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The Northern Latins on the Bosphorus? A Few Words on East Mediterranean, Byzantine and Orthodox Studies in the *Ceraneum* Centre, University of Łódź (Poland)

ABSTRACT

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The article is devoted to the presentation and characteristics of the *Ceraneum* – the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe, which has been operating at the University of Łódź since 2011. The author focuses on the importance of this Centre for the development of Byzantine-Slavic studies in Poland and in the world in general, as well as its organisational structure, financing methods and, above all, scientific and publishing efforts. He also does not neglect the public and didactic activity the *Ceraneum* undertakes. The aim is to indicate the importance of establishing similar research centres and their methods of organisation, with particular emphasis on their role in internationalising the achievements of Polish science and building strong and effective cooperation among scholars from different countries.

Keywords: *Ceraneum* Centre, Byzantine studies, Paleo-Slavic studies, University of Łódź (Poland), Mediterranean studies in Poland

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I. A brief introduction or who today needs Byzantium?

It would be something of a truism to say that for contemporary Greeks Byzantium forms a significant part of their historical identity – national, linguistic, cultural and religious. Byzantine culture, along with its South Slavic variations, also forms part of the historical identity of contemporary Balkan nations, including the Bulgarians, the Serbs and the Macedonians (there were also influences on the Croats and

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the Albanians, of course). Another obvious historical region is that of medieval Rus'. This is true especially in the field of religion. However, it should be kept in mind that both the Greeks and the Balkan Slavs enjoyed their longest period of sovereign existence in the Middle Ages. The Ottoman rule, to which they were subjected for so long, naturally draws the attention of the Peninsula's contemporary inhabitants, including its scholars, to the history of their ancestors. In turn, the non-Orthodox Christian countries need to know the history of Byzantium in order to fully understand the cultural heritage of today's Europe – the partly united continent contains countries that had once been part of the Byzantine ecumene. It is also impossible to engage in any serious dialogue with the Orthodox Church without having some knowledge, so essential to its doctrine, of its Byzantine heritage.

Academic interest in the history of Eastern Rome goes beyond the historical Byzantine ecumene, and was in fact born in Western Europe in the Renaissance. It is also a fact that until this day the largest centres of Byzantine studies operate in Munich, Oxford, Paris, Washington and Vienna (Jeffreys *et al.* 2008, 3–20). It is therefore somewhat paradoxical that it is these centres that train students from countries which, more or less justifiably, claim the right to the heritage of the former empire, including representatives of contemporary Balkan nations. Without going into a detailed discussion of the reasons for this state of affairs, which are, undoubtedly, many, it should be emphasised that Byzantine studies are common and pursued in various research institutions all over the world. This fact should not be surprising if we keep in mind that this is still the case of studies on the broadly defined history of imperial Rome, this time, essentially, medieval. The significance and magnitude of studies on Roman history, and contact with the living culture of the Byzantine sphere in its Ruthenian version also explain the development of interest in Byzantine studies in countries from East-Central Europe, which belong to the Latin sphere of culture (cf. Sophoulis 2016, 407–436). This interest did not bypass the Polish Republic, either, starting from the Renaissance interest in the history of the Fathers of the Church, to philological works and studies on Byzantine art and history during the Enlightenment and the 19th c. In the interwar period, the Cracow, and Lviv universities led the way in these studies, and in 1935 University of Warsaw opened the first Polish Chair of the History of Byzantium, which was not reopened after WWII ended. Today, Byzantine studies

in Poland are pursued in various academic centres by specialists in different disciplines, and essentially include the entirety of Byzantine history, both in chronological and thematic terms (Ceran 2001; Ceran 2006; Kruk 2017). The following reflections spotlight only the Łódź centre, specifically the international academic centre established a few years ago, which focuses exclusively on studies on the broadly defined Byzantine world.

