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и културолошки истражувања**

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ВО МЕЃУНАРОДНОТО НАУЧНО СПИСАНИЕ „ПАЛИМПСЕСТ“

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Почитувани читатели,

Со објавувањето на деветтиот број на списанието „Палимпсест“ се одбележува и потврдува неговото петгодишно постоење. Тековниот број на ова списание обработува теми кои се однесуваат на областите јазик, книжевност, методика на наставата и културологија и тие се напишани на македонски, англиски, италијански и турски јазик. Тематските области што ги покриваат овие статии се доволно разнолики да го привлечат вниманието на нашите колеги, наставници, студенти, но и доволно мотивирачки да го одржат современиот чекор со актуелните феномени на истражување од горенаведените области. Од објавените трудови во овој број како најбројни се јавуваат авторите од Македонија (Милена Саздовска-Пигуловска, Милена Касапоска-Чадловска, Марија Леонтиќ, Виолета Јанушева, Силвана Нешковска, Мери Лазаревска, Марија Ѓорѓиева Димова, Славчо Ковилоски, Маријана Ѓорѓиева-Ристевска, Ана Стефановска, Оља Стојкова, Екатерина Намичева, Петар Намичев, Нина Даскаловска, Блерица Нухи, Арбнора Сулејмани, Брикена Џафери, Марија Ѓркова, Кирил Трајчев, Ранко Младеноски, Софија Иванова), потоа од Словачка Моника Зазривчова (Monika Zázrivcová), од Австрија Мариантониа Трамите (Mariantonia Tramite), од Италија Елеонора Фоа (Eleonora Foïs), Кјара Фуско (Chiara Fusco), Мирко Мондило (Mirco Mondillo), Марчела ди Франко (Marcella Di Franco) и од Турција Ѓулшен Јилмаз (Gülşen Yılmaz).

Доминантен јазик на статиите во овој број е македонскиот јазик, што го толкувам како наш стремеж во борбата за негово негување и зачувување како наше најголемо културно наследство, како и желбата и намерата обработените тематски содржини да бидат лесно достапни за сите заинтересирани на територијата на целата наша држава. Сепак, се јавува неопходност и од актуелизација и популаризација и на другите јазици, што укажува на фактот дека светот на јазиците е огромен и дека многу аспекти од јазиците треба да се анализираат и да се објаснат. Тоа ја покажува важноста и значењето на странските јазици во современите емпириски текови во науката за јазикот, во науката за книжевноста, методиката на наставата и во културологијата.

Како резултат на електронската достапност на ова списание и на активностите на Уредувачкиот одбор, Редакцискиот совет, рецензентите, јазичните и техничките уредници, горди сме да истакнеме дека присуството на научноистражувачки статии од различни земји од светот говори за неговата актуелност и популарност. Сите што се вклучени во создавањето на ова списание несебично се ангажираат за неговото подобрување и со своите сугестии и добронамерни критики и дискусии влијаат доволно инспиративно да привлечат современи и модерни истражувачки публикации кои ќе најдат на уште поголема читателска публика во иднина, со што современите истражувања ќе бидат широко достапни и ќе овозможат размена на знаења, идеи, како и на научни и стручни достигнувања.

Билјана Ивановска, уредник на „Палимпсест“

FOREWORD

Dear readers,

The ninth issue of “Palimpsest” marks and confirms the journal’s five year existence. The current issue of the journal covers topics related to the fields of language, literature, teaching methodology and culturology, and they are written in Macedonian, English, Italian and Turkish. The thematic areas covered by these articles are diverse enough to attract the attention of our colleagues, teachers and students, and at the same time motivating enough to keep up with the current phenomena of research in the aforementioned areas. From the published articles in this issue, the authors from Macedonia appear as the most numerous, such as Milena Sazdovska-Pigulovska, Milena Kasaposka-Chadlovska, Marija Leontik, Violeta Janusheva, Silvana Neshkovska, Meri Lazarevska, Marija Gjorgjieva Dimova, Slavco Koviloski, Marijana Gorgieva-Ristevska, Ana Stefanovska, Olja Stojkova, Ekaterina Namicheva, Petar Namichev, Nina Daskalovska, Blerina Nuhi, Arbnora Sulejmani, Brikena Xhaferi, Marija Grkova, Kiril Trajcev, Ranko Mladenoski, Sofija Ivanova, then from Slovakia Monika Zázrivcová, from Austria Mariantonina Tramite, from Italy Eleonora Fois, Chiara Fusco, Mirco Mondillo, Marcella Di Franco and from Turkey Gülşen Yılmaz.

