

*Marija S. Dokić**

Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade

CELESTIAL MECHANICS AND HARMONY: INTELLECTUAL CURRENTS WITHIN EUROPE FROM MILANKOVIĆ TO KOSTIĆ**

Abstract

This paper examines how the philosophical and scientific legacies of Milutin Milanković and Laza Kostić transcend national frameworks, establishing intellectual currents that affirm Serbia's place within the broader European tradition. Their works, centered on harmony, time, and the ethical pursuit of truth, function as subtle countercurrents within Europe's historical discourse. Through their engagement with ancient thought, they demonstrate that Serbian culture has contributed meaningfully to enduring ideas and that Serbian intellectuals have shaped the development of European philosophy and science. Before turning to their engagement with antiquity, it is essential to consider the metaphysical foundation that underlies their pursuit. This insight offers a philosophical threshold through which both Milanković and Kostić enter the realm of timeless ideas. Milanković's scientific vision was never confined to empirical observation alone. He understood science as a metaphysical journey, a pursuit of eternal laws and cosmic harmony. This view aligns seamlessly with Kostić's

* E-mail address: marija.dokic@ips.ac.rs; ORCID: 0009-0004-4159-9491.

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metaphysical principle, suggesting that both thinkers approached knowledge not as accumulation, but as illumination. Visionary thinkers often recognize the persistent resonance of antiquity. The aim of this study is to explore how Milanković and Kostić relate to that eternal force, one that propels their creativity and compels them to reflect ancient insights in their own distinct idioms. Whether in the history of science or the history of philosophy, their motivations unfold gradually, revealing the immortal phoenix of antiquity within their thought. That phoenix does not vanish; it merely transforms. Its name is inscribed in the layered metaphysics of classical philosophy, and its light continues to illuminate the path toward harmony, truth, and intellectual sovereignty.

Keywords: Milutin Milanković, Laza Kostić, European legacy, scientific heroism, intersection theory

THRESHOLDS OF THOUGHT: HARMONY AS ORIGIN

In examining the intellectual legacy of Milanković and Kostić, this paper employs a hermeneutic and comparative methodology, with attention to diachronic resonance and symbolic continuity. Their works are interpreted through a dual lens: the symbolic structure of ancient thought and the empirical formulations of contemporary science. Textual analysis is conducted on their seminal writings, with particular emphasis on their engagement with classical figures such as Plato, Heraclitus, and Democritus. This study also draws upon the conceptual framework of harmony and symmetry, not merely as aesthetic ideals but as metaphysical and epistemological principles guiding their intellectual trajectories. By juxtaposing their philosophical aspirations with their scientific contributions, we endeavor to elucidate how character – defined through spiritual and cognitive heroism – emerges as a fundamental aspect of their creative identity. Through this lens, the research uncovers the extent to which their orientation toward antiquity serves as both a source of inspiration and a medium for articulating timeless truths. For Milanković, antiquity serves as a kind of foundation – one might say, the engine of his progress and relentless creativity. In this study, we will further explore the key loci of ancient thought that inspired Milanković and how this inspiration occurred, as well as where we can discern traces

of that thought in Kostić's contemplations of the world, the cosmos, and reality itself.

At times, two minds can be connected by more than appearances reveal, more than circumstances permit to be seen, more than the promises of eternity disclose – at times, two minds are bound by an idea. Milanković and Kostić are bound by much more than first impressions suggest, and above all, they are united by a profound love for Plato and the torch of Platonic thought – a flame that has never ceased speaking, finding its echo in the words of great spirits and even greater character. In the works of Milanković and Kostić, inspired by Plato and Aristotle, the concept of harmony is prominently featured. Plato's ideas, akin to a serene river's surface or a polished mirror, reflect a contemplative gaze toward the metaphysical structure of reality. Harmony, as a consequence of ontological order in Platonic thought, becomes a guiding metaphor in their reflections and endeavors. Their understanding of the cosmos stems from a vision of the universe as a mirror of harmony itself. This perspective enabled them to respond effectively to the challenges of their scientific thought. Milanković proposed his Canon of Insolation, while Kostić introduced his Theory of Intersection and Fundamental Principle. Through abstract ideals, they recognized earthly principles, each striving to unify both through the guiding principle that reveals the ideational reality of the world.

