

Polish Legacy. Balkan Heritage.

Polish contribution to culture, art and science of the Western Balkans

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Introduction

Although geographically distant, Poland and the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) have enjoyed a long history of relations and exchange of people and ideas. This process was never just one-way. It always took place in both directions, although the level of intensity varied during different historical epochs. A quick glance at the trade networks and communication routes of Europe in any given historical period would reveal direct links between Poland and the Western Balkans. The list of those who travelled and traded, fought and made peace, saved life as doctors, helped build infrastructure as engineers and studied and taught in the region would be a long one. This is especially true regarding those who left a distinctive mark in the fields of arts, sciences and culture. The aim of this album is to describe the lives and deeds of these people and to place their activities in a larger and contemporary context. As a result, it is hoped that by rediscovering these stories that they may not be lost to history. The work focuses on Poles or people born in what used to be Poland at the given time. These are people who significantly contributed to the development of the arts, science and culture of the Albanians, Bosniaks, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Serbs. Such a task seems almost impossible without discussing the wider political, social and economic contexts of various historical periods. This need to focus on context is reflected in the very structure of this album. It is divided into four chapters based on chronological order. The album starts with a short historical introduction in order to help people from the Western Balkans become more familiar with Poland. For this purpose, the introduction discusses various similarities and differences between Polish and Western Balkan histories. Next, in each chapter we describe the most important personalities, events, processes, ideas and phenomena related to cultural, artistic and scientific cooperation between Poland and the Western Balkans. As aforementioned, the album pays special attention to the Polish contribution in these fields. The first chapter discusses events during the Kingdom of Poland's union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and ends with its loss of independence in 1795. The second one

refers to historical events until 1918, when Poland did not exist as a state. The third chapter covers the 'short' 20th century (1918-1989), which involves Poland's interwar independence and communist period. Finally, the fourth one refers to events from the fall of the communist regimes to the present day. In addition to this, we have also attempted to offer a somewhat symmetrical narrative within the work. Thus, apart from describing the cases of Polish men and women who lived, worked, created and often died in the Balkans, we also discuss 'the Balkans in Poland' in a more rudimentary form. These are people and ideas that reached Poland from the Balkans and influenced the political, social and cultural life of the country.

I. Poland and the Western Balkans until 1795

The first Polish state was established by the Piast dynasty in the first half of the 10th century. In 966 Poland accepted Christianity and thus the country came under the influence of the Roman Catholic world. Since then, most Poles have remained Roman Catholics. Despite this, it is important to remember that Polish culture and identity have also been greatly shaped by experiences of confrontation and coexistence with neighbours. These include Orthodox Christians, Greek Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews and others.

In 1025, Poland became a kingdom. For almost three hundred years, however, it was ruled mostly by princes. Only after 1320 was every successive Polish ruler crowned. Between the 10th and 13th centuries Poland often found itself formally or informally under the suzerainty of the German Empire. The immigration of many Germans and Jews, especially to cities, contributed greatly to the development of the country but also resulted in considerable ethnic change in certain regions.

Moreover, Poland experienced a period of internal fragmentation in the 12th and 13th centuries. Consequently, huge territories were lost in the west of the country. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Poland was restored in the 14th century. The state even gained the status of a regional power, expanding towards the east. After the childless death of the last king from the Piast dynasty, the Angevin dynasty ruled the country for a short

period. This ended with the marriage of Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania to Jadwiga, Queen of Poland, in 1386. This marriage established the Polish-Lithuanian Union and with it the Jagiellonian dynasty, which ruled for almost 200 years.



The author of this portrait of Jadwiga was Marcello Bacciarelli (1731-1818), the court painter of the last Polish King Stanisław August Poniatowski (1764-1795).

During this period, the union became, as one of the largest states in Europe, a continental power. It was a highly multiethnic (mostly various Slavic peoples) and multi-religious (inhabited mostly by Orthodox Christians and Roman Catholics but also Jews and Muslims) state, which, at that time, distinguished itself in Europe through its tolerance. The political system was built on the basis of feudal parliamentarism, which was controlled by nobility. In the 15th and 16th centuries its culture flourished and Poland gained the status of one of main centres of European civilization. Poland also developed economically, playing the role of 'Europe's granary'. In effect, by the 16th century Poland was not considerably poorer than the most developed European countries. However, the continued dominance of the serf-based agricultural economy resulted in the country

becoming more underdeveloped in comparison to Western Europe. Moreover, the country started to adopt an oligarchic system dominated by a dozen powerful aristocratic families. In the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century, Roman Catholicism strengthened its dominant position in the country. This was particularly true among ethnic Poles.

In 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Union transformed itself from a close confederation into a federation (*Rzeczpospolita* – the Commonwealth). After the end of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Poland became an elective monarchy. Though for most of this time it was ruled by the houses of Vasa and Wettin. The second half of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century sealed the fate of Poland. Civil wars provoked by social, political, religious and ethnic divisions, as well Russian and Swedish invasions, contributed to a dramatic decrease in population. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth turned into a de facto Russian protectorate, though St. Petersburg still recognised the special interests of Prussia and Austria in Polish affairs. In the second half of the 18th century Poland was partitioned between these three countries and finally lost its independence in 1795.

The history of the Western Balkans in the Middle Ages and early modern period often differed from the experiences of Poland. The great majority of the inhabitants of the region converted to Orthodox Christianity, though Roman Catholics represented a substantial part of the population. Byzantium subsequently shaped their culture and served as a key political model. Moreover, the Western Balkan peoples lost their states in the 15th century due to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. The political systems of the Western Balkans during the pre-modern period were more centralised and authoritarian compared to Poland. At the same time, the societies in the region were overall more egalitarian.

However, the history of the region shares important similarities with Poland in comparison to the experiences of Western Europe. The Western Balkans have represented for centuries the borderland between Eastern and Western Christianity, which after the Ottoman conquest were "joined" by Islam. Poland and the Western Balkans were also inhabited mostly by Slavs who lived next to numerous non-Slavic nations.

Already in antiquity, the Western Balkans became home for a Jewish community, attracting immigration of Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century. In the Middle Ages, the Western Balkans, though to a much smaller degree than Poland, also witnessed the immigration of Germans. In the early modern period, the Western Balkans, like Poland, also experienced a high level of ethnic diversity. This was especially true when comparing rural and urban populations. Ottoman rule also brought periods of prosperity and cultural development to the Western Balkans throughout the 15th and 17th centuries. Like in Poland, different religious and ethnic communities enjoyed relative tolerance and coexistence. This resulted in a great amount of cultural

mixing and syncretism. However, conflicts gradually challenged this reality. These were often the result of domination by certain ethnic groups and religions (Islam in the Ottoman Empire and Roman Catholicism in Poland) and the interference of external powers. The economies of the Western Balkans and Poland were dominated by agriculture and rates of urbanisation and literacy were substantially lower than in Western Europe. In the 17th and 18th centuries the transfer of power to local elites in the Western Balkans made the region more similar to Poland with regard to its political system. The greatest similarities existed between southern Poland and the Western Balkans. In the 14th and 16th centuries both regions witnessed a massive migration of Vlachs. These were

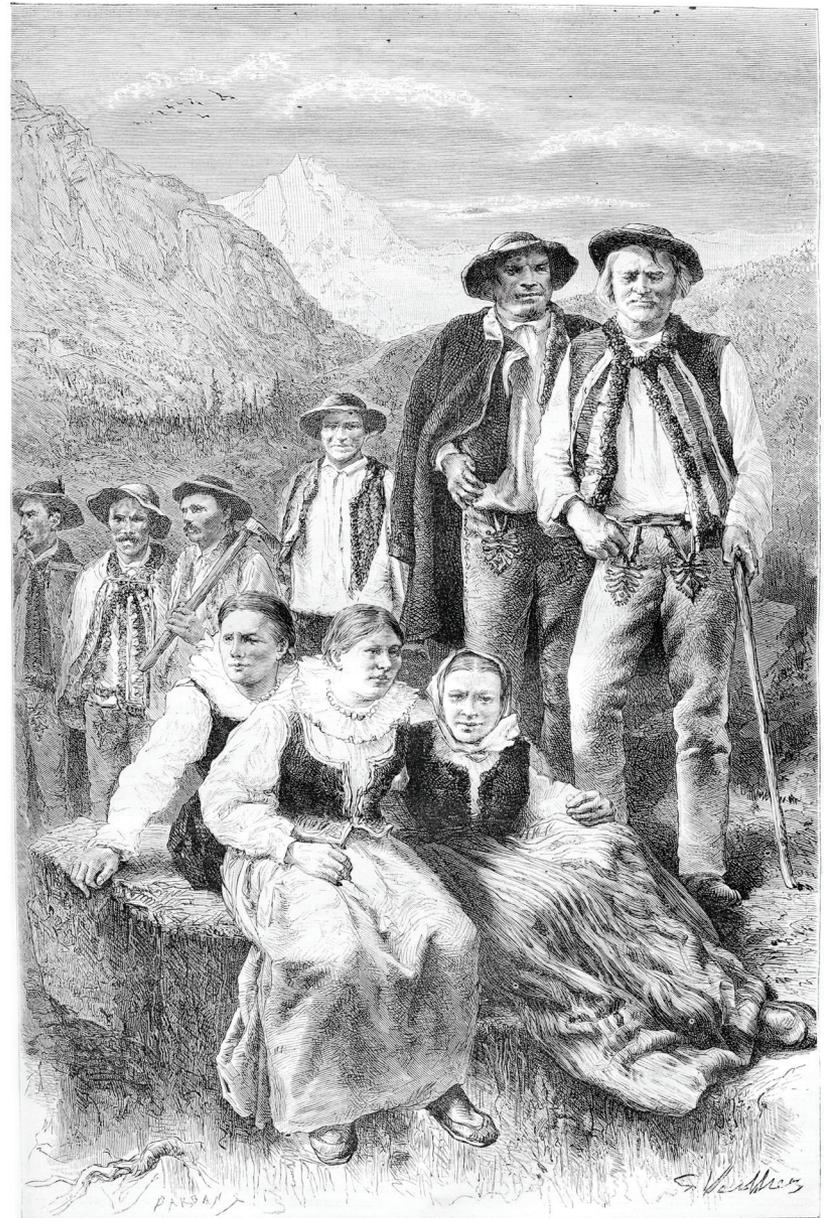


The work includes illustrations of the national dress of Poles and peoples from the Ottoman Balkans.

Romance-speaking shepherds who moved through the Dinaric Mountains and Carpathians. This common ethnic background resulted in similar patterns concerning both regions' social-economic structures and legal systems. There were also cultural similarities concerning dress, customs, beliefs, art, architecture, vocabulary and cuisine between the Polish and Western Balkan mountaineers that have sometimes survived until today. For instance, according to Kazimierz Dobrowolski, a prominent Polish ethnologist, the names of various mountain ranges in southern Poland (Bieszczady and Beskidy) are of Albanian origin. In the 19th century, the folk costumes of the mountaineers became the national dress of both the Polish and Western Balkan nations. The Carpathian Mountains served also as a "highway" for Gypsy communities migrating between the Balkans and Poland. This contributed greatly to the development of music in both regions.

The Western Balkans and Poland, to varying degrees, also share experiences regarding the expansion of the Ottoman, Russian and Habsburg empires. Wars between people of different religions and social-political hierarchies entrenched in religion contributed to a growing overlap between ethnic and religious identity in both areas. The development of relations between the Western Balkans and Poles was also facilitated by a well-established 'neighbourhood' between the Ottoman Empire and

Members of an Albanian folk group from Kosovo dancing during the 49th International Folklore Festival in Zagreb in July 2015.



Podhale highlanders presented in a drawing by Gaston Vuillier (1845-1915), a prominent French painter and traveler. The work was inspired by a photo taken by Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931), during his travels in the Tatra mountains in 1881

Poland. Indeed, from the end of the 14th century to the end of the 18th Poland-Lithuania had a common border with the Ottoman Empire. Of course, the Balkans constituted the core of this state. Moreover, at the end of the 17th century Podolia, a Polish province (today's Ukraine), found itself under Ottoman rule for several decades.

Hungarian connection

Contacts between Poland and the Western Balkans became an element of regular political and cultural relations in the 14th century due to deepening Polish-Hungarian cooperation. Meanwhile, in the Middle Ages huge parts of the Western Balkans found themselves under direct or indirect Hungarian rule. Mutual interests in the region manifested above all in marriages between Polish and Balkan dynasties. Obviously, one needs to mention particularly the marriage of Stephen Kotromanić, one of most powerful bans (princes) of Bosnia, with the Polish princess Elisabeth Piast. Their daughter, Elisabeth of Bosnia, through her marriage to the King Louis I in 1350, became the Queen of Hungary. When Louis ascended the Polish throne she became also the Queen of Poland (1370-1382) and the Jagiellons were kings of Hungary (1440-1444, 1490-1526). After the death of her husband, Elisabeth was the queen consort of both Hungary and Poland and her daughter Jadwiga was crowned 'king' of Poland in 1384. In 1997 Jadwiga was canonised by the Catholic Church. Jadwiga brought from the Balkans to Poland the Catholic monks of the Eastern rite. Their monastery in Cracow functioned for almost one century. It is worth remembering that the Kotromanić dynasty was also connected by marriage with the Counts of Celje, who were strongly related to the Piasts and Jagiellonians and also to Branković, the Serbian despot dynasty. The marriages between Polish-Lithuanian and Balkan elites did not limit itself to the Polish kings but also involved

powerful aristocratic families from Poland-Lithuania. In the first half of the 16th century members of the most prominent Orthodox Ruthenian aristocratic families from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Gliński, Wiśniowiecki, Czartoryski, Sanguszko, Zbaraski) married princesses from Serbian despot dynasties (Branković, Jaksić) living in Hungary. The representatives of these Ruthenian families gradually became Polonised and played a key role in the history of Poland. For instance, one of them, Michał Korybut Wiśniowiecki, was elected king. The hussars, the legendary Polish cavalry unit, trace their origins to Serbian mercenaries who came to Poland with brides.

