



Introduction

The inaugural issue of the annual publication “Colloquia Humanistica” launched at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences views the humanities from an interdisciplinary perspective, as intended by the members of the editorial Committee and by the Editor-in-Chief.

This first installment defining the future profile of the annual publication as a whole focuses on the theme of *continuity and discontinuity* as a specific norm in culture, language, literature, and finally, history; because the importance of the theme reaches beyond the area of Polish culture, it was designed as a distinct volume, presented in English. The choice of Macedonia and the Balkans as an exemplification of the theme of *continuity and discontinuity*, as well as the European context signaled in the title, are not coincidences. Macedonia, representing a relatively young identity, is shown from a double perspective, as an integral part of the Balkan cultural spectrum and as part of Europe. Thus, the Macedonian distinctiveness allows a reflection of a more profound nature, a consideration of the viability of the European model of cultural continuity.

Both concepts, that of the Balkans and that of Europe, date from the same time; the divide drawn by the Ottoman conquest defined for centuries two distinct developmental paths, on one hand, the Balkan-Oriental, tangled with the Greek-Byzantine and the Slavia Byzantina, shaped as a common cultural time-space, and on the other, the European, becoming more remote.

Changes expected already since the end of the 18th century, crystallized by the national states flourishing in the Balkans during the entire 19th century, contributed to the introduction of a specific model of the itinerary of their own history, according to which the resulting “Balkanity” was sidelined into a local issue, and Europe was cast in the role of a cultural model that should be attained.

The new “European” scenario required corrections to the local history or an admission to a “lack” identified with the sense of cultural inferiority, with living on the periphery clearly called the Balkans, seen not as a value in itself but as a periphery of Europe. The awareness of inferiority, or possibly of

being at an earlier stage of civilizational development, was so pronounced among the Ottoman, Greek and Slavonic elites that in periodicals published as late as mid 19th c., the preferred term was “Turkish Europe,” rather than the Balkans; the latter carried an unequivocally negative connotation.¹

Papers in the thematic section – *The Continuity and Discontinuity as a Research Problem in the Macedonian, Balkan and European Cultural Context* discuss all aspects I mentioned above.

Vitomir Mitevski, in his study *The Influence of Ancient Greek Culture on Macedonian Literature of the 19th Century*, focuses on the analysis of the works of Jordan Hadži Konstantinov-Džinot and Grigor Prličev. Both writers represent the 19th c. Macedonia; fascinated by ancient Greek culture, they are inspired to use the Modern Greek, the language functioning in parallel in several national discourses;² in fact, they belong to the wider Balkan space and provide additional value to the background of the ancient culture significant not only for them but also for Europe.

Jolanta Sujecka in her article *The Continuity and Discontinuity. The Question of Territorialism and Double Identity from the Perspective of 20th Century Macedonia*, presents the vision of continuity and of the lack of continuity from the perspective of Krste Misirkov, a representative of the Macedonian Diaspora in Sofia, and earlier, in Russia. For Misirkov, a primary identification rested on a regional Macedonian awareness completed by a wider identity, sometimes transformed into an ideal “Macedonia – the Switzerland of the Balkans” with its language “ido,” common to all Macedonians, i.e. citizens of the projected multinational, multiethnic, and multi-confessional state.

Maciej Falski tackles the title theme of *continuity and change* from the perspective of the urban space of two capital cities, Paris and Skopje. The choice of cities from different historical backgrounds facilitates the analysis of consecutive stages of the development of the continuous historical vision within the urban space – within the historical narrative saturated with symbolical meaning. The urban space of the capital constitutes the birthplace of the national image desirable from the perspective of the represented group. Skopje, an urban centre of changeable rank and belonging to different state entities, experienced public investments without planning especially evident

¹ The term “Turkish Europe” was used in the mid 19th c. among others, by a representative of Bulgarian elites, a Greek citizen Georgi Sawa Rakowski, in the “Дунавски лебед” (1860-61, the “Danube Swan”), a periodical published in Belgrade in three languages, Slavonic (Bulgarian and a language based on Macedonian dialects from the vicinity of Struga), Greek and French.

² Jordan Hadži Konstantinov-Džinot belongs to both, Bulgarian and Macedonian literatures. On the other hand, Grigor Prličev is present in Bulgarian and Macedonian educational discourse and also in the Greek 19th c. discourse, as well as in the contemporary Greek cyberspace.

after the 1963 earthquake responsible for the destruction of 90% of the urban fabric. And yet, decisions taken then confirm a conscious inclusion of the Ottoman space into Skopje's own history.

Piotr Majewski, on the other hand, in a paper entitled *Nationalism, Cyberspace and Convergence Culture*, analyzes Greco-Macedonian online discourse through the symbolic image of national communities perceived as unchangeable, or as a "natural" generational chain whose "logical" outcome is the state of awareness rooted in the remote past, in a manner provoking no auto-reflection that would question the proposed thesis of continuity of history.

