

## PREFACE

The third volume of the series **“THE BALKANS – LANGUAGES, HISTORY, CULTURE”** includes the papers by the participants in the international scholarly conference under the same heading, held on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2011 under the patronage of the Rector of “St Cyril and St Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo. The ambitions of the organizers to establish this forum as a model of academic dialog about the Balkan history, languages and culture were successfully realized during its third implementation with the participation of representatives of some of the most prestigious universities and scholarly institutions from Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey, Serbia, and the Republic of Macedonia.

The papers (50 in number) presented in this collection give exact impression of the debates held at the four sections of the conference: **“Religion and State during the Centuries”**, **“Society, Culture and Religion”**, **“The Cultural Factor in Language”**, **“Social and Cultural Geography”**.

Some of the most important issues discussed during the scholarly forum are considered in the article by Daniela Viktoria Buer, which was presented as a plenary paper under the title **“State, Religion, Nationality. Some Considerations on South-Eastern Europe (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century)”**. The author emphasizes on the projections of the “Ottoman heritage” in the formation of the national states in the Balkans, which established religious nationalism as a determining factor in this quite conflicting process.

The comparative studies published in the first section of the collection outline several thematic fields within the wide chronological range, from antiquity to nowadays: religious beliefs and the attitude of the Church structures towards political power and society in antiquity and the Middle Ages (K. Dopanci, I. Ivanov, M. Mladenov); the relations state-religion-society in the Ottoman Empire and especially in the Balkans, Central Europe and Russia (I. Cazan, K. Mutafova, A. Andreev); religion, state, public construction and subsidies (A. Antonov); the religious syncretism in the Balkans and the phenomenon of crypto-Christianity (R.-D. Chelaru); the statute of the Orthodox Church from the period of the Ottoman domination until the fundamental changes in 1947 (P. Petkov, L. Doncheva); the connection between the state institutions, the constitutions and the statute of the religious structures (M. Yovevska); religious and national identity in the Balkans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the process of globalization (D. Citiriga, M. Lasca, F. Anghel, S. Anchev, M. Veleva).

Quite a wide thematic circle form the papers in the section **“Society, Culture and Religion”** devoted to: the role of religious beliefs and religion in society and the position of the Church structures (Zh. Zhekov, N. Hristova); magic and magical practices in Byzantium (D. Dimitrov); the motif of cannibalism in Balkan medieval texts (I. Rasheva) and the symbolism of dolls in the holiday calendar in the Balkans

(R. Popov); the Ottoman heritage and the national “Balkan” states (G. J. Demir); attempts to new defining of the Macedonian nation in the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia (M. Mihov); the particoloured picture of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious urban space in the Balkans (M. Karamihova, V. Georgieva, E. Koumranzi, L. Dima, Z. D. Abaci, H. Mevsim).

The main stresses in the papers from the section **“The Cultural Factor in Language”** are laid on the following issues: medieval Bulgarian, Serbian, and Russian literary and cultural interrelations (D. Kenanov, N. Gavazova); the etymology and meaning of titles in texts from the First Bulgarian Kingdom (N. Hrisimov); linguistic connections and influences in the Balkans (A. Petrova, H. Marku, R. Lambu, S. Mihaylesku, V. Petrov); the Greek language, the European civilization and the contemporary multilingualism (D. Rumpo); the academic norm and the rhetoric structures in the different cultures (S. Popovska, D. Pirsl); the language and culture of the “other” in the schools and universities in the Balkans and educational policies of the Balkan states (Ts. Ivanova); the predetermined historical approach of the Balkan literatures (M. Vladeva).

In the papers presented in the section **“Social and Cultural Geography”** topical issues are discussed which concern: the geographic space, the cultural identity and the processes of globalization, and their projections in teaching geography, economics and cultural tourism (S. Dermendzhieva, P. Sabeva, B. Dimitrova); regional studying of the cultural characteristics (F. Vartolomei, M.-T. Andrei, C. Gherasim, I. Armas, I. Pop, P.-S. Nedea); West and East as geographic and mental constructions (P. Parashkevov). Innovative approaches (agrarian clusters) and debatable issues of the socio-economic and electoral geography in the context of the Balkans and Bulgaria more precisely are also submitted for discussion (A. Dermendzhiev, I. Markov, M. Penerliev, D. Simeonov, R. Yankov).

The editorial board hopes that the present collection will become the next step in the studying of the complicated issues of the history, culture, languages, and literature of the Balkans, that it will “close” part of the debatable problems, but will “open” new ones too. Most probably part of the defended theses will provoke discussions in our scholarly circles because of their quite disputable character. The papers are published in the collection as they have been presented by their authors, without interference, corrections or critical commentaries made by the members of the editorial board.

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