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THE BRITISH TRAVEL WRITERS ON THE MACEDONIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY (From the beginning of the 20th c. until the end of the First World War)

1. Defining cultural identity

The issue of *identity* is as old as humanity and is in close correlation with the issues of *alterity* and *otherness*: even in mythical tradition it has been formed and determined through the prism of the Other. In debates on the notion of identity, that became popular in the 20th century, two traditions prevail: the psychodynamic and sociological. The concept has created a quandary for researchers through the relation with the notion of *difference* in post-structuralism (R. Barthes) and in deconstruction (J. Derrida) or with the concept of *identification*, or transfer in psychoanalytic criticism (J. Lacan). All of these concepts reexamine Hegelian logic or the opinion implying that identities are only produced through processes of differentiation. The controversy of this conception is that identity, in the relation identity – difference, at the same time, establishes the entirety of this contradiction. In other words, the vacillation in the explanation of the notion lies in the question: is identity the *cause* (assumption) or the *result* (consequence) of a certain sequence of differences. The emancipation identification presupposes the intent of the entity to achieve inner homogenization through overcoming the diffe-

rence between self and the hostile representation of the other.¹ From a philosophical point of view, defining “the other”, leads primarily to “the understanding of the other as another human being in his/her differentiation”.²

The existence and cognition of cultural identity is, nevertheless, one of the basic human needs. Therefore, the crisis of identity or the inability of his/her self-determination is rightfully considered as cruel as the physical threat for the individual. In the frames of the cultural theory it is already ascertained that when we construct and discover our own identity, we do not isolate ourselves from the “others”, but we are engaged in a continual dialogue with them. According to the philosopher Charles Taylor, and in the spirit of the literary and cultural views of Mikhail Bakhtin on dialogism, human identity is created and realised through a continual dialogue, and that is the crucial characteristic of human life, whereby what is apparent is the mutual respect for the intellectual, political and culturally different *otherness*. It is through the dialogue that one’s own identity is formed and self belongingness is constructed.³

Actually, the concept of cultural identity is redefined in the light of the dialogical philosophical and political option. In that context, as Sheleva states: “the principle of identity coincides with the principle of the dialogicality, otherness, inclusiveness, multiplication, ... in other words, the authoritarian ideology of the wholesomeness, monologism and unanimity is currently replaced with the ideology that studies and emphasizes, above all, the gender, ethnic and cultural differences, i.e. their constitutive necessity and complexity”.⁴

If we postulate *culture* itself as a principle of identity, then on the global cultural and political stage non-dominant nations, as well as the others can show, affirm and defend the values of their own spiritual culture, i.e. their authenticity and subsistence. *Cultural identity*, accordingly, presupposes the right of nations to exist under their own name,

¹ Иван Цепароски, “За аспектите на другоста”, Foreword to *Аспекти на другоста*, *Зборник по културологија*. (Скопје: Евро-Балкан Пресс, 2007), 7-16.

² Ted Honderich, *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 637.

³ Чарлс Тејлор, *Мултикултурализам: огледи за политиката на признавање* (превод: Огнен Чемерски), (Скопје: Евро-Балкан пресс, 2004), 31.

⁴ Елизабета Шелева, *Културолошки есеи*, (Скопје: Магор, 2000), 124.

to speak their own language, to live according to the heritage of their own culture.

Nevertheless, as regards its national and cultural classification, Macedonia, depending on the national background of the author, interpreter, either exists, or is intentionally disputed, i.e. denied in some of its aspects (for example, language, nationality, statehood). The problematic historical identity is, of course, inspired by the forceful partition of its tissue that the neighbouring Balkan states had carried out in the aftermath of the Berlin congress.⁵ Moreover, Macedonian nationalism was belated, grew slowly and, at times, manifested confusing tendencies and orientations that were, for the most part, consequences of its protracted illegitimate status.

However, the autochthonous cultural values are expressed in the frames of the material, spiritual and social culture of one nation. Their impact on the environment is of a crucial importance for the development of the society. The identification with a particular culture is determined by our sense of belonging to a particular culture.⁶ We can only be members of particular culture if, as a first condition, we believe we are. We also need to sincerely share some beliefs about values, strategy, be-

⁵ They fought for Macedonia with propaganda and force, against each other and the nascent Macedonian nationalists. A prolonged struggle culminated in 1913 with the forceful partition of Macedonia after the Second Balkan or Inter-Allied War between Bulgaria, on one side, and allied Greece and Serbia, on the other. Each of these three states consolidated their control over their respective parts of Macedonia, and throughout the inter-war years inaugurated and implemented policies intended to destroy any manifestations of Macedonian nationalism, patriotism or particularism. Consequently, until World War II, unlike the other nationalisms in the Balkans or in eastern Europe more generally, Macedonian nationalism developed without the aid of legal political, church, educational or cultural institutions. (Rossos 1994: <http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/rossos/rossos1.html#top>)

⁶ The intercultural dialogue depends on, i.e. is restricted by certain frames that are hierarchically ordered and interrelated on several logical levels, as presented by Robert Dilts, a co-founder of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, that is, the explanatory model which shows how individuals construct their map of the world. He initially isolated five levels, a hierarchy of frames which all biological or social systems operate within. The levels are hierarchically ordered and interrelated, in that the higher level organizes the information on the level below. The levels are as follows: environment ↔ behavior ↔ strategies/skills ↔ beliefs/values ↔ cultural identity: David Katan, *Translating Cultures* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1999), 36-37.

havior and appropriate environments. In the same vein, if behavior is to be seen as part of culture it will have to be congruent with a set of beliefs shared by that culture, i.e. traditions which are common for a particular culture.⁷

2. The Macedonian cultural identity from the prism of the British travel writers (early 20th century – First World War)

Language and religion are the most dominant determiners of individuality and self-identification. The Macedonian people have kept a strong sense of belongingness to their village, their church, and the neighbourhood. Therefore, the interest of the scientists and researchers was aimed at the Macedonian peasants and the particularity of their language.

In the late-nineteenth century, more writers and educators began using the term “Macedonian” to refer to what they saw as a unique language or people, and not just a geographic region. The word “Macedonian” itself entered a period of flux and contest over its meaning. This fluidity lent the culture of the region a feeling of malleability, and opened the region to the claims of competing nationalist groups.

The current relevance of the Macedonian question at the end of the 19th century made some of the most prominent representatives of politics and scholars express their views on it. A special place among them belongs to the well-known British statesman, **William Gladstone** (1809-1898), who, on the invitation of the Byron Society, expressed his view on the Macedonian question in the letter addressed to the President of the Byron Society. The letter was reprinted in the Daily News (London) on 15th August 1903, p.8: “Next to the Ottoman Government nothing can be more deplorable and blameworthy than jealousies between Greek and Slav, and plans by the States already existing for appropriating other territory. Why not Macedonia for Macedonians as well as Bulgaria for Bulgarians and Servia for Servians?”⁸

The English professor and historian **William Miller** in the course of his periodic sojourns in Macedonia (1896, 1897 and 1898) summari-

⁷ Katan, *Translating Cultures*, 43.

⁸ William Gladstone, “On The Macedonian Question”, *The Times*, 6th February, 1897, p. 12., in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, (Skopje: Kultura, 1985), 406-407.

zed his views in his work *Travel and Politics in the Near East*, London 1898. He stressed the role of the Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, Austrian and Albanian propaganda in Macedonia, directed towards the assimilation of the Macedonian people, and noted that: "Macedonia, that promised land for which six Balkan nationalities and at least one great European Power are eagerly scheming ... the rival claims of the various competitors overlap each other. To Bulgarian, Serb, and Greek alike, Macedonia is the 'promised land', and the aspirations of the one can only be satisfied by ignoring those of the others. No one who knows the past history and present politics of the Balkan Peninsula can hope for any mutual arrangement, any policy of concessions, between these candidates."⁹ Moreover, regarding the Macedonian identity he stressed that "The Macedonians ... belong to none of these rival races" and that they were compelled "to forget their mother-tongue and learn Greek."¹⁰

Referring to the Macedonian question, he emphasized that it "is perhaps the most dangerous problem which the statesmen of Europe will have to face in the near future."¹¹ Miller also suggested a possible solution to the Macedonian question, in line with the political view held by the British statesman William Gladstone: "Europe has, it is said, conceded Bulgaria to the Bulgarians, and Servia to the Servians; why should she not give Macedonia to the Macedonians, either as an autonomous province of Turkey, or as an independent Balkan State? This solution, although it received the high approval of Mr. Gladstone, whose services will never be forgotten by the Balkan peoples, seems, in my humble judgment, impossible."¹²

A vigilant observation of the activities of different associations in the British society and their contribution to a more realistic perception of the ethno-national identity of the Macedonians and their aspirations for national self-determination, self-government and a nation-state

⁹ William Miller, *Travel and Politics in the Near East*, (London : T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 372. (http://www.archive.org/stream/travelspoliticsioomilluoft/travelspoliticsioomilluoft_djvu.txt)

¹⁰ Ibid., 384.

¹¹ Ibid., 369.

¹² Ibid., 388.

leads to the conclusion that the London based Balkan Committee had the most significant role, in that respect.¹³

The basic aim of the Balkan Committee, founded in London in 1903, was to put pressure to bear on the British Government to reduce the danger of war in the Near East and to make the Turkish Government carry out the necessary reforms in Macedonia. The Committee was founded by the supporters of reforms in Turkey with a view to influence the Foreign Office and the Parliament of their country to insist on the improvement of the conditions in Macedonia and they were motivated solely by humanitarian considerations. The Committee included eminent members of the British Parliament, representatives of the Church, politicians, academics, journalists and historians, such as: Sir Arthur J. Evans, James Bryce, Lord Henry P. Fitz-Maurice, Henry Brailsford, and others. Its activity (political, publicistic, and humanitarian) became especially prominent during the Ilinden rising in August 1903, during the revolution of the Young Turks and during the Balkan Wars. The committee published a special Memorandum aimed at generating public interest, entitled: "Our Duty towards Macedonia". Moreover, by the end of World war I (February 1919) its members supported the Memorandum by James D. Bouchier, advocating autonomy of Macedonia. The activity of the Balkan Committee after WWI was especially significant. The initiatives of the Committee were directed towards granting *cultural autonomy* to the parts of Macedonia under Greece and Yugoslavia, and especially for the right of the Macedonian children to be educated in Macedonian language in primary education.¹⁴

The prominent British (Irish) journalist and publicist **James D. Bouchier** was a great friend of Macedonia from as early as 1903. He continued his pro-Macedonian activity after the Ilinden Uprising. He was also active at the time of the Paris Peace Conference and interceded in favour of a just solution to the Macedonian Question. The result of that activity was also this Memorandum sent to British political circles, as well as to the US President Woodrow Wilson and the European

¹³ Христо Андонов – Полјански, "Македонското прашање" in *Одбрани дела, том III* (Скопје: Мисла, 1983), 439.

¹⁴ Panov, Andonov-Poljanski, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People...*, 423- 425.

press.¹⁵ He advocated for preserving the wholeness of Macedonia and introducing autonomous government in Macedonia, under protection of the Great Powers. He also affirmed the principle "Macedonia for the Macedonians":

"... the natural conclusion is that they should govern themselves and that the principle "Macedonia for the Macedonians" should be adopted. The autonomous Macedonian State would extend from the Sar Mountains (the Serbian ethnical boundary) on the north, to the Aegean Sea on the south, and from the Bulgarian frontier on the east to the Albanian on the west. The southern frontier, extending from Lake Kastoria to the mouth of the Vardar, would leave Verria to Greece, which would also retain Nigrita and the Chalcidice Peninsula. It would be desirable that the autonomous State should be policed by a Great Power, America for preference, during the earlier years of its existence".¹⁶

The British publicist **Allen Upward** in his work *The East End of Europe*, points out the separateness of the Macedonian people and their language:

"...I asked him what language they spoke, and my Greek interpreter carelessly rendered the answer Bulgare. The man himself had said Makedonski. I drew attention to this word and the witness explained that he did not consider the rural dialect used in Macedonia the same as Bulgarian, and refused to call it by that name. It was Macedonian, a word to which he gave the Slav form of Makedonski, but which I was to hear farther north in the Greek form of Makedonike.

And so the "Bulgarophone" villagers are no longer willing to admit that they speak Bulgarian. They have coined a new term of their own accord, and henceforth their dialect, until they have got rid of it, is to be known as "Macedonian." My Athenian friends were delighted when I told them of this on my return. It should give even greater pleasure to those Bulgarian agents who are so anxious to see the Macedonians thought that they are Macedonians."¹⁷

¹⁵ Memorandum by James Bouchier *On The Constitution Of Macedonia*, London, 26th February 1919, in *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, 1985: 651-652.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Allen Upward, *The East End of Europe* (London, 1908), 204-205.

In relation to the Macedonian cultural identity, the study by **G.F. Abbott**, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia*, London 1903, is of great importance. He systematically noted his impressions from the expedition throughout Macedonia, carried out under the auspices of Cambridge University in August 1900. His aim, as he stated in the *Introduction*, was to study the folklore in Macedonia and “to describe things as they presented themselves to his own eyes, without favour and without fear”. This travel book contains significant data on the Macedonian people, which he allocated as having their own culture and language,¹⁸ and through a detailed analysis on the family life, customs, legends and folklore elements, he came to the conclusion that it is a separate people, thus, naming them “Macedonian peasants, or the Macedonians.”¹⁹

Having realised the complexity of the problem about the recognition of the Macedonian cultural identity, he acknowledged that:

“Truth to tell, it is rarely possible to assign to the Slavs of Macedonia a distinct nationality with any degree of certainty. Their language is undoubtedly a Slavonic dialect, purer in the north, more and more mixed with Greek as it proceeds towards the south. Beyond this it is hazardous to go. A Macedonian Slav is equally intelligible, or unintelligible, to the Servian and to the Bulgarian. In some districts the resemblance is closer to one idiom; in others, closer to the other. But this resemblance does not always correspond with the vicinity of the one state or the other. Hence the impossibility of drawing hard and fast lines between the rival spheres of influence.”²⁰

Being aware of the influence of the propaganda of the neighbouring states – Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, he described the methods “adopted by these latter-day fishers of souls”, but he also stressed that “there are men who will not sell their souls for silver.”²¹

As distinct Macedonian cultural values he selected the legends on Marko Kralyevich,²² as well as on King Philip of Macedon, which led him to the following conclusions:

¹⁸ George Frederick Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 60-61, 80-81, 109-110, 112.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61, 77, 80, 98, 109, 112, 233.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

²² *Ibid.*, 159.

“When one considers the waves of barbarism which have swept over the country during the last twenty centuries, these memorials of the great king’s fame, slight and fabulous as they are, have an interest none the less real because it is not antiquarian. They show that national consciousness is not dead. The glorious past still shines through with a dim and fitful light, through the misery of the present.”²³

The physical characteristics of the Macedonian women were also appealing to G. F. Abbott, of whom he “carried away most pleasant memories.”²⁴ Not only on account of their beauty, although that was “remarkable enough: pale, refined faces; great chestnut eyes overshadowed by long-fringed eyelids; pencilled eyebrows; small rosy mouths and round chins”, but he also found their personal charm as remarkable, especially “their easy self-possession.”²⁵

Moreover, he noted another distinctive feature of some Macedonian women: “Many of these women had the sign of the cross tattooed between their eyebrows. At first I took this to be a misguided attempt at personal embellishment; but I was subsequently informed that it was a brand imprinted in early youth, so that they might be identified as Christians and reclaimed as such, should they be abducted by a Mohammedan and forced to join his harem. Prospective abductions of girls of tender age are not uncommon.”²⁶ He rightly perceived this strategy of the Macedonians in their attempt to preserve their identity.

The strategy of a cross tattoo is also mentioned by M. E. Durham in her work *The Burden of the Balkans*: “Some of the Christian women had a small cross tattooed between their eyebrows”²⁷.

Mary Edith Durham (1863–1944) was a British traveller, artist and writer who became famous for her anthropological accounts of life in the Balkans in the early 20th century and wrote seven books on Balkan affairs. She worked in a variety of relief organisations, painted and wrote, and collected folklore and folk art. In her work *The Burden of the*

²³ Ibid., 98-99.

²⁴ Ibid., 135.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 171.

²⁷ Mary Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans* (London: E. Arnold, 1905), 258.

Balkans, 1905, Durham focused on the Macedonian peasant women, whom she called somewhat ironically "my golden sisters".

And this is how she described the efforts of Macedonian peasant women to get some extra food from the British Relief Fund: "It is astonishing how slow-witted my golden sisters are, and how impossible it is to drive a new idea into them. Animal-like, they have learnt that food is to be found in a certain spot, and they return and return again"²⁸.

She admitted that her opinion about the Macedonian peasants was less than positive:

"I cannot pretend that this peasantry is in any way lovable or admirable. As far as I have seen it, it is the peasantry of the lowest type, dull-witted and of poor physique, inferior to any of the other Balkan races with which I am acquainted, and under the present government it can never by any possibility become any better". She offered a remedy: "A Christian ruler under the supervision of the Powers and not the Sultan is the only cure for existing evils, and even then progress will be effected but slowly"²⁹.

Henry Brailsford, a writer and journalist, was a prominent member of the Balkan Committee and led a relief mission to Macedonia in 1903. In 1913 he was appointed to the Carnegie Commission of Enquiry on the origin of the Balkan Wars. In his work *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (London, 1906), Brailsford identified the fluidity of the Macedonian identity during travels to the Macedonian town of Manastir (now Bitola), marveling at the manner in which a peasant from a smaller, nearby village responded to questions about his identity:

"Is your village Greek," I asked him, "or Bulgarian?" "Well," he replied, "it is Bulgarian now, but four years ago it was Greek." The answer seemed to him entirely natural and commonplace. "How," I asked in some bewilderment, "did that miracle come about?" "Why," said he, "we are all poor men, but we want to have our own school and a priest who will look after us properly. We used to have a Greek teacher. We paid him £5 a year and his bread, while the Greek consul paid him another

²⁸ M. E. Durham, "My Golden Sisters. A Macedonian Picture", *The Monthly Review*, vol. 15 (May 1904), 73.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

£5; but we had no priest of our own. We shared a priest with several other villages, but he was very unpunctual and remiss. We went to the Greek Bishop to complain, but he refused to do anything for us. The Bulgarians heard of this and they came and made us an offer. They said they would give us a priest who would live in the village and a teacher to whom we need pay nothing. Well, sir, ours is a poor village, and so of course we became Bulgarians."³⁰

The answer Brailsford's queries elicited indicate that even as a handful of intellectuals began articulating the case for elements of Macedonian cultural uniqueness, the vast majority of Christians in Macedonia remained detached from national movements. Villagers in the Macedonian region still remained largely indifferent to Macedonian, and even Greek and Bulgarian, nationalisms unless a particular ideology offered them concrete benefits, such as a priest who spoke the local vernacular and a school where the teacher and the students could understand one another.

Brailsford was quick to understand the important role that religion played in shaping not only individual, but also familial, village, and even regional identity in Macedonia. Toleration of Christianity had been a feature of the Ottoman state for several hundred years. After the Bulgarian Orthodox Church became independent again in 1870, Orthodox Christians in the Balkans faced a challenge to identify themselves not only as such, but also as *Bulgarian Orthodox* or *Greek Orthodox* Christians. By extension, one's choice of religious denomination went a long way toward defining his own national affiliation as well. Brailsford noted the way that religious affiliation transcended boundaries in European Turkey:

"It is not so much the religious instincts of the Balkan peasant as his political conditions which explain his passionate attachment to his church... His fidelity to his church has been through five centuries one continuous martyrdom. ... It is the only free and communal life which the Turks permit him. It is essentially a national organization"³¹.

However, Brailsford makes too much of the coincidence of religion and nationality in Macedonia. While the two often correlated during this

³⁰ Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1906), 102.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

period, they were not necessarily one and the same. Many individuals changed religions - either by choice or not - during the Ottoman period, just as they changed nationalities. Sometimes these changes took place simultaneously, but not always.³² Given the prominent role that biological determination played in much of his writing on ethnicity, Brailsford might not have believed that an individual could be both Greek *and* Bulgarian. And even if he would not support the notion that Greeks and Bulgarians were objectively different by blood, he was at least willing to attribute generalizable traits to the different groups that, he argued, transcended village and family. More accurately though, he understood that religion had become a telling marker of national identity during this age.³³

However, he underlined the fact that they have characteristics of a distinct cultural entity with ancient tradition and primeval values:

“Their passion is not for their race but for their country. They are a people of the soil fixed in their immemorial villages, with a limited range of sentiments which play piously around their mountains, their rivers and their ancient churches. A nation of peasants which starts with these conservative qualities will readily develop a genuine local patriotism. And this indeed has happened despite adverse circumstances. Their ballads of revolt, in which the word "Macedonia" recurs in every chorus, prove that they have already a fatherland”³⁴.

Actually, depending on the values and beliefs, certain strategies are chosen that result in certain behaviour in response to the environment. Certain skills are developed as separate strategies, expressed through various forms of behaviour of the native population towards the foreigner, i.e. towards the *other*. However, in cross-cultural encounters such strategies are interpreted differently, that is, they are transmitted as alternative metamessages.

³² Villagers often chose their method of self identification based on a number of factors, such as the ability to educate their children and worship in a familiar language, and not necessarily because of political beliefs. The Macedonian community that accepted the Bulgarian priest began to imagine itself as Bulgarians at a point in time, but this choice by no means precluded them from making a different choice as political, economic, and cultural events warranted.

³³ Ibid., 61.

³⁴ Ibid., 184.

Hence, regarding the inferior position of women in the East, in general, Brailsford was right to conclude that it was due to complex reasons which make sense within the framework of their culture, that she is obliged to remain in the house, in fact, “she is the house... a woman's absence from the house is contrary to her role.” One reason, according to him, was the Turkish influence which “has had its part in delaying their emancipation.”³⁵

“The position of women in the East is a subject on which one is apt to form hasty judgments. Certainly they are everywhere treated as the recognised inferiors of the men... This is more noticeable, however, in lands still under Turkish rule”³⁶.

However, women were mostly tied to their home where they were safe from being abused or abducted by Turkish soldiers. As, he noted: “The native women accordingly keep indoors as much as possible, for the outer world is for their imagination a place in which Turkish soldiers lie in wait to hurl abuse at them”³⁷

In the *Chapter 7- The Meaning of Fear in Macedonia*, he emphasizes the difficult position of the Macedonians under Ottoman yoke. The terror they had experienced was even worse in the aftermath of the Ilinden uprising in 1903:

“But fear in Macedonia is more than an emotion. It is a physical disease, the malady of the country, the ailment that comes of tyranny”.³⁸

He was appalled by the horrific scenes he had witnessed: of “an old priest lying beside a burning house speechless with terror and dying slowly; a woman who had barked like a dog since the day her village was burned; a maiden who became an imbecile because her mother buried her in a hole under the floor to save her from the soldiers; a lad who turned ill with ‘fear’ from the moment when a soldier put a knife to his throat; children who flee in terror at the sight of a stranger, crying ‘Turks! Turks!’”³⁹

³⁵ Ibid., 182.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 37.

³⁹ Ibid.

Mary Edith Durham has similarly described the effects of the terror of the Turks after the Ilinden uprising was suffocated; only she emphasized the case of a Macedonian woman who suffered a severe trauma:

“A wretched woman sitting at a cottage door, when she saw my gendarme, threw herself at my feet with a blood-curdling shriek, clung to my knees, and prayed to be saved, and then fell on the ground, stiff and only partially conscious. She had seen her husband’s brains battered out, and the sight of a man in uniform always brought on an attack, I was told. But as the fit appeared to be of an epileptic nature, she was probably subject to such before. The gendarme, whose presence caused it, seemed much overpowered. He possibly knew better than any of us what manner of sights she had seen. One has to be careful about ascribing such cases to the effects of the insurrection, however. I heard harrowing tales, which were published in some of the papers, about women who had been driven mad, and went about barking like dogs.”⁴⁰

Even more dreadful was her testimony of the atrocities of the Turks on the innocent civilians:

“I do not guarantee numbers, but that the usual atrocities of a wild soldiery had been committed was beyond doubt. Podmачeni⁴¹ headed the list with forty-five killed, including twenty women outraged and disemboweled; the village partly burnt and wholly plundered, and the church wrecked. Krani came next with ten women stripped and outraged. There were four villages burnt out, and for three misery Nakolech⁴² was the worst.”⁴³

“Twice I was asked for help by women who said their husbands had been roasted to death in the oven by soldiers. ‘Like bread’, added a man who thought I did not understand. The ovens are large buildings separate from the houses, and are heated by burning wood inside them.”⁴⁴

Taking the plight of women into consideration, Brailsford convincingly argued that: “These customs and conventions, which may seem

⁴⁰ M. E. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, 132.

⁴¹ Подмочани.

⁴² Наколец.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 195.

trivial enough, have in reality a profound influence on Christian society and even on Macedonian politics. Women who lead this secluded life, cut off from intercourse with any larger circle than their family and neighbours of their own sex, inevitably live in the past and conserve the past.”⁴⁵

Commercialization, the spread of literacy, and the forging of new national cultures are all aspects of the process called "modernisation." But it had little influence on the stagnant and secluded existence of the home. That was the reason why, according to Brailsford, "the women retained their own idiom and their own traditions. Had the Greeks spent the same pains on educating the women of Macedonia that they took to Hellenise the men, the whole Balkan Peninsula might have been Greek to-day. Generation by generation the children of these artificial Greeks learned at their mother's knee a native and non-Hellenic tongue." Moreover, he noted that, "...The girls marry early and leave school early", and according to him, that was the reason why "Greek is for them the language of a distant and masculine outer world beyond the closely guarded home, and while that world is closed to them its language is a superfluity, a mere elegant accomplishment.”⁴⁶

The fact that Macedonian women were uneducated was, according to Brailsford, the reason why the Greeks did not succeed in assimilating the Macedonians: "every Slav child learned his own despised tongue at his mother's knee. The peasants also were neglected. The Greeks regarded them with the unmeasured and stupid contempt ... They were barbarians, beasts of burden, men only 'in the catalogue.' The Greeks denied the rights of men to the Slav peasants and refused to accept them as brethren. The consequence was that the peasants never quite lost their sense of separation, and a certain dim consciousness of nationality remained, rooted in injuries and hatred.”⁴⁷

E. Durham also elaborates on the Greek aspirations and attempts at assimilating the "Slavs" in Macedonia:

"Nor did the conquered Slavs suffer only from Turkish oppression. The Turks had promised to tolerate the Christian religion, and not to in-

⁴⁵ Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 183.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

terfere in ecclesiastical matters, and they gave the control of the Christian Church into the hands of the Greek Patriarch at Constantinople, who had also power to deal with many of the civil affairs of the Christians. The enormous power attached to the office of Patriarch made it of extreme value, and at an early date we find it being sold by the Sultan to the highest bidder. Huge sums were paid, and these were exacted by the ecclesiasts from their unhappy flocks, who dreaded the Church tax-gatherer as much as they did the Turkish one. Gradually the whole of the power was absorbed by the Greeks, and the two autocephalous Slav Churches, Ochrida and Ipek,⁴⁸ whose power had gradually shrivelled, were disestablished, and fell into Greek hands in the latter half of the eighteenth century. ...so eager were the Greeks to get rid of all traces of the previously existing Slavonic Churches that they destroyed a great part of the Slavonic Church books and documents in the monastery libraries. The hatred between Greek and Slav was not only kept alive, but waxed fiercer.”⁴⁹

It is especially noteworthy that Brailsford affirms the role of the Macedonian woman, the mother, as the guardian of the Macedonian language, tradition and identity, and that “the revolt of nationalism which the women had unconsciously prepared found an echo in the very fibre of their minds.”⁵⁰ Moreover, he emphasized that “the vital fact in their lives is the tradition, or the memory, or the habit of speech which divides them from one another.”⁵¹

3. The Macedonian Cultural Identity in the British Travel Writings (during the First World War)

The interest of the Great Powers and the Balkan states was substantially increased during the time of the imperialist First World War. This interest was understandable - among other things, because the main battlefield in the Balkans was upon Macedonian territory.

As a direct participant at the Macedonian front during the WWI, the university professor **Edward Percy Stebbing** had an opportunity

⁴⁸ Иек.

⁴⁹ Mary Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, 46-47.

⁵⁰ Henry, N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 183.

⁵¹ Ibid.

to observe the actual war, and he describes very graphically the frontal operations. In his work *At the Serbian Front in Macedonia*, he reveals his observations about the cultural and ethnic identity of the Macedonian people. Namely, in his description of the country in which the western armies operated, he emphasized that the “extraordinary collection of types met in the towns in this tract of the country. Greeks, Turks, Albanians, Jews, Serbs, the bulgar type, Roumanians – are all seen in the streets of Jenidze-Vardar or Vodena.”⁵² However, when he mentions the different nationalities of the many hundreds of warriors, among the others, he singled out the Macedonians: “French, Russians and Cossacks, Italians, British, Serbian, ... Albanians, Macedonians and Greeks, all (with the exception of the Greeks, who kept and were left severely to themselves) fraternized together in one great community of brotherhood.”⁵³ Actually, the Macedonians had been forcibly mobilized and forced to fight on opposite sides, for which Stebbing himself testifies: “In the weeks to come, as a result of the mobilization, crowds of Macedonian civilians were to be seen marching along the roads leading to Salonika, hordes of men giving but little promise of turning out efficient fighting men.”⁵⁴