II. Why Łódź?

There is no doubt Łódź has one of the longest traditions of Byzantine studies in Poland and at the moment the largest scholarly department that focuses on the history of Late Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire. The city in question can also pride itself on the longest tradition of teaching pure Byzantine history in Poland. This refers both to basic university courses in ancient and medieval history and to specialised seminars dealing with different aspects of the Eastern Roman Empire. The first Polish Unit of the History of Byzantium (with a break in existence between 1971 and 1992; nowadays, from 2002, a Chair) after WWII was established in Łódź (Ceran 2001, 34; 2006, 13; Sophoulis 2016, 432–433; Jaworska-Wołoszyn 2017, 15).

The founders of the *Ceraneum* were employees of two academic units of the University of Łódź: the Chair of Byzantine History and the Unit of Paleo-Slavic Studies and Folk Culture (nowadays Chair of Slavic Philology). The cooperation started in 2008 and was originally connected with organising a series of open lectures on Byzantine and Paleo-Slavic studies and similar disciplines (Brzozowska 2009; 2010a; 2010b, 49). The noticeable interest they aroused (not only among the teaching staff, but also students and doctoral students), as well as the integration of the Łódź communities of specialists in history and Paleo-Slavic studies that they brought about, finally led to the decision to form an extra-departmental research unit (Czarnek 2011, 26–27; Brzozowska 2010b, 49). Accordingly, the application to found the extra-departmental Centre was filed with the Senate of the University of Łódź by the deans of as many as four faculties: the Faculty of Philosophy and History, the Faculty of Philology, the Faculty of International and Political Studies and the Faculty of Law and Administration (Kacprzyk 2011, 42; Wolski 2012, 14).

So, the *Ceraneum* is a non-departmental Centre established by the decision of the University of Łódź Senate on 7 February 2011 (*Ordinance no. 30 2011a*, § 1–3, 1–2; *Resolution no. 285 2011*, 1; Czarnek 2011, 26–27; *Sprawozdanie 2012*, 1).

The official inauguration of the *Ceraneum* Centre took place on 18 May 2011 at the Central University Library with the participation of University authorities and many guests from Poland and abroad (Czarnek 2011, 26; *Sprawozdanie 2012*, 1).

The scholarly level and the objectives of the research conducted is supervised by the Advisory Board of the *Ceraneum*, created by the Rector of the University of Łódź. The board is comprised of 40 distinguished scholars from various Polish and European research centres, who work in different fields of Humanities and Social Sciences – history, philology, archaeology, ethnology, philosophy, history of arts, political science, law and sociology (*Rules of Operation 2011*, § 9–10, 3–4; Frąk 2011, 15; *Sprawozdanie 2012*, 3, 4; 2013, 1).

II.1. The structure

It includes the Director of the *Ceraneum* Centre and their Deputy, as well as the President of the International Advisory Board of the Centre, along with their own Deputy (*Rules of Operation 2011*, § 5–7.1, § 10, 1–3, 4; *Sprawozdanie 2013*, 1, 2).

There are also two academic secretaries: the first is responsible for the development of the *Ceraneum* Centre and publishing, and the second is in charge of library activities and teaching programmes (*Rules of Operation 2011*, § 7, 3; *Sprawozdanie 2013*, 1). None of the above mentioned are paid for their involvement in the Centre's development.

The Centre also has an Erasmus+ Programme Coordinator and the Grants Acquisition and Management Coordinator (*Sprawozdanie 2012*, 4; 2018, 3). At the moment there are five full-time employees at the Centre (they are paid for their work) – two of them in administrative positions (since 2018 as specialists) and the rest working as research fellows (*Sprawozdanie 2012*, 1; 2017, 4; 2019, 4). The *Ceraneum* has its own *Rules of Operation* available on its website (*Ordinance no. 30 2011b*, § 1–2, 1; *Rules of Operation 2011*, § 1–11, 1–4). The main decision-making body of the Centre is its Directorship, whereas the Advisory Board, consisting of a group of widely recognised specialists in the

different research fields which are represented in the *Ceraneum*, watches over the high-quality scientific level of the research that is implemented there. Some of the Directorship's activities have to be formally consulted with members of the Advisory Board and the annual report on these activities needs to be endorsed by the wider Assembly of Members, which gathers at least once a semester (*Rules of Operation* 2011, § 4.2–4, 5.1, § 8, 1–2, 3). At the moment (January 2019) the *Ceraneum* consists of 125 researchers (plus two honorary members) from 12 countries and 33 research centres (Bąkiewicz 2017b; *Sprawozdanie* 2018, 1; 2019, 1–2; *Membership* 2019).