The dominant language of the articles in this issue is the Macedonian language, which I recognize as our aspiration in the struggle for its nurturing and preservation of our greatest cultural heritage, as well as the desire and intention to make the thematic contents to be easily accessible to anyone concerned throughout our country. However, there is a need for actualization and popularization of other languages, which points to the fact that the world of languages is vast, therefore, many aspects of languages ought to be analyzed and explained. This actually proves the importance and significance of foreign languages in contemporary empirical currents in the science of language, literature, teaching methodology and culturology.

As a result of the electronic availability of this journal and the activities of the Editorial board, the reviewers, the linguistic and technical editors, we are proud to point out that the presence of scientific research articles written by authors from different countries of the world speaks of its relevance and popularity. Everyone involved in the creation of this journal is selflessly committed to its improvement and with their suggestions, well-intentioned reviews and discussions influence the submission of contemporary and modern research articles that will attract even a larger readership in the future, so that contemporary research will be widely available and will enable the exchange of knowledge, ideas, as well as scientific and professional achievements.

Biljana Ivanovska, Editor of Palimpsest

КУЛТУРА



CULTURE

VIRTUAL REALITY AND READING CITIES: GPS-BASED APPLICATIONS AS A NEW FORM OF LITERARY TOURISM

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Abstract: Drawing upon Westphal's idea of the city conceived as a "mega-Book", recent studies in the field of Digital Humanities have shown an interest in translating real itineraries into fictional ones, as well as in introducing imaginary spaces and characters to our *geospace*. Since this interrelation between the real and fictional has become a blurred one, new layers of meaning have been attributed to the geographical places and their potential economic benefit when used in relation to tourist attractions. The process of this hyper-realization, a technologically and culturally mediated experience that takes reality to its limits, is nowadays impacting the most actual practices of cultural tourism in Italy and beyond. Introduced by the intersection between fiction and reality and put into practice by means of geospatial technologies, the use of advanced "interactive maps" and GPS-based applications as means of orientation is constantly changing the concept of literary pilgrimages and "jet-setting" tourism. The aim of this presentation is to reflect on the intersection between actual concepts such as "reading spaces" as defined by Westphal and Baudillard's "hyper-reality" that do not only endow the idea of traveling with a different, modified character, but also tend to merge real spaces, fictional places and virtual maps, and, thus, modify the concept of "reality" itself.

Keywords: *Virtual Reality, Literary and Cultural Tourism, Spatial Studies, Geocriticism.*

Introduction

Literary tourism is not a novelty. Considered as a *niche* form of cultural tourism, or, as Croy defined it, *a travel induced by, or associated with, works of literature, authors and places featured within literature* (Croy, 2012, p. 119), it was mostly confined to the *élite* pilgrimage in the past. Starting from the 19th century, the organization of Grand Tours for young European aristocrats enabled lovers of literature to explore the world through the eyes of their favorite author and pursue their passion for visiting the *intratextural strata* (Westphal, 2011, p. 150) of a city. This inextricable relationship between reality and fiction has become one of the focal points of the *geocentered* approach promoted by Westphal which focuses on the interconnection between the physical world and its imaginary counterpart. In the fifth chapter of his *Geocriticism* he points out Trieste as an example, defined by Claudio Magris *a city of paper*, since its reality was enriched and transformed mainly by its fictional representations in the works of art of Svevo, Saba and Slataper:

The text is no longer born of the city, but born of another text to which the city has been subjected. (...) This is the case for Trieste, whose representation and perhaps essence are marked by the work of Svevo. It is also the case of Dostoevsky's Saint Petersburg, Joyce's Dublin, Kafka's Prague, Bowles's Tangiers, and Pessoa's Lisbon. Here, human spaces and literature have become inseparable, and so also have the real and imaginary. (Westphal, 2011, p. 151).

