

**Anton POPOV**

Birmingham University

# **From *PINDOS* to *PONTOS*: the Ethnicity and Diversity of Greek Communities in Southern Russia\***

---

---

INTRODUCTION. This paper focuses on the Greeks of Southern Russia, who comprise one of the biggest groups of the Greek population in the post-Soviet space. Their history and culture are relatively understudied in the circles of Modern Greek Studies. The Greek population of two regions in the Northern Caucasian area of Russia - *Krasnodarskiy kray* (Krasnodar region) and the Republic of *Adyghea* – are examined in this study. According to the last Soviet census in 1989, the Greeks accounted for 28337 or approximately 0,6% of all the population of *Krasnodarskiy kray*, including *Adyghea* (Narody Rossii, 1994: 433–440).<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Greeks are widely dispersed in the region. They live in villages and towns, where the dominant population is Russian.



SINCE 1989, the Greeks' ethnonationalist movement has been increasing in the former Soviet Union. It was one of the results of the liberalization of the *perestroika* policy. In Southern Russia, the idea of the 'national revival' began to spread among the intelligentsia who had Greek roots. In Krasnodar region, the first Greek ethnic organisations had been formed in *Gelendjik*, *Krymsk*, *Anapa*, *Novorossiysk* and *Krasnodar* soon after *The All-Union Society of the Soviet Greeks (VOSG)* was organized in Moscow (1989). They became important factors of Greek ethnicity in the region. These organisations made contacts with Pontic communities in Greece, through which the Russian Greeks got involved in the Pontic Greeks' movement. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Russian Greeks have been taking part in international meetings of Pontic Greek organisations. So in 1994, representatives of *The Association of Greeks' Communities of Russia (OGOR)* participated in forums of the Pontians in Athens and Boston (Dmitriev, 2000).

These contacts produced the 'Pontic Greeks' ethnicity for the Greek population of the Southern Russian regions. The Greeks' ethnonationalist organisations represent the Greek population of Southern Russia as part of the Pontic Greeks, who can be characterised as an *imagined community* (in terms of Anderson (1983)). The core of Pontian-ness as a mental construction is assisted by a '*Pontic myth*' about the homeland – the *Pontos* (Fann, 1991: 341). The concept of *Pontos* is a meaningful one,

it supposes that all Pontians share one fatherland, one history (which is associated with the medieval *Empire of Trebizond*), one culture with compulsory elements and things (the Pontic folklore, the Pontic (or Laz) dress, the circular dances and the Pontic violin–*kemendja*). Thus, the Pontic Greeks as an ethnic group are understood by ethnonationalists in the essentialist sense as different from non-Greeks as well as from non-Pontic Greeks.

This Pontic ethnicity has the same feature as any other, according to the notion of Stuart Hall, ethnicity has a tendency to ignore the real diversity of individual experiences and identities (Hall, 1996a). The main question of my paper is how the contemporary Pontic Greeks' ethnicity as an ideologically determined collective identity correlates with the diversity of individual experiences.

This paper is based on life stories, which were collected during ethnographic research in 1993–2001. The ambiguity of the interaction between individual identities and Pontic Greek ethnicity is demonstrated through the narration of ethnic identity by representatives of three local Greek communities. But it needs to be prefaced by a brief explanation of the approaches to ethnicity which I use in my analyses, and their links with the informants' narration of identity.

## **Ethnicity and Narratives of Identity**

Any group is defined through differences from others. The constitution of society comes within the articulation of differences, which receive

---

\* This paper consists of data, part of which were collected through the support of George Soros Foundation and Open Society Institute (RSS program grant No. 1179/2000).

generalised, symbolic meanings and are produced through and only within different symbolic systems. Society as a social and cultural phenomenon exists and is reproduced by means of symbolic communications (Lotman, 1994). In other words, social groups are constituted within discursive practises. So any society is, first of all, a symbolic construction, that determines its mental, imagined character. And in this logic Anderson's definition of a nation as an imagined political community is applied to an ethnic group. Thus, I understand ethnicity as a discursive construction of collective identity.

