

Marija Dokić*
Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade

HARMONY: THE ULTIMATE GUIDING FORCE IN THE WORKS OF LAZA KOSTIĆ AND MILUTIN MILANKOVIĆ ON THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL AND POLITICAL STAGE**

Abstract

This paper aims to indicate the key aspects of the intellectual convergence between Laza Kostić (1841–1910) and Milutin Milanković (1879–1958), two central figures of Serbian philosophical and scientific thought. Although they belonged to different disciplines, both thinkers grounded their creative and theoretical work in the classical principle of harmony. They understood the ancient concepts of proportion (analogia) and logos as expressions of cosmic order. By examining selected passages from their writings, the paper highlights how each author explicitly engaged with ancient Greek intellectual heritage: Kostić through his reflections on symmetry, harmony, convergence, and aesthetic structure, and Milanković through his cosmological interpretations shaped by Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus. The analysis demonstrates that harmony functions not merely as a thematic motif but as a shared epistemic and metaphysical framework that informs their understanding of nature and creativity and shapes their intellectual

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

** This paper was written within the research activity of the Institute for Political Studies, funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.

identity. In this sense, the study situates Kostić and Milanković within a broader classical tradition. It shows how ancient Greek thought served as a generative foundation for Serbian culture, science, and philosophy.

Keywords: harmony, proportion, logos, Laza Kostić, Milutin Milanković, Ancient Greece.

HARMONY AND THE CLASSICAL FOUNDATION

The intellectual trajectories of Laza Kostić (1841–1910) and Milutin Milanković (1879–1958) represent two of the most distinctive expressions of Serbian philosophical and scientific thought. Despite working in different domains, both thinkers shaped their theoretical outlooks through a sustained engagement with classical ideas, which provided them with a stable foundation for interpreting the world: the ancient Greek principle of harmony, understood as the structural and metaphysical order underlying both nature and human creativity. Their engagement with antiquity was neither incidental nor ornamental; it constituted the conceptual matrix through which they interpreted the world. Kostić's reflections on symmetry, proportion, and the principle of convergence reveal a direct dialogue with classical aesthetics, while Milanković's cosmological writings, particularly his meditations on Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus, demonstrate a profound familiarity with ancient scientific and philosophical models. These references are not mere citations but active components of their intellectual architecture.

Harmony, in this sense, becomes more than a thematic motif: it emerges as a shared epistemic horizon through which both authors articulate the relationship between idea and reality, cosmos and thought, proportion and meaning, convergence and legacy. The classical legacy they inherit is not static, but it is reinterpreted and woven into the fabric of their respective disciplines. By tracing the presence of ancient Greek concepts, such as *analogia*, *logos*, symmetry, cyclicalality, and cosmic order, this paper examines how Kostić and Milanković develop parallel yet distinct visions of harmony as a principle that governs both the universe and the creative act. Their works reveal a convergence that is neither accidental nor superficial, but rooted in a common intellectual

lineage that shaped their understanding of knowledge and the structure of reality.

The sociopolitical landscape of the 19th century was marked by the emergence of harmony as a distinct affirmation of the spirit within cultural and intellectual life. This concept functioned simultaneously as a form of resistance to disorder and as a confirmation of the enduring presence of the idea within reality. Harmony appeared at the outset as a continuation of the classical notion that ideas possess a spiritual reality expressed through the works of thinkers who oppose fragmentation and strive to articulate order. In this sense, harmony shaped the intellectual atmosphere of 19th-century Serbia, where the transmission of knowledge was closely tied to the ideal of a balanced and meaningful cosmos. While Laza Kostić perceived harmony primarily through aesthetic structure and the principle of crossing, Milutin Milanković recognised it in the mathematical regularities of celestial mechanics. Both thinkers drew inspiration from the legacy of ancient Greece, whose ontological premise, that being becomes intelligible through order and proportion, served as a silent foundation for their work. The European cultural framework provided the external context, but the expression of harmony emerged as an internal resonance of spirit, articulated through their respective contributions. Where modernity introduced conceptual dissonance, both authors responded by reaffirming the classical conviction that reality possesses an underlying structure that can be understood and expressed.

Both thinkers drew inspiration from the conceptual models of ancient Greek science and philosophy, which provided the structural framework for their reflections.

The European framework serves as the external structure, while the expression of harmony manifests as the spirit's resonance, defined through their works. In periods of conceptual fragmentation, both authors responded by reaffirming the classical conviction that reality possesses an underlying structure, enabling them to collectively weave a comprehensive whole: the entirety of Serbian identity, shaped through the redefinition of thought and scientific parameters, yet immortalised in ancient frameworks of balance, proportion, and the singular essence of spirit.