Moreover, **Oliver C. Harvey** of the Foreign Office, who visited both Vardar and Aegean Macedonia, in his "Notes" on the fact-finding mission he left no doubt about the existence of a distinct Macedonian consciousness and identity. In connection with Vardar Macedonia he reported that "The Slavophone population of Serb Macedonia definitely regard themselves as distinct from the Serbs. If asked their nationality they say they are 'Macedonians,' and they speak the Macedonian dialect. Nor do they identify themselves with the Bulgars."⁵⁵

Among the many books about the Great War and its aftermath little has been written of the women's units at the Front, but the work of **Isabel Emslie Hutton** entitled: *With a Woman's Unit in Serbia, Saloni-*

⁵² E. P. Stebbing, *At the Serbian Front in Macedonia*. (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1917), 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵⁵ Cited in Andrew Rossos, "The British Foreign Office and Macedonian National Identity - 1918-1941", in *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, number 2 (1994), url: <http://www.maknews.com/html/articles/rossos/rossos1.html#top>.

ca, and Sebastopol, who was a doctor serving in the Scottish Women's Hospital, reveals the repercussions on the life of the Macedonian population, which seemed disoriented. However, she pointed out that: "The Macedonian native element was quite calm, and they did not seem to mind what happened..."⁵⁶. From their calm behaviour she concluded that: "So accustomed are the Macedonians to wars and rumours of wars, that they take everything as it comes and make the most, or perhaps the least, of the day that is with them"⁵⁷.

With regard to the suffering of the Macedonians, especially the citizens of Bitola, which was bombarded very day, she was astonished by the fact that, despite the constant terror they were struggling with, they refused to leave their homes: "The inhabitants, who were mostly women and children, underwent a great deal of hardship and suffering, but they preferred to remain in the cellars or in the remains of their houses with their few household goods around them rather than to retreat"⁵⁸.

Concluding remarks

The observations of the British travel writers regarding the Macedonians reflect the specifics and the values of the Macedonian cultural identity and tradition. Moreover, their travel writings provide positive and negative stereotypes about the Macedonian women. Some British travel writers affirm the role of the Macedonian woman, the mother, as the guardian of the Macedonian language, tradition and identity. Although their status was inferior, they emphasized the fact that the Macedonian women, being non-mobile, have best preserved the language and its genuine features: they especially maintained the old customs and kept the Macedonian language strong.

In fact, the age-long bondage had forced the Macedonian people to develop certain strategies in order to survive and endure, due to the fact that they were submitted to assimilation. Thus, the Macedonians were forced to manifest their servility and self-humiliation that even lead to self-negation and self-colonization.

⁵⁶ Isabel Emslie Hutton, *With a Woman's Unit in Serbia, Salonica, and Sebastopol*. (London: Williams and Norgate Ltd, 1928), 49.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

Nevertheless, the British travel writers present a multidimensional picture on the Macedonian ethnic culture and represent a kind of a revelation of the position of the Macedonian people in the war period. Their observations have contributed to the clarifying of certain problems relating to the predominantly subjective representation of the travel writers regarding the Macedonian cultural identity and tradition, by recognising the specifics and the values of the Macedonian cultural identity, thus providing substantial evidence that confirms the separateness of the Macedonian ethnicity.

Татјана ПАНОВА-ИГЊАТОВИЌ

БРИТАНСКИТЕ ПАТОПИСЦИ ЗА МАКЕДОНСКИОТ КУЛТУРЕН ИДЕНТИТЕТ

-РЕЗИМЕ-

Во однос на презентацијата на македонската културна традиција, компаративната анализа презентирани во овој труд се фокусира на патописите на автори од британската културна сфера, како што се: А. Апвард, Г.Ф. Абот, Х.Н. Бреилсфорд, В. Милер, Е. Дарам, Е. П. Стебинг и И.Е. Хатон, кои биле непосредни сведоци на настаните што се случиле во Македонија во периодот пред и по Илинденското востание и за време на Првата светска војна, исклучително критичен период за иднината на македонскиот народ. Нивните опсервации придонесоа за појаснување на одредени проблеми поврзани со претежно субјективното претставување на патописците во врска со македонскиот идентитет и традиција, откривајќи ги специфичностите и вредностите на македонскиот културен идентитет, со цел поверодостојно да се конкретизираат доказите за да се извлечат заклучоци кои ја потврдуваат посебноста на македонскиот етнос.