéty, "Le géographe Emmanuel de Martonne, médiateur entre la Roumanie et la France," *Études danubiennes*, 13, 2 (1997): 25-33; Emmanuelle Boulineau, "Un géographe traceur de frontières: Emmanuel de Martonne et la Roumanie," *L'Espace Géographique*, 30, 4 (2001): 358-370; Palsky, "Emmanuel de Martonne."

professional expertise, but also on their political opinions and personal contacts.⁴⁵ De Martonne made professional contacts and built friendships with American geographers Isaiah Bowman, John K. Wright and Douglas W. Johnson;⁴⁶ he worked closely with the latter within the sub-commission on Romania's frontiers.⁴⁷ It is probable that in the subsequent selection of the French experts to the conference, those with experience and contacts with the Inquiry were given priority. Previous publications indicate de Martonne's ties with high-profile politicians, such as Tardieu and Clemenceau, as well as with militaries established during his teaching at the War School and with the Army's Geographical Service.⁴⁸ Since Clemenceau did not hide his "antipathy" towards Romania and often critiqued the Romanian Prime Minister Brătianu on his work with regards to Romania, de Martonne presumably took on the role of "liaison" between the political and military circles in favour of a "Greater Romania." Some scholars consider this role as having been essential.⁴⁹ De Martonne's duty within the Territorial Commission for Romanian and Yugoslavian affairs, set up on February 3, 1919, was fully in line with his professional expertise.⁵⁰ His task consisted of designing reports and maps, as well as presenting his work at the commission's meetings.

While bringing the notion of the region in the "vidalian" meaning to the fore,⁵¹ the geographer presented simultaneously ethnic composition and rural-urban variations within a region. In order to represent the mix of nationalities in as balanced a way as possible, de Martonne developed a new "synthetic method" of combining ethnographic mapping with population (numerical) mapping. Nationality was represented as the main qualitative variable with the help of three colour spectra (three shades of red (Romanians), blue (Slavs), yellow (Germans), green (Hungarians),

45. Lowczyk, *La fabrique de la paix*, 109-114; Kitsikis, *Le rôle des experts à la Conférence de la Paix de 1919; gestation d'une technocratie en politique internationale* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1972), 12.

46. "Jean Gottmann, "Obituary: Emmanuel de Martonne," *Geographical Review*, 46, 2 (April 1956): 279.

47. Wartime geographic expertise in military cartography, as well as political and institutional networks formed prior to the conference played an important role in selecting the experts. See, in this regard, Ter Minassian, "Les géographes français," 268-271, et seq.

48. Bowd, *Un géographe français*, 36-37.

49. Ter Minassian, "Les géographes français."

50. De Martonne defended two Ph.D. theses on Romania, entitled "La Valachie" (1902) and "L'évolution morphologique des Alpes de Transylvanie" (1907), had a good command of Romanian, conducted field research in the Carpathian Mountains and published extensively on the geographical situation in the Balkan and the Danube regions. He was one of the organisers of the French School of Cartography (1934) with a wide range of courses including training in map construction and design.

51. Paul Vidal de la Blache, who was de Martonne's professor as well as his father-in-law, considered the region as a natural space, in which a homogenous physical unity between the population, geography and nature occurred. The notion was used in the "rhetoric of persuasion", because it allowed for the simulation of territorial decoupage and enforced the region's economic viability. See, R. Chartier, "Sciences sociales et découpage régional: Note sur deux débats, 1820-1920," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociale*, 35 (1980): 24-36.

violet (Bulgarians)) which was used for the first time (Annex 3). According to the expert, the aim of the method was to “offer a general geographical image”, therefore, it did not show the statistical composition of each geographical location, but homogeneous and mixed regions.⁵²

The method applied by de Martonne was criticised only much later. According to Gilles Palsky, urban population was not taken into account due to its unstable composition, so that rural factor was predominant in defining ethnicity; minorities were grouped into several categories, from which Russians, especially a number of those in Bessarabia, were missing. The red colour was used to show the predominance of (Romanian) majority—a form of visual “ethnic lobbying” through maps, which used to create the feeling of dominance.⁵³ Moreover, the title of the map, *Répartition des nationalités dans les pays où dominent les Roumains*, did “not sound entirely neutral even if they represented purely statistical evidence,”⁵⁴ but rather articulates the expert’s sympathy for Romania’s interests. Other researchers also challenged de Martonne’s subjective use of “cartographic language in service of the Romanian cause.”⁵⁵

The map of Romania was annexed to each of the four reports on Transylvania, Banat, Dobrudja, and Bessarabia, namely the regions that adhered to Romania in 1918 and were claimed at the conference as integral parts of her territory. The choice of frontier paths was not always guided by the principle of nationalities; instead, economic arguments and political ideology of the victors often prevailed.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the reports emphasized continuity and interdependence between the regions. Bessarabia presented neither an economic interest for Romania, nor was the territory crucial for her commercial development. Thus, in contrast to previous reports on Banat and Dobrudja, in which geographic, strategic and economic reasoning was emphasized, the report on Bessarabia, issued in July 1919, argued that the region should remain part of Romania based on “ethnic justice, history and geography”, as well as based on the “interests of the population.”⁵⁷ The argument regarding Bessarabia’s strategic importance as part of Romania in countering the spread of Bolshevism was not part of the report, but rather only revealed by de Martonne much later in his public oral and written interventions.

52. See, at large, E. de Martonne, “Essai de carte ethnographique des pays roumains,” *Annales de Géographie*, 29, 158 (1920): 81-98. Since the work of the experts within the committee was confidential, only in 1920 did de Martonne reproduce the map of Romania as an academic publication, as well as present it to the larger public.

