HISTORICAL GRAND NARRATIVES OF THE SEVEN KINGDOMS OF WESTEROS: FROM INVENTION TO DECONSTRUCTION OF A TRADITIONAL MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

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The article is focused on the problems of medieval images in modern mass culture in the contexts of simulation and imitation of grand historical narratives. The author analyses the text of "The World of Ice and Fire: the Untold History of the Westeros and the Game of Thrones" in the contexts of historical and political imaginations and the inventions of alternative identities. The author believes that medievalism lost its academic isolation because modern mass culture uses various images of the Middle Ages actively. Representatives and creators of mass culture use the achievements of academic medieval studies. The imagined universe of George Martin has real medieval prototypes. The author of the article, on the one hand, analyses the historical narratives of "The World of Ice and Fire: the Untold History of Westeros and the Game of Thrones" as an attempt to form historical and political memories. On the other hand, the problems of the features and type of Westeros feudalism are also analysed in this article.

Keywords: George Martin, Westeros, Seven Kingdoms, historical imagination, narratives, feudalism, political rituals

Introductory remarks. The destinies of history in the 20th century were unenviable because politicization, ideologization and mythologization victimized academic science repeatedly. History fell victim to nationalist speculations and manipulations. Authoritarian political regimes, right and left, despite their ideological and doctrinal contradictions, were united in their pathological aspirations and desires to subordinate history, unify it, integrate it into official political and ideological canons, use it to mobilize the masses and legitimize undemocratic political experience. History in the 20th century lost the status of science gradually and turned into an instrument of political struggle and ideological confrontations. History in the 20th century became a victim not only of politicians who sought to use it and used it really to achieve political goals. History in the last decades of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21 centuries became one more victim of mass culture. Orientalism probably became the first victim of the expansion of mass culture and its attempts to challenge the status of academic sciences because oriental plots and motifs became one of the central themes and plots of mass culture. The image of the Middle Ages, as Russian historian Pavel Uvarov believes, "is a very interesting thing"

(Uvarov, 2016). Therefore, the expansion of mass culture into the sphere of academic medieval studies and its primitivization, simulation and imitation actually became inevitable. Medievalism (Alexander, 2007) became the second victim of a mass culture in its attempts to use history in the struggle for consumers.

From medieval studies to medievalism, or how the Middle Ages became an element of mass culture. The Russian historian Evgenii Savitskii, summing up the results of theoretical discussions, debates and reflections, believes that medievalism develops as

images of the Middle Ages, scientific and popular, existing in the modern times, as well as institutions engaged in their production or their use, including literature, cinema, computer games, sports, health (images of diseases), fast food restaurants, etc (Savitskiy, 2015).

Medievalism is close to formal imitations of the Middle Ages and it occupies new areas of modernity, including consumption and the Internet (Panfilov, 2016), but

the new movies are products of a completely different era and another society… and attempts to find the features of the Middle Ages in the unpleasant aspects of modern life are some typical examples of the perception of the Middle Ages (Panfilov, 2014).

Russian intellectuals, including Aleksandr Filiushkin, state the existence of a public request for medieval stories (Filyushkin, 2017). Therefore, "the expectation of a new Middle Ages", as Russian critic Evgenii Pozhidaev argues, became "the usual entertainment of Russian intellectuals since Nikolai Berdiaev" (Pojidaev, 2011). Several factors stimulated this sad fall of medievalism, the erosion of its academic purity, the mutation from the academic historiography to the structural element of the culture of mass consumerism and transformation into one of the numerous fields of modern pop culture and culture of mass consumption. Romantic writers of the 19th century did a lot for the idealization and mythologization of the Middle Ages, imagining them as the golden age of knights and beautiful ladies. Fantasy in the 20th century did the same with medievalism with the difference that romantics imagined the relatively real and historical Middle Ages as an ideal world, the authors of the fantasy texts were virtually free and the fetters of real medieval history did not limit their imagination. The literature of the fantasy genre in the 20th century gave birth to a new kind of medievalism that became an alternative to the academic historiography of the Middle Ages (Bloch, 2014),

stimulating and provoking progress and the triumph of visualized medievalism for mass consumption.

The newly invented Middle Ages: textual and visual. George Martin's fantasy project became one of the most successful and notable projects of new non-academic Mediaevalism that defines the main vectors and trajectories of the transformations of the medieval heritage in the contexts of mass culture. году Cambridge University Press published the book of the English historian of law Frederic William Maitland "Domesday Book and Beyond" in 1897 (Maitland, 1897). The concept of beyond (Rijkovskiy, 2009) became one of the central in intellectual history and archaeology of knowledge gradually. It is extremely difficult to determine what "beyond" is, but the author presumes that various intellectual practices and strategies, attempts to form heterogeneous identities, features of imagination and invention, tactics and strategies of actualization and silence form those cultural and intellectual environments and spaces that can be defined as "beyond". The literary project inspired by George Martin became so successful because the writer's texts about the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros had their own unique "beyond" and did not become a primitive imitation and stylization, the integration of medieval themes and motifs into heterogeneous contexts and spaces of the contemporary culture of mass consumerism. If we assume that "beyond" of modern mass literature consists of market laws and the desire of authors, publishers and literary agents to get their profit percentage, then "beyond" of George Martin's prose provides for various motivations, including commercial and intellectual ones. Medievalism made "story with medieval or medieval-like settings, locales and societies" (Jakovljevic & Loncar-Vujnovic, 2016, pp. 97-116) an inevitable characteristic of modern mass literature. Several factors inspired the successful promotion of George Martin's ideas in the symbolic markets of exchanges and communications of modern consumer society. Firstly, George Martin belongs to those authors of mass and formally "low" literature who have certain literary skills and even talents. Secondly, the literary texts of George Martin cannot be defined as pure and classical fantasy because their author is relatively well-oriented in the real history of the Western European Middle Ages and his texts are filled with historical motifs and allusions, and these dimensions of George Martin's narrative are easily readable for professional historians. Thirdly, the screen version of George Martin's texts dragged on for several seasons (Panfilov, 2014, pp. 193-208) and promoted the rise of their popularity and successes simultaneously, stimulating the genesis and development of a particular subculture. This subculture became a component of the wider context of mass culture. Some critics (Rudoy, 2015) presume that George Martin's

