

Magdalena REKŚĆ

University of Łódź

mreksc@o2.pl

THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL MYTHS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLES OVER THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

ABSTRACT The Republic of Macedonia, especially at the turn of the the 20th century, is an excellent example of the ethnic manipulation phenomena which can be understood as a tendentious attempt of proving that a given area is inhabited by a large number of people belonging to a certain ethnic group or nationality in order to justify one's territorial demands. A number of such attempts was conducted in many different ways over the years. Nevertheless, the main idea of this work is to look for arguments found in history or rather to look on the tendentiously rewritten history, to be precise, which was supposed to suit current political programmes. Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians but also, in a lesser extent, Romanians, Turks, Albanians and Montenegrins tried to prove their rights to the Macedonian lands by propagating, among other things, national and political myths. Sometimes, the search for justification of the territorial demands in the freely interpreted history could be described as a grotesque process. People were willing to accept such implausible stories as a truth, because a myth is not something to discuss but rather something to believe in. One has to remember that in that time history was treated freely, as a set of stories that could be freely modified in accordance with actual needs. The scientific value and the act of reaching towards the truth was considerably less important than a skilful shaping of a given story. The intellectuals of Romanticism emphasised that history has a certain mission to fulfil, that is has to guard the national interest.

Key-words: Macedonia, myth, historical policy, Balkans

The Republic of Macedonia, especially at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century is an excellent example of the ethnic manipulation phenomena which can be understood as a tendentious attempt of proving that a given area is inhabited by a large number of people belonging to a certain ethnic group or nationality in order to justify one's territorial demands.¹ A number of such attempts was conducted in many different ways over the years. Nevertheless, the main idea of this work is to look for arguments found in history or rather to look on the tendentiously rewritten history, to be precise, which was supposed to suit current political programmes. The political and cultural elite treated history as a plastic material that could be manipulated with ease. Edward Hallett Carr noticed that writings are taken as sacred but their interpretation is free.² This was supposed to suggest that exactly the same events can be interpreted in a number of different ways. It is trivial to say that history is written from today's perspective, that today's reality is responsible for imposing the way we look at the past. What is more, it very often happens that specific thesis which later historians try to prove at all costs are defined in advance by the ruling elite. Józef Chałasiński called those historians the "priests of patriotism"³, as in their work they were serving the national idea which determined their scientific overview.

Unfortunately, the limits set on this work's length force the author to make a quite shortened reflection, but without a doubt a large number of the topics appearing in this work should be further elaborated on.

The Republic of Macedonia, in comparison to other areas of South-Eastern Europe, was a part of the Ottoman Empire for a relatively long time – that is until the time of the Balkan Wars when the Ottoman Empire was falling into the state of decline the reaching of which seemed to be only a matter of time. Therefore, it is not surprising that in these times when the state's power was indicated by its territorial potential the neighbouring states wanted to move their borderlines at the expense of the Macedonian lands at all costs. These kinds of ideas were characteristic for almost the entire Eastern Europe.⁴ Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians but also, to a lesser extent, Romanians, Turks, Albanians and Montenegrins tried to prove their rights to the Macedonian lands in a variety of ways: by building schools, sending their own teachers, forging the censuses results or simply by choosing specific historical events and depicting them in such a way that they would validate the ambition of expansion.

While discussing the rivalry over the domination over the Macedonians' consciousness one cannot omit the fact that the Macedonian land was a multi-ethnic territory inhabited by various ethnic groups of the South-Eastern Europe, the consequence of which is for example the introduction of the term "Macedonia," which stands for vari-

¹ G. Dejzings, *Religija i identitet na Kosovu*, Beograd 2005, pp. 42-46 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 150).

² H. Carr, *What is History? The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge, January-March 1961*, New York 1967, p. 7.

³ J. Chałasiński, *Kultura i naród. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 1968, p. 73.

⁴ T. Judt, *Wielkie złudzenie? Esej o Europie*, trans. by A. Jankowski, Poznań 2012, p. 67.

ous mixed salads, to the French and later on to the European cuisine terminology.⁵ As M. Dymarski notices, the situation got more complicated due to the events from the period of 1877-1878 when the refugees from Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina were settled in Macedonia. "The new Macedonian settlers could not put up with the poverty into which they were pushed by the Turkish government. Embittered, they demanded houses and land for themselves. The indigenous Macedonians were forced to work on behalf of the new settlers which soon lead to the outbreak of a revolt. The omnipresent penury combined with hunger pushed the Muslim and the Christian population to acts of robbery."⁶ Thus, it is not surprising that in the West, Macedonia was regarded as a land of "terror, fire and sword".⁷

In such conditions the ardent champions of the national cause had to act using the stick and carrot approach towards the local population. As B. Jezernik writes: "teachers competed against each other in encouraging parents to make children attend to their educational institutions to such a degree that the parents could not only have their children educated and dressed free of charge but they could also make profit out of it since they were paid for sending their offspring to schools. Sometimes the national leaders resorted to killing the representatives of the rural authorities and forcing the village inhabitants to declare Greek or Serbian nationality."⁸ Furthermore, Serbs and Greeks, as well as Bulgarians, sparing no funds, raced in opening new schools. For them, such actions seemed necessary. This is well reflected in the reasoning of Stefan Stambolow, a politician of that time called the Bulgarian Bismarck: "the only way to win the entire Macedonia is its gradual Bulgarisation in the time when it is still under the Ottoman rule."⁹ Ironically, Stambolow was assassinated by Macedonian mercenaries hired by his political opponents.¹⁰

The ideological struggle over the ruling of Macedonia was also visible in the already mentioned manipulation of the censuses results. Each of the parties involved which took the census always outnumbered the others.¹¹ Thus it was decided that the political demands should be backed up not only with historical but also with demographic arguments. In practice this meant that there was a system of punishments and rewards for declaring a specific identity by the local population. The fanatics of the national cause who desired to inject the national spirit through violence were more feared than

⁵ B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa. Balkany w oczach zachodnich podróżników*, trans. by P. Oczko, Kraków 2007, p. 179 (*Poleca Adam Michnik*).

⁶ M. Dymarski, *Konflikty na Bałkanach w okresie kształtowania się państw narodowych w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Wrocław 2010, p. 200 (*Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, 3278).