In this manner, both Milanković and Kostić emerged as prominent figures in Serbian intellectual thought, placing harmony at the core of their perception of the world – as a fundamental element of creation and being. Other thinkers have likewise sought the underlying principle that shapes reality, that whispers the story of being, and through its continuation upon the edifice of existence, constructs a harmonious architecture of the world. Petrović asserts that Milanković never pursued mystery but refined his character along a narrow ethical path. He demonstrated that without a canonical understanding of balance, we cannot comprehend how the cosmos operates. The Canon, distinct and superior to law, implies reflection; within it, we perceive the imprint of the idea, while law entails mechanical repetition, devoid of visible ideation (Petrović 2020, 21).

The aspiration for harmony stems from the desire to discern Plato's ideal within the tangible world. Milanković fulfills this aspiration by gazing toward the heavens – toward celestial bodies and the heights of the spirit – overcoming the limitations of purely theoretical realization.

This elevates Milanković's name among those very stars. The fascination with Plato, evident in both Kostić and Milanković, transcends fleeting inspiration and persists as a confirmation of spiritual ascent and intellectual resolve. Their reality becomes a manifestation of the concept they aspire to embody. Kostić achieves this in his philosophical treatise; Milanković accomplishes the same through his scientific discipline of climate theory.

Plato, in this context, serves not merely as an initial spark of inspiration but as the enduring signature behind both men's works. He embodies the idea that defines them – and simultaneously, the principle of harmony they pursue. Rather than stating that Plato's philosophy is "at its purest essence" a philosophy of harmony – a phrase that conflates purity and essence – we may say: Plato's philosophy centrally orients itself around harmony as a metaphysical consequence of the order of ideas. In this perspective, the idea emerges as a guiding principle, shaping the spirit by selecting those it will lead toward enlightenment. The idea becomes the pursuit of traces of harmony – a harmony that persists as an absolute measure, intrinsically present in the immaterial realm and defining that realm through its reflection. This definition leads to realization and the imprinting of ideation upon the material world. Studying Plato psychologically molds the profiles of those who embark on the quest for harmony – and ultimately discover it. In Kostić, this harmony manifests through constant encounters with its antithesis and its reflection, symmetry, which leads to convergence. In Milanković, the gaze toward the sky is recognized in his Canon, founded upon harmonious and cosmic principles, and precisely accurate. Plato is their shared choice because both possessed the courage to pursue the unending thread connecting the universe to reality. Kostić approached it as a philosopher, while Milanković approached it as a scientist with a methodical desire to comprehend the foundations of reality – never abandoning the celestial gaze but nurturing it fully.

Without Plato, we could not refer to Kostić as we do today. Kostić writes that "the principle is neither a thing, nor a concept, nor a law, but that which makes all these possible, that which precedes everything, yet reflects itself in all" (Kostić 2015). And without Plato, perhaps Milanković would never have dared to peer through the binoculars of truth. Milanković's reverence for antiquity is evident in every sentence of his profound works. He writes: "Science is not merely a collection of facts, but a path toward understanding the eternal laws that govern the

cosmos. It is a journey through the kingdom of thought, where harmony and necessity reign” (Milanković 1950). Without his immeasurable contributions, it is now abundantly clear that we could not articulate today’s scientific advancements in the same manner. Milanković and Kostić exhibit a rare distinction of spirit through their fascination with antiquity – a fascination that served as a sacred emblem, enabling them to attain unsuspected spiritual heights. Their ascent was united through a Platonic ideal, which they upheld as the ultimate truth toward which they incessantly strove.