In this context, the interchangeability between the real and the imaginary modifies the city in *mega-Book* or as an open work that, like Borges's *Aleph*, feeds the dream of a *space that contains all spaces* (Westphal, 2011, p. 161). Moreover, it is exactly from this interrelation between the city's objective reality and its many reading possibilities that many offers in the field of cultural tourism stem today. The *literary fandom* usually implies the idea of reading a novel before undertaking a real trip in the place where it is set, even though Mongiello¹ underlined that in the same field of interest belong also biographical sites of the authors, cities where they were born or dwelt for many years, or, even, cities known mostly for their inviting libraries and bookshops.

Despite Woolf's skepticism about the fictional guidebooks, considered as *wrongheaded*, since never completely responsive to *the affective power of the imaginary places established in the writer's, and reader's, own brain* (Tally, 2013, p. 82), many readers worldwide are attracted on a daily basis to discovering the *spirit of a place* by following the *blueprints* their favorite artists created out of them. One of the seven fields, covered by the Creative Cities Network of Unesco's City of Literature program² devised in 2004, proves the influence imaginary landscapes nowadays exert on our perception of them by giving special importance to the role that certain places have had on the artistic and historical heritage. J. K. Rowling's world of wizards did not only become among the main objects of mass literary tourism, drawing more than half of the British to spend their holidays in London³, but it is one of the many forms of cultural attractions that add *a new layer of experience to tourist areas*. (Dewailly, 1999, p. 51).

This proliferation of touristic offers has been certainly enriched by blockbusters, intriguing people's imagination sufficiently so that movie or tv-series fans undertake a trip just to visit the settings where their favorite scenes were filmed. Consequently, film locations do not only have the ability to turn overnight unknown geographical points into the most requested world travel destinations, but are also growing into one of the main economic sectors of certain countries. In relation to the popularity of *Game of Thrones*, Tally pointed out the sudden fame of the Fort Lovrijenac in Dubrovnik that has become best known for the King's Landing in Westeros (Tally, 2015, p. 33). Joliveau, on his behalf, proposed the term of *set-jetting* tourism and some of the examples of the cinematographic

¹ <http://blog.tripnpeople.com/turismo-letterario/>

² <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home>

³ <https://www.visitbritain.org/literary-attractions-holiday-draw-more-half-brits>

contributions to the *development of the real* (Westphal, 2011, p. 153) are Harry Potter's world and Friends' tv show setting. In the first case, he indicates the coalescing point between imaginary and real embedded at King's Cross station where today we can easily locate the Platform 9, 3/4 from which the protagonist and his fellow wizards depart for Hogwarts. In the same way, "Friends" fans get the chance to have a coffee where the famous sitcom was filmed just by identifying Central Perk coffee shop on New York city maps. Once these imaginary worlds have been created, they have literally transformed the real facets of London and New York by adding spatial features that were not there previously and by semantically charging them. Fictional characters and features transcend their confined realities and enter our *geospace*, and by merging together, they become products of the *transontological crossovers*:

While typically limited to the realm of fiction, every once in a while the literary cartography of crossovers itself crosses over into the realm of nonfiction. It is the case when fictional characters get to be inhabitants of the Land of Nonfiction. Whether or not the transontological crossovers include fictional entities that could, according to crossover culling rules, exist in the same fictional crossover universe, fictional entities have effectively crossed over into our nonfictional one. (Trauvitch, p. 211).