⁷ M. Todorova, *Balkany wyobrażone*, trans. by P. Szymor, M. Budzińska, Wołowiec 2008, p. 253.

⁸ B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa*..., p. 186.

⁹ S. K. Pavlowitch, *Historia Bałkanów (1804-1945)*, trans. by J. Polak, Warszawa 2009, p. 172 (*Biblioteka Humanisty Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*).

¹⁰ F.B. Chary, *The History of Bulgaria*, Santa Barbara 2011, p. 41 (*Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations*).

¹¹ S. Clissold, H.C. Darby, *A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge 1968, p. 136; B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa*..., p. 182.

respected mainly thanks to their actions which are brilliantly depicted in a film titled *Warming Up Yesterday's Lunch*.

Yet another important element of the justification of the rights to Macedonia was supposed to be the quest for arguments in history – in its patriotically designed version, to be precise. The fundamental role in these justifications was played by historical and political myths on which the author of this work is to focus. As it will be later proven, myths allow the reality to be easily explained, they shape the collective identity and are an excellent tool to manipulate the masses. People are mythcreators and for people “myths are not fables or fake stories but rather the deepest form of concern and also of aspirations and symbolical understanding of life and the world that surrounds us.”¹² As Richard Rorty noticed, myths provide ready-made answers and interpretation schemas which help an individual with understanding the world that surrounds him or her. As Zdzisław Chlewiński, a well-known psychologist, emphasises that without a selective reception a man would be lost in the sea of detailed information.¹³

It is worth mentioning though, that the term “myth” should not be understood as a synonym of the untruth. A myth is not entirely a falsification of reality, a story built on a single grain of truth, it possesses significant prime powers. It is something more than a fake story and as Muhamed Filipović – a Bosnian philosopher notices – a myth cannot be treated only as a figment of imagination since it tells us about man's idea of himself, of history and the powers that have influence on its course.¹⁴ For many years myths were seen as pre-scientific methods of explaining the world. No one noticed that they are constantly revitalised; reappearing in the background of new interpretations of the world's changeability as narration patterns, major cultural archetypes dealing with the fundamental problems of human beings and collectivity.¹⁵ The slow changes of this view were determined by the inability to understand and later the inability to explain a number of social, political and cultural phenomena and processes only with the usage of quantifiable factors.¹⁶ Apart from the fact that the quality factors began to be more appreciated it was more often noticed, just like Bronisław Malinowski did, that myths as a form of faith have a very powerful cultural influence; they function as an indispensable factor thanks to which the human collectivity can exist.¹⁷ Nowadays we are aware that myths are not hidden truths but as the realization of “false identity” they play significant social roles. We try to catch a glimpse of their motive powers which seem to be very strong. This will be shown on the example of Macedonia.

¹² J.L. Ford, ‘Buddyzm, mitologia i Matrix’ in S. Yeffeth (ed.), *Wybierz czerwoną pigułkę. Nauka, filozofia i religia w Matrix*, trans. by W. Derechowski, Gliwice 2007, p. 139.

¹³ M. Obrębska, ‘Myślenie stereotypowe w normie i w patologii’ in W. Domachowski (ed.), *Stereotypy i stereotypizacja*, Poznań 2007, p. 137 (*Człowiek i Społeczeństwo*, 27).

¹⁴ M. Filipović, *Deset predavanja o ideji Europe*, Sarajevo 2000, p. 45 (*Biblioteka Evropske Studije*).

¹⁵ J. Campbell, Moyers B., *Potęga mitu*, ed. B.S. Flowers, trans. by I. Kania, Kraków 2007, p. 35.

¹⁶ W. Kuligowski, *Antropologia refleksyjna. O rzeczywistości tekstu*, Poznań 2001, pp. 15-16 (*Poznańskie Studia Etnologiczne*, 2).

¹⁷ B. Malinowski, *Szkice z teorii kultury*, trans. by H. Buczyńska, H. Stasiak, T. Świącka, Warszawa 1958, p. 472.

This work includes information of the usage of historical and political myths by the elite which were to convince the masses about the rightness of specific territorial demands. In those times a very common belief was that the power of a given state is realized by its size thus in the majority of countries programmes of building a big motherland emerged, their legitimacy however had to be somehow proven. In this task myths came in with great help as they were easily accessible stories explaining the necessity of the fight for the lands that should be ours. Man never acts purely rational – one rather willingly trusts the simplification that helps to easily explain the more complex world¹⁸, and particularly easily believes in the source providing an uncomplicated explanation of the legitimacy of a given conduct and its elevated motivations. It is also worth to emphasise that at the turn of the 19th and the 20th century the Balkan Peninsula was overpowered by the ideology of national romanticism or messianism, interpreted in many different ways, which used myths, folk legends and old oral traditions as containers for native tradition and as a factor binding and forming collective consciousness.¹⁹

The strength of myth lies also in its firmaments based on emotions. This seems to be obvious to the creators of politics who call upon the “sacred reasons” and higher interests.²⁰ Such content, although irrational, through its loftiness is easily acquired by masses. It is a common belief that the need to follow one’s emotions is stronger during the times of conflicts and if one looks at the rich history of the Balkan Powder Keg it will be easy to notice that myths as irrational sources of knowledge and explanation are of great importance on this territory.

The mythical stories found their way to the masses which can be proven by the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 when young people full of euphoria and enthusiasm were travelling, often on foot, through mountains hard to reach to be able to have the honour to fight for the “eternal” lands of their nation. This is one of an infinite number of proofs of the power of continuously ritualised and perfectly constructed myths in shaping the collective space. While observing the political affairs around the world it would be hard not to notice that even today one can easily come across similar examples of extreme behaviour caused by idea to serve a great cause. Psychiatrists believe that terrorists are sane and underline that their actions are motivated by the unlimited belief in the idea.²¹ Also Gavrilo Princip unconditionally believed in the rightness of his actions. What is more he was brought up in the spirit of the romantic version of the Kosovo Myth and his biggest dream was to repeat Miloš Obilić’s deed.

¹⁸ R. Žirarde, *Politički mitovi i mitologije*, trans. by A. Jovanović, Beograd 2000, p. 13 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 107).

¹⁹ Vide: S. Filipowicz, *Mit i spektakl władzy*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 62-67 (*Logos*); M. Gilderhus, *History and Historians. A Historiographical Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs 1992, pp. 38-41.

