

The Landscape in Question...

Landscape, the leading theme of the 26th issue of the “Poznań Slavic Studies,” will always be an open category. By depicting the changing environment, the literary, cultural and linguistic landscape conveys a variety of frequently multi-layered and multi-textual states and processes: terrain, new elements of architecture, and street furniture emerging daily, with the changing city limits and borders of regions and countries. The landscapes, reconstructed by the authors of the works featured, connect with works of literature; they are originated by artists, institutions, or accidental creators. They include murals and graffiti, shop windows and signs advertising shops and studios, posters stuck up and torn down, and slap tags. The landscape category refers back to the study of space, to a new regionalism, geopoetics, cultural geography, imaginative and visual geography, or, according to Elżbieta Rybicka, visual geographies: “Visual geographies are ways of assigning meaning to the world we see, which is why natural or civilisation landscapes are often seen in literary representations as pictorial landscapes, scenes, spectacles, or performances” (Rybicka, 2014, 258). Importantly, any landscape has a creative and imagology-related aspect which is merely a representation (in the sense of imaginative geography). “Imaginative geographies are first and foremost representations of other places – of peoples and landscapes, cultures and ‘natures’ – that articulate the desires, fantasies and fears of their authors and the grids of power between them and their ‘Others’” (Johnston, 2003, 388).

The Black Sea, like other regions, basins, and areas, evokes specific associations, images, myths, and events embedded in individual and

collective memory. Unlike the Mediterranean, the Black Sea basin seems to have attracted less research interest, yet it has created an exceptionally interesting mosaic.

The region's modern landscape has been influenced by the Thracian, Byzantine, Roman, and Ottoman civilisations which have left indelible traces. For centuries, superpowers have clashed in the Black Sea basin; it continues to be an arena of revealing various inequalities between the bordering countries. The studies presented in this volume show the trends connecting with literature, language and culture that both perpetuate and deconstruct ideas and prejudices about the region. The articles present cultural, literary and linguistic landscapes related to the Black Sea.

The part devoted to cultural landscapes includes five works discussing the imaginative landscapes of Ukraine and Bulgaria, and the roads the Argonauts were to travel from the Black Sea to Slovenia. The article *Вафли Артек в русскоязычных текстах культуры* (Artek Waffles in Russian-Language Cultural Texts) by Irina Ermashova describes the phenomenon of Russian *Artek* wafers whose name refers to a popular centre for children and adolescents, established in Crimea in the Inter-war period. The waffles – a cultural phenomenon – together with the proper name *Artek* (in her article, the author uses a methodology drawn from chrematonymy research) point to a strong influence of the brand and a plethora of associations it triggers in literature: poetry, novels, or other cultural texts. In *Ślady obecności Argonautów w imaginarium kultury słoweńskiej* (Traces of the Argonauts in the Slovenian Cultural Imaginarium), Marlena Gruda takes the readers back to the time of the Golden Fleece myth and traces its presence in Slovenian culture. She draws attention to the fact that in the Danube version of the myth, when returning from the Black Sea (Colchis in present-day Georgia), the Argonauts visited the territory of present-day Slovenia and founded the city of Emona. This is seen as one example of the links between Slovenian culture and the ancient tradition.

In his article *Borysa Chersońskiego dekonstrukcja mitu Odessy* (Boris Chersonskij's Deconstruction of the Odessa Myth), Jarosław Poliszczuk deals with the work of a contemporary Odessa poet, essayist and cultural animator, tears down the so-called Odessa myth, and shows how the

identity of the residents of the eponymous city has changed in the 20th and the early 21st centuries.

Two articles are devoted to the Bulgarian Black Sea strip. In her study entitled *Wybrzeże Morza Czarnego jako przestrzeń (wyobrażonej?) wolności we współczesnym kinie bułgarskim* (The Black Sea Coast as a Space of (Imagined?) Freedom in Contemporary Bulgarian Cinema), Magdalena Pytlak takes the readers to the other side of the Black Sea coast. With reference to three contemporary Bulgarian films, the scholar presents the idealisation of freedom in this Bulgarian space. On the other hand, Kristiyan Yanev, analysing the work of non-Bulgarian authors Sylwia Siedlecka and Kristen Ghodsee, shows how the Bulgarian Black Sea image has been presented and described from a cultural and political perspective in the communist and post-communist times.

