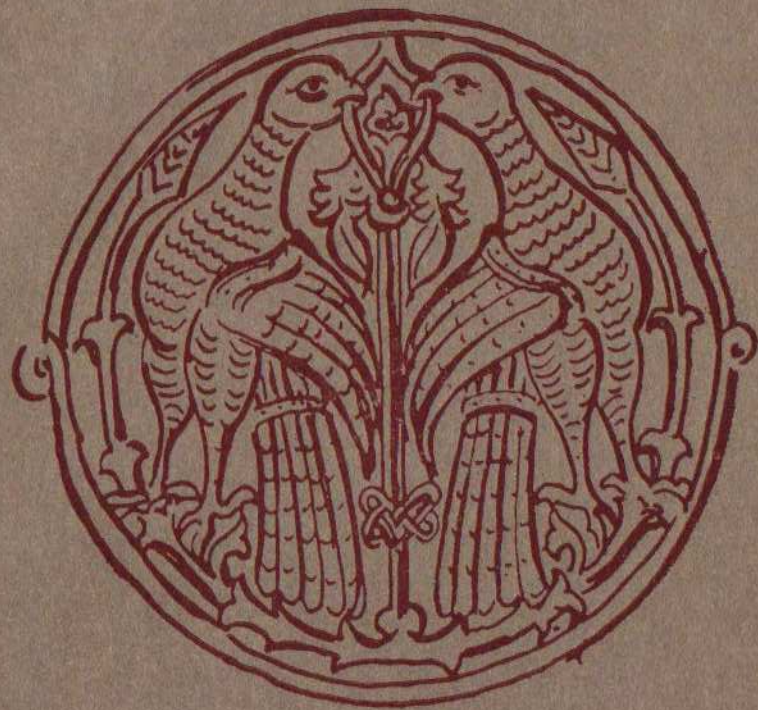




BY GIORGIO NURIGIANI

THE MACEDONIAN
GENIUS THROUGH
THE CENTURIES

DAVID HARVEY PUBLISHERS
LONDON 1972



The Macedonian Genius Through The Centuries

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BY GIORGIO NURIGIANI

David Harvey Publishers
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BY GIORGIO NORDI

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY
IAN ROBERT TURNAGE

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I LOOK UPON THE WORLD AS
A FIELD FOR CULTURAL
COMPETITION AMONG THE NATIONS.

GOCE DELCHEV

Preface

Today Macedonia occupies a well-deserved place among those historical, geographical and sentimental symbols which touch the hearts of all peoples and evoke a sympathetic resonance throughout the world.

The reasons for this sympathy for Macedonia are not far to seek. In their centuries-long struggle against oppression the Macedonian people and their valiant leaders are highly esteemed for their contribution to the history of the Balkans, which have had, and still have, so much influence on the course of events in Europe.

In the English translation of my book, *Il genio macedone attraverso i secoli* (The Macedonian Genius through the Centuries), my aim has been to put on record the finest achievements of Macedonian culture and art in the past. This valuable contribution of the Macedonian people to human civilization is the fruit of their creative spirit, continuously active throughout the centuries.

The Macedonian people are justly proud of their glorious past and have a deep love of their native soil, which has never failed to inspire them

in their struggles to win for their nation its rightful place in the sun.

The considerable contribution of the Macedonian people to human civilization is too little known; even less known is its real value for the progress of mankind, and more particularly for that of the Slav world. Five centuries of oppression under the Turkish yoke did not succeed in destroying the national genius of the Macedonian people, who hope that Europe will remember their contribution to civilization and in gratitude will accord them the justice that is their due.

No one can deny the strong national solidarity of this people, who have won their freedom after the shedding of much blood and tears, and after suffering much cruelty and many disappointments.

In their long, tortured history the Macedonian people were subjected to various dominations and oppressions, without ever being recognized. They had continuously to suffer the influence of others, but in spite of this they never lost their individuality or their national consciousness. Rather they became more compact ethnically, so that for long periods of time they were able to demonstrate the creative force of their inflexible spirit. The Macedonians always had to fight for their existence and their freedom, and because of the unbearable conditions of living in their native land, they were obliged to leave it and find refuge in other Balkan countries, both near and far, which were liberated from the Turkish yoke much earlier than they were. Emigrating in large numbers, they adapted themselves to the customs and conditions and learned the language of the countries in which

they established their home. A hard-working and intelligent people, the Macedonians did not lose their identity but soon began to make their mark in the social, political and cultural life of the countries where they settled. Most of them have not forgotten Macedonia, the beloved country of their birth.

It is estimated that up to the First World War half a million Macedonians emigrated to Bulgaria alone, about 200,000 to the U.S.A. and Canada, and rather less to Australia and New Zealand, South America, and other countries. This flow of emigration continued up to the Second World War, while emigration from Greece (Aegean Macedonia) still goes on today. Thus the Macedonian spirit and genius are still being spread throughout the world.

When Macedonia did not have a State of its own but was divided into three parts, many of her children gave their valuable contribution to the political and cultural development of other peoples. To begin with Byzantium, we may mention the great Jovan Kukulsel, who laid the foundations of the new system of musical notation. Later, in the Ottoman Empire, many Macedonians distinguished themselves as publicists and deputies. In Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Rumania and other countries too, hundreds of Macedonians won a name for themselves as statesmen, diplomats, scientists, professors, celebrated writers, publicists and journalists, painters and prelates (including a patriarch of Constantinople), and generals who commanded foreign armies.

Another important point is that the Macedonians did not just suffer in silence the influence

of other cultures, but hit back as best they could until at last, 30 years ago, they established their own State in part of their fatherland, in common with the other peoples of Yugoslavia. The mere fact of the creation of the Macedonian State completely changed the lot of the Macedonians and the opinion of the rest of mankind regarding their national existence. This was the great moment for Macedonia that the celebrated British statesman, William Gladstone, had foreseen in his famous letter, which I will quote in full below.

The Times, Saturday, 6th February 1897.

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE BALKAN
CONFEDERATION

The Byron Society, which is actively engaged in disseminating appeals in Greece and Bulgaria to help the cause of the Macedonians, has communicated to its agents a letter from Mr. Gladstone for distribution in the vernacular in South-Eastern Europe. The Society aims at inducing the Greek, Serbian, and Bulgarian Governments to come to an early agreement in reference to the Macedonian question.

The letter is as follows:

HARWARDEN CASTLE,
Jan. 19, 1897.

"Dear Sir,

The hopelessness of the Turkish Government should make me witness with delight its being swept out of the countries which it tortures. Next to the Ottoman Government nothing can be more deplorable and blameworthy than jealousies between Greek and Slav and plans by the States already existing for appropriating other territory. *Why not Macedonia for the Macedonians as well as Bul-*

garia for the Bulgarians and Serbia for the Serbians? (My italics, G. N.).

And if they are small and weak, let them bind themselves together for defence, so that they may not be scattered by others, either great or small, which would probably be the effect of their quarelling among themselves.

Your very faithful,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

In this letter Gladstone expresses the hope that the countries under the Turkish yoke will gain their freedom, and then he gives his opinion only on the solution of the Macedonian question. His position is quite clear: Macedonia must belong to the Macedonians as a separate State within the framework of a Balkan Federation. For him this was the only possible solution of the problem, a solution he had arrived at after many years of study. Gladstone's appeal became the watchword of all Macedonian progressives.