For Kostić, the choice is unequivocal, his distant Platonic ideal, residing at the precipice of Olympus, is harmony. The task of harmony is to define and guide symmetry in its unfolding. Harmony elevates symmetry but also directs it through a distinctive mode of realization known as intersection. This very harmony – this echo of harmony – is what Milanković cultivates in his Canon. Without harmony, he would not have discerned the concealed order of celestial phenomena, their intricate balance, and the embedded cosmic rhythm. Cosmic truths thus become philosophical truths, and philosophical truths illuminate cosmic order. Both thinkers are virtuosos of harmony, announcing, with resounding steps, its return and ascension.

But how did this concept become their cosmic inspiration? Harmony revealed its presence through the courage it instilled in their spirits, shaping their thoughts with fearless clarity. Let us now highlight a few elements that reveal antiquity within their works: Kostić embodies antiquity through his engagement with ancient philosophical thought. In contrast, Milanković embodies antiquity’s harmony through his disciplined gaze toward the stars, revealing hidden meanings within them. Even the act of observing the stars – gazing into the cosmic vastness with the courage to confront the universe’s boundless mirror – evokes Plato. Platonic ideas are reflections of the movements of these very planets – a dance suspended in infinity, a moment held still in eternity.

Observing the planets and cultivating a love for astronomy is, in some measure, a gesture of discipleship toward the Alexandrian School – a school Milanković deeply esteemed. He expressed his admiration for it with fervor, referring to it as the Olympus of the scientific gods:

“A peculiar city it was! When Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire, he laid its foundations – one hundred and twenty-three years prior – on the Egyptian coast between the sea and Lake Mareotis.

Named after him, it became within a century the most beautiful city and the intellectual hub of the ancient world. The lighthouse we observe, projecting its rays far into the sea's expanse, serves as a worthy emblem of this renowned city" (Milanković 2020, 71). He then proceeds to say:

"I deliberately commenced with three names: Alexander, Homer, and Aristotle. In this chord that resonates through centuries, I interwove Homer as the symbol of Greek genius, for the other two were the true founders of Alexandrian culture – more marked by science than poetry" (Milanković 2020, 80).

The cosmos is underpinned by laws and principles of harmony, and all planets traverse a harmoniously established equilibrium. Milanković presents his evidence, thereby uniting Plato's philosophical orientation – which he held in high regard – with irrefutable calculations. In contrast, Kostić pursued the path of intuition, relying on the vividness of the idea itself to substantiate and validate its inherent logic. The concept emerged as a pressing need – to uncover answers and escape the intricate labyrinth. For Kostić, Ariadne's thread served as a guiding light, illuminating the metaphysical Gordian knots that challenge the seeker.

ECHOES OF ANTIQUITY: THE PHOENIX AWAKENS

The fundamental question, always present, is why. It is at the precipice of such questions that these two thinkers stand firm – guardians of Serbian thought, ascending toward eternity. Their spiritual insight manifests in symmetrical reality, yet all is unified through the power of intersection. Only the force of intersection yields the creation of a higher order, akin to the silent cosmic understanding embedded in the arrangement of planets. Similarly, there is meaning in polarizing forces that continually attract one another, forging something new and achieving the identity of insight.

Intersection represents the relentless pursuit of overcoming constraints imposed by reality, striving toward cosmic unity and the harmony of all phenomena, which are inherently present. The definition of such a worldview is unequivocal – it draws inspiration from antiquity. It is remarkable how closely these two minds align in their thinking, and in that context, their ideals truly transcend. In analyzing these ideals, we commence – as they did – with wisdom, paying homage to the goddess whose thought metaphorically connects the pages of science, philosophy, and literature that they authored.