In the field of Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall offers an understanding of ethnicity as a *new politics of representations*, and defines it as a historical, cultural and political construction. He writes that 'the term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual' (Hall, 1996a: 446). So history, language and culture define ethnicity as discourse. Ethnicity is produced by the context in which identity and subjectivity are constituted.

This approach to ethnicity comes from the reconceptualization of identity as a process of identification. Identity is not absolutely stable, but changes in historical context. The dynamic moment of identification process is the recognition of the Self through relationship with the Other. As Hall notes, people have most of their identities not because of something deep inside them, but because of how others have recognized them (Hall, 1996b: 344). Identity is defined as a dialogic relationship to the Other, who is outside as well as inside the Self, because individual can identify oneself only through an understanding of who the Other is. This means that one knows the differences him/herself from other. But this process is ambivalent: we identify ourselves as different from others because others recognize our differences.

If identity is a dynamic process, the only place where identity receives its stability is the representation of self-identity or narrative of self. Identity is 'the story we tell about the self in order to know who we are' (Hall, 1996b: 346). This tendency to stability in the narrative of identity is close to Bourdieu's notions about the illusion of constancy of one's identity in biography (Bourdieu, 2000). And it also correlates with Ricoeur's understanding of *narrative identity* as the third active element of the identification process, which matches *selfhood* and *sameness* as synchronic and diachronic axes of identity respectively. In Paul Ricoeur's semiotics, identity is a plot of a story (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, Liebhart, 1999: 11–15).

Thus, dialectically, identity, a dynamic process of identification, is represented within nar-

ratives or discourses, but it receives stability and constancy in narratives.

This stability of ethnic identity in narratives becomes the issue of political representation in claims of militants about ethnicity as a collective identity for a group. Politicians use ethnicity as a mobilising factor of modern political movements. In fact, this political utilisation of ethnic identity is no more than the realisation of power upon representations of identities.

Bourdieu offers an understanding of ethnic identity as a particular form of struggle over classification. The representations of reality become part of reality in the struggle over the definition of ethnic identity. This struggle is also the struggle to power of imposing a vision of the social world. It supposes to take 'the legitimate definition of divisions of social world and, thereby, to *make and unmake group*'. The definition or classification consists of the idea of division, when part of the social world is separated from other space through the name. At the same time, the name brings the meaning about the unity of the group. The ambivalent idea of the unity of the group and its separation from others is central to ethnic identity. So the meaning of ethnic identity, which accompanies the definition of ethnicity, creates the reality of the unity and identity of the group (Bourdieu, 1991: 224).

Hall notes that the discursive construction of ethnicity as well as national identity lays stress on the imagined homogeneity of an ethnic group (the same as nation or race), and avoids discussions about cultural differences and the diversity of the individual experiences of people, who share one ethnicity (Hall, 1996a: 443). He agrees with Laclau that 'the construction of a social identity is an act of power', and argues that the unities or homogeneities proclaimed by identities 'are constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are a result ... of the naturalized, over determined process of closure' (Hall, 2000: 5).

### **The 'Pontic Greeks' of Vitiazevo**

In 1993, in the Black Sea coastal town of *Vitiatzevo* (Krasnodar region), I interviewed an old man Ivan K.. I was interested by the Greek ethnic identity, and for this reason I asked the informant about the different names which were used for definition of the local Greek community. My informant told me that the local Russians used for Greeks villagers the scornful nickname *Pindos* before World War II. Ivan K. could not explain clearly the origin of this word. But he had the presupposition that it could be related to the name of the mountain in Greece, he had heard about the existence of it. Continuing the reasoning, he matched this name with the sup-

posed place of origin of his ancestors. He found the confirmation in the legendary Argonauts, who sailed from the Balkans to the Caucasian coast of the Black Sea.