53. According to Jacques Bariéty, red colour that persisted over the map presented “one of the best descriptions of the Bessarabian national conscience” as belonging to Romanian space.

54. Palsky, “Emmanuel de Martonne,” 114-115.

55. Ter Minassian, “Les géographes français,” 254-255; Bowd, *Un géographe français et la Roumanie*, 59.

56. Hallair, *Le géographe Emmanuel de Martonne*, 36.

57. Notes sur la Bessarabie, 7 juillet 1919. PA-AP André Tardieu 166/378, Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, f. 171.

De Martonne's trip to Bessarabia

The Bessarabian question was discussed during the first meeting of the Territorial Commission, held on February 8, 1919. The delegates did not agree on the representativeness of "Sfatul Țării," the statistical data with regard to ethnic composition, as well as on the situation of minorities, therefore, it was decided that the final decision on the status of Bessarabia should be postponed "until the study of other borders showed if changes were to be added." Under these conditions, the commission decided to further investigate the situation of the region.

On June 2, 1919, the Comité d'Étude commissioned de Martonne for a 10-day study trip to Bessarabia.⁵⁸ The Romanian authorities paid serious attention to the visit. In order to ensure that the French guest was received with honours, they designed his itinerary and organised activities and dinners. Thus, "Prof. Martonne, who departed from Chișinău, was received in Băți, Orhei, Soroca as well as in the villages with great enthusiasm and interest of the population as well as the authorities."⁵⁹ The governmental press used the occasion to hint to its readers that France was always by Romania's side and was going to support her interests at the conference. Whereas governmental representatives expressed satisfaction on the visit, the opponents of the regime in the region criticized de Martonne's visit instead. In a private letter addressed to Krupenskii in Paris, the president of the Union of Great Landowners, Panteleimon V. Sinadino—an earlier supporter of the union of Bessarabia with Romania as a way to save the region from the Bolsheviks—expressed his indignation toward the fact that all the "foreigners" who travelled to Bessarabia "have made contacts exclusively [underl. in text] with Romanian authorities or local leaders of Sfatul Țării, Halippa, Ciugureanu, etc."⁶⁰ The Romanian authorities were blamed for interfering in the activities de Martonne undertook during his trip. Critics asserted that the government sought to influence the scholar's observations of the region that would later be reflected in his report.

The report on the region

E. de Martonne issued his report on Bessarabia to Tardieu on July 7, 1919, several days after the July 2 hearings of Maklakov and Brătianu on Bessarabia. De Martonne defined nationality as an ethnically mixed group that speaks the same language and shares a set of common practices and traditions. In the report, he indicated that

58. Based on the minutes of the Comité of June 2, 1919, cited by Lowczyk, *La fabrique de la paix*, 420.

59. "Știri din Basarabia," *Viitorul* (n.d.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 6 Cuttings, Folder Viitorul.

60. Along with Ciugureanu, Panteleimon Halippa was a Secretary of State in the Romanian government. Panteleimon V. Sinadino – Alexandr N. Krupenskii, Chișinău, August 12, 1919 (Ru.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 1 Correspondence, Folder Sinadino, Panteleimon, V.

Russian statistics on the nationalities that populated the region presented “serious discrepancies.” The geographical extremes of the region represented a “strange mosaic [...] in which it is impossible to distinguish a dominant nationality” due to Russia’s XIXth century politics of denationalization and colonization. The expert predicted that “a change in this situation can be expected if Bessarabia remains under the Romanian administration.”⁶¹ He rejected the idea of a plebiscite, argued by Maklakov at the hearings, due to the fact that the majority of peasants were illiterate and the local elites were russified. De Martonne underlined that his trip to Bessarabia re-confirmed his previous statement that “of all the provinces that make up the historical area of Romania, Bessarabia is visibly the most Romanian.”⁶²

Annexed to the report was the map of Romania that included Bessarabia. In a later study, de Martonne specified that as a source for drawing the map of the region served the 1907 map of Bessarabia, designed by the Bessarabian writer and publicist Alexis Nour.⁶³ Nour also used red colour to indicate the percentage of Romanians (Moldovans) living in the region (Annex 4).⁶⁴ De Martonne remarked that Nour’s map was not immune to critique, but that “elle est en général aussi exacte que le permettent les documents russes d’après lesquels elle a été établie.” According to the author, the pre-war maps contained “présomption d’erreur” in detriment of the Romanians, which was similar to the case of Hungary.⁶⁵ Since Nour’s map inspired de Martonne’s map on Bessarabia, one should acknowledge that in the case of Bessarabia, similar to other East European regions which status was questioned after the war, traces of cartographical knowledge transfer from the imperial to the nation-state period occurred.

Studies point out that de Martonne’s expertise on Romania was “profitably used for the establishment of the French position” at the conference.⁶⁶ Indeed, the confer-

61. Notes sur la Bessarabie, 7 juillet 1919. PA-AP André Tardieu 166/378, Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, f. 167-171; E. de Martonne, *La Bessarabie: Avec une carte et un appendice* (P.: Imprimerie nationale, 1919). De Martonne, “Essai de carte ethnographique,” 92.

62. Notes sur la Bessarabie, 7 juillet 1919. PA-AP André Tardieu 166/378, Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve, f. 168.