II.2. What does Byzantium need the *Ceraneum* for?

Let us begin with a view, recently expressed by Florin Curta, that Central and Eastern European countries form something of a gate into Byzantium (Curta 2015). The *Ceraneum* has recently been readying itself to embark on a joint Polish-Bulgarian-Latvian project exploring the cultural exchange between the north of Europe and the Balkans. Designed to investigate interaction between the areas mentioned above, the project may change our view of what northern Europe knew about Byzantium and how Byzantium influenced the north. Our notion of this issue has already been significantly modified by a number of scholars covering this problem in some of the works that have recently been published (see e.g. Shepard 2010; 2017).

Another advantage is that the *Ceraneum* can be considered to guarantee the perspective of an outsider, one unencumbered by various nationalistic and political issues of today which the Balkan region is known to be struggling with (Boia 2013; Daskalov 2018, 108–240, 368–490).

It is also a perspective different from the one existing in the West. It involves, for example, good and widely represented knowledge of Slavic languages. For obvious reasons scholars from Central Europe have a better command of these languages than their colleagues from the West (except for the linguists, of course). These linguistic skills, in turn, imply a better knowledge of Slavic scholarly literature and, consequently, a better understanding of the cultural specificity of Slavic areas (being a part of it, ultimately).

The Centre can also be given credit for popularising knowledge about the Byzantine world and especially about Byzantium's territories

in South-East Europe and Asia Minor, i.e. the core Byzantine territories in the Middle Ages (cf. Koder 2005, 19, 22, 30–32). The *Ceraneum* clearly helps the Latins to become better acquainted with the world that is rather foreign to them.

II.3. What does Poland need the *Ceraneum* for?

The *Ceraneum* continues the tradition of Byzantine studies in Poland. Not only does Polish Byzantinology have certain achievements to its credit, both in Poland and abroad, but it also has a lot of potential for future development.

The *Ceraneum* is the first and the biggest centre of this kind in Poland and scholars affiliated with it are viewed by other Polish experts on the history of Byzantium as forming the so-called “Łódź school of Byzantinology” (Frąk 2011), a well-functioning research team.

The Centre brings together scholars from different academic fields such as Paleo-Slavic studies, classical philology and Byzantine history, creating a unique intellectual milieu. Łódź Paleo-Slavists are involved in examining and editing a variety of Old Slavic sources to be found in Polish and foreign archives.

The Centre has also assembled a substantial collection of scholarly literature on Byzantium, the Balkans and the Mediterranean world in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (this includes academic journals, monographs, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and editions of primary sources). The *Ceraneum* has already hosted a number of foreign scholars and PhD students, most of whom spent several weeks in Łódź exploring the library collection and exchanging views with Polish scholars (cf. e.g. *Sprawozdanie* 2018, 5). There is also an increasing number of students and academics from around Poland who borrow books from our collection via the inter-library loan system or request scans of the articles and book chapters they are interested in.

Worthy of a mention here is also the fact that scholars employed in the Centre are not required to teach classes, nor handle all the paperwork that goes with it, focusing exclusively on research. This is very uncommon in Poland (at universities), where the vast majority of all scholars dealing with the issues in question, myself included, are required to share their time between their research work and their teaching obligations.

It is important to emphasise that Byzantine studies, due to their inherently international character, offer the possibility of internationalising

the achievements of Polish Humanities and of enhancing their prestige in the world. This goal is more difficult to achieve by scholars dealing with local or national history.

Another point is that such institutions as ours, by providing scholars with an opportunity to exchange views and by building bridges between cultures, seem to foster friendly international relations. One of the *Ceraneum's* members has recently been decorated by the Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Bulgaria for his contribution to the promotion of Bulgarian culture (*Sprawozdanie* 2018, 3). The core members and employees of the Centre often receive various prizes, scholarships and awards, both from university and state authorities (see e.g. *Sprawozdanie* 2017, 3–4; 2018, 3–4; 2019, 4–5).

