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THE CONTEXT OF LATE HUMANISM²

ABSTRACT. This paper examines, from the historiographical aspect, the context of late humanism, the epoch that marked the time between humanism and the Baroque, with its specific cultural and historical development. This short period is a sort of an intermediate stage in cultural and historical phenomena, thus, still in the first half of the 20th century, scientists defined this period as late humanism. The characteristics of late humanism are different social specificities and a wide range of cultural, art, and educational elements that emerged at the time.

KEY WORDS: late humanism, early modernism, cultural history, intellectual history

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INTRODUCTION

Today, researchers see the time between humanism and the Baroque as a distinctive cultural and historical epoch with its specificities. This short period is a sort of an intermediate stage in cultural and historical phenomena. These reasons have driven scientists to define this period as late humanism, even in the first half of the 20th century. The main elements that determine it are various social specificities and a wide range of cultural, art, and educational elements that emerged at the time. The specific historical circumstances and influential centers of science and art that emerged in the late 16th and early 17th century caused for this period to be named as a special cultural and historical epoch – late humanism. The goal of the article is to show some interesting topics of early modernism, but also to confirm that all cultural aspects are unavoidable in the study of early modernism.

TIME FRAMEWORK

Humanism, as an extraordinary epoch in the history of civilization, certainly had its specificities in certain stages, and with that in mind, we can mark those stages differently. On the other hand, a movement that is still in the focus of study of all scientific disciplines is surely looking for a general consensus in its periodization. Heidegger (2003), in 1946, observed that

“the market of public opinion continually demands new ’isms. One is always ready to supply the demand.” (p. 281)

In this context, we can also interpret the need to define late humanism, a term originally adopted in science in German speaking countries, in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. In the rest of Europe, this term was included in scientific correspondence, while in the South Slavic and Serbian territory, it was rarely mentioned in science. The first to introduce the term late humanism was Germanist Erich Trunz in the well-known study from 1931 (Trunz, 1931, p. 17–53). He defined it as “the culture of distinction,” to whose development especially contributed the Protestant humanists in the Holy Roman Empire at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries. In fact, Trunz started the history of development of a sci-

entific concept, which has lasted in science through his interpretation and definition. What we have to emphasize are controversies regarding Trunz, the creator of the term late humanism. Trunz worked at the University of Amsterdam, and in 1934, he joined the Netherlands Nazi Party. Then he moved to the Albert Ludwig University in Freiburg, and later, in 1940, he was hired at the German University in Prague. He was close to the German Nazi movement, but his distancing from the Nazi politics began in late 1943 and early 1944. Due to his connection with the Nazi movement, the Soviet authorities in East Germany banned his book of poetry (Kaiser, 2008, p. 582).

First, late humanism only referred to the cultural epoch, but in the seventies of the 20th century, this term also entered the German historiography, as a term for a particular historical epoch, whose specificities have to be taken into consideration. In 1974, German historian Oestreich (1910–1978) determined that this epoch had a factual basis. According to him, late humanism rounded the time of confessionalization, i.e. religious conflicts and social transformations, when its learned representatives tried to overcome this deep social and ecclesiastical crisis. His opinion allowed for late humanism to be defined in two ways, in the cultural and historical sense (Hammerstein, 2000b, p. 12). Oestreich was one of the historians who defined the *early modern period* as a special period in history and a discipline in the field of historical science. He set this epoch in the time of divergence and opposed two Christian denominations, when the simplicity of theorists and practitioners was expressed. It all started from the Dutch pleiad of humanists, Erasmus, Lipsius and Hugo Grotius, who succeeded at connecting Christianity with antiquity at a sensitive time. This symbiosis replaced the deep religiosity of the Christian Middle Ages, allowing these transitions to remain firmly rooted in Western religious tradition (Muhlack, 2000, p. 160).

Writing about literature at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries, Meid (2009) points out that it is known very little about this period of literary history. The overviews of literary history have simply skipped the period between Johann Fischart and Martin Opitz. It is certain that, in the obscure literature issue around 1600, the spirit of the times was reflected, the time of unresolved political, confessional and social problems; not only in the formal sense, which can be concluded by analyzing a number of works. Texts of this time essentially reflect distraction, restlessness and deep feel-