According to archival data, the village of *Vitiazovo* was inhabited by the Greeks who migrated from *Anatolian Turkey* (the Ottoman Empire) in 1862 (in the State Archive of *Krandarskiy Kray* (GAKK, found 668, description 1, file 3151.15)).<sup>2</sup> So the ancestors of my informant never lived in Greece. His own odyssey included the difficulties of life in a Russian village during *collectivisation*; survival in the line of fire of WWII; travelling into exile in Northern Kazakhstan (Central Asia) after his family at the time of Stalin's repression; and returning to his native place during Khrushchev's *thaw*. Thus, we are left with the question "What does it mean to be 'Pindos'?" without any answer yet. But below I will try to describe the almost one hundred and fifty years of history of the Vitiazovo's Greeks in a few words.

*Vitiazovo* is one of the oldest Greek settlements in the North Caucasus. At the end of the nineteenth century, the local Greeks had already been subjects of the Tsar Empire, unlike the latest (at the beginning of twentieth century) migrants from the southern coast of the sea. They had the church where services were served in Russian (GAKK, found 774, description 2, file 371). Their children could learn to read and write in the Greek (Demotika) language after the Russian revolution (1917) and until 1938, when the Greek National District in the Krasnodar region was abolished by the Stalinist government, and teaching in Greek language finished in Southern Russia.

In 1993, only people of the old generation and some middle-aged Greeks in *Vitiazovo* could speak the Pontic dialect (*romeyka/ρομεκα*). They used the name of *Romeos* (*ρομεος*) as self-definition. But the majority of my informants did not know anything about the Pontos as the place where their ancestors came from. Some of them like Ivan K. found the legend of the Argonauts quite a satisfactory explanation of their origin.

In the middle of the 1990s, the similar to *Vitiazovo* situation with Greek identities existed in other villages with the local Greek population. Sometimes people from the old generation could name local Greek communities in the *vilayet of Trebizond*, where their ancestors lived. It was very often the simple *Trabzonlidhes/Trapezonlithies*, which indicate in habitants of a wide area surrounded by the city of *Trebizond* (may be the whole vilayet), or the *Samsulidhies*, which means a people from the *sandjak of Samsun (Djanik)* in the western part of the vilayet. In rare cases, the names of some towns and even villages in the Pontos were used by my informants as self-definition, for instance, the *Or-*

*dulidhies* (from *Ordu*), the *Baphrali/Paphrinothies* (from *Baphra*), the *Apeshlidhies* (the name *Apesh* could be used for some village near Trebizond), the *Samaruksidties* (the village area in the *sandjak of Trebizond*). The descendants of the Greeks-refugees (1917–19) from the former Kars region of Tsar Transcaucasia are known among other Greeks as the *Garslidhies*.

However, the people had already used the concepts of *Pontians*, *Pontic Greeks* and *pontiaka* (the Greek word for the Pontic dialect). They heard them in Greece during visits to the country as tourists or for meeting with relatives who had emigrated. These visits became easier during perestroika and after the collapse of the Soviet Union. But before the beginning of the 1990s, the majority of my informants had never heard of the name of *Pontians*. They told me: "Yes, we are the Pontic Greeks, they <the Greek Greeks> call us this way, the *Ponti*, the *Rouso-Ponti*...". It is necessary to note that the definition of *Rouso-Ponti* is used by the native population of Greece toward the Greek-migrants from the former Soviet Union instead the official *Ellino-Ponti*. It has a derogatory connotation, because these migrants are associated with the social and economical problems of refugees (about Pontic refugee-ness see Voutira, 1991).

So the Greeks in Southern Russia define themselves as Pontic Greeks but without any matches with the Pontic myth and the historical Pontos. The word *Pontos* has little meaning for them. Sometimes it leads to curiosity. One informant of mine, an old woman, was surprised by my question – does she speak *Pontiaka* (Pontic dialect) – "What?! A *pontika*, this is a mouse!" (In Greek the word of 'pontika' (*η ποντικα*) means a mouse).