Our publications, especially those in Polish and intended for the Polish readership, are designed to help Polish scholars interested in European history, including the history of Poland, gain a better understanding of the historical significance of Byzantine Empire. Our mission is to make these scholars realise that it is no longer possible to consider Polish history, or the history of the broadly understood Latin world, in isolation from the Byzantine Empire, which, through its interactions with the western world, played a very important role in laying the foundations of today's Europe.

The position held by Łódź among other Polish scholarly institutions called upon to study the history of Byzantium is also affected by the following:

- The *Ceraneum's* current Director serves as President of the Byzantine Commission of the Polish Historical Society in Warsaw, which is a part of the Association International des Études Byzantines (AIEB) (*Sprawozdanie* 2016, 1);
- Scholars from Łódź are responsible for preparing Polish records for Byzantine bibliography. The bibliography is published on the pages of the leading historical journal devoted to the history of Byzantium, that is “Byzantinische Zeitschrift”, published in Munich, Germany; in a sense, the scholars from Łódź can be considered to represent Polish Byzantinology in this area.

Łódź is clearly the main centre of Byzantine studies in Poland. It has a well-stocked library (open Monday to Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; room no. 319 on the 3rd floor of the Central Library of Łódź University), which possesses circa 7,400 volumes concerning its

research field and still increases through new acquisitions, scholarly donations, replacement of the volumes concerning Mediterranean topics from the Central University Library to the *Ceraneum* and international cooperation, i.e. library exchange with 8 countries at the moment (Frąk 2011, 15; *Sprawozdanie* 2012, 2; 2018, 2; 2019, 2–3). As such, the Centre stands a real chance of bringing together Polish scholars dealing with Byzantium and the Slavic Orthodox world.

The Centre conducts a regular exchange of publications with the following institutions (*Sprawozdanie* 2017, 2):

- Bibliothèque de Lettres, École normale supérieure – Paris (France);
- Centar za Crkvene Studije – Niš (Serbia);
- Jaffet Library, American University of Beirut (Lebanon);
- Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII – Bologna (Italy);
- Prof. Ivan Dujčev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies – Sofia (Bulgaria);
- Medieval Academy of America – Cambridge (USA);
- National Institute of Archaeology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – Sofia (Bulgaria);
- National Institute of Archaeology with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – Shumen branch (Bulgaria);
- Pontifical Oriental Institute – Rome (Italy);
- Slovanský ústav Akademie věd ČR, v. v. i. and Euroslavica – Prague (Czech Republic);
- St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tărnovo, Faculty of History (Bulgaria);
- Universidade de Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Clássicos (Portugal).

II.4. The *Ceraneum's* research areas

The *Ceraneum* is involved in doing research into the following issues (I confine myself here to those researchers who are either employed in the Centre or who actually shape the Centre's activity):

- Dietetics, pharmacology, cuisine and medicine, both ancient and Byzantine, in the period from the 1st to the 7th c. AD;
- Pseudo-canonical Old Slavic literature from the 9th to the 18th c.;
- Dualistic heresies in Byzantium and in the *Slavia Orthodoxa* community;
- Liturgical issues in Byzantium and in the Balkans;
- Adaptation and reception of Byzantine literature by the Orthodox Slavs in the period from the 9th to the 18th c.;

- Old Slavic grammar and lexis in the period from the 9th to the 18th c.;
- Old Slavic literature in the period from the 9th to the 18th c.;
- Folk culture of the Balkan Slavs in the above-mentioned period;
- Byzantine-Rus' relations from the 9th to the 15th c.;
- State-Church relations in Early Byzantium, 4th–6th c.;
- Byzantine-Arab relations, 6th–9th c.;
- The history of Byzantine administration and Byzantine cities in the period from the 4th to the 7th c.;
- Byzantine empresses in the period from the 4th to the 10th c.;
- Byzantine-Latin relations in the period from the 6th to the 11th c.;
- Byzantine-Slavic, especially Bulgarian, relations;
- A history of medieval Bulgaria;
- Byzantine literature (focusing on historiography and rhetoric);
- Power ideology, education and social structure in the 4th–10th c.;
- A history of Constantinople and usurpations during the Early Byzantine period, 4th–7th c.;
- Bulgarian monasticism, 12th–14th c.;
- Byzantine geopolitics and historical geography;
- Byzantine warfare during the period from the 6th to the 11th c.

