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New Research on the Holocaust in Romania

Over the last three decades and after many decades of near complete silence, research on the Holocaust in Romania has become a growing and increasingly diverse field. [1] The 1990s and early 2000s saw the publication of a range of ground-breaking works, including a number of source collections, the first comprehensive overviews of the topic, and the Final Report on the Holocaust in Romania, assembled by an international team of scholars. [2] These studies not only did much to clarify the basic facts, such as the death of between 300,000 and 400,000 Jews and 20,000 Roma under the Antonescu regime, but also drew attention to the main attendant issues: Romania's longstanding antisemitic tradition, the existence and influence in Romania of the Iron Guard - the largest home-grown fascist movement outside of Germany - and the country's alliance with the Axis for most of World War II. In addition, many of these works addressed and sought to tackle directly the problems of denial, minimisation, or ignorance about the Holocaust in contemporary Romania.

In the decade that followed, scholars started posing new interpretative questions: In particular, they asked who was responsible for the violence? Who were the perpetrators? How antisemitic was Antonescu himself? In other words, where was power located? These questions were given very different answers: some historians, such as Jean Ancel, saw widespread popular antisemitism as key; others, such as Dennis Deletant, pointed to the leadership's aim for national renewal and sovereignty. Others, still, mixed a bit of the two: Vladimir Solonari, for example, emphasised the role of mid-level officials and showed how xenophobia and plans for national purification could lead to ethnic cleansing, while Armin Heinen demonstrated how an entire society could become mobilised for the sake of genocide. [3]

In a way, these constituted very different - some would say incompatible - explanations for the outbreak of genocidal violence in Romania. Yet perhaps, as Heinen has recently argued, no overall explanation can be offered for the variety of "forms of violence" in Romania and its administered territories at different times. [4] Indeed, the Holocaust in Romania was characterised by different phases, major variation between different regions, and the involvement of a diverse range of people in the violence. Conclusions reached thus depend on what timeframe, area or actors one is looking at, as well as the sources at hand. Moreover, short or long-term explanations are not enough: What is needed is a mixture of the two - a careful weighting of traditions and contemporary policies and aims - as well as broad, transnational contextualisation.

These conceptual debates are by no means unique to the case of Romania. Yet in view of its complexity, the Romanian case highlights these dilemmas in a particularly sharp manner. And as Heinen also argues, it is therefore all the more astonishing that this case is often left out of wider conceptualisations of the Holocaust. [5] Recent research on
the Holocaust in Romania has done a great deal to break down this complexity and highlight the wider relevance of this case to our understanding of the history of the Holocaust as a whole. The following review discusses six of these works in some detail. It asks what they add to our knowledge of the Holocaust in Romania in particular and our understanding of the Holocaust in general. It thereby focuses, as these studies do too, on three analytical categories and specific questions: Time or, more precisely, "When did genocidal violence begin?"; space, namely "Where did the violence happen?"; and actors, or, in other words, "How much agency did people have?". Any good study of the Holocaust in Romania engages, to a certain degree, with all three of these dimensions and questions and, indeed, the following studies do so too. However, the organisation of the reviewed works under these headings serves to underscore their main emphasis and, with this, their main contribution.

**Time: When did genocidal begin?**
The question of when the Holocaust began has been a key issue for historians of the Holocaust for several decades and remains contested to this day. [6] Its importance has to do with the fact that it involves defining what counts as genocide. Did it all begin with the Nuremberg Laws, the first mass shootings by Germans or the first deportations of Jews to Eastern Europe? Can any of this be equated with the "final solution"? How about 19th century antisemitism or other groups of victims such as the mentally ill? How far back should we go or widely should we look?

With regard to Romania, can a pogrom be regarded as genocide? Is it an isolated instance of genocidal violence or the onset of something bigger? Beyond this, how did violence in Romania relate to the wider geopolitical situation? Closely related to the issue of time or timing is the question whether the violence followed a plan "from above" or whether it arose "from below", in a more or less spontaneous fashion. Our understanding of the chronology, in other words, is key to establishing who was responsible.

Two recently published studies seek to clarify this issue and, in particular, answer the question "when did genocide begin?" for the case of Romania. The first is Jean Ancel's "Prelude to Mass Murder: The Pogrom in Iași, Romania, June 29, 1941 and Thereafter", published posthumously in English by Yad Vashem in 2013 [7]; the second, Henry Eaton's "The Origins and the Onset of Violence of the Romanian Holocaust", which appeared the same year.