It seems that the situation has changed in recent times. In 2000, a friend of mine bought a bottle of dry red wine, which was produced in *Vitiazovo*. The wine was called *Pontiyskoe* (Pontic). A man in a *Laz dress* with a rifle was drawn on the bottle, the background of the label was a map of the Black Sea coast with two points – *Vitiazovo* in the North and *Trapezunt* (Trabzon) in the South.

After all, we need to take into account that one of the first and most influential Greek ethnic organizations in Southern Russia is situated nearest to the *Vitiazovo* city of *Anapa*. (In fact, *Vitiazovo* has become a part of it). This organization publishes a newspaper with the very Pontic as well as Hellenistic name – *Euxeinos Pontos* (ΕΥΞΕΙΝΟΣ ΠΟΝΤΟΣ).

Coming back to the meaning of the term *Pindos*, it can be traced from Russian slang. In villages, people from the middle and older generations sometimes use it without any relation to the Greeks as a negative aspect with some sexual connotation for a foolish person. It is difficult to say why this word

in pre-war Vitiazzevo stuck to local Greeks. But temporarily, its interpretation by informants gives an interesting field for understanding modern Greek ethnicity in Russia.

### **The 'Urums' from Gaverdovskiy**

In the Soviet anthropological tradition of Greek Studies, different groups of the Greek population were classified with linguistic criteria. Two groups of Greeks were indicated in the Caucasus. The representatives of one were supposed to speak the Pontic dialect of the Greek language. The mother tongue of the others was the Eastern-Anatolian dialects of Turkish (Yeloeva, 1995). This linguistic classification determines the different terms for Pontic and Turkish-speaking Greeks in Soviet academic circles. The Pontic-speakers were defined by their self-name *Romeos* or their regions of inhabitancy, for instance, the Abkazian Greeks, the Greeks of Adjara, and the Greeks of the Northern Caucasus (Volkova, 2000: 15). The term *Pontians* was used in Soviet literature relatively rarely. Probably, this was for political reasons, as the remains of repression against the *Pontic* cultural movement in the Soviet Union in the 1930s (Karpozilos, 1991: 370). In anthropological literature, the self-definition of Turkish-speaking Greeks – the *Urums* (*Urumlar*) – became a commonly used name (Volkova, 2000: 15).

Before the 1990s, the Turkish-speakers lived mainly in Eastern Georgia; in particular, they comprised a significant population of two districts – *Tsalka* and *Tetritskaro*. They are descendants of people who migrated from the *vilayet of Erzurum* (Eastern Anatolia) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the majority of them migrated from Georgia, avoiding economic problems and growing nationalist political pressure. After 1990, some of them supplemented the Greek population of *Krasnodar* region and *Adyghea*.

In May 2001, I spent my fieldwork among the *Urums* of the village of *Gaverdovskiy* in *Adyghea*. *Gaverdovskiy* is a place of compact settlement, perhaps, of the most numerous group of Turkish-speaking Greeks in the North-Western Caucasus. There are approximately 200 *Urums'* households in the village, but the majority of population are Russians.

The Greek population of the settlement appeared in 1937, when the first settlers left their homes in the *Tsalka* district of Georgia to come to *Gaverdovskiy* after their villages were inundated by the construction of the *Hrum* hydroelectric power station. Later the Greek population grew after WWII, especially in the 1970-80s. The most intensive Greek migration to *Gaverdovskiy* from *Tsalka* began in the early 1990s. At the present time, the

representatives of two *Tsalka* villages (*Oliank* and *Yedikilisa*) live in *Gaverdovskiy*. *Yedikilisans* contrast themselves with *Oliankians*, who appeared in *Gaverdovskiy* later.