63. In 1916, Alexis Nour wrote a memorandum, in which he launched the idea of a Romanian-Ukrainian coalition against Russia, as well as foresaw the federalization of Russia. According to him, the only way for Bessarabia to avoid Bolshevism was the union with Romania. On the memo, see, Cușco, Taki, *Bessarabiia*, 354-356

64. According to the legend, these constituted 2 000 000 from the total of 3 000 000 inhabitants (two thirds), the number being higher than that given in the 1897 census (47.6 per cent). Alexis Nour, *Basarabia, harta etnografică* [Bessarabia, ethnographic map], 1 : 450 000, București, 1915. The annex contains a 1917 edition of the map, which included, on the upper right corner, an artistic vision of a coat of arms of Bessarabian gubernia, approved by the Russian Emperor on July 5, 1878. It does not correspond to the coat of arms of the Moldovan Democratic Republic.

65. E. de Martonne, “Essai de carte ethnographique,” 89. To the right of the map, the following “Russian sources” used by Nour were indicated: the maps of the Russian General Headquarters, the maps of Bessarabia published in Russia and Germany, statistics gathered by county zemstvos during the years of 1906-1909, as well as personal observations.

66. Boulineau, “Un géographe traceur des frontières,” 362, 364. Oliver Lowczyk also indicated that de Martonne’s contribution to the works of the Comité, as well as the work of the French

ence minutes show that during the meeting of the Council of the Heads of Delegations on October 11, 1919, the French delegate Jules Laroche, who argued against the position of the American delegate Frank Polk,⁶⁷ emphasized that “the journey which Mr de Martonne recently made in Bessarabia had brought new proofs” on the Romanian character of the region, which should be taken into account. The emphasis on the region’s ethnic composition proves that nationality remained the main point of argumentation around the status of Bessarabia in both the report and the subsequent discussions on the issue.

According to Dmitri Kitsikis’ fine observation, the experts’ role in shaping final conclusions on issues that required argumentation on history and ethnicity was greater, as opposed to such questions as geostrategy or struggle against Bolshevism;⁶⁸ this could also well be the case of Bessarabia. Still, in order for an expert’s work to have impact, a “certain concordance de vues politiques et stratégiques entre experts et décideurs” was sought.⁶⁹ Here, de Martonne’s position on Romania’s important role against Bolshevism and, therefore, on the need to support the country’s enlargement and strength, coincided with the position of other experts which “explored ways to handle Bolshevik Russia and respond to the threat of Communism.”⁷⁰ Not only geographers, but also historians, such as R.W. Seton-Watson, argued in favour of Romania’s role in the defeat of the Bolsheviks.⁷¹

Reaching out to the public

The reports written by the experts were confidential, which they considered to be frustrating in the later stages of their careers.⁷² On July 8, 1919, two days after having presented his report on Bessarabia, de Martonne relinquished his duty as

delegation related to the Romanian frontiers, was of “substantial importance” (Lowczyk, *La fabrique de la paix*, 121, 469).

67. During the conference the American position towards the Bessarabian issue clearly favoured Russia’s interests in the region. Mitrasca, *Moldova*, 361-366.

68. Dimitri Kitsikis considered the problem of reparations, the Polish “question,” and that of the Rhineland to be the most important (Kitsikis, *Le rôle des experts*, 26-27).

69. Ter Minassian, “Les géographes français,” 286.

70. Michael Graham Fly, Eric Goldstein, Richard Langhorne, eds., *Guide to International Relations and Diplomacy* (London – New York: Continuum, 2002), 395.

71. Consultations on Romania with the British historian R.W. Seton-Watson, who attended the conference in a private capacity, were mentioned in different sources. See, i.a., Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Taylor & Francis, 1981); Cornelia Bodea, Hugh Seton-Watson, *R.W. Seton-Watson și românii* [R.W. Seton-Watson and the Romanians] (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1988).

72. See the memoirs of Charles Benoist, the political editor in charge with the selection of members of the *Comité d’Études*: Charles Benoist, *Souvenirs, 1902-1933: Vie parlementaire, vie diplomatique*, tome 3 (P.: Librairie Plon, 1934), 324.

an expert. Perhaps, being conscious of the importance of his work, but also of its limits, he decided to step out into the press and present his position with regard to Bessarabia to the French public. It is worth mentioning, that no other Romanian region was given such importance in the press as Bessarabia.

On July 19, 1919, de Martonne debuted with an article on the situation in Bessarabia in the Parisian *Journal des Débats*.⁷³ The publication emphasized the author's intention to answer questions that were of interest to the French audience: whether there were Bolsheviks in Bessarabia, how the population received Romanian rule, and whether local inhabitants demanded the return of the region to Russia. De Martonne assured the reader that during his trip to Bessarabia he did not encounter "any Bolshevik", which was a proof of the fact that Romania had secured the region and re-established order there. Drawing comparison with the situation of Transylvania under Austro-Hungarian rule, he underlined that Bessarabian minorities, among them the Germans, initially did not welcome the union of Bessarabia with Romania, but later declared loyalty to the King. As for the rest of the inhabitants, "all still consider themselves as "Moldovans."⁷⁴ The scholar did not deny that there was a state of dissatisfaction among the inhabitants, but rather categorized it as confusion mixed with nostalgia for the Russian Empire. According to the geographer, the incertitude at the conference with regard to the future status of Bessarabia echoed back to the region, where a confused state of spirit was maintained: "All the rumours could find ground: the Russians will come, the Bolsheviks will pass the Dniester; the departure of the French troops⁷⁵ worries." Nevertheless, one could find in the region a mass of conscious Romanians. The abuses of Romanian administration were qualified as "blunders," from which the French themselves were not immune in the newly acquired Alsace.⁷⁶ Thus, the author concluded, the assimilation of Bessarabia into Romania was proceeding naturally, so that, it was doubtful that "an impartial observer, even sympathizing with Russia, would respond affirmatively" to the question whether

73. E. de Martonne, "En Bessarabie."

74. Within the Russian Empire, the Bessarabians called themselves "Moldovans" (a name that comes from the historical Principality of Moldova), in Romanian and Russian sources these were called "Bessarabians," both terms referring to regional rather than ethnic identity. Today the controversy over the Moldovans being a separate ethnic group from the Romanians—a legacy of the Soviet times—is closely related to geopolitical debates on Moldova's future toward (Russian) East or (Romanian) West.