texts became the raw material for several television projects that integrate medieval images into the worlds and spaces of modernity. The success of the project stimulates its commentators and critics to express different viewpoints. The range of opinions is varied from cultural to Marxist. The authors of the project assumed that its audience would be wide enough and they were right in this context because mass culture trained several generations of potential viewers and consumers. Successful promotion of the project required new texts, which complemented the prose of George Martin. Therefore, the author himself and several fans of his texts initiated a project of history writing of the imagined worlds, which appear in the prose of an American writer. These activities led to the emergence of a new "historical" narrative, which in fact was an attempt to transplant, imitate and simulate the tactics and strategies of medieval history writing into the contexts and spaces of modern mass culture.

Aims and objectives of the article. The author will try to analyse these imitations and simulations of the historical narrative in this article. This article has several tasks, including an analysis of the genesis of the imitational historical narratives of George Martin's universe, the study of the features of the historical and political imagination of the invented worlds, the analysis of the forms and features of transplantation of historical knowledge and collective narratives in pseudo-historical sources of the world of the Seven Kingdoms, an attempt to analyse political, social, economic and cultural institutions mentioned in the historical grand narrative of the imagined universe of Westeros.

Methodology. Methodologically, this text is based on ideas and approaches proposed in intellectual history, the history of ideas and intellectual archaeology. The author of the article, on the one hand, believes that it is necessary to use both classical and modern interdisciplinary approaches to medieval studies. On the other hand, the methods proposed for the analysis of nationalism, including the ideas of Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, presented in their classic texts "Imagined Communities" (Anderson, 1983) and "Invention of Traditions" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) are applicable to the analysis of the imitation of historical narratives also because George Martin's prose and his texts inspired active use the resources of imagination and invention because world of George Martin is one of the most successful invented ones (Ekman & Taylor, 2016, pp. 7-18) and a classic example of their imagination and construction.

Historiography. The imagined worlds of George Martin, which imitate the processes and institutions of the Middle Ages, were able to become the object of academic analysis in Western historiography (Larrington, 2016) (Pavlac, 2017) (Johnston & Battis, 2015) (Attewell, 2014) (Mondschein, 2017) (Perpinya, 2016) (Young, 2015) (Caroll, 2017), but the number of academic texts focused on the analysis of social, economic, political and cultural histories of Westeros remains extremely insignificant. If we erase the phrase of Pavel Uvarov that "the historiographical happy end was not very convincing" (Uvarov, 2000) from the context then it will illustrate the situation with the studies of fiction in the medieval studies fairly. Most of the texts are written and published in English in international journals and the assertion that the prose of George Martin, on the one hand, inspired by the images of the European Middle Ages, became a commonplace (Carroll, 2015) (Young, 2015) (Marques, 2016). Umberto Eco, an Italian writer and historian, in the 1980s proclaimed that "We are dreaming the Middle Ages" (1986, p. 64) and this statement inspired several waves of non-academic manipulations and speculations that entered the "Middle Ages" and "feudalism" into a number of the central collective imagined and invented heroes of modern fantasy. On the other hand, the narrative of the American writer differs significantly from earlier attempts to map feudalism in the modern fantasy genre because the images suggested by George Martin are both artistic, but they are much closer to the imagined and invented Middle Ages than, for example, the prose of Ursula Le Guin, which became part of the classical canon. Russian historian Pavel Uvarov presumes that

now there is no single or at least prevailing way of history writing. But at the same time, 'practising historians' still do not doubt that it should be written with use of sources (Uvarov, 2004)

but in this article, the author uses special sources. These sources can change the vectors of historical studies and expand their horizons significantly, especially in the case of social history. The process of renewal of social history, as Paul Uvarov believes, "is necessary and inevitable, but its success is not guaranteed automatically" (Uvarov, 2011). George Martin's texts that actualize the images of the invented Middle Ages found their admirers and first historians in Western historiography because its methodological and theoretical backgrounds are radically different from Russian ones. The Russian historian Evgenii Savitskii, commenting on this historiographic situation, presumes that

American professional historians, philologists, and art historians produce books that would outrage the researcher who was brought up in respect of the principle

of historicism. These texts are little known in Russia because they look strange and do not correspond to academic criteria, which are still reproduced in Russian universities (Savitskiy, 2016).