Poland's orientation towards the south led to its involvement in the Hungarian wars in the Balkans, especially in the context of growing Ottoman expansion. One of the most famous European knights, Zawisza Czarny (Zawisza the Black), died in 1428 while fighting the Ottomans. Following the unsuccessful Siege of Golubac (Serbia), the Hungarian army began to cross the Danube in dismay and Zawisza Czarny, despite

Battle of Varna. The author, Stanisław Chlebowski (1835-1884), was the master painter of the Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz (1830-1876) between 1864 and 1876.



the king's offer to follow, decided to guard the army's retreat. He returned to the battlefield outnumbered and, according to legend, was captured alive and subsequently beheaded during a dispute between two janissaries over who was responsible for the famous prisoner. By all means, the peak of Polish military involvement in the Hungarian-Ottoman conflict during this period involved the campaigns of Władysław III Warneńczyk, King of Poland and Hungary (1440-1444). Serbia represented one of main battlefields for Warneńczyk's confrontation with the Ottomans. The king perished during the battle of Varna in 1444. He is the only Polish king who lost his life on the battlefield. In the following centuries, Władysław III Warneńczyk and Zawisza Czarny became icons in Polish art and literature.

The campaigns of Władysław III encouraged the Albanian nobleman Gjergj Kastrioti, commonly known as Skanderbeg, the most important Albanian national hero, to launch an uprising against the Ottomans. For the next 25 years Skanderbeg successfully opposed Ottoman advancement in the Western Balkans. He also gained huge popularity in Poland. The struggle of Skanderbeg and the Albanians against Ottoman rule was first discussed in Polish literature by Marcin Bielski (1495-1575). His *Kronika wszystkiego świata* (Chronicle of Everything in the World) was published for the first time in 1551. However, Bielski continued to work on the chronicle



for the rest of his life. Influenced by the huge popularity of Skanderbeg across 16th century Europe, Bielski presented him as a typical renaissance knight, who fought a series of victorious battles against the Ottoman invaders. Although clearly a collection of various accounts of the hero's life, Bielski's chronicle played a key role in establishing Skanderbeg's story as a topic of interest among Polish readers. Skanderbeg's portrait was placed on the facade of the Golden House in Gdańsk. This building was built at the beginning of the 17th century and designed by the prominent Flemish architect Abraham Van Den Blocke. According to accounts, one of the swords modelled on the coronation sword of Polish monarchs was supposed to be created for Skanderbeg.

The Hungarian-Ottoman wars also impacted the development of Polish-Balkan cultural ties. Thus, the ethnonym 'Bošnjak' occurred for the first time in history in a letter sent by the Bosnian King Tvrtko II in 1440 to Władysław III Warneńczyk. In this document, he stressed that "Bosniaks had the same ancestors as Poles" and that both nations speak one language. It is possible that the change from the previous ethnonym of 'Bošnjanim' to 'Bošnjak' occurred under the influence of the Polish language (a Pole in Polish is 'Poljak'). Although the original language in which it was written remains unknown, the majority of preserved manuscripts of the *Kronika turecka* (Turkish Chronicle) are in Polish. It is possible that Konstantin Mihailović from Ostrovica (Serbia) wrote it sometime between 1491 and 1500, most probably during his stay in Poland. The book contains a life story of Konstantin and his exploits as an Ottoman high rank officer, a detailed description of some of the Ottoman Empire and its campaigns in the second half of the 15th century, and even a political memorandum addressed to then Polish King Jan Olbracht and his brother King Władysław of Hungary. This urged the monarchs to wage war against the Ottomans. However, Konstantin stressed in his work that the political system of the Ottoman Empire was based on the meritocracy and merits presenting that model as a source of inspiration for the Polish King. Discovered and published in 1828 under the incorrect title *Pamiętnik Janczara Polaka* (Memoir of a Polish

Whilst particularly famous among Albanians, Skanderbeg was venerated as Athleta Christi across Europe, including Poland.

Jannissary), the book soon became a significant point of reference for the history of the Western Balkans during that period. It also played a key role in understanding Polish-Serbian and Polish-Ottoman relations. The work subsequently contributed to the rise of pan-Slavism at this time.

Slavia Orthodoxa

The story of Konstantin Mihailović shows that direct military relations between Poland and the Balkans also opened up opportunities for cultural exchange between the Orthodox communities of both areas. Indeed, Poland-Lithuania was inhabited mostly for almost three centuries (14th-17th centuries) by Orthodox Slavs (mainly Ruthenians, the ancestors of Belarusians and Ukrainians). After Russia, this represented the largest Orthodox community in the world. Many members of the Orthodox elite defined themselves for a long period in a multilayered way. For instance, they understood themselves as Polish or Lithuanian nationals in a political sense but remained ethnic Ruthenians. Church Slavonic was a lingua franca that united the Polish-Lithuanian Orthodox Christians and their fellow-believers in the Western Balkans. At the beginning of the 15th century, literature in this language developed in Poland-Lithuania thanks to the immigration of Balkan Orthodox Christians. One of them was Grigorij Camblak (c. 1365-1420), one of the most important Orthodox medieval writers and metropolitan of Kiev in Poland-Lithuania. Camblak was originally Bulgarian but before coming to Poland-Lithuania he lived in Serbia at Visoki Dečani (present day Kosovo). He wrote a biography and hymn of the

The Orthodox monastery of Supraśl was built in the Gothic style. However, its interiors were decorated by Serbian painters in the Byzantine style typical of the Western Balkans.

King of Serbia Stefan Dečanski, a report on the transfer of the remnants of St. Paraskeva to Serbia and even edited the service dedicated to this saint.

In 1490-1491 the printing house run by Schweipolt Fyol, a Polish-German in Cracow, printed the first-ever books in the Cyrillic alphabet and Church Slavonic language. The most important book was *Oktoechos*, which was based on the earlier translations from Greek to Church Slavonic by Cyril and Methodius, as well as their disciples from the Ohrid School (North Macedonia) in the 9th century. The books printed in Cracow were highly instrumental in reinforcing the Orthodox liturgy among the Slavic populations of the Western Balkans. In the 16th century the monastery of Supraśl, located in north-eastern Poland, became one of the most influential monastic centres of the Orthodox world. Its library gathered a huge collection of books from the Balkans. The monastery's church possessed many frescos painted by a group of Serbian painters under the supervision of master Nektorius. At the end of the 16th century, Gabriel, the archbishop of Ohrid, visited the monastery and elevated it to the status of 'lavra'. Monks from Supraśl visited regularly Mount Athos and the Serbian Hilandar monastery.



In 1581 the Ukrainian city of Ostrog, located then in Poland, produced the first Bible entirely in Cyrillic and Church Slavonic. This monumental publication was richly decorated and by all means a typographical landmark. The significance of the Ostrog Bible was enormous for Orthodox Christians living in the Western Balkans and it became highly popular in the region. Equally important for the use of Church Slavonic and, in the case of Serbia, its reintroduction into liturgy and religious practices, was a grammar written by Meletius Smotrycki (1577-1633), then Orthodox archbishop of Polock but later a convert to Greek Catholicism. The book was published in 1618 in nearby Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and since then became a standard textbook for teaching, learning and practicing Church Slavonic. This was true for Orthodox people both in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Western Balkans.

This rise in printing activity finds its origins in the intellectual ferment provoked by debate within the Orthodox community regarding relations with Rome. In 1596 many bishops of the Orthodox Church in Poland signed the Union of Brest with the Roman Catholic Church and established the Greek Catholic branch. At the beginning of the 17th century the Union of Brest served as a source of inspiration for Roman Catholic clergy in the Western Balkans, who tried to convince the Serbs to accept the Pope's primacy. In that period, Metodije Terlecki, a future Greek Catholic bishop of Chełm in Eastern Poland, played a particularly active role in these proselyting activities.

The development of trade between the Balkans and Poland-Lithuania was another important factor that helped to increase cultural interactions within 'Slavia Orthodoxa.' The route through Moldavia and Wallachia leading to the Western Balkans was one of the main channels of trade and exchange between both regions. Thus, Vasile Lupu, an Albanian who was the prince of Moldavia during 1634-1653, possessed close ties with Lviv. In 1644 Vasile built an Orthodox church dedicated to St. Paraskeva of the Balkans, whose cult is very popular among Orthodox Christians in the region. In Lviv there is still a street called Serbska (Serbian), which is located in the district where merchants from the Western Balkans would stay while visiting the city. Lupu's daughter Maria married Janusz Radziwiłł, one of the most powerful magnates in Poland-Lithuania during the 17th century. In the 17th century the Orthodox Slavs in Poland defended themselves



By founding a church in Lviv, Vasile Lupu was instrumental in introducing St. Paraskeva, one of the most popular saints among Balkan Orthodox Christians, to the Orthodox community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

against the pressure of the Roman Catholic Church by presenting Ottoman rule over the Balkans as a lesser evil ("Better the Turkish Turban than the Papal Tiara"). They were supported by Orthodox clergy from the Ottoman Empire, including the Serbian Patriarchate. For instance, the bishop of Belgrade was one of the most important participants in the Orthodox gathering in Brest in 1596, which rejected any potential union with the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, Orthodox Christians in Poland, despite their Ruthenian ethnicity, regularly used the Polish language in their writings. This was based mostly on the

Through his paintings of key battles waged by the Ottomans, including the 1683 Siege of Vienna, Chlebowski laid the foundations for historical painting in the Ottoman Empire.



Baroque Polish literary forms. In the 18th century Ukrainians writing in Polish arrived in Vojvodina and contributed greatly to the development of Baroque literature among the Serbs of the region. Many of their literary works were translated into Slavonic-Serbian, a literary language made up of a blend of the Ruthenian variant of Church Slavonic, vernacular Serbian and Russian, used by Serbian elites until the middle of the 19th century.

The Eagle and the Crescent

Poland also maintained links with the Muslim communities of the Western Balkans for centuries. From the end of the 15th century until the end of 17th the Ottomans fought several wars with Poland. However, these lasted just slightly more than 25 years altogether. During this period, the Ottoman Empire was ruled to a large degree by Albanians and Slavs originating from the Western Balkans. Due to this, in these Ottoman-Polish conflicts many Muslims from the Western Balkans fought against Polish-Lithuanian armies. The 1621 Battle of Khotyn between Ottoman and Polish-Lithuanian forces gained a prominent place

in both Polish and Western Balkan literature. In the latter's case, the epic poem *Osman* is perhaps the best example of this fascination. The work was written by Ivan Gundulić (1589-1638), an outstanding Croatian poet from the Republic of Dubrovnik, an Ottoman vassal state. The poem features many historic and legendary personalities from the Western Balkans and Poland. For example, Władysław Waza, the heir to the Polish throne, and Grand Vizier Dilaver Pasha, a Croat from Bosnia, are the main historic protagonists of this masterpiece of South Slavic literature. Despite being enemies, both men are presented in a positive light by Gundulić. However, first of all, the author perceived Poland-Lithuania as a potential liberator of the Western Balkans from Ottoman rule.

The most crucial event of the Polish-Ottoman Wars was the failure of the second Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683. The Vienna campaign brought an end to Ottoman dominance in Central Europe and laid the road for the expansion of the Habsburg Empire to the Balkans. The German-Polish forces during the campaign were commanded by the Polish King Jan III Sobieski, who won many battles against the Ottomans and gained a prominent place in the folk songs of the Western Balkans.

An efficient system of intelligence gathering also played a key part in the German-Polish coalition's victory. The most crucial role in this system was played by Jerzy Kulczycki. He was a Polish trader of Ruthenian origin and spy who worked closely with his trusty servant, the Serbian Đorđe Mihajlović. Together, they moved between the besieged city and the German-Polish military camp in Turkish attire. The Ottomans did not unmask Kulczycki because he was fluent in Serbian and Turkish. He learned these languages while he was working as a translator in Belgrade for the Austrian Oriental Company. King Jan III Sobieski gave Kulczycki the bags of coffee found in the captured Ottoman camp as a reward for his actions. He subsequently established a coffee house in Vienna, one of the first institutions of this kind in Europe outside of the Ottoman Empire. Kulczycki is memorialised in Vienna with a statue on Vienna's Kolschitzky street.

The Battle of Khotyn in 1673 was perhaps the most glorious victory achieved against the Ottomans by Sobieski. It was immortalised in the novel *Fire in the Steppe* (Pan Wołodyjowski) by Henryk Sienkiewicz, one of the most influential novelists in the history of Polish literature and a Nobel laureate. The novel was published in 1888. Sienkiewicz presented the Ottoman troops as a powerful and terrifying force but also as brave warriors deserving respect. In his description of the 1672-1673 campaign he paid special attention to Muslim soldiers from the Western Balkans, creating colourful images: "The legions of the mounted beys of Bosnia came with colours like the dawn, and fury like lightning; the wild warriors of Albania came, fighting on foot with daggers; bands of Mohammedanised Serbs came."

On the other hand, it should be remembered that in the 16th and 17th centuries many Polish volunteers fought against the Habsburgs in the ranks of the Hungarian forces that were vassals of the Ottomans. This meant that they often cooperated with Ottoman soldiers from the Western Balkans. According to accounts of Polish diplomats visiting the Ottoman Empire, they could often count on favourable treatment from Bosniak Muslim officials due to their Slavic ethnicity. In the middle of the 16th century a Bosniak pasha told a Polish diplomat at the Ottoman court in Istanbul that "We are from one nation with you and your king, you are Lach (Pole), I am Bosnian; and it is natural that every nation loves itself more than foreigners."