Squared realities: GPS applications, fictional settings and virtual maps

In the summer of 2016 a world-known phenomenon, Pokemon Go application, was launched. By motivating the usage of the GPS navigators of our phones, it is an application based on tracing specific itineraries that orient the player in quest of *the amazing creatures that have been discovered across the Planet*. If we pay closer attention to the core messages of the trailer⁴: *Now, more than ever, undiscovered species are appearing, or The world of Pokemon is all around you*, we can see how tangible the intersection between the real, physical world appears in relation to the imaginary one: the trailer takes us into forests and ocean landscapes, mountains and big cities, where these little creatures show up. The final scene invites us all to immerse fully in the virtual world of Pokemons, with these three spatially engaging activities:

Go explore. Go discover. Go collect.

This invitation to explore, to discover and to collect, then, stimulates a polysensorial approach to the place where the player moves. One is obliged to closely observe the streets so that he or she could catch the pokemons, pay attention to the different flashes of light encountered along the way, sounds that announce the proximity of the desired object and to collect it, which, if it was not a virtualized reality within which one operates, would imply a tactile experience as well. Invited to move throughout a virtual geography, *our senses are manipulated to generate realistic geographic experiences* (Rodaway, 1996, p. 179) and the temporal

⁴ <https://www.pokemongo.com>

specification renders the situation even more bizarre: *now, more than ever*, as the trailer says, Pokemon's world and our Planet inhabited by these new, amazing creatures seem to clash. Their intersection does not consist of an exchange, they blend thus creating a liminal, merged inter-territory.

Similarly, in the field of cultural tourism tendencies that incorporate the artificialization of reality are being stimulated by new applications based on GPS navigation. Since it *puts complete fiction into concrete form* (Dewailly, 1999, p. 44), the reality that appears on our screens is *comprised of artifacts which could never be found naturally in the places where they have been introduced* (Dewailly, 1999, p. 44). By introducing this third element, the screens of our phones, which appears as an interstice between the real and the imaginary, how do we relate concepts such as the legibility of the city, a human space that never appears as a blank page (Westphal, 2011, p. 159) and virtual maps that are far smarter than any real guide? How can we define that particular cyberspace that draws upon the invitation to visit a literary city by following a precisely elaborated itinerary that appears on our screens and invites us to take a stroll in the fictional world of our favorite author?

Two recent articles published in *The Guardian*⁵ have suggested applications such as *Citymapper*, *Waze*, *Rome2Rime* and *LiveTrekker* as new means of orientation through the city hassle. By sketching intelligent and quick itineraries for tourists, commuters and taxi drivers, they use *interactive maps* that memorize past routes or trace the exact itineraries of their users, providing an effective movement from one place to another. Not only do these maps undermine any romantic and spontaneous discovery of a new place, but also by means of constant geolocalization they offer to their users, these virtual maps have influenced many forms of cultural pilgrimages. We are going to reflect on the intersection of the real, hyperreal and cyberspace by taking into consideration three recently promoted applications: *Abracapp*, *Cityteller* and *Litterateur*.

ABRACAPP, a new Italian startup, launched in January 2018, is based on the idea of "virtualization" of what is already a fictional reality. Connected to one of the main initiatives in the field of literary tourism in Italy, the project on *literary parks*⁶, it stands for a touristic guidebook to culturally charged landmarks, giving an insight into the historic heritage of a city. It is worth paying attention to its slogan:

*Every wall becomes a page, every street a chapter and every city a book.*⁷

The possibilities that every user who signs up obtains are the following: postscripts and photos that will stay pinned around certain locations, a radar search while they move, liking and commenting other users' posts, navigating to where a specific post originated, chatting with the author of a post related to a specific place,

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/nov/19/20-best-apps-upgrade-smartphone-2017-gadgets>

⁶ <http://www.parchilletterari.com/itinerario.php?ID=00055>

⁷ "Ogni muro diventa una pagina, ogni strada un capitolo, ogni città un libro".

sharing the post via other platforms.⁸ These practices when visiting the literary parks enable literary fans to consult and exchange experiences with others and, at the same time, broaden the knowledge of a certain place, simply by adding one's own experience of the place or adding information to the local community. It is a unique platform based on a dialogue, on traveling and on visiting places born out of fiction. The simulated virtual world is, thus, based on guaranteeing the "presence" of the literary fan: all the promoted practices that offer connectedness with a community tend to guide users to an immersion within the mediated environment, or to guarantee the sensation that *they are somewhere other than the actual environment*. (Tussyadiah, 2017, p. 3).

