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A SERIES OF ARTICLES ON KONESKI IN THE FOREIGN PRESS

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Abstract: The Blaže Koneski Collection in the Archive of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU) contains diverse archival material organized into several collections, including a collection of articles on Koneski published in the domestic and foreign press.¹ This paper explores the potential of this Collection for research of the international reception of Koneski and his work. It presents several articles from the foreign press preserved among Koneski’s archival materials. The paper discusses the subject matter and content of the articles, as well as their references to other sources on Koneski in the environments in which they appeared. The final section considers the possibilities for a more detailed study and presentation of this part of the Collection, as well as the broader significance of archival materials for opening new perspectives on Koneski research.

Keywords: *Koneski; archival materials; journalistic articles; reception.*

1. Introduction

Among the holdings of the Haralampie Polenaković Archive at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts is the Blaže Koneski Collection, which contains a variety of archival material donated by Koneski, his family, and several of his collaborators. The Collection has been consulted by several scholars in recent years, especially in the preparation of The Critical Edition of

¹ The paper is published within the framework of the project of the Blaže Koneski Faculty of Philology in Skopje, “Virtual Museum Koneski”, realized with support from the Ministry of Education and Science through the Competition for the allocation of funds for financing scientific and research projects at state universities, faculties/scientific institutes/MANU for 2025.

the Complete Works of Blaže Koneski (Koneski 2011–2024), and since 2025 there have been intensive efforts toward its systematization, processing, and research. The first results of the complete review of the material indicate that the collection contains documents, correspondence, manuscripts and typescripts featuring handwritten corrections of Koneski's literary works and scholarly articles, his interviews, speeches, excerpted material and notes, as well as other testimonies to his rich literary and scholarly work. One of the most comprehensive collections is the collection of journalistic articles about Koneski published in the foreign and domestic press, which makes it possible to trace the reception of his work in both narrower and broader contexts.

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential of this collection for studies related to the reception of Koneski and his work worldwide. From a methodological point of view, this research was carried out through the reading and presentation of several archival units from the Collection. The paper analyzes six articles about Koneski published abroad, all of which are part of the collection of journalistic articles, focusing on their subject matter, content, and references to other sources related to Koneski in the environments in which they were published. The paper contains several notes on the articles and, in the concluding section, considers the possibilities offered by the Blaže Koneski Collection for studying Koneski's reception worldwide.

1.1. Selected archival units from the Blaže Koneski Collection

The work of processing the Blaže Koneski Collection in the MANU Archives, which began in October 2025, is in its final phase. By April 2026, immediately before the submission of this paper, almost 90% of the total material had been processed. The current overview of the Collection confirms the findings from the review of the materials made in the preparatory phase of the project in terms of their diversity and significance. During systematization, the materials were divided into several collections, among them the collection of journalistic articles about Koneski published in the domestic and foreign press. At present, this collection includes about 150 of the approximately 1,600 processed archival units, a significant number of which were published outside Macedonia. Six articles stand out and are presented here: one in Italian, three in Swedish, and two in Spanish.

1.2 An issue of the Italian newsletter “Relazioni Arte” dedicated to Koneski

The archival unit with call number 187 contains three copies of the newsletter “Relazioni Arte”,² published on May 3, 1971, in Rome by the Press Information Agency (Appendix 1).³ The issue is entirely dedicated to Blaže Koneski, and its editor is Janja Jerkov, a prominent Italian Slavist and professor at the Sapienza

² *Relazioni Arte*, 3 maggio 1971, Anno V, n. 11.

³ The authors express their gratitude to Ljubomir Gjorevski and Ivan Blažev from the Archives of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts for their consultations and assistance with the digitization of the archival materials.

University of Rome. The newsletter consists of a cover page and 17 unbound A4 pages. A photograph of Koneski is published on the first page, and the remaining content is presented in four parts: “Due incontri con Blaze Koneski, premio Herder” (pp. 1–5), “Le poesie di Blaze Koneski” (pp. 5–10), “La prosa letteraria di Blaze Koneski” (pp. 10–14), and “Bibliografia di Koneski” (pp. 14–17).