Marjan Markovik⁷ focuses his attention on the issue of continuation of Balkan features at the level of the language, both within the Macedonian dialects and in the literary (standard) language. His thoroughly documented study, *Macedonian Language from the Perspective of its Balkan Environment (Language Tendencies)*, clearly situates the Macedonian language within the Balkan context, a fascinating exercise in view of the fact that languages of Balkan linguistic league undoubtedly reveal tendencies present in European languages, especially in comparison with the traditional grammatical and phonetic structure of the Slavonic languages.

Irena Sawicka treats the theme of continuity and the lack of continuity in her paper entitled *Continuity or Discontinuity – the Case of Macedonian Phonetics*, providing an analysis of the Macedonian phonetics within the context of the Balkan phonetics, not as belonging to the Slavonic linguistic family. Sawicka demonstrates how diverse phonetic phenomena originating in a variety of languages mingle together into one common feature. It is especially noticeable in the territory of Aegean Macedonia where certain Slavonic phonetic phenomena are motivated by systemic facts simultaneously originating from the Greek and the Albanian linguistic context. Consequently, the singularity of the Macedonian language is a result of the Balkan environment on one hand, and on the other, of the multi-ethnicity more pronounced there than anywhere else in the Balkans, especially in the territory of the Aegean Macedonia.

Victor Friedman, in his article entitled *The Balkan Sprachbund in the Republic of Macedonia Today: "Eurology" as Discontinuity and Dialectology as Continuity*, uses examples of contemporary languages, Macedonian, Albanian, Romanian and Romaic in its urban variation to prove that the processes that in the past created the Balkan linguistic league, are still functioning on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and also in the other Balkan states. While the other Balkan countries are multilingual on the dialectal level which is characteristic for the league, in Macedonia the same phenomenon exists still in the urban time-space. The idea of

the creation of a European linguistic league with a focal point in today's European Union and in the Balkans as its periphery, is the result of the current policy but has no relation to the linguistic-historical phenomenon, such as the Balkan linguistic league. At the same time, the fact that Friedman situates the present tendencies in the contemporary Macedonian language within the processes common to the whole Balkan linguistic league, does not negate the European linguistic context but demonstrates the parallel processes occurring in Europe and in the Balkans.

Robert Sucharski (*A Few Observations on the Distinctive Features of the Greek Culture*) analyzes linguistic and cultural meanings of the lexeme βάρβαρος 'a barbarian/barbarian,' initially devoid of negative connotations, and demonstrates how its semantics widened with the propagation of the ancient Hellenic culture among the peoples conquered, i.e. admitted to the civilized world; at the same time, implicitly highlighting the core values of the contemporary Greece. The modern Europe, with its identity deeply rooted in the ideals of the ancient Greek culture, becomes, in Greek modern reasoning, a natural niche for the need for continuation of the post-Ottoman Greece.

Follows Przemysław Kordos (*Patrick Leigh Fermor's 'Hellen-Romaic Dilemma'*) who tackles the theme of continuity treating the example of dichotomy between *Hellen* and *Romios*, as a binary functional opposition for the description of the contemporary Greek identity. Kordos uses material provided in a monograph by a British writer and traveler, Patrick Leigh Fermor and reveals the deliberate Greek choice of the European cultural context apparent in the symbolic image of the westernized *Hellen* and in the negation of the Byzantine and Balkan tradition in their own culture, represented by the ironic figure of *Romios*.

In Nikolay Aretov's paper, *Enlightened Travelers and Their Mental Maps*, closing the thematic bloc, the Bulgarian scholar does not directly treat the issue of continuity and its lack, focusing on a certain cultural prejudice present in the European perception of the Balkans. While analyzing a negative image of Bulgaria as part of Balkans in the statements and behaviour of a 19th c. Czech intellectual Konstantin Jireček who represents a cultural periphery in relation to Europe and the West, Aretov demonstrates the power of the European cultural model to which there was no alternative in the discussed period.

The papers presented in the thematic bloc treating the issues of continuity and discontinuity do not provide a definitive analysis of the subject but only prepare ground for further discussion. While these papers reflect a homogeneity which is not exclusively thematic, they follow two visibly different paths of reasoning, related to the fields of expertise of the

individual scholars. We are faced on one hand, with materials presented by Balkan linguists, on the other, with conceptualizations produced by other humanists, literary historians, classicists, anthropologists, sociologists and cultural historians.

The linguistic material brings a credible confirmation of the hypothesis that the historical and cultural processes in the Balkans were parallel to those in Europe. Anthropological, historical and literary material reveals that the Balkans and Europe cannot be treated as equivalent and yet, it reaffirms the fact of historical and cultural distinctiveness of both entities taking shape at the same time but at a distance.

Linguistic processes, as it seems, remain to a much greater degree independent from ideological interference of various national purists, not like historical material influenced by various pressures, including ideological. The linguistic Balkans and their development are subject to processes beyond our influence: this is why the discussion about *continuity and discontinuity* must be built on scientifically established facts.