Both these books deal with the violence directed against Jews that erupted in and around the Romanian town of Iași at the end of June 1941. The main episode of violence, the Iași Pogrom, which took place on 29th June, and its immediate aftermath, is quite well known. These events caused the death of around 14,000 people, around a third of the 45,000 strong Jewish community, in Romania's second largest city and a city widely considered at the time to be Romania's Jewish cultural centre. 5,000 people were shot or beaten to death on the main day of the pogrom and most of the others, packed onto cattle trains, died of suffocation over the following weeks as these were made to travel aimlessly around
Romania in stifling heat. Many of the victims were men but Jewish women and children were killed too. The events in Iași were reported on both as they happened and immediately after the war. Between 1945 and 1948, a war crimes trial was organised to prosecute the perpetrators. It is also one of the few events of the Holocaust in Romania, which was commemorated during the Cold War - if on a small scale and primarily among survivors. But this did not prevent this episode being distorted and minimised for decades in Romanian public life and, in general, poorly integrated into the wider history of the Holocaust. These two studies thus seek to compensate for this situation by setting the historical record straight and giving the violence that broke out in northern Romania in the summer of 1941, before the Germans' own largescale campaign of mass murder had even begun, in their view, the visibility it deserves.

The two works deal with many of the same circumstances and, as captured in their titles, they also make quite a similar claim, namely that what happened in and around Iași in June 1941 marked the beginning of the genocide of the Jews in Romania. However, these are two very different types of books and there are subtle differences in the argument too. Ancel's over 600-page account reconstructs chronologically and in painstaking detail the exact unfolding of the pogrom in Iași: the planning, the incitement to murder among non-Jews, the first killings, and the massacre of thousands of people in the courtyard of the police station (Chestura) and on the city's streets on 29th June; then, the packing of 7,000 men onto "death trains" and their tortuous journey, the crimes that followed, and the legacies of these events for the Jewish community of Iași and post-war Romanian society as a whole.

Ancel draws on a huge amount of sources: archival documents, trial materials, and oral history testimony. His description of the violence is as detailed as the documentary evidence available today permits. Different scenes are described in minute detail. This close reading and careful juxtaposition of the sources enables him to uncover the lies, falsifications, and forgeries surrounding these events, upheld by both those involved at the time and others since then. For Ancel, this was a veritable conspiracy (69). He therefore continuously compares and contrasts statements and versions of the same events in order to establish the truth. He disproves false claims such as the blaming the violence on the Germans or Legionary groups and takes the opportunity to name and shame those involved at different stages of the violence. This book thus functions like the fulfilment of a long awaited quest for justice or a delayed prosecution. The selection of copied and printed primary documents at the end of the book contributes to this purpose as well.

Amongst this minutiae, Ancel puts forward three main arguments: Firstly, that though the violence was made to look like the response to a Jewish provocation, it was in fact planned in detail, staged, and carefully stage-managed from the very top of the Romanian leadership. Secondly, Ancel examines and clarifies the role and involvement of different actors: the military, the police and secret police, the Germans (who were indeed present), and the local population. He looks at both groups' and
individuals' attitudes and room for manoeuvre. In particular, he emphasises that while the Germans participated, the Romanians instigated the events. Finally, Ancel repeatedly emphasises the continuity in personnel between the Iaşi Pogrom and later crimes committed by the Romanian armed forces in Bessarabia and Transnistria. This is key to his main argument about the Iaşi Pogrom being "the prelude to mass murder". For Ancel, the perpetrators learned in Iaşi that "Jewish lives had no value" and that their crimes would remain unpunished (64). In this sense, Iaşi gave them license to commit genocide. This is why Ancel also deals, in this book, with the subsequent, "ancillary pogroms" and, ultimately argues that "the Iaşi Pogrom was the subsidiary and not vice versa." (517-8)