In their rapid economic and cultural advance, the present generation of Macedonians are following worthily in the footsteps of their forefathers. For them the Republic of Macedonia is an historic reality and a challenge to them to turn their creative potentialities into solid achievements. Such achievements can be seen in their educational institutions, ranging from the schools where the Macedonian language is taught to the "Cyril and Methodius" University of Skopje and the Academy of Sciences and Arts, as well as in the literary and artistic works with which Macedonians are increasingly making a name for themselves in contemporary European culture.

For a quarter of a century now the Macedonian people have been devoting all their energies to furthering the spiritual and material progress of their country. Contemporary Macedonian culture is a striking and exemplary demonstration of the great springs of creative energy that are released when a small people at last wins the freedom it has struggled and yearned for so long. This is true although the Macedonian State is not yet united, since some Macedonian territory, apart from that in Yugoslavia, still forms part of Bulgaria and Greece.

To get a true idea of the extraordinary energy and enthusiasm shown by the Macedonian people of every walk of life and social class in their national renaissance, it is really necessary to visit this gallant little country and see at first hand what is being achieved. Set free after so many centuries of cruel oppression, the Macedonian people are now applying all their creative capacities to reviving their age-old cultural traditions and Slav civilization, to renewing their ancient glory in all its pristine splendour. The ferment of freedom at work in the hearts and minds of this hard-working, tenacious people may be expected to yield a more and more valuable contribution to the progress of mankind and the common stock of cultural wealth.

In conclusion, I should like to say that many distinguished Italians have expressed their admiration for, and given their moral support to, the work of liberation of the Macedonian people. I have already cited Gladstone's famous letter on the Macedonian question. There are many other

British names I could also mention, such as that of my friend, the distinguished publicist, James Boucher, Miss G. Muir Mackenzie and Miss A. P. Irby, Sir Edward Boyle, President of the London Balkan Committee, Lord James Bryce, who showed his friendship for Macedonia during the glorious Ilinden rising, Lord Noel Buxton, who wrote some excellent books about the Macedonian people, the traveller John Fraser, the well-known publicist, Lady Thomson, and, more recently, H.R. Wilkinson, who have all helped to establish the truth of the Macedonian national idea in Britain and in the world.

Rome, February 1972. *GIORGIO NURIGIANI*



The Brothers SS. Cyril and Methodius

There are few achievements in the history of civilization like that of the brothers SS. Cyril and Methodius, in whose mission we find the first signs of Macedonian culture. Their great work introduced the Slavs to the world of culture and put them on a level with civilized peoples, without, however, letting the Macedonians be absorbed by the Slavs so that they should not disappear from the political scene.

The foundations laid by the brothers SS. Cyril and Methodius have for eleven hundred years inspired and nourished the development of Slav culture. In fact, as we look back over the centuries, we can see the unfolding of the real creative intellectual possibilities of all the Slav peoples.

The noble work started by the two brothers, pioneers of Macedonian and Slav culture, after eleven centuries of history is still not ended; on the contrary, it is attaining ever vaster proportions in the living realities of today and will continue to progress towards a more glorious future.

The social, political and spiritual vigour of the Slav peoples today is the best proof of the abundant

fruit yielded by the fertile sowing of Cyril and Methodius.

With the passing of the centuries, each Slav people, putting its distinguishing stamp on the creative work of the two brothers of Thessaloniki, has achieved its own national culture which can proudly take its place beside those of other civilized peoples.

In this sense, the Macedonians also notwithstanding the long periods of their slavery, have shown themselves worthy heirs and torch-bearers of the civilizing activity of the Thessalonian brothers, manifesting their aspirations for a free social, spiritual and intellectual progress in many aspects of their life.

With the invention of their Slavonic alphabet, called precisely *Cyrillic*, which was a milestone in the history of human civilization, the brothers SS. Cyril and Methodius showed exceptional genius and an uncommon capacity for hard work, qualities which marked them out as those best fitted at the time to carry out a work of such lasting importance.

During the time in which Cyril and Methodius lived, Byzantium, their native land, was advancing rapidly both socially and politically and, being a highly civilized country, was an example for many European and Asiatic-African communities; accordingly, it was able to exert its cultural and ecclesiastical influence on many other less developed peoples. In this difficult historical situation, the extraordinary intellectual gifts of the two Thessalonian brothers stand out even more. In fulfilling their three ecclesiastico-political missions

to the Saracens, the Khazars and the Slovenes they had ample opportunity to show their greatly superior capacities in philosophy and religion, and also in diplomacy and literature; but this was even more true of their mission to the Slavs of Moravia in 863 when they brought them the Slavonic alphabet, which represents, as already mentioned, the most striking achievement of the two apostles.

There has been much discussion about the ethnic origin of the two brothers. As a matter of fact, in the tangled ethnography of the time, as regards the lands from which they came, it is difficult to speak of nationality in the modern sense of the word, in order to establish that they belonged definitely to one rather than to another of the Balkan countries whose peoples have a clearly marked national physiognomy. Nevertheless, the soundest arguments favour the thesis that the two saints belonged to the Slav groups who spoke the Macedonian dialect of Thessaloniki, which was a Slav dialect, i.e. Old Slavonic.

Cyril and Methodius were members of the large family of the vice-governor of the military region of Thessaloniki, Leo, and his wife Mary, who was of Slav origin. Of their seven children, Methodius was the eldest (born about 817), and Constantine-Cyril, the youngest, was born in 827. The sources on the childhood, life and work of the two Thessalonian brothers give scanty information about Methodius; he is supposed to have attended the elementary school in his native town. We do know, however, that after completing his studies, he entered military service with his father. Then he was appointed governor of a Slav Principate

in Macedonia. But having an inclination for the religious life, after ten years of military service he left for the monastery of Polichron on Olympus, in Asia Minor.

On the youth of Cyril, on the contrary, there is more information: at an early age he was already distinguished for his great intelligence. When he started school, he showed great enthusiasm for the studies which, impelled by his exceptional intellectual capacities, he pursued in the famous Magnaur school in Constantinople, which was regarded as the best scholastic institution in all Byzantium. In this school he learned philosophy, dialectic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, rhetoric, grammar, literature and other subjects. Sitting at the feet of the most celebrated teachers of the time, including Leo the philosopher and Photius, who later became Patriarch of the Church of Constantinople, Cyril deepened his knowledge of these subjects.

On leaving school with the degree of "Philosopher", Cyril served at Court, which conferred on him the title of prince and authority to assume another important military office. But Court life and the responsibilities of office held no attractions for the modest Cyril, who preferred study; accordingly, without hesitation he declined this military commission.

"Truly, the gift is great," he wrote, "but it is for those who desire it. For me there is nothing finer than study, for with it I become rich."

Then Cyril, after being ordained priest, was appointed librarian of the patriarchal library in the church of St. Sofia. He spent some time in a

monastery in order to devote himself to study. The Court highly esteemed his intellectual gifts and cultural capacities and allowed him to remain in the monastery, where he was appointed professor of philosophy. He was later sent to Constantinople to carry out his first politico-diplomatic mission. At that time the Christian religion began to be opposed by the Saracens who, with their vaunted Islamism, aimed at extending their political influence in their own country and in the most distant lands. Therefore, the Byzantine Emperor, not wishing to remain indifferent to their anti-Christian activities, summoned the Council of the Court and entrusted Cyril with the task of going among the Saracens, who, of course, professed the Mohammedan faith, to defend Christianity. In fulfilling this mission (850—851), Cyril displayed to the full his gifts as diplomat, orator and theologian in his discussions with his most learned Mohammedan interlocutors who opposed the Christian faith. They were greatly impressed by the wise, well-reasoned arguments of their adversary and, at the end of the discussion, accorded him the recognition he deserved.