Both walked unwaveringly the terrain of their cherished ancient symbolism, transmitting the ancient concept – for that is its essence: the idea of wisdom, now brought forth into the realm of Serbian science, culture, and art. Milanković speaks of Athens while portraying Aristotle’s journey and his dual encounter with Athena Pallas on the Acropolis. On a radiant sunny day, Aristotle ascended the Acropolis once more to bid farewell to the goddess. As he approached her statue, the sun’s rays transformed her features, softening her stern gaze into a compassionate expression. Her lips seemed to convey, “Aristotle, you have served me faithfully and worthily”. This revelation brought immense joy to his soul (Milanković 1947, 61).

Milanković’s symbolism can be interpreted as a reflection of Aristotle’s intellectual journey, culminating in his scientific achievements. Like Aristotle, Milanković dedicated his life to serving wisdom. Initially, the path to knowledge appeared distant and challenging. However, the softened features of the goddess at the culmination of his intellectual quest symbolize his triumph over obstacles and the transformation of distant concepts into intimate thought. Milanković subtly incorporated the same symbolism into his own life, likening himself to the sun of science and the embodiment of its firmament. He faithfully served wisdom, guided by the metaphorical goddess Athena – his mentor and turning point on the path of antiquity.

This metaphor represents the unfolding of the journey of ideas. Science’s sanctuary lies in the realm of new thought, where ancient insight is unveiled. Kostić similarly identifies the goddess Athena as the most decisive phenomenon at the gates of ancient Athens, whose eternal station leads to the timeless ideals that inspired Aristotle. The scientific path involves traversing the past of immortal ideas, transforming the present, and shaping the future. The gaze toward the ancient sky directs and molds these ideas, completing the initial phase of their journey. Their enduring presence in the scientific world underscores the timelessness of these ideas, while harmony’s ascent signifies the commencement of a new era.

Athena, the protector of the Hellenic people, manifested decisively, determining the fate of the Greeks. This divine appearance in the *Iliad* holds immense significance. The Greeks’ troubles during the siege of Ilium stemmed from the knowledge that within the besieged city stood her sanctuary, the Palladium (Kostić 2019, 157).

The harmony of thought, embodied in Athena and ancient Greek civilization, finds its manifestation in the world of science today. While science may sometimes stand in tension with the harmony of truth, aligning it with ancient ideas oriented toward harmony invariably leads to progress. Both thinkers believe in harmony and connect it to the truths of antiquity. For Kostić, the pinnacle of modern science serves as a symmetrical reflection – mirroring, leaning upon, and drawing its ideal and indestructible foundations from the source of harmony. Harmony, for Kostić, is the fundamental principle of the universe. Milanković concurs, stating:

“You see, my son. I do not consider as true astronomers those who, like Hesiod and other pseudo-astronomers, merely observe the risings and settings of stars and similar celestial phenomena. Rather, I recognize those who have discovered the celestial spheres and their harmonious order – for that alone is worthy of an enlightened individual. Among such astronomers, I include Eudoxus” (Milanković 1947, 57). This passage serves as a lighthouse of silence – where Athena’s wisdom guides thought, and the intersections of reality reveal the architecture of truth.

For Milanković, divine insight was intrinsically linked to the comprehension of harmony – reflected in it and inseparable from it. Harmony stood as the ultimate element of knowledge, representing the essence of ideas and everything they encompass. The concept of cosmic consonance embodies the harmonious knowledge of the world, formed through a profound connection. It manifests in its most striking, intimate, and visible form. Nothing can be added or taken from this fundamental idea, and it is precisely this concept that Milanković pursued through his observations of celestial spheres. The results were unequivocal and self-evident.

Similarly, Kostić perceives harmony as the indisputable reflection of ideal forms. The Platonic element is inherent in both concepts, always present within the singular pursuit of serving the cosmic order and recognizing harmony in all aspects of existence – even when concealed, accessible only to the skilled observer. In Kostić’s philosophical framework, harmony achieves a more comprehensive expression through its comparison with symmetry. As Miloš Đurić writes, in Platonic thought, beauty is not merely an aesthetic category, but an ethical summons, it shapes the soul and leads it toward truth (Đurić 1936, 112). Symmetry serves as the guiding principle and shaping

force behind harmony's activity. External antagonism strives toward ultimate unification, as Kostić consistently perceives symmetry always in harmony's service, and harmony likewise in symmetry's service. These concepts are mutually essential on the spiritual plane, shaped through the influence of the physical world.