Moreover, in the 18th century the Balkan Muslims serving in the Ottoman army became brothers in arms of the Poles fighting together against Russian interference in Poland's internal affairs. This was especially true during the Bar Confederation (1768-1772). The Ottoman military intervention on the side of the Bar Confederation against Russia ultimately ended in disaster. Many Muslims from the Western Balkans lost their lives fighting in the ranks of the Ottoman army at this time. The battles with the Russian army around Khotyn taking place during the Bar Confederation became the main topic of Meša Selimović's Bosnian historical novel *Fortress*, which was published in 1970. It is one of the most important novels in the literary history of the Western Balkans.

In the 19th century the Bar Confederation inspired the emergence of Wernyhora's prophecy in Poland, which gained massive popularity. Wernyhora, a Ukrainian fortune-teller, became a significant figure in Polish art and literature. According to the prophecy, Poland was expected to regain its independence thanks to Turkish help, namely after "the Muslims water their horses in the Horyn river", which was located in the eastern

This painting by January Suchodolski depicts Polish insurgents receiving help from Ottoman officials. Many of these Ottoman representatives would have originated in the Western Balkans.





The tomb of Roxelana, which is located close to the Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul. Roxelana is a popular figure in literature and art. She recently enjoyed renewed interest following the Turkish series *The Magnificent Century*, which is very popular in Poland and the Western Balkans.

regions of pre-partition Poland. Between 1916-1917 the corps of the Ottoman army joined German and Austro-Hungarian troops in the struggle against Russia in eastern Poland. In Poland this was interpreted as the fulfilment of Wernyhora's prophecy. It should be remembered that many Ottoman soldiers fighting in eastern Poland were in fact Muslim volunteers from Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Sandżak.

These relations between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Empire also had a cultural dimension. In the culturally diverse Polish-Lithuanian Union Ottoman-Muslim culture (dress, cuisine, music, weapons, furniture, carpets, handicraft, design, words, values and military tactics and organization) became very popular. Poland was perhaps the country most exposed to the allure of Ottoman culture outside of 'Pax Ottomana'. Indeed, Sarmatism, a Baroque cultural phenomenon treated as the most genuine expression of Polish identity, was strongly influenced by Ottoman heritage. The Bosniaks and Albanians that occupied key posts in the Ottoman administration in regions neighbouring Poland often acted as middlemen regarding the cultural transfer between the two areas. Poland-Lithuania was also inhabited by a Muslim minority (Tatars), making it a unique case among Western Christian countries in the early modern period. Polish-Lithuanian Muslims recognised the jurisdiction

of Ottoman religious authorities and travelled often to the empire. Therefore, they sometimes visited their fellow believers inhabiting the Western Balkans or met them in the border regions or Istanbul. These contacts within the ummah also involved people from Poland who were taken captive by Crimean Tatars and then sold as slaves in the Balkans and converted to Islam. One of the most powerful women of the 16th century, Roxelana/Hürrem, was the daughter of an Orthodox priest from Rohatyn, which was then located in Poland. She became the first wife of the Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent. Roxelana corresponded with Polish kings and within royal and diplomatic circles she was considered to be Polish. There are claims that good relations between the Ottoman Empire and Poland-Lithuania in the 16th century were the result of her influence. She was the first woman in the Ottoman Empire to donate money for the building of mosques and schools all around the empire. Due to her impressive political influence, Roxelana encouraged great interest in European and Polish literature and art. She often promoted officials from the Western Balkans within the Ottoman system of administration. For instance, Rüstem Pasha, who was a Croat from Bosnia, was one of the greatest grand viziers in the history of the Ottoman Empire. He was also Roxelana's son in law and close associate. Rüstem Pasha and his wife, Mihrimah also corresponded with Polish-Lithuanian rulers. Rüstem's personal translator was Ibrahim bey, a Polish convert. Meanwhile, Salomon Ashkenazy, a Jewish court doctor who for many years dealt with the health of the Polish King Sigismund II Augustus moved to Istanbul and started to work for Mehmed Pasha Sokolović, grand vizier of Serbian origin. Much like Rüstem, Sokolović was an outstanding Ottoman man of state. He reestablished the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate in 1557. Sokolović lobbied actively during the first free elections in Poland in favour of anti-Habsburg candidates to the Polish throne. Ashkenazy, who did business on a big scale in Poland, assisted actively his master in such activities.

Turhan Hatice was another outstanding Ruthenian 'valide sultan' (mother sultan) originating from Poland, most probably from Podolia. She lived during the 17th century and played a crucial role in establishing the Albanian Köprülü family as a powerful political force. Many members of this group ruled the Ottoman Empire as grand viziers during the second

half of the 17th century. In 1672, during the war with Poland, Turhan Hatice took part in the Ottoman siege of Kamianets-Podilskyi under the command of Fazıl Ahmed Pasha Köprülü. After the town was captured, one of its churches was converted into a mosque that was named in her honour. In all likelihood, this new mosque was formerly the Franciscan church where Colonel Jerzy Wołodyjowski, who perished during the siege, was buried. He served as a source of inspiration for the main protagonist of Sienkiewicz's aforementioned novel *Fire in the Steppe*.

Translators and Muslim Jews

The role of intermediary between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Ottoman Empire was also sometimes played by Christians from the Western Balkans. The stories of the Bruti and Crutta families are excellent examples of this phenomenon. The Bruti family originated from Durrës in Albania. Bartolomeo Bruti (1557-1591) was a fascinating personality. He gained fame in Europe as a spy working for many states including Poland (the king and the chancellor) and the Ottoman Empire. He was also an excellent translator of Oriental languages. He was a cousin of Sinan Pasha, the Ottoman grand vizier with whom he cooperated closely. Bruti also became a Polish noble and even incorporated the Polish crowned eagle into his coat of arms. He also gave the name Stanisław (the patron saint of Poland) to his only son and successfully negotiated a Polish-Ottoman Treaty. Antonio Crutta (1727-1812) of the Kryethi clan, which lived in the surroundings of Shkodra in modern northern Albania, served the interests of the Polish crown for nearly 30 years. For his services he was ultimately made a noble. He spoke many Oriental languages and was instrumental in keeping the peace between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire.

Cultural exchange between Poland-Lithuania and the Ottoman Western Balkans also involved the Jewish populations living in both countries. During the 17th and 18th centuries Polish Jewry was strongly influenced by Sephardic Judaism from the Balkans. Some Polish Jews under this Ottoman influence even converted to a highly syncretic and heterodox

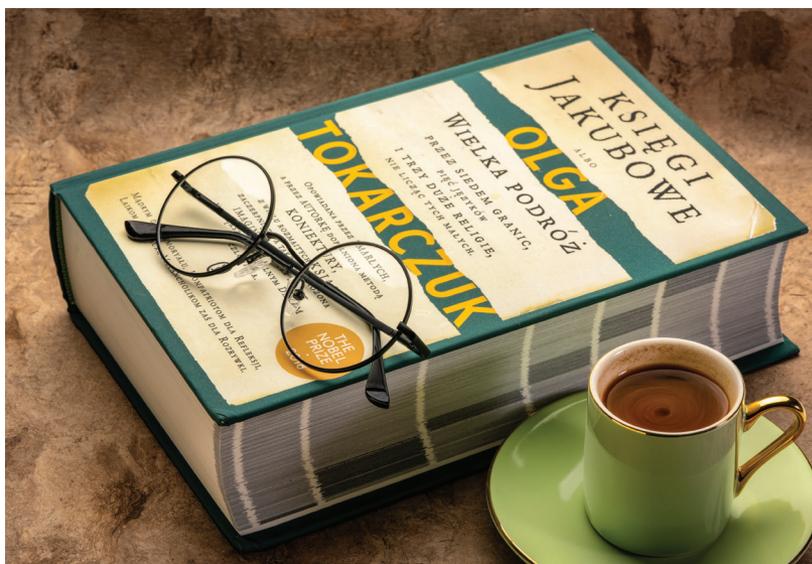
Antoni Łukasz Crutta's portrait was painted by Jean-François Duchâteau (1750-1796), who lived in Istanbul between 1775 and 1796 and portrayed many diplomats at the Ottoman court.



version of Islam. The most important figure behind this conversion was Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), who claimed to be the long awaited 'Messiah'. He travelled through Macedonia and Albania and spent the last years of his life in Ulcinj (Montenegro), where he was most probably buried. Tombs that are ascribed to him may be found in various places in Albania and Montenegro. Meanwhile, Nathan of Gaza, his successor, is buried in Skopje. The movement gained a high level of popularity among the Jewish communities of south-eastern Poland (modern-day Ukraine).

Under the influence of Sabbatai Zevi, Jakub Frank, a Polish Jew, migrated to the Ottoman Balkans with his followers and accepted Islam. He lived for some time in Thessaloniki and from there made a pilgrimage to the grave of Nathan of Gaza in Skopje. He even became a janissary and a member of the Bektashi Sufi order, an Islamic heterodox mystic community that played a very important role in Albanian history. Bektashism substantially influenced Frank's worldview, particularly with regards to "Abrahamic" universal and holistic monotheism. After he returned to

Poland, Frank and his followers were baptised and created 'Frankism', a religious movement of Jews who converted to Christianity and joined the ranks of the Polish elite. Many prominent Poles, including the wife of the great poet Adam Mickiewicz, came from that community. Overall, she strongly influenced the worldview of her husband. In recent years, Frank gained worldwide fame thanks to Olga Tokarczuk's monumental biographical novel *Księgi Jakubowe* (*The Books of Jacob*). In 2019 she won the Nobel Prize in Literature for this work. The Sabbateans were met with strong opposition from Orthodox Judaism. Tzvi Ashkenazi (1656-1718) was one of the most important rabbis who vehemently opposed the new understanding of Judaism. His family came from Vilnius but Ashkenazi received his theological education in Ottoman Macedonia at a Sephardi school in Thessaloniki. He served as the rabbi of Sarajevo and ended his career as the rabbi of Lviv. Szymon Aszkenazy (1865-1935), one of the most distinguished Polish modern historians, also belonged to that famous family. At the same time, the followers of Sabbatai Zevi from the Balkans were still able to influence Polish Jews who remained believers of traditional Judaism. They transmitted Sufi Islamic beliefs and rituals to Poland and consequently contributed to the development of Hasidism, a mystical form of Judaism that appeared in south-eastern Poland in the second half of the 18th century.



II. Poland and the Western Balkans between 1795 and 1918

From 1795 to 1918 a fully independent Polish state did not exist on the map of Europe. In 1815, after the Napoleonic Wars, the part of former Poland under Russian rule was considerably expanded at the expense of Prussia and Austria. As a result, around 80 per cent of the territory of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth belonged to Russia for more than a century. However, around 45 per cent of ethnic Poles lived in Austria and Prussia. The partition had severe political, economic and social consequences. The overall study of the economic development of Poland in that period has shown that the country remained a semi-peripheral economy lagging behind Western Europe. This is despite intensified industrialisation and urbanisation in the second half of the 19th century, as well as the legal emancipation of peasants. The Poles enjoyed short periods of autonomy in Russia and Prussia in the first half of the 19th century. However, genuine and long-term improvement of their status only took place in Galicia, an Austrian province, in 1867. The area became a cultural centre for Poland until the end of the First World War. During the same period, the political and cultural rights of the Polish people were restricted substantially in the Polish territories under the rule of Russia and Germany. The situation improved slightly in Russia after the revolution of 1905.

Nevertheless, the idea of an independent Poland did not die out. On the contrary, it became one of the central components of Polish Romanticism, encouraging several uprisings especially against Russia (the November Uprising, the January Uprising). These ended with defeats and repression, which only encouraged Poles to flee to Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, Polish emigration abroad became an important feature of Polish culture in the 19th century. The end of this century saw the final formation of the modern Polish nation. Simultaneously, both civic and ethnic national identities appeared at this time and became key topics of debate. In the same period, tensions between

"My book shows how Poland negotiated its identity surrounded by many different nations and cultures. This includes Muslim culture, as the country shared a border with the Ottoman Empire."

Olga Tokarczuk

Polish nationalism and other national movements, including nations without their own states (Ukrainians, Jews, Lithuanians), increased substantially. The proponents of an ethnic vision of the nation stressed the correlation between Polish national identity and Roman Catholicism. The conflict was embodied in a very bitter rivalry between Józef Piłsudski, the future marshal of Poland who supported a more civic Polish national identity, and Roman Dmowski, the leader of National Democracy and supporter of a more ethnic vision of 'Polishness'. This deep ideological divide still influences public debate in Poland to a substantial degree.

The history of the Western Balkan nations in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century was also shaped by struggles for independence or at least autonomy and national unification. At the same time, the Western Balkans also experienced the rise of modern nationalisms within a particularly mixed region. This factor and linguistic affinities among Slavs encouraged two trends. Broader identities, such as Yugoslavism, emerged and attempted to overcome or suppress religious, regional and social divisions by creating bigger states or federations. In contrast, narrower national identities attempted to establish homogenous national states through ethnic cleansing, forced assimilation and armed conflicts with other national movements.

Sometimes these trends did not contradict each other, thereby giving birth to hybrid national identities. Until 1918 the region witnessed the development of national cultures and the weakening of wider communities based on religion and pre-modern state and cultural traditions (Byzantium, Ottoman Empire, Orthodox Slavdom etc.). The economic modernisation of the region accelerated but the level of urbanisation, industrialisation and education remained one of the lowest in Europe. The nations of the Western Balkans, like the Poles, also experienced



Austria-Hungary. Poles under Habsburg rule lived alongside Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats, Montenegrins, Serbs and even some Albanians.

political migration and the development of national cultures outside of the motherland. In comparison to Poland, however, three Western Balkan states gained formal independence in 1878 (Montenegro, Serbia) and 1912 (Albania). Moreover, Montenegro and Serbia also considerably expanded their territories. This is despite the fact that Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Sandžak, a province located between Serbia and Montenegro, in 1878.