As can be seen from the above, scholars from the *Ceraneum* explore various research fields relating to different aspects of Byzantine civilisation and the Slavic world. In this regard, the *Ceraneum* is not different from similar centres functioning outside of Poland. In addition to particular topics studied independently by various scholars, there are four research teams at the Centre. The teams cover the following research areas: Paleo-Slavic studies, Byzantine medicine and Byzantine cuisine, Byzantine-Arab relations and the history of medieval Bulgaria. These research teams seem to set the Centre apart from other scholarly institutions of this kind. They did not emerge as a result of some pre-conceived plan. Their formation stemmed naturally from scholarly interests shared by different academics who teamed up to study particular issues together and to collectively apply for research grants. Actually, the Centre remains open to different research paths to be followed in studying different aspects of the Mediterranean world and its cultural influence across other areas. We are interested in establishing collaboration with scholars representing different research fields and dealing with the above-mentioned geographical areas, including particularly the Roman and Byzantine Empires in

the period from the first to the fifteenth centuries and the Orthodox Slavic world in the period from the ninth to the eighteenth centuries. We wish to bring together both Polish and foreign scholars who, while representing different scholarly disciplines and using different research methods, will work together on various topics, significantly deepening our knowledge of the world of Byzantium. Our goal is to establish permanent cooperation with the best experts on the history of Byzantium and Slavic issues in the world. We aim to create a dynamic institution housing a well-stocked library and based on reliable long-term funding.

In December 2015 the *Ceraneum* was invited to become one of the founding members of the “*Pax Byzantino-Slava*” International Research Network, which currently brings together 22 research centres and universities from Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Switzerland and Italy. The main goal of the Network is to initiate, coordinate, undertake and support joint research activities in the domain of Byzantine-Slavic relations, and also in the broader domain of Medieval studies. Earlier, in 2013, the Centre had also signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and a similar agreement with the Centre for Medieval Studies at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tŕrnovo is being prepared at the moment (*Convention* 2015. Art. 1–17, 1–8; *Sprawozdanie* 2014, 2; 2016, 5).

In 2017 and 2018, based on the decision of the National Research Centre (Poland) and the Max Planck Society (Germany), the *Ceraneum* found itself in an elite group of Polish scientific units, in which the so-called Dioscuri Centres of Scientific Excellence can be created, to promote outstanding researchers who want to conduct their research in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (*Sprawozdanie* 2018, 4; 2019, 4; Dawczyk 2018).

II.5. The financing of the *Ceraneum*

For the publication of the journal, a monograph series or organising conferences (the Centre has already organised or co-organised 13 national and international conferences, 10 sections during various scientific meetings, and took patronage over 2 scientific meetings – *Sprawozdanie* 2013, 6; 2014, 6–7; 2015, 5; 2016, 5; 2017, 5; 2018, 5; 2019, 6, 7; Hołasek 2015; Dawczyk 2018), as well as for its operations, the Centre relies on the funds granted by the Rector of the Łódź University, the Dean of the Faculty of Philology, the Dean of the Faculty

of Philosophy and History, the Head of the Chair of Slavic Philology, and the Head of the Chair of Byzantine History. Sometimes it is also co-financed by the Library of the University of Łódź, the Łódź Municipal Office or the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (*Rules of Operation* 2011, § 11, 4; *Sprawozdanie* 2012, 3; 2013, 5; 2014, 3–4; 2016, 3; 2017, 3; 2018, 3; 2019, 2, 4; Wolski 2013, 45; Dawczyk 2018).

The purchase of scholarly books requested by the Centre is financed by the Library of the University of Łódź and, in part, by the Library of the Institute of History of the University of Łódź. It is also, and in fact, predominantly financed from funds allocated specifically for the implementation of specific scholarly projects (*Sprawozdanie* 2015, 2; 2016, 1–2; 2017, 3; 2019, 2).