Based on the same idea of transferring fictional setting onto virtual realities, *City teller* is a social platform where one gets the possibility to geolocalize book settings. Its main objective is to provide a new way to discover a city and it promotes itself as a tool that *permits to know the world through the storytelling of a great author*⁹. It is an application that as ABRACAPP uses geolocalization in order to provide full immersion of literary fans in their favorite fictional world and instead of requiring a non-place like Disneyland or Universal Studios, its hyper-real space gets concretized by the simple transposition of it inside the screen of one's phone. Its GPS enables to trace one's position and to offer the exact distance from a place that appears as a fictional setting, while every user gets the unique opportunity to opt for a specific post he or she is interested in, and read a quote suggested by other users and their favorite novels on the spatial object that appears in front. For instance, if Padua is the destination of the literary pilgrimage, on Via S. Fermo a quote inserted from Bugaro's *Bea Vita! Crudo Nordest* pops up and on Piazza dei Signori a reference from another user that quotes Strukul's *La giostra dei fiori spezzati*. The city is visited through the quotes of local and foreign authors, from Gadda to Dan Brown, and appears within the application thanks to avid readers who fill in information on streets, districts and precise locations. In this way, we do not only get the chance to follow itineraries of the fictional world, but also get closer to a place in an original way and extend our literary and cultural knowledge.

Litteratour is the third example of the same tendency to offer alternative tourguides to the traditional literary trips. Designed for tourists curious about feeling the city through its writers' representations, the application maps places and itineraries of the biggest Italian cities such as Milan, Naples, Rome or Turin and promotes itself as a map where stories and feelings are embedded and as a powerful tool with which one can discover "cities in-depth". Along with the other previous applications, *Litteratour* is dedicated to narrating the territory through the geolocalization of books and authors and gives birth to an even wider cultural map that tends to unify words and places¹⁰ not only inside novels, but in music and films as well. This application enables its users to plan their trips by filtering their destination through the author, title of a novel or song they are keen on.

⁸ <http://abracapp.com>

⁹ <http://www.cityteller.it>

¹⁰ <http://www.litteratour.org>, "Words and places, mixed together".

Furthermore, each pin of the map contains a literary extract that can be saved and traced within the user's profile diary and, consequently, shared as a personalized itinerary on different social networks such as Twitter or Facebook.

Bringing together history, geography and GPS-organized guided tours, these applications function as navigational radars that provide the possibility to its users to add photos, comments and hashtags anchored in the exact geographical point where they were taken and get in touch with another tourist by asking for further explanation of the wanted route. Conversely to the proceedings of an application such as *Tripit*, where the virtual space endows itself with the dimension of a "place", *ABRACAPP*, *Cityteller* and *Litteratour* seem to follow the reversed direction since they transform *places* in the background of non-existent *reading spaces*. Each map offers an overlapping dimension of a place in which fiction and reality, offered in the form of a virtual itinerary, merge together. All the considered applications share one repeating element: their preference for the reading city to the real one, for the invented setting to its referential space. Between the real and the imaginary maps, thus, the virtual reality gets enriched by the personal experience of those who actually walk through the city, and provides a new space, where real, reading and personal landscapes meet. Therefore, we assist in the formation of a new, multilayered reality in which not only do referential and imaginary places interfere, but where humans, following their own itineraries on the screen, appear as subjects of a constant *mise en abyme*, or protagonists of the *precession of simulacra* in which *the terms of reality seem closer to those of fiction and the interpretive practices proper to fiction* (Westphal, 2011, p. 159). The digitalization of the imagined world makes it fictionalized two times, and consequently, it can be defined as a *squared* reality, two times transformed, by its appearance in the fictional world and by its reduction within a cyberspace. Thus, even when we visit a city following the descriptions of a realist novel, where the attempt of an *equivalence of the sign and of the real* (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 24) is more tangible, since no fiction can be considered as a real, mimetic reproduction of our physical world, we walk once again according to a map that precedes the territory. Fictional spaces anchored in a virtual reality seem to transcend even the hyper-reality in which our day-to-day experience *is mediated by synthetic sensuous media* (Rodaway, 1996, p. 176), since they become the product of a microcosm that we can enjoy only when bounded in the space that appears on our screens.

