

## THE STATE AND STATUS OF INDOLOGY IN CROATIA TODAY

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Currently at our Department there are seven teachers and one honorary retired teacher. Our curriculum is rich and includes Sanskrit, Hindi, Indian history, Indian religion and philosophy, Indian literature, Indian art and Asian theatre.

The status of Indology in Croatia is high, with great interest even from the general public. But there are problems which, we hope, will not affect our study, like recession which may cut the project financing and the availability of new posts for young scholars. Bologna process did quite a lot of damage.

In my paper I shall say more on the history of Indological studies in Croatia, mentioning the main scholars and their work.

### I. INTRODUCTION

This overview of the state of Indology in Croatia today is divided into three parts. First, I shall try to define what the term Indology means. The main part of my presentation will concentrate on the present state of Indology in Croatia. At the end, I shall briefly describe the history of Indological studies in Croatia, mentioning the main scholars and their work.

In his comprehensive article “What is Indology and which is its goal? Treatise on rage”<sup>1</sup> Walter Slaje (2003) puts the question: “Indology, what could that be?” And he continues (*ibid.*, p. 311): “What may it be... What is its purpose?... and who may need it?”<sup>2</sup> I cannot go into detail concerning his article. I can only say that he is concerned with the destiny of Indology in our modern globalised world.

We all know perfectly well that Indology was born as a scientific child in Europe. Indology in English, Indologie in German, Indologie in French means ‘*logos* or knowledge of India’. Its field of research is India as ‘Kulturraum’ in German, as Slaje (2003, p. 318) explains, meaning the cultural space or area of India. In one India there are many Indias and many fields of prospective research. The main language polarities are between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages and though a cultural gap exists between the worlds of the speakers of the two main group of languages, it is not deep. They are connected. In my opinion, the link is Sanskrit. And we can ask a question – does Indology exist without the knowledge of Sanskrit? I think not.

<sup>1</sup> “Was ist und welchem Zwecke dient Indologie? *Tractatus irae*”.

<sup>2</sup> “Indologie. Was das sei... wozu?... und wer? das denn *brauche*.”

This can sound very philologically oriented and outdated today in all kinds of area studies, which include economics, gender studies, politics, etc., but these, as I see it, without the knowledge of the primary Indian culture based on Sanskrit, and in the South India on the Tamil language, can only be superficial. Nowadays, in this hyperactive globalised world, there is mostly no desire or motivation to get at least some knowledge of the old culture with its language, in our case Sanskrit, which preceded this modern world.

When Indology arose at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was impetus-providing for European culture in many fields, but above all in literature. William Jones' translation of Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* from Sanskrit into English, and subsequently Forster's translation into German, represented the beginning of interest on the part of European writers in classical Indian literature. Goethe and Schiller even thought of staging *Śakuntalā* in the Weimar theatre, but they realised that it was too early for the general public to understand such a work of art, distant in time and space from the interests of the public of those days. In the 19<sup>th</sup> c. even Shakespeare's works and Greek tragedies had to be adapted, very much distorted from their originals, to satisfy the taste of the public (Gönc Moaçanin 1996, pp. 73–85).

Though the beginnings of Indology were connected with the East India Company and the Asiatick Society of Bengal (William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Henry Thomas Colebrook, Horace Hayman Wilson, and others), in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Indology, which was philological Indology par excellence, thrived particularly in Germany. German Indologists were mostly classical philologists, very interested in the Indo-European languages and Sanskrit came as a kind of a speaking tree to them. This is not the time or place to speak about the history of Indology, one has to read the work of Windisch *Geschichte der Sanskrit-Philologie und Indischen Altertumskunde*, Renou & Filliozat *L'Inde classique*, Bechert & von Simson *Einführung in die Indologie*, etc.

Indology, and this denomination is not used in anglophone countries, in the traditional sense of the term, emphasises the study of Sanskrit and differs from Indic studies / Indian studies, or South Asian studies. Indology in the strict sense, does not include studies of economics, politics, sociology or anthropology as does Indian studies in an intellectual pursuit of all things Indic. This modern form of Indology is mostly based on research into contemporary languages, literature and culture, with an interest in sociological, economical, political research of contemporary Indian life. Walter Slaje thinks that this interest is partly due to the economic and political profit to be made, and so that this interest is utilitarian and commercial; in his words as – relevant to modern times, market-oriented.<sup>3</sup>

Michael Witzel (1997, pp. VI–VII) thinks of Indology as the study of civilisation based on texts and says in his *Introduction* to the book *Inside the Texts, Beyond the Texts*:

It is nothing short of a scandal that still, after some 200 years of study, instead of preparing reliable texts and translations, a lot of ink keeps being spilled in work with inadequate materials.

