
BY WAY OF PRESENTATION

Miguel Rodríguez Andreu
(Editor of Balkania)

It is a satisfaction for me to publish the number 8 of this second Balkania era, owing to the support of Casa Mediterráneo and its director, Javier Hergueta. During the last couple of years, Balkania has been maintained as a reference journal, using the academic links between Spain and Southeast Europe and incorporating academic content from authors from other geographies to whom we publish their articles both in Spanish and English.

In this issue we wanted to continue with the same spirit of the previous issues: achieve a level of publication that brings the Balkans closer from rigor and depth. We continue to seek a balance between historical analysis and the monitoring of current events, but with sufficient perspective so that the journal is not corseted at a political moment and has a horizon of interest for the sake of present and future researchers.

This year, we have chosen to deal with several issues that had not been addressed until now. First of all, I must express my gratitude for the help given by the sociologist and Honorary Professor of the University Paris-Descartes Jean Pierre Liegoise, an expert in Roma issues, for his invaluable help in the realization of this issue. In this way, we address the history of the Roma communities in the Balkans through an article by the specialists, Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov, who trace a journey through the Roman identity from the time of the Ottoman Empire to the current times of pan-europeanism and globalization. Linguistic issues also have a place: Hristo Kyuchukov explores the coding of the Romani language. In this sense, he argues that in order to develop a Roma-encoded lexicon, it is necessary to use the old Roma words that are forgotten in some dialects but are preserved in others. With regard to the sociolinguistic question, Jelena Kovač's article aims to provide preliminary information on the attitudes of the young Roma population of Serbia towards learning and preserving their mother tongue, determining as a determining factor the role played by the family.

Balkania is interested in working on a comparative approach that brings Balkan studies closer to other area studies. It is necessary to recognize a particular interest in the work of Anamarija Marinović who, from her academic specialty in

Portuguese-speaking studies, analyzes and compares the concepts of absence and longing (*saudade*) and her Serbian linguistic equivalent (*čežnja*) in the two respective cultures. Similarly, we have a work by Jelena Filipović and Ivana Vučina Simović that reveals the emotional ties created by Nobel Prize winner Ivo Andrić with the Sephardic community in the Balkans and how these ties manifested in his literature and essays, reflecting in this process a form of "imagined community".

Another issue that Balkania had not analyzed so far were the environmental issues that are increasingly emerging in Balkan studies. Jeroen Arends places value on the concept of ecosystem services as an approach that could play a very important role in the sustainable use and management of natural areas and natural resources in the region. The article by Nadezda Apostolova and Daniel Scarry summarizes the patterns in the socioecological system of Macedonia, which shows how economic, social and political factors interrelate with landscapes, species and ecosystems in the present. The publication of both articles offers a broad focal vision of the entire region, but also of a single country.

The census in Bosnia seemed to us a very important issue to have of the complicated political situation that the country is experiencing with the difficult ethnic and institutional equilibriums that the country has been living since the signing of the Dayton Accords. The successful defense of the thesis of Esmā Kućukalić and the publication of a book on the subject, seemed an excellent opportunity to publish the results of her years-long research.

The work of Aleksandar Kocić allows us to put at the same level, with all its complexities, the sealed peace agreements for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, which nowadays happen to be two of the most important political political uncertainty points of the region. The interest of this article, in addition to the international level, is to contribute to establishing a genealogical point in relation to the current scenario. This is particularly important, above all, from the point of view of comparative studies, because after the Yugoslav fragmentation, the countries of the region show increasingly more specific or differentiated state realities.

We hope that it meets the demands of our public and that it contributes to the expansion of the Balkan studies, not only by providing knowledge, but also by favoring the appearance of new lines of research.