²⁰ D. Pavlović, ‘Simbolički i politički rascepi u Srbiji posle 2000. Godine’ in V. Petrić, G. Svilanović, K. Solioz (eds.), *Srbija je važna. Unutrašnje reforme i evropske integracije*, trans. by T. Milosavljević, Beograd 2009, pp. 184-185 (*Edicija Samizdat*, 59).

²¹ J. Sieradzan, *Od kultu do zbrodni. Ekscentryzm i szalenstwo w religiach XX wieku*, Katowice 2006, p. 11.

Nowadays, in the field of science no one questions the idea that history will never free itself from the myth or that the national vision of history must present the ethnocentric point of view and this automatically assumes the elevation of the role of one's ethnos and erasing its faults. One proof of that is for instance the difficulty in creating a common transnational version of the history course books. Another one can be discovered after conducting a comparative analysis of the same entry in different languages in the Wikipedia where one event or one historical character can be interpreted in many different ways.

Although going to great lengths, historians will not be totally objective as being members of one specific nation they become the hostages of its collective memory which is composed from many myths.²² If this is what happens today then it is easy to imagine what the scale of myths construction was among the nations interested in controlling the Macedonian lands. Their elite, of course, were not interested in building a historically reliable source but in creating a story that would be capable of seizing the masses.

Also the champions of the national cause believed in the rightness of their actions while trying to take control over the minds of the Macedonian inhabitants. As it was earlier noticed, the romantic ideology ordered them to reach far beyond their constraints in which history came as a great help.²³ Moreover, it was in that period of time when the term *historia sacra* became widespread.²⁴ One of the pillars of building the narration confirming the legitimacy of the incorporation of the Macedonian lands was the thesis arguing that some time earlier in the history these lands were within the borderlines of a given country, disregarding the fact that such a situation could have lasted only for a very short period of time. The Bulgarian tradition described Macedonia as the Bulgarian national cradle²⁵ – similarly Kosovo is called in this way by Serbs. It is also worth mentioning that the myth about the nation's cradle strengthens the symbolical meaning of the territory. It easily explains to the society why it is worth fighting for at all cost. In Sofia, there were stories about the specific, spiritual role of Macedonia as a political and cultural centre of Samuel's tzhdom which was to be reflected in the act of his moving the capital to Ochrid in his Balkan state reaching from one sea to another. Also in the time of the Bulgarian splendour, Ivan Asen II managed to annex the Macedonian lands. All this allowed to conclude that only the united Bulgaria with its cradle can regain its rightful power.²⁶ Of course, there was a number of more extreme views according to which the ancient Macedonian kings should have been admitted to

²² M. Halbwachs, *Spoleczne ramy pamieci*, trans. by M. Król, Warszawa 1969, p. 7 (*Biblioteka Socjologiczna*).

²³ M. Todorova, *Dizanje prošlosti u vazduh. Ogledi o Balkanu i Istočnoj Evropi*, trans. by S. Glišić, Beograd 2010, pp. 83-84 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 184).

²⁴ Vide: M. Rekść, 'Historia sacra w dyskursach etnonacjonalistycznych', *Zbliżenia Cywilizacyjne. Zeszyty Naukowe PWSZ we Włocławku*, Vol. 7 (2011), pp. 21-34.

²⁵ B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa...*, p. 185.

²⁶ R.D. Kaplan, *Balkańskie upiory. Podróż przez historię*, trans. by J. Ruszkowski, Wołowiec 2010, pp. 117-118 (*Sulina*).

the community of Bulgarian rulers who after conquering the Balkans extended their ruling territory up to India.²⁷ Moreover, Bulgarians referred to the language criteria, explaining that Slavic dialects of the local communities were one of the dialects of Bulgarian language. These arguments reoccur and are repeated until the present.

As it can be noticed the myth of the golden age and the “powerful motherland”, whose size was to be re-established, were usually referring to a short period in a long period of history which was no obstacle to treat them as states of nature. Thus oral traditions about the “eternal lands of the nation”, “national cradle” and about the historical power of the nation were created. Miroslav Hroch by analysing the national revival movements, notices that their inherent trait is the act of looking for an argument in history that will help in advocating the demands of resurrection of a state that once in the past existed but was unjustly destroyed.²⁸ Taking this into consideration the Macedonian reference to the antique tradition, which is covered in the later part of this work, should be easier to understand. Let us now focus on the mechanism of using the past in realizing specific goals which, leaving aside its rightness, allows to make historical falsifications. What is meant by this is the assumption that history (its mythical version, to be precise) should support political action programmes. In other words, history should serve social consolidation but in such case the scientific objectivity has to be put aside.

As it will be shown later, a myth is not something to discuss but rather something to believe in. A large number of scholars believes that the national mythology is a kind of secular religion in which the beautifully colourized oral tradition is elevated to the rank of the highest indisputable truth.²⁹ The mythologized version of history concentrates on building a specific elevated narration and not on aiming to establish objective facts, thus it can be assumed to be irrational.³⁰ Besides, people do not need a complicated oral tradition. They are open to easy answers, explanation of the reality and hints pointing to the right way of acting. Besides every religion is composed of a system of mythical stories which can be easily enriched with national elements the example of which is the myth of the chosen nation.

Coming back to the ideological fight for the Macedonian lands, in Athens no one dared to doubt that in the ancient times Greece and Macedonia constituted a joint organism. The restitution of northern lands that were crying after the mother Hellas had grown to the rank of a fundamental challenge for the national cause workers, especially before the accession of Greece to the EU. While turning a deaf year to the fact that Greek forefathers described Macedonians as barbaric, another fact, namely that of allowing Macedonians to take part in the Olympic Games, was emphasised and

²⁷ B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa...*, p. 180.

²⁸ M. Hroch, *Małe narody Europy. Perspektywa historyczna*, trans. by G. Pańko, Wrocław 2003, p. 132 (*Zrozumieć Europę*).

²⁹ S. Petrović, *Srpska mitologija*, Vol. 1, Niš 2000, p. 16.

³⁰ J. Kornhauser, *Świadomość regionalna i mit odrębności (o stereotypach w literaturze serbskiej i chorwackiej)*, Kraków 2001, pp. 46-47 (*Prace Instytutu Filologii Słowiańskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 19).

put forward as an obvious proof of the ancient unity,³¹ but the condition that granted Macedonians entry in the competition – proving Greek blood relations – was left unmentioned. Until they were humiliated by Alexander the Great, Athenians perceived Macedonians as barbarians.