GPS-based applications and the tourist practices that they provide are not imaginary stations that feed reality anymore, they generate new self-sufficient spaces. Virtual maps used for discovering the world of Pokemon do not aim to depict realistically our well-known territories, they actually depict the reversed process: the world as we know presents itself as a background for the new one, more real than the reality itself, perfectly organized and where the reference to its original becomes irrelevant because the mediated forms refer to themselves (Rodaway, 1996, p. 176). Consequently, tourists today undertake a trip in crossover universes, complex and transontological realities and their devices are a bridge, or an inter-territory that brings them to these new virtual geographies. From this point of view, not only does the romantic idea of a literary pilgrimage fade away, but it also appears as an unnecessary and complicated way of approaching a new place,

for applications assure the traveler's independency in the process of conquering the city by simply following the given instructions of the artificial reality step by step.

The importance of these technologically and culturally mediated experiences of a place, which takes reality to its limits whether for practical or entertainment reasons, was confirmed by the European Selection of Matera as the Italian Capital of Europe for 2019. In the final report by the Commission, Matera's project title, "Open Future", was evaluated as "*an opportunity to move towards openness, because "accessible to all", "freely available and unrestricted"* due to its ambition to integrate the programme into a wider perspective, with an open outlook towards virtual connections within the urban European network. The Commission report underlines this trait by defining it as a visionary strategy that consists of "*stripping away the barriers to culture, especially through new technologies and learnings*". This is how the Commission arguments why Matera is a perfect fit for the contest among the other five city candidates:

The panel was impressed with the vibrancy and innovation of the artistic approach. (...) The panel appreciated the strong focus on *digital technology* which by 2019 will be far more relevant in the cultural and social sectors than it is now. The program ranges from an *online TV channel* to the *digitalization of heritage archives* to coding clubs for young people. This is a forward looking and innovative approach for an ECOC. (...) The emphasis on *new technology* (including the heritage sector) also meets a common aspect of future European culture. (of the European Capital of Culture in 2019 in Italy: The Selection Panel's Final Report, p. 6).

The success of the bidbook of Matera, as well as the new practices of cultural tourism, allow us to closely examine the process of metamorphosis of the *exopolis*, or the *ex-city* as Soja defined it, and its transformation into a *simcity* (Soja, 1996, p. 443), a hyperreal space of simulacra.

Conclusion

At the present time the interrelations between real and fictional realities render their distinction an impossible task. Even when fictional worlds draw closely on our referential reality, the new, imaginary place has the incredible power to modify its point of departure by adding the fictional *surplus* to the already existing reality. The advances of the technology that have brought new approaches to traveling and exploring our world have not only created spatial forms in which reality and fiction merge, but conducted to new products of the so-called hyperreality that lacks a real referential counterpart.

Reading cities transferred onto virtual maps that appear on our screens have brought new practices in the field of cultural and literary tourism. It is a growing tendency that substitutes old forms of literary pilgrimages and that supports fans of bestsellers to follow virtual itineraries in order to approach the fictional reality they are interested in. Communities, comments and hashtags enrich the cyberspace of applications such as *ABRACAPP*, *Cityteller* and *Littertour* where the distinction between reality, fiction and virtual spaces has become a blurred one. The

technological advance brings new approaches of the reading city and by blending overlapping realities inscribed within one single space produces new spaces.

These microcosms bounded inside the screens of our smartphones can be named as ulterior forms of Baudrillard's hyperreality, a new form of a cyberspace, or even a virtual reality that provokes more interest than the physical world in which it is grounded. By comprehending different levels of the same city, its geospace, its fictional counterpart and transposition in the virtual reality, the maps and itineraries on which the suggested applications are based create a new form reality where the user appears as an ulterior form of a *mise en abyme*. It follows that the newest forms of literary tourism create a new, squared reality in which every idea of "real" becomes a questionable unit.