There was a time when a letter sent from Sarajevo reached Cracow in three days.



During this period, many Poles and inhabitants of the Western Balkans would have paid for stamps using Austro-Hungarian Korons.

Due to massive Polish emigration abroad and diaspora interest in the great powers' politics in the Balkans, the Poles became engaged in the region on an unprecedented scale during the 19th century. Moreover, the Poles of Galicia lived under Austro-Hungarian rule for 40 years together with many inhabitants of the Western Balkans. After the occupation of Bosnia, a great number of Polish officials and administrative workers came to the province and began working in the new administration. Engineers, judges and prosecutors soon followed this group and quickly climbed the administration hierarchy. For instance, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the deputy mayor of Sarajevo was Władysław Nieć, a Polish lawyer, whereas the administrator of Bosnia during 1912-1915 was Leon Biliński (1846-1923), the former rector of the University of Lviv. The Polish diaspora also grew with more 'ordinary' settlers, the majority of them peasants, who moved to Bosnia tempted by the promise of free land. Technological advancement and more effective modes of production followed, bringing progress to Bosnian society as a whole. During the interwar period, the number of Poles living in Bosnia exceeded 15,000 people. The vast majority of this group were repatriated to Poland after the Second World War and settled in Lower Silesia (Bolesławiec).

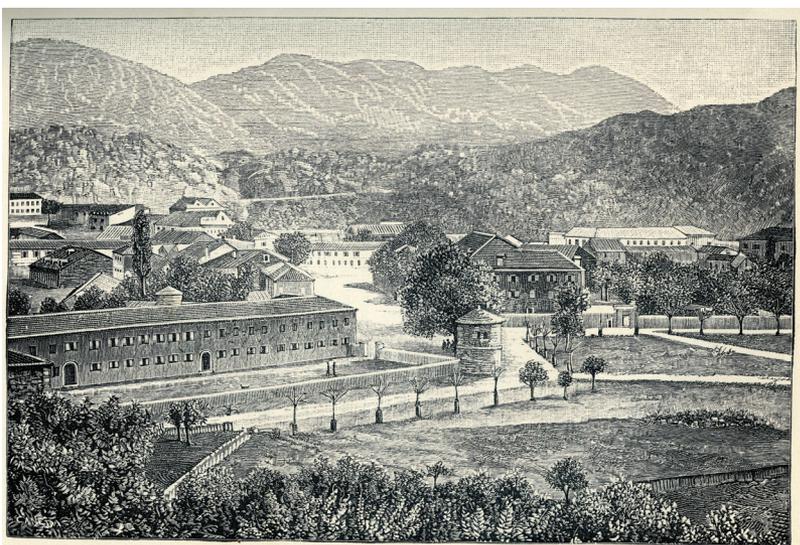


Romantic nationalism, highlanders, medieval and folk culture

The number of cultural contacts between Poles and the inhabitants of the Western Balkans grew rapidly in the first half of the 19th century. This occurred alongside the rise of Romanticism, which was especially fascinated by folklore, songs and old customs from South-Eastern Europe. The first Polish traveler to explore the folklore of the Western Balkans was Prince Aleksander Antoni Sapieha (1773-1812). He visited Bosnia, Montenegro and northern Albania at the beginning of the 19th century. He was the first modern Polish traveller to visit Bosnia and Albania.

He also wrote one of European history's first detailed ethnographic descriptions of the people of both countries. Sapieha expressed the idea that Poles could 'bring civilization' to the South Slavs in return for old Slavic customs. Between 1825 and 1829 Andrzej Kucharski (1795-1862) travelled all through the area, stretching from Croatia to Montenegro. Kucharski was preparing to become the head of chair of Slavic studies at the University of Warsaw but following the November Uprising the Russian authorities closed the institution. He published his observations on the journey in a series of letters, which came to important conclusions concerning South Slavic languages. He was also able to conduct research in local libraries and, while doing so in Cetinje (Montenegro), he prepared the first catalogue of the manuscripts preserved there. With the help of Vladika Petar I Petrović-Njegoš, he was able to correct many errors in maps detailing Montenegro and Lake Shkodra.

Aleksander Antoni Sapieha was the first Polish traveller in the Western Balkans. He also served as chamberlain and adjutant to the French Emperor Napoleon I.



Cetynia — stolica Czarnogóry; podług fotografii.

A drawing of Cetinje, then the capital of Montenegro. This work was inspired by a photo published by Polish priest Marcin Czermiński, who travelled in the Balkans at the end of the 19th century.

One of the main precursors to proper scientific research on the history, geography and culture of the Slavic peoples was Józef Maksymilian Ossoliński (1748-1826). He was the director of the Imperial Library in Vienna (1808-1826) and founder of ‘The Ossolineum’, one of the largest scientific libraries in Poland. Through Jernej Kopitar, his Slovenian friend and collaborator, Ossoliński directly influenced the work of Vuk Karadžić, the reformer of the modern Serbian language. Ossoliński also had close relations with other Serbian cultural figures of the epoch. Most importantly, he contributed to Vienna becoming one of the main centres of Slavic studies in general and South Slavic studies in particular. Karadžić was strongly inspired by the work of Samuel Bogumił Linde (1771-1847), the author of a pivotal dictionary of the Polish language and a protégé of Ossolinski and Jerzy Samuel Bandtkie (1768-1835). Bandtkie was one of the leading Polish philologists of the era and, among many others works, was the author of a bilingual Polish-German dictionary and Polish language grammar. Karadžić received copies of both Linde and Bandtkie’s dictionaries and used them while preparing his *Srpski Rječnik* (Serbian Lexicon). Moreover, following his stay in Cracow and Warsaw during the winter of 1818-1819, Karadžić became a ‘member-correspondent’ of the Association of Sciences of the Jagiellonian University. At the same time, Johann Gottfried Prieksner (1746-1819), a well-known illustrator

of German origin born in Poland, helped to illustrate *Mala prostonarodna slaveno-serbska pjesnarica*. This was the first collection of folk songs published by Vuk Karadžić, marking the start of a career in this field that would eventually grow to fill nine volumes.



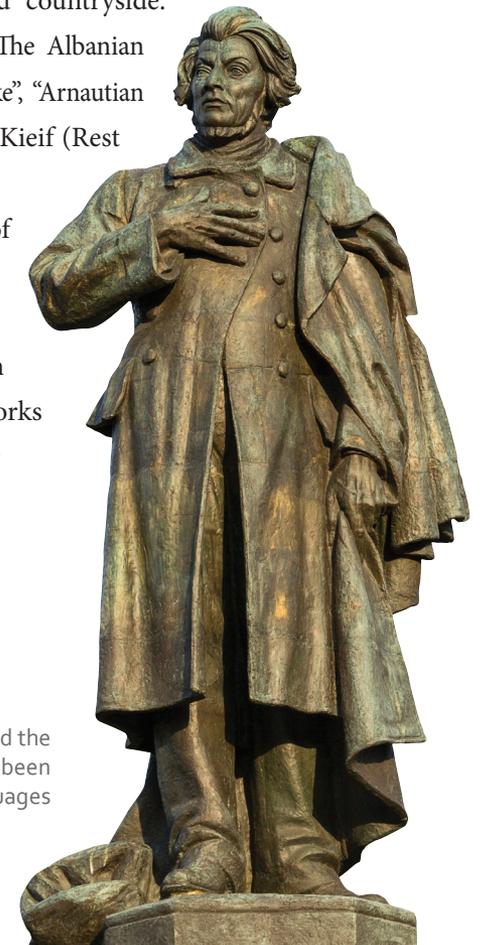
This romantic and idyllic depiction of folk singing in *Mala prostonarodna slaveno-serbska pjesnarica* (Little Slavo-Serbian song book of the common people) opens the first publication of what would become one of the largest collections of folklore in Europe.

Another field of research where the contribution of Polish scholars proved to be crucial was law and jurisprudence. Waław Aleksander Maciejowski (1793-1883), a professor of law at the University of Warsaw, was among the first European scholars to study the history of Slavic laws. In this context, he paid special attention to Dušan's Code and analysed it in the first volume of his *Historyia prawodawstw słowiańskich* (History of Slavic Legislations), which was published between 1832-1835. In 1859 this volume was translated into Serbian by Nikola Krstić and published by Matica Srpska. This work played a key role in the development of the history of law in the Western Balkans and encouraged further research into the topic. Polish historians also made valuable contributions to the study of the Western Balkans in the Middle Ages. In 1916, Olgierd Górka discovered and published *Anonymi descriptio Europae Orientalis "Imperium Constantinopolitanum, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ruthenia, Ungaria, Polonia, Bohemia". anno MCCCVIII exarata* (Anonymous description of Eastern Europe...), an anonymous chronicle from 1308. The text provides important information on the political history of the Western Balkan countries, as well as their economy and social conditions. It is also considered to be a particularly valuable source for understanding how Balkan Orthodox Christians were viewed in the West during the Late Middle Ages. The discovery of this new medieval source, hitherto completely unknown, was met with great interest in Yugoslavia and Albania during the interwar period.

Adam Mickiewicz's lectures at College de France also proved pivotal in this process of cultural exchange and the growth of knowledge regarding Western Balkan folk cultures. Mickiewicz's discussions of the literature and culture of the Slavs opened a new chapter in this respect. This is because he introduced this subject to the world of scientific research. Mickiewicz searched for features common to all Slavic nations. The Polish poet idealised the Montenegrin people and saw them as a model of a truly free society and a genuinely Slavic nation. "This small nation, however, was able to maintain its independence. Protected by its inaccessible location and their own courage, they always resisted attacks by Turks, Austrians and, in recent times, the French Empire," Mickiewicz wrote in the early 1840s. "Its history is very interesting for the Slavs, and

their social condition deserves their particular attention, since it can serve as a most perfect model of the Slavic community. They do have total freedom – it is supposedly the only truly free country in the world, a country of freedom and equality. The Montenegrins do not care for their status at birth nor wealth, nor do they even want to accept any semblance of hierarchy, so that the people do not have any kind of government at all." Mickiewicz's praise for the folk traditions, literature and culture of Slavs in general and Southern Slavs in particular left a strong mark on the fledgling field of Slavic studies. This interest materialised in translations of the folk songs from Vuk's collection into Polish. Perhaps the most important of these translations was a collection prepared by the well-known poet Józef Bogdan Zalewski (1802-1886) in 1836.

To a lesser degree, Albanian folk culture also attracted the interest of Poles. For instance, the Albanian Highlanders inspired various works of the prominent Polish painter Waław Pawliszak (1866-1905). In 1893 he opened his studio in Shkodra in northern Albania. He created many paintings presenting scenes from the everyday life of Albanians in both their towns and countryside. His main "Albanian" works include "The Albanian Wedding", "Albanians at the Skutari Lake", "Arnautian dancers", "At the bazaar in Skutari", "Kieif (Rest during the journey)", "In front of the Albaniankhan", "Ambush or Revenge of the Albanian" and "Game of Dice". In fact, Pawliszak should be recognised among the first painters working in the Albanian lands. His "Albanian" works represent a unique case in the history of modern European art.



Although Adam Mickiewicz never visited the Western Balkans, his work has often been translated into regional languages



Wacław Pawliszak experienced and depicted the Balkans (especially Albania), the Middle East and North Africa like no other Polish artist of the era.

Yugoslav idea

Interest in the folk cultures of the Western Balkans led many Poles to engage with the Yugoslav idea, which hoped to bring about the unity of the South Slavs. In fact, Poland was instrumental in shaping a form of 'proto-Yugoslavism' in the 16th century. Then, Vinko Pribojević, the Croatian scholar who first formulated this idea, spent three years in Cracow. There he was influenced by the works of Polish historians, such as Jan Długosz and Maciej Miechowita, as well as Archbishop Jan Łaski. All of these figures promoted the idea of Slavic power and unity. After returning to his home in 1525, Pribojević gave a presentation entitled *De Origine Successibusque Slavorum* (On the Origin and Glory of the Slavs), in which he discussed the history of the Slavs. The address became a key founding part of the Yugoslav idea. Another important figure in the development of early Yugoslavism, Juraj Križanić (1618-1683), was also directly linked to the

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. He promoted the idea of Pan-Slavism and also believed that the unification of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches would contribute to the liberation of Serbs and Croats from Ottoman rule. This would then result in the creation of a Slavic empire. Križanić spent several years in Poland. He joined the Polish forces of King Jan III Sobieski in 1683 and died while fighting against the Ottomans during the battle of Vienna. In the 19th century the idea of cooperation between South Slavs got the support of 'Hôtel Lambert' in Paris, which was headed by Prince Adam Czartoryski (1770-1861). The 'Hôtel' constituted the main Polish political force in exile. Serbia played a special role in Polish political plans of that period. The autonomous principality was supposed to transform itself into an important political centre that would bring about the unification of the South Slavs. This would subsequently lead the way for

the resurgence of the Polish state by taking advantage of the disagreements between the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austria. It was believed that France and Great Britain would offer their support for this plan. Czartoryski treated the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a source of inspiration for this potential federation of the South Slavs. In 1843, Czartoryski sent to Belgrade his agent the Czech-born František Zach (1807-1892). Zach was a Pan-Slavist and participant in the Polish November Uprising. Upon arriving in Belgrade, he presented this plan to then prime minister of Serbia, Ilija Garašanin. On the basis of Zach's document and some 90 per cent of the original text, Garašanin went on to produce *Načertanije* (The Draft). This work would become a central part of Serbian foreign policy until the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913.