From that time the Saracens had a proper respect both for the Christian religion and for the State of Byzantium.

After completing his mission to the Saracens, Cyril went to Constantinople to the Polichron monastery on Olympus where he wished to visit his brother Methodius. But he did not spend much time there as he had to leave again for Evangeli Batrice to meet the Khazars (a people of Turkish stock inhabiting the northern coast of the Black

Sea) overwhelmed by the Jewish and Mohammedan religions. The Khazars, whose fanatical Christian orthodoxy was well known, had appealed to the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send them a missionary to help them to maintain their religion. So Cyril arrived among them in 859, bringing with him his brother Methodius. However, knowing that in the land of the Khazars bitter arguments could arise with Jewish theologians and other scholars, the brothers Cyril and Methodius, in order to prepare themselves for many debates, broke their journey for some time at Kherson, a territory at that time governed by Byzantium, where they learned the Hebrew language and studied the most important works of Hebrew literature. Here they also learned from popular legends that Pope Clement had been buried in the territory of Kherson. Cyril made enquiries and discovered his remains, dedicating three poems to the deceased Pope, who was then proclaimed a saint of the Christian Church: they were hymns eulogizing the saint in his death and praising his achievements in his life.

When the two brothers arrived among the Khazar Christians, they had to face, as they had foreseen, bitter arguments with the Jews and the Saracens, who rejected the Christian religion. Nevertheless, thanks to his eloquence and his profound knowledge of Hebrew and Mohammedan works, Cyril succeeded in explaining the Christian religion to the Khazars and many of them, renouncing their pagan beliefs and customs, were converted to Christianity. The bitter disputes on religious and philosophical subjects that the brot-

hers had with the Jews, Khazars and Mohammedan scholars were noted down by them and formed an interesting record, which Methodius later translated from Greek into the old Slavonic language; but neither the original nor the translation has ever been traced.

At the end of their mission the two brothers gained complete victory over their opponents on religious problems.

On his return to Constantinople, Methodius returned to the Polichron monastery, which conferred on him the dignity of archon.

It was not long before Cyril and Methodius were entrusted with another mission: this time to Moravia. And it was here that their work immortalized them in 863.

As is well known, in 862 Rastislav, Prince of Moravia, to escape from the pressure and opposition of the German Latin clergy, who were still under the Archbishopric of Salzburg even after the recent liberation of the country from the Frankish domination (855), decided to change his rite. Therefore, he appealed to the Court of Byzantium to send two priests to the region to preach and spread the faith among his subjects according to the Eastern rite.

The choice of the Byzantine Emperor could not but fall on the two learned brothers of Thessaoniki, who had already proved themselves so well qualified to carry out this delicate mission. Before Cyril went to Moravia, the Emperor Michael III in fact addressed to him the following words: "Philosopher, I know you are tired; nevertheless, you must go to Moravia. No one can fulfil this

mission better than you. I will give you many presents. Go with your brother Methodius. You are Thessalonians and all the Thessalonians speak pure Slav!"

The Byzantine Emperor, realizing the political advantages that could be obtained through the religious influence on Moravia, granted Prince Rastislav's request.

But this time the mission of the apostles presented greater linguistic difficulties. Therefore, in order that the preaching of Christianity among the people of Moravia might obtain the desired success, they felt it was necessary to invent an alphabet, which the Slav peoples, still in a state of illiteracy, had not had up to then. Accordingly, they decided to compile an alphabet in the Slavonic language in order to be able to devote themselves more effectively to their religious, cultural and spiritual work in Moravia.

Retiring into a monastery with some of their disciples, the two brothers at once began to draw up the Slavonic alphabet, which the Slavs later used to write an extensive literature.

To the pagan Slavs, whose religion was polytheism, there was now opened up a whole new world of good writing which enabled them to progress culturally and escape from the backwardness that made them an easy prey for the neighbouring peoples. Hence Prince Rastislav's appeal was promptly answered by the Byzantine Emperor Michael III, who thus succeeded in opposing the expansionistic aims of the German Latin clergy. It was here, then, that their work immortalized the two brothers in 863. If, on the contrary, they had con-

fined their mission to the Saracens and the Khazars, posterity would have remembered them only as two scholars, nor would their names have obtained such glory among all the Slav peoples, who honour them with eternal gratitude.

From the biographical sources on the lives and activities of the two apostles, we also learn that, after composing the Slavonic alphabet in only a few months, they translated a number of liturgical books. These facts about the life of Cyril were probably collected by their disciple Clement of Ochrid, who had a great admiration for the striking achievement of his Masters. In scientific circles it is rightly considered that it takes many months to compose an alphabet, especially if it is to be used for translation into a language that has never been written before, even though the authors of this alphabet are very learned men.

It is now generally believed that the language used by Cyril and Methodius in their writings and preaching was the one spoken at the time in their native region, viz. a dialect, Old Slavonic, spoken in the neighbourhood of Thessaloniki.

The idea therefore persists in scientific circles that the previous preparation of this alphabet, before the two brothers left for Moravia, was the result of a much longer study since it was not possible to compose a new alphabet in the Slavonic language in a short time, still less translate the necessary liturgical books. Accordingly, the hypothesis has gained support that, even before they started their mission in Moravia, they had been engaged in philological studies of the Slavonic language. These studies were due to their perfect

knowledge of the language of the Slavs. Indeed, some scholars believe that, as their mother was Slav, they had been familiar with this language from their earliest childhood. Moreover, during the ten years spent in the Principate of Macedonia, Methodius had the opportunity to get to know the life, language and customs of the Slavs. It is also supposed that Methodius took with him to this Principate his valiant disciples and successors: Clement, Naum and others, who, with Cyril, could have composed the Slavonic alphabet and translated the most important religious works, including the Gospels and several psalms.

In composing the Slavonic alphabet, the brothers Cyril and Methodius made use of the Greek letters and invented others for those sounds of the Slavonic language for which no letters existed in the Greek alphabet. This information is given by Crnorizez Hrabar (The Brave Black Monk) in his work "*O pismeneh*" ("For the Letters") in which, among other things, he says: "Some he formed according to the Greek letters and others according to the Slav idiom".

Later, Cyril and Methodius translated the first books of the Slavonic language used by all the Macedonian Slavs, such as the Gospels, the Psalter, the Acts of the Apostles and other liturgical texts. From this initial preparation for their mission in Moravia, in 863 began the work of Cyril and Methodius for the Slav world, which year is rightly regarded as the official date of the origin of the Slavonic alphabet.

Shortly before they went to Velehrad, the capital of Moravia, Cyril and Methodius gathered

round them a number of young men from Moravia in order to prepare them for the priesthood so that, after being ordained, they could replace the German priests of the Church of Moravia. In this way they could spread the teachings of their Masters, while in Velehrad the latter continued their work of translating ecclesiastical books from Greek into the Slavonic language, obtaining from this intense cultural labour considerable success for the propagation of Christianity in the Slavonic language. This aroused the anger of the German priests and feudatories, who conducted a violent campaign against Cyril and Methodius because they were frustrating the German ambitions of assimilating the Moravian people.

