

UDC 930.85(4-12)

YU ISSN 0350-7653

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

BALCANICA

XXXVIII

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

Editor

DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ

Editorial Board

FRANCIS CONTE (Paris), DIMITRIJE DJORDJEVIĆ (Santa Barbara),
DJORDJE S. KOSTIĆ, LJUBOMIR MAKSIMOVIĆ, DANICA POPOVIĆ,
BILJANA SIKIMIĆ, ANTHONY-EMIL TACHIAOS (Thessaloniki),
SVETLANA M. TOLSTAJA (Moscow), GABRIELLA SCHUBERT (Jena),
NIKOLA TASIĆ (Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies)

BELGRADE
2008



derstand more easily the difficulties that the young Serbian state and its diplomacy were facing and to build a more complete picture of the directions taken by Serbian diplomacy in the years preceding the Annexation Crisis and the Young Turk Revolution. It is observable that the diplomacy of Serbia headed simultaneously in several directions, as evidenced, for example, by the effort to persuade the Western powers into supporting Serbia's national and political position. So in 1907 Serbia took part in the international conference at The Hague, and in the second half of the same year, Serbian diplomacy sought to re-establish commercial relations and negotiate a new agreement with Austro-Hungary. The selected documents offer the scholars interested into this peri-

od, particularly those who are not able to consult the material kept in the Serbian archives, the possibility of taking a more complete look at the international-political developments in the Balkans in the early twentieth century. The series *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1903-1914*, therefore, is a highly useful tool for studying Serbia's international position in the period covered. In spite of many scholarly, methodological and organizational problems, inevitable in working with scattered and damaged archival materials, the editors have succeeded in making a comprehensive and methodologically well-structured collection of important diplomatic and related documents available to the public.

BLACK LAMBS AND GREY FALCONS: WOMEN TRAVELLING IN THE BALKANS. ED. BY JOHN B. ALLCOCK AND ANTONIA YOUNG. NEW YORK, OXFORD: BERGHAHN BOOKS, 2000. Pp. 308.

*Reviewed by Sanja Lazarević Radak**

This edited volume, first published in 1991, is devoted to women travellers and their role in creating the image of the Balkans through travel writings. The editors John B. Allcock and Antonia Young present fifteen articles emphasizing the female perspective in creating the image of the Other. This volume also has a relevance to the complex question of the socialization of women in different epochs, from the Victorian age to the mid-1950s. The European patriarchal system, with its restrictive regulations and pressure of conventions, gave rise to a particular kind of women travellers. Seeking to break the patterns of their own cultures, they became explorers and "escapists". The perception of the Other is seen as a construct influenced by priorities of one's own culture and its symbolic system of ideas, its norms and values. With every culture having its own ideas of what is strange and exotic, a multitude of perceptions are

possible. "Feminine culture", if there is such a thing, is a culture of the Other, but travelling is not only a masculine business. Therefore, the essential question is "What is a specifically female contribution in writing about the travel experience and what is specific about female emotions, imagination and ideas?"

This book brings information about Rebecca West, Mary Edith Durham, Emily Balch, Flora Sandes, Rose Wilder Lane, Margaret Masson Hasluck, Louisa Rayner, Mercia McDermott and other women travellers. As Allcock remarks, there is no doubt that these women significantly influenced the popular perception of the Balkan region and its culture.

The authors suggest that the notion of "Balkans" burdened with negative connotations suggested a contrast to a traveller's homeland. Perceived as epitomizing a

* Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade

savage Europe, the Balkans was described as wild and dangerous, but also as attractive. It promised adventure, freedom, escape from Victorian and Edwardian patterns of behaviour. It was constructed as a wild, rough and dangerous place, but also mysterious and fascinating.

Omer Hadžiselimović takes us to a mid-nineteenth-century journey with Miss MacKenzie and Miss Irby through the “realities of Bosnia”, an Ottoman province at the time. To understand the Bosnian multinational situation involved facing the problems of cross and crescent, violence, horrors of war, irrational conflicts previously unknown to the travelling ladies. They saw the beauty of towns and villages, tasted coffee and sweets, but their most striking experience was the bitterness of war. Their warm feelings for the Christians, especially Serbs, “children of Europe” as they called them, inspired in Miss Irby the urge to protect Christian girls and to provide for their proper education.