The dominance of historiographic culture that is a qualitatively and meaningfully different from Russian one, turned George Martin's prose into a source, although the writer offers idealized Middle Ages. Despite this, Western intellectuals and the few historians in Russia, including the author of this article (Kyrchanoff, 2017), use them as an excuse for postmodern and constructivist speculations and reflections. Russian medievalists, unfortunately, prefer to ignore the interdisciplinary potential and perspectives of the academic analysis of the imagined and invented alternative Middle Ages. Attempts of philologists who specialize in the analysis of fantasy and modern mass culture and literature are also not effective. Therefore, the author, on the one hand, is forced to note with regret that there is a cultural vacuum in studies of George Martin's imagined worlds in contemporary Russian intellectual history. On the other hand, the author hopes that possible studies of non-existent medieval and alternative feudal worlds and land spaces will promote the rise of the popularity of social history (Uvarov, 2010) which in the last two decades began to give up its positions in competition with constructivist approaches.

The Middle Ages and feudalism: what exactly, which one? It is very debatable to answer the question what feudalism exactly existed in Westeros? This question automatically involves a few more ones: did the imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms live in the mature or late Middle Ages? These issues are partly questionable, partly controversial in the contexts of attempts by some intellectuals to prove that the world imagined by George Martin became not a world where traditional feudal relations and natural agrarian economies dominated, but the world that came close to the threshold of a new era, the era of early modernity. Some intellectuals (Efimov, 2017) believe that the feudal world of the Seven Kingdoms, imagined and described by the American writer in the smallest details, exists as a world where the old feudal order, relations and institutions are gradually dying out because they cannot compete with new alternative models of political, social and economic behaviour successfully and effectively. Our hypothetical recognition of the crisis of feudalism in Westeros, emphasizes the urgency of our attempts to answer questions about the nature and type of local feudal relations. What type of feudalism in general and feudal relations and institutions in particular did exist in the Seven Kingdoms? Was feudalism a universal and inevitable

type of organization of social, economic and political relations? Were the Seven Kingdoms the only and unique preserve of feudalism or other variations of the feudal development existed in the imagined world of George Martin outside of Westeros? These questions are not interesting to fans of the texts of the American writer, but academic historians and other intellectuals tried to answer these debatable questions. George Martin's texts can cause disappointment to orthodox and true believing social and economic historians because his books cannot provide them with information about the real size of estates, the relationship of the domain with other territories, the terms of service, the number of dues, corvee, the pace of commuting rents. The absolute predominance of the rural population makes it possible to define the type of economic and social relations of the Seven Kingdoms as feudal. Dependence of the inhabitants of the Seven Kingdoms was naturally felt and understood by them so strongly that the image of the world they lived in and they created for themselves included many features that actualized their inability to separate themselves from the natural environment and the class restrictions of those political and economic institutions that dominated in their world. Paul Mason, an English critic, publicist and political commentator, believes that the Seven Kingdoms exist in the world of the Middle Ages of the late feudalism, arguing that

the elite are in trouble, their sources of wealth exhausted, their civilisation assailed by crazed fanatics from without – while, within, the masses are in open revolt. No, it's not the eurozone – it is Westeros, the mythical venue for Game of Thrones.… But why do so many of these secondary worlds resemble feudalism in crisis?... In modern fantasy fiction there is always a crisis of the system: both of the economic order and of the auras of power… But there is also more clearly systemic doom hanging over the economy of Westeros… If you apply historical materialism to Westeros, the plot of season five and six becomes possible to predict. What happened with feudalism, when kings found themselves in hock to bankers, is that – at first – they tried to sort it out with naked power. The real-life Edward III had his Italian bankers locked up in the Tower of London until they waived his debts… Feudalism gave way to a capitalism based on merchants, bankers, colonial plunder and the slave trade. Paper money emerged, as did a complex banking system for assuaging problems like your gold mine running dry (Mason, 2015).

The Middle Age of Westeros in this historical situation is the era of decline and fall of feudal relations. Feudalism of the Seven Kingdoms is no longer stable and not developed feudalism, but the late feudalism, where social, economic and political institutions fallen into a state of protracted crisis and cannot compete with new more successful and rational economic and political competitors. The trajectories of social, political and economic history of the West in the 16th century, on the one hand, led to the fact that

new rationally thinking first generations of representatives of the bourgeoisie became more successful in their historical conflict and confrontation with old feudal elites who could not adapt to new market rules and relationships successfully and effectively. On the other hand, these transformations became possible because political elites for several centuries or even decades earlier could limit the power of the king power, but the social world of the Seven Kingdoms did not know such social transformations and in fact late economic feudalism existed in conditions of domination of political feudalism that did not know political competition and alternatives. The world imagined by George Martin, on the one hand, is unstable politically, and the dominant political groups are also not stable because they are in a state of constant competition with other representatives of social group they belonged to. On the other hand, the feudal war, George Martin wrote about, may inspire factors that will stimulate the genesis and the emergence of social and economic changes. Mass death of representatives of feudal elites in the civil war will free significant number of their peasants from their feudal lords. In fact, feudal lords who survive will be forced to seek new forms of relations with dependent peasants. The situation, George Martin constructs in a cycle of his novels, has much in common with the conditions that existed in England after the "black death" and became an incentive for the erosion of feudal relations and the genesis of capitalism. The imagined feudalism of the Seven Kingdoms in these intellectual, social and economic contexts is the feudalism of the sunset period and feudalism on the eve of the fall. As for the other two issues, including "Was feudalism a universal and inevitable type of organization of social, economic and political relations?" and "Were the Seven Kingdoms the only and unique preserve of feudalism or other variations of feudal development did exist in George Martin's imagined world outside Westeros?", absolutely different answers are possible. Aron Gurevich, a Soviet and Russian medievalist, analyzing the difficulties in determining feudalism wrote:

I tend to see Western European phenomenon in feudalism predominantly, if not exclusively. In my opinion, feudalism developed as a result of a unique constellation of development trends. The feudal system is not a phase of a world-historical process, it arose as a result of a combination of specific conditions emerged as the result of the collision between the barbaric world and the Mediterranean world of the late Antiquity. This conflict gave impetus to the synthesis of the German and Roman origins, and gave birth to conditions for the emergence of Western European civilization at the end of the Middle Ages beyond the traditional social order, beyond the limits in which all other civilizations remained (Haritonovich, 2000).

