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## THE SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL NOSTALGIA FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (THROUGH EXAMPLES FROM MACEDONIAN POETRY)

**Abstract:** The imagology of the Mediterranean moves between reality and imagination, between fact and fiction. In this research a classification of the nostalgia for the Mediterranean is made, while perceiving the Mediterranean as encompassing geography, culture, history, myth and way of life.

The researcher finds two types of nostalgia for the Mediterranean: spatial nostalgia and temporal nostalgia. Both types are illustrated through examples from the Macedonian poetry (oral folk poetry and contemporary poetry). Spatial nostalgia is sensitive, ambient, personal and it has its own memory map (of landscapes, smells, tastes, sounds, languages, people...). Temporal nostalgia is directed toward the past, both the mythical and the historical past. Though it seems paradoxical, spatial nostalgia idealizes the Mediterranean more than the temporal nostalgia, which demystifies the Mediterranean mythical and legendary mystifications. There is also one separate and complex type of “Macedonian nostalgia for the Mediterranean”, which combines the two types and is both spatial and temporal, it is chronotopical.

**Key words:** *spatial and temporal nostalgia, Mediterranean, chronotope, Macedonian poetry, myth, demystification*

### INTRODUCTION: THE MEDITERRANEAN, BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION

The Mediterranean is not merely a sea. *Mare Nostrum*<sup>1</sup> is a civilization which gravitates toward the sea and from the sea toward the land. This

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<sup>1</sup> There are many ways in which the Mediterranean has been named [1], [2]: Our Sea (in Latin ‘Mare Nostrum’; in Ancient Greek ‘η ημετερα θαλασσα’), Great Sea (in Latin ‘Mare Magnum’; in Ancient Greek ‘η μεγαλη θαλασσα’; in Ancient Hebrew ‘הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל’, ‘HaYam

gravitation generates constant nostalgia of the land for the sea and of the sea for the land. The Mediterranean nostalgia is ironical in its mystery: those who have no access to the sea, yearn for it; those who have access to the sea, yearn for the land; those who lost their access to the sea, mystify the Mediterranean; and those who have personally experienced the Mediterranean here and now, adopt it as their own world, a world of pleasures or a world of temptations...

Therefore, the nostalgia instigates the imagination, the personal, collective and creative imagination. This imagination creates images of the Mediterranean which are then stored in the collective memory (myths, legends), in language and in literature (epics, poetry, novels, plays, travel literature). These images are clichéd and they become stereotypes with local, ethnic and sub-regional overtone. This is how an imagology about the Mediterranean is created. This is how Mediterraneanology was established, perceived as a complex of descriptive and interpretative disciplines.

Mediterraneanology defines the Mediterranean in the following way: Fernand Braudel [3] sees it as a civilizational phenomenon, Predrag Matvejević [1] as a “Breviary”<sup>2</sup> and it is also seen as a zone of migrations, conversions and intercultural dialogue on the relation Christianity-Judaism-Islam, Europe-Asia-Africa.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the Mediterranean is an intersection zone of the coastal civilizations and the continental civilizations from several continents,

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HaGadol'), Hinder Sea (also in Ancient Hebrew 'הַיָּם הַמְּיָרֵק'), Internal Sea (Mare Internum), Mediterranean Sea (Mare Mediterraneum, meaning: inland sea, in the middle of the land; in Modern Hebrew 'הַיָּם הַמְּיָרֵק', 'HaYam HaTikhon', 'The Middle Sea'), White Sea (in Ottoman 'زِيكْد قَا' and in Turkish 'Akdeniz'; in Persian 'Baħr-i Safid' and in Modern Arabic 'طسوت مل [اضيبأل] رحبال', 'al-Baħr [al-Abyaq] al-Mutawassiṭ', 'the [White] Middle Sea'), Green Sea, Southern Sea or “The Big Water” (this last term is according to the title of a 1971 novel by Živko Čingo). It is both a Wave (θάλασσα, thálassa) and a Bridge (πόντος, pón-tos), as the Ancient Greeks used to designate the Mediterranean. Since it is in the midst of a few continents/lands/countries, it may also be seen as Earth's median sea, the Centre or “Navel of the World” in a Mediterranean-centric and mythomaniac approach ('mythomaniac' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century meaning of the word). The Mare Nostrum idea translates itself to the images of the local seas: for instance, the Adriatic Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Ionic Sea or the Black Sea are observed as “little Mediterraneans”. In colloquial speech the Macedonians, and the Serbs also, still talk about the Adriatic Sea as “our sea” today.