75. The French troops left Southern Ukraine in April 1919. General Berthelot, who earlier led the French military mission in Romania (1916-1917) and, therefore, was considered a "great friend" of Romania, showed reluctance towards the union of Bessarabia with Romania, considering that the interests of Russian Whites in the region should not be ignored. See, Svetlana Suveica, "A Russian Diplomat in Bucharest: S.A. Poklevskii-Koziell and the "Bessarabian Cause" (1919-1920)," *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, XXII, 1-2 (2014): 10-31.

76. Paul Vidal de la Blache and Emmanuel de Martonne prepared the justification for the return of Alsace-Lorraine for the French government, avoiding the necessity of a plebiscite in the region. See, Virginie Mamadouh, "Geography at War, Geographers at Peace," in Colin Flint, *The Geography of War and Peace: From Death Camps to Diplomats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 32.

a “come-back” to Russia was possible. Although de Martonne did not claim to counter anti-Romanian propaganda, he was undoubtedly aware of those publications that incited spirits against Romania.⁷⁷

In a 36-pages ethnographic description of the region published a couple of months later, the geographer returned to the issue of the Bolshevik menace and assured the reader that it was Romania that had saved Bessarabia from the Bolsheviks, and that, despite cultural and social diversity, “the definitive union to Romania is being fulfilled.”⁷⁸ Although not bluntly stated, the expression of de Martonne’s position over the status of Bessarabia in the press was a much-awaited gesture by the Romanian government, which, at that time, faced a harsh critique from both internal political opposition and from abroad.⁷⁹ The Romanian delegation facilitated the publication of de Martonne’s two texts “as separate brochures, one thousand copies in French and one thousand in English.”⁸⁰ In turn, de Martonne was active in the Romanian press abroad, which also served propaganda purposes.⁸¹

De Martonne’s interventions in the public also echoed in the Romanian press. Through its official newspapers, the government used de Martonne’s authority to reconfirm before the public that the country’s claim on Bessarabia will be fulfilled soon. Thus, on July 24, *Viitorul* informed its readers that, “while some believe that Bessarabia is ethnically a Russian province—and those who support this view are those who were asking before the war if Romania was the same as Rumelia—a great professor whose specialization is exactly the knowledge of the populations, their field classification, as well as general geography, Mr. de Martonne, comes to tell you that this province is purely Romanian.” De Martonne’s authority was thus used to re-state that, with regard to Bessarabia, “the truth must win.”⁸²

77. See, for instance, M. Wolkonsky, “Les Roumains en Bessarabie”, *Cause Commune*, Paris, 18 octobre 1919.

78. “Choses vues en Bessarabie,” *Revue de Paris*, October 1, 1919. An excerpt with a similar title was issued the same year: E. de Martonne, *Choses vues en Bessarabie* (P.: Imprimerie des Arts et des Sports, 1919). Several other French newspapers re-published the excerpts from the two above-mentioned publications (“La verite sur la Bessarabie”, *L’Œuvre*, July 15, 1919), a pamphlet that comprised both texts was also issued (*Un témoignage français sur la situation en Bessarabie. Deux articles de M. E. de Martonne* (Paris: Imprimerie Dubois et Bauer, Juillet 1919, held at: Bessarabia pamphlet collection, Microfilm, Hoover Institution Library, Stanford, California).

79. The fact that on July 2, 1919, Brătianu left the conference unwilling to reach a compromise with the Serbian delegates on the region of Banat was one of the main points of critique. S.A. Poklevskii-Kozel – S.D. Sazonov, Bucharest, December 15, 1919 (Ru.), HIA, Secret letter (copy), Russia. Posol’stvo (U.S.), Reel 23, Box 22, Folder 22.6 Bessarabia, 1920, c. 0017.

80. Ion Pelivan – Daniel Ciugureanu, Paris, August 8, 1919 (Ro.), Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale București (further, ANIC), Fond Ioan Pelivan, inv. 1449, d. 129, f. 24; De Martonne, *La Bessarabie*; Idem, *Choses vues en Bessarabie* (P.: Imprimerie des Arts et des Sports, 1919); Idem, *What I Have Seen in Bessarabia* (P., 1919).

81. De Martonne was a member of the patronage committee as well as an author of publications for *La Transylvanie*, a Romanian review with a propagandistic character, carrying the subtitle of the “organ of the National Committee of Romanians from Transylvania and Bucovina.” Palsky, “Emmanuel de Martonne,” 115.

82. “Învățătură de Martonne și Basarabia,” *Viitorul*, Bucharest, July 24, 1919.

The Bessarabians take a stance

In the summer of 1919, spirits in Bessarabia were confused. The “truth” about the region being “Romanian,” re-stated by the new regime on various occasions, looked different to the representatives of the former regional elite. The latter expressed its discontent with the spread of de Martonne’s position in the press and called for a critical response in the French press.