In this context, Kostić establishes a link between spirituality and harmony, yet also acknowledges harmony's activity as symmetrical. This implies that the reflection of harmony's influence manifests as the operation of the spirit on the surface. The ultimate outcome is the intersection, which facilitates the acquisition of new insights. Each intersection contributes to a deeper understanding of reality, as each subsequent encounter between symmetry and harmony provides deeper comprehension or illumination of the spirit – as Milanković would describe it.

The dialogue between Milanković and Kostić bears a striking resemblance to a discourse between the two greatest minds of antiquity – Plato and Aristotle. We consciously discern how, at a particular juncture, admiration for harmony transitions into an empirical perspective, contrasting with Kostić's evident rationalism. In Plato's school, geometry shed its former elements and emerged as an aprioristic science, founded upon universally accepted principles and axioms. Plato, however, erred in disregarding the source of experience, opting instead for the realm of pure ideas. Plato and Kostić remain within the domain of ideal forms, while Milanković and Aristotle confront the challenges posed by the science of first causes and celestial mechanics.

The pursuit of harmony entails the quest for universal balance and cosmic order, manifesting in two distinct yet interconnected aspects of reality. One pertains to the nature of the universe; the other encompasses our daily experiences and the aspects of spiritual creativity that support our decision to adhere to ideal forms. Milanković aligned himself with these unwavering ideals, particularly influenced by the intellectual legacy of Ancient Greece. He aspired to become a knight who would respond to the challenge posed by that ancient culture to contemporary models.

From Milanković's perspective, modernity necessitated a return to the roots of a glorious past – one that purifies the spirit and unveils forgotten truths. By reflecting on the past, Milanković – like Kostić – advanced. Ancient Greece served as an indispensable source of insight that could not be found elsewhere. It provided a haven for these two (un) contemporary souls, intrinsically and exclusively bound to the ideals

they articulated. While Kostić drew inspiration from Heraclitus and his definitions of transience and eternity – their union in a singular whole, where commencement and conclusion are indistinguishable and perpetually repeating – Milanković's spirit was stirred by Democritus, in whom he perceived the germ of enduring scientific insight that he himself diligently pursued. Milanković wrote of Democritus:

“Democritus taught: ‘Nothing emanates from nothing; nothing that exists can be annihilated. All changes we perceive are, in fact, nothing but the amalgamation or separation of components. Nothing occurs by chance; rather, everything is a direct consequence of its cause and necessity. Nothing exists beyond atoms and the void; all other concepts are merely opinions. Within atoms, there is no qualitative distinction’” (Milanković 1947, 64).

Milanković further emphasized Democritus's naturalistic spirit by comparing him to Aristotle: “Aristotle was overly idealistic and lacked the rigor of a naturalist. Democritus, on the other hand, was a far more thorough investigator of nature. He was not swayed by visions of purpose but recognized the inherent necessity and causality in nature, thereby opening the door to examining and explaining natural phenomena. Democritus reduced qualitative differences to quantitative ones, just as modern physics does. He delved deeper into the fabric of nature than Aristotle. Democritus sacrificed his inheritance to explore foreign lands, while Aristotle did not seize the unique opportunity to travel east with Alexander the Great to discover new worlds. Instead, he chose to remain in Athens, engaged in thought and learning while traversing the halls of his Lyceum” (Milanković 1947, 102).

Milanković undeniably acknowledges Democritus as the progenitor of modern physics, despite Aristotle often being regarded as the father of natural science thought. In this context, Milanković demonstrates his profound reverence for ancient writings, revealing Democritus's remarkably concise thinking – focused solely on the nature of things. This leads Milanković to observe qualitative differences when comparing Democritus to Aristotle, who, while sharing similar philosophical inclinations, retained elements of Platonic idealism, having been Plato's student.