<sup>2</sup> “Breviary” (from Latin: breviarium ‘summary, abridgement’, breviare ‘abridge’, brevis ‘short, brief’) means a Psalter, a book containing the everyday service for the Roman Catholic Church priests, a brief overview of texts, a collection of different cultures, a kind of “chronology”.

<sup>3</sup> The mythomaniac observations ('mythomaniac' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century meaning of the word) of the contemporary reality are often illustrated by some toponyms (like Mariovo/Moriovo, desert regions with sea remains: salt, sea-shells).

including all that those civilizations may imply: races, peoples, religions, mythologies, languages, cultural inheritance, architecture, music, cooking, mentality, moral, climate...<sup>4</sup>

## THE MEDITERRANEAN: SPACE AND TIME

The image of the Mediterranean in literature ought to be set in correlation with the much more fluid and versatile notion of the Mediterranean adopted in the theory. As much as this notion is real, it is also an imaginary space (pastoral, apocalyptic, symbolical), while its time is historical, as much as it is mythical and psychological. When the real existing geographical and state borders were changing, those borders were migrated into the internal, mental map of the peoples. Illusion is the other face of reality. When reality turns into past, it migrates to the imaginary world and to the unconscious sphere.

Something similar could be said about the historical changes reflected in various languages. In language it is not only the image of the existing Mediterranean world that is created, but also one particular “linguistic Mediterranean world”, filled with reminiscences and mirages: sea expansion, deserted and utopian islands,<sup>5</sup> green-azure colors, smells of salt and saltworks, of fish, oysters, algae, olives, grapes, lemons, oranges, figs, lavender, oleanders, rosemary, basil and honey, then shipwrecks and floods, pirates and whalefishers, mythic goats and their alpinism, abysses and bays, Atlantis, the Leviathan, Cyclopes, jelly fish, and even the deeply moving images of the contemporary migrations across the Mediterranean.

In these conditions, literature (as the *Home of language*) became a topographic archive of both real and imaginary countries and peoples, of both chronicles and legends, historiographies and mythographies. Literature, in fact, accomplishes the *sacral unity of space and time*, which, in turn, is nearest to the notion *chronotope*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, we won't write about the pragmatic aspects of the Mediterranean, but about the *Mediterranean chronotope*,

<sup>4</sup> Consult the reader edited by Milan Ćurčinov [4].

<sup>5</sup> The archaic notion of an island implies a broad range of nostalgia: from ultimate isolation to ultimate movement, escape, communication and “mingling” with other people, ethnicities, cultures, languages.

<sup>6</sup> The mere term Mediterranean Sea in itself contains both a sea image and a land image. Language remembers old times, old city names (like the name Phillippopolis for today's Plovdiv, or Adrianopolis/Adrianople and Edrinje for today's Edirne), and through language (the ways people vocalize and verbalize) we too recall the archaic and distant spatial-existential layers and signs.

about its psychological, anthropological, mythological, aesthetic and metaphysical (sacral) dimension.