In the autumn of 1919 Krupenskii published a 52-pages brochure that included his and de Martonne’s articles.⁸³ The head of the “Bessarabian delegation” emphasized that his Bessarabian origin gave him priority over his opponent: he knew better than “an occasional traveller” the tradition, the character and the mentality of the inhabitants. As a “representative” of Bessarabia to the Peace conference, it was his “right, as well as [my] duty, to protest against the testimonials and conclusions of the scientist geographer, if he interpreted erroneously the observed facts, or if these observations I consider superficial.”⁸⁴ One should have thus questioned de Martonne’s conclusions on the situation and the state of spirit in the region, not only because his trip was too short, but also because the “ami des Roumains” was treated with hospitality and courtesy, like an official representative of France, which might have influenced his position on Bessarabia.

According to Krupenskii, who seemed to care about the honour of French science, de Martonne used vague and imprecise language. Krupenskii considered the fact that the geographer spoke only “the language of the invaders” to be insufficient to conclude that Romanian was the language of the majority. “Would not Mr. de Martonne know that the “impressions” in the matter of statistics and demography are always very misleading, and that only a new census is likely to correct—or confirm—the results of another census?”⁸⁵ A map could show the real situation only if based on official data, such as the 1897 Russian census; nevertheless, Krupenskii himself purposely diminished the percentage of Romanian majority in four central counties (Annex 2).⁸⁶ Krupenskii’s active engagement in polemic with de Martonne was viewed differently by the supporters of the “Russian cause” for Bessarabia. Whereas some émigrés encouraged the discussions, others considered them to be of no practical use to the cause. Thus, the Russian poet Serge Persky, who was based in Geneva and seemed unaware of the fact that *La Gazette de Lausanne* republished

83. *Remarques suggérées par deux articles de M. E. de Martonne. Réponse de M. A.N. Kroupensky, délégué de la Bessarabie à la Conférence de la Paix* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, 1919); Réponse de M. de Martonne à mes remarques et ma réponse à sa prose, HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box III Speeches and Writings, 1919, Folder “A Propos de la Bessarabie” (1919).

84. *Remarques suggérées par deux articles*, 37.

85. *Ibid.*, 50.

86. In contrast to de Martonne’s map, which was a professional product and was reproduced by the author in his academic publications, his map was known to the wider audience through the publications of the “Bessarabian delegation” with a propaganda character. See, *The Roumanian Occupation in Bessarabia*, 13.

de Martonne's article from the French *Les Débats*,⁸⁷ observed that de Martonne's article in Switzerland went unnoticed; nevertheless, he promised to answer with an article himself.⁸⁸ In contrast to Persky, the Bessarabian émigrés in Lausanne praised Krupenskii for his "brilliant response" to the French scientist.⁸⁹

De Martonne's Romanian and Bessarabian connections

At first glance, the word of a convinced "romanophobe" was positioned against the word of an unbiased scientist. As argued earlier by other scholars, de Martonne's work was not confined to a strictly scientific and disinterested field, but rather was "necessarily imbricated [...] in political circumstances."⁹⁰ Besides maintaining close relations with French political and military circles, the scholar was also in contact with Romanian political figures. The latter relations, combined with his personal preferences, influenced the way he was perceived—rather as a "Romanophile and thus less favourable to Bulgarians and Hungarians."⁹¹ Romanian politicians and diplomats sought and appreciated de Martonne's advice in counteracting the Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Russian propaganda. For instance, the geographer spoke in this regard with the Romanian ambassador to Paris, Victor Antonescu, with whom he kept close contact. "Martonne m'a communiqué ce matin que les Russes font propagande [...] auprès des personnalités [de la] conférence contre [le] rattachement [de la] Bessarabie à la Roumanie. Ils font conférences dans la maison particulière où ils convoquent des personnalités [du] monde politique diplomatique," informed he the Romanian Prime-Minister Ion Brătianu through a telegram of July 11, 1919.⁹²

The private correspondence between the Bessarabian public figures that supported Romania's interests in the region reveals more details about the question of de Martonne's (im)partiality. The latter established close contacts not only with the Romanian delegates at the conference, but also with the Bessarabian officials. This likely occurred during his trip to the region. While carrying out his duty as an expert, he kept intense correspondence with both parties, giving advice on strategies to counter-balance Russian propaganda. In a letter to the Bessarabian minister, Ion Incuț, he requested that the group of Bessarabians in Paris be filled with new "devoted" persons. "If Mr. de Martonne asks you, tell him that all those indicated

87. "En Bessarabie," par E. de Martonne, *La Gazette de Lausanne*, July 24, 1919, HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 7 Cuttings.

88. Serge Persky – Alexandr N. Krupenskii, Geneva, August, 29, and September 4, 1919 (Ru.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 1 Correspondence, Folder Persky, S.

89. Alexis G. Barladean – Alexandr N. Krupenskii, Lausanne, December 19, 1919 (Ru.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 1 Correspondence, Folder A. Barladean.

90. Bowd, "Emmanuel de Martonne...", 103-120.

91. See, for instance, Hallair, *Le géographe Emmanuel de Martonne*, 36-37. See fn 21.

92. Bowd, *Un géographe français*, 71-72.

by him will come to Paris. It is in our interest that he does not assume somehow that we do not fulfil his wishes, especially as he does us so many favours,” wrote Ion Incuț to Ion Pelivan in Paris.⁹³ From Chișinău, Pelivan was advised to establish closer contact with the French expert.⁹⁴ The Bessarabians who supported Romanian interests in the region thus felt indebted to the French scholar for his service as an expert during the conference, which had been favourable to the “Romanian cause”.