THE GREEK INTELLECTUAL LINEAGE

When referring to Kostić and Milanković, the initial classical association that arises is their position within a broader intellectual tradition shaped by ancient Greek thought. Although they approached knowledge from different disciplinary angles, both thinkers consistently returned to classical models as the conceptual foundation of their work. This orientation is not merely thematic; it reflects a deliberate engagement with the ancient understanding of logos, proportion, and cosmic order as the structural principles governing both nature and thought.

In the classical tradition, logos denotes the rational structure of the world, the principle that renders the cosmos intelligible. Analogia, or proportion, expresses the relational harmony through which this structure becomes perceptible. These concepts form the backbone of Greek cosmology, from the Pythagorean notion of numerical harmony to Plato's account of the world-soul in the *Timaeus* and Aristotle's insistence on order as the condition of knowledge. Both Kostić and Milanković explicitly draw upon these ideas. Kostić's reflections on symmetry and the principle of convergence echo the classical conviction that form and meaning arise from proportionate relations. Milanković, in turn, invokes Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus in his cosmological writings, interpreting celestial mechanics through the lens of ancient philosophical models.

This classical lineage is not an abstract reference but a living framework within their work. Kostić's philosophical essays reveal a sustained dialogue with Greek aesthetics, particularly in his insistence that harmony and symmetry are complementary expressions of the same underlying principle. Milanković's *Through Distant Worlds and Times* demonstrates his familiarity with ancient scientific thought, especially in his reflections on the mathematical regularities of the cosmos. For both thinkers, antiquity functions as a conceptual reservoir – a source of categories through which they articulate their own visions of reality.

By situating their thought within this lineage, it becomes evident that harmony is not simply a motif they share but a classical inheritance that shapes their intellectual identities. Their engagement with Greek models enables them to reinterpret modern scientific and philosophical questions within a framework that emphasises order, proportion, and the intelligibility of the world. In this sense, the classical tradition does not

merely inform their work; it structures the very horizon within which their ideas unfold.

Both thinkers consistently articulate harmony as a central conceptual principle within their respective disciplines. Yet the question remains: how did this principle acquire such formative significance in their intellectual worlds? For Kostić, harmony emerges from his sustained engagement with classical categories, which he interprets through the lens of symmetry, proportion, and the principle of convergence. His philosophical discourse does not merely reference antiquity but reconstructs its conceptual vocabulary in a distinctly modern framework. Milanković, by contrast, encounters harmony through the mathematical structure of the cosmos; the regularity of celestial motion provides him with a concrete model through which ancient ideas become scientifically meaningful. In his reflections, classical thought is not evoked through imagery but through the recognition that the order of nature corresponds to the order of reason. In this way, both thinkers transform harmony into a methodological orientation: for Kostić, it becomes a principle of form and meaning; for Milanković, a key to understanding the intelligibility of natural laws. Their approaches differ, yet both reveal how classical concepts can be reinterpreted as foundations for modern philosophical and scientific inquiry. Both thinkers nonchalantly transcend conventional frameworks, and in doing so, they paradoxically come to define both. What becomes evident is a sustained intellectual commitment that shapes the development of their thought – their earliest influences indelibly inscribed in the contributions they leave behind. Kostić breaks free from the modern philosophical confines, embracing instead the classical totality refracted through a contemporary lens. Plato, in him, never ceases – just as the Aristotelian spirit continues to flicker in Milanković's scientific realm. Each step forward in their thought is marked by a higher-order cognition, which in turn leads to a deeper comprehension of character amidst the ever-transient stage of time, where only that which possesses true value both endures and eternally transforms, altering its external forms but preserving its inner essence. Plato's idea, although it may transform in manifestation throughout history, has never ceased to exist. The same can be said of Aristotle: Milanković becomes its bearer through his scientific pursuit, just as Aristotle once was in antiquity. Emerging from this discourse is a compelling imperative to transcend the limitations imposed by existential constraints – through the ascent of philosophical

and scientific imagination. Both endeavours successfully achieve this goal, as each redefines the domains they explore: dismantling inherited paradigms and elevating them to a fundamentally different level. Kostić and Milanković engage in a profound dialogue with ancient worldviews, akin to the profound exchanges between Plato and Aristotle. In this process, they reconceptualise these models into renewed conceptual frameworks that profoundly influence our perception of reality. Their work represents a genuine reversal of inherited thought, affirming, through distinction, the very essence of the tradition they extend.