The German priests, appealing to Christ's use of the three languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin, opposed the preaching of Christianity in the Slavonic language by the new priests trained by Cyril and Methodius. In their continual attacks, the German clergy intrigued and plotted against the two Thessalonian brothers before the Pope, who summoned them to Rome to give an account of their work in Moravia. Convinced they had done a noble work, Cyril and Methodius went to Rome, where they at last had the opportunity to report on the religious and cultural mission they had carried out, well knowing that, without the clear recognition of the Roman Church, their evangelization could not easily obtain success among the people of Moravia and other Slav countries.

During their journey to Rome, on their way through Pannonia Cyril and Methodius met Prince Kotsel, who wished to treat them as his guests.

Here the two apostles and their disciples stayed for some months, during which they taught the Slavonic alphabet and script to some fifty new pupils, thus carrying out another important work of cultural dissemination. Resuming their journey to Rome, they stopped at Venice, but here they had some bitter disputes with opponents of the Slavonic alphabet and were accused of heresy.

This is how a biographer describes, very convincingly, the encounter of the two Thessalonian brothers with the German priests: "So many hawks against two doves". And he goes on: "Tell us, O man, how did you create books for the Slavs and how do you teach them? They do not know the only three languages in which we glorify the name of God in the Hebrew, Greek and Latin books". In his reply Cyril rejected this affirmation, saying: "Does not God send the rain on all alike? And does not the sun shine on all alike, too? And do not we all breathe the same air? Are you not then ashamed to recognize only three languages? Do you want all the other races and all the other peoples to be deaf and dumb? Many peoples have knowledge of books and each one praises God in their own language, and among these there are the Armenians, the Persians, the Avars, the Iberians, the Goths, the Khazars, the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Syrians, and many others."

Moreover, as this biographer relates, Cyril made use of many telling examples to prove his case against his adversaries and when they felt "ashamed, he left them and set out on his journey again".

On reaching Rome, the two brothers went to see Pope Adrian II, bringing him a precious gift: the remains of Pope Clement which Cyril had discovered at Kherson. By this diplomatic act, the two apostles succeeded in winning the Pope's support for the Slav cause, in spite of the hatred of the German priests against it. Pope Adrian II was greatly impressed by the many-sided learning of the two Thessalonian brothers and even more by the nobility of their Christian demeanour. He not only accepted their account of their educational and missionary work, blessing the Slav books that were offered to him as a present, but insisted on ordaining as priests the students who accompanied Cyril and Methodius to Rome, and while a solemn liturgy was officiated in Latin and Slavonic, the newly ordained priests celebrated the liturgy in the Slavonic languages throughout the night. By this act the Pope officially approved the preaching of Christianity in the Slavonic language also. And in this approval of the apostolic work of the two brothers and their followers the Pope's wish that they should all become good missionaries was explicit.

The great success won by the brothers Cyril and Methodius at Rome was the best condition for the continuation of their apostolate, since they realized that without the recognition of the Roman Church a further spreading of the Slavonic alphabet would not have been possible. On the recognition of the Slavonic script in Rome great hopes were based for the spread of Christianity in the Slav lands; the disciples of the two brothers thus had the opportunity to extend and intensify the

teachings of their Masters and to ensure a bright future for their evangelization work.

But at this moment tragedy supervened: Cyril, before returning to Moravia, worn out by his tireless labours fell ill and died on 14th February 869. Having a presentiment of his end, he had become a monk. He was buried with great honours in the church dedicated to Saint Clement near the Coelian Hill in Rome, where is kept the body of that saint which Cyril had found and brought to Rome and given to Pope Adrian II.

Even on his death-bed, Cyril still showed his concern for the Slavs. These words he spoke to his brother Methodius bear witness to it: "Brother," he said, "we were engaged together in ploughing a furrow of land. Till the end of my life I will help you in the field. I know you would prefer mountain (i. e. the monastery), but you must not abandon study for it because by means of study you will be able to save more easily."

Methodius followed Cyril's advice and until the end of his life he continued in the way he had undertaken with his brother, so that the Slavonic script became more and more widespread although its inventor and indefatigable champion had passed from the scene.

When the Slavonic alphabet was recognized by the Roman Church, Prince Kotsel of Pannonia asked the Pope to send Methodius to his territory to teach it to his subjects. The Pope readily granted the Prince's request, convinced that by means of Slav culture Christianity would spread more widely in regions only recently converted from paganism. In sending Methodius to Pannonia, Pope

Adrian II imposed the condition that the liturgical books were to be read in the churches of that region in Slavonic and in Latin. In order not to harm the cause of the Slavonic script, Methodius left for Pannonia where he was enthusiastically welcomed by Prince Kotsel.

Then the spread of the Slavonic script suffered a setback. The German priests, not liking the restrictions imposed on their ecclesiastical power in Pannonia, by means of intrigues and false accusations succeeded in getting Methodius and his followers thrown into prison, where for three whole years they patiently endured the sufferings and hardships of confinement. The Pope knew nothing of this and when he was informed of it by one of Methodius' disciples who had escaped from prison, he had those responsible severely punished. Having regained their freedom, Methodius and his disciples now resumed their apostolate with greater zeal than ever.

In 874 the Moravians requested the new Pope John VIII to send Methodius to evangelize their land and the Pope gave his consent. At that time Methodius, as Archbishop of Pannonia and Moravia, had a promising field of work and, feeling a little more independent, modified the promise made to Pope Adrian II and celebrated mass only in Slavonic and according to the Eastern rite. This was seized on by his adversaries, the German priests, who at once informed the Pope of what was going on. Pope John VIII then forbade Methodius to celebrate mass in Slavonic, but he did not obey the Pope's orders and continued to celebrate and preach in Slavonic. Vexed and offended, Pope John

VIII caused the following letter to be written to Methodius, requesting him to come to Rome for consultations: "It has come to our knowledge that you are not propagating the teaching within the terms and according to the modalities laid down by the Holy Roman Church, and are continuing to confuse the people. Accordingly, by these presents we order you to come at once to our See so that we can hear from your mouth what the reasons are that have moved you to act otherwise than you had assured the Holy Roman Church, thereby giving us the opportunity to understand your attitude."

Methodius admitted that he was in the wrong, but explained the reasons for his behaviour with such dignity that he prevailed upon the Pope to withdraw his prohibition of the use of the Slavonic language and script. The Pope, confirming what his predecessor had decided regarding the use of the two languages in religious services, replied: "The Slavonic letters invented by Constantine the Philosopher that the glory of God might be extolled with them we have justly praised, and we ordain that the liturgical offices be celebrated not only in Latin but also in this language for the praise of Christ." He also confirmed that the mass and the gospel should be read by all the priests of Moravia and Pannonia in both languages, Latin and Slavonic, and that they should obey the orders given to Methodius.

So Methodius resumed his work, but once again had to face the calumnies and mean attacks of the German clergy, particularly of Bishop Wishing, who even made use of forged documents. But

once again Methodius was able to prevail over his adversaries.