Just like their neighbours, Athens undertook the challenge to prove their historical rights to Macedonia. More and more publications dealing with ancient times were published in order to establish a comfortable version of the history for the national interest.³² Historians, archaeologists and ethnologists were proving that ancient Macedonians – and thus the contemporary ones as well – are a part of the Greek ethnic group and the peculiarly understood requirements of the *raison d'état* justified the usage of a clump of mythizations. The romantic sources lamented on the fact that for the coming “holiday” the Hellenic land was besmirched by the barbaric Slavonic element. Instead of introducing a differentiation between Bulgars and Serbs, Greeks used a common category – Macedonian Slavs. Slavic people were called Bulgars, Bulgarophones, bulgarophone Greeks, Slavophones (Slavophone Greeks) or Endops (autochthones). It was believed that those people were Slavized Greeks who should be given help to re-discover their true identity.³³ Germanos Karawangelis – a national activist and a clergyman, who wanted to convert all the stray sheep, said: “You were here before Greeks – since the times of Alexander the Great, before the Slavs came to enslave you.”³⁴

Serbs remembered that it was the city of Skopje where in 1346 Stefan Dušan crowned himself as the tzar of the Balkan empire³⁵ and this fact was to be successfully used to build a story of eternal lands that some time ago were a foundation of the Serbian power. It was all the more necessary to remember this fact, since Bosnia and Herzegovina was occupied by Austria-Hungary and Macedonia, lying inside the Ottoman borderline was the only possible direction of expansion.³⁶ Hence, the political programme had to be additionally strengthened with ideological efforts in order to provide common agreement on the historical necessity of its realisation.

At the end of the 20th century, treating Macedonia – at that time only Vardar Macedonia – as an inherent part of one's country resulted in the rise of demands of taking over the Orthodox monasteries on the territory of the new creation called FYROM. The Serbian orthodox church, which was holding the jurisdiction over the

³¹ W. Schuller, *Griechische Geschichte*, München 2002, p. 49 (*Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte*, 1A).

³² *Vide*: W. Potkański, ‘Odrodzenie narodowe w Europie na przełomie XX i XXI wieku na przykładzie Szkocji i Macedonii’ in M. Jeziński (ed.), *Współczesne nacjonalizmy*, Toruń 2008, pp. 126-127.

³³ M. Makurat, ‘Uchodźstwo Macedończyków z Grecji z perspektywy historii, herstorii i historii mówionej. Doświadczenie pani Marii Dimkovej i jej rodziny’ in T. Ciesielski, J. Zatorska, A. Skoczyła (eds.), *Historyczna i ponowoczesna tożsamość Słowian*, Łódź 2012, pp. 165-166.

³⁴ As cited in: T. Czekalski, “Grecy z Aten” i “Grecy z Salonik” – konteksty macedońskie w życiu społeczno-politycznym międzywojennej Grecji’ in I. Stawowy-Kawka (ed.), *Miejsce Macedonii na Bałkanach. Historia, polityka, kultura, nauka*, Kraków 2005, p. 226.

³⁵ Н. Кайчев, *Македонијо, възжелана... Армията, училището и градежът на нацията в Сърбия и България (1878-1912)*, София 2006, pp. 246-247.

³⁶ P. Olszewski, *Macedonia. Historia i współczesność*, Radom 2010, p. 43.

“entire empire of Stefan Dušan” since 1920, could not get over the fact of establishing the Macedonian orthodox church. Serbian authorities became even more indignant at the Vatican policy of reviving the Uniate communities in Southern Macedonia that were forbidden until that time by Serbs and Bulgarians.³⁷ The nationalist discourse was constantly spreading information that the lands mentioned were supposed to be the historical core of the Serbian state.

At this point, it would be a good idea to mention about the basic, although doubted by many³⁸, assumption of the Greek historiography which is the myth of the ethnic purity – the belief that contemporary Greeks are directly related to their ancient ancestors. Some people pursued to debunk this myth³⁹ rather from many different reasons than in order to reveal the truth. The neighbouring nations wanted at all costs to demonstrate that the ancient Hellas – the key reason of pride and the proof of Greeks’ greatness – had a totally different ethnic colouration, thus the stories about the tribal mosaic of those times were being multiplied. They were to prove who dominated who in order to point at a tribe which was supposed to be the progenitor of the “appropriate” nation and the core of this great Hellenic civilisation as well. The Albanian explanators of history developed a view describing their mythical ancestors – Illyrians – as the creators of the Minoan civilization and of the Epirus’ power.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Greek mythology is considered to be the Illyrian mythology appropriated by Hellenes.⁴¹ This was done by Albanians to prove that they are the Balkan autochthons and for that reason the lands called for in the national programme should become their property.

Romanians tried to demonstrate that the inhabitants of ancient Greece were of Dacian origin. This for many people did not occur as an absurdity since at that time according to many theses the Dacians “gave birth” to all of the world’s civilisations.⁴² It is enough to mention the famous 1913 work of a recognized ethnologist Nicolae Densușianu titled *Dacia Preistorică* in which the author proves that Pelasgians are of Dacian origin. According to him they spread around the world ages ago and contributed to the development of the biggest civilizations.⁴³

³⁷ V. Perica, *Balkanski idoli. Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama*, Beograd 2006, pp. 129-135 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 156); J. Witte, J.D. van der Vyver (eds.), *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective. Legal Perspectives*, The Hague 1996, p. 280.

³⁸ Vide: A.D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations*, Cambridge 2004, pp. 184-185.

³⁹ Vide: J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece. The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, Jefferson 1997, pp. 80-90.

⁴⁰ N. Spahiu, *National Awakening Process among Orthodox Albanians*, Hamburg 2006, pp. 6-8.

⁴¹ H. Taçi, S. Doucette, *Kosovo “Moral Democracy” or Kosovo “Greater Serbia”?*, Prishtina 2004, p. 153; Cz. Jankowski, *Na gruzach Turcji. Zarysy historyczno-publicystyczne*, Warszawa 1915, pp. 139-144 (*Biblioteka Współczesna Gebethnera i Wölffa*).