Eaton tells this story in a very different way. To begin with, with just 150 pages and eleven short chapters, it is a much more concise account. Yet at the same time, Eaton embeds these events in a much longer-term framework. The whole first half of the book, five of the eleven chapters, deals with the background and context for the actual outbreak of genocidal violence - "the origins" announced in the title - reaching back to the 18th and 19th centuries. In other words, although Eaton characterises the pogroms of the summer of 1941 in Romania as modern "state-administered genocide" (6) or, as he repeats at the end, a "government-staged event" (153), he also emphasises the role of "age-old hatreds" (5). In fact, he explicitly links antisemitism to the birth of the Romanian nation. He points, in this connection, to the significance of Iaşi as a cultural and historical centre for Jews as well as for Romanian nationalists and anti-Semites, and argues that the two went hand in hand. With this, he suggests that the fact that the violence in 1941 broke out in this area of the country was no coincidence. He then describes the failed struggle of Jews for emancipation and acceptance as members of the Romanian nation and the range and incremental character of anti-Jewish policies in the interwar period. Ultimately, the escalation of antisemitism in Romania in the 1930s led to what others have called an "antisemitic consensus" [8], and Eaton stresses the helplessness of Jews in Romania in the face of this phenomenon. The second half of Eaton's book deals with the instances of violence that he views as the actual "onset of genocide". He starts with the mass killing at Stânca Rosnovanu in late June 1941, which coincided with Romania joining the war on the Soviet Union. Eaton stresses that this was "one of the first executions to include women and children" in World War II (78). He also emphasises that exactly the same method - the construction of a Jewish threat, the incitement to murder, the narrative of retribution, the blaming of the Germans, etc. - was used later in Iaşi. He then explores the circumstances of the Iaşi Pogrom itself in more detail and from the perspectives of "Perpetrators", "Victims" and "The German Connection". This part of the book largely echoes Ancel's main arguments and findings, if much more briefly sketched. Eaton too draws on a combination of archival sources, survivor testimony and court material and points out the mendacity of the perpetrators' post-war statements.
The value of Eaton's book lies not least in the fact that the thesis is so clearly stated and the text so concisely written. In his introduction, Eaton writes that the questions guiding his work were "why Romania set out to kill Jews in its territories" and "where, when and who was responsible" (1). His main answer, spelled out in the conclusion, reads: the Holocaust in Romania was the result of "a mixture of modern antisemitism and Christian myths" (150). Having joined the war against the Soviet Union, in north eastern Romania these conditions came together in a kind of perfect storm and this set genocide in motion. The question he really answers, therefore, is another, which he also formulates, namely "when did murder become state policy?" (7). In view of the existing literature, this is a legitimate and relevant question and his answer, "June 1941 in north eastern Romania" is convincingly documented. Yet, especially when read alongside Ancel's meticulous work, Eaton's main claim - that rampant antisemitism led to mass murder - may seem a little simplistic or even teleological. How can one differentiate between different actors implicated in the violence - their behaviours, their room for manoeuvre, and their motives? How does this violence relate to what came not just before, but afterwards too, let alone what happened elsewhere?

Indeed, on all of these counts, Ancel does a better job. However, Ancel's book is not an easy read. The amount of evidence laid out can be overwhelming for the reader and the occasional clumsiness of the English translation does not make it any easier. Moreover, most probably because this study was originally conceived of as Ancel explains in the preface, as a chapter in his The History of the Holocaust in Romania, rather than as a self-standing book, the author delves straight into the subject, without a preamble (22). As Leon Volovici explains in his foreword to this English translation, this study and its main claim regarding the Iaşi Pogrom constituting "the prelude to genocide" need to be read against the backdrop of Ancel's earlier work and deep knowledge of the subject (11). As the mention of the country's longstanding antisemitic tradition in the last couple of pages suggests, Ancel presupposes his readers' familiarity with the wider context. In the end, though the author convincingly shows that this was a timely and necessary book, it is quite likely only experts will have any interest in such a detailed and graphic depiction.

**Space: Where did the violence happen?**

Discussions on how to "map" the Holocaust have been running strong in recent years. [9] In general, there has been a tendency to reframe the map of the Holocaust eastwards, in accordance with the origins of the overwhelming number of the victims, and in order to uncover "unknown" or "forgotten", yet representative places with the help of microstudies. [10] Beyond this, scholars have been encouraged to question their own assumptions about space. Indeed, spaces are often our units of analysis and though we take them for granted, this largely determines our findings. The use of contemporary borders is often anachronistic. What does the Holocaust in "Romania", "Poland" or "Ukraine" actually mean? An increasing number of scholars have demonstrated the significance,
for explaining the dynamics of violence, of taking into account different features inscribed in space such as shifting political regimes, borders and loyalties. [ 11 ] We need to reflect on what it is that we are looking at: Is this a village or a town? What was the character of social relations before the war? Who ruled the area? Was a border present, absent or moving, and what effect did this have?