Section two, related to literature, contains three studies each on Ukrainian and Bulgarian issues (including one Bulgarian-Georgian comparative study). Oleh Bahan covers the Black Sea landscape in Yevhen Malaniuk's writing, primarily poetry: *Тема Чорного моря в літературних інтпретаціях Євгена Маланюка* (The Black Sea Theme in Yevhen Malaniuk's Literary Interpretations). Nadia Boiko, on the other hand, analyses the short stories of Oleksandr Konyski, Lesya Ukrainka and Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky in her work *A View of Ineffable Charm... The Black Sea in the Ukrainian Prose of the Late 19th Century*, focusing on the reception of the sea and autobiographical themes related to the sea. Feliks Sztajn-buk tackles the 1928 *Поетика простору у романі Юрія Яновського 'Майстер корабля'*. Using the hermeneutic and comparative-typological method, he concludes that space, prevailing over time in the novel, is a result of a synthesis of the topos of the sea and steppe.

The coastal city of Burgas occupies a special place in works devoted to Bulgarian literature. In her article *Czarnomorskie wizje w liryce Christa Fotewa* (Black Sea Visions in the Lyric of Hristo Fotev), Dorota Gołek-Sepetliewa focuses on the poet whose family moved to Burgas from Istanbul. The author notes that "the landscape drawn by Fotev bears clear traces of historical and civilisation identification, (...) triggered off by the Mediterranean tradition in the discovered traces of the Greek legacy". Fotev's work documents the parallels between the European legacy of ancient Mediterranean traditions and the Greco-Roman

remains in the territories adjacent to the Black Sea basin. Kamen Rikev focuses on the travel writing of Ivan Vazov, a Bulgarian bard, in an article entitled *Черно море е зелено: Какво вижда Иван Вазов отвъд очертаванията на Варна и Бургас?* (The Black Sea is Green: What Does Ivan Vazov See Beyond the Outlines of Varna and Burgas?). Vazov's works, published in 1891 and 1921, place him among "some of the first Bulgarian writers to see the role of tourism as a guarantee of prosperity; the writer attributes to ethnic Bulgarians a wishful role of civilising colonists". In his text *Bulgarian and Georgian Fictional Geographies and Coastscapes as Bridges for a Comparative Black Sea*, Jordan Lyuckanov draws a picture of the seascape on the basis of Bulgarian and Georgian literary works by Pencho Slaveykov and Aki Morčildadze. The author spots in them the formation of regional and geographical imagery related to land, sea and coast. He shows the various elements of the "construction" of geography in the so-called literary alternative history.

The third part of the "Black Sea" issue of the "Poznań Slavic Studies" revolves around the most broadly defined linguistic landscape. The articles contained therein concern not only the landscape understood as a specific space in which linguistic signs are subjected to academic consideration, but also a metaphorical landscape, showing the linguist's view of language, nature, things or emotions through specific "images," as well as the factors that make up a phenomenon. In this section, onomastics texts prevail, mostly focused on chrematonymy which in recent years has become the most dynamic group of proper names subjected to (often interdisciplinary) research. Jolanta Gola's article deals with the transonymisation of Bulgarian hydronyms referring to the name of the Black Sea. The author proposes a typology of the transonyms and explains the motivations behind naming thereof. It turns out that the Bulgarian language readily transforms proper names into other proper noun categories and uses them, for example, in public space in the form of company names displayed on signboards. Jolanta Gola also examines all the graphic elements of the carriers of proper names. This approach to proper names shows a new direction of research that, instead of isolating names, ranks them in various contexts, like, for example, design (Borowiak, 2021). The article by Piotr Tomasik deals with train names with a Black Sea component.