Nowadays, the situation of *Gaverdovskiy* villagers is characterized by the economic problems of the transitional period, which are common for post-Soviet Russia. But these difficulties are multiplied for recent migrants. In these conditions, Greek ethnicity becomes economic capital (in Bourdieu's terms), because the majority of the local Greeks spend a part of year in Greece, where they work as seasonal unskilled workers. These job trips are organised with the support of the regional Greek ethnonational organisation – *Adyghean Republic's Greek Society (ARGO)*. This organization has a head office in *Maykop*, the capital of *Adyghea*, which is situated five kilometres from *Gaverdovskiy*. The leader of *ARGO* and some of its active practitioners come from *Gaverdovskiy*.

During my fieldwork, I undertook a group interview. It took place in a small shop in the central square of the village, where local Greek men used to gather every afternoon. (These men's meetings are a common situation for village life in Transcaucasia). My informants were mainly middle-aged men, and recent migrants from *Tsalka*, particularly from the village of *Oliank*.

My question about their identity as Pontic Greeks evoked the discussion. They agreed with each other that they were *Pontians*, although this term became known to them after the start of their visits to Greece (about 1996, before they preferred to go for commercial purposes to Turkey). They told me, with reference to some popular historical literature,<sup>3</sup> that their ancestors migrated to Turkey from Greece in the past. Their great grand-fathers changed their language to Turkish in order to save the Orthodox faith. In narratives it looked like a negotiation of the Greeks with the Ottomans. Also, the legend is a kind of indulgence for their 'wrong' language, from the common Greek point of view. The Turkish word *Musulmanca* (Muslim language) which is the *Urums'* name for their mother tongue, shows that language is a painful point of their identity.

The story about an exchange of languages as a cost for the saving of their faith is the *Urums'* response to their marginal position in the Greek world. It carries the latent conflict between (Pontic) Greek-speakers and Turkish-speakers. Paradoxically, the *Urums'* Turkish blames the Pontic-speaking Greeks, whose ancestors saved their language, but what was the price?... My respondents demarcated the border between the two groups by the *Urums'* name for Pontic-speakers, which is the *Laz*. In Turkey, the *Laz* is a regional term rather than an ethnic one: the population of inner Anatolia defines by it the inhabit-

ants of the Black Sea coast. The Urums had brought this classification to Transcaucasia (there are several Pontic-speakers' villages in Tsalka), and keep it in Northern Caucasus. But the concept of Laz is meaningful from the Anatolian perspective, because it matches with the tradition of anecdotes about the Laz as a people from the backward periphery of the Empire (see Meeker, 1971: 321).

Thus, the Gaverdovskiy Greeks accept the Pontic identity (at least, my Oliankian informants did), because they find in it the explanation of their marginality. Becoming Pontians, they pass from the margin to the centre, as soon as the idea of Otherness from Greece is central in the Pontic myth. But to be Pontic Greek means to be Greek for the Urums (their Turkish, their stigma, seems to go away in the concept of Pontian-ness). And to be Greek in modern Russia has some benefits evidently, the easiest way to get a job in Greece is to be one of them.

### **The 'Circassians' Greeks' from Bzhedughable**

The last case of Greek identity in Southern Russia, which I want to demonstrate in this paper, comes from the small village of *Bzhedughable* in Adyghea. In 2000, ARGO (Adyghean Republic's Greek Society) organized the celebration of the anniversary of the village as the oldest Greek settlement in Adyghea. (A short article about this festival was published in one of the issues of *Euxeinus Pontos*).

Bzhedughable is the last compact settlement of the group which is known in the anthropological literature as the Circassians' or Highlanders' (*Gorskije*) Greeks. According to archival data, the first mention of this group appeared in the 1820s. During the Russian colonisation of the Northern Caucasus, people who claimed themselves to be Greek-Orthodox started to come out from the fighting Circassians on the Russian side (Kolesov, 2000). These people identified themselves as Greeks, although they did not speak any other language except the Circassian dialects (the group of dialects of natives of the North-Western part of the Caucasus, which consisted of the base of literal Adyghean language). They called themselves Orthodox, but there were not any priests among them, and churches were not known on the Circassians' territory before the Russians arrived. Moreover, they had the same customs as Circassians and used to live in the same villages with them (Kuznetsov, 1997). The Circassian Armenians are another group which appeared at the same time and with similar circumstances.