A variety of national research grants (some of them in cooperation with foreign researchers) were in the past or are being now implemented at the *Ceraneum* (below is a selection of them; for more details see *Projects* 2019):

- Reception of the Literary Output and Folk Culture of the Slavia Orthodoxa Circle in Poland – History and Bibliography of the Translatory Production (2013–2018, Sonata Bis 1, HS – National Research Centre);
- The Bulgarian state between 927 and 969. The epoch of Tsar Peter I (2015–2018; Harmonia – National Research Centre);
- Financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education for editing an English language version of the “*Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe*” (2017–2018);
- Ancient and Byzantine cosmetology. Myrrh and frankincense in beauty products (1st–7th c. AD) (2018; Miniatura 1, HS – National Research Centre);
- The Novgorod First Chronicle – Polish Translation and Scientific Account of the Oldest Chronicle of Novgorod the Great (2017–2019; National Programme for the Development of Humanities, “Universalia”2.2);
- Mohammad and the rise of Islam – stereotypes, knowledge and imagination in the Byzantine-Rus’ cultural circle (2017–2020; Opus – National Research Centre);
- Dualist heresies in the history of South-East Europe during the period of 9th–15th c. (2017–2020; Harmonia – National Research Centre).

So far, the *Ceraneum* has received PLN 2,996,360, which equals *circa* EUR 697,250, through these research and editorial projects (*Sprawozdanie* 2012, 2–3; 2013, 3; 2014, 3; 2015, 2–3; 2016, 2–3; 2017, 2–3; 2018, 2–3; 2019, 3, 4).

The salaries that the *Ceraneum*'s employees are paid come from the University's central budget and partly from the research grants.

We are open to different forms of financing, both foreign and domestic.

II.6. Public and didactic activity

II.6.1. Our public activity includes:

- Open lectures devoted to Byzantine cuisine combined with period meals tasting sessions (Brzozowska 2013, 36; *Sprawozdanie* 2013, 6; 2014, 6);
- Open lectures delivered by distinguished Polish experts on the history of Byzantium and organised as part of the celebrations of events important to the Centre, such as the opening of the Centre or the First Convention of the Centre's International Advisory Board (2011 and 2012) (Czarnek 2011, 27; Wolski 2012, 13–14);
- Exhibitions organised in the hall of the Library of the University of Łódź: an exhibition of the publications and personal stationary of Prof. Waldemar Ceran (Brzozowska 2012, 42; *Sprawozdanie* 2012, 4); an exhibition of scholarly publications by Byzantine and Paleo-Slavic specialists from Łódź, organised in connection with the first convention of the Centre's International Advisory Board (Brzozowska 2012, 41, 42); an exhibition organised to celebrate the completion of a research grant and entitled "The old Byzantine capital in photography"; Bulgarian culture as seen through Viktoria Marinov's camera lenses (Jagusiak 2016); an exhibition organised in Warsaw (in the building of the Bulgarian Institute of Culture of the Bulgarian Embassy in Warsaw – BIK) – "The Church in Tsar Samuel's Bulgaria: Roots and Heritage" (Exhibition 2019);
- Presentations of books (Brzozowska 2012, 41–42), for example: *The Bulgarian Tsardom. Politics-Society-Economy-Culture, 866–971* (in Polish – Leszka and Marinow 2015), a book presented at BIK (*Sprawozdanie* 2016, 6);
- Articles and interviews devoted to the Centre, regularly published on the pages of the official University journal, the "Chronicle" (Czarnek