On the other hand, John Hodgson finds that Mary Edith Durham’s perception of the Balkans in the early twentieth century changed with political change. Her views on the region, strongly marked by her intimate experience (abandoned by the Serbian officer she was in love with, she became an ardent anti-Serbian supporter of Albanians), varied from fascination to disappointment. She travelled across Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and along the Adriatic coast, in pursuit of pleasure and adventure, but her fascination with the Albanian national cause eventually led her to political activism. Her valuable collection of Balkan folk costumes inspired a picturesque and exotic image of the Balkans.

Elinor Murray Desaplatović and Joel Halpern devote their attention to an adventurous and brave woman, Emily Balch. She was one of the few opponents of the widespread perception of Slavic

immigrants as dangerous foreigners and a threat to American democracy, projecting all problems of one’s own society onto the Other, members of minority groups, those unfamiliar newcomers and their “indecent culture”. Emily Balch undertook a year’s journey in 1905. Travelling through Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, she focused on the points of high emigration such as Modruš-Rijeka, Zagreb, Varaždin, Dalmatian coast, and the Gulf of Kotor. The authors emphasize that Emily Balch was a serious researcher, but not even her work was fully free of exoticism. Her travels influenced her political attitudes, and she became an international peace worker.

Monica Krippner writes about the British women who volunteered as doctors and nurses in the First World War, to mention but Elsie Inglis, Flora Sandes, Emily Simmonds, Lady Paget, Elizabeth Ross, Agnes Bennet and Isobel Emslie. Especially interesting is Julie Wheelwright’s story about Flora Sandes, a girl that dreamed of becoming a boy. Difficulties that a woman, the “ultimate” Other, could experience in patriarchal Europe inspired her journey to an unknown world. She joined the Serbian Army (becoming an officer in 1916) and, playing a traditionally male role, fulfilled her dream. There are interesting descriptions of humanitarian operations in Serbia, from the initial victories in 1914, the retreat across Albania and recovery in Corfu (1915–16), to operations on the Salonika Front.

Antonia Young portrays Rose Wilder Lane (1886–1968) as an unusual girl who left home and school at the age of seventeen to embark upon a writing career. She visited Italy, Greece, Albania, Egypt, Armenia, Arabia and Persia. Her travels across Albania in the 1920s, of which she wrote in the *Peaks of Shala*, in fact were a quest for what she saw as man’s true homeland. Her fascination with the primal innocence of a people in the child-

hood of civilization was part of her romantic and exotic outlook.

According to Felicity Rosslyn, Rebecca West tried to hide her stereotyped view of the German people behind Gerda, a character from her famous book inspired by her journey in Yugoslavia in 1937: *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, published in two volumes in 1941. Gerda is the image of a dangerous Other, a metaphor for materialism and cultural sterility, as much as it is a symbol of overcoming conflicts in Europe. From Rosslyn's perspective, Rebecca West's message about friends and enemies was simple, as her stereotypes were.

Mark Clark's article on Margaret Mason Hasluck is a story about a great traveller of the 1920s and 30s, most interested in the Bektashi. This Sufi order was her inspiration and the reason for her journeys in Albania and Macedonia. Genuinely interested in social life, she wrote reports and letters, took pictures, measured the heads of local populations and made long lists of their customs. Hasluck travelled to Athens, Cairo and Istanbul, but Albania and the social life of Muslim Albanians remained in the focus of her interest. According to Clark, her style was not scholarly and her travels had an escapist form. Nevertheless Hasluck left us a valuable material on Albanian culture.

Anne Kay emphasizes the importance of Louisa Rayner's work. During the Second World War Rayner stayed in a Serbian rural household for six months, observing rural life and taking part in it. She focused on the details of everyday life and domestic routines. She perceived the presence of matriarchal patterns caused by the absence of men, but the main body of her work deals with political difficulties disturbing the routine of domestic life in a small village. The research into the relationship between everyday life and politics was Rayner's contribution to understanding the Serbian countryside.

Diane Waller introduces us to the work of Mercia MacDermott, a great traveller driven by political motives. Fascinated by the revolutions against Ottoman rule in the Balkans, she became an English teacher in Sofia (she died in Bulgaria in 1989), where she began to study the ideas of Macedonian revolutionaries, trying to understand the background of the *Ilinden* (St. Elias Day) Uprising (1903). She encouraged girls to educate themselves, to work, to venture beyond the domestic sphere. Viewed from that perspective, Mercia MacDermott's work involved fighting for women's rights.