Balkan political evolution brought the Ottoman Empire to a collapse and resulted in a gradual withdrawal of Turkey from South-Eastern Europe; during the entire 19th c., when the new national states were emerging, they caused an ideological break of continuity and the rearranging of their own history without the Balkans but through individual aspirations to become European. These tendencies were more or less justified but they never provided arguments that would support the belief in a full cultural parallelism; at most, they opened the way to “noble” falsifications committed within particular national traditions. For that reason, papers produced by anthropologists, literary historians, cultural historians and sociologists reveal a lack of parallel processes in comparison with Europe and highlight the distinctiveness of the Macedonian, and by the same token, Balkan course of development.

It appears then that as Balkanists we owe more to linguistics than to the other humanities, because it were the linguists who made us aware of the fact that in their mentality, the Balkans are not another Europe, a “Turkish Europe,” but a sovereign region, a borderland in the sense of a structural, coherent entity, not a periphery.

Finally, we should ask the question whether arranging one’s own history or literature to make it appear more European can be explained by any reason other than political expediency. The answer, it seems, is no. This is concordant with linguistic, ethnographic and historical facts confirming a distinctiveness that an expert can occasionally recognize as parallel to European processes but at other times, it may appear an exotic cultural code requiring specialized research tools.

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The second part of this inaugural issue of the yearly journal “Colloquia Humanistica,” entitled *Articles*, contains two studies by the late Professor Ryszard Handke; in these, the author discusses Stanisław Lem’s science-fiction works.

A separate, large section called *Materials*, brings the first Polish translation of the poem *Armatol* by Grigorios Stawridis (Prličev), an until now unpublished archival historical document, *The Borders of Macedonia*, which is in fact a debate recorded in Ladino by Rafael Kamhi, between G’orče Petrov, one of the leaders of Macedonian autonomist movement of the revolutionary organisation (IMRO-VMRO) and Teodor Hercel, and finally, an article by Dmitri Filosofov, *Great People and Us* (from the cycle *Sunday Discussions*).

The section containing materials is included in the volume for a reason: it completes and documents the thematic bloc devoted to *continuity and discontinuity*. The figure of Grigorios Stawridis, known in the Macedonian discourse as Grigor Prličev (Прличев), and in the Bulgarian as Grigor Pырliczew (Пърличев), is one of the topics of Vitomir Mitevski’s paper, at the same time, the Ohrid poet and his biography constitutes one of the more intriguing exemplifications of both, the Balkan cultural background and the history of ideological manipulations his work and his life suffered from different national discourses as they were being interpreted to support various hypotheses regarding territorial continuity or literary history.

The biography of Rafael Kamhi suffered a similar fate; linked to Macedonian revolutionary organization, a champion of the struggle for autonomy of the Turkish Macedonia in 1903, a figure with a momentous identity, impossible to attribute to a specific ideology and because of that claimed by various national discourses.

The first Polish translation of Prličev’s poem from Modern Greek, as well as the Polish translation from Ladino of the debate on Macedonian borders, not only fill the gaps in our knowledge of the complex Balkan history but also provide arguments needed to construct an accurate image of the region, without erasing the local history and without national correctives.

The figure of Dmitri Filosofov and the forgotten article, with the added bibliography of his studies devoted to Poland, constitute a fascinating contribution to our understanding of this original personality of a Russian who lived in Poland and wrote extensively about that country. Additionally, his unpublished article undoubtedly breaks the negative stereotypes concerning Russians, well established in Poland, and also presents a slightly different Russian image, from the perspective of Piłsudski who is the subject of the essay.

By the same token, the entire section containing materials serves the theme of *continuity and discontinuity* as it fills the gaps in our memory.

And finally, the last section entitled *Discussions. Presentations. Book Reviews* describes the annual publication of a cycle of studies of the Central European Commission founded by Henryk Batowski in 1991 as part of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU); the cycle is being issued in installments (*Zeszyty*) since 1993. In this section we present a profile of a contemporary Macedonian poet and writer, Bogomil G'uzel; a review of the study on Macedonia entitled: *National Identity or Multiethnic Society* completes the section.

The section *Materials*, along with the next one called *Discussions. Presentations. Book Reviews* are not designed as permanent elements of the periodical, even though we would like to maintain their *continuity*, obviously depending on the number of items worth presenting, among them documents, as well as their monographic or synthetic conceptualizations.

The yearly volume creates a space for discussion and exchange of achievements between humanists in Poland but also in foreign centers; it has the potential of becoming a showcase of Polish humanities and a prestigious title: this is why the opening issue is being presented now in English.

The following volumes, also scheduled to be issued in English, will provide a forum for discussion focusing on the status of the so-called minor cultures. This concept opens an area of research into cultures which evolved in regions perceived as belonging to a "lesser Europe," cultures fascinating to scholars, such as for instance the culture of Sephardic Jews in the territory of the Balkans. The present issue offers an until now unpublished Ladino source translated into Polish, a text of enormous significance for further research in the South-Eastern European region; it is our intention to continue presenting new and unpublished texts in the following volumes of the periodical.

We expect that the "Colloquia Humanistica," this new annual publication being now offered to the readers, be a periodical of high scholarly standards but at the same time of a lively nature, not in the sense of swift reactions to passing sensations but as offering timely support to the idea of scholarly exchange, i.e., debate, argument, creative discussion and not partisan interpretations from the point of view of specific ideologies. In other words, a *Colloquium*.

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