The majority of the modern population of Bzhedughable is Russian. But less than thirty families who have Circassian Christian (Greeks and

Armenians) roots still live there.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of villagers whose surnames were mentioned in the first archival documents about Circassians' Greeks, are children of mixed marriages. Some of them have a record of Russian ethnicity in their Soviet passports. (Soviet inner passports have a compulsory for all citizens column for ethnicity). All descendants of Circassian Greeks speak Russian; one of the last villagers who can speak Adyghean was seventy six years old in 2001.

I visited this village in October 2001, during the anniversary of its founding. In the festival, children with Circassian Greek and Armenian surnames, dressed in Cossack folklore costume,<sup>5</sup> sang Russian and Ukrainian songs. But the empty field in the middle of the village cemetery still separated Russian and 'native' parts as the last border between the old Circassian-speaking population and the Russian 'newcomers'.

In Bzhedughable, I interviewed a young man, Oleg R., whose mother is half-Circassian Greek, half-Russian, and whose father is a Russian with a Ukrainian surname. When he was sixteen years old and received his Soviet passport, Oleg R. pointed out his ethnicity as a Greek. He told me that he chose his mother's ethnicity because he is proud of her Greek roots. Ironically, his mother tried to change her record of Greek ethnicity to Russian almost half a century ago, in 1953. But in that time, the bureaucratic rule of indication of children's ethnicity by their father's ethnic origin was strong, and the local authority prohibited this ethnic transformation to Oleg's mother.

I asked Oleg R., whether he identified himself as a Pontian. He answered with a smile: "No, I am a Greek. What sort of Greek, I don't know. But definitely, I am not a Pontic Greek". However, Oleg R. is not alien to the Pontic Greek movement; he lives in Maykop and participates in the activity of ARGO. But he recognizes the activists of ARGO, among whom many are from Gaverdovskiy Urums, as 'the Greeks who speak Turkish'. They are contrasted with his relatives from Gelendjik (a city on the Black Sea coast), "whose grandmothers spoke Greek" (in fact, they spoke the Pontic dialect). He identified this people as 'the Greek from the sea line' avoiding used the term 'Pontic'.

Here, it is necessary to say why Oleg R. smiled when he rejected the Pontic identity. The concept *Pontos*, in Russian pronunciation *Pont*, is less known outside a relatively narrow circles of scholars and Greek ethnonationalists. But the term *Pont* is well known as a Russian slang word for the insolent, defiant behaviour of criminal people. This equivocal meaning of the word often becomes a theme of jokes among young Greeks in Russia, and it sounded funny for Oleg R., too.

## Conclusion

The cases of Greek identity, given above, demonstrate the complicated situation which influences the narratives of ethnicity by representatives of different Greek communities in Southern Russia. These conditions might be described as cultural 'heteroglossia'. Using this word after Mikhail Bakhtin, James Clifford writes: "With expended communication and intercultural influence, people interpret others, and themselves, in bewildering diversity of idioms...". *Heteroglossia* assumes that different languages as well as cultures co-exist in the world and they do not exclude each other but rather intersect with each other (Clifford, 1996: 22–23). In the case of the Greeks in Southern Russia, there is a complicated intersection of different languages, cultures, historical backgrounds, economical strategies and individual experiences.