This remark of Aron Gurevich is quite applicable to the analysis of hypothetical trajectories and developments tendencies of those regions that were not part of the Seven Kingdoms geographically and were located outside of Westeros. Paraphrasing Aron Gurevich's words, it is logical to ask "Was feudalism the only phenomenon that existed exclusively in the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros?". The specific content of the answers will depend on our perceptions and understandings what feudalism is in general? If we perceive feudalism in a Marxist spirit and we insist orthodoxly that feudalism is a social and economic formation between slavery and capitalism, then we can automatically identify other regions of George Martin's world of as feudal. If we assume that the society of the Seven Kingdoms is feudal, then it is logical to assume that this is Western feudalism in our understanding. Creators of fantasy worlds, including George Martin, are extremely uncertain outside the Western Middle Ages and therefore avoid to stylize and imitate peripheral European feudalisms, including Byzantine and Slavic ones. Sergei Ivanov, a Russian Byzantinist, commenting on these intellectual preferences, believes that

the world of fantasy is always the world of the Middle Ages, but the Middle Ages are just western. The "Game of Thrones" is Roman-Germanic Middle Ages. In fantasy there is no place for stylization in Byzantium, Byzantium fell into an image hole (Ivanov, 2015).

Soviet historians, recognizing the existence of feudal relations and institutions, projected these explanations into the history of Oriental societies and imagined the different types and forms of Chinese, Japanese or any other feudalisms. If we use this methodology based on the assumption that feudalism was universal, but developed as different and heterogeneous in social, political and economic contests, the Free Cities, including Lorath, Norvos, Qohor, Pentos, Volantis, Braavos, and others regions including Yi Ti and Asshai-by-the-Shadow can be imagined as feudal. If a historian or anthropologist who analyses the imagined worlds of George Martin wants to feel like an orthodox Marxist, he or she can imagine and invent feudal relations even among Dothraki. It is normal for post-post-modern historiographical situation and intellectuals who have Soviet historians as their predecessors to find feudal relations in Dothraki society. Soviet intellectuals proposed the theory of nomadic feudalism, ignoring the social and economic realities of Mongolian society. Therefore, the concept of feudalism can be used for explanation of any society in George Martin's universe because it will allow modern intellectuals to imagine feudalism in all regions of the world of George Martin, although

academic ethics can stop some of them and they will limit themselves to the mental feudalization of the Seven Kingdoms only.

Periodization and the invention of progress. The historical grand narrative in its imagined forms in the world of the Seven Kingdoms differed from the real trajectories of the development of historical knowledge and collective ideas of the past significantly. The imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms lived in a relatively successful era for knowledge and those who can be called medieval intellectuals. In comparison with earlier epochs

the written word begins to play a completely different role than in the previous era. Elites (first of all they were a real and potential audience of various historical works) begin to form their memory on other backgrounds, they have written, recorded memory. They start to use texts more than oral tradition (Sidorov, 2017).

The official history of Westeros in this context can be defined as an attempt to invent and fix historical and political memory. The imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms did not know what a religiously centric consciousness was and therefore the history in his understanding did not have strict and rigid bindings and connections with religious transformations and changes. Therefore, the imagined author of the historical chronicle allowed himself reasoning about the age of the world and his estimates ranged from 40 to 500 thousand years. The periodization of the history of the Seven Kingdoms' world in its official version is, on the one hand, linear. The linear character of grand historical narrative became the result of the absence of a religiously centric picture of the world that provides intellectuals with the imagined division of history into "before" and "after". On the other hand, the imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms acted in traditional medieval cultural contexts and imagined his "linear time" as torn apart. The timeline of the world of the Seven Kingdoms, unlike real history, is based on the classification of events in their chronological order and sequence. The imagined author understood clearly the differences between ancient history and its modernity (although his modernity from the viewpoint of the modern intellectual is the past because it is Middle Ages), preferring to divide the history into several stages, including periods of "the Dawn Age", "the Coming of the First Men", "the Age of Heroes", "the Long Night", "the Rise of Valyria", "Valyria's Children", "the Arrival of the Andals", "Ten Thousand Ships", "the Doom of Valyria". Several parallels between these imagined stages of invented history and real epochs in the history of terrestrial civilization are possible and plausible. "The Dawn