Krupenskii's French connections

While in Paris, Krupenskii tried to make himself visible, as well as credible before the French public. Whereas observing that French politicians refrained from taking a public stance on the matter, Krupenskii tried to establish contacts with the French academic, literary and journalistic world. For instance, Krupenskii met the French author P.G. La Chesnais who published widely on the post-war territorial questions of the conference agenda, namely on Alsace-Lorraine, as well as was the fight against Bolshevism.⁹⁵ Rather than showing interest in collecting “all that Bessarabian romanophiles have published,” La Chesnais instead planned to counter their position by writing an account of Bessarabia that favoured pro-Russian interests in the region.⁹⁶ La Chesnais tried—to no avail—to persuade the historian Ernest Lavisse, who, together with the president of the Chamber of Deputies, Paul Deschanel, presided over the *Union des grandes associations françaises contre la propagande ennemie*, to take a stance on the issue of Bessarabia.⁹⁷ La Chesnais' letters to Krupenskii reveal that he was well informed on the matter, asked for precise information, and used different occasions to deliver talks on Bessarabia.⁹⁸

Krupenskii's attempt to downplay the Bessarabian Ion Pelivan, member of the Romanian delegation to the conference, in the French press was often a fiasco.

93. The named persons were Ion Năstase, Grigore Cazacliu and Ion Codreanu. Ion Incuț – Ion Pelivan, Chișinău, July 21, 1919 (Ro.), ANIC, fond 1449, fond Ion Pelivan, inv. 1449, d. 128, f. 103; d. 129, f. 4.

94. “By the way, he tells me that he saw you only once and that he would wish for a greater contact with you. Perhaps it would be helpful to visit him more often,” specified Incuț in a letter. In a footnote to the letter, Pelivan added later: “I visited him several times, but it happened that I did not find him at home. He was very busy, either with Sorbonne or the conference. But in the summer of 1919 he left Paris for (illeg. word).” Ion Incuț – Ion Pelivan, Chișinău, July 21, 1919 (Ro.), ANIC, fond Ion Pelivan, inv. 1449, d. 129, f. 4v.

95. P.G. La Chesnais, *The plebiscite problem: On the application of the rights of people to the Alsace-Lorraine question* (P.: Imprimerie J. Cussac, 1919); Idem, *La Guerre civile en Finlande* (P.: Bossard, 1919); Idem, *The Defence of the Cossacks against Bolshevism* (P., 1919).

96. P.G. La Chesnais – A.N. Krupenskii, May 29, 1919 (Fr.), HIA, Alexander N. Krupenskii Papers, Box I Subject file, Folder La Chesnais, P.S.

97. *Union des grandes associations françaises contre la propagande ennemie* [“puis” pour l'essor national], Paris, 1918-1920, at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6558340t/texteBrut>

98. P.G. La Chesnais – A.N. Krupenskii, June 4, 1919 (Fr.), HIA, Alexander N. Krupenskii Papers, Box I Subject file, Folder La Chesnais, P.S.

Such was the case with *Le Temps*, the newspaper editor telling Krupenskii that he was not equal to Pelivan who was on an official mission to Paris. Given his position, Krupenskii's "polemics of a personal matter" were not allowed to be published in the pages of a respectable newspaper, "because of both the traditions of our newspaper and the abundance of the material we currently have to inform our readers."⁹⁹

Both parties tried to reach out to French personalities through propaganda materials. These were translated into the languages used at the conference¹⁰⁰ and spread among the diplomatic missions of the Allied countries. From a total of 293 copies of the French version of the book, *L'occupation roumaine en Bessarabie*, distributed personally by Krupenskii, 163 reached French delegates and other persons, of the remaining copies 50 went to Switzerland, 40 – to Italy, 20 – to Bruxelles, and 20 – to Istanbul. The leaders of the Russian White movement were also among the personalities who received the pamphlet.¹⁰¹

Simultaneously, the French public was informed via radio of the state of affairs in Bessarabia, presented in such a way that the "dark side" of the Romanian regime was seen. Thus, on October 18, 1919, the Paris branch of the telegraphic agency "Radio" broadcast the text of a declaration, issued by the "delegation" to the peace conference, which criticized the implementation of Romanian legislation in Bessarabia.¹⁰² The Bessarabians thus claimed to "protest against these new abuses of the Romanian regime" and condemn the "forced Romanianization of a Russian province". According to the document, the inhabitants eagerly awaited the result of the plebiscite, which, presumably, would be anti-Romanian.¹⁰³

The "fight"

The polemic between Krupenskii and de Martonne continued during the second half of 1919 and into 1920. After the publication of Krupenskii's response to de Martonne's article from October 1, 1919, in *La Revue de Paris*,¹⁰⁴ it was de

99. Letter of April 20, 1919, Paris (Fr.), HIA, Vasilii A. Maklakov Papers, Box 19, Folder 19.8 Bessarabia. Press, general.

100. For the translation of the memoirs on Bessarabia from French into English, A.N. Krupenskii used the service of Bampton Hunt. B. Hunt – A.N. Krupenskii, October 17, 1919 (En.), HIA, Alexander N. Krupenskii Papers, Box I Subject file, Folder Hunt, Bampton.

101. Among these were general Wrangel, Sazonov, Maklakov, Lvov, Girs, P. Struve, Chaikovskii, Kryzhanovskii, Nelidov, Kokovtsev, as well persons close to the Tsar, such as Bazili and Moruzi.