Later on Methodius made a careful study of the traditions and, with the help of his disciples, translated into Slavonic the Nomokanon, Paterik and many other religious works. It was precisely in this field that Methodius excelled his brother Cyril, both in the selection and in the quality of his translations; he developed to the full his exceptional gifts as a translator, and his works are outstanding for their preciseness, expression and vivid choice of words.

After working for many years in Velehrad, Methodius, who was considered the chief torch-bearer of Slav culture by his Moravian disciple Gorazd, died there and was buried on 6th April 885, mourned by all the people. The following words are taken from a biography of him:

“A great crowd of people gathered to mourn the good Master and pastor: men and women, children and grown-ups, rich and poor, masters and servants, widows and orphans, strangers and local people, sick and healthy, all followed to the tomb the body of him who had always laboured for the good of all and to save all.”

With the death of Methodius, all the work of the two Thessalonian brothers was in grave danger. The successor of Rastislav, Prince Svetopolk of Moravia, under pressure from the Germans, forbade the use of the Slavonic script. The German priests, encouraged also by the new Roman Pontiff, Stephen V, who had forbidden the celebration of the liturgy in Slavonic in the churches of Moravia, launched a merciless attack on the successors of

the two Thessalonian brothers. Gorazd was removed from the office of Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia and replaced by Wishing.

Most of Methodius' disciples had to endure persecution: some of them, the youngest, were sold as slaves in Venice, others were imprisoned and tortured. The few who remained at liberty were expelled from Moravia, because Pope Stephen V had forbidden them to officiate in the churches, and took refuge in other countries.

In spite of all this, the work of SS. Cyril and Methodius could not be destroyed and the disciples, who managed to save the fundamental works of their Masters, continued their teaching in new ways in other Slav countries.

The most learned of these disciples was Clement of Ochrid, who was particularly active in spreading the Slavonic script. In fact, he succeeded in founding the first two Macedonian schools, translated Greek writings into Macedonian and had the works of Cyril and Methodius copied. Still more important, he improved the alphabet invented by Cyril, called *Glagolitic*, which was called *Cyrillic* in honour of Cyril and later adopted by most of the Slavs.

This improved alphabet spread rapidly and soon became the script used by all the Slav world and the Romans; but later it was abandoned by nearly all the Slav Catholics and the Romans, and was kept — with a few exceptions — only by the Russians, the Serbs, the Bulgarians, and the Macedonians, who still use it today.

The alphabet in use today is considerably simplified in the form of the individual letters, the

number of which differs from people to people in relation to the phonetics of the different languages. The Bulgarian alphabet, for example, today has only 32 letters, the Serbian no more than 30, the Russian, which before the revolution had 35 letters, was reduced by the Soviet to 31, and the Macedonian also has only 31 letters.

Both the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic alphabets are found on some monuments of the 9th and 13th centuries and later. But by the second half of the 10th century the Cyrillic was already ousting the Glagolitic alphabet.

The achievement of Cyril and Methodius coincides with the discoveries of that time which were affording a part of mankind, the Slav peoples, a greater prosperity in almost every department of life.

Until the time of these two brothers and their disciples Clement and Naum, the Slavs had been sunk in the darkest ignorance; their work gave all the Slav peoples a cultural unity: henceforth the Slavs were able to communicate with one another with a single script and a single literary language, from which afterwards stemmed the different literary languages of the various Slav nations.

The Macedonian language, which the two brothers from Thessaloniki used as the basis of their alphabet, is the youngest Slav literary language. As already mentioned, when Cyril and Methodius composed their alphabet, they knew the dialect of the Macedonians living in the neighbourhood of Thessaloniki. It was during their stay in Moravia and Pannonia that they raised this dialect to the level of a literary language, so that the conditions

were favourable for the Slavonic script, which took its rise from Macedonia, to spread among other peoples of those regions.

The creative achievement of SS. Cyril and Methodius thus acquires an exceptional importance; it continues to arouse great interest in the world of learning where a branch known as "Slavonic Studies" is devoted to it.

In fact, there are numerous scientific works in existence on the Slavonic script that are of increasing philological and historical value, as the following impassioned words of Crnorizez Hrabar, a strenuous defender of the Slavonic alphabet against the continual opposition of the Greeks, bear witness:

*"If you ask Greek men of letters:
'Who invented your letters and when?,'
You seldom find anyone who knows.
But if you ask Slav men of letters:
'Who invented your alphabet and translated your books?,'*

*They will all reply:
'Saint Constantine the Philosopher, called Cyril:
He invented our letters and translated the books
Together with his brother Methodius.'*

(From "O pismeneh" — "For the Letters")

It is worth repeating that the fact that the Slavonic script took its rise near the charming Macedonian shores of Lake Ochrid, confirms that in later times too Macedonia was the region where a rich cultural and spiritual activity flourished, particularly that carried on by Clement and Naum of Ochrid.

This also shows that the philological and literary studies of Clement of Ochrid extended and refined upon those of Cyril and Methodius. Nor were they confined to Macedonia and other Slav regions, but also influenced some non-Slav peoples, for example the Roumanians, Albanians, and others.

It should be added, finally, that Clement's great popularity was also due to his exceptional intellectual gifts and his devoted work for his school, which was attended by a very large number of students (about 3,500) who afterwards graduated from the first Slav University of Ochrid.

It was no accident that the cultural activity of Clement and Naum was centred in Macedonian territory. It is now accepted by Slavonic scholars that, since they were born in Macedonia, it was only natural that they should end their days in their native land.

Their mortal remains lie on the shores of Lake Ochrid to bear witness to the rise of Slav culture so many centuries ago.

Saint Clement of Ochrid

One of the first promoters of Macedonian culture, whose name is linked with that of the romantic city of Ochrid, is certainly Saint Clement. Perhaps no other Macedonian city has aroused such fascination and veneration. Its name fills every Macedonian heart with pride. Pilgrims from all over Macedonia go to Ochrid: some go there with the untroubled light of faith in their hearts or the simple curiosity of children; others go to admire the scenes of the saint's life and the places hallowed by his glorious memory, in order to form a picture of it in their imagination which, treasured up, will be a source of inspiration and devotion in the future.

The secret of this mystic appeal is due quite simply to the fact that Ochrid is the age-long guardian of a name sacred to every Macedonian: that of Clement of Ochrid.

In the rainbow of splendid lights, a great one shines majestic and austere: it is that of St. Clement, a Macedonian whose figure stands out luminous and large in the history of Macedonia.

Learned and ignorant, rich and poor, Christians and pagans, all have bowed before this holy

man, this troubadour of Christ, this noble writer. Painters and sculptors have sought to fathom his physical and spiritual mystery; poets have drawn inspiration from him for their flights of fancy; writers of every faith have, with unflagging interest, subjected to learned scrutiny the primitive sources, the documents, acts and chronicles, the legends and biographies that have accumulated over the centuries.

Many other saints are almost forgotten, or are only fleetingly, from the niches of churches, from frescoes or secluded pictures, recalled to the memory of the living. A few prayers rise before them like a faint odour of incense. Saint Clement, on the contrary, is a real, live hero. The centuries, instead of tarnishing his fame, give him an ever more radiant halo round that face in which burns purity transfigured by suffering.

During the whole period of the Macedonian Renaissance, his miraculous name was spread by the teaching of the schools of Ochrid to all the other towns of Macedonia, and it became the holy standard of the people in their struggle for freedom and independence.