#### TYPES OF NOSTALGIA: SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL NOSTALGIA

So, the term Mediterranean implies both space and time (geography and 'chrono'-graphy). The metaphysics of space and time establishes the *chronotope* of the Mediterranean. The chronotope transcends the administrative state borders and spreads the Mediterranean "spirit/*spiritus*" as far as the Mediterranean geographical and cultural zone spreads, as far as the Mediterranean sensibility, memory and nostalgia may reach. Nostalgia is the key notion in the interpretation of the Mediterranean chronotope, perceived as that which is called *spiritus loci* (spirit of the space) and *spiritus temporis* (spirit of the time, Zeitgeist).<sup>7</sup>

Nostalgia (yearning, longing, sorrow, desire, passion, Eros) gravitates both toward space and toward time. Therefore, we could classify it into two modes: *spatial and temporal nostalgia*. Spatial nostalgia focuses on the lost and absent space (birth place, birth land, estate, freedom of movement in space), while the temporal nostalgia longs for mythical and historical figures, events and conditions.

Both fantasize about something which is absent in the real world and present in the inner world, which creates an (obsessive) desire for something to be repeated, to come back again. That *inner world* is important for the creation of Verbal Art images of the object of desire and for instigation of the creative Eros. Both spatial and temporal nostalgia rely on the principle of mystification, idealization, glorification and eroticization, thereby they rely on a mythical, biased, at times infantile, but also empathic world view.

Spatial nostalgia can be directed toward the birth place, but also toward regions with which we identify, we feel "at home", regardless how foreign they are (we feel them our own), regions that free us from our energetic, moral, familial, political or other constraints. One may go back in space physically much more easily than in time. Returning in time is more mental, imaginary, related to the collective unconscious and to memory which is either nurtured with legends, language and institutionally, or suppressed.

Temporal nostalgia is often explained in a Proustian way, as some personal lost time, as wistfulness over one's childhood, youth or some other time that is considered to be good, regardless whether it objectively was a good

<sup>7</sup> For more on the Mediterranean chronotope, see: Katica Āulavkova [5]

time. The important thing is that the time was subjectively experienced as good (from both temporal and existential distance). Temporal nostalgia longs for some collective imaginary past and for its narrative. Temporal nostalgia mourns for the lost civilizational code, the code of paganism, polytheism and ritualism, the ancient epic and heroic code which was founded in the imaginary map of the ethnos that is systematically deprived of individuality, dislocated, negated, deprived of its homeland (the Slavophone/Slavic Macedonians are still called ‘Endopes’, ‘Ендопи’, ‘ντόπιοι (ντόπιοι)’, from ‘ντόπιος (ντόπιος)’, i. e. native, local, from-here).<sup>8</sup>

Both types of nostalgia have a potential for cyclic returning and repeating, depending on the language and on the composition of the spirit and the soul of the individual and the collective. Sometimes it happens that the spatial nostalgia is inseparable from the temporal nostalgia (and vice versa). The spatial nostalgia for the sea and the sea shores is reflected in the temporal nostalgia for the past/antiquity. In such cases the nostalgia is a complex chronotopic nostalgia.

#### THE MYTHICAL IMAGE OF *MARE NOSTRUM* IN THE MACEDONIAN ORAL POETIC TRADITION

The image of space in Macedonian folklore and in Macedonian folk oral literature is antithetical and mythical: where ever there is white/light there must be black/dark as well.<sup>9</sup> Precisely this kind of awareness and this kind of linguistic expression shows the inherent sense/sensibility for ritualistic, magical and mythopoetic experiencing of the world. There is a lyrical folk song “A deer swims in the sea” („Елен пливат по море”) in which the ritualistic rhythm and the mythical reflection has been kept:

A deer swims in the sea, hey Lazarus! Its antlers golden / on its antlers towers / on the towers a golden chamber / on the golden chamber a carpet / on the carpet a bed / on the bed, a pillow / on the pillow, a lady / rocking

<sup>8</sup> Just like, for instance, Homer’s epical “Ithaca” is a synonym for returning to one’s birth place for the Hellenic and Hellenistic world, or like Constantine Cavafy’s “Ithaca” exists even at places where it is not present, as a part of the subject’s psychomental topography. The nostalgia is more of an act of daydreaming about the return and an absent presence, rather than actual returning home again.

