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ON THE OCCASION OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF ACADEMICIAN PETAR HR. ILIEVSKI (1920-2013)

On the occasion of the centenary of the birth of academician Petar Hr. Ilievski, a long-time editor-in-chief of Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante, we publish this text with a brief overview of his academic work.¹

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Academician Petar Hr. Ilievski was born in the village of Bigor Dolenci, Kičevo, on July 2, 1920. After finishing primary school in his hometown, and middle school in Negotin Krajina (Serbia), he enrolled in the Orthodox seminary in Bitola. He then studied at the Faculty of Theology in Sofia, graduating in 1946. As a student, he was involved in the Public Liberation Movement in 1942, taking part in the War in 1944. Following the Liberation, Ilievski worked in Skopje as a high school teacher and taught catechism, Latin and Russian. During this time, he also worked on the Macedonian translation of the Gospel, which was eventually published in 1952. In that same year, 1952, he enrolled as a part-time student of Classical Philology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje; he was also taken on as a librarian at the Faculty and as a technical editor of the academic journal *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante*, which, at the time, was just beginning its publication under the editorial auspice of prof. M. D. Petruševski. In 1956, Ilievski received a BA in Classical Philology and was hired as a teaching assistant at the Department. During 1957-19588, he specialized in Cambridge, UK, where he also worked on his doctoral dissertation “*The Ablative, Instrumental and Locative in the Oldest Greek Texts*” – one of the first dissertations in the field of Mycenaean studies, which he defended at the University in Skopje in 1960. This paved the way for his teaching career – from assistant professor to full professor of Greek and Latin historical grammar – until his retirement in 1985.

¹ This text was originally published in Macedonian in *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante* 55.1-2 (2005), 5-20. We are republishing it in English with several minor modifications.

Apart from Skopje, prof. Ilievski gave lectures at the universities in Rome, Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Tirana, and many others. He participated in numerous academic conferences in the country and abroad; his bibliography consists of over 400 entries.

His social engagement was impressive. He helped to establish the Society of Classical Studies in the former Yugoslavia, as well as to organise two academic congresses in that area of study (the articles were published in *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante*, in 1978 and 1990). He also organised the VIII International Mycenaean Colloquium in 1985 (the articles were published in *Tractata Mycenaea*, MANU, 1987), as well as two international academic gatherings on Sts. Clement and Naum Ohridski in 1993, and several other meetings of international scholars.

In 1965, he was elected member of the Standing International Commission of Mycenaean Studies at the World Confederation of Societies of Classical Studies. In 1979, he became a member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts; in 1981 he became a member of the Centre for Balkanological Studies at the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Due to his outstanding academic activity, academician Ilievski has been awarded several high-ranking awards and recognitions; among them the prestigious “11th October” award, which he received in 1973 and in 1988.

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A brief glance at his bibliography sufficiently indicates the volume and diversity of the scholar engagement of academician Ilievski. Insiders are well aware that what they have before them is an enormous and multifaceted academic opus, which will cause a challenge for any researcher or reviewer, as it will require competence in areas that are sometimes very distinct from one another. A genuine evaluation of his complex work can be given only by a group of several specialists; here, we will offer a mere overview, limited by the author's modest knowledge of the problems presented.

It may be stated with certainty that the academic work and research of academician Ilievski mainly covers three areas of study: a. Classical studies, where Mycenaean studies occupy a prominent place; b. Balkan linguistic studies, with special reference to the historical development of Macedonian, and c. Byzantine-Slavic relations, especially in the times of Cyril and Methodius.

Mycenaean studies occupy a prominent place in the academic work in the field of classical studies, not only because, personally, therein lies the subject of the doctoral thesis of Ilievski, but also due to the fact that this significant work marks the beginning of a decades-long focus on these problems, as well as international affirmation. The aforementioned title of the thesis makes it clear that Ilievski focuses

on the ablative in the Mycenaean Greek dialect. After a careful reading of the Mycenaean texts, he offers an analysis of numerous examples of the use of ablative case functions, expressed by forms in the instrumental case in Mycenaean Greek. What should be borne in mind is that this doctoral dissertation is not only a ground-breaking work in the field, but due to the original approach and solid argumentation, it is widely accepted in scholarship, and often referenced by eminent experts.

