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From the Editors

The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, although he was a professed postmodernist, did not hesitate to call the “Mediterranean myth” a great meta-narrative of European culture. For centuries, the legacy of Greco-Roman antiquity built a coherent axiological and esthetic system, elaborated with new content—especially Christian ethics—but also, for example, with the influences of the multicultural Levantine orient. The coherent, though non-uniform “myth” returned under many guises, with the rhythms of subsequent historical epochs. Is it relevant today and if so how? In the rapidly globalizing contemporary world, is the symbolically understood Mediterranean Sea still a point of reference? Finally—recalling the title of this issue—should we perceive it as a cultural “center of the world” or only as a periphery?

We are delighted to bring you a selection of texts by researchers of various aspects of the Mediterranean heritage: both very detailed and more general, cross-sectional studies. The volume opens with an article by Józef Cezary Kałużny from the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, which explores the very interesting topic of the transformation and adaptation of some ancient iconography to new, Christian usage. Wojciech Mruk from the Jagiellonian University takes us to the world of medieval pilgrims in Acre, the city of crusaders and the capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, while Nicholas Coureas from the Cyprus Research Center in Nicosia introduces us into the lives of former Cypriot merchants, reconstructed through their wills. Cyprus, this time seen through the eyes of Russian pilgrims, also returns in a panoramic study by Svetlana V. Bliznyuk, a researcher at the Lomonosov Moscow State University in Moscow. In turn, Christopher David Schabel from the University of Cyprus writes about the problems of the Kingdom of Armenia in the fourteenth century. The intriguing theme of Mediterranean cuisine, viewed from a historical and cultural angle, is raised by Janusz Smolucha from the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. Hieronim Kaczmarek from the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences presents a cross-section of the current state of research on the history

of Polish travel to the Middle East, while Bożena Prochwicz-Studnicka (Jesuit University Ignatianum) offers a historical and cultural analysis of medieval Arabic autobiographies. Next comes Fr. Szymon Tracz's analysis (University of JP II) of Italian inspirations in the painting decoration of the cathedral in Frombork, followed by studies by three Italian scholars and researchers: Alessandro Boccolini from Università degli Studi Della Tuscia in Viterbo addresses the complicated issues of papal diplomatic efforts in the era of the Holy League (with an interesting theme of John III Sobieski's victory in Vienna), Alberto Castaldini (from Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania) follows the routes of George Wheler's 17th-century journey to the Levant, and Olga Piccolo (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)—much closer to our present day—discusses the “Italian” stylistic elements in Olga Boznańska's portrait paintings. The title section of the issue closes with Turkological readings by scholars from the Jagiellonian University: Sylwia Filipowska on *Balıkçısı Halicarnassus* and Grażyna Zajac on Mediterranean motifs in Turkish literature.

The permanent sections of *Perspectives on Culture* include single, but valuable texts. The Cross Cultural Management section includes a very interesting article about so-called serious games and board games in the context of cultural change, written by three authors: Jakub Lickiewicz and Marta Makara-Studzińska from the Department of Health Psychology of the Faculty of Health Science at the Jagiellonian University Medical College and Patricia Paulsen Hughes from the College of Education and Human Sciences at Oklahoma State University—Stillwater. The issue ends with a text by Stanisław Sroka (Jesuit University Ignatianum) which discusses the contribution of the Polonized French Teisseyre family to Polish culture.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this selection of articles.

Leszek Zinkow – his research interests include comparative culture studies, especially the reception of the heritage of the ancient Middle East (mainly Egypt and its historical, mythological narratives and symbolism). Also deals with travel accounts to oriental destinations (editions of texts), the history of museums and collecting, in addition to the history of contemporary culture, the history and practice of the media, the social history of science, transfers, and cultural innovation. He also works at the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. Member of the International Association of Egyptologists (Mainz), Polish Society of Cultural Studies and the Commission of Classical Philology at the Polish Academy of Sciences (Krakow). Deputy editor-in-chief of the “*Perspektywy Kultury*” magazine (editor-in-chief in the years 2013–2016).