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<sup>3</sup> Gegenwartsrelevanz, Arbeitsmarkt (Slaje 2003, p. 312).

In his Gonda lecture *Protestants, Orientalists, and Brāhmaṇas – Reconstructing Indian Social History*, Richard W. Lariviere (1995, pp. 16–17) is of the opinion that:

Philology (...) is the fundament of our science. It is the foundation on which we must build. The texts are our best source of testimony about classical India (...) in many ways the only window that we have on classical Indian society (...) only through the creation of edited texts (...) can (we) begin to place these texts in their proper context.

Joel P. Brereton and Stephanie W. Jamison (2002, p. 209) say that

Instruction in Sanskrit merged with instruction in life, for, after all, the art of good philology is the art of good thinking and our common humanity exists through a web of texts.

But Ronald Inden in his *Imagining India* (1990) criticises this kind of approach to Indology. So there are very discordant views about Indology in our Indological world. In our department we adhere to the view that for the study of Indology Sanskrit is of the utmost importance – that could mean, for the adherents of the concept of modern Indology, that we are following the precepts of so-called traditional philological Indology.

## II. PRESENT SITUATION OF INDOLOGY IN CROATIA

After this introduction I shall mention the main issues concerning the state of Indology in Croatia today.

Currently at our Department there are seven teachers and one honorary retired teacher. Our curriculum is rich and includes Sanskrit, Hindi, Indian history, Indian religion and philosophy, Indian literature, Indian art, Asian theatre. In the first year we have about 30 candidates but, as the course is difficult for them, one third completes it.

As we have to adopt the Bologna process and to adapt the programme to its requirements, we now have the first generation of students who studied according to Bologna rules using ECTS or the European Credit Transfer System. Its rules cannot be applied to our form of studies, since they require us to change and reduce the number of programmes which we have and to divide our study programme into two stages with a final exam after the first step and a new enrolment procedure for the second. Our Department, and 3 others (Department of Classical Philology, Department of Philosophy and Department of South Slavic Languages) at our Faculty of Philosophy, out of about 30 departments decided not to accept the model 3 + 2 but opted for 4 + 1. We stayed at 4 + 1, and that means that no substantial changes in our curriculum have been made. I must stress that at our faculty most of the courses are organised on the basis of studying two subjects. Only a few Departments, like Departments of Croatian Studies, History, Sociology, Psychology and Archaeology offer the possibility of studying just one subject. Recently the University instigated an overhaul of the programmes. The staff of our Department had several meetings to decide whether some changes were needed in the existing programme of Indology. We opted again for 4 + 1 and our programme consists of Undergraduate study of Indology – first

and second levels. The new parts of the programme will be the addition of modules. Our programme shares with related university studies in Europe the core subjects in Indology: Vedic, Sanskrit, Prakrit, and New Indo-Aryan courses (in our case Hindi courses), courses in Indian history, literature, religions and philosophy. It also offers Avestan and Old-Persian courses as the basis for Indo-Iranian comparative philology. So far we have not been able to start teaching Bengali and Tamil, two other very important Indian languages with a rich literature.

Our programme requires 8 semesters for a B.A., and 10 semesters altogether for a M.A. degree. Our students combine the study of Indology with some other study at the Faculty. Because of the combination of studies, and because of the complexity of Indology, the first level (B.A.) cannot, in our opinion, last less than four years, but the second level (M.A.) can be envisaged as a one-year level, with one obligatory subject and others as optional subjects, oriented towards writing the M.A. thesis. After completing it, the student is qualified to enrol for a Ph.D.

Though there are almost no possibilities for Indological jobs after finishing the study of Indology, our study contributes to the depth and width of education of students who make their professional career in another field of studies or elsewhere.

The programme of undergraduate study in the first grade includes the following subjects: Vedic, Sanskrit and Prakrits, Indian History, Culture and Civilisation, Indian Religions, Indian philosophy and Technical literature, Indian Literatures, Hindi Language, Indo-European Linguistics, Indo-Iranian Linguistics (Old Persian or Avestan Grammar); optional subjects like History of Indology and Oriental Studies and other optional subjects such as Indian Art, Asian theatre. Students can also choose some optional subject from other Departments recommended from our Department, like History of the Orient, History of Art in Antiquity, Introduction to Linguistics, Theory of Literature, Greek Literature, Latin literature, Greek philosophy, etc.

In addition, students have to attend seminars in: Sanskrit, Vedic, Prakrit, Hindi, Indo-Iranian. Sanskrit seminars must be selected to include at least two of the following:

1. Poetry, drama and fiction
2. Indian religions
3. Indian philosophy and technical literature.

Moreover, at least one seminar should refer to epic, purāṇic or smṛti literature, and at least one (preferably two) to the *kāvya* literature.