Although their intellectual paths differ, both thinkers demonstrate a distinctive commitment to classical thought that shapes the development of their ideas. Rather than approaching antiquity as a symbolic horizon, they engage with it as a source of conceptual clarity. Milanković's admiration for Greek thinkers, particularly Democritus, reflects his orientation toward methodological rigour and the search for causal explanations in nature. Democritus provided him with a model of scientific perseverance, while Plato offered a framework for understanding order as a condition of intelligibility. From this perspective, Milanković's scientific work emerges not as an ascent toward transcendence but as a disciplined effort to articulate the structural principles of the cosmos. Kostić, in a different manner, integrates classical categories into his reflections on proportion and convergence, allowing ancient ideas to inform the conceptual architecture of his philosophical thought. Their shared engagement with antiquity thus appears not as a heroic gesture, but as a sustained intellectual orientation that shaped the foundations of their respective contributions. This discernment would eventually lead him to a robust scientific foundation, affirming that Antiquity, far from being an antiquated reference, was indeed a generative source. Inspiration, it transpires, continues to emanate from that wellspring. Milanković's contribution has etched a new constellation in the firmament of Serbian science. He has redefined the boundaries of our understanding with extraordinary precision, precisely as Kostić did in the realm of metaphysics. The intrepid journeys of these sages into the uncharted territories of knowledge do not result in loss, but rather in a profound deepening of their understanding of both the familiar and the boundless. They redefine the known through innovative conceptualisations: Kostić through a Platonic vision of the cosmos; Milanković through an unwavering contemplation of the heavens.

This relentless pursuit of transcending the limitations of conventional scientific models not only shaped Milanković's intellectual orientation but also provided it with a clear direction. In contrast, time has only reinforced the philosophical principle embodied by Kostić. Together, they express the essence of harmony as a metaphysical ascent – its manifestation in the realm of time and space. For they are, literally, the embodiment of the very concept itself: its manifestation through scientific and philosophical inquiry. Their insights are emanations of harmony in its purest form, and it is by aligning with its inherent logic that they attained the zeniths of their respective visions. Their names have endured the test of time, resonating most distinctly with the lineage of Antiquity, which likewise withstands all the constraints that time may impose. They remain preserved within the very essence of the idea as they perceived it – an idea of unity and wholeness. This very idea defined their path: each becoming an obelisk of consciousness, echoing the convergence of concept and foundation. There is no other interpretive key to their legacy but harmony itself – they articulated the harmonics of their thought by faithfully following its trajectory. Harmony served as their archetype, yet it rests upon a deeper principle: cosmic balance and cosmic symmetry, which reverberate through the eternal present moment. Their shared concept originates in a conviction that all must be interrelated and proportionally attuned, and that there is a reason why certain ideas emerge and illuminate the world at specific junctures, and why certain individuals become their incarnations. In contrast to the mechanistic and egocentric philosophies whose primary objective appears to be the creation of a mirror in which the object impersonates the subject and vice versa, a realisation emerges that the structure of the cosmos is fundamentally ethical. The entire cosmos may be encompassed within the concept of equilibrium. Awareness of this balance irrevocably separates those in contact with the cosmos from those estranged from it. It serves as the sole genuine gateway into the “secrets” of the universe: these mysteries persist only up to the boundary of balance, and once that boundary is reached – achievable solely through an ethical act – there are no longer secrets. Everything becomes mirrored within itself, boundlessly (Petrović 2020, 12).

SYMMETRY, CONVERGENCE AND THE STRUCTURE OF THOUGHT

Kostić and Milanković serve as transmitters of the ancient concept of harmony, proportion, and concord, yet each articulates this inheritance through a distinct conceptual lens. For Kostić, harmony is inseparable from the principle of convergence, a structural law that governs both aesthetic form and the organisation of reality. His reflections on symmetry and harmony reveal a systematic attempt to describe how form emerges from the interplay of opposites, and how this interplay generates meaning. In his view, symmetry and harmony are not opposing forces but complementary expressions of the same underlying principle: symmetry as the analytical unfolding of form, and harmony as its synthetic completion.

Milanković approaches harmony through a different, yet related, structure of thought. His cosmological writings interpret celestial mechanics as the manifestation of proportional relations that echo classical models. The regularity of planetary motion, the recurrence of cycles, and the mathematical precision of cosmic order all reflect a universe governed by principles that the ancients had already intuited. In *Through Distant Worlds and Times*, Milanković explicitly invokes Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus, interpreting their ideas not as historical curiosities but as conceptual tools for understanding the structure of the cosmos. His scientific method thus becomes a continuation of the classical conviction that nature is intelligible because it is ordered.