Finally, Barbara Kerewsky-Halpern encourages us to see the women's travel accounts as an anthropological attempt at understanding both other cultures and their own respective cultures.

Image construction is a universal phenomenon. Almost inevitably, it involves prejudices and stereotypes. In this particular case, the Other was observed, studied, their heads were measured to establish the racial type they belonged to. The Other was dangerous, exotic, attractive, ugly or beautiful, but always real and unreal at the same time, and therefore their humanness was open to question. At once reluctant to indulge in self-reflection and attracted to it, the traveller embarked upon a different world. According to E. Said, the Orient is a system of representations framed by political forces. This construction is represented through ideas of discovering the world of "otherness", by inventing or imagining an "inferior" Other. Allcock points out that this can help us understand the process of constructing an imaginary Balkans through universal ideas such as "a land of the living past", "the childhood of civilization" and "savageness". As Allcock he observes, the Balkans was depicted as incompletely Oriental, and its inhabitants as inheritors of ancient civilizations, but too close to Nature, which made them children of civilization. The population

of the Balkans was rural, and their virtues and vices shaped by the tribal tradition of warrior-type societies. Contradictory in itself, the Balkans eluded definition. A mysterious and dark history filled with irrational brutality was seen as “typically Balkan”.

Let us return to the essential questions: What is the feminine perspective in viewing the Balkan populations as significant Others? and What is the specific contribution of the women travellers to creating the image of the Balkan populations? Or: Are they friends or enemies, or simply exotic Orientals? The women travellers viewed the Balkans as “traditionally warrior societies”, as contradictory, both “civilized” and “uncivilized”, but the Balkan cultural text was read as predominantly masculine. For that rea-

son, Allcock quotes the attributes such as courage, roughness, strength and sturdiness. Balkan societies were seen as half-way between rational and irrational, real and unreal, civilized and savage, though not barbarian. In contact with a world previously unknown to them, the travellers became aware of different social patterns, and perhaps most importantly, they modified their own self-images through their reflection on Others. As the editors put it, most of these women were “black lambs and grey falcons” attempting to escape from the patterns of their own cultures.

This book is a rare contribution to understanding the feminine perspective of cultural displacement and the diverse significance of travel literature.

RĂZVAN THEODORESCU, *CONSTANTIN BRÂNCOVEANU ÎN TRE “CASA CĂRȚILOR” ȘI “IEVROPA”*. BUCHAREST: ENCICLOPEDIA RAO, 2006. PHOTO BY IOAN OPREA. PP. 130. ILLS. 76.

Reviewed by Ljiljana Stošić*

University professor and member of the Romanian Academy, Răzvan Theodorescu is an erudite intellectual and eminent scholar in ancient Romanian and European art and civilization with a bibliography containing hundreds of items. He is a laureate of the Herder Prize traditionally presented at Vienna University.

The originator of an art and life style known as the “Brancovenian style”, the Wallachian prince Constantine Brancoveanu (1688–1714), at once was a true humanist, a monarch ruling on the fringes of Europe and a contemporary of Louis XIV, Augustus II, Peter the Great and Clement XI. His being likened to equal-to-the-apostles Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor and founder of the city on Bosphorus – the Second Rome – in a fresco in the monastery of Hurez (1694) was a political manifesto conveying moralizing and artistic messages. The first contacts with the Uni-

versity of Padua and this city’s scholarly, philosophical, literary and artistic circles, the opening of the school of St Sabbas and the first printing house in Bucharest, took place under Constantine’s predecessor, the Ottoman vassal Șerban Cantacuzino (1678–88), rightfully called a “new Solomon” or “Ptolemy Philadelph” by his contemporaries. That the Brancovenian style and outlook in fact continued the Cantacuzian is shown by the plan of the monastery church of Hurez, which is a simplified version of the triconch of Curtea de Argeș (1512–17), and by the portrait gallery of his predecessors on the Wallachian throne (Neagoe Basarab, Radu Șerban, Matei Basarab, Constantin Șerban, Șerban Cantacuzino), which lays an ideological emphasis on the dynastic continuity of Constantine Brancoveanu as a direct seventh-generation descend-

* Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade