

DIONISIE LIBONI, **The Development of the Concept of “New Russia” and a Chronological View of the Inclusion of Bessarabia in the North Pontic Entity**

Abstract: Through the first decades of the 1800s, the concept of “New Russia” led to tremendous regional changes. The administrative unity it represented was becoming increasingly a sphere of progress which was supposed to civilize and enlighten formerly undeveloped “wild” territory. Novorossiia was depicted as a fortified region with enormous potential to attract Christians from the neighbourhood adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the empire. For example, the Chief of the Third Section of the Imperial Chancellery, A. Benckendorff, noted two main tools, which might be crucial for the exploitation of this factor: colonization and the assurance of special juridical status. Frequently, this unity was viewed as a territorial prolongation of Catherine the Great’s “Greek Project.” Tsar Nicholas I’s philosophy of power saw this engineering revoked, and during the interval, the province between the Prut and Dniester Rivers (Bessarabia) was absorbed into the Russian sphere of unity. Gradually, the policy of attracting colonists was postponed and a policy of homogenizing the gubernial legislation of the region was implemented.

Also, according to Kimitaka Matsuzato, New Russia was affected by the process of juridical re-evaluation, because the region was classified in the same range as the three macro regions of the Russian Empire: the Moscow core, the Volga-Ural zone and Malorossiia.

Additionally to the construction of an administrative base, the process involved a cultural component, which was reflected in the development of the region’s own history, literature and ethnography. Under the auspices of the governor of New Russia and Bessarabia, M. S. Vorontsov, a complex programme for recording the history of the region was initiated.

Keywords: Novorossiia, imaginary, province-building, historiography, project, Vorontsov.

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