Society and Modernity.
Semantic and philosophical deliberations
on the historical nature of the notion of ‘society’

The aim of the semantic and philosophical deliberations pursued in the article is to answer a question concerning the genealogy and, at one and the same time, the particular nature of the contemporary notion of ‘society’. The historical variability of the notion and its successive, objective designations are also presented. Is this notion universal, or is it relative, tightly bound up with the post-revolutionary epoch within it which it emerged, synchronously becoming a fundamental concept for a new science that was concurrently being born; sociology? Viewed from the historical perspective, ‘society’ first made its appearance as a concept closely related to the notion of community, going on to become manifest as the specific ‘feudal society’ and, finally, to emerge as ‘society’ with no adjective, an autonomous sphere of reality studied through sociology. In the course of these deliberations, what also comes into sharp relief is an essential difference between society sensu largo, in other words as the subject of sociology and sensu stricto, which is to say, a constituent part of the society-state juxtaposition. The article concludes with the posing of some questions which, in the author’s firm opinion, can only refer to society in the present-day, and thus modern, sense; questions which, on account of that same specific reference, by the same token reveal its particular nature.