ings of existential insecurity, through satirical critique of social events. Literature thus unveils the downfall of society, embodied in “religious-speculative reconstruction programs” and utopian better-world projects. By pointing to the shortcomings of the real world, it tries to point out to the individual the spiritual meaning of his life, and strives to strengthen him and help him endure the challenges of time (p. 83–84). Considering the issue of periodization of literature of these epochs (Bojovic, 2010), he concludes that a simplified demarcation is generally accepted, according to which the Renaissance poetry lasted from the second half of the 15th and during the 16th century, and the Baroque poetry was in the 17th century. This strict demarcation does not fully correspond to the state of literature, but it is softened by the addition that the Renaissance was present in small traces in the early 17th century (p. 11). The interpretation of specificities of late humanism brings us to basic ideas that have prompted researchers to determine this term. Late humanism draws its values from Italian humanism, which brought new horizons in European culture and science. Under the influence of humanism, Europe was developing; its education, poetry and prose were making a progress, various scientific disciplines were rising. There occurred a development of theological thought and idea, which, through elites, influenced the religious and social climate in European countries. This is why its last sprouts were special, and they developed in special social and cultural circumstances. Setting the epoch of late humanism in precise time frames was a problem from the beginning; the researchers were unanimous in one, this epoch marked the transition from the 16th to the 17th century. Thus Trunz set late humanism conditionally in time around 1600 in his work, with which he started this debate. Regarding the time boundaries of this epoch, there are different opinions; some contemporary researchers have placed this epoch between 1560/70 and 1620/30 (Hammerstein, 2000b, p. 13–14). Bremer (2008) borders this period between 1570 and 1630. Science has essentially tried to date late humanism in a way that defines this epoch as a product of humanism, in which free ideas and learning prevailed, and where a certain freedom of aesthetics occurred (p. 97–98).

The term *late* carries a message that causes different opinions, but in this case, it certainly does not indicate something that happened late or was late. Late humanism did occur significantly after humanism and the Renaissance, but it still represents a stage

in this process. The methods and styles of the Renaissance, which were formed in the 14th century, and which were developed on the Apennine peninsula, early began to spread to the transalpine Europe. Scientific elites in Europe searched for role models and inspiration in the Italian humanists and their creation. Lively business activities in Italy and the rest of Europe contributed to the expansion of humanist ideas. Nevertheless, humanism outside the Italian state was formed later in time, and this is why it could be defined as late. It expanded to France with the French invasion of Italy in the second half of the 15th century. The definition *late* is too broad, and certainly insufficiently precise. However, this specifier cannot be identified with something that is late or something underdeveloped, or decadent in art. Researchers today generally agree that humanism, with its values, was able to experience full affirmation in the time within which late humanism was placed. Then, the conditions were met for the achievements of humanism, which upcoming intellectual elites could present at that time, to start being applied in the full extent and systematically (Hammerstein, 2000, p. 110–111).

In times of late humanism, European higher education reached a significant stage of development, which was necessary for humanistic ideas to take root in those social strata that were able to affect changes. These intellectual elites educated in the humanist principles improved culture and science, but social relations, too. At the time, universities were established in Europe, and their main platform was based on the original humanistic postulates. The greatest achievement of these circumstances was establishment of a large number of educational institutions that were founded on the principles of humanism. There occurred a development of the elements of science and culture, which were not at a high level until then. In historiography, the sources were researched, the sources and works of earlier authors were critically analyzed, research in science was carried out, and styles in art were upgraded. It was a time that led to late humanism, as a period that brought advanced differences to humanism and encircled it as a process of civilization. Late humanism was born at universities and was personified by leading professors of the time. Trunz linked the development of late humanism to the Lutheran and Calvinist teachers, whose number grew at the then German universities. The number of Protestant professors grew at the time at the universities of Leipzig, Königsberg, Wittenberg, Altdorf. Since that time, humanism had a

more open field for action; humanistic elites were formed and occupied prominent places in the education of young intellectuals. These late humanists were not just painters, sculptors or actors; they were also scientists, lawyers, doctors, historians, and linguists. Thus, the humanists of this epoch prolonged the spirit of humanism, not allowing it to disappear, and advancing its ideas that led to its high-level rise (Trunz, 1931, p. 27–28).

Late humanism is also specific for the challenges that its representatives overcome. While in the Renaissance, humanists created in a peaceful atmosphere, freed from divisions that their followers had to overcome, late humanists were exposed to rigid dogmatism created by religious divisions. The church also constrained the Renaissance humanists by controlling all forms of mental labour. The humanists opposed these constraints for two centuries, and then in late humanism, they were able to express their views in this segment (Bremer, 2008, p. 98–99). At the time around 1600, the progress of the humanities was reflected on culture, and literature was in bloom. The bloom was also marked by certain discourses in relation to the historical epoch, burdened by political and confessional conflicts and antagonisms. In contrast, Latin and vernacular literature complemented each other, compensating for the antagonisms in political life. The person who marked this sort of literary reform was Martin Opitz (1597–1639); his contribution to literature in German is immeasurable; he fought for the status of the German language in European culture, placing it on an equal footing with the French and Italian. He worked in well-known late humanist centers Heidelberg and Leiden (Bremer, 2008, p. 98–113).