What Milanković may not have fully comprehended at the time is that he himself would eventually adopt similar principles through his own scholarly endeavors. In Democritus's words, Milanković recognizes three foundational laws of modern natural science: the

law of the indestructibility of matter, the principle of causality, and the fundamental premises of atomic theory. Notably, Democritus, through his teachings, anticipated the future and described the state of contemporary science. Milanković's fascination with Democritus, akin to Kostić's with Heraclitus, delineates the distinct intellectual trajectories of both thinkers. One endeavors toward the convergence of perspectives, elucidating the intricate relationships between the individual and the multitude through the principles of symmetry and harmony. The other contributes to the scientific realm with an unparalleled theory of isolation. Both are profoundly influenced by the sun and its perpetual illumination, which, as customary, serves as the beacon of knowledge. They act as transmitters of original Greek ideas, their contemplations extending deep into antiquity. Yet this does not diminish their originality; rather, their contributions leave an indelible mark on Serbian culture through their illustrious names. Their fascination with antiquity represents a quest for answers – a means of escaping the cyclical nature of modernity's persistent questioning, a gaze beyond the confines of the present. It was antiquity, modeled through Plato, Heraclitus, and Democritus, that enabled them to transcend these circles and attain the essence of the concept.

TIMELESS SEEKERS: TRUTH IN THEIR OWN IDIOM

As a historian of science, Milanković meticulously presents data on each philosopher and scientist. Yet he does so with a distinct touch of individuality: his approach is a harmonious fusion of poetic elements, lyrical enthusiasm, and unwavering factual precision. Milanković is a poet, a philosopher, and an individualist in his approach to history. Consequently, he stands out as a singular figure in numerous ways – one of which is the potent force amplified through deduction, evident in his discourse on philosophical thought and the thinkers who inspired him. He not only elucidates terminology and contributions but also breathes life into the figures of his narratives through vivid dialogues and imaginative reconstructions. While Milanković depicts young Aristotle arriving in Athens with great enthusiasm, following in Plato's footsteps, Kostić smiles upon the emergence of novel intellectual content shaped through poetic epochs, particularly inspired by Homer's profound spiritual insights.

Kostić's perspective on heroism is striking. For him, modern heroes are not those who wield swords and conquer in battle, but those who triumph through sharp thought, contributing to the unhindered advancement of science while establishing their own worldview. The essence of heroism has shifted to the realm of spiritual achievement, with scientific and philosophical contributions serving as its reflection.

Heroes immortalize their deeds through the force of thought, spirit, and character, leaving their mark on the canvas of eternity. Kostić writes:

“Agamemnon, ‘ruler of men’, was leader of the Hellenic tribes and commander of the Achaean army that invaded Troy. However, despite being the favorite and pride of the people, the embodiment of all their virtues, and the true champion of the Achaean army, Agamemnon was not the hero. Achilles, the divine hero among heroes, was the true hero, even though he was subordinate to the king” (Kostić 1962, 98).

This demonstrates how, in every nation, when times of strength and awareness arise, heroes replace rulers as representations of national values and virtues. Initially, heroes are recognized for their strength and heart; later, they are recognized for their intellect and spirit. This profound spiritual transformation occurred most vividly and swiftly among the ancient Greeks. Kostić further emphasizes: “They, in every other respect, surpassed all other tribes of humankind, from time immemorial to this very day” (Kostić 1972, 98).

