

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

XLI



2010

# BALCANICA

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UDC 930.85(4-12)

ISSN 0350-7653

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
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# BALCANICA

## XLI (2010)

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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BELGRADE  
2011

Publisher  
Institute for Balkan Studies  
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
Belgrade, Knez Mihailova 35/IV  
www.balkaninstitut.com  
e-mail: balkinst@bi.sanu.ac.rs



The origin of the Institute goes back to the Institut des Études balkaniques founded in Belgrade in 1934 as the only of the kind in the Balkans. The initiative came from King Alexander I Karadjordjević, while the Institute's scholarly profile was created by Ratko Parežanin and Svetozar Spanačević. The Institute published *Revue internationale des Études balkaniques*, which assembled most prominent European experts on the Balkans in various disciplines. Its work was banned by the Nazi occupation authorities in 1941. The Institute was not re-established until 1969, under its present-day name and under the auspices of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. It assembled a team of scholars to cover the Balkans from prehistory to the modern age and in a range of different fields of study, such as archaeology, ethnography, anthropology, history, culture, art, literature, law. This multidisciplinary approach remains its long-term orientation.



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Volume XLI of the annual *Balcanica* is printed with financial support from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia

in nineteenth-century Serbia. His other books are devoted to the political history of the Yugoslav state: from the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia in 1918 and its collapse in 1941 to its postwar restoration on a communist basis and its disintegration in 1991. These books include explanation of the Serbo-Croatian relations in Yugoslavia and especially Serbo-Albanian relations in Kosovo and Metohija. Dragnich's retirement from academia did not mean retirement from scholarly work and research. He published several books, such as *The First Yugoslavia. Search for a Viable Political System* (1983), *Saga of Kosovo* (1984), *Serbs and Croats. The Struggle in Yugoslavia* (1992), *Serbia's Historical Heritage* (1994), *Yugoslavia's Disintegration and the Struggle for Truth* (1995), *Serbia and Yugoslavia* (1998). The last book Alex Dragnich wrote, *Serbia through the Ages* (2004), is devoted to the history of Serbia. This outstanding work symbolically rounds off the impressive scholarly oeuvre of Alex Dragnich.

Alex N. Dragnich was a founding member and first president of the Society for Serbian Studies, dedicated to promoting and enhancing knowledge of Serbian culture and society throughout the North American continent, and to fostering and supporting scholarly research in a variety of fields. The Society publishes the journal *Serbian Studies*, where Serbian scholars and writers from the Serbian diaspora, and authors from Serbia and other Serb-populated lands occupy a special place.

Dragnich was a foreign member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts from 1997, member of the Privy Council of the Royal Family of Serbia, and recipient of the Grand Cross of the Order of White Eagle conferred by the Crown. In 2002 he was awarded a special medal by the Yugoslav post-Milošević and democratic government for merit in improving the image of Serbs and Serbia in the United States.

Alex N. Dragnich passed away in 2009 in Bowie, Maryland, at age of ninety-seven.

ALEKSANDAR JOVANOVIĆ (1947–2009)  
*PER ASPERA AD ASTRA*

by Vladimir P. Petrović and Sanja Pilipović\*

Aleksandar Jovanović was born in 1947 in Belgrade. Having graduated from the University of Belgrade in 1970, he left for Niš to join the local museum. Five years later, he returned to his native town to embark upon a university career as a teaching assistant at the School of Philosophy. He received his MA degree in 1976, and in 1982 defended his doctoral thesis devoted to the Roman-period burial practices in the territory of Yugoslavia. He climbed the university ladder to full professorship at the departments of Classical Studies and of Archaeology of the Belgrade University School of Phi-

losophy, and he also taught at the School of Philosophy of Novi Sad University.

The bibliography of Aleksandar Jovanović includes numerous studies, contributions and monographs. The important monographic volumes such as *Jewellery in Roman Dardania* (1978), *Forms of Burial in the Territory of Yugoslavia at the Time of the Roman Empire* (1984) and two bilingual, Serbian and English, books *Serbia – Homeland of Roman Emperors* (2006) and *Essays on Antique Cults and Iconography* (2007) reflect just some aspects of his

\* Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade

rich scholarly work. One of the last two monographs looks at the lives of sixteen Roman emperors born in what is now Serbia (Trajan Decius, Claudius II Gothicus, Aurelian, Probus, Maximianus Herculius, Constantius, Chlorus, Galerius, Maximinus Daia, Flavius Severus, Constantine the Great, Licinius, Constantius II, Vetranio, Jovian, Gratian and Constantius III), while the other is conceived as a selection of smoothly written and carefully worded problem-oriented essays addressing a variety of research topics.

A significant area of Professor Jovanović's interest was the iconography of the Greco-Roman world, to mention but his texts on a pottery vessel decorated in relief from Singidunum (1997), on the silver emblems from Tekija (1990), his contribution to the iconographic studies of the Augustan golden age (2001), or archaeological notes on the sacral monuments from Macedonia (2005), or his contribution to the study of Roman-period iconography in Upper Moesia (2007). Ancient cults constituted another area of his scholarly focus, as best exemplified by the text on a 4th-century-BC syncretistic monument from Vinik near Niš (1977) or the one on the cult of Venus *Funeraria* in Upper Moesia (2000). To be mentioned are also the texts devoted to the late Roman villa at Mediana near Niš, but also

the fact that Aleksandar Jovanović was not at all reluctant to address the delicate problem of archaeological counterfeits, as evidenced by the texts "Falsifikate im archäologischen material—eine warnende aktualität" (2002) and "On an assemblage of forged Roman rings" (2005).

Apart from his work of a scholar and researcher, Aleksandar Jovanović left an indelible mark on generations of archaeology and art history students through a series of his lovingly and carefully prepared undergraduate and postgraduate courses and tutorials at two universities, Belgrade and Novi Sad. But the tremendous influence he exerted on young people was not only that of a teacher passionate about his subject, classical civilization, but also of an exceptional person whose warmth, infinite kindness, generosity and sensitivity will remain his everlasting gift not only to his family and friends but also to his students and colleagues.

Professor Aleksandar Jovanović had the ability to impart his tremendous knowledge in an unassuming way, and to understand, reassure and respect his collocutors. Conversations with him filled us, his students, with a feeling of joy and satisfaction, and we remain deeply grateful to Professor Jovanović for his almost parental support which was our encouragement and which made us better people.

Publisher

Institute for Balkan Studies  
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
Belgrade, Knez Mihailova 35/IV  
www.balkaninstitut.com  
e-mail: balkinst@bi.sanu.ac.rs

Editorial assistant

*Marina Adamović-Kulenović*

Layout

*Kranislav Vranić*

Cover design

*Aleksandar Palavestra*

Printed by

*Čigoja štampa*

Belgrade

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији  
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

930.85

949.7

**BALCANICA** : Annual of the Institute for Balkan Studies = Балканика : годишњак  
Балканолошког института / editor-in-chief Dušan T. Bataković. - 1970, књ. 1- .  
- Belgrade : Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Institute for Balkan Studies =  
Београд : Српска академија наука и уметности. Балканолошки институт, 1970-  
(Belgrade : Čigoja štampa). - 24 cm

Godišnje

ISSN 0350-7653 = Balcanica (Beograd)

COBISS.SR-ID 6289154