

Foreword
*Contributions to the Research
of Croatian Philosophical Heritage*
the Mission of this Biannual Journal*

Vladimir Filipović, editor

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In the inter-republic program titled “History of Philosophy of the Yugoslav Peoples”, the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb has taken upon itself the task of producing research contributions on topics from the Croatian philosophical heritage, so that as a result of this research we may finally compile an overview of the development of philosophical thought that the sons of this nation, partly in our homeland and partly as participants in European philosophical dialogues, accomplished throughout the centuries. Many thinkers from our philosophical ancestry have found their way into foreign encyclopedias and world histories of philosophy, their Latinized names marked with significance in the development of European philosophical thought, without it being known that these are sons of the Croatian nation. But it is an even greater oversight – and does not do us honor! – that we ourselves know very little about this integral part of our cultural life and work, so that when publishers of European philosophical thought request a report specifying our philosophers’ significance, we cannot meet this request, for there is no such report, even in our own language. Hence, this biannual journal, which seeks to fill this substantial and very important gap, has been long overdue, and the research tasks that await us in the coming years are most extensive.

This has been noted as early as October 19th, 1881, when the first philosopher at the restored Faculty of Philosophy (1874) Franjo Marković held his eminent inaugural speech as rector titled “Croatian writers of the philosophical vocation from beyond the Velebit from the 15th to the 18th century”, in which he regretted the ignorance about our philosophical heritage, where so many valuable and significant works lay hidden. Marković offers a comprehensive list of names and works by our thinkers of old. Aside from the task of explor-

* Vladimir Filipović, »Predgovor. *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine*. Zadaća ovog polugodišnjaka.«, *Prilozi za istraživanje hrvatske filozofske baštine* 1/1–2 (1975), pp. 7–10.

ing this historical legacy, he particularly stresses the necessity of translating these predominantly Latin works into Croatian. Continuing the thought, he emphasizes: “Thus, from this point on, once we have studied them and revived them with our nation’s voice, they will benefit us greatly: through them we shall come to know Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, through them the wondrous age of the Italian and European Renaissance in general, through them we shall set foot into the high temple of the world’s wisdom – not perhaps at home there yet, but as late arrivals, at least with honorable travel papers from the age of Europe’s intellectual revival. Much like the old Croatian writers from Dalmatia, most notably those from Dubrovnik, who after having been rescued from oblivion and reintroduced here to the world some forty years ago stirred the development of our literature in general, so can the philosophers from beyond the Velebit stir the development of our new undertakings in the philosophical disciplines. In time, the use will be various, and we can now say, inspired by the words of Mill in the introduction to his celebrated *Logic*: whoever grasps the logic of thought, shall master the logic of deeds, and doubtless, only the nation that has earned for itself a motherland of thought has firmly ensured its material motherland.”

The task that Marković assigns to us is thus manifold: to familiarize ourselves with, and to translate from then-universal Latin into the Croatian tongue, the classical works that are both our own and the world’s, and thus to assume care of the history of our philosophical cultural past, as we have done forty years ago with old Croatian literature. Thereby we find our place today in European philosophical dialogues with our “honorable travel papers”, contrary to the notion that only today have we started thinking philosophically. That this is demanded not only by our cultural historiographers, but also by the world public as well as our own, is borne witness by these two facts: we have recently been requested to offer our report for Überweg’s grand compendium of the history of European philosophical thought. Such a report has not yet been prepared, so we will once again remain absent from this world-renowned work.

When we recently published, alongside its Latin original, the translation of our own Rugjer Bošković’s major work “A Theory of Natural Philosophy”, although an expensive work for our circumstances, it was sold out in three months. This is clear proof of the strong interest of our people in our philosophical heritage, and that they now understand Marković’s quote from Mill that “only the nation that has earned for itself a motherland of thought has firmly ensured its material motherland”. And this is to say that nations lacking a conscious cultural past also lack distinctiveness, and thereby lack a true homeland. They remain mere appendages of foreign cultures. And apart from

our history of government and politics, light has been shed on our past only in some cultural realms (such as literature, art history, etc.). Our philosophical past is known only through fragments, and very sparsely.

Here is yet another quotation from Marković's study. More precisely, an addendum to his discussion: "To meet the appeal, expressed to me in many letters, and in agreement with the indicated purpose of this speech, I hereby list as many bibliographical notes as I can so far regarding the works of our old writers of the philosophical vocation, and to see these notes completed as quickly as possible, I also declare that partly prompted by this speech, the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences concluded that it will issue a special volume, in which the main philosophical works (or at least their excerpts) by our writers of old are to be translated into Croatian, with biographies and assessments."

The Yugoslav Academy has never acted upon this conclusion, so we must regretfully impart the fact that its last lecture on a Croatian author of works in Latin (Dragišić) was held over half a century ago (1922).

But the Institute of Philosophy at the University, having outlined various tasks in its work program, and with already published works and now these "Contributions", is to carry out this mission, which concerns a significant gap in our culture that must be filled. These "Contributions to the Research of Croatian Philosophical Heritage" represent the realization of Marković's "Volume", and thanks to this Institute, the planned and, in many aspects, publication-ready Croatian translations of Latin works by Croatian authors accomplish what the Yugoslav Academy promised us almost a century ago.

Provided there are ensured material means in our community for realizing these plans, the Institute of Philosophy will attempt to do so with the works it prepares.

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In its future volumes, this biannual philosophy journal will deliver new and original reviews of unexplored reflections by our philosophical ancestors, whose work stretches over more than half a millennium, as well as an occasional previously printed discussion, like the aforementioned rectoral speech by Franjo Marković. The journal thus has an entirely historical mission and will not include contemporary philosophical topics. These ought to be published in a journal devoted to contemporary philosophical dialogues. This historical journal, apart from exclusively philosophical topics, will publish on topics where philosophy meets the natural sciences, literature, et cetera, but only if philosophical reflection, and its significance for other fields of science or art, prevail therein. The "Contributions" shall – as said – manifest their imagined

character and justify their publication if they manage to fulfill the massive void that becomes apparent when we look at our fields of history of literature or art history, which have continuously been the subject of multifarious scientific research. The research into the history of philosophy of our important heritage, which concerns such an integral part of cultural life, has to this day remained almost utterly neglected, so let this be the beginning of realizing this great task that many nations, even those with much smaller legacies, have long since accomplished and as such presented themselves to the world. Only now do we stand before this unfulfilled task! Let these contributions be an introduction into this significant and unexplored realm of our cultural living.

Translated into English by Viktor Ivanković