Achilles, in particular, can be seen as the last hero, who is distinguished solely by physical strength and courage. Immediately after him, Odysseus emerged, embodying the highest virtues achieved through intellect and spirit. After Achilles's passing, it was said that his armor should be granted to “the greatest hero”. Odysseus and Ajax, son of Telamon, competed for that honor. While all acknowledged Ajax's superior physical strength, Odysseus was awarded Achilles' armor by the army. From the initial national awareness regarding the primacy of spiritual heroism, a remarkable tree of Hellenic enlightenment emerged – akin to the mustard seed of the Gospel. This tree spread and branched beyond the Roman Empire, subduing the raw force of Roman conquerors through its unparalleled spiritual power. To this day, it continues to stand tall above the intellectual heights of all educated nations.

The essence of Kostić and Milanković's original thought lies in their focus on antiquity's understanding of character as the foundation of heroism. Character is recognized through the magnitude of

intellectual and spiritual achievement – the path they both courageously pursue. As Mihailo Đurić observes, the Greek polis was not merely a political structure, but a formative space for the idea of man as a free and responsible being (Đurić 2009, 45). Character shaped their spirits and provided reflection along the path of intellectual heroism. Their contributions serve as the most compelling confirmation of their decision, as they truly embody authentic heroes of the Serbian spirit within the European framework.

METAPHYSICS OF LIGHT: SOVEREIGNTY AND RESONANCE

Milanković and Kostić, Serbian thinkers, profoundly shaped Serbian intellectual tradition and subtly influenced European cultural and scientific heritage. They engaged with the cosmos, metaphysics, and the concept of civilization as a structure based on truth, character, and harmonious development. Their allegiance to antiquity was visionary, invoking the Platonic ideal as a philosophical foundation that resonated with Enlightenment principles and European humanism. Milanković's scientific brilliance contributed to Serbia's prominence in international scientific discourse, particularly in climate theory, calendar reform, and celestial mechanics. He became a symbol of peaceful progress, whose ideas were embraced across Europe during periods of political upheaval.

Kostić offered Europe a poetic-philosophical mirror of spiritual resilience and cultural refinement, positioning Serbian thought within the lineage of classical Western philosophy. His emphasis on character, intellectual heroism, and the moral vocation of philosophy aligned with European civic ethics and literary dignity. Both thinkers served as cultural emissaries of Serbia, representing their nation and contributing to the construction of a continental intellectual edifice. Their contributions demonstrate that spiritual and scientific heroism, nurtured in a modest land, can leave enduring imprints on Europe's collective memory. Their legacy continues to exert a subtle yet persistent influence – an idea, harmony, and character shaping European thought. Though rooted in Serbia's intellectual and cultural landscape, Milanković and Kostić had a profound impact beyond its borders. Their works subtly intersected with shifting European geopolitics. Living through the decline of empires, the rise of national aspirations, and the restructuring of European alliances,

they embodied intellectual sovereignty, Serbia's quiet assertion of value and vision amidst turbulent historical currents.

As Miloš Đurić reminds us, Hellenic ethics is not only the teacher of our moral thought, but of our entire spiritual culture (Đurić 1960, 17). Their legacy invites the European academic sphere to re-evaluate its philosophical and scientific Canon, expanding it to include voices shaped by peripheries that were never marginal, but immortal. Dokić writes: "The link between symmetry and beauty is unmistakable; the link between symmetry and eternity even more profound. Symmetry emerges as a response to eternity – an aesthetic promise of the transcendent. This arises from humanity's innate inclination to associate perfection with permanence, rendering it natural to trust that which is most uncertain. Yet the miracle of nature does not end here – it begins" (Dokić 2024, 12).

As I further stated: "Nature, in its essence, is imperfect; symmetry, then, becomes a revolt. Art thus becomes, once more, a response to the question of causality and eternity—not the question with which everything begins, but the one at which all things converge. It offers refuge for the eternal, the ineffable, the unspoken and unrealized. Intersection, in this context, contains destructive power, for it requires opposition. From the union of opposites arises the authentic new – something that merges the force of two entirely divergent moments into one" (Dokić 2024, 12). In terms of reverence and orientation toward antiquity – intertwined with harmony – the developmental path of their ideals and foundational thought is identical. In this regard, Milanković and Kostić are spiritually and ideologically equivalent. They share the same truth and guide us toward the path of spiritual realization through the beauty of thought.