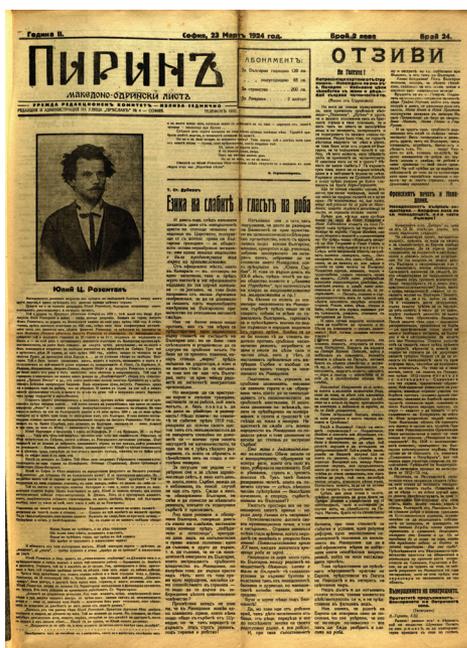
František Zach.

Zach served as chief of staff of the Serbian army. In 1876, he was heavily wounded in fighting with Ottoman forces under the command of the famous Mehmed Ali Pasha, who was born as Ludwig Karl Friedrich Detroit.

Poland also made a contribution to the development of the Yugoslav idea with regards to music. “Hej Slaveni” was the unofficial anthem of communist Yugoslavia. It was adopted officially in 1977. The song was used as the national anthem of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro until 2006. Its lyrics were written in 1834, whereas its melody was based on “Mazurek Dąbrowskiego”, a popular Polish patriotic song, which became Poland's national anthem in 1927.

Insurgents and teachers

The second half of the 19th and the beginning of 20th centuries saw many Western Balkan romantic nationalists and intellectuals mix their educational work with insurgent activities and especially guerilla warfare. This development was influenced by various folk stories in the region. Polish activists belonging to this tradition could be found especially in Macedonia. Following the January Uprising, Ludwik Wojtkiewicz first migrated to France and then made his way to Veles in Macedonia, where he worked as a French language teacher. He participated in the Russian-Ottoman war (1877-1878) on the Russian side and right afterwards became one of commanders of the Kresna Uprising in Macedonia in 1878-1879. However, due to various disagreements with other leaders he eventually decided to leave the country. Another Polish revolutionary, Juliusz Rosenthal (1872-1903), also participated in the Macedonian insurgency as part of the Ilinden Uprising of 1903. He was born in Irkutsk into the family of a Polish doctor and revolutionary, who was punished by Russian authorities with internment in Siberia. In 1880 the family moved to Bulgaria and Juliusz graduated from the Gabrovo gymnasium. During this period, he began to write poetry and translated the well-known novel *With fire and sword* by Henryk Sienkiewicz into Bulgarian. After working for some time as a teacher, he enrolled in the faculty of law in Sofia University and there befriended Goce Delchev and Jane Sandanski. These figures were the main heroes of the Macedonian national pantheon. Rosenthal joined them and participated in the Ilinden Uprising, losing his life fighting against the Ottomans.



In 1924 *Pirin, Macedonski-Odrinski List* published an article commemorating the life of Julius Rosenthal.

One of those who took care of the victims of the Ilinden uprising was Julian Szumlański. For his participation in the January Uprising (1863-1864) he was sentenced to internment in Siberia. He eventually escaped and found shelter in the Ottoman

Empire. He moved to Thessaloniki, the main city of Macedonia, and began to teach at the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Bulgarian Men's High School. This was the same high school that Goce Delchev attended as a student. In Thessaloniki he also met his wife Zaharia, who came from Bitola in Macedonia and became one of main proponents of women's emancipation in the country. In 1903, following the crushing of the Ilinden Uprising, they opened an orphanage in Bitola for the children of the victims of Ottoman repression. This institution functioned until 1912 and was the first orphanage in the history of Macedonia.

Ottoman generals and Noble Prize winner

After immigrating to the Balkans, Polish insurgents did not only join the ranks of the guerillas fighting the Ottomans. Indeed, a number of Poles escaping from Russian persecution saw the Ottoman Empire as a safe haven. As a result, they often enlisted in the Ottoman army. Many of these people converted to Islam and quite often served in the Balkans, suppressing uprisings and rebellions. One of the most colourful personalities in this group was General Antoni Aleksander Iliński (1812-1861), a legendary cavalryman who converted to Islam and changed his name to

Iskender Pasha. He married a Bosniak woman during his service in the region under the command of Ömer Pasha Latas, a future Ottoman field marshal born to Serbian parents. General Konstanty Borzęcki (1826-1876), alias Mustafa Celeleddin Pasha, was another prominent Pole who fought in the ranks of the Ottoman army in the Western Balkans. Borzęcki was killed during one of the first battles of the Montenegrin-Ottoman war in 1876 and was buried with honours in a mosque in central Montenegro. Unfortunately, this building has not survived to the present day. His book on the modern Turkish nation had a strong impact on Turkish nationalists, such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Moreover, Borzęcki also influenced other Balkan Muslims, including many Albanian ideologues active in Istanbul. Marshal Latas is believed to have been Borzęcki's 'protector' and it is likely that Borzęcki was married to his daughter. The story of Iliński or Borzęcki became a source of inspiration for the presence of fictional Polish Ottoman officers in the novel *Omer Pasha Latas*, which was written by Ivo Andrić (1892-1975) and focused on the Bosnian period of Latas' life. Andrić, who was born in Travnik (Bosnia), is one of the most outstanding writers from the Western Balkans. His work was recognised in 1961 when he received the Nobel Prize in Literature. It is worth remembering that Andrić studied in Cracow and possessed a passive knowledge of Polish. General Antoni Jeziorański

Iliński served as a source of inspiration for Ivo Andrić. "Sigismund Ehring, an exile from Poland and for several years now one of the best officers in Omer Pasha's army. The son of a Warsaw builder, [...] joined the Turkish army, formally converted to Islam and soon became an artillery officer." Ivo Andrić, *Omer Pasha Latas*





Latas "was like an apparition, unexpectedly mild and benign. As if not riding a horse but floating on a cloud [...] his face, with its slightly graying beard and expression of stern dignity and enigmatic kindliness." Ivo Andrić, *Omer Pasha Latas*

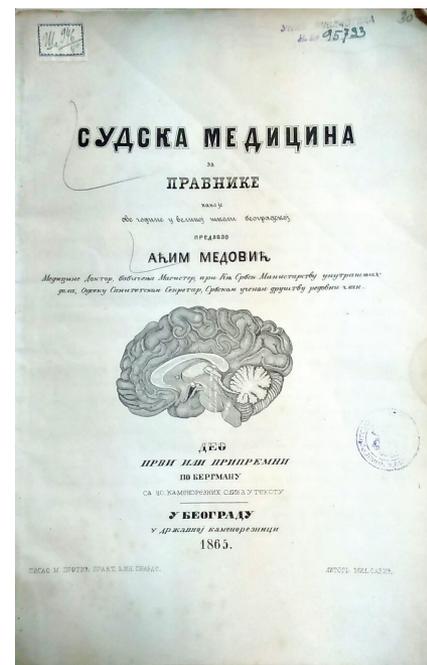
was another prominent Ottoman officer of Polish origin. In the middle of the 19th century he served in Belgrade and was responsible for renovating the famous Kalemegdan fortress, which is one of the town's most important landmarks today. There he earned himself the Serbian nickname 'Jovanović'. After returning to Poland he participated in the January Uprising as a field commander of Polish forces in the eastern part of the country.

Doctors and engineers

Another Pole served in the Ottoman army as a medical doctor alongside Borzęcki during his last campaign. His name was Władysław Jabłonowski (1841-1894), the brother of the well-known Polish historian and ethnographer Aleksander Jabłonowski (1829-1913). For a period of time Aleksander and Władysław travelled together and jointly explored the Middle East. Military service would prove to only be one part of his biography. He became the Ottoman representative to the International Sanitary Commission in the East and in this capacity served throughout the empire fighting epidemic diseases. In 1888 he served as the main specialist in Shkodra (Albania), where he successfully stopped an outbreak of cholera that had ravaged the town and its surrounding settlements. His memoirs, which were only partially published, are rich with ethnographic data and other observations about the lands and people he lived in, including northern Albania.

There is a long line of Polish doctors who served in Serbia in the 19th and 20th centuries. A crucial figure in the development of Serbia's medical sciences and healthcare system was a Polish doctor named Aćim Medović (1815-1893). Born as Joachim Medowicz, he studied philosophy in Lviv and then medicine in Vienna. He moved to Serbia in 1842 and lived there until the end of his life. In 1865 he published the first book on forensic medicine, which led him to become the first professor of this field in the law faculty of the University of Belgrade. He also pioneered research on psychiatry in Serbia.

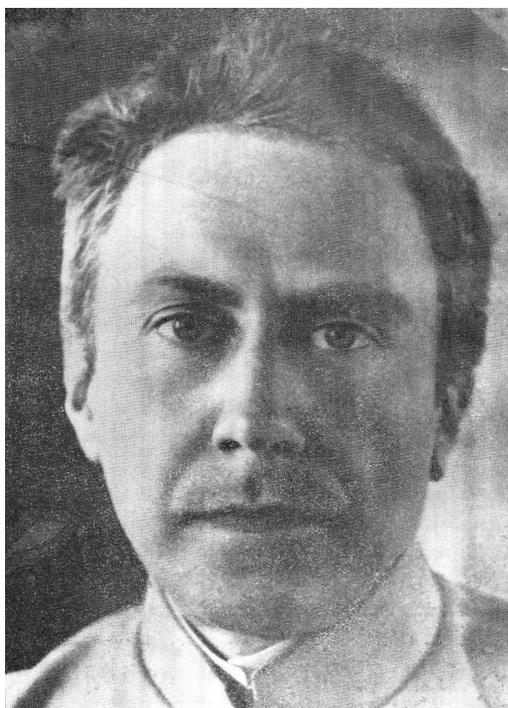
Sudska medicina za pravnike (Forensic medicine for lawyers), a richly illustrated medicine textbook by Aćim Medović, was the first of its kind in Serbia.



For all these accomplishments he was chosen as the first president of the Serbian Medicine Association in 1872.

Other Polish doctors were also working in Serbia during the 19th century, such as Kazimierz Gąsiorowski. He was born in 1840 and worked as the administrator of the State Hospital in Belgrade. Jan Sienkiewicz (1848-1904), the nephew of the well-known Polish writer Henryk Sienkiewicz, came to Serbia to serve as a volunteer during the war with the Ottomans. He decided to stay and worked in the Pirot region until his death. Perhaps the most distinguished Polish doctor who served in Serbia at this time was the world-famous immunologist and bacteriologist Ludwik Hirszfild (1884-1954). He would work in the country until the end of the First World War. Born into an assimilated Jewish family in Warsaw, he completed his medical studies in Germany in 1907. Alongside Emil von Dungern, Hirszfild discovered the heritability of the AB0 blood types, as well as rhesus disease. In 1915 Hirszfild volunteered to go to Serbia in order to fight an epidemic of spotted typhus. He served until the end of the war as a doctor and a serological and bacteriological advisor. During his work in the country he also discovered the bacillus “Salmonella

paratyphi” C, which was named after him as “Salmonella hirschfeldii”.



After the Second World War Ludwik Hirszfild continued the research he initiated in Serbia and Macedonia. He was the founder and first director of the Institute of Immunology in Wrocław.



In her memoirs, Teodora Krajewska provided accounts of the private lives and professional struggles of women in both Poland and Bosnia.

Polish doctors were instrumental in creating the modern healthcare system in Bosnia. The first hospital in Bosnia was opened in 1866 but by 1879 there were only seven doctors serving the entire province.

Thus, the need for doctors and medical care was immense. A new hospital was opened in Sarajevo in 1892 and its first director was Lepold Gluck (1854-1907), a Polish Jew born in Nowy Sącz. The facility for lepers that he built in Sarajevo's hospital was recognised as one of the best in the world. Bernard Zauderer (1851-1928) was also from Nowy Sącz. He was the son of a Polish Jewish doctor and entered Bosnia in 1878 as a military doctor. Despite this, he ultimately decided to stay in the region and lived and worked in Travnik until his death. He specialised in fighting syphilis and leprosy and became one of the most respected specialists in the region in these fields. Justyn Karliński (1862-1909), who left Vienna for Bosnia to work as a doctor in 1887 became the chief sanitary inspector of the province and conducted pioneering research on bacteria and epidemics. He also took care of Bosniak pilgrims to Mecca and was even nominated to the post of personal physician of the Ottoman sultan. Even more crucial to the establishment of the modern healthcare system in Bosnia was the work of several female Polish doctors. The first was Teodora Krajewska (1854-1935), who worked for 38 years as the main female doctor in Bosnia. Krajewska also conducted scientific research on osteomalacia and published the results of her work for an international audience. Krajewska's

position was later filled by another female Polish doctor, Jadwiga Olszewska (1855-1932), who decided to move to Bosnia after working in Serbia during 1895-1899. Olszewska lived, worked and died in Tuzla. During WWI Bronisława Całczyńska-Prašek (1887-1969) moved to Sarajevo, where she became the first pediatric doctor. In 1921 she moved to Zagreb and started teaching at the city's university. During the Second World War Całczyńska-Prašek saved many Jews and for that reason was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

Polish specialists also made serious contributions to the modernisation of Balkan infrastructure in the 19th century. Karol Brzozowski (1821-1904) and Franciszek Sokulski (1811-1896) completed the Balkan section of the Ottoman network of telegraph lines between 1857-1860. The first of these lines to be completed ran between Edirne and Niš. This was followed by a line connecting the settlements of Bitola, Ohrid, Elbasan and Vlorë. This connected almost all of the most important towns in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia with the rest of Europe. They were among the first telegraph lines in the entire Ottoman Empire. Brzozowski and Sokulski were of similar background. They both participated

in the Polish uprisings before migrating to the Ottoman Empire and retiring in Galicia. Alojzy Adam Przeździecki (1814-1897), another Polish engineer who worked and lived in the Ottoman Empire, gained such popularity that in 1861 he was nominated director of public works in Istanbul. He then was

Karol Brzozowski is one of the most famous Polish figures buried in Lychakiv Cemetery (Lviv), one of the oldest and biggest in Europe.



sent to Bosnia, where he started the process of building bridges and roads in the province. Antoni Tereziński (1847-1904) also lived in the region at this time. A Polish engineer and surveyor, he was responsible for measuring the borders of the province. Tereziński converted to Islam, changed his name to Huršid and was known as Huršid Effendi Terezinski. In 1883 he was responsible for forming the first professional fire brigade in Bosnia and was its first commander until 1903.

