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**Summer School in Anthropology, Ethnology and Comparative Folklore
in the Balkans at Konica
Konica, Greece, 30th July - 12th Aug., 2006**

The *Summer School in Anthropology, Ethnology and Comparative Folklore in the Balkans* took place in Konica, Republic of Greece, between 31st July and 11th Aug., 2006. The Summer School is one of the forms of realisation of the comprehensive project Border Crossing, which was envisioned as a network of cooperation among institutes of anthropology, ethnology, history and other similar sciences in the Balkan and in other countries. Attending the School were some hundred undergraduate and postgraduate students from Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, USA, France, Macedonia, Italy, Germany, Albania, Slovenia, Turkey, Poland, The Check Republic, Armenia, Kosovo, Russia.

Each participant was offered to choose and to attend three of the nine courses. The first part of the School (31st July - 2nd Aug.) included the following topics:

- ***“Anthropology Theory and Understanding in the Balkan”***
- Georgios Agelopulos, Ph.D., Department of Balkan, Slovenian and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessalonica;
- ***“The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Post-socialistic Concept of the New Balkan States”***
- Ljupco Risteski, Ph.D., Ethnology and Anthropology Institute, “Ss Cyril and Methodius” University, Skopje
- ***Methodology of Field Work: Quality and Applicative Research”***
- Bojan Zikic, Ph. D., Ethnology and Anthropology Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade
- Jana Bacevic, Ethnology and Anthropology Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade
- ***“Ethnography of East European Socialism”***
- Ilija Iliev, Ph.D., Ethnology Department, Sofia University

The second part of the School (7th Aug. - 11th Aug) included the following courses:

- ***“Nations, Migrations and the Creation of Ethnic Groups: Rituals, Stories, Speeches and Material Culture”***
- Jorgos Cimuris, Ph.D., Social Anthropology Department, Pantheon University, Athens
- Valia Krava, Technology Institute, Thessalonica
- ***“Economic Anthropology and Social Transformation in South East Europe”***
- Alik Angelidu, Ph.D., Social Anthropology Department, Pantheon University, Athens
- Sophie Schevallie, Ph.D., Sociology and Anthropology Department, University of France, Besanson
- ***“Borders and Identities”***

- Evgenia Blagoeva, Ph.D., Anthropology Department, New Bulgarian University, Sofia
- Ilija Iliev, Ph.D., Anthropology Department, New Bulgarian University, Sofia
- ***“Music and Dancing in the Balkans: Culture, Identity and Power”***
- Panagiotis Panopoulos, Ph.D., Social Anthropology and History Department, Aegean University, Mithilini
- Janis Manos, Ph.D., Balkan Studies Department, University of Western Macedonia, Lerin

The programme assigned 16 hours to each subject, and lectures were given in morning and afternoon sessions. The topics were elaborated through lectures, discussion and video-presentations. A few anthropological documentaries were also shown which turned to get a lot of attention and provoke vivid discussions.

Course #9 had a different concept from the other courses. It took place from 3rd Aug. until 11th Aug., and it was entitled:

- ***“Ethnographic Research of the Border Region: Field Practice on Both Sides of the Greek-Albanian Border”***, and it was conducted by
 - Prof. Vasilis Nikiakos, Ph.D., History and Archaeology Department, University of Yanina
 - Vasilis Dalkavukis, Ph.D., History and Ethnology Department
 - Kostas Mancos, M.S., History and Archaeology Department, University of Yanina.

After the introductory lectures and working instructions, the participants split into 2-5-member teams. They worked on topics that were proposed by the participants themselves, and the topics included life in the border area and the understanding of borders by the local populations. Some of the teams conducted field research in border settlements in Albania: in the village of Carcova and the town of Leskovik; the second group of teams remained in Konica where they carried out their research. Here are some of the topics included in the field research:

- *“Understanding (reading) of the border area on the Greek/Albanian side of the border”*
- *“Life Stories of Albanian women (in Konica) and the Greek-Albanian border”*
- *“Border officials as professionals”*
- *“How do the young people of Konica feel about the border”*
- *“Mapping and the social life of Albanian emigrants in Konica”, etc.*

Researchers prepared questionnaires-reminders for the purposes of their field work, which they used in interviews. Some of the data was gathered in casual conversations and through observation. A large number of photographs were taken and a lot of videos were made. Research results were not the crucial purpose, nor were the exercises of a well-planned and completed field research. The purpose of such a programme was to encourage the participants to cooperate among themselves, to turn to each other and to depend on each other. Moreover, we had to “mix”, i.e. the teams had to include some of our Greek or Albanian colleagues who were indispensable in our contacts and our interviews of the local population. It was only then that the name of the project - **“Border Crossing”** was fully understood as a message: -Crossing/overcoming all barriers (language, political, cultural, etc.) considered as borders! This realisation is one of the values of the School and its major benefit.

The evening sessions in the congress room of the Konica Municipality building at 20:30, open to all participants, were reserved for the lectures of guest lecturers, illustrious anthropology professors:

- Prof. Dimitra Gefu-Madianu, Ph.D. - *“Culture and Ethnography”*
- Prof. Maurice Godellier, Ph.D. - *“Relationships of Society”*
- Prof. Efticia Vutira, Ph.D. - *“The Cultural Structure of Greek Refugees”*
- Prof. Rajko Mursic, Ph.D. - *“The Dual Value of Identification and Change: From Leibach to Sutka”*
- Prof. Jane Cowan, Ph.D. - *“Supervision of League of Nations Treaties in Regards to Minorities (1919-1933) as a Remembrance Point: Anthropological Reflections about Bureaucrats, States and Supporters of Petitions and Projects about Macedonia”*
- Prof. Fotini Cimbiridou, Ph.D. - *“Genus, Ethnography and the Islam”*

Following the lectures, as well as during the unofficial part of the sessions, the professors talked with School participants and answered their numerous questions.

In addition to the working part of the School, the organisers also offered a variety of well-designed contents in the free hours. This included the concert of the mixed singing group which took place in the yard of the church of St. Apostol, in the village of Molivi, at the very Greek-Albanian border, who performed a number of polyphonic songs from Epir. There was also an outing to the sea-side village of Preveza, at the coast of the Ionic Sea, including the visit of Yanina. Summer School participants celebrated the village holiday of Molishta together with its inhabitants. The inhabitants of the Vlach village of Aetomilica (Densko), which is at 1,600 metres above sea level, offered a particularly warm welcome and the sounds of Epir dances echoed from the peaks of Gramos well into the night.

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The organisation of an event such as the Summer School in Konica is a demanding and complex project. As a result of the efforts which had been put into its completion, the participants enjoyed the unique experiences and a feeling of fulfillment and an appreciation for a job well done by the organiser. In more than one ways it was a justification and a confirmation of the need for such an event and the necessity of **crossing the borders**.