The author of the first part, entitled “Two Meetings with Blaže Koneski, Winner of the Herder Prize”, is Antonio Jerkov, a journalist of Croatian origin who lived and worked in Rome and actively followed Yugoslav culture. As the title itself suggests, it is a portrait of Koneski through the prism of Antonio Jerkov’s personal testimony about his ties to Koneski and Macedonia. Prompted by the fact that Koneski’s birthplace is the village of Nebregovo in the Prilep region, Jerkov begins the text by evoking memories of his first contact with Macedonia through the cities of Veles and Prilep, the legend of Marko Krale, and the warmth of Prilep homes and their inhabitants:

I know people from Prilep who have left indelible memories in my life. One day, as an unknown guest, I entered a modest house in this city, where I was served a delicacy made from rose petals. Blaže Koneski will forgive me this digression on Prilep, but I wanted to recall these personal experiences, which explain why, even before I met Koneski, I already felt close to him. I knew him by name.⁴

Jerkov goes on to describe two of his meetings with Koneski: the first in 1969, when Jerkov was in Skopje for a scientific conference held at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts at the invitation of Academician Polenaković, and the second, again in Skopje, just a few months before the publication of the text in “Relazioni Arte”. The descriptions of both meetings are interwoven with biographical data about Koneski, with Jerkov’s observations on the Macedonian language, the creation of the Macedonian state, and Koneski’s key role in building Macedonian culture. Regarding Koneski’s literary activity, Jerkov emphasizes that Koneski is “one of the greatest (perhaps the greatest) living Macedonian poets”⁵ and further that “[t]he breadth of his cultural interests, his translation activity, best reflect Koneski’s human dimension”.⁶

In the text, Jerkov particularly dedicates himself to describing Koneski’s human side and the impression he made on him: the fervor with which Koneski spoke about Rome and his contacts with Italy during their first meeting at MANU, as well as the unexpected wit that Jerkov discovered at a dinner together, most likely in Nerezi in 1971:

⁴ “Ho conosciuto persone di Prilep che hanno lasciato nella mia vita ricordi indelebili. In questa città un giorno, da sconosciuto ero entrato in una modesta casa del luogo, dove mi fu offerto un dolce fatto con i petali di rosa. / Blaze Koneski mi perdonerà queste divagazioni su Prilep, ma ho voluto ricordare questi fatti personali che mi spiegano perché anche prima di incontrarlo, egli mi era già molto vicino. Lo conoscevo di nome” (BK 187, p. 2).

⁵ “uno dei maggiori (forse il più grande) dei lirici macedoni viventi” (BK 187, p. 4).

⁶ “La vastità dei suoi interessi culturali, le sue opere di traduzione, indicano, meglio di ogni altra cosa, la dimensione umana di Koneski” (BK 187, p. 4).

He—the poet, the philologist, Blaže Koneski—was the life of the party. He may never know how grateful I am to him for the wonderful moments spent in his company. That night I discovered Koneski as a person: a strict professor, a humanist, an academic, but, when necessary, a pleasant interlocutor at an evening gathering. This is how I remember Koneski: a man, a poet, and a scientist.⁷

In the final part of his text, Jerkov expresses his congratulations on the awarding of the Herder Prize to Koneski. In a separate note, he states that his text, with its personal tone, is being published in place of a more detailed biographical text about Koneski, which, for objective reasons, was not included in the issue.

The second and third parts of the presentation of Koneski contain translations of several of his works. In the section dedicated to Koneski's poetry, Italian translations of the poems "The Heavy Dance" ("Teskoto"), "Wheat" ("Messi"), "The Embroideress" ("Ricamatrice"), "Falling Asleep" ("Assopimento"), and several stanzas from the ballad "The Sun Column" ("Ballata") are published. The poems were translated by Giacomo Scotti and were published in Italy in the anthology "La poesia Macedone" (Scotti 1965) and in the poetry collection "Ricamatrice" (Koneski 1967). In the section dedicated to Koneski's prose, the short story "Song" ("Canto") is published, translated by Giacomo Scotti and previously published in Italy in 1965 in the already-mentioned anthology of Macedonian poetry. The introduction emphasizes that the text is "poetic prose" ("prosa poetica"), which is in line with Koneski's own position (Андреевски 2020: 331), and that Koneski is, above all, a poet (BK 187, p. 10).

The final part contains an extensive bibliography of Koneski's works, with a total of 89 items published from 1945 to 1970. The bibliography covers both Koneski's scholarly and literary activities.