During the confessional conflicts, humanists came to a specific position; they were required to side with one of the churches, and to put their methods and forms into a fight for one of the sides. Reformation theologians in the Protestant centers asked the humanistic elite to side with them and make a contribution towards the fight for a new church. On the other hand, the Catholic reform holders, the Jesuits, tried to include the humanists faithful to the old church in order to involve their intellectual forces in the process of Catholicism restoration. The questions whether humanists managed to prosper in the new circumstances and whether humanism was damaged by these tendencies are raised. Some great humanists, such as Erasmus, remained faithful to the old church, but severely criticized its weaknesses and social anomalies (Venard, 1992, p. 301–302). The time imposed on humanists an

opinion that was the result of religious conflicts, which was not in accordance with free humanistic views, and this encountered resistance. Therefore, many consider Erasmus to be the last classical humanist, and at the same time, the first precursor of late humanism. One of the leading representatives of late humanism was Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), who formulated the framework and base of late humanism, managed to define the forms for introducing the postulates of a confession, which simultaneously did not openly differentiate between the others. Lipsius's humanistic activity came to the fore at the newly founded University of Leiden, where he was a history professor and rector. He devoted himself to themes from contemporary European history, pointing out confessional problems and exclusivity of each side in the conflicts. Thus, in his work, he also subjected to criticism Philip II, a personification of Catholic unscrupulousness of the time. Lipsius also worked on publications and interpretations of ancient authors, especially Tacitus, by which he put this ancient author to the forefront of the then science (Wiedemann, 2000, p. 183). Thanks to the conditions in which late humanism developed and his representatives worked, the specific methods of humanistic elites were also developed. Thus, one of the basic characteristics of late humanists was the aim to disregard the religious differences as much as possible and to ignore them in the creative context. This humanist legacy was present in all intellectual circles. In the Prague of Rudolf II until the early 17th century, the relationship between tolerance and intolerance was held in balance. Thereby, an illogical situation occurred, where the most fervent members of a religious party were the main patrons of late humanist science and culture (Polišenský, 2006, p. 9–10).

CENTERS

Regarding the centers in which late humanism developed, it was first Prague, the capital of the empire at that time. The other centers of late humanism were the ancient capital of Vienna, and then Heidelberg and Stuttgart. When it comes to university centers, Basel, Tübingen, Ingolstadt, Altdorf in Bavaria stand out, where humanistic ideas were inherited since the time of classical humanism. Although late humanism was linked to the area of the Holy Roman Empire, its centers were also London, Milan, and Leiden

(Hammerstein, 2003, p. 110–112). Confessionalization was certainly in close connection with the epoch of late humanism and had a strong influence on it. On the one hand, we have the development of late humanism in Protestant centers, while on the other hand, the Catholic emperor gathered humanists and scholars of all confessions at the court. Late humanism as an epoch also carried distinctive methods, forms, and styles that were fostered and spread in late humanist educational centers. Art developed towards mannerism, which was separated from harmonious proportions of the Renaissance and moved away from natural shapes, while colors were of a broader spectrum. Late humanist authors, in their poetry and prose, nurtured a highly virtuosic manner of treating humanistic ideals, and those were allusions, symbols, a deliberately cryptic style, whose meaning and refinement should have been open only to a chosen circle of dedicated connoisseurs of their work. The virtuosity of late humanist style was reflected in the aesthetic mannerism. Late humanism imposed new forms in literature that abounded in allusions and quotations (Tönnemann, 2000, p. 141–142). On the scientific level, there appeared a development of interest in ancient cultures, personnel were educated and trained for the study of ancient texts and scriptures, criticism of the old sources was developed in researchers, and everything was subjected to reviews. Classic authors were systematically analyzed and the authenticity of their works and translations was determined. The interest in science strengthened and the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, and physics was enhanced. At the same time, the mystical was studied, and alchemists and magic experts gathered (Maclean, 2000, p. 231). Late humanism was also marked by the awakening of cultural wave that was brought by Catholic reform. Jesuit culture and education policy entered all aspects of cultural life, literature, drama, art, and science. The influence of Jesuit culture was particularly recognizable in progress of performing arts at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries (Bremer, 2008, p. 124).

The Habsburgs had previously shown interest in culture, but Rudolf II led this interest. It remains uncertain if, in his aspirations for inventions and creations of universal collections of art, he wanted to break away from tradition and start a new beginning elsewhere, so he moved the capital to Prague in 1583. The emperor did not make the center of state bureaucracy out of the new capital city, but he made the center of science and art instead. For this reason, this period of the history of Prague has always been inter-

esting for researchers of cultural history. It was an extraordinary place in history, where large funds were invested in the advancement of scientific knowledge and artistic creativity (Haupt, 2009, p. 10–11). Prague was transformed into an oasis of ascent of arts and sciences, into the center of late humanism, where scientists and artists from all over Europe worked, regardless of the religion and culture they belonged to. In Prague, research went beyond the strict framework prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church (Maut, 2009, p. 80–81). In this segment, a special mark was given by mystics, alchemists and occultists, who were appointed by the emperor. Thus, Rudolf, raised as an ardent Catholic at the court of his uncle Philip II, neglected his religious beliefs and demands of the time in which he lived, regarding science and art (Evans, 1980, p. 224–242).