The ideologically constructed conception of Pontic Greek ethnic identity receives new meanings in individual narratives, which depend on the concrete historical and cultural context. Moreover, the interpretation of Pontic ethnicity by individuals

is often determined by the languages which are used. These can be Russian, Greek, Turkish, the terminology of Soviet anthropology, records in Soviet passports, and even slang. Others also indicate the particular meaning of Pontic ethnicity, because identity is a dynamic process of demarcation of boundaries between Self and Other. As Fredric Barth argues, ethnic groups are constituted only through boundaries (Barth, 1996: 79).<sup>6</sup> But others are different in each concrete case. They can be Russians or Turks as well as Greek Greeks or Turkish-speaking Greeks. The Pontic myth constructs the Pontic Greeks' ethnicity on the boundary as well. It separates the Pontians from others and the rest of the Greeks.

Thus, the Pontic Greek ethnicity is accepted by different Greek communities in Southern Russia, because they find in it an explanation of their marginality and otherness. At the same time, it becomes an ongoing process of meaning-making, which is very flexible to the changing of external circumstances, instead of a unified and coherent identity. It is a changeable frontier space, instead of a strict and unbroken border.

## References

- Anderson, Benedict (1983)**, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Barth, Fredric (1969)**, 'Introduction', in F. Barth, eds., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Bergen, Oslo, London.
- Barth, Fredric (1996)**, 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries', in J. Hutchinson & A. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1991)**, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2000)**, 'The biographical illusion', in P. du Gay, J. Evans & P. Redman, eds., *Identity: A Reader*, London: Sage Publications; New Delhi: Thousand Oaks.
- Clifford, James (1996)**, *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, eighth printing, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: Harvard University Press.
- Dmitriev, Konstantin (2000)**, 'Iz Istorii Obschestvennogo Dvizhenia Grekov Rossii', *Center for Racial, Ethnic & Linguistic Minorities Rights. Bulletin*, 2 (Krasnodar): 55–64, [http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6\\_55-64.pdf](http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6_55-64.pdf)
- Fann, Patricia (1991)**, 'The Pontic Myth of Homeland: Cultural Expressions of Nationalism and Ethnicism in Pontos and Greece, 1870–1990', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4 (4), Special issue. The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks: 340–356.
- Hall, Stuart (1996a)**, 'New Ethnicities', in D. Morley & Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, New York, London: Routledge.
- Hall, Stuart (1996b)**, 'Ethnicity: Identity and Difference', in G. Eley & R.G. Suny, eds., *Becoming National. A Reader*, Oxford; New York: Oxford university Press.
- Hall, Stuart (2000)**, 'Introduction: Who needs 'Identity'?', in S. Hall & P. du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage Publications.
- Karpozilos, Apostolos (1991)**, 'Pontic Culture in the USSR between the Wars', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4 (4), Special issue. The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks: 364–371.
- Kolesov, Vladimir (2000)**, Cherkesskie (Gorskie) Greki, *Center for Racial, Ethnic & Linguistic Minorities Rights. Bulletin*, 2 (Krasnodar): 87–101, [http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6\\_87-101.pdf](http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6_87-101.pdf)
- Kuznetsov, Igor (1997)**, 'PONTICA CAUCASICA ETHNICA I', in Igor Kuznetsov and Anton Popov, eds., *Studia Pontocausica 2. Pontiyskie Greki*, Krasnodar.
- Lotman, Yuri (1994)**, *Besedy o russkoi kulture: byt i traditsii russkogo dvorianstva (18 – nachala 19 veka)*, Sankt-Peterburg: Iskustvo.
- Meeker, Michael E. (1971)**, 'The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of Their Ethnic and Cultural Background', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2 (1971).
- Narody Rossii (1994)**, Moskva: Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia.

**Volkova, Natalia (2000)**, 'Greki Kavkaza', *Center for Racial, Ethnic & Linguistic Minorities Rights. Bulletin*, 2 (Krasnodar): 15–43, [http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6\\_15-43.pdf](http://history.kubsu.ru/centr/pdf/kn6_15-43.pdf)

**Voutira, Effie (1991)**, 'Pontic Greeks Today: Migrants or Refugees?', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4 (4), Special issue. The Odyssey of the Pontic Greeks: 400–420.