Roman Catholic priests and intellectuals

For Albanians living in the north of the country, Roman Catholicism naturally represented an important link with Poland. The usual path of education for Albanian Catholic clergy was to gain education in Catholic institutions abroad. Some of these figures chose to study in Poland. One of the leading figures of the so-called 'Shkodra cultural circle' at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was the great poet Ndre Mjeda (1866-1937). He was a Jesuit and completed his studies in theology in the Jesuit College in Cracow in 1891-93. Anton Maria Xanoni (1862-1915), another Jesuit and well-known literary figure of the time, also studied there between 1890-1892. After completing his studies, Xanoni returned to Shkodra and began teaching at the Saverian College, one of Albania's main education centres during this period. An outstanding linguist, writer and master of



Bishop Franciszek Malczyński was born into a Greek Catholic family on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland.

X. Franciszek Malczyński, biskup z Lesz. 1.

rhetoric, Xanoni is best remembered for his creation of a standardised set of rules for writing in the country's northern dialect. He also wrote a grammar of the Albanian language. Ndre Mjeda was co-founder of the cultural association Agimi (Dawn), which pushed for the use of Albanian as a literary language. In order to accomplish this, he called for the creation of a purified Albanian language free from borrowings from foreign languages. Mjeda created a new alphabet, which combined Latin script and a few diacritic signs borrowed from Croatian. However, it did not win the support of the majority of Albanians. Another strong link between Albanian Catholics and Poland was Franciszek Malczyński (1829-1908), a Polish cleric who served as the bishop of Alessio (Albanian Lezha) from 1870 until his death. He chose to live in the village of Kallmet and due to his frequent travels throughout the diocese was very popular among Albanian Catholic highlanders. He was buried with honours in Kallmet.

The Polish Catholic priests also contributed greatly to the development of knowledge regarding Albania in Poland. Perhaps the most spectacular case was the priest Marcin Czermiński (1860-1931), who in 1892 traveled to northern Albania and produced the first account of Albania in the Polish language. This book was titled *Albania*.

This very rare picture of old Shkodra, then situated on the banks of the Drin and Kir rivers, was published in a book by Marcin Czermiński.



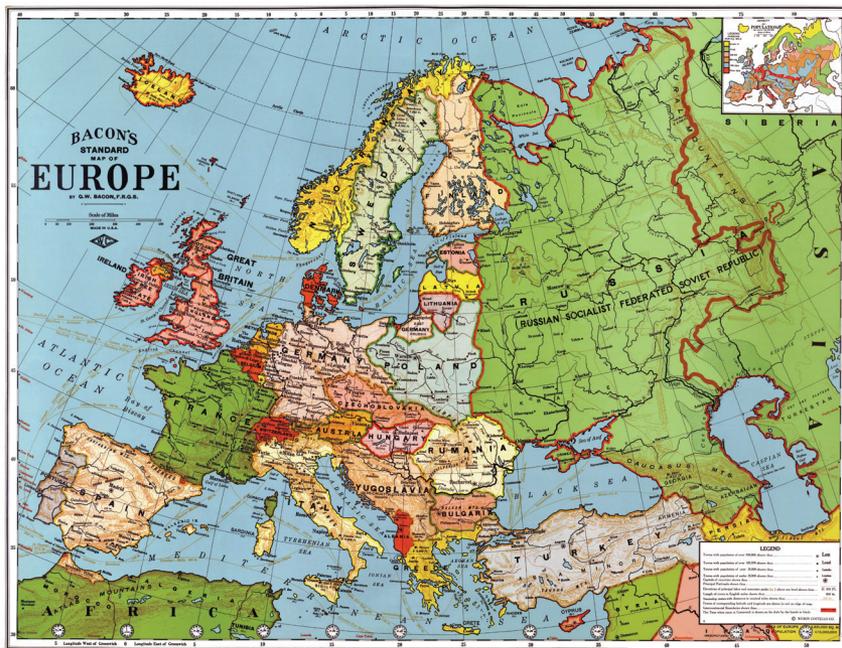
Widok na przedmieście Skodarskie i na rzekę Bojanę.

Zarysy etnograficzne, kulturalne i religijne (Albania: Ethnographic, Cultural and Religious Sketches) and was published in Cracow in 1893. In addition, Czermiński visited Bosnia, Montenegro and Macedonia. The main result of these trips were regular articles in the Polish press and several richly illustrated books describing these countries. These writings retain their value to this day as interesting and very valuable documents regarding the ethnography of the Balkans at that time.

III. Poland and the Western Balkans in the short 20th century

During the so-called 'short twentieth century' (1918-1989), Poland experienced many dramatic changes. The century started with the restoration of independence (1918), wars with neighbours such as Bolshevik Russia (1918-1922), a short period of democracy (1918-1926) and then an authoritarian regime (1926-1939). The restored Poland was two times smaller than the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the middle of the 18th century. National minorities made around 35 percent of its population. In the interwar period, the country tried to catch up economically with Western Europe with mixed results due to a number of very serious challenges. This included economic wars or tensions with neighbouring states, the impact of the First World War on economic infrastructure, regional divisions caused by the partitions, and a post-feudal social structure that dominated the political system. Poland also suffered from an ethnic divide between the Polish majority and many national minorities. These groups were often subject to marginalisation and even discrimination by state institutions.

In 1939 Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and lost six million citizens (including three million people of Jewish origin) as a result of the occupants' criminal and genocidal activity. Nazi Germany was responsible for the majority of these actions, especially when it comes to Holocaust. Berlin's crushing of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 was one of the most atrocious crimes committed in modern history. However, during the war and after its end, various groups living on Polish soil also engaged in armed conflict. This often resulted in war crimes, ethnic cleansing and genocidal acts. Moreover, some Poles and



The First World War ended the age of empires in Central Europe.
The era of nation states began soon after the conflict

“Gdańsk in the eighties
Queues for newspapers
Independent unions
Defence committees”

Azra, “Poljska u momu srcu” (Poland in my heart)

members of other nationalities were involved in the Holocaust. As a result of the Second World War, Poland lost half of its eastern territory to the Soviet Union. However, one-third of its territory now consisted of land gained from Nazi Germany in the west. Poland’s ethnic structure also changed dramatically, as it became one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in Europe.

After the war, communism was imposed on Poland following the second Soviet invasion. During this era, the regime was forced to deal with a lack of support on a regular basis. At the very beginning, the communist authorities implemented a policy of forced and rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. This was accompanied by the development of education, which brought social advancement to the masses. Nevertheless, structural issues within the communist system increasingly translated into regular crises and Poland’s economic underperformance in comparison to capitalist Western European countries. The market problems encouraged protests, political thaws and the development of a democratic opposition, which won mass social support at the beginning of the 1980s in the form of Solidarność. This factor, combined with a general crisis within the Soviet bloc, caused the fall of the communist system in Poland in 1989.



Much like in Poland, the First World War caused massive destruction and human suffering in the Western Balkans and particularly in Serbia. Between 1918-1920 two new states emerged from the conflict in the region. These were Yugoslavia (at the beginning called the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians') and Albania, which did not manage to function as a proper state between 1912-1920 due to internal divisions and external interference. Both countries went through short periods of democracy and authoritarian monarchies, painful experiences of the Second World War (especially in the case of Yugoslavia), and a communist period.



King Zog I was the first ever Albanian head of state to visit Poland. After leaving Albania on the eve of the Italian occupation in 1939, he spent several weeks in Warsaw and stayed in the legendary Hotel Europejski.

The Yugoslav authorities had to constantly deal with problems involving armed resistance from various groups within the Serb-dominated multi-ethnic state. During the Second World War, the legacy of these tensions, resentments and nationalist aspirations became the source of conflict between the Yugoslav nations. This was accompanied by ethnic cleansings, war crimes and genocides, with the largest one committed by Croatian fascists against the Serbs. The Second World War also saw civil war break out between communist partisans and their opponents, as well as mass reprisals against anti-communists in the post-war period. The number of Yugoslavs that lost their lives in these conflicts exceeded

1.2 million people and differently from Poland, the great majority of victims were killed by their compatriots. Albania was also occupied during the conflict by Axis forces but the war was experienced in a different way. This was due to the incorporation of large parts of southern Yugoslavia into the Kingdom of Albania, a puppet state of Italy. The death toll in Albania during the war and after its end was proportionally many times smaller than in Yugoslavia and even less so in comparison to Poland. After the war the communist regime in Yugoslavia continued to contend with various national questions. However, the government enjoyed a high level of genuine support for a much longer period than Poland. Belgrade's popularity stemmed from its defence of national independence, its gradual and limited liberalisation of the political system, and a successful economic performance that continued into the 1970s. Nevertheless, the erosion of the state, which appeared during the 1980s and only increased as a result of the fall of communism in the early 1990s, led to wars that resulted in the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the emergence of new nation states. Communist Albania, much like Yugoslavia, managed to defend its independence from external domination but in a different way in comparison to Yugoslavia and Poland. The Albanian regime remained Stalinist until the middle of the 1980s. However, the

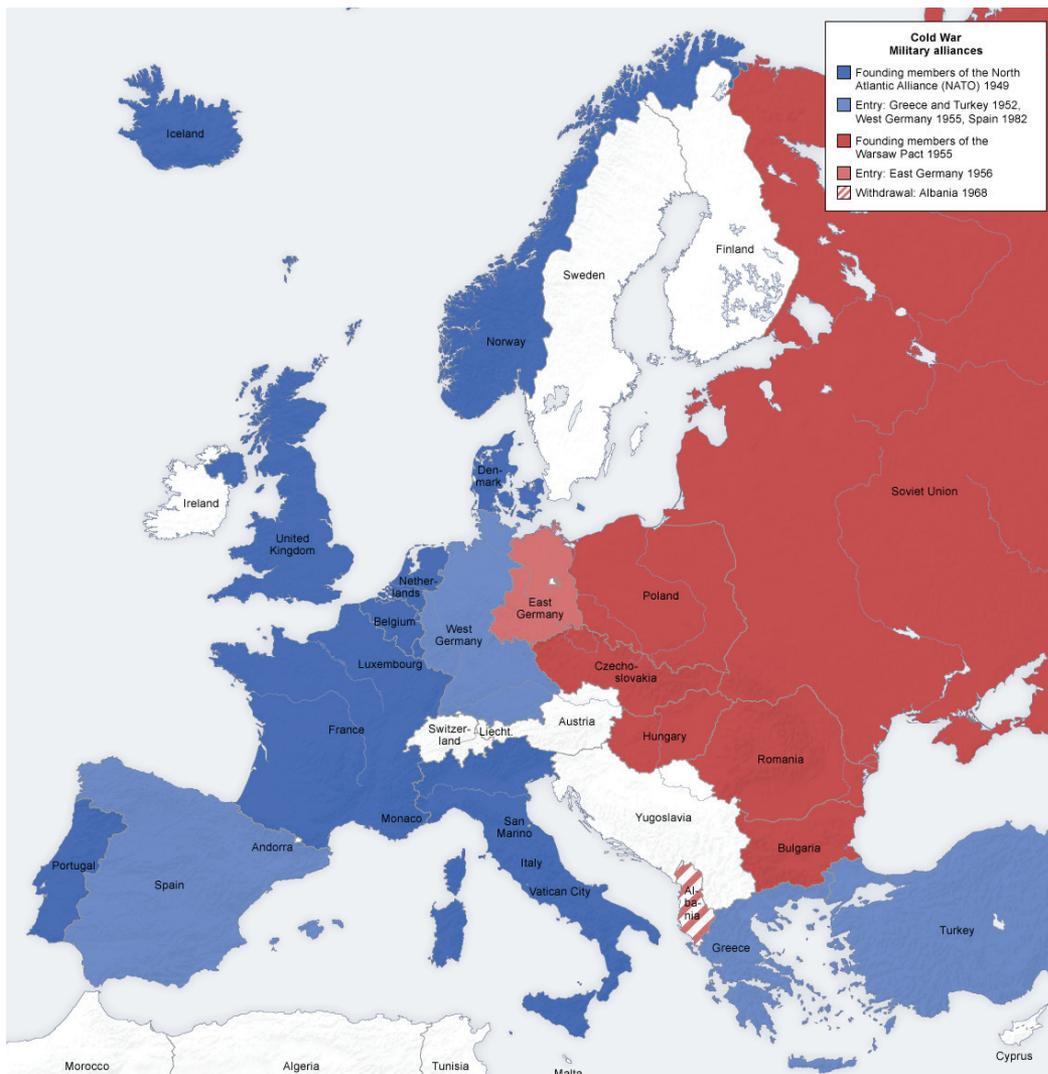
In November 1965, Władysław Gomułka and Józef Cyrankiewicz, the leaders of communist Poland, visited Skopje alongside Marshal Josip Broz Tito. Both of them were awarded the title of honorary citizen of Skopje.



democratic opposition in Yugoslavia was weaker than in Poland and in Albania it almost did not exist.