Late humanism was little felt in the South Slavic area, even in the context of culture, through the prism of the values that this epoch ascended in its centers in Central and Western Europe. This situation was dictated by social and cultural conditions prevailing in this area. Some researchers believe that there are links between the beginning of Illyrism and the culture of late humanism. In this way, Blažević (2008) writes:

“As expected, the trail led to late humanism, from whose creative atmosphere, among others, the much better-known European nation ideologemes, such as Teutonism and Sarmatism, also grew their (South) Slavic counterpart – Illyrism” (p. 7).

In the synthesis *The Slavs in the Renaissance (Sloveni u renesansi)*, Novak (2010) uses the term late Renaissance, that is, *late Renaissance tragedies*, with which he signifies new literature forms that appeared in this area in the late 16th century. He does not associate the term late renaissance with late humanism, nor does he mention this cultural epoch. However, the late humanist ideas can be discerned in the achievements of the tragedy in the part of the South Slavic area that was under the influence of the Italian and the Habsburg culture. The tragedy *Dalida* by Sabo Gučetić, from 1580, sounded too modern for that time and manifested the writer’s need to speak about freedom and emancipation of women. The tragedies *Atamante* by Frano Lukarević and *Jokasta* by Miho Bunić were reflected in the same humanistic tone. The Jesuit theater was critical of these tragedies; for it, they had an overdose of humanistic parallels with antiquity, and the criticism of the ruler as a possible villain was inconsistent with the Jesuit poetics, in which the ruler

was portrayed on the stage as a wise man or a Christian martyr. In the South Slavic area, late humanism was certainly felt through the life and work of the sons of the region who have prospered in late humanist centers (p. 684–685). The most well-known of them was a Dalmatian, Faust Vrančić (1551–1617), a historian and an inventor who was at the court of Rudolf II in Prague between 1579 and 1594 (Jurić, 1978, p. 289–296). In this thin connection, this cultural epoch remained in relation to the South Slavic area.

CONCLUSION The development of late humanism formed specific conditions in which its representatives worked, which implied the specific work methods of humanistic elites. Although initially researchers linked late humanism to the culture imposed by the Protestant humanists at the turn of 16th and 17th centuries, this epoch was equally indebted to the Catholic humanists. The legacy of late humanism is reflected in the level of tolerance among the scientific circles that worked in this epoch, which was particularly manifested in the centers of late humanism, where humanists, Protestants and Catholics worked equally. The end of this epoch is observed by modern researchers through changes of the forms and styles that are characteristic of it, their passing, and the beginning of the Baroque that marked the reappearance of pursuit of practical use of science and art. Late humanism began to live in modern science as a term describing a cultural epoch. German historiography introduced it into European historiography, in this way marking it as a specific historical epoch.

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ДАЛИБОР М. ЕЛЕЗОВИЋ

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У ПРИШТИНИ СА ПРИВРЕМЕНИМ СЕДИШТЕМ
У КОСОВСКОЈ МИТРОВИЦИ, ФИЛОЗОФСКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ
КАТЕДРА ЗА ИСТОРИЈУ

РЕЗИМЕ

КОНТЕКСТ КАСНОГ ХУМАНИЗМА

У раду се са историографског аспекта разматра контекст касног хуманизма, епохе која је обележила време између хуманизма и барока, са својим специфичностима културно-историјског развоја. Први је појам касни хуманизам увео германиста Ерих Трунц у познатој студији из 1931. године. Дефинисао га је као „културу сталеза”, чијем су развоју допринели посебно протестантски хуманисти у Светом римском царству на самом преласку из 16. у 17. век. Немачки историчар Герхард Естрајх 1974. Године пише да је касни хуманизам посебна историјска епоха. Према њему, касни хуманизам заокружује време конфесионализације, односно верских сукоба и друштвених преображаја, када хуманисти покушавају да превазиђу дубоку друштвену и црквену кризу. Мада су истраживачи у почетку касни хуманизам везивали за културу коју су наметнули протестантски хуманисти на размеђу 16. и 17. века, ову епоху су подједнако задужили и католички хуманисти. Особености касног хуманизма су различите друштвене посебности и читав низ културних, уметничких и образовних елемената који се тада јављају.

Кључне речи: касни хуманизам, рано модерно доба, културна историја, интелектуална историја