Romania, with the multiple changes to its territory during World War II, showcases these spatial problems acutely. It is not useful to think of the country as one national unit with regard to the Holocaust or the dynamics of genocidal violence during World War II. Though continuities and influences such as the link in personnel between the perpetrators of the Iaşi Pogrom and later violence identified by Ancel are important, there are limits as to how much an account of what happened in Iaşi, for example, a major town in the Old Kingdom, can help us understand what happened elsewhere, such as in small, multi-ethnic villages on Romania’s contested frontiers such as Bukovina, Bessarabia or militarily administered Transnistria.

Two recent studies place such spatial relationships and questions at the centre of their work. The first is Simon Geissbühler's "Blutiger Juli: Rumäniens Vernichtungskrieg und der vergessene Massenmord an den Juden 1941" [Bloody July: Romania's War of Extermination and the Forgotten Genocide of the Jews in 1941]. In this book, Geissbühler focuses on the outbreak of violence in the rural areas of Northern Bukovina and Northern Bessarabia in the weeks following the Iaşi Pogrom. The author’s justification for not focusing on Iaşi or other larger towns in the area such as Czernowitz (Cernăuți) is that antisemitic actions that took place there are by now well researched. In contrast, he writes about very small villages and towns, where Jews had lived for generations when the war broke out, but about which few people have ever written or heard. Lying today on the border between western Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova, they can be said to have fallen in the gap between different nation-centred Holocaust memory cultures. And yet they were also the sites, as Ancel and Eaton also argue, of the first phase of the Holocaust in Romania.

As Geissbühler explains, he is interested in the interplay of Romania's fascist, genocidal state policy, military actions, and the outbreak of violence among villagers. In effect, this book attempts an integrated and contextualised approach to some of the first and small yet repeated instances of genocidal violence in the country. The first three chapters set the scene: Geissbühler begins by giving an assessment of the state of research and mentions Romanian scholarship's "potential for development" (18). He then turns to the political situation in Romania in the interwar period and argues that the country was "a failed state", characterised by "eliminationist antisemitism" and of which "the main policy was ethnic cleansing" (44; 49; 52). With this, Geissbühler draws on concepts previously developed for and applied to the cases of Poland and Germany respectively. [ 12 ] Finally, he provides a chronological outline of the events of summer 1941 - "the forgotten genocide". Geissbühler points out that the partial character of the evidence prevents the writing
of an exhaustive list or account. But he insists in particular on the absence of German involvement and concludes that "there was no quantitative or qualitative difference between the Romanian and the German genocide of Jews." (60)

The following two chapters focus on "Perpetrators, Collaborators and those who knew [Mitwisser]" and "Victims" respectively. Geissbühler bemoans the lack of evidence concerning lower-level perpetrators, but stresses that this was a mixed group, including members of the army and ethnic Romanian and Ukrainian locals. He discusses different motives including greed, group pressure, and retaliation on Jews for territorial changes. But he also emphasises the sadism of the perpetrators and their use of brutal methods and rape (97; 98). His main points are that this was on a par with what the Germans did (92; 96) and that knowledge and approval of the events was widespread (104). While his chapter on victims draws on a few testimonies, most of it serves to clarify the number of people killed in the region in the summer of 1941 - according to his estimates, some 45,000. Finally, in the last and longest chapter, Geissbühler deals with issues of memory and denounces the "collective amnesia" up until the present (141).

Geissbühler's focus on the events of early summer 1941 in rural areas draws attention to the number and the spread of the outbreaks of genocidal violence, both within communities and across borders. It thereby usefully prompts us to think about spaces of violence on different scales and in different constellations. However, his study also contains the traces of his work as a diplomat: Some 25 pages of the 150-page book are dedicated to the politics of memory and his own experiences in the region. The title itself, with its use of the strong term "war of extermination" and emphasis on forgetting, reflects his political and educational agenda. At times, the narrative is characterised by a polemical or even downright castigating tone and, in general, this study would have benefited from a more critical approach to the secondary literature. [13] In the end, this may have helped qualify and consolidate the main claim and argument. Indeed, in view of the current state of knowledge on the region, the fact that the Holocaust in Romania (or in this case, in northern Bukovina and Bessarabia) was "as bad" as in other places is an important insight, but it stops short of helping us understand why this was.

