

**Reconstructing the History of Bessarabia Under the Tsarist Rule.  
Notes on the Margins of a Recent Book  
(Abstract)**

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The author discusses a recent monograph dedicated to the history of Bessarabia written by two historians Andrei Cusco and Victor Taki (with participation of Oleg Grom). The book has been published in Moscow, in a prestigious series of monographs “The margins of Russian Empire”, edited by the well-known historian Alexey Miller, professor at the Central European University in Budapest and European University in Sankt Petersburg. The authors declare their commitment to the current historiography called “New Imperial History” grouped around “Ab Imperio” journal (Kazan). This school emphasis on rediscovering the complexity of relations between central and local communities in the modern empires. The monograph covers the case of Bessarabia in the Russian Empire (1812-1917). The authors discuss a variety of issues and they are not rigidly fixed on “traditional” research fields such as political history, social, economic etc., embarking rather on an interdisciplinary approach at the crossroads of history, anthropology, ethnography, linguistics, geography, semiotics and so on. Thus, the book discuss the “invention” of Bessarabia as a separate entity in the symbolic geography of the Russian Empire, as it lacked distinct characteristics before the annexation in 1812. The authors discusses how Bessarabia was integrated in the political space of Russian Empire, originally the province being classified as one of the “Western margins” of Empire, but during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the perception was changed and Bessarabia became an “inner region”. In another chapter, the authors discuss how the social tissue of Bessarabia evolved, by resizing different social classes. The book also covers the issue of the developments of administrative practices during the Tsarist Empire, and how they (inter)changed due to political circumstances. A special chapter is focusing on the “Kishinev pogrom”, which is analyzed by the authors as a tragic result of the lack of synchronization policies between Center and Periphery and the complicated issue of the “rituals” of the Empire and Nation in the context of Bessarabia at the beginning of Twentieth century.