<sup>9</sup> The antithetic perception (based on the bipolar, antipodal and antagonistic principle) is a way of experiencing the world connected to the dominant philosophical and religious matrixes, which is reflected in folklore as a stylistic cliché: “white book — black writing” [6, p. 104], the white color meaning good/fair/serene and the black color evil/not fair/sad. This division of the mythical image is a result of the archetypes Black God and White God (kept in the Slavic mythology and in the pagan beliefs). See: Katica Kulavkova [7].

a male child / feeding it with chickpea bread / stringing tiny pearls / throwing out the big pearls... [6, song no. 39, p. 63]<sup>10</sup>

The golden antlers of the deer swimming in the sea are described as a “place” where an imaginary Home lies, where a whole imaginary world is happening and a pastoral life filled with blessings (in this world there is a mother feeding her child and stringing pearls, there is a huge string of precious pearls, small and large, and an unconditional maternal love washed in the golden light gleaming from the deer’s antlers, both spread across the expansion of sea, and in them an ideal mythical world which is turning and repeating, in a cyclical way... The sea is a cradle, home, birth, survival, wealth, light, love. According to Lidija Kapuševska Drakulevska the image of the sea as “the big water” is a parabola of the female principle [8].

In another folk song “The maiden fell asleep at the seaside” („Заспала мома крај море”) [6, song no. 144, p. 145], a landscape of a sea shore is given, with an olive tree, a girl waking up from her dream (from a broken olive branch) and a sea wind (“Meglen”). The girl curses the wind for waking her up from her “big dream”, because in her dream there were three young men (“foolish”) and each of them gives her something: the first one an apple, the second one a golden ring, the third one a kiss. Here again we have an idyllic image of life at the sea shore as domicile space. The dream has been interrupted by a natural element, the sea wind.

This song is an isolated example which shows that in the Macedonian legends the memory of the sea shore as a symbol for the collective home (birth land) was preserved. The Macedonian folk poetry contains numerous signals for the quondam intimate relationship between the people and the sea. The collective memory, connected to the Macedonian language, suggests awareness for a natural belonging of the Macedonians to the Mediterranean zone through the Aegean sea. This awareness is articulated in the poetry of many Macedonian poets: Mateja Matevski, Radovan Pavlovski, Vlada Uroshević, Jovan Koteski, Mihail Rendžov, Katica Ćulavkova, Liljana Dirjan and others.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The folk song is difficult to translate; it is in dialect and with many Turkish archaisms. Here is the original: „Елен пливат по море, јо Лазаре! Злати му се рого’и / на рого’и пирго’и / на пирго’и злат одор / на злат одор халија / на халија постела / на постела, перница / на перница кадана / машко дете луљаше / со симит го ранеше / дребен бисер нижеше / јадриот го фрлаше...”

<sup>11</sup> Lidija Kapuševska Drakulevska calls them “poets of the sea” [8, p. 69]. For more on the Mediterranean motives in contemporary Macedonian poetry, see her full essay [7]. And for the belonging of the Macedonian literature in the Mediterranean cultural sphere, see the essay by Katica Ćulavkova [9] in the same reader [4].