Age" and "the Coming of the First Men" played in the historical worldview of the imagined author roles that were the same to the pre-history. "The Rise of Valyria" and "Valyria's Children" are Antiquity and its Byzantine relapses. "The Arrival of the Andals", "Ten Thousand Ships", "the Doom of Valyria" are analogous to the fall of the Roman Empire and the Migration Period in the history of Western Europe. Aegon Targaryen and his aggressive policy have the conquest of England by Wilhelm in 1066 by their historical prototypes (Martin, Antonsson, & Garcia, 2014, pp. 73-75). The subsequent stages of the Targaryen Kings have some parallels with the history of the European Middle Ages. The imagined author in his attempt to write the history of the known world believed that this history was a history of a gradual complication of culture and social institutions and relationships. Imagining the world as a world of gradual complication, development and actually progress, the imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms perceived it as a heterogeneous world. The historical imagined grand narrative of Westeros in this intellectual situation actualizes its constructivist character, because the real authors of the text actually imitated the style of the medieval chronicle, synthesized it with modern simplistic historical representations. The author of the official history of Westeros in this context, on the one hand, believes that

the eastern lands were awash with many peoples – uncivilized, as all the world was uncivilized but numerous. But on Westeros, from the Lands of Always Winter to the shores of the Summer Sea, only two peoples existed: the children of the forest and the race of creatures known as the giants (2014, p. 19)

and offers, on the other hand, more progressive viewpoints than his real colleagues, who wrote medieval Western chronicles, because progress and development were the main criteria that reflected the level of development of peoples and states, he wrote about. For example, the historical grand narratives of Westeros fix the simultaneous coexistence of several biological species of people, which indicates that its imagined author was familiar with early versions of the local theory of evolution or came close to its discovery.

Political rituals and symbolic communications. It is very tempting and probably appropriate to define the society, social and economic and institutions and relationships that the imagined author of history fixed as feudal but real creators of this text, including George Martin and his co-authors, are aware of the history of the medieval West and transplanted some processes and institutions from the real history of

the European Middle Ages into imagined historical contexts of Westeros. Just as

the West, concealed from the Great Steppe, could afford the luxury of feudalism (Mehanik, 2011)

Westeros separated from its competitors geographically existed in the feudal system of social and economic coordinates. Despite the fact that the history of the Seven Kingdoms is nothing more than an imagined and imagining construct, George Martin, in his cycle of novels, was able

to create one of the most convincing neo-medieval worlds. If Dumas used the history as a nail for the painting, then Martin mixes the colours on the basis of history (Panfilov, 2014).

The history of Westeros is mainly the history of relations between regional dynasties of local feudal lords. Westeros, as a feudal society, belonged to the number of agrarian communities and the levels of urbanization in these regions were significantly lower in comparison with other lands of the world imagined by George Martin. Climatic and natural factors (Tarly, 2017, pp. 1-9) determined the vectors of social and economic development partially, promoting feudalization of society, actualizing the natural character of its agrarian economy and minimizing the role of the eradication processes. The cities in the world of the Seven Kingdoms were formal and nominal political and military centres because peripheral and deep regions were the basis of the economic stability of this agrarian society despite the fact that the natural and climatic conditions did not favour the progress in agriculture. The imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms records some political rituals and ceremonies that formed the basis of the official ceremonial and political mythology of the Seven Kingdoms. The coronation was among the most important political rituals in symbolic communication between representatives of the elites of the Seven Kingdoms. Coronation as "one of the variants of the rites of passage" (Boytsov, 2014) was an extremely important act for the political clan of Targaryens because the kings who belonged to this dynasty sought to legitimize the seizure of the Seven Kingdoms but it was extremely difficult to do without invented political traditions and rituals, including rituals of the coronation. These imagined institutions and relations in forms they emerged and developed in the Seven Kingdoms managed to become the object of research in Western historiography (Riggs, 2017) (Attali, 2017) (Clasby, 2017) (Polack, 2017) (Muhlberger, 2017) (Pavlac, 2017) (Cowlishaw, 2015). The coronation was among the central political rituals and the author of the history of Westeros described it in the following way:

Three days later, in the Starry Sept, His High Holiness himself anointed Aegon with the seven oils, placed a crown upon his head, and proclaimed him Aegon of House Targaryen, the First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, and Protector of the Realm. ("Seven Kingdoms" was the style used, though Dorne had not submitted. Nor would it, for more than a century to come) (Martin, Antonsson, & Garcia, 2014, p. 79).

Mihail Boitsov, the Russian historian, believes that

political rituals rallied the political community, especially when people with power gathered together (Boytsov, 2014).

The desire to actualize and emphasize the continuity of the statehood of Aegon Targaryen with earlier states attests, on the one hand, to the considerable political ambitions of the dynasty, which sought to integrate legends and rudimentary political memories of the historical states that preceded the Seven Kingdoms into its collective political myth. Despite the fact that Aegon Targaryen had nothing in common with the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, he sought to integrate them into an imagined political body, but these attempts were radically different in comparison with modern tactics and strategies of national construction and nationalistic imagination. Political ceremonies and rituals of Targaryens became an attempt to institutionalize relationships of dependence in the form of patronage, suzerainty and vassalage because the loyalty was regionalised and localised. These regional loyalties were more important for political elites than ethnic, linguistic and religious identities of the local population because these political categories and ideal constructs were unknown in the feudal era, the imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms wrote about.

The author of this official historical narrative of Westeros mentions facts of the multiple coronations of Aegon Targaryen, who was crowned twice. The first coronation became an actual claim to the acquisition of political power, and the second one was an attempt to legitimize the conquest, seizure and usurpation of power in the Seven Kingdoms. The constant travels of Aegon Targaryen over the conquered lands and territories of Seven Kingdoms became one more political ritual which in fact was an attempt to unite the disparate parts of the new state and form a myth about the unified state political body and promote the image of the king as its supreme suzerain, but these trips did not stimulate political integration because the king did not dare to change radically regional and even local political institutions and rules and norms of law:

rather than attempting to unify the realm under one set of laws, he respected the differing customs of each region and sought to judge as their past kings might have (Martin, Antonsson, & Garcia, 2014, p. 87).