Both thinkers, therefore, articulate harmony as a structural principle, not merely an aesthetic or metaphorical one. Kostić's insistence that "harmony is nothing other than folded symmetry" (Kostić 2015, 47) underscores his belief that form arises from the dynamic relation of its elements. Milanković's reflections on the "harmonic relations" of celestial spheres (Milanković 1947, 24) reveal a similar conviction: that the cosmos is governed by proportionality, and that this proportionality is the key to understanding its order.

By placing symmetry, convergence, and proportion at the centre of their thought, both authors develop conceptual frameworks that bridge the gap between philosophy and science. Their approaches differ in method, Kostić through metaphysical reflection, Milanković through mathematical reasoning, but converge in their underlying assumption that reality possesses an internal structure that can be articulated. Harmony

thus becomes the point of intersection between their intellectual worlds: a principle that unites aesthetic form and scientific law, metaphysical insight and empirical observation.

Harmony is not merely a template of nature; it must also be present in artistic creation, encompassing both aesthetics and appearance. Kostić acknowledges this when he states: "Where symmetry ceases, harmony immediately appears, and where both rest, we invariably encounter a clear, pure intersection. Beneath the skin, there is not a single spot – no matter how small – that does not contain a trace of one of these three manifestations of the fundamental principle of crossing" (Kostić 2015, 64). Furthermore, he asserts: "Harmony is nothing other than inverted – or better yet, folded symmetry; and conversely, symmetry is inverted – or better, unfolded harmony" (Kostić 2015, 47). Thus, symmetry and harmony are not opposites but complements, each a reflection and verification of the other. Harmony is the synthesis of symmetry, while symmetry is the analysis of harmony. Nature, not content with having generated these two central phenomena, organic and all other life, from a single germ, ensured that the two would also intersect with one another. Twins born of the principle of crossing, fertilised by pure intersection, symmetry and harmony successfully conceived the universe, birthing it, shaping it, and populating it with eternal life. They collaborate in every endeavour, in every phenomenon, from the formation of crystals to the highest products of the human spirit, in the masterpieces of art and poetry – we encounter symmetry and harmony in a fruitful, blessed partnership. The closer this bond, the more radiant and abundant their presence in any living organism or intellectual creation, the more perfect that being or work becomes (Kostić 2015, 48). Kostić posits that harmony and symmetry manifest as paradoxes – contrasting yet mirroring each other. Each becomes a prerequisite for the realisation of identity. Celestial mechanics appears as a system governed by proportional relations that reflect an underlying order, in which each star plays a specific role in harmonising the cosmos. Every cosmic movement responds to this attunement. This attunement is structured within cyclicity, revealing repetition and cyclical return – an insight shared by Milanković and Kostić. Cyclicity is another characteristic of the harmonised cosmos. Circular motion represents the universe's response to harmony, which, on the creative level, culminates in symmetry. Together, they form an intersection that develops into a distinct, harmonically symmetric existence.

LIGHT AND COSMIC ORDER

Cyclicity occupies a central place in both Kostić's and Milanković's understanding of the cosmos. For them, circular motion is not merely a physical phenomenon but a structural expression of harmony, a pattern through which the universe reveals its internal order. As Petrović notes, "describing a full circle signifies the attainment of perfection" (Petrović 2020, 19). This view resonates with ancient cosmology, in which circular motion was regarded as the most complete and self-sufficient form of motion. In this classical framework, repetition is not redundancy but the reaffirmation of order.

Light emerges as another shared motif through which both thinkers articulate the intelligibility of the world. For Kostić, light represents the fundamental principle that renders reality transparent to thought; it is the medium through which form becomes perceptible, and meaning becomes possible. In Milanković's scientific writings, light functions as the starting point of inquiry, the element that allows the cosmos to be measured, understood, and mathematically articulated. Although their approaches differ, both authors treat light as a conceptual bridge between appearance and structure, between the visible and the intelligible.

Proportion serves as the unifying paradigm that connects these motifs. In the classical tradition, proportion is the relational structure that makes harmony possible; it is the condition under which elements can coexist within a coherent whole. Kostić interprets proportion through the principle of crossing, emphasising the interplay of symmetry and harmony as complementary forces. Milanković, by contrast, identifies proportion in the mathematical relations governing celestial mechanics, where the recurrence of cycles and the regularity of motion reflect a universe sustained by order.

Through these concepts, harmony, light, cyclicity, and proportion, both thinkers articulate a vision of the cosmos that is fundamentally structured and intelligible. Their reflections do not merely describe natural phenomena; they interpret them as manifestations of a deeper principle that aligns with the classical conviction that the universe is governed by harmony. In this sense, their work continues the ancient effort to understand the world through the interplay of form and meaning.

Their engagement with harmony reflects an effort to understand the structural principles that govern both natural and intellectual phenomena.

Proportion emerges as their primary paradigm in approaching the cosmos – a reflection of intersection and an emblem of the entire universe, which can only exist under such conditions: perpetual perseverance in the emanation of light and sustained by the source of the original life principle. Light transforms into the paradigm of knowledge, the unifying force of the universe, and the prerequisite for *logos*, which, in turn, manifests as harmony among cosmic elements. From their literary and aesthetic contributions, both thinkers are considered children of Antiquity, channels through which ancient thought resurfaces within Serbian culture. Milanković's dialogues with Aristotle and Plato present strikingly original approaches to philosophical reflection, while Kostić's writings enrich a specific comprehension of the classical world. Notably, his interpretation of the *hero-genius* closely mirrors his own life and work, and, indeed, Milanković's as well. For Kostić, Antiquity provided the most vivid formulations of heroic consciousness, some of the most profound ever offered in literary reality. However, the true legacy of Antiquity was metaphorical: it guided the path toward the transformation of heroism. Heroism, in its highest sense, is not conquest, but the mirror through which thought recognises its ultimate expression, the reflection of spirit.

HEROISM AND THE INTELLECTUAL IDENTITY OF THE THINKER

Kostić interprets heroism as an intellectual category rather than a historical or martial one. For him, the hero is the figure who recognises the primacy of the idea and remains faithful to it, even when confronted with the limitations of the age. In this sense, heroism becomes a form of cognitive integrity, a commitment to the ideal that shapes both thought and action. Kostić's reflections on Homer and the classical tradition reveal his conviction that the highest form of heroism lies in the capacity of thought to transcend the immediate and orient itself toward the universal.

A comparable orientation toward harmony as a principle of intellectual integrity appears in the work of Nikola Tesla. As Predrag Milosavljević emphasises, Tesla explicitly linked technological innovation with the classical ideal of harmonic order, noting that "the greatest benefit comes from technological progress that strives toward unification and harmony, and my wireless transmitter is above all built

on that principle” (Milosavljević 2020, 29). This perspective situates Tesla within a broader lineage in which the pursuit of knowledge is inseparable from that of order.

Milanković articulates a similar conception of heroism, though through a scientific lens. His imagined dialogues with Athena and Aristotle in *Through Distant Worlds and Times* illustrate his belief that scientific inquiry is a continuation of the classical pursuit of knowledge. The hero, in this framework, is the thinker who advances understanding by aligning his work with the principles of order and rational clarity. Milanković’s scientific perseverance reflects this ideal: his engagement with ancient models is not nostalgic but methodological, grounded in the conviction that the cosmos is intelligible and that knowledge emerges from disciplined inquiry.

Both thinkers thus redefine heroism as an intellectual stance rooted in the classical tradition. Their work suggests that the true hero is not the conqueror of external circumstances but the one who reshapes the conceptual frameworks through which reality is understood. In this regard, Kostić and Milanković represent a broader philosophical lineage in which knowledge and fidelity to the idea constitute the essential features of intellectual identity. Their contributions exemplify a form of heroism grounded in thought, a commitment to the principles of harmony and order that they inherited from antiquity and reinterpreted within their own historical moment.

The fundamental trait of heroism lies in its connection to the Platonic world of ideas. Heroism is not mastery over material reality; it must be a reflection of the ideal, a step into that realm. Science and literature, at their highest, become precisely such steps. Our two thinkers now stand at the forefront of this metaphysical ascent. Not only did they surpass the boundaries of their era, but they also echoed their insights across generations of renewed crossings. For both thinkers, heroism is defined not by external achievement but by intellectual integrity and fidelity to the idea. The *concept revolves around* the manifestation of harmonic knowledge - the purest, most intimate, and evident form of cosmic consonance. It is an immutable entity, devoid of any additions or subtractions. This notion guided Milanković’s contemplations of the celestial spheres, yielding self-evident results. Similarly, Kostić perceives harmony as the indisputable reflection of ideal forms. Both share a Platonic element: the profound, enduring aspiration to serve cosmic order and discern harmony in all phenomena, even when

concealed, perceivable only to the discerning observer. In Kostić's philosophical framework, harmony achieves a more comprehensive expression when juxtaposed with symmetry. Symmetry governs and directs the activity of harmony, while external antagonism is drawn towards ultimate reconciliation. For Kostić, symmetry is perpetually subordinate to harmony, yet harmony serves symmetry in turn. They are interdependent on the spiritual realm, which is constructed through the worldly. Kostić thus establishes a connection between spirituality and harmony, interpreting its manifestation as symmetrically structured: the mirror of harmony's activity is embedded in the actions of spirit on the surface of reality, leading to convergence and novel insights. Accord and harmony resonate throughout the universe, accompanied by symmetry as they traverse the cosmos, whether we consider intersections or celestial mechanics. The essence remains unaltered: that pivotal step forward, a liberation from the constraints of the era to which they belonged. Had Kostić and Milanković remained confined to the frameworks of contemporary thought, their contribution could not have acquired its distinctive form. They would have been denied the very guiding principle that enabled them to transcend the intellectual limitations of modernity. The true essence of philosophical heroism lies in transcending inherited limitations and charting a new course of inquiry. Their departure from conventional scientific practices not only constitutes a significant scientific contribution but also challenges the notion that science must remain obscure or inaccessible. Their writing style is bold and compelling, stemming from a profound understanding of the nature of reality – without which such clarity and elegance would have been unattainable.

Milanković achieves this through his writings on the history of science, which skillfully combine dialogue with a steadfast devotion to ideas and a psychological sensitivity to the thinkers and philosophers he portrays. This synthesis is unique: it bridges the gap between history and the form of the short story, appealing to readers who are drawn to irregular storytelling and unconventional explanations. By doing so, science becomes more accessible to the general public, dispelling the rigid insistence on intellectual inaccessibility. His use of the epistolary form further enhances this intimacy, drawing the reader into his ideas and into the realm of science itself. He guides them toward the discovery of novel realities and epochs shaped by the foundational thinkers. Thought has been awakened, and now it may embark on its journey. In their case,

this journey begins with studying their predecessors and culminates in the imprint of their individual contributions, defining their own epoch. Harmony is thus restored: from reverence for their forebears to the forging of authenticity. Their intellectual journeys serve as allegories of their ideas, embodying the very paths they have traversed. It is not coincidental that Kostić writes about Homer and Milanković writes about the prominent scientific figures of his time – their orientation was evident from the outset, as was the trajectory of their overturning of conventional thought and redefinition. To contemplate the cosmos is to engage in the study of proportional essence. Kostić's cosmic vision gave rise to the concept of *intersection*, his ultimate law of the universe, which is present in both the minutest and grandest aspects of reality. It permeates all and generates novel actuality, a constant overcoming and surpassing, the breaking of paradigms and the formation of new ones. These intellectual luminaries became scientific and philosophical visionaries whose thinking continues its ascent, grounded in the paths of ancient predecessors whom they deeply admired. In doing so, they became torchbearers of Serbian cultural identity and knowledge through corridors of resistance.

Kostić naturally gravitated toward idealisation, toward visions of reality grounded in the conceptual. Milanković, on the other hand, was drawn to deduction and scientifically verifiable axioms. Both shaped the life of the mind according to their ideals: the former through rationalism, the latter through empiricism. Together, they disrupted traditional frameworks and established novel rules in philosophy and science. They are pioneers in their respective fields and embodiments of the intellectual spirit of their time. No one before them articulated the concept of intersection in this manner, and no one studied celestial mechanics as they did. What binds them is a harmonious response to the calling of philosophy and science – a call already inscribed within them, to which they responded with creative works that preceded and prolonged the very notion of harmony. Harmony resonates through their works – and it speaks of them. The drive to transcend all imposed limitations results in the formulation of novel theses in science and philosophy. Their oeuvre is both a reflection and a reply, an act of revolt against mediocrity. Only in such conditions can creativity emerge as the indispensable expression of wholeness and its definition.

The book of nature is written in numbers – nature's harmony is the harmony of numbers. It speaks to our eyes through proportions,