**Wodak, Ruth; de Cillia, Rudolf; Reisigl, Martin and Liebhart, Karin (1999)**, *The Discursive*

*Construction of National Identity*, (Critical Discourse Analysis Series), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

**Yeloeva, Fatima (1995)**, 'Turkoyazychnye pravoslavnye greki Vostochnoy Gruzii (Tsalkinskiy i Tetriskaroyskiy rayony)', in *Yazykovoy centr philologicheskogo fakulteta Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Nauchnye doklady*, Sankt-Peterburg.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Since 1989 the Greek population of the region has been changing. The significant part of it emigrated, generally, to Greece. At the same time, recent migrants from Transcaucasia (Armenia and Georgia, including Abkhazia) and Kazakhstan supplemented it, this process is going especially intensively after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The next demographic census will be taken in 2002, it will be the first census in post-Soviet Russia.

<sup>2</sup> This and following references to archival documents were kindly given by my colleague Vladimir Kolesov.

<sup>3</sup> Some leaders and active participants in the Pontic Greek movement have written and published books, which usually are a description of history of the particular group or Greeks' village, or the life history of famous compatriots. Good examples are books *Tsalkians – Children of Georgia (Tsalkintsy – deti Gruzii) (1990)* and *The Greeks of Georgia (Greki Gruzii) (1990)*, which are widespread among Greek-migrants from Georgia.

<sup>4</sup> There are several families of the Agydh in Bzhedughable. The name of the village is an Adyghian one, the official status of this village is *aul* that means natives' village settlements in Northern Caucasus. The last significant

component of Bzhedughable inhabitants are the Kurds, who are the recent migrants from Armenia.

<sup>5</sup> The Cossacks are a group of the Russian population in the Northern Caucasus and the modern ethno-nationalists movement in some post-Soviet countries (Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan), which is especially active in Southern Russia.

<sup>6</sup> F. Barth argues that ethnic groups are units of ascription and identification of social actors themselves. They have the characteristic of the organising interaction between people. Barth rejects the primordial *givens* as essential features, which form ethnic identity. Instead, he focuses on the boundaries of ethnic groups, which influence the ethnic identities of actors rather than the cultural contents of particular social organisations. But ethnic boundaries are maintained during and through transactions between different groups. On the other hand, the role of others/strangers becomes significant for the formation of boundaries and self-consciousness of an ethnic group. From Barth's point of view, ethnicity is a boundary process, which looks like a matrix of strategies open to the participants in the *inter-ethnic game* (Barth, 1969; see also Voutira, 1991: 407–409).

## А. П. Попов

### От «Пиндоса» к «Понту»: Этничность и различия греческих групп в южной России

Термин «понтийские греки» часто используется как этническая характеристика греческого населения Кавказа. Вместе с тем понтийское самосознание распространяется среди греков региона относительно недавно. Значительное влияние на формирование понтийской идентичности оказывали миграция кавказских греков в Грецию, которая стала возможна с конца 1980-х годов, и деятельность греческих национально-культурных обществ, появившихся в регионе в начале 1990-х. В фокусе данной статьи находится интерпретация «понтийскости» информантами, представителями трех групп греческого населения Северо-западного Кавказа: 1) греками поселка Витязево, чьи предки переселились из Трапезундского вилайета Османской империи в XIX веке; 2) урумами хутора Гавердовский в окрестностях Майкопа, значительная часть которых является недавними мигрантами из Восточной Грузии, и 3) потомками так называемых «черкесских греков» аула Бжедугхаль (Адыгея). Анализируя индивидуальные нарративы, автор статьи приходит к выводу, что на Кавказе понтийская идентичность приобретает смысл культурной и исторической дистанции от греческой нации как «воображаемого сообщества» (используя термин Б. Андерсона). В то же время, рассказывая о себе, как о понтийцах, информанты конструируют собственную этническую биографию, в которой они ищут объяснение культурной неоднородности греческого населения региона.

(А. П. Попов)