⁴² A. Dubicki, ‘Mit o pochodzeniu Rumunów – między Dakami, Rzymianami a...?’ in E. Ponczek, A. Sepkowski (eds.), *Mity historyczno-polityczne, wyobrażenia zbiorowe, polityka historyczna. Studia i materiały*, Vol. 1, Toruń 2010, p. 79.

⁴³ A.M. Avrămut, ‘Die Daker und der Zeitgeist: Rumänische Geschichtsschreibung vor und nach 1989’ in T. Kahl, L. Schippel (eds.), *Kilometer Null. Politische Transformation und gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen in Rumänien seit 1989*, Berlin 2011, pp. 234-235, (*Forum: Rumänien*, 10).

Also Serbs tried to convince others that it were their ancestors who lived in the ancient Greece. Their argumentation was frequently based on the assumption that they were the autochthons of the Balkan Peninsula. There was also a number of hypotheses proving that each and every of the more important civilizations was the creation of Serbs. What is more, Herodot's ideas of Serbs being the largest nation in the world, not including Indians, were constantly repeated.⁴⁴ But even if one left these extreme theories aside, one could come across another view, created by Serbian science, according to which all Southern Slavs are Serbs.⁴⁵ Such a view of reality allowed to treat the Macedonian Slavs as Serbs.

All of the pretenders to the Macedonian prey had never stopped in convincing others that the Macedonian people are members of their nations. Apart from the Greek-Serbian-Bulgarian triangle, Romanians, Albanians and even Montenegrins joined the rivalry. Romanians backed their territorial claims with the argument of the presence of the Vlach people in Macedonia who according to the Romanians were the descendants of Dacians – “pure blooded Romanians.” They emphasised the fact that until the 19th century the neighbouring nations described Romania as “the land of Vlachs”⁴⁶ which was supposed to suggest that Vlachs are Romanians and such an interpretation allowed to lay a claim for the Macedonian lands. It is also worth to notice that the romantic stories about the purest and thus unblemished by a foreign element members of the nation living somewhere far away possess a strong emotional charge and create a need of including these members into the given community. Although Romania could not allow itself to conduct more extensive actions that would result in joining the Macedonian lands, there were attempts of founding grants or giving permissions for settling on the territory of Romania. At the same time, Greeks took the position that Vlachs are romanised Hellenes. Also today, these two discourses are strong enough to result in the functioning of two parallels: cultural and educational systems financed by Romania and Greece.⁴⁷

The Albanian demands were connected with the presence of a large national minority inhabiting the Macedonian lands at the time of the Ottoman Empire's existence. As the author of this text is trying to prove, no one made an attempt to recognize the objective truth. What is more, the national pride caused the falsifications to multiply in order to create the new “patriotic truth,” thus Albanians started to develop some theories that were supposed to prove that many of the Balkan Slavs or Greeks were actually of Albanian origin since the entire Western part of the Balkan Peninsula was inhabited by ancient Illyrians. The change of identity was supposed to be the result of a serbiza-

⁴⁴ ‘Osam milenijuma srpskog porekla’, Moj Izbor, IvonaZivkovic.net, at <<http://www.ivonazivkovic.net/OSAM%20MILENIJUMA%20SRPSKOG%20POREKLA.htm>>, 4 August 2013.

⁴⁵ L. Moroz-Grzelak, *Bracia Słowianie. Wizje wspólnoty a rzeczywistość*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 151-154.

⁴⁶ R.D. Kaplan, *Na wschód do Tatarii. Podróże po Bałkanach, Bliskim Wschodzie i Kaukazie*, trans. by J. Ruskowski, Wołowiec 2010, p. 59 (*Sulina*).

⁴⁷ *Vide*: S. Schwandner-Sievers, ‘The Albanian Aromanians’ Awakening: Identity Politics and Conflicts in Post-Communist Albania’, *ECMI Working Papers*, No. 3 (1999), pp. 15-16, at <http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/working_paper_3.pdf>, 26 July 2013.

tion, bulgarization or a hellenization processes.⁴⁸ There was even an attempt to find the connection between Vlachs and Albanians. Montenegrins had the smallest range of possibilities but even they claimed that the Macedonian Vlachs are the sons of their nation.

The fight for the Macedonian souls was also led by the national Churches: Greek and Serbian Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarch. All three of the Orthodox centres intensified their actions promoting the ethnoreligious conversion by arguing that only by accepting the right national identity the transcendental salvation can be reached. As it was already mentioned, the Serbian Orthodox Church took control over the Vardar Macedonia as late as in 1920 so in the period of the Macedonian campaign, described in this work, the axis of the struggle laid between the Greek and the Bulgarian Church. What is more, in Macedonian lands, the word "Greek" had religious connotations for ages. This was the result of a centuries-old dependency of the Ottoman Empire in which the millet system was in use – the system of religious not ethnical communities. The term "Bulgar" was reserved for the unconscious (dark) peasants, thus being a "Greek" or a "Turk" one could have also been called a Bulgar. The propagators of the "progressive ideology" made sure that these three categories had a "sacred" meaning.⁴⁹

In Greece, there was no lack of ideas promoting the expanding of the current term "Greek" to new realities. People were persuaded that those who "always" defined themselves as "Greeks" should be included into the great Hellas community. These ideas were introduced after the Aegean Macedonia was annexed and when an exceptionally efficient action of nationalisation was conducted, the leaders of which resorted to such means as resettlement or introduction of the duty of the language oath – the obligation to use the Greek language only.⁵⁰ "The scientists" were multiplying the "scientific" proofs showing that each and every Orthodox inhabitant of Macedonia is of Greek origin. Some decided to draw even further reaching conclusions and tried to convince that the Islamic converts are also Greeks who were forced by the Turkish administration to reject their primal faith.

The search for justification of the territorial demands in the freely interpreted history could be described as a grotesque process. Nevertheless, for the people of that time it seemed to be natural, since the history was treated freely. In fact, history was seen as a set of stories that could be freely modified in accordance with current needs. The scientific value and the act of reaching towards the truth was considerably less important than a skilful shaping of a given story. The intellectuals of Romanticism emphasised that history has a certain mission to fulfil, that is to guard the national interest. The

⁴⁸ S. Zefi, *Islamization of Albanians through Centuries (15-20th Century). Reasons for Islamization and the Stance of the Church towards the Occurrence*, trans. by A. Spahiu, Prizren 2006, p. 194.