This question, in turn, is precisely that which Diana Dumitru sets out to answer in her new book "The State, Antisemitism, and Collaboration in the Holocaust: The Borderlands of Romania and the Soviet Union". The starting point for her study was the attempt to explain why and in what way popular (namely civilian and Gentile) attitudes and behaviours towards Jews during the Holocaust differed in different territories. She therefore set up a comparative case study between the regions of Bessarabia (which corresponds, more or less, to the territory of the contemporary Republic of Moldova) and historical Transnistria, the area of south-western Ukraine administered by Romania during World War II. Up until 1918, both regions were under tsarist rule and during the Second World War, both areas were subject to similar policies too.
However, civilian participation in the Holocaust was notably more widespread in Bessarabia than in Transnistria and this book aims to explain this pattern. Dumitru postulates this had to do with long-term socio-cultural trends rather than the immediate historical circumstances. Indeed, although the author points out, that her interest lies in the reactions of civilians (not soldiers or the authorities), she also stresses that they acted under specific political conditions and in a context shaped by the state (5). Dumitru thus uses space not only as a source of empirical data, but also as an analytical framework, for the sake of a long-term comparison. Over half of the book is dedicated to the period before the Holocaust, from the mid-19 th century onwards. Dumitru thereby draws attention to the common starting point for both regions as part of the Russian Empire. However, she then outlines the very different policies and ensuing attitudes which developed when Bessarabia was part of Romania in the interwar period and Transnistria part of the newly founded Soviet Union after 1918. In the former region, the Romanian modernisation project spurred ethnic nationalism, antisemitism, and the treatment of the Jews as "second-class citizens" (57). In the latter, Sovietization entailed an aggressive integrationist policy towards Jews, the promotion of equality, and the official prohibition of antisemitism (99). Dumitru argues that the effects of these diverging policies were momentous, both in terms of how they affected the (Jewish) social structure and with regard to interethnic relations, especially the development of antisemitic stereotypes. The second half of the book explores what happened in these regions after Romania joined the war on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. Collating material from post-war trials and oral history interviews, the author reconstructs non-Jews' reactions to the killing and deportation of Jews by Romanian gendarmes throughout Bessarabia and Transnistria. In the former, she finds extensive evidence of civilians assisting in murder or even initiating massacres. Dumitru concludes that this "points toward a shared set of social attitudes and values that made the murder of Jews an acceptable behavior in Bessarabian communities." (153) In contrast, in Transnistria, not only was the population less well-disposed towards the Romanians, but also more reluctant to take part in mass violence against Jews. Here, she finds evidence of charity, empathy, kindness, and rescue efforts in both rural and urban areas and especially among youth. Dumitru's findings, including her insights on the region's Volksdeutsche having to be groomed for genocide, echo the results of recent research on the region and on other parts of the former Soviet Union (186-7). [ 14 ] Together, all of this evidence points in the direction of a longer term, socio-cultural explanation for participation in genocide or lack thereof. Methodologically, this is a remarkable study. Dumitru's familiarity with the material and depth of analysis are exceptional. She combines archival evidence with a wide array of oral history interviews - both existing ones and ones conducted for the purposes of the project. The interviews with non-Jewish local witnesses of the Holocaust in particular provide both concrete examples and real-life voices and open up new insights into motives and past social relationships. The summarising and
Dumitru's main message is that antisemitism is constructed and that in this respect, states are powerful actors. Neither is this a completely new idea, nor does she intend, as she herself points out, to offer "an ode to the Soviet system" (17). But this is nevertheless a finding with lasting relevance and by making this argument, Dumitru also takes position with respect to current scholarly debates on the Holocaust: she does not isolate, as many recent and impactful studies have done, the effects of policies of occupation and the wartime vortex of violence, but rather embeds them in long-term traditions and developments. This book thus forces us to think not only of the violence as situational, but also to take seriously the longer term social relationships and beliefs that inform people's actions. In other words, it forces us to think of spaces of violence as created in different timeframes and on different levels, by different actors.

**Actors: How much agency did people have?**

The question of responsibility remains the most contentious issue regarding the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe. The fact that the Germans relied on allies and local collaboration, and that this was essential to mass murder, is indubitable. But this nevertheless remains a controversial topic as recent debates in Poland have shown. [15]