## NOSTALGIA FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE CONTEMPORARY MACEDONIAN POETRY

### 1. SPATIAL NOSTALGIA: A PERSONAL MEDITERRANEAN

The poetic speech is sensitive to the numerous face and seamy sides of the Mediterranean chronotope, which is marked by the *spiritus* of the time, the *aura of the space*,<sup>12</sup> but also by the sensibility of the poet. I will single out an example of spatial nostalgia which is freed from mystification of the past and of the birth place, but is a specific nostalgia for the Mediterranean as a newly found spiritual birth land. This is characteristic of the poetry of Liljana Dirjan (1953–2008), a Macedonian poetess of Armenian descent from her mother's side. In her poetry the nostalgia is “from this time”, personal, impressive and evocative. She is evoking her personal sensitive and localized experiencing of the Mediterranean world (visual, textile, olfactory). The Mediterranean landscape is situated in her memory, her psyche and her language. Therefore this landscape is ambient, narrative, memoir-like and confessional, associative, created with love, like a game, curiously and content, without the pathos of loss and sorrow. Dirjan's landscape is abundant with narrative details, insertions and cinematic shots. It is more cinematic than photographic, more dramatic than prosaic. Therefore it cannot be said whether the dominant memory in it is memory by “contact” (metonymic) or by analogy (metaphorical). One can feel the bitter nuance of a good dry red wine, so the reader's throat tightens from it. One ought to enjoy in the sharp details of the stories and the imaginary Mediterranean regions she describes in a pastoral manner, like an “Eden paradise”:

To pick a village here  
 With a house, goats, chickens, bees, a cat  
 And a dog, thimble-sized garden  
 To graft grape vines, lemons, oranges here  
 To sow celery and patience dock  
 To form little furrows with tomatoes and peppers  
 In the morning to say to the sun:  
 ‘Hey, you, do warm and cuddle my produce  
 I am going to the sea — my first neighbor  
 For a chat.

(“Corfu”) [12, p. 108–9]

<sup>12</sup> Daniela Hodrova speaks about the “aura of the city” in [10]. See also Elena Ivanova Hristova in [11].

In several poems and in an ambient manner Dirjan evokes lucid, visual and sensory images of a few Mediterranean micro toposes: the islands Lastovo and Korcula in the Adriatic Sea, the island Corfu in the Ionic Sea, Cairo (Egypt) and Damascus (Syria); thereby creating her own personal lyrical Mediterranean microcosm. The poems mentioned are the following: “To have tea in Asia”, about Bosphorus and Cappadocia [12, p. 122]; “Damascus: heavy silk” [12, p. 127]; “A Cairo taxi” [12, pp. 242–3]; “Jelly fish”, from Nea Moudania, Aegean Sea [12, p. 80]; “Olive” [12, p. 37]; “Olympian afternoon with remnants” [12, p. 49]; as well as the group of poems about several islands: “Toward Lastovo 1” and “Toward Lastovo 2” [12, pp. 65–66], “A-mol, Peter from Lastovo” [12, pp. 125–6], “Corcula” [12, p. 124], “Corfu” [12, pp. 108–109].

I will also quote a fragment from Dirjan’s beautiful poem “Damascus, heavy silk”, which is characteristic of her human identity and her creative identity. The silk from which she made her scarves, painted by her in her own way and with her special love, that silk lead her from the “Silk Road”, through the remarkable Damascus, into the world of the Other, a world without which the Mediterranean would, actually, not be imaginable. The yearning for the Other World is evoked through the image of Damascus, while the desire for the Other through the painting of the silk, the heavy nocturnal silk. In between the lines, beyond this chronotope of the Other World, the yearning for the sacral is hinted, the yearning for the intimate relationship with the celestial silk which surpasses the official religious interpretations. Thereby the spatial nostalgia with personal intonation leaves the framework of the geographical Mediterranean and enters the sphere of metaphysical existence. As far as time is concerned, she uses the “eternal Present” which knows of no space and time obstacles. So the illusion happens here and now:

... on yellow sand a yellow afternoon  
 Time for prayer  
 Circle around the Rock  
 I am painting silk, a Silk Road  
 To get to you at night  
 To catch you shining Bright  
 ... and your body is from gold and crepe satin  
 I am lying down next to you  
 And on the way one can hear  
 How the sky is falling  
 Dark heavy silk.