⁴⁹ L.M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Princeton 1997, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁰ J. Paszkiewicz, 'Macedoński problem narodowościowy w greckiej polityce zagranicznej w latach dwudziestych XX wieku' in I. Stawowy-Kawka, M. Kawka (eds.), *Macedoński dyskurs niepodległościowy. Historia, kultura, literatura, język, media*, Kraków 2011, p. 192; W. Śmieja, *Gorsze światy. Migawki z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Warszawa 2012, p. 37 (*Bieguny*).

belief that prevailed at that time that a nation without history has no right to exist lead to the phenomenon of tendentious production of the past for it not to be too poor. For each of the nations a fundamental challenge was to create a magnificent and significant but not necessary true history.

This can be proven by the sole fact that the national heroes were sought in the vast resources of history, even in the very old history when no one heard about the idea of the nation in its modern form. Having no possibilities to continue this topic the author of this work would like to focus on the character of Alexander the Great who by the majority of Balkan nations was considered to be their progenitor. It is trivial to say that every community needs heroes whose great deeds could be set as a pattern to follow. So it should not be surprising that at the moment of the explosion of the national revival movements in South-Eastern Europe people resorted to looking for as many well known historical characters as possible. Their connections with a given nation were supposed to be proven thanks to the actions of falsifying and embellishing the history. Obviously, none of the parties involved made an attempt to have a honest debate about the character of Alexander the Great, whereas as early as in the antient times some of the Roman historians saw Alexander as an unpredictable man, a tyrant who was unable to control his emotions, abusing alcohol.⁵¹ This is what we call the process of heroization in which only the positive features are ascribed to the protagonist, the negative ones are simply omitted. It has to be mentioned that the specificity of a myth is hidden in its sharp distinction between good and evil – there is no place for the shades of gray – thus the mythical hero can be either unambiguously positive or unambiguously negative. Mircea Eliade defined myth as a “sacred tale”⁵² and when something is concerned to be sacred it is often taken for granted and is not to be disputed.

Greeks had no doubt that Alexander the Great was a Greek. This should come as no surprise if one remembers that according to the assumptions mentioned earlier, Greece and Macedonia constituted a unity. To support this thesis, people were reminded that Alexander's expansion meant propagating the Hellenic culture on the conquered lands. This was mentioned by Johann Gustav Droysen in the book entitled *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* which was popular at that time.

Albanians, on the other hand, had no doubt that the mythical leader had some Illyrian roots which was supposed to be proven by the fact that Alexander's mother was from Epirus and – as it has been already noticed – the Albanian vision of history recognized their own mythical ancestors as the creators of Epirus' power status. This view was further developed with a great dose of pride as the emphasis was put on the fact that the Albanian soldiers of Alexander the Great were the ones who conquered the entire world known at that time.⁵³

⁵¹ K. Usakiewicz, 'Aleksander Wielki – od postaci historycznej do bohatera kulturowego' in K. Taczyńska, A. Twardowska (eds.), *Poznać Bałkany. Historia, polityka, kultura, języki*, Vol. 4, Toruń 2012, p. 428.

⁵² M. Eliade, *Aspekty mitu*, trans. by P. Mrówczyński, Warszawa 1998, p. 11.

⁵³ B. Jezernik, *Dzika Europa...*, p. 180.

Also Serbs decided to admit that Alexander the Great was of their origin.⁵⁴ Such a controversial thesis appeared in the 19th century publications. It was also referred to in the end of the 20th century when the foundation of the sharp nationalism was created. Such usurpations were a direct consequence of the autochthonic theories placing Serbs as the eternal inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula or of the allochthonous theories dating the coming of Serbian ancestors to the Balkan Peninsula in the 6th, 7th, or even in the 12th century B.C.⁵⁵

The character of Alexander the Great was an ideal one to build on the ideological background supporting the military actions as he remained invincible to the end and as the range of his conquests was to be forever remembered. What is more, the usurpation of the heroes can be easily explained by the idea of the quest for the antidote to the peripheral complex. Thus, it is not surprising that also Aromanians prove that their blood ran in the veins of Alexander the Great.⁵⁶ Similar usurpations appeared also among Croats and Bulgars. The latter ones spared no effort to prove that Slavs were an ancient nation, older even than the Greeks. The folklore was supposed to provide all the necessary proofs. However, the character of Alexander the Great was used as a building material for national identity also beyond the Balkan Peninsula. A vast number of ethnic groups were trying to start their lineage from the hero and his legions. An Afghan tribe – Afridi – is one of the examples supporting this thesis. Similar cases of usurpation appear also among the Croats or the Bulgarians.

Just like any other neighbouring nations also Macedonians eagerly used historical and political myths in creating their own identity. The Macedonian national revival which at the beginning of the 20th century was in its initial stage, not coincidentally developed mostly on the lands belonging to Serbia and later to the Kingdom of SHS and Yugoslavia. Belgrade supported the revival in order to uproot the strong Bulgarian structures and later to conduct a total Serbization of the Vardar Land. The culmination point of Macedonian national activists' actions was the time of the Second World War when the postulate of creating a separate republic was heard by Josip Broz Tito, who believed in the principles of brotherhood and unity. It should not come as a surprise that the national revival movement was based on the myth of great history.

The specificity of Macedonian identity manifests itself in the extreme apology of historicism as a continuity of the separation of the community. The awareness of belonging to the Slavic world goes hand in hand with the glorification of the ancient past which can be seen in the pantheon of national heroes where Alexander the Great co-exists with Cyril and Methodius.⁵⁷ They do so until the present which can be proven by the existence of a controversial project "Skopje 2014".⁵⁸ From the time of declar-

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 180.

⁵⁵ M. Czerwiński, *Semiotyka dyskursu historycznego. Chorwackie i serbskie syntezy dziejów narodu*, Kraków 2012, p. 156, 196.

⁵⁶ K.-M. Gauß, *Umierający Europejczycy. Podróże do sefardyjskich Żydów z Sarajewa, Niemców z Gottschee, Arboreszów, Łużyczan i Arumunów*, trans. by A. Rosenau, Wołowiec 2006, p. 188 (*Sulina*).

⁵⁷ L. Moroz-Grzelak, *Bracia Słowianie...*, p. 246.

