

# Research Project for the Preservation of the Cultural and Historical Heritage

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**Abstract.** The exceptional contribution of Felix Kanitz to Bulgarian scientific and cultural development is an occasion to present to Bulgarian and European public his artistic and documentary heritage, to turn again our attention to the personality and the significant achievements of the great explorer of the Balkans in the 60s and 70s of the nineteenth century. Kanitz's imagery and literary heritage belong to the most valuable elements of our material and spiritual culture. In the prospect of association of our society to the European community Kanitz's works should be understandably promoted in the scientific space so as to point out Felix Kanitz's cultural contributions to Bulgaria and to better identify his relationship with both the national Bulgarian identity and the Balkans and European nations.

The artistic works and literary heritage of F. Kanitz which have been preserved until today are valuable elements of the common European material and spiritual culture. The time has come for them to be presented correctly in the scientific world and through the new communication technologies to become available for the public. The Scientific Archive and the Central Library of BAS have a mutual project for specifying and broadening the knowledge about the life and work of Kanitz, and for digitalizing and publishing pages of his private archives. This is a responsible researchers' task which has an important significance for affiliating the Bulgarian culture into European cultural environment.

**Keywords:** Digitization, Felix Kanitz, Drawings

## 1 Introduction

Nowadays the cultural heritage which is kept in the Scientific Archives of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (SA-BAS) perfectly corresponds to the international priorities of the European science and culture. There is a clear tendency in Europe for making its monuments available in digital forms. Several important programmes of the European Union operate in this respect. They are oriented towards establishing a united European digital library and archive with a particular subdivision – a digital library and archive with scientific contents.

The resources of the modern technology presuppose an initiative development in order to unite the efforts and activities for the collaboration in digitalization of the most important pieces of cultural and historical heritage. In a number of cases they have

received the support of scientific projects for the creation of an open communication environment with a purpose of promoting the cultural values of the community. This is opportunity for their use as objects of national researches, material source in the educational process, exhibitions, and editorial initiatives, when participating in national and international forums. The efforts of many cultural and educational institutions are aimed at achieving actual results, more specifically – growth and recognition of virtual repository of electronic records of cultural artifacts from our past.

## **2 Theme of the Project**

This report presents work on a research project, which was won by the Scientific archive of BAS and approved by the National Science Fund. The theme of the project is the elaboration of "Artistic-documentary album of works by Felix Kanitz".

The project is a good opportunity for Bulgaria to resurrect one valuable memory and to appreciate the personality and significant work of the famous Hungarian researcher and traveler Felix Philipp Kanitz.

## **3 Project Description**

### **3.1 Historiographic Review**

The specific survey of the achievements in the framework of this theme shows that the Bulgarian historiography owes the famous Hungarian-Austrian scientist Felix Philipp Kanitz a lot. It is only natural that the Bulgarian researches are deeply interested in revealing what the personality and the merits of this great friend of Bulgaria are.

The first biographer of Felix Kanitz was the Hungarian Geza Feher (Feher, 1936). In 1936 he published the book *Felix Philipp Kanitz – Life, Journeys and Scientific Work*. In it the author represents the observations and research of Kanitz about the Bulgarian style of life at that time and his immense contribution to the exploration of those territories in geographical, archeological and ethnographical aspect. Geza Feher outlined the participation of Kanitz in the Bulgarian public life and in the struggles of the Bulgarians for religious independency and strive for freedom. Geza's purpose was to acquaint the Bulgarians with what Kanitz thought about their characteristics as a nation. But he also added his own personal experience and impressions and suggested his attitude to the Bulgarian lifestyle. However not all the researchers could accept Geza's point of view.

A book called *Bulgaria in the Images of F. Kanitz* by Stoyan Romanski was published in 1939. Academician Romanski tried to see the Bulgarian territories, towns, fortresses, ruins and the ordinary people through the eyes of Felix Kanitz while traveling across Bulgaria. His story was illustrated by numerous quotations and explanations from the book of F. Kanitz *The Danube Bulgaria and the Balkan Mountain*. This book supplied new data about Kanitz. To illustrate his book Romanski used some of the famous engravings, drawings and sketches of Kanitz which had been published in different newspapers and magazines while he had been alive. This is a book of true merits -

the greatest of which is that it was the first big Bulgarian research on the works of Kanitz. It is a pity that it was the last of its kind.

In 1981 Lazar Lakov (Lakov, 1981) published the book *Felix Kanitz and His Original Map of the Danube Bulgaria and the Balkan Mountain*. He represented Kanitz as a cartographer and analysed the essence and the significance of this important map not only to Bulgaria but to Europe.

In scientific reports on various occasions a lot of materials about Felix Kanitz have been published throughout the years (Zlatarski, 1904) (Mavrodinov, 1942) (Dinekov, 1942) (Paskaleva, 1995). But none of them pretended to be a detailed research on the life, work and merits of this scientist.