The very name of this saint, which seems to express all the perfections, breathes a gentle, far-off sweetness that soothes the ears of Macedonians, oppressed by so many hardships and struggles in life.

Thus Saint Clement, distinguished master and model of religious perfection, in his Christian prudence tempered the severity of monastic life so that it could be observed by all. He was not only a

great master in teaching, but also a perfect model in well-doing.

To St. Clement of Ochrid is due pride of place in the first generation of disciples and successors of the two brothers of Thessaloniki. With his cultural and literary achievement, St. Clement is a figure of universal importance in the Slav world. As a follower of Cyril and Methodius and an interpreter of their work, St. Clement used his exceptional intellectual gifts above all to improve the construction of the written Slavonic language and enrich its literature, so that Slavs might take a worthy place in mediaeval culture.

In his linguistic and literary labours, Clement desired the full development of the work started by Cyril and Methodius in Moravia. His aim was to spread the Slavonic script among the other Slavs of the south also.

In his diocese, Clement had, primary, secondary, episcopal and supplementary schools. In section 81 of the panegyric biography, written in Greek by Archbishop Theophylact, it says that Clement had more than 3,500 pupils in the different provinces of Macedonia. To keep in touch with them, he organized supplementary courses in Ochrid, which were attended by young men who had left the secondary schools. In his educational work, Clement devised new teaching methods. He also showed his humanitarian interest by founding orphanages and practical courses for workmen.

He was a jealous apostle of Slavism and in his verses addressed himself to all the Slavs, reminding them of their good fortune in being able to hear the gospel, not in a foreign language, but in their

own tongue. It is clear that this school had not only the aim of spreading education among the Macedonians, but also the noble mission of giving the Slav world the possibility of reading Holy Scripture in a language they could understand.

The activity of St. Clement, carried on over a period of thirty years, was indeed many-sided. It also included the origins of mediaeval Macedonian architecture, the building of churches and monasteries in Macedonia and the origins of Macedonian Slav painting (so splendidly continued and shown in the frescoes, icons and iconostases in churches and monasteries in Macedonia), as well as the origins of book-restoring among the Southern Slavs. The name of St. Clement is linked above all to the literature of the Southern Slavs, particularly to poetry, the art of public speaking and preaching, and the cultural and pedagogic work of those Slavs.

St. Clement of Ochrid was the first Slav bishop. The importance of his cultural and educational work is such that it transcends the moment of history in which he lived; looking back over the thousand years since his death, we can see the significance of this great promoter of the Southern Slavs in its true perspective. He was, in fact, the first writer of the Southern Slavs, whose name is immortalized in the popular traditions and in the legends¹ which for centuries the Macedonian people have woven round his life and work. And there is no greater tribute to the memory of a man

¹ Zv. Romanska, Clement and Naum in the Traditions. Volume "1100 Years of Slav Writing", Sofia, 1963, pp. 377—382.

beloved by the people than the remembrance of him preserved in popular tradition.

Because of his cultural work carried on for so many years and his personal example as benefactor of the people of Ochrid, as a result of which the first legends arose about him, Clement richly deserves this immortality in the memory of his people.

The life of this truly great man is of the stuff of which epic poems, telling of heroic sacrifices and brave deeds, are made. He was not one of those saints who aspired to Christian perfection by retiring to a desert and mortifying their bodies with fasts and extraordinary privations; instead, he chose a way of life consonant with his birth.

The most important biographical sources on St. Clement of Ochrid are: "The Enlarged Life of Clement" by Theophylact, and "The Short Life of Clement" by Dimitri Homotijan, both written in Greek. The former work was published towards the end of the 11th century. Moved by the veneration of the people of Ochrid for the work of Clement, Archbishop Theophylact, a learned Greek of Constantinople, has given a very full biographical account: he describes the life and religious activities of Clement, and also the hymns, copies and other similar works written by Clement's disciples and successors.

"The Short Life of Clement" by Archbishop Dimitri Homotijan of Ochrid was written in the 13th century and contains some important facts about the life of Clement that were not given in Theophylact's account. Homotijan's work is thus a valuable supplement to that of Theophylact, which

is the primary biographical source for the life of St. Clement.

Apart from these two biographies, no additional information on the early life of St. Clement is to be found in other biographical notes.

Clement's date of birth is not mentioned in either of these biographies, or in any other document; it can therefore be fixed only approximately. It is known that Clement died at an advanced age and was buried on 27th July 916 in his monastery in Ochrid. If we suppose that he died aged 75—80, we could assume that he was born between 836 and 841.

Many suppositions are also made about his place of birth. However, many scholars are of the opinion that he was born in Macedonia and that his native town was Ochrid. Some scholars also conjecture that Clement and Naum were two brothers, Naum being regarded as the elder, probably because he died before Clement in 910. As to his parents, it is not even known what occupation they followed.

Little is known, too, about the level of education Clement received, but to judge from his profound knowledge of theology and his talents for painting and poetry, he must have been a very cultured man. The mere fact that Clement accompanied Cyril and Methodius on their mission to Moravia clearly shows that he was a great scholar, otherwise Byzantium would not have enlisted him in the struggle against the Latins. As is well known, Cyril and Methodius had five disciples: Gorazd, Naum, Anghelaria and Sava, and the people called them all *sedmochislenitsi*, i.e. the seven saints.

It is very probable that Clement received his education at Byzantium and later from Methodius, when the latter was governor of one of the Slav regions. Theophylact speaks of it in his biography of Clement, when, as a very young man he accompanied Methodius. It is believed that Clement was with Methodius when he stayed in the Polichron monastery, and that Clement helped Cyril and Methodius in the work of copying the translations into Greek, before they left for Moravia in 863. There is also the opinion held by some Slavonic scholars that, since Clement was one of the most promising pupils of Cyril and Methodius, he very likely accompanied them on their mission to the Khazars (859—861). This hypothesis is made in connection with the name borne by Clement: during Cyril's mission, Clement is supposed to have discovered the body of Pope Clement, who died in exile in the Crimea, and to have received his monastic name of Clement as a result of this discovery.

In Moravia, Clement was the first, inseparable companion of Cyril and Methodius. Continuing his education under their guidance, he everywhere worked with zeal for Slav culture, assisting them faithfully in their apostolic labours and sharing their life of sacrifice and virtue.

On Clement's stay in Rome (861), where he had gone with Cyril and Methodius and some other disciples to defend their mission in Moravia, there is some definite information given by Homotijan's "Short Life of Clement". During his stay in Rome, Clement was ordained priest by Pope Adrian II.

During the religious and cultural activity he carried on for many years in Moravia and Pannonia, Clement acquired a profound knowledge of ecclesiastical and political organization which he later applied in the territory of the Southern Slavs, and especially in Macedonia.

When Methodius died in 885, his disciples were forced by the opposition of the German clergy to leave the State of Moravia. After living many years in that country, years of satisfaction and also of disappointment, of victories and defeats, they took refuge in various countries, with the firm intention, however, of continuing the work of Cyril and Methodius. Clement, together with Naum and Anghelaria, went south to the Danube and, after many adversities, reached Belgrade, which at that time belonged to the Bulgarian kingdom.

On their arrival in Belgrade, Clement, Naum and Anghelaria were received with great honours by the Bulgarian Prince Boris, who realized the need to have learned men around him, and this seemed a favourable opportunity. Soon after Anghelaria died. Only the two disciples of Methodius, Clement and Naum, now remained and they continued the work of their great Masters among the Southern Slavs.