[12, p. 127]



In a similar way, in the poem "An arabesque" [13, p. 131], the author Radovan Pavlovski (1937) puts in the foreground his personal experience with the exotic and with its attractiveness which ignores identity differences and turns into the supreme principle of love. In coherence with the principle of spatial nostalgia, this poem sings about the Eros of Otherness (in a racial, gender, cultural, mental sense), about the exotics of the Arabian world and the African ambience. "In my eyes traces of sea", Radovan says, while in the eyes of the small Arabian girl "a violet". "The sea is a cradle / rocking between two shores." A cradle between the two worlds. A distance that ought to be conquered.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. TEMPORAL NOSTALGIA FOR A DISTANT PAST

The Mediterranean is ideal for incarnation or embodiment of archetypal functions. Thereby, when poetry is referring to mythical images and through them to archetypal structures, it evokes the image of the Mediterranean. The mythical and archaic Mediterranean evokes prehistoric epochs and times, therefore the poems which actualize the universal archetypal potential are an expression of deep (temporal) nostalgia for the mythical past and its world freed from moral and rational taboos.

The history of the Mediterranean knows of various mythical incarnations of the universal archetypal patterns. The mythical images are an incarnation (embodiment, personification) of the abstract archetypal patterns and, as such, they are characteristic of the poetic speech which is hypersensitive, visual, rhythmic, consonant, emotive and clairvoyant. The universal layers of the Mediterranean civilization are familiarized with the mythical intertext in poetry.<sup>14</sup>

The obsessive attachment to the mythical way of thought implicates an attachment to the Mediterranean culture. The temporal nostalgia in poetry is a form of metareflexion of the mythical aura of antique culture and its moral cannons. This understanding is close to the opinion of Blaže Koneski

<sup>13</sup> Vlada Urošević, a poet fascinated by travelling, has published many travelogues and memoir fictions in which he sings about concrete Mediterranean micro-locations: Khalkidhiki and the parts of the peninsula (Cassandra, Sithonia, Athos), Vourvourou, Kalogria, Athens, islands in the Ionian Sea (Corfu, Zakynthos, Ithaca, Cephalonia), Lebanon, Baalbek and others [14].

<sup>14</sup> For instance the archetypal-mythical patterns of the (Promethean) sacrifice for the benefit of the human race/the people, of the heroic act for saving the people (Bolen Dojčin/Ailing Dojčin, St. George), of fratricide (Cain-Abel) and patricide (Oedipus/Laius), of incest (Jocasta and Oedipus), of parental infanticide (Medea), then also of the figures of the Wise Man, the Creator, the Miracle Maker, the Foreigner, Magna Mater, the Shadow, the Dragon...

who introduced the category “spiritual intercourse with the Mediterranean” [15]. The nostalgia for the epical and the mythical past is stated as a reply to the contemporary cultural code. The temporal nostalgia yearns for a spiritual space and visualizes its mythical images and archetypal patterns. That is its focus.

In Macedonian poetry the temporal nostalgia for the Mediterranean visualizes the illegible, symbolic, mythical and archaic past, so thereby it refers to the ritualistic and mythical world view. The world view often looks for its own local window to look through. For the Macedonian poets a local portal for entering the Mediterranean spiritual/symbolic cosmos is the Antique inheritance in all of its shapes (Antique Macedonian, Antique Thracian, Antique Hellenic and Antique Roman<sup>15</sup>). Later on, the same role is also taken on by the Byzantine, Christian and Old Slavic culture. The Old Slavic mythology is in the shadow of the Antique mythological inheritance, and the pagan symbolic suppresses the Christian one. In fact, the pagan awareness is current in the contemporary folklore culture (like the performative and ritualistic matrix of the carnival). The Antique and the Slavonic cultural matrixes are syncretically connected and this is precisely what establishes the discerning characteristic of the temporal nostalgia in Macedonian poetry. On the same principle lies the dualistic understanding of the Eastern-Mediterranean culture: a powerful Antique and Old Slavic matrix, with specific indigenous Macedonian signifiers.