embodied in the architecture of our temples; it whispers to our ears through the sounds of the lyre. I measured the lengths of that instrument's strings and found that they produce a clear, pleasing tone only when their lengths stand in simple arithmetic ratios. This same harmony is manifest in the structure of the entire cosmos. The radii of the crystalline celestial spheres, as I calculated from their periods of rotation, also exist in simple harmonic relations. The inaudible music of the spheres completes this harmony. Thus, the universe embodies a perfect order, beautifully expressed by the word *Cosmos* (Milanković 1947, 24). Milanković expresses his reverence for harmony when writing about Democritus; through the philosopher's ideas, we glimpse his own. In animating the words of the ancients – even briefly – he reveals his foundational view of creativity and authorship: a worldview that bears only one name – harmony. “If we transform the intellectual value of our representations into the ethical value of our demands, then we arrive at this: just as perception yields only a vague knowledge of appearances, not essence, so too the pleasure arising from sensory stimulation is relative, obscure, unreliable even to itself, illusory, and deceptive. True happiness – of which only the wise may partake – pure bliss, the goal and peace of life, should not be sought in external goods or bodily pleasures, but in the quiet and calm state engendered by the gentle undulation of the soul's subtle atoms. That gives the soul measure and harmony, shields it from caprice, and grants it resolute confidence in itself. It is the stillness of the sea of the soul, which, having recognised its own passions, has become sovereign over itself. True bliss is tranquillity, and tranquillity is granted only by knowledge” (Milanković 1947, 43).

For Kostić, harmony is the primary stabilising force within the cosmos. It complements symmetry, and together they reign supreme. Both thinkers assert that harmony is an integral part of the universe's fabric and that the cosmos rests upon its principles. They not only adhere to this notion in their own work but also embody it. Their writing continually returns to the concept of harmony, even as it is the defining characteristic of their identity. Their unwavering devotion to the idea surpasses the reality from which they emerged. They become the bearers of light, torchbearers of the universal and inviolable truth – the truth that emerges from Plato's cave of shadows. Their works offer both reflection and an invitation: a desire to enrich others with knowledge and, simultaneously, a deliberate and thoughtful contribution to the cosmic balance. They stand as pillars of Serbian identity and cultural and intellectual legacy.

The concept of harmony becomes a symbol of resistance against the chaos of their era and an imperative to transcend existential limitations. The spirit of harmony permeates their endeavour to structure reality in accordance with elements aligned with the cosmos itself. Wherever an epoch commences its new thought, the idea of harmony awaits it, prepared to guide it. It is harmony's responsibility to orient the age's expression and align it with its own principle of being, positioned on the precipice between reality and ideal essence. Both thinkers direct their attention toward the same source: the ideational realm, which they reflect into their own creations. Consequently, we witness the outlines of pure harmony, resplendent like a path out of ignorance. They are akin to Sirius, the brightest star, conveyors of the idea's light. Indeed, Milanković writes of Sirius: "The celestial body currently visible above the ocean's surface is Sirius, the most luminous star within the outer crystalline celestial sphere. Today, we have the opportunity to observe it for the first time of the year, just before sunrise. Yesterday, its proximity to the Sun rendered it imperceptible to our vision due to the Sun's glare. However, today, the Sun, accompanied by its crystal sphere, has sufficiently distanced itself for us to discern it, though it will once again fade in the Sun's rays within a brief span" Milanković (1950, 15). In Serbia's philosophical and scientific landscape, the light of Sirius holds a significant place, embodying the contributions of Milanković and Kostić. They advocated for harmony as the fundamental principle underlying Serbian cultural and national identity during the 19th century. At that time, harmony was not merely a matter of national interest; it *was* its manifestation. The expression of Serbia's spiritual essence *was* the embodiment of harmony in the realm of reality, to which thought continually returned for nourishment. Establishing a novel philosophy entails traversing an uncharted path; doing so under the auspices of harmony signifies a return to the origin – to the philosophy of Antiquity, where they found boundless inspiration for creative symbolism manifested in harmonic form. The ideals of Antiquity were transposed into the contemporary world, whether in astronomy or philosophy. Their (non)modernity underscores the enduring presence of a higher order that transient thought cannot obliterate. Aspects of reality perceived beneath the veil of harmony are solidified within scientific and philosophical concepts. The triumph of thought serves as the very symbol of light, to which Kostić continually returns. At the core of that light lies harmony

– the origin of all comprehension, the force that ensures both the motion and equilibrium of celestial bodies.

“The intersection embodies a perpetual struggle between opposing forces on the vast canvas of existence. Its thorny expression manifests in the pages of knowledge, positioning itself as the alpha and omega of every literary work. It emerges as an indispensable aspect of every creative process, extending even to the realm of art itself. The intersection serves as a *metaphor for the cosmos*, simultaneously acting as an allegory for art. In this art, the intersection perceives the ultimate expression in the harmonious unity of poetic and philosophical elements, reflecting the two fundamental cognitive principles of understanding. The convergence is not a mere disguise; it is a continuous struggle, a mental uprising, and it was this very path that ultimately led to enlightenment” (Dokić 2024, 216).

