

TRANSCENDING BORDERS

DISSOLVING NATIONALIST IDEAS BY TRACING MINORITIES

Our starting point into researching the Balkans was a period where nationalist ideas were on the rise and smaller nation-states taking shape. These nationalist ideas often came from a common language, culture or religion, which led to us questioning what truly defines us as humans - commons that transcend national borders.

We identified a multitude of minorities in the region we studied. Each of these minorities was assigned a color that represents a blend of their national colours.

For each minority, we deepened our research on mythology, folklore, language, alphabet and architecture and space, food and religion. All this information; these traces were recorded in written form on our map. Through telling the stories as text in a specific area, we used the local legend, religion or myths of the group to connect them to topography. The text itself by its story, color and shape becomes a manifested trace of humans populating this areas.

The collected minorities showed an intriguing picture of diversity in the Balkans which could not be constrained by national borders. We decided to use our 15 different groups of minorities and their subgroups

to dissolve the underlying borders. By grouping the stories to the aforementioned 7 research topics, we separated our hatches onto 7 layers of transparent sheets. It thus reflects a universal theme. The layering of these would then result in our main argument:

As traces and the humans they reflect begin to appear in the topography, the national borders dissolve.

Our research began with the forming of nationalist ideas, borders being drawn and redrawn and how this was especially shaped by common language. With our work we want to prove that common myths and told histories are instead traces of humans transcending borders. Through a greek church at the Danube, Tatar communities in Dobruja or German exclaves in Wallachia we show that borders are abstract constructs.

South Eastern Europe with its turbulent history, reshaped borders, giant empires but most importantly vastly different cultural groups is the perfect space to commit to this research **and to find a new way to define topographies - by humans and their stories instead of national borders.**



1. Excerpt for the collective map disrupting the Iron Curtain

- Gagauz
- Hungarians
- Rromas
- Bulgarians
- Tatars
- Greeks
- Jews
- Aromanians
- Serbs
- Turks
- Romanians
- Armenians
- Germans
- Ukrainians

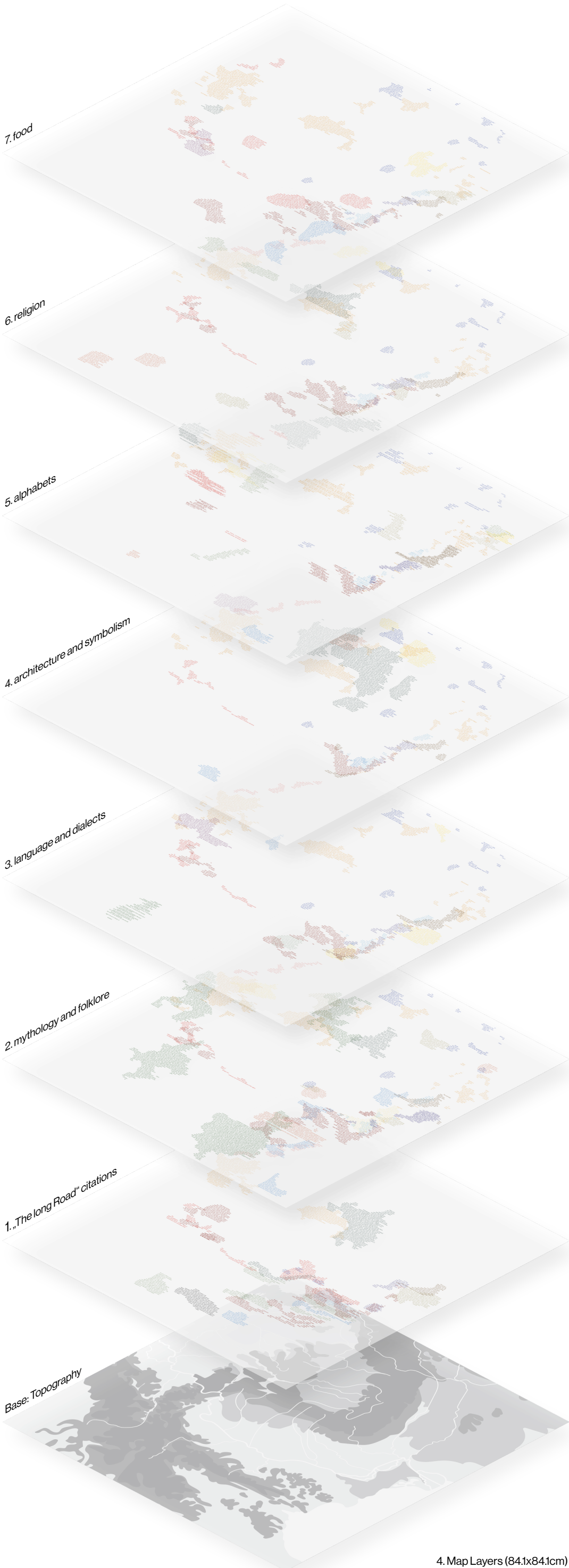
2. Legend for Maps and Booklets



3. Booklets giving context and expanded information to the texts shown on the map

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4. Map Layers (84.1x84.1cm)