Irrespective of contemporary memory politics, any serious and sensitive discussion of responsibility needs to account for the character of power relations at the time and the degree of agency of the actors on different levels. With regard to Romania, for example, a sovereign state, yet a German ally, the relationship to Germany and the extent of German influence on the Antonescu regime has long been a subject of debate. [16] To what extent did Nazi-allied states set their own aims and to what extent were they "working towards Nazi Germany"? Beyond this, as Dumitru's study has shown, it is useful to distinguish between different types of actors, such as the political leadership, soldiers and representatives of the state and civilians - those creating the context for murder, those carrying out murder and those using genocide for their own benefit or, as the case may be, hindering or resisting it. Only then is it possible to outline different types of behaviour, weigh up how much agency people had, and, ultimately, give responsibility more accurately. Here too, two recent studies on the case of Romania have made a major contribution to the literature. In her recent study "Deutschland und die Verfolgung der Juden im rumänischen Machtbereich" [Germany and the Persecution of the Jews under Romanian Rule] Hildrun Glass attempts to end the discussion concerning German or Romanian responsibility for the Holocaust in Romania once and for all. [17] Glass sets out to reconstruct the "decision-making processes" (Entscheidungsfindung) (203) at the very top that led to the murder of 300,000 to 400,000 Jews under Romanian rule, while allowing for the survival of some 300,000 others. For this, she draws on three main types of sources: German and
Romanian contemporary archival material and retrospective statements (mostly evidence collected in the context of post-war trials, but also post-war statements and memoirs). As she herself writes, this constitutes a triple angle analysis (10). Indeed, she examines closely the German-Romanian relationship as well as the German and Romanian leaders' own independent and respective intentions over the course of World War II. Glass makes the extent of German influence on policies towards the Jews clear from the outset. The first chapter dealing with the period 1937-1940 outlines the structures and character of German political interference in Romania (politically and economically) before the outbreak of the Second World War. This chapter thus also introduces the reader to many of the main actors of the study and their institutions: these include the German Embassy (Deutsche Gesandtschaft Bukarest (DGB)) and its ambassador Manfred Freiherr von Killinger, who had a direct line to both Ribbentrop and Hitler. To add to this, there was a range of economic and military offices including members of the NSDAP, SS, and RSHA, who were in frequent contact with the Romanian leadership and authorities.

The following chapter tackles the "congruence" of German and Romanian plans over the course of 1941. This section reads as the natural consolidation of the German-Romanian relationship previously described. However, the meaning of "congruence" comes into its own with Romania and Nazi Germany's joint attack on the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941. Romania was Germany's most important ally on the Eastern Front. For Romania, this was not only a chance to satisfy expansionist foreign policy aims in the East and "wage a great war against the Slavs" (113), but also an opportunity to "cleanse the terrain" (curățirea terenului) - namely to get rid of "foreign elements" and in particular "foreign" Jews. For Glass, the expression "cleanse the terrain" can be regarded as the equivalent of the German "resolution of the Jewish question" (Lösung der Judenfrage) (51).

Yet, in the space of a few months, Romania shifted its position from closest to reluctant ally with regard to Jewish persecution. The plans drawn up at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 had included the deportation of all Romanian Jews, over 300.000 people, to the Generalgouvernement. But this never happened. This is what Glass describes as the phase of "divergence". The evidence here is highly problematic, as the Romanian archives appear to have been purged: there is a nine-month gap in the material of the Romanian Foreign Office Archives, between January and September 1942. The only thing that can be established for certain is that Romania was hesitating and delaying handing over its Jews and this, Glass believes, even before the fateful military struggle over Stalingrad (177). By October 1942, Mihai Antonescu, Ion Antonescu's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, no longer believed in a German victory. This moment marked a radical change in Romania's policy towards the Jews and towards its German ally, which made its alliances conditional on agreement with the "final solution".
In the final chapter, Glass deals with the years 1943 and 1944 and describes the "change of heart" (Sinneswandel) of the Romanian government (233). Indeed, until the regime's collapse in August 1944, Romania continued moving away from Germany and closer to international partners and institutions such as the Red Cross. Glass's study draws attention to the importance of chronology - the changing attitude of the Romanian authorities towards the German leadership over time. This, in fact, gives the book its structure and constitutes one of its main arguments. As Glass argues, Romania put an end to its alliance with the National Socialists when the prospects for military victory faded. Yet this also means that the interruption of the policy of deportation and murder therefore needs to be seen as a consequence of the geopolitical situation rather than as an ideological U-turn.

She also emphasises the significance of space: She argues that Romanians appeared to have drawn a line between life and death along the border between the Old Kingdom and the new provinces (25). However, as she concludes, a complex territorial situation was made even more complicated by the war and this affected motives and choices. One is unavoidably led to speculate, as the author does too, as to whether a different outcome to the war would have meant a different outcome for Romanian Jews as well (269).

Ultimately, therefore, her main argument can be said to be about actors - Romanians in positions of authority and Germans posted in Romania - whose statements and actions she examines and crosschecks carefully. Indeed, this study provides insight into German and Romanian structures of power and communication, as well as the structural modes of persecution and exploitation of Romanian Jews, but it especially highlights the significance of certain individuals, their personal interests and political manoeuvring, for what eventually happened.