Ilievski's work in the field of Mycenaean studies has been presented before (also in *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante*);² on this occasion, however, we should especially note "*The Life of the Mycenaeans in their Written Testimonies*", an academic monograph published in the year 2000, representing a synthesis of the achievements to this point in this academic field. It is imposed as such not only because of its panoptic approach, but also due to the series of personal discoveries and original solutions stemming from previous individual and specialized research, which are embedded in this comprehensive work.

The monograph covers all key topics pertaining to the life and culture of the Mycenaeans: geographical location, population, economy (livestock, agriculture, crafts), religious beliefs, military issues, with a special emphasis on anthroponomy as a source for the life and language of Mycenaean Greece. The manner in which the material is presented is unambiguous: starting directly from the data contained in the Linear B records, a critical position on many practical issues related to the Mycenaean civilization is built on the basis of original evidence. In the process of dealing with individual problems, each step witnesses high erudition and exhibits a consistent effort to come up with specific solutions that reflect personal research experience and conviction. The examples are numerous.

In describing the livestock in Pylos as one of the major Mycenaean centres, Ilievski sets out from the terms that denote small cattle: a-ko-ra, we-re-ke, ta-to-mo, pa-ra-jo, we-ne-we. Referring specifically to the term a-ko-ro, he lists two possible meanings: "sum" and "herd", arguing convincingly that the most probable meaning of this important word is "sum" (derived from the a-ke-re / agērei, "to collect", a root that also gave us the Latin word *grex*, -gis, "herd") – which refers to livestock acquired as a tax or gift. A broad comparison with specific Balkan occurrences throughout history shows that such herds were also owned by medieval nobles. (pp. 124-5).

Such a detailed analysis was also applied to the name of the god Zeus, as well as to Dionysus, whose undoubted presence in the Mycenaean pantheon is derived from several tablets, especially from KN Gq 5 (p. 221). Having determined that we are facing the oldest known

² See M. Todorović, "Petro Chr. Ilievski – sexagenario", *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante* 30.1-2, 5-8.

occurrence of the god Dionysus, the author concludes that “not only ritual ceremonies, but also the name of the god was syncretized by Indo-European and non-Indo-European elements in much older times than we thought before the decipherment of Linear B” (p. 222).

Other seemingly small details are carefully examined, such as the configuration of the war chariot, i.e. the terminology of the wheel and its parts (see especially pp. 264-5). It is interesting that, from here, we reach once again significant and well-argued conclusions about both the everyday life of the Mycenaeans and the historical background of Homeric poetry, where many details were previously unclear.

The study of anthroponomy occupies a prominent place in the concluding chapters of the book; there, academician Ilievski sets on a study of personal names in the Mycenaean, Homeric, classical Greek and Slavic worlds. Well-informed on this issue in many ways, he establishes parallels of etymology and meaning, which result in unexpected, but deeply thought-out and reasoned solutions. Among other things, he elaborates on the Mycenaean-Homeric and Classical Greek complex names with (-)ānōr, (-)andro(s)/-ra, and the later Greek and Slavic names with klēs and -slav; he concludes that the Mycenaean personal names are closer to the heroic, Homeric personal names in the way of formation of both complex and simple names with suffixes.

Parallel to Mycenaean research, as a classical philologist, academician Ilievski appeared in other specialised fields of the discipline. We may single out “*On Ancient Prosody in Macedonian Translation*”, a work not very large in volume, but rich in content. In a series of collected articles, Ilievski is mainly interested in the language and metrics of the translations of ancient Greek epic into Macedonian. Once he has determined the suitability of the speaking rhythm of Macedonian to the creation of an ancient hexameter in translation, he points out the danger of the excessive presence of dactylic hexameters. The translator’s skill is reflected not only in the creation of dactylic hexameters, but also in the breaking of their uniformity. Elsewhere, he points out the dactylic rhythm of the Macedonian folk tales in comparison to the Homeric epic hexameter; he concludes that the hexameters in Macedonian prose are far from the complex shapes of the classical Greek hexameter and have a mainly logaoedic character, i.e. contain metric beats that match the speech units.

The text dedicated to the term “harmonia” partly deviates from the thematic framework of the book; however, Ilievski dwells on a general notion under which one can include every work of art in antiquity. Tracing the formation and development of the term “harmonia” (derived from the root *ar-, *ra- meaning “joint”, “connection point”) from earliest Mycenaean and Homeric Greek onwards, the author shows that it originally described the fundamental notion of harmony of the parts with the whole, as a basic hallmark of what we define as being simultaneously good and beautiful. This is one of the essential

problems dealt with in Greek literature, philosophy and art; academicians Ilievski explores it in several of his other separate works.