102. Reference was made to three decrees: one declaring *ipso facto* all the inhabitants of Bessarabia as Romanian subjects; the second giving a term of 15 days for landowners to "swear allegiance to the Crown of Romania," otherwise risking the confiscation of property; the third introduced conscription to the Romanian army.

103. "En Bessarabie," Agence Télégraphique "Radio", 18 octobre 1919, HIA.

104. "A.N. Kroupensky – E. de Martonne, A propos de la Bessarabie," *La Revue de Paris*, December 15, 1919, tome VII, 893-894.

Martonne's turn to reply. In his response, the geographer wrote that the "great Russian landowner" Krupenskii had "left the country for many years"—in fact, in the spring of 1918—and was informed of the situation in Bessarabia only through "reports."¹⁰⁵ He was criticized for spreading via different channels the idea that the return of Bessarabia to Romania was contrary to people's will. One of the "false" arguments was about "Sfatul Țării" being a "Bolshevik body" when in fact it had asked the Romanian troops for protection against the Bolsheviks.¹⁰⁶ De Martonne, by contrast, had visited the region and observed the real state of affairs, thus writing an account that "speaks for itself." He assured the reader that his earlier publication on Bessarabia was a "sincere and impartial document," and that he did not intend to provoke polemic he found to be "quite idle." The scholar wrote: "Je n'ai dissimulé ni l'empreinte profonde laissée sur ce pays par un siècle de régime russe, ni les difficultés soulevées par le retour à la Roumanie. Mon impression reste cependant que la réassimilation de ce pays moldave est un phénomène naturel. Avant dix ans nous saurons si je me suis trompé."¹⁰⁷

In his letter to the editor of *La Revue*, Krupenskii who earlier attacked personally de Martonne, complained that de Martonne's article was an attack to his person and reputation.¹⁰⁸ Krupenskii assured the reader that he was not a Russian refugee, but "a delegate" sent by the Bessarabian population to the conference.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to de Martonne, his status—not as a "Russified Romanian who fights in Paris for the detachment of Bessarabia from Romania", but as a "delegate of Bessarabia to the Peace conference"—allowed him to claim before the Great Powers the holding of "a plebiscite [underl. in text] for Bessarabia, under the guarantee of an inter-allied commission and after the temporary removal of the Romanian authorities. – The plebiscite would show better than any written argument which of us—Mr de Martonne or me—is right," concluded the author.¹¹⁰ By the beginning of 1920, the press debate was being followed by a significant French audience. Besides, *L'Œuvre*, *Le Journal*, and *Les Débats*, which republished some excerpts of the articles signed by each part, the Parisian *Les Dernières Nouvelles de Midi* also got involved. The latter claimed that *Les Débats*

105. Krupenskii's private correspondence, kept at Hoover archives, is proof in this regard. His main informant from Chișinău was the former great landowner Panteleimon V. Sinadino.

106. After the Bolsheviks took power in Petrograd, the composition of "Sfatul Țării" changed, so that more leftist-oriented members joined. The revolutionary character of the body was also emphasized by the Romanian Prime minister, Ion I.C. Brătianu, during the July 2 hearings.

107. "A.N. Kroupensky – E. de Martonne. A propos de la Bessarabie."

108. "A.N. Kroupensky – E. de Martonne. A propos de la Bessarabie."

109. In fact, Krupenskii held three mandates from several small organizations, such as: the Bessarabian gubernial council—after Bessarabia detached from Russian empire it existed only on paper—, the Union of great landowners, and the Odessa Committee for Saving Bessarabia, through which the initiative for the creation of the so-called "Bessarabian delegation" to the Peace conference was launched in the spring of 1919.

110. Draft letter, undated (Fr.), HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 3 Speeches & Writings, 1919, Folder "A Propos de la Bessarabie".

and *Revue de Paris* published “lamentable articles” of the French geographer, taking the pro-Russian side in the debate.¹¹¹

At the beginning of 1920, the polemic between the two, which reached a high point, was followed by the Romanian public.¹¹² In the introduction of the book on the Bessarabian population, published in 1920 by the Romanian geographer Constantin Murgoci, de Martonne explicitly wrote that the “recommended reading” was addressed to “the Russians who fled France” and there protested against the union of Bessarabia with Romania and contested its Romanian character.¹¹³ This is another indication of de Martonne’s concern with the echo of the polemic, which was ongoing and, undoubtedly, had larger implications beyond those for the two parties involved. For his contributions, the geographer was praised by Romanian politicians and academics for “orienting” the foreign public on the “just Romanian cause.” The Romanians highly appreciated de Martonne who “loved our country as his second motherland”¹¹⁴ and acknowledged his “crucial role” in ensuring the success of the enterprise at the peace conference, assigned him the label of a convinced “romanophile” and of a proponent of “latinity.”¹¹⁵

Conclusions

The polemic between Emmanuel de Martonne and Alexandr N. Krupenskii lasted until the spring of 1920. On March 3, 1920, the Supreme Council clarified the status of Bessarabia at the request of the Romanian Government, the latter insisting that the issue pertained to Romanian-Russian relations. The treaty that recognised Bessarabia as part of Romania was signed in Paris on October 28, 1920. Finally, the Great Powers declared the geographical and economic strength of the Romanian nation-state to be an effective measure against the spread of Bolshevism. A Russian-Romanian agreement on the issue was also encouraged; nevertheless, Soviet Russia did not adhere to the Paris Treaty and never recognised Bessarabia as a Romanian territory.

