



Editorial

A frontier area of empires, a collision site of the tectonic plates of history – all these terms describe Central and Eastern Europe. When looking at the north, east, or south of the region, we are always able to point to a moment in history that can be named this way. It is thus a ceaseless task for our nations to reassert their own subjectivity and to create a counterbalance to the forces.

Empires that periodically rise to power try to make a permanent mark in Central Europe. When they decline or fall, traces of their former dominance remain visible. One can ignore them, but not for long. One can try to remove them, or treat them as a reminder that freedom is not something that is given once and for all. This is part of the heritage often referred to as “unwanted legacy.” In the current issue of *Trimarium* we take a look at its various guises. Monuments such as Soviet tanks in Poland, architecture in the Czech Republic, urban development in Moldova are all part of the everyday life of successive generations living in these areas. These traces of the past are also present when passers-by are less likely to notice their ideological message, and when they only know about subjection to foreign empires from the stories of their parents and grandparents and the pages of textbooks.

Traces of the past very often penetrate deeply into public spaces. A monument is easier to demolish, a cemetery to relocate

or liquidate (the Soviets did this in the territories they occupied without hesitation), but removing the traces from urban architecture – edifices, elements of infrastructure – is much more difficult. The approach to these remnants is also changing. Sometimes it seems that they do not need to be bothered with, until there comes a moment when they again become an object of interest to an heir of the former empire, which is becoming more and more active in international politics. Another attitude is the desire to stamp them out completely, even at a high price and with considerable effort. Finally, there are those who recognize that there is no “unwanted legacy,” and any legacy can be wanted in the sense that it represents part of the history of a place. Instead of being resentful about it, we should develop it so as to benefit from it ourselves. These do not have to be only material benefits as elements of “unwanted legacy” facilitate the story of the past and help us realize something that free citizens find difficult to imagine. Properly presented, they can serve to spark discussion about the value of freedom, which is seldom thought about when one is not denied it.

Such discussions will emerge, with varying intensity, wherever historical remnants are visible in public space. What is less visible does not become less important and is also up for discussion or dispute. Is it not an even more universal question to ask what belongs to literary heritage and how the literary canon should be formed? They bear not only the stamp of historical or social conditions, but also the stamp of current politics, which sometimes impedes proper thoughtful reflection. While the canon evokes an association with being canonical or immutable, it is, after all, a compilation of those works that are considered vital to the formation of cultural identity at a given time and in a given place. This is underscored by such currents as postmodernism, whose premise is quite the opposite of the creation of pantheistic canons. Or perhaps we are already living in a time where postmodernism, too, is becoming partly canonical, contrary to its intentions? One can get such an impression when publishing articles that analyze the issue of postmodernism, which are based on settled approaches,

thereby creating, as it were, a canonical take on the subject. There is probably no country free of such a tension between the canon and its deconstruction resulting from the fashions and methodologies of contemporaries.

Between what enters our space by force, unwanted, and what shapes our thinking about intangible heritage, there are other inextricably linked experiences. These are the histories of communities whose centuries-old presence in a certain area is interrupted by the storm of history, as well as those that live in the borderlands and pose challenges to states that are building their structural unity and identity: challenges that are sometimes difficult to meet, and there is sometimes not enough goodwill to do so.

For the first time, this year's last issue features a section on reviews of published works. We hope that it will have a permanent presence in the pages of *Trimarium* and continue to introduce international readers to what is currently being released on the publishing markets in the countries of the region. We would like there to be as many review articles as possible, and we would also like to select among them those that we will be able to share with a wide audience in English in the new publishing series *Trimarium Library*.