Taking full advantage of his broad education, academicians Ilievski held a lifetime of commitment to areas that, at first glance, seem far removed from the classics, but in fact, thanks to his comparative approach, act convergently and lead to surprising and significant results.

As an answer to the pressing need to defend the individuality of the Macedonian language, in 1962 he started a series of texts on the damaskin literature in Macedonian translation; the most important contribution is unquestionably his edition of *The Damaskin of Krnino*. Having spent numerous hours studying in the manuscript departments of the libraries in Belgrade, Sofia and Plovdiv, as well as on microfilms from the manuscripts in Moscow and Kiev, academicians Ilievski managed to complete this work, pointing out the peculiarities of the Macedonian language from centuries ago, long before it was codified as a separate modern literary language.

The wider field of Balkanological research is especially marked by his linguistic studies, where the development of the Macedonian language once again has a special place. Central to this is the extensive “*Balkanological Linguistic Studies*”, a work consisting of over 40 separate articles. Setting out from the “*Balkan Language Substratum*”, academicians Ilievski explores the reasons for the language changes and the mutual movement of the languages spoken in a territory such as the Balkan Peninsula. He analyses morpho-syntactic features, the lexicon, and word formation; onomastic studies also have a prominent place. By our free choice, we would single out the problem with the origin of the suffixes -issa (in Greek) and -ica (in the Slavic languages); the author shows that the influence between these two linguistic environments in the Balkans did not go exclusively from Greek to Slavic, but also vice versa. Furthermore, he pays special attention to the Macedonian translation of the damaskin from the second half of the XVI century, noting the peculiarities of the spoken language, causing Macedonian to differ even then from the neighbouring South Slavic languages.

The wide comparative and specialised approach provides a new and thorough insight into the problems due to which, as stated by Blaže Koneski (p. 6), these papers will become inevitable in all further studies concerning the history of the Macedonian language.

In response to a debate on the emergence and development of Slavic literacy that occurred in the Macedonian public in the early 1990s, Ilievski published “*The Emergence and Development of the Alphabet, with Special Reference to the Beginnings of Slavic Literacy*”. This book approaches the problem of Slavic literacy using extensive analogies with older scripts. Given that the Slavs adopted the advantages of the Byzantine and Mediterranean, and thus indirectly of the Middle Eastern culture, the research enters the field of the very beginnings

of writing in general. The stance that numbers chronologically precede letters is especially emphasized; the mutual connection between them remains a lasting mark up to today's digital expression of the script. The question of the appearance and development of the alphabetic scripts is dealt with extensively, from the earliest myths and historical accounts of their appearance in the Middle East (related to the Phoenicians) to the adaptations into other languages and the appearance of the Slavic alphabet, with repeated emphasis on the relationship between letters and numbers.

In the second part of the book, special attention is paid to the Glagolitic alphabet, used in the Ohrid Literary Centre, in the oldest times of Slavic literacy, as an official alphabet. Ilievski refers to the Glagolitic alphabet as the "iconic script", created immediately after the victory of the iconoclasts in order to serve as visual evangelical sermons. Hence, in the draft of certain letters there is a deep ideological (Christian) motivation and phonetic-graphematic harmony. Let us add that this is a work in which the Glagolitic alphabet is analysed for the first time in our country on a large scale.

The above-mentioned creative synthesis of classical and Slavic culture in the academic work of academician Ilievski is also present, although in a more discreet manner, in the field of Cyril and Methodius studies, best presented by his work "*Lights that do not Set: the Slavic First Teachers and their Pupils*".

In this work, Ilievski analyses the main advantages of the mission of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius: the creation of the Slavic alphabet, the codification of the literary, i.e. liturgical language, and the first translation of the most important biblical and liturgical books. Along with this, he explains the idea of equality of all languages, which is argued by Constantine the Philosopher (St. Cyril), an idea that, from today's perspective, we can see as a defence of the cultural principles of modern Europe. The dignity of the mission of our First Teachers is shown by determining the true motive that led them in their struggle, namely, not a simple fulfilment of the political tasks given to them by the imperial court (which are interpreted as secondary), but a sincere devotion to the service of the Word in an evangelical sense.

The Greek-Slavic symbiosis stands out on a cultural level, conditioned by the direct contact of the Slavs with the Greek language. Ilievski once again brings to light the thesis of the two-way influence that took place. The Greek influence was certainly greater, and is reflected on several levels (borrowing untranslated Greek words, creating calques, etc.), but the Slavic language left traces on Greek that can be seen even in modern Greek (mainly in agricultural and livestock terminology, as well as in common law).