The press polemic between de Martonne and Krupenskii, although not directly relevant to the decision-making process, but more to the people’s mood and political

111. “Ce que ce bon M. de Martonne a vu en Bessarabie ... Du bleu!”, *Les Dernières Nouvelles de Midi Paris*, February 18, 1920, HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 9 Clippings.

112. “Polemica Martonne – Crupenski [Krupenskii]”, *Avântul*, February 2, 1920, HIA, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 9 Clippings, Miscellaneous.

113. Victor Tufescu, “Emmanuel de Martonne, făuritor al geografiei moderne și rolul său în formarea geografiei românești” [Emmanuel de Martonne, the maker of Modern Geography and his Role in the Formation of Romanian Geography], in *E. de Martonne, Lucrări geografice despre România*, sub îngrijirea V. Tufescu, Gh. Niculescu, Ș. Dragomirescu [E. de Martonne, Geography works about Romania, edited by V. Tufescu, Gh. Niculescu, Ș. Dragomirescu] (București: Editura Academiei RSR, 1981), 23.

114. Tufescu, “Emmanuel de Martonne,” 25.

115. Spector, *Rumania at the Paris Peace Conference*, 56.

propaganda inside Romania, revolved around similar subjects to the ones raised by Romanian and Russian representatives at the conference's hearings. Among the arguments little discussed by the first, but questioned by the latter, was the will of the Bessarabian population to unite with Romania. Whereas de Martonne, similar to the Romanian delegates, claimed that the will of people was expressed by "Sfatul Țării" the moment it voted for the union, Krupenskii, along with the Russian émigrés contested "Sfatul Țării"'s right to decide on behalf of the population, due to the fact that its members were not elected through universal suffrage, and campaigned for a plebiscite.¹¹⁶

The Bessarabians, as well as the Russians and the Romanians, considered the question to be open until the conference issued a decision on the status of the region. With the political tribune having been left to the decision-makers, regional actors such as Krupenskii and Pelivan used the press as the only accessible platform to publicly voice their claims. In contrast to the European public, whose interest in the region lasted until Bolshevism was no longer considered a real threat, for local actors the decision in Paris was considered a matter of survival.

The French geographer Emmanuel de Martonne advised the French delegation on the status of Bessarabia, among other Romanian territories, nevertheless, de Martonne's role in persuading the French delegates to support Romania's claims in the region should not be overestimated. France's official position was shaped by diplomatic and military factors that took into account the military crisis in southern Russia, the situation in the region, the state of affairs inside Russia, as well as the favorable position of the Allies towards the Russian representatives in Paris. France signed the London Declaration, but only after the Polish victory in the war with Soviet Russia.

One important observation is that de Martonne, well aware of the growing role of propaganda during the conference, used the press to raise issues that were not explicitly stated in his expert reports issued to the territorial commission. Acknowledging that anti-Bolshevism was one of the strongest factors that influenced the position of decision-makers, on the one hand, and that the Bolshevik menace was a sensible topic for the French public, on the other hand, the geographer made a strong point regarding Romania's crucial role in the fight against the spread of Bolshevism. Already in his duty as an expert, he had kept correspondence with Romanian and Bessarabian officials, whom he encouraged to invest resources and people to counter Bessarabian and Russian émigrés anti-Romanian propaganda, played well among the conference's delegates and in the press. In order to make his point stronger, de Martonne referred to arguments that were outside of his professional expertise, e.g., criticizing the Tsarist regime and its consequences for the region and arguing that the Bessarabian minorities supported the union. To ensure his supremacy in the dispute, which was followed by the French public, and although far from being on equal foot with his main opponent Krupenskii, de Martonne resorted to his professional status and authority as scientist. He also used

116. See, *The Bessarabian "Parliament" (1917-1918)* (P.: Imprimerie Lahure, n.d.).

personal critique in order to downplay his “rival” Krupenskii. De Martonne’s active stance in the French press echoed in Romania and Bessarabia. His position was used by Romanian officials and the press to persuade the confused public that the union of Bessarabia with Romania was an irreversible act, which recognition in Paris would soon follow.

The dual role of Emmanuel de Martonne—as an expert and scientist who took an active stance in public—with regard to the case of Bessarabia shows that during the conference the delimitation between the assigned and the expected role of an expert was rather symbolic. As long as both served the principles that guided the decision-makers, the line between science, politics and propaganda could often be crossed with ease. In the time of post-war uncertainties, the press, perceived not only as a valuable means of information, but also as a propaganda tool, was taken seriously by regional actors as well as professional experts, both being aware of its great value for political debates in Paris, but especially for propaganda inside the contested regions.

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Map 1 – Romania in the 20th century
(Reprinted with permission from: Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*,
2nd revised and expanded edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 149).

Map 2 – “Répartition de la Population Moldave sur le Territoire du Gouvernement de Bessarabie – Conférence Politique Russe (draft).” (Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, California, Alexandr N. Krupenskii Papers, Box 3 Speeches & Writings 1919, Folder Russian Political Conference, Paris).

Map 3 – Emmanuel de Martonne, *Répartition des Nationalités dans les Pays où dominent les Roumains*. (Reprinted with permission from : Gilles Palsky, “Emmanuel de Martonne and the Ethnographical Cartography of Central Europe (1917-1920),” *Imago Mundi. The International Journal for the History of Cartography*, 54, 1 (2002), Plate 6.)

Map 4 – Alexis Nour, *Basarabia: harta etnografică* [Bessarabie, carte ethnographique]
(București, Foto-Lito: C. Göbl-Rasidescu, 1917)
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_RDM-1917.jpg)