Therefore the following conclusion imposes itself: the moment has come for the publishing in a modern form and exhibiting the artistic heritage of Kanitz and to remind the Bulgarians of his importance at the same time. Such an issue would play a significant part in integrating the Bulgarian culture into the European environment since the image of Bulgaria depicted by Kanitz with the help of the words and the pen even now – as it was more than a century ago – acquaints the Europeans with our material and spiritual culture, our geographic peculiarities, natural resources and the people. There has hardly ever been another foreigner who could feel the spirit of the Bulgarians and their longstanding traditions so well. Felix Kanitz has the undisputable right to be called a connoisseur of Bulgaria and supporter of the Bulgarian interests in Europe.

### **3.2 Actuality of Scientific Problem**

The actuality of the scientific problems of the Project is determined by several circumstances:

- By clarifying and widening the knowledge about the life and work of Felix Kanitz and publishing a great part of his sketches, drawings and water-colours, a lot of materials by him and about him will become available to the scientists. The lack of detailed research on his work is a serious obstacle which the prospective issue will help overcome and will also serve as a basis for new research and analyses.
- Introducing into scientific circulation of the artistic-documentary heritage of Kanitz will make it possible to see from a new perspective the Bulgarian and the European dimensions of his work and his links with the national identity of the Bulgarian as well as the Balkan and the European nations.
- The proposed scientific problems are also actual because of the fact that such an album will become a turning point for developing of many scientific research issues. This makes the album particularly important for the following scientific fields: history, history of art, geography, geology, archeology, etc.

### **3.3 Objectives and Scientific Tasks of the Project**

The objectives of the proposed project fully coincide with the goals and tasks of the Scientific Archives of BAS, i.e.: preserving and popularizing of the Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage.

The main objective of the Project is to make available new knowledge concerning the whole literary and artistic work of Felix Kanitz who has contributed a lot to the European and particularly the Balkan culture, as well as to popularize his artistic and documental heritage. This will be conducted through the following:

- Preparation and publishing of an artistic album of his sketches, drawings, water-colours, engravings, photographs, maps, etc.
- Publishing of a contemporary biographical article on the basis of a newly traced documents in Bulgarian and foreign archives.
- Representing and popularizing of the finished product.
- Making the album in a digital form and presenting it on the Internet.

Studying and popularizing the work of Felix Kanitz appear to be an important contribution to the defining of the Bulgarian national identity and its formation in the modern times. The artistic imagery and the literary heritage of Kanitz belong to the most precious elements of the Bulgarian cultural values. In the perspective of making the Bulgarian society part of the European world these values have to be popularized and made available so that they are fairly and truly presented to the European scientific community as well as to the European public – a public that relies on knowledge and education. This is where the scientific objectives and tasks of the project result from.

The scientific tasks, whose completion will lead to achieving the intended objectives, are as follows:

- Deliberate tracing of new sources in Bulgarian and foreign archives and libraries which contain data about the life and work of Felix Kanitz.
- Investigating the literary heritage of Kanitz as an important part of the resources containing information about his activity.
- Tracing of unknown artistic materials published by Kanitz in foreign newspapers and journals.
- Among the other tasks the researchers in the team commit themselves to the storage and publicizing of the preserved artistic-documentary heritage of Kanitz as well as of the newly acquired resources.

All documents will be scanned to build a digital repository. This will facilitate access to the materials.

### **3.4 Methodology**

For working out of a data base by the Central Library of BAS: adapting of the programme BASLIB. It is performed on Borland C++ Builder 6 and maintains work with various data base (MS Access, Interbase, MS SQL, etc.). BASLIB operates in Windows XP environment using ODBC.

BASLIB maintains the following functions:

- assigning a language (Cyrillic, Latin, Greek or other);
- assigning a font (name, size, language, type);

- controlling the status of the data base;
- configuring of the working screen – choice of fields to be displayed or edited according to the type of the recording, arranging of the fields, labelling of the fields and the width of the labels;
- configuring of the lists Catalogue and History – choice of columns to be displayed, signs of the columns;
- generating of check-ups and references, etc.

The generator of the check-ups allows to:

- form primary and final lines up to 3 levels;
- arranging by one or more fields (the field can be assigned);
- choose part of the recordings with assigning the conditions for the choice;
- the manner of editing the data: alignment, table or free, with or without transfer of more data in the field, longer fields (the whole or the first 127 symbols), etc.
- The files (photographs, documents, html pages) are organized in a Pool which is differently addressed/titled for the different users, at the same time the name of the file and the subfiles are stored and saved according to this Pool.

### **3.5 The Main Project Activities**

The main activities that will make the project team are:

- Preliminary research on the theme in archives, libraries and on the Internet.
- Discovering of new sources about the life and work of Felix Kanitz.
- Selection of the newly found documents and of the already used ones by the scientists.
- Expertise of the selected documents: time and place of issuing the document and clarifying of who its author was.
- Systematic arrangement and description.
- Cultural-historical research on the newly discovered archival images and materials concerning the theme.
- Annotations of the selected documents.
- Distribution according to the topics: discussions, opinions and suggestions.
- Analysis and interpretation of the research results.
- Making the materials digital: photocopying and scanning, processing of the scanned files, developing and maintaining of the Internet-based digital storage.