In some of the texts dedicated to St. Clement of Ohrid, the author points out St. Clement's personal contribution to the development

of the Slavic abstract lexicon, as well as to the creation of models of Slavic word formation rules. Several separate articles offer a multifaceted analysis of the newly discovered “*Canon of St. Andrew the Apostle*” by St. Naum of Ohrid, determining his high literary achievements in both style (epithets, metaphors, comparisons...) and composition. The previously unknown literary work of St. Naum appears as an expression of the norms of classical Byzantine hymnography and as a personal creative mark.

Besides describing St. Cyril of Salonica as an orthodox theologian with great and diverse talents (poetic, organizational, etc.), Ilievski places special emphasis on his classical education (St. Cyril was also a professor of philosophy at the Magnaura University).

His last book in this area of study, “*Tradition and Innovation in the Macedonian Church Slavonic Literary Monuments from the Turkish Period*”, emphasizes the continuity in the Slavonic written tradition, although with several innovations. This time, Ilievski is interested in the Macedonian literary monuments from the XV to the XIX centuries, i.e. from the time of Ottoman domination until the Balkan Wars. Within a broader undertaking, he distinguishes two basic developmental stages, the first of which is a time of cultural (and linguistic) rapprochement of the Balkan Christian peoples in conditions of oppression, which lead to the so-called “Balkan linguistic union”, while from the XVIII century onward the development turns into divergent directions, ending with the formation of modern Balkan literary languages based on the vernacular. Starting from the XVI century, and especially from the end of the XVIII century through the so-called damaskin literature, the spoken language intended for the broad popular strata increasingly enters the Macedonian literary tradition.

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The presented works of academician Ilievski represent the main part of his academic opus. However, a glance at his bibliography, consisting of over 400 entries, attests that his work, in both volume and content, far exceeds those limits. The account of his work cannot be complete without a review – albeit a vague one – of the numerous smaller writings commonly referred to in scholarship as “opuscula minor”. On the basis of the review of his academic studies and articles, professional and popular texts in periodicals and the press, we can get an idea not only of his wide scholastic interests, but also of his multifaceted engagement.

a. His work on the notion of “harmonia” has already been mentioned, but it should be borne in mind that Ilievski covers this topic in as many as four articles. It is one of his characteristics to return numerous times to certain issues that particularly concern him, to refine them, to think about them and, in some way, to live with them. We know that these articles were published at a time when our society was

exposed to unpredictable events, so we can interpret the articles on “harmonia” as a repeated appeal for harmony and unity, as a primordial force that helped our community overcome historical turmoil.

b. In the field of higher scholarship, the leading place undoubtedly belongs to the numerous articles dedicated to Mycenaean studies. Unlike the more comprehensive papers that present the results of many years of research, these relatively short texts let us in the creative laboratory of academician Ilievski, and allow us to follow his meticulous and lucid analysis of the Mycenaean tablets. These papers are scattered throughout his bibliography, and some of his interpretations of the ideograms have long been recognized and accepted as enduring values in academy.

c. Using the experience of Mycenaean studies, where the names of places and people (written on clay tablets) are important starting information for the reconstruction of an ancient civilization, Ilievski approaches the domestic field and dedicates a series of articles on the toponymy and anthroponymy in Macedonia. Of course, the comparative approach allows him to solve problems not on a case-by-case basis, but with a broad scientific foundation and from a deep historical perspective.

d. A special place is given to the influence of Greek and Latin on the Balkan, primarily Slavic languages. At times, this influence is interpreted culturally (we often have returning influences from the Slavic world, forming a kind of cultural symbiosis); other times, his interest is focused on linguistics. The problem of the languages on the soil of Macedonia in ancient and early Byzantine times is especially delved into.

e. The Macedonian language and Macedonian literary heritage also belong to the topics to which academician Ilievski constantly returns throughout his life. The Macedonian language is processed on several levels: the double object, the descriptive comparison, the lexicon, the accent, the transcription of Greek names into Macedonian, the relationship between ancient and modern Macedonian, as well as the place of Macedonian among other Balkan languages.

His studies on damaskin literature (as an important segment of the history of the Macedonian language, and as proof of its gradual, but definite individuality over the centuries) are mainly linguistically oriented, but the literary side of the issue is also dealt with. Ilievski dedicates a special study to Macedonian literature and culture in the context of the Mediterranean cultural sphere.