The pace of modernisation in Albania and Yugoslavia during the interwar period was slow due to infrastructural deficiencies, lack of investment and general backwardness. However, the gap between Albania and Western Europe was greater than that of Yugoslavia. The communists in Yugoslavia and Albania were able to achieve a great leap in modernisation after the Second World War. Despite this, Albania soon started to lag behind the rest of Europe due to its rigid totalitarian character. Meanwhile, communist Yugoslavia managed to compete with the West until the end of the 1970s. The nature of mutual contacts between Poland and the Western Balkans

changed radically after the end of the First World War. They became much more institutionalised and were often organised by the state. Above all, they became prone to the norms and regulations of modern diplomatic relations. Following the establishment of communist regimes in the region after 1945, both Poland and the Western Balkans (with the exception of Greece) became part of the so-called 'Eastern Bloc'. As a result, the areas found themselves under direct Soviet influence as part of Moscow's wider Cold War concerns. Yugoslavia first (1948), and then Albania (1960) broke away from Soviet domination. Whilst issues concerning ideology and Soviet influence continued throughout the communist period, both countries enjoyed rather good relations with Warsaw.



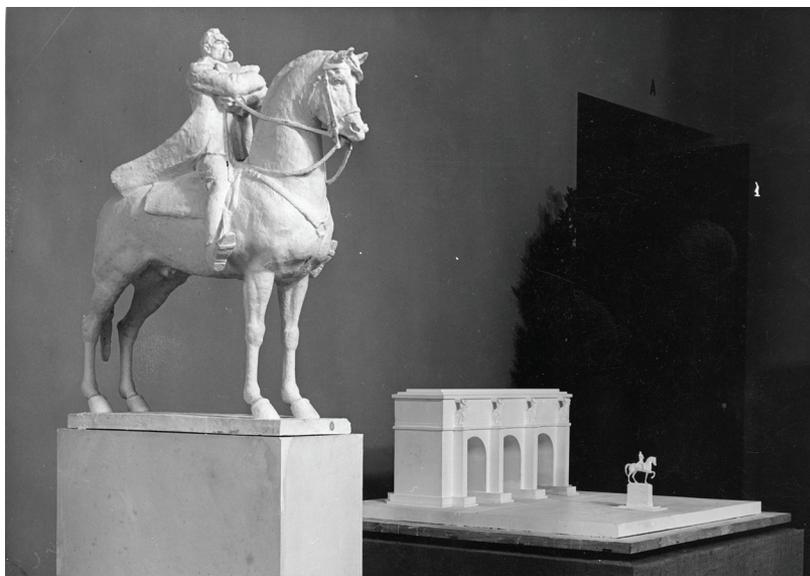
Interwar state institutions and ideologies

Poland established diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as early as June 1919. This aligns with the instructions given to Erazm Piltz, the first extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, which stated that “In the Balkan peninsula, efforts should be made to generate and consolidate influences of Polish state and culture, not only in Southern and Western Slavic lands, but also in other countries of the peninsula”. Both countries enjoyed essentially perfect relations during the interwar period. Poland also had good relations with Albania despite the fact that diplomatic relations were only established in 1937. This occurred when Władysław Günther-Schwarzburg, a well-known Polish diplomat and former ambassador to Belgrade, who at the time was extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Athens, obtained accreditation for the same position in Albania.

Poland, Yugoslavia and Albania were all communist countries. Despite this, they followed different paths in a Europe divided by the Cold War.

In the interwar period, Poland sometimes conducted its national interests through an innovative and original foreign policy. For instance, Warsaw used the Tatar community as a bridge towards Muslim communities around the world, including those in Yugoslavia. Jakub Szynekiewicz, the mufti of Poland, visited Yugoslavia several times. In 1930 the Polish mufti was the only representative of a Muslim community from outside of Yugoslavia that participated in the nomination ceremony for the head of the Islamic community in Belgrade. On the other hand, Szynekiewicz met with many representatives of the Yugoslav Muslims who were visiting Poland. This includes Smailaga Ćemalović, the mayor of Mostar. Polish Muslims often studied in religious schools in Sarajevo. They also printed their religious books in the city. Major Aleksander Jeljaszewicz represents another example of relations between Polish Tatars and Yugoslavia in the interwar period. He was the commander of the last Tatar unit in the Polish armed forces. This squadron distinguished itself during the German invasion in 1939. After that campaign, Jeljaszewicz was awarded the 'Virtuti Militari', the highest Polish military decoration for heroism and courage on the battlefield. In the 1920s Jeljaszewicz attended an officers' cavalry school in Yugoslavia and even served in the Yugoslav border guards.

The genius of Ivan Meštrović, the greatest Yugoslav sculptor, was appreciated also in interwar Poland. The Second World War denied him the chance to build various important monuments in Warsaw.



Finally, in 1998 the figure of Piłsudski on a horse by Antun Augustinčić was placed on a six metre pedestal in the centre of Katowice.



Another important and influential figure in Polish-Yugoslav relations during the interwar period was Julije Benešić (1883-1957). A poet, scholar and former director of the National Theatre in Zagreb (1921-1926), he was sent to Warsaw as a plenipotentiary delegate of the Yugoslav

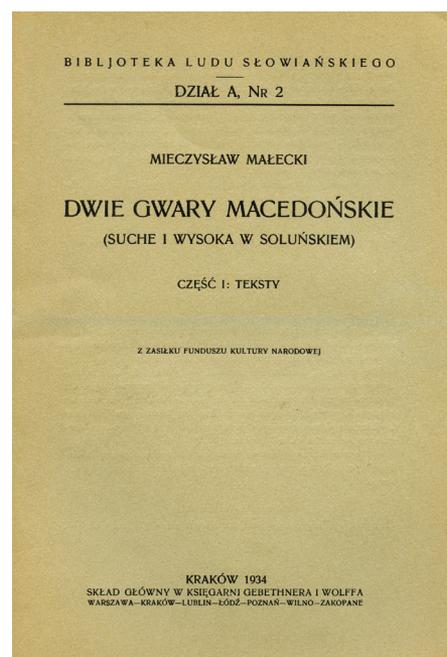
Ministry of Culture and teacher of the Croat language. This was due to his knowledge of Polish and Poland that he acquired during his studies in Cracow. He also organised the publication of the Yugoslav Library series, which saw thirteen volumes published before the Second World War. After returning to Yugoslavia he translated works by Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Stefan Żeromski, Henryk Sienkiewicz and Władysław Reymont into Serbo-Croatian. Simultaneously, many outstanding Yugoslav artists also assisted the development of Polish art. In August 1939 Ivan Meštrović, the world-class Yugoslav sculptor, won the competition to design a monument in Warsaw to commemorate Józef Piłsudski and his victory against the Bolsheviks. The equestrian statue of the marshal with the triumphal arch was to be built in the city's centre. The outbreak of the Second World War ultimately prevented the implementation of the project. That same year Antun Augustinčić, another eminent Yugoslav sculptor, designed Piłsudski's monument, which was commissioned by the Society of Upper Silesia. The bronze statue, however, did not reach Poland before 1939. The monument was only sent to Katowice in 1990.

Josef Strzygowsky (1862-1941), a prominent Austrian art historian of Polish origin, played a key role in promoting Meštrović's works across

Europe. He was a great admirer of South Slavic art. Strzygowski was born and grew up in Bielsko-Biała in southern Poland. He trained Kosta Strajnić, a Serbian art historian, who helped consolidate Meštrović's position at the centre of Yugoslav artistic life during the interwar period. Strajnić visited Poland several times and conducted research in Cracow and Warsaw.

Ethnographers and geology

Slavic studies in Poland were also institutionalised and soon mutual cooperation occurred in scientific projects and research in the field. A young and very promising linguist, Mieczysław Małecki (1903-1946), subsequently spent the period of 1927-1929 in Yugoslavia. He studied the dialects of the Macedonian language in Aegean Macedonia (Greece). The villages Małecki conducted research were called in Macedonian Suho and Visoka, and today are called in Greek Sochos and Ossa respectively. His study, entitled *Dwie macedońskie gwary (Suche i Wysoka w Soluńskim)* [Two Macedonian Dialects (Suhe and Visoka in the Thessaloniki Province)], not only represented one of the most complete dictionaries of Macedonian dialects. Indeed, it also proved that Macedonian is a separate Slavic language, situated between the Serbian and Bulgarian languages.



It is perhaps Józef Obrębski (1905-1967) who accomplished the most in scholarly terms. An ethnologist, sociologist and specialist in Slavic studies, he completed his PhD studies in London under the supervision of Bronisław Malinowski. The core of his fieldwork in today's North Macedonia

Małecki's book is both a linguistic study and a collection of genuine Macedonian fairytales and folk stories.



"Obrębski was known in the village as Josif and was really liked by the people."
Ariton Veselinovski

took place in 1932-1933. For most of this period he conducted his research in the central part of the country. He documented the social structures, kinship, rural families and communities, religious practices, folk medicine and magic rituals of this area. Most of his fieldnotes took the form of manuscripts and typescripts. A finished study on magic practices and its relation to the region's family system was destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising. Fortunately, his writings were published recently and by all accounts will serve as a key reference point for anthropological research not only for North Macedonia, but for the Balkans as a whole. Obrębski also created an exceptional collection of several hundred photographs, saving for history the traditional family celebrations of the Macedonian people (baptisms, funerals, holidays, weddings, etc.). The negatives of these photos survived the Warsaw Uprising hidden in metal boxes buried in one of the city's gardens.

Due to the long period of uncertain state relations and low level of Albanian studies in Poland, Albania was not a popular destination for Polish scholars. However, Zog I, the king of Albania, proved to be quite famous in Poland. The Polish press presented him as an extravagant, almost Oriental ruler. Nevertheless, journalists wrote of his attempts to modernise his country in the face of clan divisions and economic backwardness. As a result, his popularity appeared to stem from Poland's

own attempts to modernise during this period. In 1934, the famous painter, writer and philosopher Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939), better known as Witkacy, even painted the Polish engineer Antoni Krahelski in a style reminiscent of King Zog I. This portrait was entitled “Mbret Lalus Zogu”. In Albanian, ‘Mbret’ means king and ‘Lalus’ was Krahelski’s nickname, which could be translated as ‘pretty boy’.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that Stanisław Zuber (1883-1947) made his name in Albania during the interwar period and even laid the foundations of modern Albanian geology, mineralogy and mining. Zuber was born in Lviv and was the son of Rudolf Zuber (1858-1920), a highly esteemed and well-known Polish geologist, explorer and engineer. Following a meeting during a conference in Madrid, he was invited and thereafter hired by AIPA (The Italian Agency of Petrol in Albania) to conduct research in Albania. Between 1927-1935 he worked extensively in southern Albania and discovered two important oil fields in Kuçova and Patos. He settled permanently in Albania in 1935 and started a large and extensive research project on Albania’s geology, oil reserves, natural gas, natural asphalt, ore minerals and drinking water. His most important works were the completion of three very detailed maps of Albania (tectonic, geological and mineral respectively). He also completed around

450 smaller maps of various regions. After the war in 1947, following pressure from the Yugoslav communists and a new wave of repression initiated by the Albanian government, Zuber was arrested on clearly false charges of sabotage and espionage. That same year he died as a result of



In 2011, during the inauguration of Stanisław Zuber’s monument in Kuçova, the Albanian President Bamir Topi awarded him a posthumous “Mother Theresa” Decoration.

torture and his remains were never found. One of the most important Albanian writers of the second half of the 20th century, Petro Marko (1913-1991), witnessed the death of Zuber and in his memoir gave a terrifying testimony about his last days. Only after the fall of the communist regime was Zuber rehabilitated and given full and much deserved honours. He was awarded the medal “Martyr of Democracy” by the president of Albania. The town of Kuçova gave him the title of honorary citizen and a museum was built there in order to promote the life and work of this great scholar.

Town planners, painters and poets

The post-war period saw perhaps the most intensive chapter in relations between Poland and Yugoslavia. Symbolic gestures appeared in the very first days after the war. During 1945-1950 Foksal Street, a picturesque street in the centre of Warsaw, bore the name of the Yugoslav Brigade of Work. This honoured the young workers who were sent by the Yugoslav authorities to help rebuild the Polish capital. Despite economic difficulties during the first years after the conflict, Poland accepted nearly 15 thousand refugees from the civil war in Greece. Among this group were some 3500 children. A large number of these refugees were ethnic Macedonians. Most of them later moved to Yugoslavia, although many decided to stay in Poland due to mixed marriages.

Following patterns established during the interwar period, many important works by Yugoslav writers were translated into Polish. In the case of those writing in Macedonian, this was the very first time that their work was translated into the Polish language. One of the key texts that encouraged the rise of the anti-communist left opposition in Poland was *The New Class. An Analysis of the Communist System* by Milovan Đilas. Polish writers’ works were translated into languages spoken in Yugoslavia as well. In the case of Czesław Miłosz, this occurred despite the wishes of Polish communist authorities. The Polish poets Tadeusz Różewicz (1987) and Adam Zagajewski (2018) have even received the Golden Wreath, the highest award presented during the Struga Poetry Evenings. The award is one of the most important prizes for poets in Europe.