After 4 years the students have final exams and a graduation thesis. In the fifth year – second grade of the study of Indology – students have one subject: Indology – methods, scope, instruments, tasks as an obligatory subject. This subject offers help for writing the M.A. thesis. It gives concise surveys of the main methods in philology (concerning research into languages, texts, literatures, and their cultural and historical context), of the main Indological disciplines and of bibliographical and Internet sources. It helps in obtaining insight into the history of Indology and into current trends of research and impending tasks in the field. Final examinations consist of the following exams: Hindi Language, Hindi literature, Sanskrit and Indo-Iranian Studies, Indian History, Culture and Literature.

The Master's thesis is optional because the students can choose to write their thesis on their other study group (Linguistics, French, English, Art, History, etc.).

Our new programme will allow students studying at other Departments to choose modules we can offer such as Indoaryan linguistics, Indian philosophy, culture and civilisation, Hindi, Sanskrit, Indian literature. Modules are a kind of supplement or addition to non-Indological students and as Walter Slaje (Slaje 2003, p. 316) says they give "only superficial and partial information".<sup>4</sup>

### III. HISTORY OF INDOLOGY IN CROATIA

I shall say a few words about the history of Indology in Croatia, as it is more extensively elaborated in the articles of Mislav Ježić (2007, 2008–2009). Sanskrit has been taught since the renewal of the University of Zagreb in 1874, along the lines of other modern European universities, in connection with the study of Slavic languages and some other philologies, especially classical philology. Indology, together with linguistics, was introduced at the University as part of a programme in comparative Indo-European grammar, which occupied the highest status within philology and the humanities throughout the 19th century. Sanskrit, a core element in the conceptualisation and analysis of the relationships among the Indo-European languages, was incorporated into the very foundation of the study of Slavic languages, which meant that each prospective teacher of the Croatian language was required to study and pass Sanskrit. The first teacher of Sanskrit in Zagreb from 1876–1885 was Leopold (Lavoslav) Geitler, a Czech born in Prague in 1847. He studied in Prague and Vienna and had a broad education as a Slavic and Indo-European scholar and he knew Sanskrit and Lithuanian well. He was nominated in 1874 to the post of Professor of Slavic languages. From 1876 onwards he regularly taught Sanskrit grammar (three hours), the interpretation of chosen paragraphs from *Mahābhārata* and also Lithuanian. He died in 1885.

A short historical overview of Croats important in Indological studies begins with Filip Vesdin or Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo (1748–1806), a Croat born in Lower Austria who was a missionary on the Malabar coast. After his return from India in 1790, he published in Rome the first Sanskrit grammar in Europe *Siddharubam seu grammatica Samscrdamica* (Siddharubam or Sanskrit grammar), besides some other works, but the most popular was his travelogue in Italian *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali* (A Travel to the East Indies, 1796). In the 19th century Pero Budmani translated five stories from *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* (1867) and *Śakuntalā* (1879). Tomo Maretić translated *Nalopākhyāna*; in the Croatian National Theatre *Mṛcchakaṭikā* (1894) and *Śakuntalā* (1897) have been performed, but these were adaptations translated from German. A year after Tagore received the Nobel prize, Pavao Vuk-Pavlović translated *Gītāñjali* (1914) and also Tagore's drama *Citrā*, which was staged in 1915 in the Croatian National Theatre, maybe the first staging of Tagore's drama in Europe.

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<sup>4</sup> "... nur oberflächliche Teilinformationen."

Sanskrit was taught until the end of World War 2, but after the war there was a break in the teaching of Indo-European subjects and Sanskrit.

Officially, Indology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb started in 1961 and it was due to the political situation of Non-Aligned politics that the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement (Nehru, Nasser and Tito) met that year and that the political climate was favorable. As Mislav Ježić gives detailed information about events at the beginning of official Indological studies in Zagreb, I shall mention only the key figure in bringing Indology to life in Croatia, Prof. Radoslav Katičić, classical philologist, balkanologist, slavist. He is considered to be a founding father of Indology in Croatia and he was head of the Department of General Linguistics and Indology from the beginning till 1977, when he left for a post in Vienna in the Institute of Slavic Studies. He is the author of a handbook *Stara indijska književnost* (Ancient Indian Literature) published in Zagreb in 1973.

Our Department was at first called Department of General Linguistics and Oriental Studies. Then in 2000 we separated from the Linguistics Department and became the Department of Oriental Studies and Hungarology-Indology and Turkish studies were subsumed under Oriental studies. It was necessary to have some unusual combinations with such different chairs because we are very small chairs and had to merge into one Department. And finally, in 2005, because Sinology and Japanology were added as 3 year-free studies (for students who have already finished some study or 2 years of some study), we became the Department of Indology and Far Eastern Studies. For the first time the Indology became a part of the name of the Department and this pleased us. From one Department that functioned as a whole, we became three Departments: ours, Linguistics and Department of Hungarology, Turkology and Judaic Studies.