Naum remained in the Bulgarian capital, Pliska, and worked there, but Clement left for the region of Kutmichevitsa, quite a long way from the centre. During this period Prince Boris gave them three houses: one at Devol (one of the principal centres of the region of Kutmichevitsa), the others at Ochrid and Glavenitsa respectively.

The opinion prevails among scholars that the region of Kutmichevitsa then extended between Lake Ochrid and Lake Prespa, Southern Albania and Greece, which at that time was ruled by the Bulgarians.

Various conjectures have been made as to why St. Clement was sent to a region so far from the capital. According to some, Clement was banished from the Court precisely because he would not recognize the Cyrillic alphabet then in use in the central part of the Bulgarian State.

Today it is an established fact in all manuals of Old Slavonic that the Glagolitic, i.e. the alphabet composed by Cyril, is the older of the two alphabets. In vain has the Bulgarian Professor Emil Georgiev many times attempted to prove in some of his books that the Cyrillic is older than the Glagolitic alphabet, and that it was used in the Bulgarian State long before the Glagolitic alphabet was invented in connection with the mission of Cyril and Methodius in Pannonia. According to the Macedonian scholar, Professor Blaze Koneski, Georgiev appears to regard the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet as a process of gradual adaptation of the Greek letters to the needs of Slavonic writing. Living in immediate contact with the Greeks and even within the boundaries of a State, the Slavs adapted the Greek letters and began to make use of them to represent their own speech. There is nothing strange in this, affirms Koneski. Besides, it is also confirmed by the monk Crnorizez Hrabar, who says in his apologia that, after the Slavs were converted to Christianity, they used Greek and Latin letters for many years

until Constantine (Cyril) the Philosopher invented his alphabet.

We can point to something similar in times closer to our own. At the beginning of the 19th century, especially in Southern Macedonia, where the Cyrillic alphabet had been forgotten, the language of the Macedonian people was written in Greek characters. Even the "Collection of Folk Songs" of the Miladinov brothers was first written in Greek characters.

As is well known, at the very time when the Glagolitic alphabet was used, the literary School of Ochrid, founded by Saint Clement, was essentially different from the literary School of Preslav, where the Cyrillic alphabet was used because it was more suitable in the exalted circles of the Boyars at the Bulgarian Court.

According to others, Clement himself wished to go and work in the south-western regions of Macedonia, moved by strong feelings of attachment to his native land.

For seven whole years St. Clement worked diligently in Kutmichevitsa. He constantly travelled round his diocese, explaining the Christian religion to the people in their own language and doing his best to root out all the superstitious accretions that had collected in the course of time. His simple, fearless, moving words exalting peace and love went straight to the hearts of the lowly. He stripped himself of all sacerdotal display, and did not use the pompous language of the Boyars but the natural, unaffected speech of the people. At the same time he instructed young and old in the use of the Slavonic alphabet, and the priests in the

service of the Church. The aim of his teaching was to train devoted servants of the Church. Thus Saint Clement became the first Macedonian educator. He organized the first Slav university, the first *literary school of Ochrid*. This university founded by Clement must not be understood in the strict, formal sense that the word has today. He wished instruction to be available to people of all ages. "We have never seen him not working; he taught the young in the most diverse ways: to some he would show the forms of the letters, to others he would explain the meaning of what was written, and he would take the hands of others and show them how they should write. And all this he did by night as well as by day, and also when he went away to say his prayers; or else he would read or write books, and sometimes he would do two jobs at once: he would write and also teach something to the young..." (Theophylact, "The Enlarged Life of Clement").

During the time he was engaged in educational work, Clement built many churches and monasteries in his diocese, which he regarded as centres of the national culture. Thus, for example, in his native town he built a monastery in honour of St. Panteleimon, venerated by the Christian Church, and a church which later became a cathedral. St. Clement often went to that monastery to meditate in silence on the delights of nature. When he died, he was buried in it.

In 893, Czar Simeon of Bulgaria appointed Clement Bishop of the region of Drembitsa or Velica, which, according to the view most widely held among Slavonic scholars, comprised the regi-

ons of Debar, Kichevo and a part of Ochrid, as well as the territory along the valley of the River Treska (which in its northern reaches is known as the Velica) and the River Vardar. According to another view, the region of Velica (Drembitsa) also embraced the region of Strumitsa, because it is believed that the administrative centre of that region was the town of Veles.

In this new post, Clement again distinguished himself by his devoted cultural and teaching work. This is confirmed by his biographer Theophylact, who says that Saint Clement found the people "completely ignorant of the divine word and of Holy Scripture," and that in his teaching he "neither slumbered nor slept". As soon as he had consolidated the Christian faith of the people of Velica, where he behaved as "a father of the poor and defender of the widows," St. Clement continued his cultural work, with greater zeal than ever, in Kutmichevitsa.

How varied and extensive Clement's daily work was at Velica is confirmed by the fact that he even engaged in farming activities, wishing in this way to be useful to his people. Looking at the land around him, he saw that it was not sufficiently cultivated, so he cleared away the wild trees and bushes and planted fruit-trees in their stead. Whenever he could find a little free time, he would go and rest in his monastery at Ochrid, to which he always felt drawn as to his spiritual home when he was away in other places.

Clement worked for twenty years in the region of Velica, and when he at last felt too feeble to fulfil his pastoral duties properly, worn out with

unceasing toil and weighed down by the infirmities of old age, he decided to spend the last days of his life in his beloved monastery. Accordingly, he went to Czar Simeon and begged him to relieve him of his office and appoint a younger man in his place. Czar Simeon refused to accept his resignation because he was afraid he would not be able to find a worthy successor to him.

So Clement was obliged to bow to his sovereign's will. In spite of the keen sorrows of his heart, the afflictions of his spirit, and the infirmities of his ageing body, tired out by so much toil, although he was now 70 he continued writing works, some of which he had to finish, other to correct, and in regard to yet others there were objections to reply to. He also had to please the brethren of his diocese, and advise them on what action to take in the recurrent disasters. It seems incredible that so many burdens did not unhinge his mind and turn his warm eloquence to gall and wormwood. Although his body was languishing with exhaustion, his mind and spirit still burned with a clear flame; putting forth a great effort, he managed to complete his "Domenical Triode", a translation from the Greek into Old Slavonic of the sung church chants.

Clement remained Bishop of Velica till the end of his life. Leaving the capital of the country he had lived in so long, he set out for Ochrid; he fell ill on the journey and died soon after he arrived there.

Saint Clement had worked without ceasing until the last days of his life. Before he died, he gave half of his goods to the bishopric and half

to the monastery. He was buried with full honours at Ochrid on 27th July 916. The internment took place in the monastery of St. Panteleimon in the tomb that Clement himself had prepared "on the right side of the first part of the church".

The body of Saint Clement was not left in peace for long: Macedonian soil suffered so many wars and changes of rule; then came the Moham-medans and Saint Clement's monastery was converted into a mosque. His remains were transferred to the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos, which was then called Saint Clement of Ochrid.

Clement's literary activity is of great importance. The part he played in the cultural history of the Slavs can be compared only to the major achievements of the mind of man.

