

Preface

Habent sua fata libelli, – has been affirming about the books in antiquity and this assertion is acceptable also for these issue. Its destiny is extraordinary. The idea of the edition of *Limes* was born as a result of the long-lasting and productive relationships between the researchers who are interested in the problems of the borderlands of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus. Such contacts have continued not for one year and their stages has been both the common international scientific conferences and the publications including the collection of articles by the authors from Lithuania and Belarus *Regionalism as the Cultural Alternative of Globalization* published in Grodno in 2005. As a result has been composed the triangle of three researching centers, i.e. Culture, Philosophy and Arts Research Institute in Vilnius, University of Bialystok and Yanka Kupala State University in Grodno. This triangle has initiated *Limes*. This idea has been supported by both the researchers and the heads of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University providing gladly its publishing basis and becoming one of the founders of the new journal.

The conception of this journal is uttered in its title. The Latin word *limes* had meant a limit, a borderline, a boundary, a mark, as well a margin. The boundary and the limit are as old phenomena as the human civilization. Though a border does not only separate the territories, states and nations. Separating a border establishes the neighborhood between them. In this way it arises on the one hand as a wall, on the other hand as a door and on the third one as a bridge. In any case the border has influence on the *ethos* of the borderlands presupposing the way of life, the identity and the historical memory of the local settlement. Not accidentally cultural studies of the borders or the researches on the borderlands belong to the number of the most dynamic branches of the contemporary humanitarian knowledge.

Every borderland is unique in particular way. The borderland of Poland, Lithuania and Belarus is one of the most interesting regions to be researched. Existing in the geographical centre of Europe this region has for the ages been a *topos* where have taken place both differences and the coexistence while the political, ethnic-cultural and confessional factors interconnect. During one generation has been changed the configurations and functions of three neighboring countries' borders. Nevertheless has been preserved a borderland as historical-cultural phenomenon with its characteristic features as the *perpetual being of the Other*.

The research on the borderlands in the context of cultural regionalistics will become the trans-limited and interdisciplinary forum of the humanitarian, philosophical, sociological and cultural studies.

The scientists from Bialystok, Vilnius and Grodno have done a large work researching mentioned problems from their point of view. The results of these researches are different due to different approaches, methodological foundations and contents. In every of these three neighboring countries exist their own schools, researching traditions and possibilities of borderland's researching. There came a time not only for closer cognition of their results but also for integration of the endeavors, intellectual inter-

changes and scientific interconnection researching the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian borderland and creating an interdisciplinary studies of borderland. We treat the journal as an intellectual space for the discussions and the common reflection on the fate, history and today of our region. The journal is open to all scientists from Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland as well from other countries.

The base of the first issue is the international symposium “The role of historical and cultural memory in the evolving national and European identity” held in 23–24 March 2007 in Culture, Philosophy and Arts Research Institute in Vilnius. Accordingly it consists of three parts: *Historical and existential memory*, *National identity*, as well *Nowadays identity discourse*. The authors analyze memory of a nation from the point of view both philosophical (T. Kačerauskas, L. Astra) and sociological (R. Poczykowski, A. Sadowski, M. Bieńkowska-Ptasznik). There are discussed the questions of identity from both historical (V. Berenis, L. Astra) and contemporary (S. Danskikh, A. Sadowski) perspective. The issue deals with both the heritage (V. Berenis, T. Kačerauskas) and the future of a nation (L. Titarenko). A national identity is analyzed in the contexts of urbanization (L. Titarenko, S. Danskikh), media (R. Poczykowski) and politics (W. M. Kowalska).

We are inviting to cooperate all the academicians and scientists who are interested in the problems of cultural regionalistics.

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