⁵⁸ *Vide*: R. Hislope, 'Macedonia' in S. Berglund, J. Ekman, K. Deegan-Krause (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Cheltenham 2013, p. 622 (*Elgar Original Reference*).

ing the independence of Macedonia its elites try to cure the traumas of poverty and peripherality by referring to the traditions of the ancient kingdom. They managed to strengthen the belief that the Macedonian ethnos was formed over one thousand years B.C.⁵⁹ or that the consciousness of the national identity was not a product of romantic discoverers but that it always existed.⁶⁰ A separate article could be solely devoted to the usage of Alexander the Great. Unfortunately, there is no place left in this essay to develop this topic. Similarly, there is no place left for the description of Macedonian national myths being ritualized by politicians, especially as these ideas are not the subject of this essay.

The aim of this essay was to sketch the phenomenon of history manipulation and its usage for justifying current political objectives. It is also worth to add that the issues from this work are still present, that in the 21st century some people still try to treat peculiarly understood past as a tool in fight for modern profits. As Dubravka Ugrešić writes, the Balkan nations love slogans about the fight in the name of culture and history but those who take them “have never had an opportunity to read even one book, and they can’t count the centuries with ease [...] It appears that the defenders of the history and culture are generally the defenders of the matters they know and care about the least.”⁶¹ Her words are confirmed by the observations from the post-Soviet area made by Anne Appelbaum just after the collapse of the USSR. While describing the conversation with Russian nationalists Applebaum draws attention to their ignorant attitude when the thoughtless praising of historical achievements of the Russian nation goes hand in hand with the lack of basic knowledge about the world.⁶²

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Appelbaum A., *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Przez pogranicza Europy*, trans. by E. Kulik-Bielińska, Warszawa 2001.
- Avramut A.M., ‘Die Daker und der Zeitgeist: Rumänische Geschichtsschreibung vor und nach 1989’ in T. Kahl, L. Schippel (eds.), *Kilometer Null. Politische Transformation und gesellschaftliche Entwicklungen in Rumänien seit 1989*, Berlin 2011 (*Forum: Rumänien*, 10).
- Berglund S., Ekman J., Deegan-Krause K. (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Cheltenham 2013 (*Elgar Original Reference*).
- Campbell J., Moyers B., *Potęga mitu*, ed. B.S. Flowers, trans. by I. Kania, Kraków 2007.
- Carr H., *What is History? The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge, January-March 1961*, New York 1967.
- Chałasiński J., *Kultura i naród. Studia i szkice*, Warszawa 1968.

⁵⁹ A.M. Polkowska, *Macedonia*, Wrocław 2000, p. 9.

⁶⁰ *Vide*: Д. Ташковски, *За македонската нација*, Скопје 1976, p. 34.

⁶¹ D.Ugrešić, *Nikogo nie ma w domu*, trans. by D.J. Ćirić, Kraków 2008, pp. 69-109.

⁶² A. Appelbaum, *Między Wschodem a Zachodem. Przez pogranicza Europy*, trans. by E. Kulik-Bielińska, Warszawa 2001, pp. 218-219.

- Chary F.B., *The History of Bulgaria*, Santa Barbara 2011 (*Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations*).
- Ciesielski T., Zatorska J., Skoczylas A. (eds.), *Historyczna i ponowoczesna tożsamość Słowian*, Łódź 2012.
- Clissold S., Darby H.C., *A Short History of Yugoslavia from Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge 1968.
- Czekalski T., "Grecy z Aten" i "Grecy z Salonik" – konteksty macedońskie w życiu społeczno-politycznym międzywojennej Grecji' in I. Stawowy-Kawka (ed.), *Miejsce Macedonii na Bałkanach. Historia, polityka, kultura, nauka*, Kraków 2005.
- Czerwiński M., *Semiotyka dyskursu historycznego. Chorwackie i serbskie syntezy dziejów narodu*, Kraków 2012.
- Danforth L.M., *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Princeton 1997.
- Dejzings G., *Religija i identitet na Kosovu*, Beograd 2005 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 150).
- Domachowski W. (ed.), *Stereotypy i stereotypizacja*, Poznań 2007 (*Człowiek i Społeczeństwo*, 27).
- Dubicki A., 'Mit o pochodzeniu Rumunów – między Dakami, Rzymianami a...?' in E. Ponczek, A. Sepkowski (eds.), *Mity historyczno-polityczne, wyobrażenia zbiorowe, polityka historyczna. Studia i materiały*, Vol. 1, Toruń 2010.
- Dymarski M., *Konflikty na Bałkanach w okresie kształtowania się państw narodowych w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, Wrocław 2010 (*Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, 3278).
- Eliade M., *Aspekty mitu*, trans. by P. Mrówczyński, Warszawa 1998.
- Filipović M., *Deset predavanja o ideji Europe*, Sarajevo 2000 (*Biblioteka Evropske Studije*).
- Filipowicz S., *Mit i spektakl władzy*, Warszawa 1988 (*Logos*).
- Ford J.L., 'Buddyzm, mitologia i Matrix' in S. Yeffeth (ed.), *Wybierz czerwoną pigułkę. Nauka, filozofia i religia w Matrix*, trans. by W. Derechowski, Gliwice 2007.
- Gauß K.-M., *Umierający Europejczycy. Podróże do sefardyjskich Żydów z Sarajewa, Niemców z Gottschee, Arboreszów, Łużyżan i Arumunów*, trans. by A. Rosenau, Wołowiec 2006 (*Sulina*).
- Gilderhus M., *History and Historians. A Historiographical Introduction*, Englewood Cliffs 1992.
- Halbwachs M., *Społeczne ramy pamięci*, trans. by M. Król, Warszawa 1969 (*Biblioteka Socjologiczna*).
- Hislope R., 'Macedonia' in S. Berglund, J. Ekman, K. Deegan-Krause (eds.), *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe*, Cheltenham 2013 (*Elgar Original Reference*).
- Hroch M., *Małe narody Europy. Perspektywa historyczna*, trans. by G. Pańko, Wrocław 2003 (*Zrozumieć Europę*).
- Jankowski Cz., *Na gruzach Turcji. Zarysy historyczno-publicystyczne*, Warszawa 1915 (*Biblioteka Współczesna Gebethnera i Wolffa*).
- Jezernik B., *Dzika Europa. Bałkany w oczach zachodnich podróżników*, trans. by P. Oczko, Kraków 2007 (*Poleca Adam Michnik*).
- Judt T., *Wielkie złudzenie? Esej o Europie*, trans. by A. Jankowski, Poznań 2012.
- Кайчев Н., *Македонијо, възжелана... Армията, училището и градежът на нацията в Сърбия и България (1878-1912)*, София 2006.
- Kaplan R.D., *Bałkańskie upiory. Podróż przez historię*, trans. by J. Ruszkowski, Wołowiec 2010 (*Sulina*).