Poreionyms (55 units), collected and discussed by the author, refer to the Black Sea in several countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine). In his selection of the material, the author has also adopted a historical perspective (USSR). He presents an onomastics and cultural analysis of the collected names of transport connections, shows them in a reader-friendly appendix arranged by country, and indicates possibilities for further research into chrematonyms related to train names, taking into account also comparative studies. In her article *The Image of the Black Sea in Crimean Marketing Chrematonyms. An Introduction to the Research*, Samuela Tomasik analyses how the creators of company names in Crimea reflect the Black Sea and the entire coastal space. The researcher also draws attention to trends in the naming of commercial and service premises, distinguishing between traditional and contemporary spaces. She concludes that the inhabitants of the Crimean Peninsula appreciate their past and traditions, but are also aware of and in need of changes in terms of services, goods and naming thereof.

Petar Sotirov tackles the issue of the images of the Black Sea in the awareness of Bulgarians in his article *Какво е Черно море за българите? Опит за когнитивна дефиниция* (What is the Black Sea for Bulgarians? An Attempt at a Cognitive Definition). Using cognitive methods: cultural, pragmatic and emotional, he seeks an answer to the question posed in the title, proving that the Black Sea as an idea functions in the awareness of Bulgarian citizens, and serves as value added and a common good. On the lexical level (be it colloquial, literary, media or artistic), its “image” is a perfect example of this. The situation is different in Polish, as shown in the article *The Image of the Black Sea in General Polish Language and in Polish Parliamentary Discourse. A Corpus-Lexicographical Analysis* by Michał Szczyszek. The researcher presents the results of corpus and lexicographical analyses of the “black sea” bigram. His interesting inquiries lead to conclusions that place the concept of the Black Sea “on the periphery of the Polish linguistic image of the world”. A different kind of research is presented by Wojciech Hofmański in his work *Technika siedmiu sit wobec granic zasięgu grafii łacińskiej. Analiza interkomprehensyjna na materiale ukraińsko-polskim* (The Seven Sieves Technique Against the Limits of the Reach of Latin Spelling. An Inter-Comprehensive Analysis of Ukrainian-Polish Material). This is a novel approach to the coexistence

and co-communication of closely related (in this case Slavic) languages. Using the so-called “seven sieves analysis,” the author attempts to show pairs of Slavic languages that show differences in linguistic subfamily membership, and the type of script used, (e.g. Latin vs. Cyrillic alphabet), thus proving the functionality of this method.

The articles contained in the *Off Topic* section also fall within the areas of spatial and geographical, as well as eco-theological and cinematographic imagery. Three of them deal with the post-Yugoslav area. In a comprehensive study entitled *Middle Ages or Renaissance? Rapacka on Marulić*, Tomislav Bogdan again discusses the importance of Polish Slavic studies for the development of Croatia-centred research. This time, he focuses on Joanna Rapacka’s opinions on Marko Marulić, and compares the medieval author’s image in Croatian studies with the results of Rapacka’s research. He poses a question of Marulić’s place in literature periodisation and emphasises the fact that, in the works of Joanna Rapacka, Marulić appears as the first (and only) great author of medieval Croatian literature. In her article *Podróże po Bośni Ivana Lovrenovicia* (Ivan Lovrenović’s Travels in Bosnia), Dominika Kaniecka describes the interaction of space and literature, using the texts of the contemporary Sarajevo-based writer and intellectual. The author has developed, in a sense, a “geopoetic map” that guides the readers through the fragments of the spatial layout of the traveller’s autobiographical memory, the emotions that accompany experiencing space, and the tension between history, memory (individual and collective), and writing. Urszula Putyńska’s article entitled *Od satyry do naturalizmu – krótkometrażowa filmografia Ante Babai* (From Satire to Naturalism – Ante Babaja’s Short Films) is devoted to short films shot by Croatian director Ante Babaja. As the title suggests, Babaja’s work can be presented as a transition from a satirical to a naturalistic form of representation while “the ambition to create a complex semantic structure of the works is reflected in the original combination of inspirations from different orders, and a creative adaptation of literature, music and painting to the needs of cinematography”.