Using the proto-text of the Ancient Greek myths, the Macedonian poets evoke images from the Mediterranean world and express their attitude toward the Mediterranean inheritance. Many poets write about the mythical figures of Odysseus, Penelope, Iphigenia, Helen, Ares, Zeus, Antinous, Agamemnon, Procne and Philomela, the one-eyed Poliphemus, the Cyclops, Circe, Orpheus, Eurydice, Dionysus, Hercules, Hermes, the nymphs... — all of which have been widely sung in the Antique epics and tragedies, but also in contemporary literature.

Several Macedonian poets capture the Mediterranean “ghost of time” through Antique Greek myth reflections, which are nostalgic as much as ironic. The temporal nostalgia is neither idolatrous nor stereotypical. It is fascinated by the mythical image of the world, but attempts to recreate it in a different way, through re-vision and demystification. The urge for originality leads the poets to a new view on the old world and to a revision of the inherited clichés.

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<sup>15</sup> Macedonia Prima and Macedonia Secunda are administrative entities of the ancient Roman Empire.

Blaže Koneski (1921–1993) in the poem “Odysseus” [16] and Jovan Koteski (1932–2001) in the poems “Antinous” [17, p. 66] and “Penelope” [18],<sup>16</sup> both demystify the delusion about Penelope’s fidelity to Odysseus by showing her erotic appeal and her openness to systematic temptations over the many years. The image of the erotic yearning hides behind the image of weaving, which is in internal conflict with the social status. The whole thing is not about fidelity to the husband, but about subordination to the codex of the social status and prestige (by title, estate, family).<sup>17</sup> Through this prism the dual role of Penelope is captured in a lucid and witty way. The temporal nostalgia demystifies the inherited mythical and epical stereotypes.

Radovan Pavlovski’s poetry contains elements of demystification, but with a stressed attachment to the mythical and historical time where he situates his poetic world and his temporal nostalgia. Through it, he gives a personal mark to the universal motives and he also adds the ceremonious/hymnal intonation, the mythic metaphorism and the pathetic tone which are characteristic of his poetry.

In fact, Radovan Pavlovski commits himself to those historical themes which imply epical glorification. This is seen best in his poetry collections *The Son of the Sun* (1999) and *Shield* (2001), but poems of this type are present in several of his collections. In a mytho-poetic and obsessive way, in his poetry he evokes the historical voices of Archimedes, Alexander the Great, Aristotle, Phillip II, Roxana, Cleopatra, Amun Ra and others. In the poem “The key to the expedition” [13, p. 165], which is dedicated to Alexander III of Macedon, the land is being glorified, not in order to anchor upon it, but in order to fly into the heights from it. The Mediterranean geographical, historical and spiritual landscape is built in all his poems dedicated to Alexander the Great. In his poem “*Aristotle in exile*” [20] Alexander’s teacher and famous philosopher returns from Athens to his native Stagira, on Khalkidhiki, in a quest for the spiritual shelter within himself. The poet says: “There will always be more children than parents”! The Mediterranean calls to the open sea, but also gives meaning to returning home and to the temporal nostalgia.

In his poetry Radovan Pavlovski also personalizes numerous mythical voices, like those of Jocasta, Oedipus and Odysseus in “Jocasta” [13, p. 214], “Oedipus” [13, pp. 215–6], “The monologues of Odysseus” [13, pp. 51–55],

<sup>16</sup> Jovan Koteski has many poems which fit well in this mythical Mediterranean cycle: “Diomedes”, “Menelaus”, “Passion”, “Briseis”, “For another man’s wife”, “Persephone”, “The Dream of the female Heraclids”, “Athena Parthenos” and others [17].

<sup>17</sup> On this subject see: K. Ćulavkova [19].