1.3. Several articles in the Swedish press about Koneski

The collection of journalistic articles published abroad also includes articles from the Swedish press. One of the first texts in this line of reception is "Makedoniska hörhändeln" by Sven Collberg, a journalistic article about Blaže Koneski published on March 8, 1971, in the newspaper *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* (BK 944) (Appendix 2). This text, which circulated in the Macedonian academic sphere through the translation "Macedonian Synopses" by Jovan Petrovski, does not include a direct analysis of Koneski's poetry, but it is significant as an early form of cultural mediation. The Macedonian cultural and social context is presented to the Swedish reading public, thereby creating a basis for the later reception of individual authors. In that sense, Collberg's text functions as a preliminary discursive space in which "Macedonian" becomes recognizable as a cultural category, thereby indirectly preparing the ground for the reception of

⁷ "L'animatore della serata era lui, il poeta, il filologo: Blaze Koneski. non saprà forse mai quanto gli sono grato per quelle piacevolissime ore trascorse in sua compagnia. Quella notte ho scoperto Koneski, un uomo completo. E' un severo professore, un umanista accademico, ma quando occorre, si rivela un piacevolissimo compagno di una lieta serata. Questo ricordo di Blaze Koneski, uomo, poeta e scinzato" (BK 187, p. 4).

authors such as Koneski.

A more focused and explicit reception of Koneski occurs in the late 1980s, when his work becomes a subject of critical attention in the Swedish press. In the newspaper *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, on March 24, 1988, Sven Christer Swahn published the text “Bister besjungare av dömd kärlek” (BK 24) (Appendix 2). The title itself, which translates as “Strict Singer of Doomed Love”, points to a clearly profiled reading of the author: Koneski is perceived as a poet of lyrical intimacy and stylistic imagery. Such an interpretation positions his poetic work within the framework of a broader European lyrical model, dominated by themes such as fate, love as a tragic horizon, and human limitation. This text was published on the occasion of the publication of Koneski’s collection of poems “The Gentle Light of the World” in Swedish, which contains a total of thirty-three translations by Jan Miloš, as well as biographical information about Koneski prepared by the translator. What is particularly significant in this critical review is the way in which Koneski is “translated” not only linguistically but also culturally: his poetry is not presented as an exotic product of a “small” literature, but as a relevant part of universal poetic discourse. Thus, the reception moves beyond a purely informative presentation and enters into a value-oriented interpretation, which represents a higher level of literary integration.

At the same time, on the same date (24 March 1988), the Stockholm daily newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* published the text “Lyriska fynd på ungerska, makedonska”, which, according to the data is attributed to Tom Hedlund according to the English translation (BK 27). Unlike Svahn’s text, Koneski is included here in a broader comparative context, alongside poetry from other linguistic and cultural environments less familiar to the Swedish audience. The key term in the title, *fynd* (“discoveries”, “finds”), is particularly indicative of the model of reception. It suggests that these literatures are seen as something new, insufficiently researched, and worthy of “discovery”, which is a typical discourse in the reception of so-called “small” or peripheral literatures in a Western European context. Within such a framework, Koneski is not read in isolation, but as part of a broader cultural horizon in which different linguistic traditions converge through translation and critical mediation.

However, such grouping has a double effect. On the one hand, it allows the Macedonian author to be included in an international literary current and to become accessible to a new readership. On the other hand, there is a risk of a certain generalization, whereby the specificities of Koneski’s poetics may be overshadowed by the broader category of “Eastern European” or “small” literature. It is precisely within this tension between individualization and typology that his Swedish reception takes place.

1.4. Several articles on Koneski in Spanish

Among the numerous archival units containing journalistic articles about Koneski, several are also in Spanish, from both Spain and Latin America. The review of journalistic articles dedicated to Blaže Koneski in the foreign press therefore includes one article from each of these Hispanic contexts (Appendix 3).

The first archival unit is an excerpt from the *Archipiélago Literario* supplement published in the daily newspaper *Jornada* in Santa Cruz de Tenerife.⁸ This supplement was published between 1987 and 2001. The excerpt from the newspaper is archived under the signature BK 802 and is particularly significant because the author of the text is Justo Jorge Padrón, winner of the “Golden Wreath” at the Struga Poetry Evenings in 1990, eight years after Koneski (Padrón 1990). The article is written under the title “New Poetry in the European East” with the subtitle “Contemporary Poetry in Macedonia”. It appeared in issue No. 92, published on Saturday, 30 July 1988, pp. 11–12.