The king could ascribe himself the role of a supreme judge only, although decisions were made according to local norms and customs. Feudalism in the Seven Kingdoms existed as a heterogeneous world of sacred gestures and symbolic communications that actually had a political character. Westeros feudalism was a world where the oral tradition dominated, despite attempts to document historical and political experience in written form, the role of the recorded word was low in comparison with those spheres where oral culture, customs and traditions prevailed and dominated. The number of opponents of royal power, as the imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms wrote, was significant and included representatives of the feudal aristocracy and nobility, as well as religious groups, including the High Septon and various religious orders, such as Poor Fellows. Religion in the world of the Seven Kingdoms played a role that was no less significant than in the history of the real western Middle Ages with the only difference that the religious situation in the invented world of George Martin was more heterogeneous (Tucker, 2017) (Wittingslow, 2015) (Johnston & Battis, 2015) (Ramon Ruiz, 2016). The official history of the Seven Kingdoms mentions numerous facts of mutual violence of both royalists and their religious opponents, which culminated in the formal victory of the king, who actually institutionalized a compromise between the monarch and his religious enemies. The victory of the king in a confrontation with religious opponents of power did not mean a radical of the monarch's power, because he was forced to rule, taking into account the opinions of the leaders of the feudal aristocracy. In fact, the institutional compromise between the king and the feudal houses that controlled the territories of the formally united Seven Kingdoms expressed in the appearance of a post of Lord Protector of the Realm and Hand of the King (Martin, Antonsson, & Garcia, 2014, p. 103), who was advisor and mediator in the relationship of the ruling king with political and religious elites. The imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms recognizes that King Jaehaerys I tried to break this institutional compromise between the royal power and the feudal elites because he appointed Septon Barth as Hand of the King despite the fact that he was "no man of humble birth" (2014, p. 104). The violation of the compromise between the royal power and the regional elites of the former Seven Kingdoms provided the king with the opportunity to unify the political spaces and make the imagining political body of the state more visible because

where his grandsire, King Aegon, had left the laws of the Seven Kingdoms to the vagaries of local tradition and custom, Jaehaerys created the first unified code, so that from the North to the Dornish Marches, the realm shared a single rule of law (2014, p. 104).

The imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms believes that Jaehaerys I sought to change the relationships of power with religious groups and elites because the orders became influential economic actors. King Jaehaerys I was interested in a compromise with secular regional feudal elites because

the Poor Fellows and Warrior's Sons, no longer hunted as they had been in Maegor's day, were much reduced and officially outlawed thanks to Maegor, but they were still present. And still restless, in their eagerness to restore their orders. More pressingly, the Faith's traditional right to judge its own had begun to prove troublesome, and many lords complained of unscrupulous septries and septons making free with the wealth and property of their neighbours and those they preached to (2014, p. 105).

The origins of this conflict were predominantly economic because the interests of religious orders and septons did not coincide with the interests of secular feudal lords. The imagined author of the official history of the Seven Kingdoms, on the one hand, believes that the royal power and religious elites could reach an agreement and institutionalize a compromise between secular and religious authorities:

Jaehaerys instead dispatched Septon Barth to Oldtown, to speak with the High Septon, and there they began to forge a lasting agreement. In return for the last few Stars and Swords putting down their weapons, and for agreeing to accept outside justice, the High Septon received King Jaehaerys's sworn oath that the Iron Throne would always protect and defend the Faith (2014, p. 106).

On the other hand, the history of the Seven Kingdoms records attempts of institutional restraint of royal power, but they were in fact temporary and unsuccessful because council of seven (2014, p. 141), mentioned by the author of the history of Westeros, was a council of regents and it did not become a permanent political institution, but the author of history recognizes that several groups, including council members and a hand of the king, could simultaneously limit the power of the king Aegon when he was young (2014). The imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms mentions the existence of small council during the reign of Daeron II (2014, p. 170). This factor suggests that the conditions for the restriction of royal power existed during the Regency

period, but feudal groups could not use this opportunity effectively and provide representative institutions with a permanent character, but the official history of the Seven Kingdoms records the case when an uncle of King Daeron became the Hand (2014, p. 147).

The compromise nature of the distribution of power functions among representatives of the political elites of the Seven Kingdoms actualizes the simultaneous coexistence and co-operation of the principles of intra-natal and intra-dynastic suzerainty, despite attempts to affirm the primacy of the first one. The imagined author of the official history of Westeros, despite all attempts by the kings to centralize the state, recognized that these aspirations were not very successful in general and in Dorne in particular. Daeron II, according to the official history of the Seven Kingdoms, was forced to cede Dorne and recognize its rights which were more significant than the same ones of other kingdoms:

the lords of Dorne held significant rights and privileges that the other great houses did not – the right to keep their royal title first among them, but also the autonomy to maintain their own laws, the right to assess and gather the taxes due to the Iron Throne with only irregular oversight from the Red Keep, and other such matters (2014, p. 172).

Probably it does not make sense to state that Daeron II granted such wide rights to the Dorne Kingdom. It is more logical to assume that Dorne has never been under the full control of the Kings of the Iron Throne and the actions of Daeron II, on the one hand, became a recognition and institutionalization of the historical situation. On the other hand, such significant concessions testified that the seven kingdoms were not a centralized and regular state, but they developed as a quasi-federation or even a confederation of seven kingdoms despite the fact that local kings recognized the suzerainty of the Kings of the Iron Throne.