- Kaplan R.D., *Na wschód do Tatarii. Podróże po Bałkanach, Bliskim Wschodzie i Kaukazie*, trans. by J. Ruskowski, Wołowiec 2010 (*Sulina*).
- Kornhauser J., *Świadomość regionalna i mit odrębności (o stereotypach w literaturze serbskiej i chorwackiej)*, Kraków 2001 (*Prace Instytutu Filologii Słowiańskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 19).
- Kuligowski W., *Antropologia refleksyjna. O rzeczywistości tekstu*, Poznań 2001 (*Poznańskie Studia Etnologiczne*, 2).
- Malinowski B., *Szkice z teorii kultury*, trans. by H. Buczyńska, H. Stasiak, T. Święcka, Warszawa 1958.
- Moroz-Grzelak L., *Bracia Słowianie. Wizje wspólnoty a rzeczywistość*, Warszawa 2011.
- Obrębska M., 'Myślenie stereotypowe w normie i w patologii' in W. Domachowski (ed.), *Stereotypy i stereotypizacja*, Poznań 2007 (*Człowiek i Społeczeństwo*, 27).
- Olszewski P., *Macedonia. Historia i współczesność*, Radom 2010.
- 'Osam milenijuma srpskog porekla', Moj Izbor, IvonaZivkovic.net, at <<http://www.ivonazivkovic.net/OSAM%20MILENIJUMA%20SRPSKOG%20POREKLA.htm>>.
- Paszkiewicz J., 'Macedoński problem narodowościowy w greckiej polityce zagranicznej w latach dwudziestych XX wieku' in I. Stawowy-Kawka, M. Kawka (eds.), *Macedoński dyskurs niepodległościowy. Historia, kultura, literatura, język, media*, Kraków 2011.
- Pavlović D., 'Simbolički i politički rascepi u Srbiji posle 2000. Godine' in V. Petrić, G. Svilanović, K. Solioz (eds.), *Srbija je važna. Unutrašnje reforme i evropske integracije*, trans. by T. Milosavljević, Beograd 2009 (*Edicija Samizdat*, 59).
- Pavlowitch S.K., *Historia Bałkanów (1804-1945)*, trans. by J. Polak, Warszawa 2009 (*Biblioteka Humanisty Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego*).
- Perica V., *Balkanski idoli. Religija i nacionalizam u jugoslovenskim državama*, Beograd 2006 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 156).
- Petrović S., *Srpska mitologija*, Vol. 1, Niš 2000.
- Polkowska A.M., *Macedonia*, Wrocław 2000.
- Potkański W., 'Odrodzenie narodowe w Europie na przełomie XX i XXI wieku na przykładzie Szkocji i Macedonii' in M. Jeziński (ed.), *Współczesne nacjonalizmy*, Toruń 2008.
- Schuller W., *Griechische Geschichte*, München 2002 (*Oldenbourg Grundriss der Geschichte*, 1A).
- Schwandner-Sievers S., 'The Albanian Aromanians' Awakening: Identity Politics and Conflicts in Post-Communist Albania', *ECMI Working Papers*, No. 3 (1999), pp. 15-16, at <http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_lfpubdb/working_paper_3.pdf>.
- Shea J., *Macedonia and Greece. The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, Jefferson 1997.
- Sieradzan J., *Od kultu do zbrodni. Ekscentryzm i szaleństwo w religiach XX wieku*, Katowice 2006.
- Smith A.D., *The Antiquity of Nations*, Cambridge 2004.
- Spahiu N., *National Awakening Process among Orthodox Albanians*, Hamburg 2006.
- Śmieja W., *Gorsze światy. Migawki z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Warszawa 2012 (*Bieguny*).
- Taczyńska K., Twardowska A. (eds.), *Poznać Bałkany. Historia, polityka, kultura, języki*, Vol. 4, Toruń 2012.
- Ташковски Д., *За македонската нација*, Скопје 1976.
- Thaçi H., Doucette S., *Kosovo "Moral Democracy" or Kosovo "Greater Serbia"?*, Prishtina 2004.

- Todorova M., *Balkany wyobrażone*, trans. by P. Szymor, M. Budzińska, Wołowiec 2008.
- Todorova M., *Dizanje prošlosti u vazduh. Ogledi o Balkanu i Istočnoj Evropi*, trans. by S. Glišić, Beograd 2010 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 184).
- Ugrešić D., *Nikogo nie ma w domu*, trans. by D.J. Ćirlić, Kraków 2008.
- Usakiewicz K., 'Aleksander Wielki – od postaci historycznej do bohatera kulturowego' in K. Taczyńska, A. Twardowka (eds.), *Poznać Balkany. Historia, polityka, kultura, języki*, Vol. 4, Toruń 2012.
- Witte J., Vyver J.D. van der (eds.), *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective. Legal Perspectives*, The Hague 1996.
- Zefi S., *Islamization of Albanians through Centuries (15-20th Century). Reasons for Islamization and the Stance of the Church towards the Occurrence*, trans. by A. Spahiu, Prizren 2006.
- Žirarde R., *Politički mitovi i mitologije*, trans. by A. Jovanović, Beograd 2000 (*Biblioteka XX Vek*, 107).

Magdalena REKŚĆ, PhD – works as an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Łódź. Moreover, she works as the Secretary of the Academia at the Research Centre of the University of Łódź “Balkans at the turn of the 21st Century”. The field of her scientific interests covers: qualitative factors in political science explanation, historical policy as far as political, social and cultural problems in the Balkan region are concerned. Magdalena Rekść is the author of one monograph: *The National Myths and Their Role in Creating Politics as Exemplified by the Former Yugoslavia's States*. She has also published over 30 scientific papers.