The head of the Department of Indology and Far Eastern Studies is Mislav Ježić. He made important contributions to research into the text history of the Vedic *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which are internationally acknowledged. He pursues studies in *Ṛksamhitā* in comparative perspective, he published a monograph *Ṛgvedski himni* (Ṛgvedic Hymns) in 1987, a bilingual edition of the *Ṛgvedic Upaniṣads: Aitareya and Kauṣītaki. Appendix Bāṣkalamantra Upaniṣad* (1999). Recently he translated into German a number of Ṛgvedic hymns published in *Rigveda – Das heilige Wissen* (2007), under the editorship of Michael Witzel and Toshifumi Goto. He founded, with the cooperation of John Brockington, Peter Schreiner and Gregory Bailey, the Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas (DICSEP), the most prominent regular conference in that field of studies (1997, 1999, 2002, 2005 and convened in 2008 for the fifth time). The sixth DICSEP conference was held in August 2011. The Proceedings of the conference are regularly published by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Four volumes of the Proceedings had been published: 1. Composing a Tradition: Concepts, Techniques and Relationships (1999), 2. Stages and Traditions: Temporal and Historical frameworks in Epic and Purāṇic Literature (2002); 3. Epics, Khilas and Purāṇas: Continuities and Ruptures (2005), 4. Parallels and Comparisons (2009).

Two former professors have retired. One of them, Zdravka Matišić, translated Pañcatantra and wrote a Hindi grammar; Milka Jauk Pinhak mostly specialised in linguistics and worked on Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo. Young assistants are working on Śaṅkara, on Buddhism and on Sūrdās.

I translated Śūdraka's *Mrcchakaṭikā* in 1979, which was staged for two years in the Croatian National Theatre and was a great success. My two books are *Sahrdaya – književno putovanje sa srcem u Indiju* (Literary travel “with heart” to India; 1996) and *Izvedbena obilježja klasičnih kazališnih oblika: grčka tragedija, indijska nāṭya, japanski nō* (Theatrical practice of classical theatrical forms: Greek tragedy – Indian nāṭya – Japanese nō; 2002). Other topics of interest for me include: *Mahābhārata*, relations between India and Antiquity, literary relations between Asia and the West.

In 2001 our Department published a handbook for students *Istočne religije* (Eastern Religions). Mislav Ježić wrote the part on Brahmanism and Hinduism, Milka Jauk Pinhak wrote on Buddhism and I myself presented the religions of Tibet, China and Japan.

The ongoing work of our Department includes a research project dealing with the *Upaniṣads* under the leadership of Mislav Ježić, with collaboration from Michael Witzel, Sven Sellmer and Przemysław Szczurek and two assistants from our department. Mislav Ježić will soon publish his translation of *Amaruśataka* and is preparing German translations of Ṛgvedic hymns for the aforementioned series of German translations of the Ṛgveda published by *Verlag der Weltreligionen* in Frankfurt.

And finally something about our students. In 1998 our students organised a students association of Indology. They were and are active in preparing different activities, such as an exhibition of photographs that some took in India and organising screenings of Indian films. In 2007 they prepared a festival called “Passage to India”. On the occasion of Hindi divas they always prepare some musical programme and give a recitation of works by Hindi authors. In May 2009 they initiated a students conference named MESIC – Middle European Student Indology Conference which continued in Poznań in 2010. In the same year they released a CD of Indian music. On occasion during the last decade on the island of Rab some lectures on Indian subjects were held at a summer school.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The status of Indology in Croatia is high, with great interest shown in it even by the general public. But there are problems, which we hope will not affect our study, like the recession which may mean a cut in project financing and in new posts for young scholars.

The future of Indology in Croatia as a faculty course currently seems secure due to various factors. A national culture that did not include Indology would not meet European and western scholarly and cultural standards. The first 50 years of scholarly tradition, with some remarkable achievements in Indological scholarship, cannot simply be wiped out, though in various great European Indological centres Indological chairs have been

abolished when some of the professors retired or died. The future of our projects is in question because of the recession and economic problems. In the past project funding from the Ministry of Science helped participants in the project to attend conferences and with publishing their works and the situation is now uncertain. There are no new posts at the university, and even if there were, it is difficult to find a good candidate because Indology is a very demanding field of research. We have no foundations to help financially – maybe some international cooperation could be of help.

In 2012 we shall celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and to mark this event will publish a special issue of a famous Croatian literary periodical *Književna smotra* (Literary review) with only Indological articles.

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