- 2011; 2014; Brzozowska 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2013; Kacprzyk 2011; Wolski 2012; 2013; Hołasek 2015; Jagusiak 2016; Bąkowicz 2017a; 2017b; Dawczyk 2018);
- Open meetings devoted to the Centre’s official opening and to the Centre’s fifth anniversary, organised in the Library of the University of Łódź and covered by the local or national press, local Radio and TV stations (Frąk 2011, 15; *Sprawozdanie* 2012, 1; *Uniwersytet Łódzki* 2016; *Sprawozdanie* 2017, 1; 2018, 1; 2019, 2; Puculek 2017);
 - Open lectures organised for both Polish and foreign scholars (55 so far) (*Sprawozdanie* 2012, 4; 2013, 7; 2014, 8; 2015, 5–6; 2016, 5–6; 2017, 6–7; 2018, 6; 2019, 8; *Open lectures* 2019);
 - A Facebook page that we run to inform the public of the Centre’s achievements and of all the events we organise, including scholarly conferences and open lectures (Facebook 2019);
 - Unfortunately, for the time being, except for open lectures we are not involved in any large-scale popularisation projects. However, we consider this kind of activity, which is specified in the Centre’s status, to be most desirable.

II.6.2. Didactic activity:

- Between 2012 and 2014 some of the *Ceraneum*’s members and the Centre itself (as an institution) took part in two international didactic projects (Wolski 2013; *Sprawozdanie* 2013, 4; 2014, 5; 2015, 3–4):
- “Standards of Everyday Life in the Middle Ages and in Modern Times” – implemented in cooperation with St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tărnovo (in charge of the programme), St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University (both from Bulgaria), Ovidius University, Constanța (Romania), Uludağ University, Bursa, University of Ankara (both from Turkey), Université Paris 13 (France), sponsored by the LLP-Erasmus Intensive Programme (IP) of the European Union;
 - “Syncretic Societies: Bridging Traditions and Modernity? The Balkan Summer School of Religion and Public Life” – project implemented by a consortium consisting of “Paisii Hilendarski” Plovdiv University (Bulgaria), University of Eastern Finland (Finland), Istanbul Bilgi University (Turkey), University of Bucharest (Romania), University of Milan (Italy), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).

The Centre implements an intensive exchange of academic staff (STA) within the Erasmus+ programme, and currently has 11 agreements

with different scientific and teaching institutions from various European countries (*Sprawozdanie* 2013, 6; 2014, 7; 2015, 5; 2016, 5; 2017, 6; 2018, 5; 2019, 7–8):

- Charles University (Cz PRAHA07) – Czech Republic;
- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BG SOFIA30) – Bulgaria;
- St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tărnovo (BG VELIKO01) – Bulgaria;
- “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv (BG PLOVDIV04) – Bulgaria;
- Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (D FREIBUR01) – Germany;
- University of Primorska (SI KOPER0) – Slovenia;
- University of Ljubljana (SI LJUBLJA01) – Slovenia;
- Suleyman Demirel University (TR ISPARTA01) – Turkey;
- Università Degli Studi di Firenze (I FIRENZE01) – Italy;
- Università Degli Studi di Napoli ‘l’Orientale’ (I NAPOLI02) – Italy;
- Università Della Calabria (I COSENZA01) – Italy.

Between 2013 and 2016 a Student Research Section operated in the *Ceraneum*, which brought together students from different university courses interested in broadly understood Mediterranean issues (*Sprawozdanie* 2014, 1; 2015, 1; 2016, 6; 2017, 7).

II.7. The *Ceraneum* and archaeology

Some of the *Ceraneum*’s members are active archaeologists but none of them are actively involved in the Centre’s development (see the members list in *Membership* 2019). However, we remain open to cooperation with specialists in this field.

The *Ceraneum* works closely with archaeological museums in Bulgaria. Associated with the museums are archaeologists from Varna, Sofia and Shumen. For the time being, however, our cooperation consists only in exchange of scholarly literature.

We have students visiting us under the Erasmus+ programme. These students, who are mainly from Bulgaria, also include representatives of archaeology.

As I mentioned above, at the moment we are planning to sign a cooperation agreement with the Centre for Medieval Studies of the St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tărnovo. There are archaeologists co-operating with this unit.

In 2015 an idea emerged of a joint project on everyday life to be carried out by the *Ceraneum* and the Historical Museum in Varna (which

is, in fact, archaeological). For the time being, the project is still waiting to be put into action, but it shows the Centre's openness to cooperation with archaeologists.