If the study does not so much offer a new or conclusive main claim, this was also not necessarily its primary objective. Indeed, it can be read as a critical commentary on the evidence and a reflection on the possibility of reconstructing the decision-making processes during the Holocaust at all. At times, the reader may be slightly overwhelmed by the listing of contradictory claims side by side and the level of detail. But Glass's careful and systematic confrontation of German and Romanian material unquestionably goes far beyond anything other historians have done until now and so does her deconstruction of the complex relationship between Romania and the "Third Reich".

Although there is some thematic overlap with Glass's work, Ştefan Cristian Ionescu's "Jewish Resistance to 'Romanianization', 1940-1944" considers the question of Romanian responsibility or participation in the Holocaust from a somewhat different angle - from below rather than from above and with a narrower focus on one mode of Jewish persecution, namely economic exploitation and theft. Indeed, Ionescu focuses on the implementation and impact of Antonescu Regime's domestic policies of "Romanianization". Simply put, "Romanianization" was Romania's version of aryanisation. However, this was no mere copy of the German model. It
involved policies of discrimination, extortion, expropriation, and exploitation implemented in the name of an exclusively defined national community. In effect, it was those defined as Jews who were affected most and on the largest scale. However, in theory, these policies were directed against all those designated as foreigners (e.g. non ethnic Romanians), including those who were counted as Germans, Hungarians and Roma. As Ionescu shows, this massive transfer of wealth was a distinctly Romanian national project. In fact, he calls it "[the Antonescu regime's] major domestic project." (38)

Romanianization was implemented with varying severity in different regions of the country - not least because it depended on whether Jews were deported or not. Ionescu's study thus focuses on the case of Bucharest, from which very few Jews were deported and where Jewish assimilation was advanced and widespread. He thereby aims to show, as others have for other regions, how the robbing of the Jews could become a key factor in social relations. He identifies and differentiates between different types of actors, both among those characterised as victims and those described as perpetrators and variable, even ambivalent and changing behaviours both across space and time. With this, he thematises not only the top-down character of persecution, but also the participation in genocide across groups and classes. This study thus deals with a different form of violence to the studies reviewed above. But as Ionescu argues, Romanianization was an integral part of the country's wider "genocidal project" (31).

Ionescu begins by explaining what the most important decrees pertaining to Romanianization were, how the institutional structure to support them worked, and who the individuals mobilised to implement the laws and its beneficiaries were. He thereby highlights the importance of the "appearance of legality" (41) for the Antonescu regime as well as the shortcomings of the laws: problems of definition ("Jew", "ethnic Romanian", etc.), incoherence and contradictions, and associated loopholes. He also examines the "Romanianization bureaucracy" and their motives and draws attention to the number of actual "Romanizers" and "would-be profiteers". This indicates both the scale of the enterprise and its infrastructure and the scale of involvement in this practice, and therefore also the fact that Romanianization as a policy was largely perceived as a legitimate transfer of ethnic minorities' wealth to ethnic Romanians.

The next two chapters, on the situation of the Germans and the case of Roma respectively, help draw out the specificity of the Jewish case more sharply by providing a possibility for comparison. Ionescu explains that contrary to what one may think, the Romanian-(ethnic) German relationship was fraught, even hostile, both at the top and among the wider population (121; 123). He also shows that outrage over the deportation of the Roma appears to have been greater than over that of the Jews. This suggests that despite allegations of insalubrity and criminality, Roma, in contrast to Jews, were still viewed as part of the community (143).
Ionescu then turns to forms of resistance to Romanianization announced in his title. He stresses the brave and continuous legal efforts of Jews in Romania to counter the discrimination they faced, especially by means of petitions. He then provides a more general assessment of the limits of the policies of exploitation and theft due not only to the victims' resistance, but also to the shortcomings of their design and their widespread manipulation by the wider population. This was known as "sabotage" or "camouflage" and involved practices such as dissimulating Jewish employees by for example changing names on paper or renting back expropriated apartments to their former Jewish owners.

As Ionescu concludes, in practice, Romanianization was an "ambivalent policy" (183). Yet his findings are nevertheless bleak: whether people breached Romanianization in order to help, profit, or thieve is hard to determine. The only thing which is unquestionably clear is the huge scale of involvement of the Romanian Gentile population in robbing their neighbours and their strong sense of entitlement in the process. The fact that Romanianization, as Ionescu argues, ultimately failed was due not to moral outrage, but to the circumstances of the war, the collapsing economy, and its structural flaws.