Publishing activity:

Preparation for printing/publishing of the artistic-documentary album: writing of an introduction to the issue and a biographical article about Felix Kanitz; preparation of the illustrating materials; editing and printing of the album.

Writing of articles: about the life and work of F. Kanitz and about his works of art; editing, proof reading and submitting for printing.

Organizational activities—organizing and performing presentations of the artistic-documentary album about F. Kanitz.

### 3.6 Project Partners

The Project will be done in co-operation among the Scientific Archives of BAS and the Central Library of BAS.

The Scientific Archives of BAS is the oldest and one of the richest archival storages in Bulgaria. They were founded on the basis of archival documents right after the establishment of the Bulgarian Learned/Literary Society in 1869 (called Bulgarian Academy of Sciences since 1911), which are in fact the nucleus of the first national history archives. Today they keep more than 500 personal and 160 institutional funds and collections of hundreds of archival documents and materials. There have been registered 22 collections of archival documents, musical notes, memoirs, stamps/seals, etc. 80 significant historical documents have been submitted here.

The Personal funds of documents which are stored in the Scientific Archives of BAS constitute their essential part and treasure. They contain materials for research in the fields of the Old-Bulgarian language and literature; linguistics and philology; history of art; Bulgarian history; natural history; philosophy; finance and economics; sociology and politics.

The rich documental basis of this oldest archival institution in Bulgaria offers the opportunity to enlarge scientific research and increase publishing activity. In the specialized journals and mass media the researchers of the Academy popularize the materials of its history as well as the life and work of famous Bulgarian and foreign scientists.

Over recent years there has been a strong tendency towards issuing thematic collections and catalogues on specific occasions, for acquainting the Bulgarian and European public with our cultural and historical heritage and the achievements of Bulgarian science. Exhibitions are organized to mark important anniversaries. We take part in projects in co-operation with similar Bulgarian and European institutions. This work contributes to enriching the documental archives and popularizes them.

In this respect it is very important that the Scientific Archives of BAS keep the personal archival documents of the famous traveler and scientist Felix Philipp Kanitz. This fact determines the leading part of the Scientific Archives in the mutual Project. It becomes more actual having in mind that it is the 190th anniversary of the birth of F. Kanitz. If realized the Project will reveal new documents and artistic sources as well as publish a special album of his works of art and produce of a holographic series of watercolours.

The Central Library of BAS is the oldest scientific library in Bulgaria. It was established in 1869 in Braila together with the Bulgarian Learned Society and it was in the form of a book collection of the Society. In 1879 it was moved to Sofia and in 1911 it was renamed and called Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The network of libraries of the Academy was started in 1948 by establishing the libraries of the Institutes of BAS.

The Central Library is a scientific library with departments in many fields. It has the national responsibility to develop and organize the Bulgarian library fund and to serve scientists and researchers by providing Bulgarian and foreign books.

The Central Library of BAS conducts scientific research, publishes and performs other activities in the areas of applied science.

## **4 Conclusion**

As a result of the project new knowledge will be acquired, summarized, made digital and published in a paper volume, which will have great cultural value for outlining the overall picture of the life, work and artistic heritage of Felix Kanitz. This will provide the possibility to survey the Bulgarian and European dimensions of that heritage as well as to develop future themes about outstanding historical figures. These results will be applied in various scientific fields: political and cultural history, history of art, geography, ethnology, etc. They will widen the opportunities for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research.

As a consequence of the Project an effective team will be formed of experienced scientists and young researchers who will establish longstanding working relations with one of the biggest owners of archival documents – the Scientific Archives of BAS – and with establishments working in the area of digitalization and creation of digital storage.

The work on the Project will be favourable for the activities of the partner-institutions because it will enlarge the perimeter of their scientific assignments. Through the digitalization of the documents the team will bring forward research on a number of issues which have been under development.

The digital Internet-based storage of the materials within the frame of the Project will constitute virtual archives and library and will build bridges in time, space and society.

The results acquired from the Project will be new knowledge about the life and work of Felix Kanitz and an important contribution to solving numerous issues concerning the significance of Kanitz and his place in the European culture and history.

Due to the publishing of the results from the Project in an album in Bulgarian and English they will be available not only to the Bulgarian but to the European scientists, too, particularly to the ones on the Balkans.

The digitalization of the discovered and published materials will make them available for quick usage in Bulgaria where the Scientific Archives will give the chance to researchers, teachers, graduates, students and all who are interested, to use them for scientific and educational purposes. Their digitalization will allow quick transfer and their introduction on the Internet - thus enlarging the applicability of the Project's results on an international scale.

The artistic works and literary heritage of F. Kanitz which have been preserved until today are valuable elements of the common European material and spiritual culture. The time has come for them to be presented correctly in the scientific world and through the new communication technologies to become available for the public. This is a responsible researchers' task which has an important significance for affiliating the Bulgarian culture into European cultural environment.

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