The four articles published in the world's most important encyclopaedia of classical culture, *Der Neue Pauly* (Stuttgart-Weimar), bear special importance for the affirmation of the classical heritage in Macedonian culture.

f. Ilievski displayed a constant concern for the affirmation and popularization of classical studies and culture in our country. Of course, his engagement on a professional level was expressed through various professional meetings, seminars and committees, but it is also more than noticeable in written form, in periodicals and the press. On one hand, Ilievski points out the extraordinary importance of the classics for our culture; on the other hand, he is committed to the classical education and training of qualified staff, who will be able to properly convey the values of antiquity to future students.

g. Our review of the bibliography reveals other remarkably fruitful activities of academician Ilievski. Namely, until 2005 he had published as many as 73 reviews of scholar and professional works from the field of classics, both from our country and abroad. Tireless and devoted, as always, he selflessly strove to spread the latest information about what was being studied in the world, to express his judgment, and at the same time to establish a link of communication between international and domestic scholarship.

Special attention should be paid to the accounts of the scholarly work of academician Mihail D. Petruševski: not only because of the importance of this eminent classical philologist, but also because of the attitude of academician Ilievski toward his former professor. The number of eight reviews in itself speaks of the piety he felt toward his teacher. In addition to the analyses of the individual works of academician Petruševski (the studies on the critical edition and translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, the translation of the *Iliad*, and the critical editions and translations of Prličev), there are general reviews of his scholarly work: three during his lifetime (with two special bibliographies), and five more texts after the death of his professor: two immediately after his passing, and three more on the occasion of an anniversary of his death.

h. On a recent occasion, academician Ilievski confessed that many times in his life he had been guided by immediate needs, imposed by time. As old-fashioned as it may seem to us today, in the very spirit of the heroic age – when people were ready to sacrifice themselves for the ideals of their people and homeland – Ilievski resolutely defends the Macedonian cause with all his knowledge and intellectual ability.

Thus, for example, at the end of the 1950s, when in a political pamphlet by the University of Thessaloniki, hidden behind the mask of scholarship, the originality of the Macedonian language was denied, academician Ilievski devoted himself to long-term academic research in order to determine the uniqueness of the Macedonian language over the centuries. Hence, the mentioned series of studies on damaskin literature. Again, when in the early 1990s some of our university professors began to spread uncritical claims that Slavic literacy was older than Sumerian and Aegean literacy – arbitrary views that could only embarrass our scholarship in the world – he opposed them with an exten-

sive scientific project titled “*Slavic Literacy and the Ohrid Literary Centre*”, supported by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts; along other competent scholars and experts concerning the problem, Ilievski critically exposed the matter in seven comprehensive works.

His knowledge and critical scientific approach were applied even more directly immediately after the independence of Macedonia, at a time when political circles from the south started a type of aggression toward Macedonia, disputing, among other things, the name of our nation. Academician Ilievski did not stay aside, nor was he satisfied with declarative views, but entered the defence of the Macedonian cause in his own way – with a series of scholarly texts in which the main word was had by scientific arguments. In a number of articles, he discusses Macedonian relations with Greece in general, while in other articles he argues the uniqueness and historical basis of the Macedonian language and name.

A common feature of all these polemical texts is the avoidance of ephemeral political views and the high level of scholarly criticism.

i. Academician Ilievski gave a positive contribution to the construction of an independent Macedonia by naming the new national currency - the Denar. He even provided a public explanation of his choice in writing. As we would say, he took on the role of godfather of our Denar, acting in accordance with our unique situation – competently, responsibly and far-sightedly.

j. In the world of classical scholarship, there is another, less known, field, in which academician Ilievski had been working on since his youth, and with no less zeal. A theologian according to his secondary school education, he participated in the affirmation of Orthodoxy in our lands from his youth, often in unfavourable political circumstances. On a practical level, we should mention his engagement as a lecturer in religious education or in various organizational committees (among others, in the Main Commission for the establishment of the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Skopje in 1976/7); however, his theoretical efforts are hardly less significant.

In 1960 he wrote several articles for the Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia, including “*Hilarion of Moglena*”, “*John I, the Archbishop of Ohrid*” and “*The Religious Schools in Macedonia*”.

