PETAR HR. ILIEVSKI (02.07.1920-31.05.2013)

Petar Hr. Ilievski

The Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences marked the 85th anniversary of Academician Petar Ilievski's birth by organizing a scholarly symposium entitled *Classicism, Balcanistics, Paleoslavistics* – the three large domains of research of this scholar. I have not met another scholar with such a broad interest and profound knowledge and understanding of the truth that the language registers the cultural history of the people – the speakers of that language.

It is fascinating to look at P. Ilievski's works dealing with linguistic problems within the three domains mentioned above; each of them reveals a new scholarly profile of the author. In his distinguished work *Origin and Development of Writing with Special Regard to the Beginnings of Slavic Literacy* (published by MANU 2001, the second revised edition 2006), as well as in his Mycenaean studies, dominates a historian of culture; in his paleo-slavistic works and in those on the Macedonian mediaeval literacy can be found a philologist and research worker in the domain of the so called external history of the language, while in his Balkan studies dominates primarily a linguist – grammarian and etymologist. To this we can add that

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as a theologian and linguist P. Ilievski is one of the most renowned and most deserved and highly valued translators of the Holy Bible from Greek into Macedonian.

Petar Ilievski dedicated more than sixty years to text analysis. The analysis starts with the identification of the writing, goes through its decipherment, if needed, and then arrives at the content of its message. Here the approaches of the scholars differ. Some of them concentrate on the message itself, the so called exegesis of the text, hermeneutics, conditions and motives that created the message, others make an effort through analysis of the text to get to the reconstruction of the language system in which it is recorded. In Petar Ilievski we have a scholar who mastered all those procedures to perfection and, from the very beginning of his scholarly path, applied them both to his mother tongue - Macedonian, and to the classical languages he studied.

My reflections connected with P. Ilievski's scholarly and scientific work, which I summarize here, are formulated from the position of a Slavist and Macedonist. I am totally incompetent to adequately evaluate his Mycenaean studies. Ilievski's monograph *The life of the Mycenaeans from their own records with special regard to the onomastic and prosopographic deductions* (published by MANU 2000) was my first contact with Mycenaean topics. A magnificent interpretation of the records on the clay tablets leads the author to an all-embracing reconstruction of the life of Mycenaean society. Gradually becoming acquainted with Ilievski's other works, I realised that such an ability to revive the past by relatively modest written statements was one of the charismatic characteristics of his scholarly work. I detected the same capability later on in his Balkan and Macedonian studies, which were much closer to my own scholarly interests.

Ilievski contributed greatly to classical studies as editor-in-chief for many years of *Ziva antika*, one of the most renowned scholarly journals of today in this field; most notable were his efforts to attract new eminent contributors to the journal, as well as to ensure that it continued to be published.

The knowledge of the classical languages and their whole documented history enabled Ilievski to present to the Macedonists, as well as to the broader circle of Balkanists, the capital volume *Balkan Linguistic Studies with Regard to the Historical Development of the Macedonian Language* (published by the Institute of Macedonian Language, Skopje 1998). As the author states in the summary to this edition, "This book represents a collection of forty three papers, during the last twenty five years and divided according to the subject in two parts: I Balkan patterns in the grammatical structure of Macedonian consisting of twenty six papers (...) and II Balkan

onomastic studies (17 papers)". From the moment of its appearance the book became "a bible" to any person interested in the historical grammar of the Macedonian language, as well as in the mechanisms of the stemming and spread of the so called Balkanisms, i. e. (I quote again the author): "... those structural linguistic peculiarities which are common to more than two Balkan languages and extend over a broad area". Today, twenty five years after the publication of the work, little can be added to the inventory of morpho-syntactic and lexical Balkanisms proposed by Ilievski, and to his recommended interpretations. I shall feel free to express here my personal and profound gratitude to Academician Ilievski for his readiness, from the foundation of the Research Centre for Areal Linguistics at MANU in 2000, to act as President of the Scientific Council of the Centre. He evidently did not consider this function a formality - since he was permanently in contact with myself, the director of the Centre, followed all our initiatives and achievements, did not spare his time to give advice and supplied the Centre with the necessary scholarly literature pertinent to our research work from his rich personal library.

Ilievski's text *Two Different Approaches towards Interpreting Ancient Texts and Some Greek-Slavonic Onomastic Parallels*, published in Prilozi, MANU 2007, extended in 2008 and published in English in *Proceedings of the Macedonian-American Scholarly Conference*, played an important role and is still current. The text represents an appeal in defense of scientific truth and methodological correctness and shows the absurdity of the theory that there is a connection between the middle text on the Rosetta-stone and the southern Macedonian dialects.

Ilievski's scholarly work in the domain of early Macedonian literacy and its external history has been published successively in three parts: *Unsettling Light (to the Slavonic primeval teachers and their disciples*, MANU 1999, the above mentioned monograph edition on the development of writing - and the crown in its line of investigation - *Tradition and Innovations in the Macedonian Church Slavonic Literary Monuments from the Turkish Period* (MANU 2005). During the five centuries of Turkish reign the author distinguishes two phases in the development of the culture and the languages of the subdued Slavs: first - convergent and second - divergent. The richly documented discussion of the author is related to this thesis.

The reader who is acquainted with the opus magnum of Acad. Petar Ilievski will easily conceive that here I could only touch upon the various topics. A more complete bibliography can be found in volume XXXV/2 of *Prilozi*, MANU, OLLN, Skopje 2010.

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