The concept of suzerainty in the world of the Seven Kingdoms was plural. Aegon Targaryen, the first king of this dynasty, could not unite and consolidate the territories of the conquered kingdoms and was in fact forced to recognize the local dynasties as regional social, political and economic institutions. This policy led to the virtual coexistence of the principles of intra-dynastic and intra-generic suzerainty, when the kings of the Targaryens dynasty, as formal seniors among the peers, were forced to coexist and cooperate with representatives of regional dynasties despite Targaryens could be younger or elder than local kings or their relatives. The relations and connections between the Targaryens and the regional kings varied and ranged from forced co-operation to an apparent political confrontation, but all kings had the right to "call the banners" (2014, p. 328), which actualized the heterogeneous relations of suzerainty and

vassalage, dependence and independence among representatives of the ruling class.

Seven Kingdoms: post mortem or in memoria. The imagined history of the Seven Kingdoms is an attempt to unify and fix historical and political narratives, create the first versions of national and historical memory, but it is widely known that collective narratives that form a national or nationalizing history are not stable. It is more logical to assume that such narratives that determine the main vectors of Westeros history writing will inevitably become victims of deconstruction and revision because the world described by the author of this history is in a state of deep crisis and civil war that became harbingers of radical changes and transformations. If we assume that Westeros feudalism is late and dying, then it is logical to assume that in a few decades later the text of history will be imagined as a historical source because this feudal and estate grand narrative will be replaced by nationalizing or national narratives that will form new versions of Westeros history in general and each of the Seven Kingdoms in particular. How can the historical imagination in the Westeros world change after radical economic and political transformations? Firstly, several simultaneously coexisting and competing national historical narratives or nationalized versions of the past will replace a single archaic narrative that dominated in the official history of the Seven Kingdoms. Secondly, these new national histories will be political and ideological constructs, despite the fact that their authors and formers will use a single body of sources including the text analysed in this article. Thirdly, these new versions of history will simultaneously construct and deconstruct historical narratives and facts because their potential authors and their political customers will be interested in mythologization of ancestral past that will differ from the same historical subjects of neighbours. Fourthly, it cannot be ruled out that the feudal conflicts described in George Martin's cycle will be imagined as a symbolic boundary or frontier in mental transition from one historical epoch to another. Fifthly, all these national or nationalized histories will inevitably use the image of Otherness and the concepts of the enemy. It cannot be ruled out that Dorne can be this politically and ideologically motivated Other for the North. Targaryens and Lannisters can become positive or negative collective heroes and their images will depend on political and ideological preferences of authors of new histories. Historians of the modernising Westeros will not be burdened by class stereotypes, but they will be voluntary captives and hostages of the national myths of nations as the imagined communities they will belong to. If Targaryens and Lannisters can become political and ideological Others and antiheroes,

then the history of the feudal civil war, George Martin wrote about, provide historians of future national or nationalizing states with a universal and inevitable Other. Dothraki will become this universal Other who will consolidate the historical imaginations of the national historiographies of the former Seven Kingdoms. Dothraki who after the end of the war may remain in Westeros will stimulate the political and historical imagination of politicians and intellectuals and none of them will be indifferent because Dothraki motives will be permanent incentives for historiographic confrontations and battles for history. It does not matter who will win in the late feudal war in Westeros, but it is also obvious that Dothraki will be among the ethnic and cultural marginalized losers in the world where neighbouring communities will become nations, when Dothraki were doomed to be a political and ethnic minority and a socially oppressed group. Fifthly, the history of the world after the Game of Thrones will become a political commodity and ideological construct simultaneously, and local intellectuals will inevitably actualize the servillist and instrumentalist dimensions of the past. The extreme politicization of historiography, the monopolization of historiographical production and the high degree of politicization of historical debates can be the main factors that will determine vectors and trajectories of the imagination of the history of the Seven Kingdoms in a few decades or some centuries later. The history of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros will move to the centre of ideological debates and will inevitably be a victim in the hands of political entrepreneurs from the hypothetically possible Society of Valyria Restoration, Society of True Andals, Society for the Praise and Promotion of Merit of Aegon II, Society of glorification of Aerys II… Historians in this world will not be a single community: some of them will analyse the features of genesis and local variations in the development of feudalism, the terms and sizes of duties, rates and features of rent commutation in the contexts of social, cultural or agrarian histories; others will use the history and facts of the past to legitimize political processes, states and institutions actively. Eddard Stark and Robert Baratheon can turn into short-sighted political reactionaries in historical imagination who defended the dying institutions of the feudal estate society, and Tyrion Lannister and Petyr Baelish can be invented and imagined as heralds of a new capitalist era.

Preliminary conclusions. An alternative historical grand narrative which emerged as an attempt to write a universal and synthesis history of imagined worlds and their social and political spaces, invented in George Martin's texts and in their television adaptation did not arise in a vacuum. Russian historian Fiodor Panfilov believes that "a fantastic world where there are not so many fiction and magic" became the consequence of "the

total conversion of the Middle Ages" (Panfilov, 2014). This grand narrative has real historiographic, cultural and intellectual prototypes that stimulated the historical imagination of George Martin and the invention of political, social, economic, cultural and religious institutions that "exist" in the universe of Westeros.