Koneski is one of the authors represented in Padrón’s review of contemporary Macedonian poets, in which Padrón describes him as “the first creator of the Macedonian literary language and without a doubt one of the founders of its new literature.”⁹ The Spanish readership learns about Koneski’s significance as a linguist, professor, and codifier of the Macedonian language on the next page of the same article, which provides a brief biography of Koneski with several important details:

Blaže Koneski was born in the village of Nebregovo in 1921. He was the first President of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts and of the Writers’ Union of Yugoslavia (1960–1964). He is a corresponding member of the Academies of Sciences and Arts of Serbia and Slovenia. He has honorary doctorates from the universities of Chicago and Krakow.¹⁰

In addition, as part of the bibliographical data, several of his poetry collections published up to 1988 are listed, as well as the prose work “Diary After Many Years”. To convey to Spanish readers the sublime character of Koneski’s poetry, Padrón writes:

But the foremost position that he occupies in the field of philology in his country has not diminished his brilliant creative spirit. His poetry achieves a balanced expressive harmony without unjustified digressions. He rescues the most mysterious myths from the rich legendary and folkloric well of the Slavic world, particularly that of the Macedonian people, and shapes them into lyrical heights through personal and profound voice. Koneski enters the sphere of reflection and intimacy, historical evocation and modernity, linking the mythical to the everyday through language of spring-like transparency that is,

⁸ <https://www.bienmesabe.org/noticia/2012/agosto/archipelago-literario>. Accessed 10 March 2026.

⁹ “[E]l primer creador de la lengua literaria macedónica y sin duda uno de los fundadores de su nueva literatura” (BK 802, p. 11).

¹⁰ “Blaze Koneski nació en el pueblo de Nebrégovo en 1921. Fue el primer presidente de la Academia de las Ciencias y Artes de Macedonia y de la Unión de Escritores de Yugoslavia (1960–1964). Es miembro correspondiente de las Academias de Ciencias y Artes de Serbia y Eslovenia. Doctor Honoris Causa de las Universidades de Chicago y Cracovia.” (BK 802, p. 12).

at the same time, hard as diamond. It can be rightfully said that he occupies the highest ranks of linguistic knowledge and creative artistry in his country.¹¹

In addition to Koneski's biography, his portrait is also provided, as well as a Spanish translation of the poem "Touch", published in the collection Church (1988). In this journalistic article, the poet Padrón's view of Koneski as a poet is particularly important, emphasizing that his prominence as a linguist does not diminish his poetic excellence.

The archival unit BK 1028 contains several newspaper excerpts published in October 1963 during Josip Broz Tito's tour of Latin America, in which Blaže Koneski participated as president of the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia. The following discussion concerns an article from the daily newspaper "Excelsior" published in Mexico. This article, titled "Writers, Economists and Soldiers from Mexico and Yugoslavia", was published on October 6, 1963, under the subheading "Among Poets and Writers", and describes the meeting between Koneski, in his capacity as president of the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia, and Mexican writers at University City. The text notes that despite the language barriers—Koneski spoke Macedonian and very little French, while his interpreter spoke French and very little Macedonian—the conversation lasted about 90 minutes, and Koneski managed to bring the Yugoslav, and thus the Macedonian, literary scene closer to the curious Mexican audience. They were also interested in the reception of Hispanic American works in Yugoslavia, to which Koneski replied that books by about thirty authors had been translated from several languages and published in modest print runs. In this article, Koneski is described as a prolific scholar in the fields of the history of the Macedonian language, grammar, and dialectology, as well as an important author engaged in the public sphere. The rest of the article discusses reading and translation tendencies in Yugoslavia, as well as writing trends in Macedonia and Yugoslavia; Koneski successfully outlined the literary situation in the region at that time.

2. Some notes on the articles

The articles in the corpus cover a wide time span: from the article published in Mexico in 1963, through the articles published in Italy and Sweden in 1971, to the articles published in 1988, again in Sweden and Spain. The impetus for publishing the articles varies: the awarding of the Herder Prize to Koneski (BK 187), the publication of a collection of his poems in Swedish (BK 24 and BK 27),

¹¹ "Pero esta máxima prioridad que ha tenido en el campo filológico de su país, no ha mermado su brillante espíritu creador. Su poesía elige una equilibrada armonía expresiva sin disgresiones injustificadas. Rescata los mitos más misteriosos del rico caudal legendario y folklórico del mundo eslavo, particularmente el del pueblo macedonio, para configurarlo desde la altura lírica de una voz personal y profunda. Koneski penetra en la esfera de la reflexión y de la intimidad, en la evocación histórica, en la moderna, relaciona lo mítico con lo cotidiano a través de un lenguaje de transparencia manantial y al propio tiempo duro como el diamante. De él puede decirse que ocupa el máximo rango del conocimiento lingüístico y de la especulación creadora en su país" (BK 802, p. 11).