Edukacyjna rola ekoteologii i zooteologii Tatiany Goriczewej (The Educational Role of Ecotheology and Zootheology by Tatiana Goricheva) is an article by Krzysztof Małek which falls within the realm of animal

studies. The author has analysed possible shaping of pro-animal and pro-environmental attitudes among Christians through the zoo-theological and eco-theological works of Tatiana Goricheva, a Russian philosopher and theologian. Based on Goricheva's work and interviews with her, Małek notes that remodelling one's own attitudes towards more environmentally and animal-friendly does not require changing one's faith or ceasing to follow or abandon one's traditions.

The final text, off the main theme, is a study by Karel Štřelec on *The Archetypal Character of Eve: A Comparative Overview of Modern Czech, French and Canadian Literatures*. The researcher conducts a comparative analysis of selected characters bearing the name Eve in contemporary French, Canadian and Czech literature. The study focuses on the variants, shifts and similarities that relate (to varying degrees) to the first biblical woman.

Issue 26 of the "Poznan Slavic Studies" also contains four review articles in which the authors look at new Slavonic monographs: two Polish, one Serbian and one Bulgarian. Tomasz Ewertowski reviews Jelena Marićević Balać's book *Ка осмеху Европе. Савремено српско, пољско и чешко песништво у компаративном кључу*, published in Novi Sad in 2023. The book is a collection of concise comparative studies (based on Serbian, Polish and Czech poetry), divided into four distinct sections, each focusing on one issue (culture, nature and culture, eco-poetics, avant-garde). A review article by Izabela Lis-Wielgosz entitled *Na fali zmian... Barokowe wpływy i serbska literatura XVIII wieku* (On the Crest of Change... Baroque Influences and Serbian Literature of the 18th Century) presents and reviews Justyna Romanowska's book entitled *Polsko-ukraińsko-rosyjskie konteksty poezji metafizycznej serbskiego baroku* (Polish-Ukrainian-Russian Contexts of Serbian Baroque Metaphysical Poetry) published in Kraków in 2022. The author notes, among other things, that Romanowska's publication connects with a discussion on the developmental process of Serbian literature, as well as a long discussion on the existence of the Baroque era in Serbian literature. Mariola Walczak-Mikołajczakowa took on a scholarly topic close to her heart, namely Bulgarian Catholics in Banat, and Magdalena Abajieva's study entitled *Книжнината на българите католици от XIX век и банатската книжнина* (The 19th Century Bulgarian Catholic Literature and Banat Literature), published in Sophia in 2024. The author of the article meticulously describes the

contents of the book, while also drawing attention to its relevant passages and conclusions. Mariola Walczak-Mikołajczakowa points out, among other things, that the common features of Catholic writing in Bulgaria and Banat, as indicated by Abajieva, are important also because they “contribute a synthesis and summary of all the previous findings on the subject”.

The last text in the current issue is a review article by Marta Wrześniewska-Pietrzak *Covidowy język jako syndrom postcovidowy – reaktywność użytkowników języka na rzeczywistość pandemii SARS-CoV-2* (Covid Language as a Post-Covid Syndrome – Language Users’ Reactivity to the Reality of the SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic). The linguist analyses a book authored by Natalia Długosz and Andreana Eftimova, titled *Syndrom postcovidowy w języku. Polsko-bułgarskie studium przypadku. Raport z badań eksperymentalnych, wydanej w Poznaniu w 2023 roku* (The Post-Covid Syndrome in Language. A Polish-Bulgarian Case Study. Report on Experimental Research Published in Poznań in 2023.) In her review, Wrześniewska-Pietrzak points out the differences in the research conducted by the authors of the monograph against the publications showing media representations of Covid and the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, as well as research works presenting the impact of the pandemic on the Polish language.

The published works encourage reflection on the past, present and future, mirrored in the culture, literature and languages of the Black Sea basin but also other areas: Poland, Europe, and the world. What emerges is a picture of a region that has been surprisingly diverse geographically, culturally, ethnically and linguistically for thousands of years. Moreover, the Black Sea area, although sometimes forgotten, appears to be as important an area for European culture as the Mediterranean which is more often present in our awareness, literature and culture. We view the topic as an introduction or encouragement to carry out research into the Black Sea basin in the broad context of the humanities.

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