Medieval chronicles were the first incentives for the emergence of alternative imagined medievalism in the texts of the American writer. Later historiographic attempts to interpret and explain medieval texts also stimulated and inspired George Martin in his desires to imagine a synthetic grand narrative of a formally medieval but virtually never existing history writing. Many subjects, including processes, institutions, social and economic relations and even ethnic groups that appear in George Martin's historical grand narrative have real predecessors and prototypes in a history of Europe. Actually, George Martin repeated the historical scheme of periodization and mental division of history into antiquity and the Middle Ages. The various invasions of formally barbaric ethnic groups, on the one hand, in the imagined history of George Martin, as it was in the real history of the West, stimulated radical changes in social and political institutions and relationships, inspired feudalization.

On the other hand, the worlds imagined and invented by George Martin, actualize unrealized alternative scenarios of the real history of the Middle Ages. In George Martin's texts, we deal with protracted and prolonged feudalism burdened by climatic features that slow down the speeds and paces of social and economic changes in the traditional agrarian society significantly. Analysing the imagined medieval worlds of George Martin, we can presume that the social and cultural spaces, the American writer writes about, retained more dimensions of heterogeneity and diversity than the real historical spaces of the European West because the Christianization in the late antiquity and the subsequent conversion of barbarians to Christianity greatly assisted to the unification of the Christian cultural code. The imagined worlds of George Martin, unlike the real and plural European medieval ones, did not know what Christianization was and therefore they could maintain their heterogeneous character.

The actual situation of religious pluralism, the simultaneous coexistence of pagan cults, cultures and identities with attempts of religious unification, influenced the main vectors and trajectories of the historical imagination, the invention of the past and the history writing in the worlds of George Martin. The American writer suggested that cultures without Christianization were able to preserve more knowledge of previous civilizations and historical traditions than unified and religious identity. Therefore, the histories written by imagined and never living chronists of the world of the Seven Kingdoms are more rational than real attempts of

historical description of European medieval authors. The religious situation of heterogeneity and simultaneous coexistence of pagan cults with religions that seek to unify world allowed the "writing" of history of Westeros as an attempt to systematize and generalize the historical facts and various sources. The imagined author of the history of the Seven Kingdoms approached the rational and proto-positive versions of history several centuries earlier than the intellectuals of the real western Middle Ages.

The emergence and success of the history of the Seven Kingdoms, which simulates real historical narratives and imitates a variety of tactics and strategies of history writing. It reaffirms that the history in the age of post-post-modern as other forms of human knowledge is subject to falsification, construction and deconstruction. In fact, George Martin deconstructing motifs and themes of western feudalism history, constructs new historical narratives are inevitably mutate and transform into a grand narrative that imitate the tradition of European history writing. The grand narrative of the history of the Seven Kingdoms has a mixed and partly transitional character, actualizing the elements of several historiographical traditions and forms of historical imagination simultaneously. On the one hand, the official history of Westeros imitates the forms of the traditional European historical worldview, but, on the other hand, these historical narratives became attempts to comprehend and rationalize the historical process.

The mixed nature of the grand narrative in the official history of the Seven Kingdoms actualizes its post-modernist nature of the construct and the invented tradition because the authors of this text imitated the style of academic discourse consciously and intentionally and simulated the traditional and archaic versions of the historical consciousness of the Middle Ages. This text could arise only in the depths of consumption of post-post-modern era, because the authors realized the limitations of traditional forms and modern attempts of history writing and tried to connect the various forms of historical imaginations and offer a grand narrative that satisfy supporters of academic historiography and popular mass literature. The success and triumph of history as fiction, history as the imagination, history as the invention, history as speculation actualizes constructivist character of modern historical knowledge including medievalism.

The constructivist nature of the modern historical consciousness dooms society to develop in a vicious circle of historical imagination, where construction and deconstruction, imagination and inventions became the main forms, tactics and strategies for the formation and dissemination of collective and individual knowledge of the past, including the Middle

Ages. Medievalism repeated the intellectual faith of Orientalism in this cultural situation, because it mutated into several simply recognizable images. Medievalism became a victim of the consumerism and henceforth market logic. Commercial rationality replicates the simplified and primitivized images of the Middle Ages, but despite it, academic medieval studies will exist in the following decades, co-operating with medievalism as a simplified and non-academic version of knowledge. Medievalism of mass consumerism will use the achievements of academic historiography, but academic historians will prefer to ignore it, but as academic Orientalism ignores the forms of mass Hollywood Orientalism, ignorance will become the main tactic and strategy of the academic community instead of peaceful coexistence with the numerous forms of fantasy medievalism.

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ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ ГРАНД НАРРАТИВЫ СЕМИ КОРОЛЕВСТВ ВЕСТЕРОСА: ОТ ИЗОБРЕТЕНИЯ К ДЕКОНСТРУКЦИИ ТРАДИЦИОННОЙ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ ИСТОРИОГРАФИИ

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Статья сфокусирована на проблемах средневековых образов в современной массовой культуре в контекстах симуляции и имитации «больших» исторических нарративов. Автор анализирует текст "The World of Ice & Fire: the Untold History of Westeros and the Game of Thrones" в контекстах исторического и политического воображения и изобретения альтернативных идентичностей. Автор полагает, что медиевализм утратил академическую замкнутость, потому что современная массовая культура активно использует различные образы средневековья. Представители и творцы массовой культуры активно используют достижения академической медиевистики. Воображенная вселенная Джорджа Мартина имеет реальные средневековые прототипы. Автор статьи, с одной стороны, анализирует исторические нарративы "The World of Ice & Fire: the Untold History of Westeros and the Game of Thrones" как попытку сформировать историческую и политическую память. С другой стороны, проблемы особенностей и типа феодализма Вестероса также анализируются в этой статье.

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