However, the landmark contribution by Poland during this period was the involvement of Polish town planners in the rebuilding



The Polish town planners' experiences of the rebuilding of Warsaw after the Second World War proved to be extremely valuable during their work in Skopje.

of Skopje after the devastating earthquake of July 26th 1963. Much of the city was immediately transformed into ruins, leaving 1100 dead and more than 200,000 homeless. The central figure in this project was Adolf Ciborowski (1919-1987), who became the Manager of the UN Skopje Urban Plan Project. He assembled a team made up of some of the most well-known Warsaw-based town planners (architects, economists, sociologists and statisticians). Headed by the architect and town planner Stanisław Jankowski (1911-2002), who was highly instrumental in the process of rebuilding Warsaw after WWII, this team developed the Skopje urban plan. Within the framework of the Polish aid for Skopje the Association of the Polish Architects organised also a competition for the project of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, which was won by three Warsaw architects: Waclaw Kłyszewski (1910-2000), Jerzy Mokrzyński (1909-97) and Eugeniusz Wierzbicki (1909-91). The three architects were known as the "Tigers". This was the result of a joke, when the painter and graphic artist Aleksandra Wejchert (1921-1995) placed a drawing on the door of their studio that showed three tigers demolishing their rivals in architectural competitions. Indeed, they are the authors of some of the landmarks of modernist architecture in Poland. Jankowski, on the other hand, under the pseudonym "Agaton", took part in the Polish resistance and in the Warsaw Uprising. After the Second World War he

decided to return to Poland and became immediately involved in the process of rebuilding Warsaw. For two years the Polish team worked in Skopje and was highly influential in shaping the new urban face of the city. The group of Polish architects planned the new building of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in Skopje. As an act of solidarity, artists from all around the world donated their works to the newly established museum. Polish artists joined this campaign. Subsequently, MoCA now has a unique collection of Polish modern art. In Skopje there is a street bearing the name of Adolf Ciborowski, whereas part of the Polish works from MoCA were presented during an exhibition held in Cracow in 2019. The exhibition was organised by the International Centre of Culture (MCK). As part of this project, MCK also published an album.



The Contemporary Art Museum in Skopje has a collection of 200 works donated by 135 Polish artists, including Jan Cybis, Jan Tarasin, Jerzy Nowosielski and Tadeusz Kantor.

A new phenomenon in this period was mass tourism in both directions. This was despite difficulties in obtaining passports or visas. This interest led to the production of many very interesting travel guides, report books and other publications regarding the cultures of both areas. There were also other signs of political solidarity. For instance, in 1981 the well-known Yugoslav rock band Azra produced the song „Poljska u mom srcu” (Poland in my heart), which discussed the growth

of the Solidarity movement in Poland. A year later the same band produced the song “Proljeće je u 13 Decembru” (Springtime comes on 13th of December), referring to the introduction of martial law in Poland on December 13th 1981.

Polish-Albanian relations followed a different path due to the harsh nature of the Albanian communist regime and its isolation following the decision to reject Soviet influence in 1960. Before that, Polish specialists were often invited to work in Albania and were very much appreciated by their hosts. Many members of the Albanian post-war intelligentsia studied in Poland. For instance, the mathematician Osman Kraja, who in 1981-88 was the rector of the University of Tirana. Above all Polish technology and machinery were greatly admired in the country. Even after the break that followed 1960 the demand for this type of Polish expertise never ceased. Cars were not a common sight on the streets of communist Albania. If there were cars, however, it would likely be a Polish model such as a Warszawa, Nysa, Żuk, and later on the Fiat 125 P. Until 1960 Albania was viewed as a close ally in Poland, and an interesting and exciting part of the newly founded bloc of ‘people’s democracies’. This interest encouraged Anna Milska (1909-1987), a Polish philologist who became well-known as a translator from German to Polish and editor of folk tales, to visit Albania in the late 1940s. She shared her impression of the country in a travelogue entitled *Shqiptarija – ojczyzna górskich orłów* (Albania – fatherland of mountain eagles), which was published in 1950. Around the same time, Albania also became a topic of huge interest for Stanisław Krzyształowski (1903-1990), a Polish painter who spent some time in the country at the start of the 1950s. Krzyształowski showed a great admiration for mountain landscapes in his work. He painted a series of Albanian landscapes and presented them during an exhibition in Tirana in 1955. In contrast to this, Czesław Miłosz’s 1974 short poem *Władca Albanii* (The ruler of Albania) was most likely inspired by the harshness of Albanian communism. In 1972 a new standard of Albanian literary language was created by the communist regime. Inspired by this mechanical creation of a new language, the future (in 1980) winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature presented his vision of the end of the poetic world and the resignation of the poet. This poem was only translated into Albanian in 2004.

A completely new phenomenon were mixed Albanian-Polish marriages. One such marriage was that between the well-known Albanian painter Danish Jukniu (1934-2003), and his wife, a pediatrician named Danuta Kościuszko (1935-1994). They met in Cracow, where Danish studied at the Academy of Fine Arts and Danuta studied medicine. In 1963, despite restrictions, Danuta joined her husband, who was already teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tirana and started working as a pediatrician. She never renounced her Polish citizenship and stayed in Albania on a residence permit. At the same time, she never visited the Polish embassy and thus avoided any accusations that she was a spy. Such allegations were not uncommon for those in mixed marriages. Eventually their life crumbled when, following a government campaign against ‘liberalism in arts’ in 1976, Danish, who was then head of the painting faculty, was forced to work as a drawing teacher in a primary school in his native Shkodra. Danuta Kościuszko began working as a pediatrician in the local hospital and soon made her name as one of the most prepared and highly respected doctors in the town. The lives of thousands of children, that she saved during 30 years of relentless work, are her main legacy. One of the main linguists specialising in Albanian during the second half of the 20th century was Waclaw Cimochoowski (1912-1982). He studied in Vienna under the direction of Norbert Jokl (1877-1942), one of the leading albanologists of the time. Cimochoowski received his PhD for a dissertation on the dialect of the northern Albanian village of Dushman. This represented the first full description of a sub-dialect and non-literary form of the Albanian language. During his years as a professor at the Nicolaus Copernicus University of Toruń, he developed a theory on the potential origin and development of the Albanian language. He situated the origin of this language in the triangle between modern Niš, Skopje and Sofia. Although debated by other linguists, this hypothesis still continues to inspire scientific research. This period also saw development regarding scientific cooperation in the field of Slavic studies between Yugoslavia and Poland. It was based on the solid foundation of institutions established in the interwar period.

IV. Poland and the Western Balkans after 1989

Due to the fall of communism, the establishment of democracy and economic reform, Poland experienced perhaps the best period of its modern history. This success story allowed Poland to join NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. On the other hand, Poland's transformation also faced difficulties as the transition was oftentimes accompanied by internal political, social and economic problems. Poland's geopolitical position in Europe changed fundamentally because of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia and the reunification of Germany. While in 1990 Poland bordered three countries in 1993 the number of its neighbors raised to seven.

After 1989, the map of Europe changed dramatically. This was particularly true in the Western Balkans and Central Europe.



Following the Srebrenica genocide in July 1995, Mazowiecki resigned from his post of Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights as a sign of protest against the world's apathy.

Memories of the 1990s in the Western Balkans and Poland are radically different. Compared to Poland, the fall of the communist regimes in Albania and Yugoslavia was more dramatic. Albania experienced civil disorder and a sort of rebellion against the government. Meanwhile, the dissolution of Yugoslavia resulted in several armed conflicts of different intensities. The wars in Bosnia and Kosovo were accompanied by ethnic cleansing and a large number of war crimes. This includes the events that took place in Srebrenica in July 1995, when Bosnian Serb forces murdered thousands of Bosniaks. In comparison to Central Europe, the region has still not joined the EU. However, three Western Balkan countries are now members of NATO. Despite these striking differences, modern Poland shares some similarities with the region. This includes certain economic and political issues stemming from long-term historical structures and processes, the post-communist transformation and a relatively recent process of integration with the EU.

The dynamics of Polish-Balkan relations had to change with the collapse of Yugoslavia and the emergence of a new and varied group of nation states in the region. Polish diplomacy has subsequently attempted to adapt to this new reality over many years. At the same time, Poland has not forgotten about the importance of the region as a whole. In the 1990s

and the beginning of the 21st century, Warsaw engaged with the Western Balkans on an unprecedented scale through participation in various international missions (UN, EU, NATO). This engagement was also clearly seen during former Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki's (1927-2013) mission to the region as Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Around the same time, Henryk Sokalski, a Polish diplomat, headed the UNPREDEP mission in Macedonia (1995-1998). Polish specialists also helped build the foundations for a new institutional life in Kosovo during its time as an international protectorate and after 2008 as an independent state. For instance, Marek Antoni Nowicki was the first 'international ombudsperson' in the area between 2000-2005. Currently, Poland is one of most important advocates of EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans. Recently, Poles have started to visit the region as tourists on a massive scale. For the first time ever in history, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Poles now meet every year with Albanians, Bosniaks, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Serbs.

Movie directors, novelists and musicians

Despite an initial collapse in the 1990s, an upward trend can be seen in terms of cultural and scientific cooperation between Poland and the Western Balkans in the 21st century. Books by Balkan writers are quite often published in Poland shortly after they appear in Balkan languages. This is thanks to Polish publishers such as Centre Pogranicze and Czarne Publishing House. These groups were able to direct the tastes of their readers to the region, thereby making it more fashionable. The overall number of books translated from the Western Balkan languages into Polish is really impressive. It often exceeds the number of translations from many other languages, including others in Europe. The situation is similar in the Western Balkans. For instance, the works of some prominent Polish writers were published in Balkan languages before they gained international recognition and awards. This was the case regarding the works of Olga Tokarczuk, which were published in Albanian.

Modern Polish culture has also strongly influenced the thoughts and careers of many Western Balkan writers. Miljenko Jergović, an outstanding Bosnian Croat novelist and poet, is one of the best examples of this

phenomenon. In one of his interviews, Jergović declared that "Polish literature and film are among the most important elements of European culture, especially in the second half of the 20th century. Poland has always been an unusual literary topic for me. If countries were to be thought of as literary heroes, Poland would be by far the most interesting for me". A clear interest in Poland and its history is visible from the very beginning of his career. Indeed, his literary debut, a poetry collection from 1988 called *Opservatorija Varšava* (Warsaw Observatory), is clearly influenced by the country. Jergović is very popular in both the Western Balkans and Poland. In 2012, he received the Angelus Central European Award for his book *Srda pjeva, u sumrak, na Duhove* (Srda Sings at Dusk On Pentecost). The Angelus is a Polish international literary award. It was established in 2006 and presented by the city of Wrocław. Jergović is the only writer from the Western Balkans to have won the award. In 2016 he published the novel *Wilimowski*, which is built around a strong Polish theme. The work tells the story of a trip taken by a retired physics professor from Krakow, Tomasz Mieroszewski, and his son, Dawid, to a small village situated in the mountains of Yugoslavia just before the Second World War. Jergović also made the legendary German-Polish Silesian footballer Ernest Wilimowski the title character of his novel.

Bilateral or multi-lateral cooperation is also clear in other fields of cultural and scientific activity. For instance, one of the first Albanian films that discussed the harsh communist past was *Kolonel Bunker* (Colonel Bunker). It was directed by Kujtim Çashku and produced in 1996 as an Albanian-Polish-French

Ernest Wilimowski, the hero of Jergović's novel, is the only player to have scored four goals in an official game against Brazil. He did this during the 1938 World Cup.



Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe



Quo Vadis, Aida? was selected as the Bosnian entry for 'Best International Feature Film' at the 93rd Academy Awards.

co-production. One of the main roles in the film was played by the well-known Polish actress Anna Nehrebecka, who performed in Albanian. Another well-known Polish filmmaker, the future Oscar winner Paweł Pawlikowski, produced a shocking documentary

film entitled *Serbian Epics* at the start of his career. This work helped capture the threats of modern nationalism in the Balkans. In 2020 his associates helped produce the movie *Quo Vadis Aida?*, which was directed by Bosniak director Jasmila Žbanić. A few years ago, she won the 'Golden Bear' for her movie *Grbavica*. Her latest film presents the tragic story of a Bosniak woman who lost her sons and husband during the Srebrenica genocide in 1995. The movie is a Polish co-production managed by Ewa Puszczyńska, who was also a co-producer of Pawlikowski's acclaimed movies *Ida* and *Cold War*. Žbanić's film was edited by Jarosław Kamiński, who also worked for Pawlikowski. Antoni Komasa-Łazarkiewicz, a Polish composer cooperating with Agnieszka Holland, another award-winning Polish director, was responsible for the music. Finally, Małgorzata Karpiuk, was the costume designer for the movie.

Goran Bregović's performances as a solo artist, as well as his successful cooperation with the artists Kayah and Krzysztof Krawczyk, also encouraged interest in Balkan music in Poland. Facing huge demand for such music from the public, the musical producer Grzegorz Brzozowicz, who was instrumental in introducing Bregović to the Polish musical scene, undertook another musical project. This consisted of translating and re-introducing the old songs of former Yugoslav rock bands produced by the legendary label Jugoton. This time, however, they were performed by well-known Polish singers.

Last but not least, the level of scientific cooperation between Polish and Balkan colleagues, especially in the field of humanities and social sciences, is now very high. Such a noteworthy project is the University of Warsaw's archaeological research in the Montenegrin-Albanian borderland and, in particular, the identification and excavation of the town of Risan. The Polish linguist Zuzanna Topolińska has contributed greatly to the field of linguistics of modern Macedonian over several decades. Professor Topolińska is a regular member of Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as a foreign member of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Three Polish scholars are foreign members of MANU. Alongside the further development of the tradition of Slavic studies in Poland, a new sub-field of Albanian studies has emerged in recent years. This has already taken the form of institutionalised activity at universities in Warsaw, Toruń and Poznań. Highly instrumental in this process has been the well-known Polish linguist, Professor Irena Sawicka, who in December 2020 was accepted as a foreign member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo. The accession of the Western Balkans to the European Union, which is only a matter of time, will open up a new chapter in the history of Polish relations with the region. This will provide both sides with new opportunities to strengthen cooperation in the fields of art, culture and science.

The album *Kayah i Bregović* sold over 700,000 copies in Poland and achieved the status of a diamond album. In 2000, Kayah won three Fryderyk Music Awards, the highest annual award in Polish music, for best album, best female singer and best video clip.



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