“Ithaca” [13, p. 223]. In doing so, he is following their proto-narratives and then placing them in a contemporary psycho-poetic context: “one sin to another gives birth”, he writes in “Oedipus” [13, p. 215], the sin is an anthropological constant, everything else is subject to change. The poem “Ithaca” is entirely focused on the notion of time: just a few inhabitants of Ithaca “sustain the habits of time”, “time has its own smell”, the grass also smells of time, also the house, and the stone, and the sea... In two other poems, “Promethean” [13, p. 217] and “Orpheus” [13, p. 218] he addresses Prometheus and Orpheus in a theatrical manner. In the poem “Mirror war” [13, pp. 180–181] he sings about the Sicilian Syracuse and he uses several mythical figures (Arethusa, the Golden Fleece) in order to stress the insight that people and civilizations ought to look for their basic support within themselves, not outside. “We saw the light, and it saw us” says Radovan. In other words, man is nature’s shadow, transitory and ephemeral, while the cosmos is something else, supra-human.

#### CONCLUSION: THE MACEDONIAN NOSTALGIA FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN

As shown from the handful of examples from the Macedonian poetry, one part of the Mediterranean spatial-temporal nostalgia, which is connected to the Macedonian *habitus*, may be called “Macedonian nostalgia”. It has the characteristics of “Magical Realism” which spreads in the Macedonian literature in a fragmentary and spontaneous way, but persistently, and representing a reflection of one anthropological paradigm of Macedonianhood. Since Macedonianhood is unique: it exists for over two and a half thousand years as territory, geography, state, history, heroism, shared inheritance of memory, material culture, narrative; it settled into the Macedonian language in several written and spoken canons and idioms (the Ancient Macedonian, the Medieval Macedonian, the New Age Slavic-Macedonian and the Contemporary Macedonian language); it lives in the folklore; it influences the identity of the Macedonian people (an intertextual harness between the Ancient Macedonian and the Slavic-Macedonian matrix); and still, in spite of it all, it is constantly the object of negations, propagandas and aspirations. On this crossroads, the survival urge expresses itself in the form of resistance, but also in the form of a quest for more discrete forms of existence: mimicry, Diaspora, migration, assimilation. This creates an urge to sing about the nostalgia not only as openness toward history, but also as preparedness to lead intercultural Mediterranean dialogues.

The Macedonian nostalgia could be interpreted as platonic love for the birth place (the mythical birth land), as an anthropologic yearning for the

South, whereby the South is perceived as synonymous with hearth, light and warmth, but also as openness toward the cultural diversity of the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> The exit toward the sea and the view on the sea for the Macedonians is the notion for freedom, and freedom is the other face of happiness and Paradise. The Macedonian nostalgia longs for the glorious times and marginalizes the periods of slavery and suffering. The Macedonian collective memory does not hold on to memories of being harmed, but is subject to forgetfulness and forgiveness, this is how much it is attached to the beautiful, the good and the free.

The Macedonian nostalgia has a historical genesis, but also a mythical character. This link between the historic and the mythical time is poured into poetic images, sometimes epical, other times lyrical. In the Macedonian novel and short story there is an ongoing thread which distinguishes itself by being connected to Antique Macedonia and it is a legitimate Mediterranean spatial-temporal formation. All the great East-Mediterranean Empires moved toward the East and connected the three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa (the Ancient Macedonian, the Ancient Roman, the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires). Two novels stand out by their quality and importance: one is the epistolary fiction *Alexander and Death* (1992) by Slobodan Micković, and the other is *Towards the Other Land* (1993) by Mitko Madžunkov. In the contemporary Macedonian poetry (from 1945 onwards) there are also epics and poems which sing about the mystified 'being' of Antique Macedonia, perceived as Space which expands immeasurably yet with domicile origin (the Hearth around which the family and the ethnos gravitate), but also as Time which leaves the frames of history and enters the abyss of mythical time.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The Mediterranean as a synonym for the "South" was sung in the cult poem "Longing for the South" by Konstantin Miladinov (1830–1862). The nostalgia for the south is nostalgia for the Mediterranean sun, light, long days and sunsets, music on the kaval — a traditional Balkan handmade woodwind flute (old instruments for sensual and spiritual melodies).

<sup>19</sup> The collective memory and the unconscious of the Southern Slavs is marked by the Mediterranean cultural archive, and not as something adopted, but as something native, endemic...

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