CONCLUSION

The intellectual trajectories of Laza Kostić and Milutin Milanković reveal a shared commitment to the classical principle of harmony as the structural foundation of both thought and reality. Although they worked within different disciplines, their reflections on symmetry, proportion, light, and cyclicity demonstrate a common orientation toward the ancient Greek conviction that the cosmos is ordered and intelligible. By engaging with classical concepts such as *logos* and *analogia*, both thinkers developed frameworks that bridge philosophy and science, as well as aesthetic form and mathematical law. Their work shows that harmony is not merely a thematic element but a conceptual principle that shapes their understanding of knowledge, classical theory, creativity, and intellectual identity. In this sense, Kostić and Milanković stand as representatives of a broader classical lineage within Serbian culture, reinterpreting ancient ideas in ways that continue to inform contemporary reflections on the relationship between order and harmony, between meaning and the structure of the world.

REFERENCES

- Dokić, Marija. 2024. *Ukrštaj, simetrija, smisao*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije.
- Kostić, Laza. 1962. *Odabrana dela I*. Novi Sad: Matica srpska.
- Kostić, Laza. 1972. *Odabrana dela II*. Beograd: Srpska književna zadruha.
- Kostić, Laza. 2015. *Osnovno načelo: kritički uvid u opštu filozofiju*. Sombor: Gradska biblioteka Karlo Bijelički.
- Kostić, Laza. 2019. *Ogledi*. Beograd: Nolit.
- Milanković, Milutin. 1947. *Osnivači prirodnih nauka Pitagora Demokritos Aristoteles Arhimedes*. Beograd: Izdanje društva Nikola Tesla.
- Milanković, Milutin. 1950. *Kroz carstvo nauka*. Beograd: Izdavačko preduzeće narodne Republike Srbije.
- Milanković, Milutin. 2020. *Kroz vasionu i vekove*. Novi Sad: Ikp „Bogunović“.
- Milosavljević, Predrag. 2020. „Sklad i saglasje u srpskoj kulturi i nauci: povodom osam vekova od Zakonopravila Svetoga Save (I deo).“ *Phlogiston* (28): 27–62.
- Petrović, Aleksandar. 2020. „Kroz vasionu i vekove do nepobedivog sunca“, u: *Kroz vasionu i vekove*. Milanković, M. Novi Sad: Ikp „Bogunović“.

Марија Докић**Институт за политичке студије, Београд*

ХАРМОНИЈА, ПРОПОРЦИЈА, ЛОГОС И АНТИЧКА МИСАО У ДЕЛИМА ЛАЗЕ КОСТИЋА И МИЛУТИНА МИЛАНКОВИЋА**

Резиме

Овај рад истражује начине на које Лаза Костић и Милутин Миланковић у свом стваралаштву препознају и тумаче античке појмове хармоније, пропорције и логоса као темељне принципе разумевања света. Полазећи од претпоставке да велики ствараоци увек трагају за оним што је трајно, рад показује како се античка мисао јавља као стабилна основа њихових интелектуалних визија. И код Костића и код Миланковића, античко није само историјски слој, већ активни оквир који обликује њихово поимање космоса и природе сазнања. Костић античку традицију развија кроз разматрања симетрије, хармоније, укрштаја и естетичке структуре, настојећи да покаже да хармонија представља унутрашњи закон појавности. Миланковић, са друге стране, у античким моделима препознаје концептуалне претходнике математичког поретка космоса, што му омогућава да сопствена научна истраживања постави у шири оквир идеје о уређености и разумљивости света. У раду се посебно разматрају места на којима се њихова мисао додирује са Платоновим и Аристотеловим категоријама, али без претварања антике у симболички мотив; уместо тога, античка мисао се анализира као структурни принцип који усмерава њихово разумевање стварности. Показује се да су хармонија, пропорција и логос за оба аутора више од метафора: они представљају концептуалне инструменте помоћу којих артикулишу однос између идеје и појаве, форме и значења, природе и мишљења. Упоређивањем њихових приступа

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

** Овај рад је настао у оквиру научноистраживачке делатности Института за политичке студије, коју финансира Министарство науке, технолошког развоја и иновација Републике Србије.

открива се да, упркос различитим дисциплинама, деле заједничку оријентацију ка унутрашњем поретку стварности и уверење да се истина открива кроз меру и склад. На тај начин, рад показује да се Костић и Миланковић могу разумети као део ширег класичног интелектуалног наслеђа, у оквиру којег античка мисао делује као трајни извор категорија које обликују њихово стваралаштво и њихов поглед на свет.

Кључне речи: хармонија, пропорција, логос, Лаза Костић, Милутин Миланковић, античка мисао.