Koneski's participation in the Yugoslav delegation visiting Latin America (BK 1028), and the broader interest in Macedonian poetry (BK 802 and BK 944).

The article published in Italy stands out from the other units of the corpus in terms of the depth of the personal, scholarly, and literary portrait of Koneski. Unlike the other articles, it is, in fact, a special issue of a newsletter intended for a narrower readership interested in literary topics, as well as for informational purposes for the cultural columns of the Italian daily press. Through it, several elements can be distinguished that are also found in some of the other articles in the corpus: biographical data about Koneski, notes on his activity as a scholar, his literary oeuvre, his role and significance in a broader social context, and his personality. For research purposes, it is the richest of all the texts in the corpus, and it also contains a bibliography, several translated poems, and references to published translations in Italian. The personal perspective from which Jerkov writes about Koneski makes a special impression: he speaks with great respect about Koneski's greatness as a scholar, writer, and public figure, but also as a person in general.¹²

The articles in Swedish are dedicated, above all, to Koneski's literary activity and indicate a certain line of reception. The first article positions him in a broader context, while the other two focus specifically on shedding light on Koneski's poetic work. If these three contributions are considered as a whole, it can be concluded that Koneski's reception in Sweden develops in two complementary directions. The first follows a cultural and mediating direction, aimed at presenting the Macedonian context as a prerequisite for understanding the literature. The second is aesthetic and critical, in which Koneski is read as a poet with universal thematic and expressive relevance. Although the corpus is limited, the appearance of these texts in influential newspapers points to the fact that his work succeeded in establishing communication outside its native linguistic and cultural space. In this sense, the reception of Blaže Koneski on the Swedish cultural scene is an important indicator of the way in which the Macedonian language and Macedonian literature are articulated within the Northern European cultural space. This articulation does not develop as continuous and systematic literary communication, but rather as a series of isolated yet indicative critical interventions in the published media, which nevertheless allow for the reconstruction of certain reception models and interpretive tendencies.

The two articles in Spanish are also of great importance. Padrón's article (BK 802) presents Koneski from a writer's perspective and testifies to the interest in Macedonian poetry beyond the borders of Yugoslavia, within the wider European context. Padrón's description of Koneski's poetry is poetic: the lyrical connection between the two writers is noticeable, as is their mutual respect; for Padrón, Koneski has a "brilliant creative spirit". The second article, on the other hand, presents Koneski's significance not only as a linguist, codifier, and writer, but also in a broader social context, as President of the Writers' Union of Yugoslavia, able to promote Macedonian and Yugoslav literature in the world. This article

¹² On the reception of Macedonian prose and poetry in Italy, including the work of Koneski, see Karanikić (2013).

notes the interest in Koneski, Yugoslavia, and Macedonia—our poetry, prose, and translation activity—in a much broader context, far from the European continent, namely in Mexico. On this basis, one may conclude that Koneski was not only a key figure for Macedonia, but also for the entire Yugoslav area.

Although the corpus of articles is small, the selected archival units provide evidence of Koneski's presence in a wider European and global literary and cultural space, as well as of the interest in the Macedonian language and Macedonian literature more generally. The texts presented here also encourage further research into the collection of articles published in the foreign press from the Blaže Koneski Collection, which would contribute to shedding light on the worldwide reception of Koneski's scholarly and literary work.

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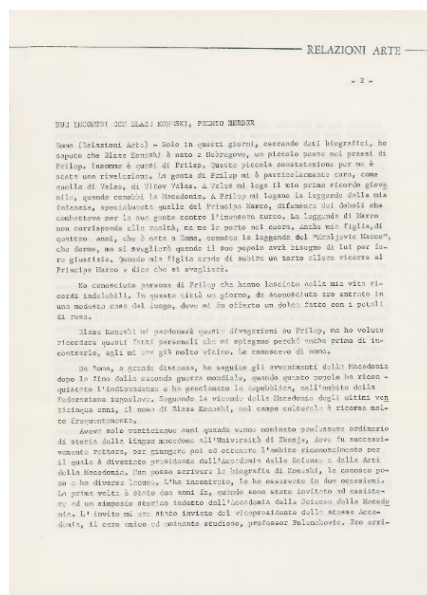
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Appendix 1



Archival Unit BK 187

Appendix 2



Archival Units BK 24 and BK 944

Appendix 3



Archival Unit BK 802

ГОД. 11
БР. 21

ПАЛИМПЕСТ

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