This book draws attention to a fundamental aspect of Jewish persecution in Romania and does a great job at convincing the reader of its importance. In fact, when reading Ionescu's work, it seems somewhat astonishing that the topic has not been dealt with before. [18] It thereby points to the notable lack of social historical studies of the Holocaust in Romania in general and raises a number of further questions: what were the continuities of these Romanianization policies looking both forwards and backwards or the relationship between Bucharest - the centre - and the periphery? How much knowledge did people in the capital have about what was happening in the East or on the front during World War II? How indoctrinated were Romanians? Indeed, here, we are given an indication of the way in which human emotions of "greed, opportunism, friendship and resilience" (ix) related to, undermined or aligned with, "the ethnocentric antisemitic worldview of Antonescu's officials" (187) and the deployment of genocidal policies for the sake of state-building (189). However, this deserves further, sustained exploration for different groups and areas. By not only offering some well-founded insights regarding the agency of different social actors during the Holocaust, but also prompting new questions, this book has the potential of changing the narrative on the Holocaust in Romania and it is therefore a very valuable addition to the literature.

Conclusion

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, research on the Holocaust in Romania was focused on conducting what in German is so appropriately called Grundlagenforschung (research on the basics) of who did what when how, comparing the applicability of "functionalist" versus "intentionalist" explanations for the Romanian case, and combatting denial, minimalisation and relativisation. Now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, this research field is gaining nuance, depth, and its own distinctive character. The studies reviewed here are a
clear testimony to this fact: They are innovative, well researched and methodologically clever; they have benefited from the variety of approaches and insights developed for other chapters of the Holocaust, all while establishing Romania as a case with its own specificities and differences. With this, we are left to hope it will facilitate a better integration of the Romanian case into wider accounts of the Holocaust for the sake of comparison and further differentiation of what we mean by "the Holocaust".

As I have tried to show here, these studies contribute to our understanding of the Holocaust in three different ways in particular. Firstly, they emphasise that the Holocaust was a process and that none of the settings of genocidal violence were static environments. In the case of Romania, for example, joining the attack on the Soviet Union and the conjuncture of the war in general, had a huge influence on policies and the fate of the Jews under Romanian rule. Secondly, these studies add to our understanding of the Holocaust as a multi-sited event, with many things happening simultaneously and connected in ways that are not always obvious. With this in mind, it is then possible to identify connections, see the links between locations, and try and explain differences as well. Finally, the studies encourage us to rethink the categories of "perpetrator", "victim" and other assigned roles such as "bystander", "rescuer" or "profiteer". It is clear that real-life situations are often much too murky for these reified categories, human behaviour too fluid, changing, and unpredictable and that looking at the period of the war is not enough to establish patterns of behaviours. This raises a range of new questions but on this basis, new researchers on the Holocaust in Romania are better equipped than ever to answer them and challenge how we think of the chronology, geography and sociology of the Holocaust.

Notes:
[ 2 ] For the source collections, see many books published by Editura Hasefer, the publishing house of the Romanian Jewish communities. For the overviews, see Radu Ioanid: The Holocaust in Romania. The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies Under the Antonescu Regime, 1940-1944, Chicago 2000; Mariana Hausleitner / Brigitte Mihok / Juliane Wetzel (Hgg.): Rumänien und der Holocaust. Zu den Massenverbrechen in Transnistrien 1941-1944, Berlin 2001; Randolph Braham (ed.): The destruction of Romanian and Ukrainian Jews during the Antonescu era, New York 1997. See also a range of publications by Jean Ancel, including, for example, Antonescu and the Jews, Jerusalem 1993. For a discussion of the issues dealt with in this literature, see Irina Livezeanu: The Romanian Holocaust: Family Quarrels, East European Politics and Societies vol. 16, no 3 (2003), 934-947. The Final Report dating from


[11] The role of the layered experiences of violence was most famously shown in Snyder: Bloodlands.


[13] This concerns the revival of the contested notions of state failure and "eliminationist antisemitism" in particular, but also the vast amount of literature quoted throughout.


[16] This question was more or less instrumentalised by both sides. See e.g. Andreas Hillgruber: Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu. Die deutsch-rumänischen Beziehungen 1938-1944, Wiesbaden 1954.


[18] The exception is Jean Ancel's The Economic Destruction of Romanian Jewry, Jerusalem 2007. However, this book has a much wider scope (the whole of Romania) and more of a survey character.