The Centre's members maintain collaborative relationships with the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

II.8. The Ceraneum and academic cooperation – research assistance and publishing activity

Everyone who wants to cooperate with the Centre is welcome. We offer: joint research projects, contacts within academia, access to library and handling of research grants. First of all, we invite authors to publish papers on archaeology in the “*Studia Ceranea. Journal of the Waldemar Ceran Research Centre for the History and Culture of the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe*” (Journal's Website 2019; Wolski 2012, 13; Petrov 2016; Jagusiak 2016; Sophoulis 2016, 435, fn. 117), the official periodical of the Centre, following a peer-review process, which is indexed in the following national and international reference bases (*Sprawozdanie* 2019, 6; *Databases* 2019):

- Web of Science™ Core Collection (Emerging Sources Citation Index) – USA;
- EBSCOhost research databases – USA;
- Slavic Humanities Index – Canada;
- European Reference Index for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS) – Norway;
- Central and Eastern European Online Library (CEEOL) – Germany;
- Bibliographic Database of Polish Academic Journals from Humanities and Humanistic Social Studies (BazHum) – Poland;
- Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH) – Poland;
- Index Copernicus Journals Master List (IC) – Poland;
- Polish Scholarly Bibliography and POL-Index (PBN) – Poland;
- University of Łódź Repository – Poland;
- Google Scholar Bibliographic Database – USA;
- Scientific Communication Portal (INFONA) – Poland;
- Polish Scientific and Professional Electronic Journals (ARIANTA) – Poland;

- Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) – Germany;
- Information Matrix for the Analysis of Journals (MIAR) – Spain;
- Publishers International Linking Association Inc. (Crossref) – USA;
- Network of Library Content and Services (WorldCat) – USA;
- Biblioteka Nauki – Centrum Otwartej Nauki (CeON) – Poland;
- Directory of Open Access scholarly Resources (ROAD) – ISSN International Centre and Unesco;
- Public Knowledge Project (PKP Index) – Canada;
- UlrichsWeb – USA.

So far (since 2011), the Centre has published 8 volumes of the journal. In 2015 we started the *Ceraneum*'s own monographic series, predominantly devoted to the edition and translation of the sources – the “Series Ceranea” (*Series' Website* 2019a; *Sprawozdanie* 2016, 4; Jagusiak 2016). On the other hand, the whole group of Łódź University's Byzantinists and Paleo-Slavists have so far published several dozen monographs and collected studies in various Polish and foreign publishing houses, among others in the “Byzantina Lodziensia”, the series of the Chair of the Byzantine History at Łódź University (cf. *Series' Website* 2019b; Sophoulis 2016, 432–435). They concern different research topics in the field of broadly understood Byzantine world, including the so-called community of the *Slavia Orthodoxa*.

III. Perspectives and aims

As we can see from the above, the *Ceraneum* Centre integrates the activities of different academic units conducting research on a wide scope of issues related to history, culture and traditions of the countries of the Mediterranean basin and South-East Europe.

Its activities include in particular conducting multidisciplinary research in the fields concerning the Mediterranean between the 1st and the 18th c. and seek to extend the multidisciplinary cooperation at the University, as well as on national and international level, by organising scholarly meetings, integrating the particular units of the University of Łódź involved in the implementation of the tasks included in the *Ceraneum* Centre's goals, as well as disseminating and popularising the research results of the Centre's staff and members in the form of publications (*Rules of Operation* 2011, § 3, 1; Kacprzyk 2011, 43; Frąk 2011, 15). In connection with these activities, our future objectives include

getting and implementing new research and educational projects, both national and international (grants from the European Union, for example); increasing the number of the *Ceraneum* staff; finding reliable financing for the “*Studia Ceranea*” and “*Series Ceranea*”; and further expansion in the area of international cooperation with specialists in different areas and branches of research. We would like to organise more international conferences (in fact, in 2019, we are going to launch a new annual project in this area, called “*Colloquia Ceranea*”, gathering scholars from various countries), run specialised academic courses for PhD students, in this way expanding the range of courses offered by the University of Łódź and, of course, increase the book collection and access to electronic libraries and bases, necessary for sensible and fruitful research work.

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