Both could have chosen a more widely travelled path, but they resisted such temptations. Philosophical thought and love for the idea inevitably shaped their scientific contributions. Their ideals were transposed onto contemporary philosophical and scientific discourse, yet their ideas transcended those frameworks. Naturally, they encountered resistance and disapproval, but their character led them toward the fulfillment of their own entelechy and the authorship of scientific thought that leaves an indelible mark on time and space. This scientific thought ascends like the phoenix of insight, standing at the threshold of a world of novel possibilities. For that thought is the phoenix: unbreakable, indestructible by any test of time, capable only of enhancing our

comprehension of emerging conceptual realities through its mighty individuality.

Milanković and Kostić did not merely inherit antiquity – they reawakened it. In their works, the Platonic ideal is not a distant echo but a living force, shaping the contours of scientific rigor and poetic insight. Their allegiance to harmony was not nostalgic, but visionary: a commitment to truth that transcends epochs, ideologies, and borders. Through celestial mechanics and philosophical reflection, they forged a distinctly Serbian contribution to the European intellectual tradition; one that does not ask for recognition, but commands it through the quiet authority of character. Their heroism was not forged in conquest, but in contemplation; not in domination, but in precision; not in noise, but in the silent architecture of thought. They remind us that the periphery is often the birthplace of the eternal. That from modest lands, ideas rise like phoenixes; indestructible, luminous, and unbound by time. Their legacy is not a monument, but a movement: a rhythm of thought that continues to pulse beneath the surface of European philosophy and science. In the end, they did not merely gaze at the stars. They taught us how to read them. This reflection invites us to consider thoughts not as an ornament, but as a structure, where *Athena's gaze* becomes a principle of clarity, and the intersection of opposites reveals the architecture of conceptual truth.

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Марија С. Докић*

Институт за политичке студије, Београд

НЕБЕСКА МЕХАНИКА И ХАРМОНИЈА: ИНТЕЛЕКТУАЛНЕ СТРУЈЕ У ЕВРОПИ ОД МИЛАНКОВИЋА ДО КОСТИЋА**

Резиме

Овај рад истражује на који начин филозофско-научна заоставштина Милутина Миланковића и Лазе Костића превазилази националне оквире, успостављајући значајне интелектуалне везе између српске културне традиције и ширег европског контекста. Њихова дела, усмерена ка појмовима хармоније, времена и етичке потраге за истином, могу се разумети као суптилне струје унутар европског историјског дискурса. Аргумент се заснива на тези да су српски интелектуалци обликовали универзалне идеје које надилазе локалне идентитете, чиме су значајно допринели развоју европске научне и филозофске мисли. Велики стваралачки умови одликују се способношћу да препознају трајна мисаона језгра: управо тај плес ка бесконачном и тежња ка вечном – ка архетипској сили која надахњује стваралаштво – обликује начине на које Миланковић и Костић рефлектују античку традицију у својим делима. Њихова рецепција класичне мисли не представља пуко имитирање, већ оригиналну интерпретацију, прожету сопственим духовним и интелектуалним кодовима, чиме је додатно богате. Било да се разматра историја науке или историја филозофије, истинска мотивација оба аутора открива се кроз процес постепеног разоткривања метафоре феникса – бесмртне идеје античке мудрости која не нестаје, већ се непрекидно трансформише. Име

* Имејл адреса: marija.dokic@ips.ac.rs; ORCID: 0009-0004-4159-9491.

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тог феникса симболично је сакривено у мисаоном ткиву древне филозофије, и управо кроз Миланковића и Костића, тај дух бива поново артикулисан у форми савременог научно-филозофског израза.

Кључне речи: Лаза Костић, Милутин Миланковић, европско наслеђе, интелектуални хероизам, теорија укрштаја

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