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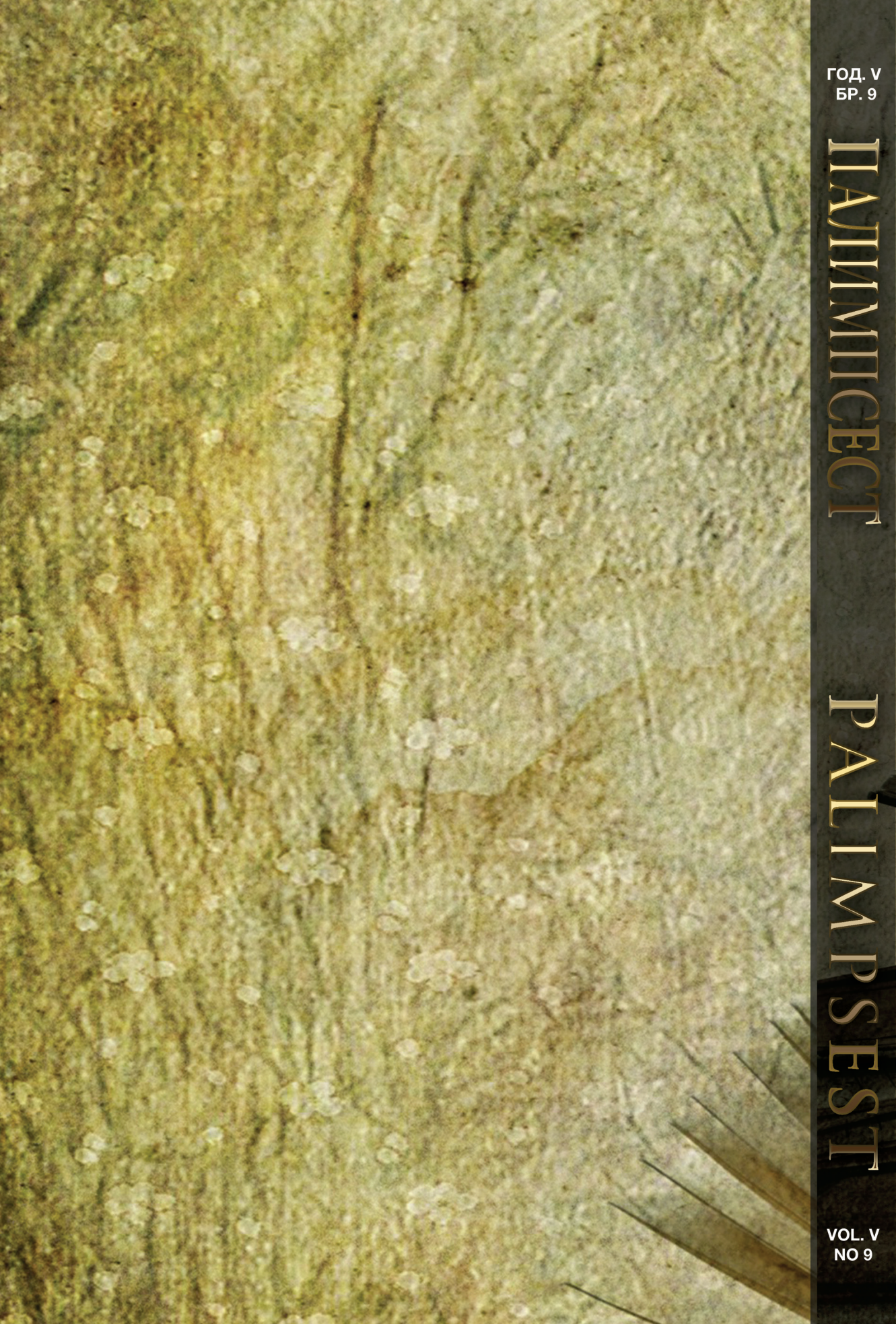
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