The publishing of the Gospel in Macedonian, an endeavour which he worked on alongside two other translators, is of great importance for Macedonian Orthodoxy, and culture in general. In addition to several smaller texts on Christianity and Orthodoxy in particular, published in domestic periodicals, a prominent place is occupied by his book “*Christianity and Peace - Peace and Christianity*”, co-authored with T. Gocevski.

We should also mention the texts in which Ilievski pays attention to the Orthodox heritage and culture, preserved in our monasteries.

Besides working for the renewal and revitalization of the Macedonian sanctuaries, most of the texts are dedicated to the monastery of the Immaculate Holy Mother of God near Kičevo, as well as other sanctuaries.

Hardly pretending to be assessors of the academic works of academician Ilievski, we will allow ourselves to express our personal impression of him. Concentrating on his unusually rich and thematically-branched opus, we realise that we have before us an extraordinarily fruitful scholar, who has managed to put his multifaceted education to use in creating a unique synthesis, and establishing international standards of academic research that will serve as a template for generations of scholars coming.

4

There is a rule amongst ancient biographers according to which the biography of a certain figure cannot, and must not, be reduced to a simple listing of their works. In order to acquire a complete picture, it is necessary to present them as a person, because what is written about them, without bringing the person to life on a personal level, is worthless.

Academician Ilievski is a professor in the eyes of our classicists. Directly or indirectly, he is indeed a professor to all of us who work in the field of classical studies. Carrying out his professional obligation with the seriousness and responsibility that were inherent in him, he showed constant care for classical education at all levels. I remember how he tried, to the point of exhaustion, to explain a problem during class, how he brought us books in the classroom in order to introduce us to academic scholarship first-hand, with quotes from the great magi of science. As a supervisor of final papers or MA and PhD works, he approached his duties seriously, as if his teaching career depended on it. In the role of teacher and pedagogue, we all know Ilievski as an approachable and straightforward person. As an example, I will mention my first meeting with him, when I went to his office with the intention of asking him about the possibility of enrolling in a Classics programme. Upon entering, I found him eating an apple during a break between classes; he told me to sit down, treated me to a sliced apple, and the conversation started spontaneously, naturally...

There is one thing that today's man, devoted to personal worries, can hardly understand. As a man of action, academician Ilievski was the organizer of many associations, gatherings and institutions. At a very young age, he organized the City Library in Kičevo, where he personally procured duplicate books from the National Library in Skopje. Shortly afterwards, in the church of Saint Paraskeva of the Balkans, he put together a church choir. Practically helping our science, education and the Macedonian Orthodox Church, he participated in innumerable boards: religious, academic and educational... In the field

of Classical Studies in particular, as mentioned above, he was the organizer of the largest professional associations and international academic gatherings. The way he did this was unusual: without much fuss, quietly, with the feeling that things would sort themselves out and go as they should. It is often said that the best organizer is one whose work remains unnoticed by others.

On this occasion, we are also obliged to mention Ilievski's decades of work as editor of the journal *Živa Antika / Antiquité Vivante*. Approaching, together with academician Petruševski, this voluntary and full of responsibility commitment from the very beginning, he undertook all the duties familiar only to those who have participated in such an endeavour. Academician Ilievski was, for years simultaneously, editor, proof-reader, finance officer, as well as self-appointed sales and exchange representative, distributor, and who knows what else. In his enthusiasm, he often engaged family members, especially his wife, for laborious proofreading and translation work. In a casual conversation, I learned that in the absence of proper mail delivery, many copies of the journal had been transported on his bicycle on several occasions. The journal had to stay alive and reach readers around the world.

One could say much more about the man, the philanthropist, who as a youngster worked as a volunteer in a partisan hospital fighting typhus, or about the care of the father of three daughters... But maybe someone would say that this is too much for one human life.

On an anniversary dedicated to academician Ilievski, held at the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts in November 2005, he expressed his gratitude for the honours bestowed upon him and soberly said: "I am aware that "honos onus est". Honour is a burden, it requires new responsibilities and efforts. But at my age, when strength is abruptly weakening, it would be unrealistic and ridiculous to promise that I will continue to strive with undiminished enthusiasm."

However, all of us around him were witness to his increased creative activity in his last ten years. A careful reviewer of his bibliography will realize that half of the published papers belong to the period after he retired in 1985. It is surprising that these are his greatest works, in which he completed his academic achievements. Starting from the age of 77, when a pensioner is expected to enjoy the fruits of his previous efforts, academician Ilievski achieved a creative renaissance, which is certainly a rare case and, we would say, an expression of a blessing.