Clement was the first original Slav writer. He worked as teacher and pastor not only with the spoken word, but also with the pen. In the opinion of some scholars, Clement was the author of about thirty homilies, as well as some Pannonian legends about SS. Cyril and Methodius, and a "Life and Panegyric of Cyril". His "Lives" are very important because, besides being the first in time, they deal with persons who have acquired a fateful significance in the history of the Slav peoples.

Moved by the spiritual needs of his pastoral mission, Clement did not stop short in his literary activity at theoretical questions, but pursued an essentially ethical aim.

The works of which Clement is certainly the author are:

1. Teaching on the Resurrection;

2. Teaching on the Transfiguration of God;
3. Sermon for Easter Day;
4. Homilies on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
5. Homily in Memory of the Prophet Zachariah and of the Supper of St. John the Baptist;
6. Homily on St. John the Baptist;
7. Commandments for Feasts: Teaching for the People for the Day of the Apostle, Martyr or Saint;
8. Teaching in Memory of the Apostle or Martyr;
9. Homily on Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki, Sanctified and Glorious Martyr;
10. Eulogy on Pope Clement of Rome;
11. Eulogy on the Forty Martyrs;
12. Sermon on the Holy Trinity;
13. Homily on the Archangels Michael and Gabriel;
14. Homily on Lazarus;
15. Homily on Our Blessed Father and Slavonian Master Cyril the Philosopher.

Another group of Clement's literary works also contains homilies on Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and on the different saints of the Christian Church, as well as various teachings on the most important feasts (Easter, Christmas, Epiphany and others).

Mention must also be made here of a series of manuals of instruction for the clergy, e.g. "The Teaching for Bishops and Priests", "A Homily on the Biblical Fathers", "A Sermon on the Wrath of God, Death and Repentance", and others.

Of special importance in this list are the works of St. Clement concerned with the so-called "Legends of Pannonia" (known also as the "Life of Cyril" and the "Life of Methodius"). The similarity of these "Legends of Pannonia", as regards language, expression and composition, to Clement's definitely attested literary works confirms the Christian tradition that the author of a homily on a given saint is also the author of the life written of that saint. Since, therefore, it is established that Clement wrote the "Homily on Cyril", it is rightly believed by scholars that he is also the author of the "Life of Cyril".

As regards the "Life of Methodius", it is held that no one knew the life and work of Methodius better than Clement, because he accompanied him everywhere from his youth until his death.

Slavonic scholars regard the "Legends of Pannonia" as the most authentic biographical source for a knowledge of the lives of Cyril and Methodius.

Clement is equally important for his translation work. Thus it is believed that he took part in the translation of the "Breviary of Sinai" and the "Missal of Kloz", both well-known Old Slavonic texts. As regards Clement's translation of the "Coloured Trio", of which Theophylact speaks in his "Life", Clement is said to have continued his work of translating this collection of church chants even when he had to take to his bed and death was approaching.

Clement's most important literary work is unquestionably the "Homily on Cyril", of which several editions exist and which was a very po-

pular work in Old Slavonic literature. It is an exceptional hymn in which are woven the great devotion and veneration of the pupil for his beloved master, inventor of the Old Slavonic alphabet, language and literature.

All the works of Cyril, Methodius and Clement are called Slavonic works except when, for strictly stylistic reasons, the language is called "our language"².

The reproduction of the most important parts of the epoch-making work of St. Cyril of Thessaloniki has been achieved with great beauty of style, expression and composition; it is a clear proof of Clement's poetic gifts. Clement's poetic art has the unmistakable stamp of genuine originality, as is shown particularly clearly in his exposition of Cyril's colossal achievement.

"As Venus, when at the end she appears with her light to illumine all the firmament of heaven, heralding it in the sun's rays, even so this blessed Father and Master of our language illumined and instructed with threefold luminous rays the people that lay in the darkness of ignorance."

In Clement's works, especially in his homilies on the different saints of the Christian Church, the highest expression is reached of what is essentially distinctive in Clement's poetic language: the simplicity and clarity of expression with which he achieved the effect he desired on his readers, just as he did on his hearers when, in his sermons in church, he taught them the true interpretation of

² H. Polenakovik, *Clement of Ochrid — Life and Activity*, "Book on Clement of Ochrid", Skopje, 1966, p. 39.

the word of God. With no more than these simple explanations in poetic language Clement succeeded in obtaining excellent results in his noble mission to the people, in which he endeavoured to replace the Greek language in the liturgy by the Slavonic language, which the people could understand. Thus Clement's works contributed all the more to the spread of the Slavonic liturgy in Macedonian churches, as well as in those of other Slav peoples.

With this great number of literary works that were still further increased by the copies made by his disciples, Clement, the first original Slav writer, occupies a pre-eminent place in the Old Slavonic, Macedonian literature. As the most talented successor to the literary achievement of SS. Cyril and Methodius, St. Clement of Ochrid exercised a considerable influence on Slavonic literature, and thus had a great number of followers and imitators.

By transplanting the Slavonic script to Macedonian soil, whence it later spread to other Slav peoples, St. Clement succeeded in creating a flourishing literary tradition of exceptional richness among the other peoples of the south, but especially among the Macedonians. It may be said that there is no well-known Macedonian man of letters or scholar who has not contributed to the great cultural work started by his glorious predecessor. As already mentioned, during the whole period of the Macedonian Renaissance, his miraculous name was spread by the schools of Ochrid to all the other towns of Macedonia, and it became the holy standard of the people in their struggle for freedom and independence.

St. Clement's work was also held in great esteem by Macedonian writers before the Renaissance, from Partenia Zografski, Dimitar Miladinov and Jordan Hagi Konstantinov-Dzinot up to Rajko Zinzifov and Grigor Prlichev. To quote from one of these writers, here are Rajko Zinzifov's lines on Clement in his poem "Ochrid":

*With pure, childlike heart,
Clement in the Slav tongue
Brought the word of God
To Ochrid, in the old church,
Clad in Cyril's mantle.
In plain, simple words
He briefly, gently preached
The spirit of love, the free spirit;
In the church, lovingly humbly
He fed his Slav flock, old and young,
With Cyril's holy lore.*

With his literary works, Clement also laid the foundations of the Old Macedonian literature, which was enriched by his successors. The national literatures of many other Slav peoples, chiefly the Balkan peoples, drew inspiration from Clement's works.

"Vigorous, indeed, is Clement's language. Not even the conditional themes of mediaeval religious literature were able to take away what is characteristic in his diction, in which for the first time the vowels and consonants of the Slavonic language are woven into so complex an orchestration. Clement's works have every right to be compared with the best models of Byzantine style. These works spread widely in the Slav world. They were favourite reading also in the language of the old Russian script, which experienced the attrac-

tive influence of that language variation which the literary school of Ochrid was developing. Particularly in the time of Czar Samuel, the dispute over the ecclesiastical plan between Ochrid and Kiev helped to strengthen that influence."³

S. Clement's literary and cultural activity is a fundamental contribution to Slav civilization. Its mission was to uplift and humanize the Slav peoples when the Christian teaching was being introduced among them. It was essential that Christianity should be spread among the Slavs in their own language, so that it could be understood by the great mass of the people. For this to be achieved, a study of the script was a fundamental prerequisite.

The work of St. Clement and of St. Naum was an essential preliminary, a rich mine destined to be widely exploited in the process of raising the Slavs to the level of civilized peoples. With his exceptional intellect and inventive genius, notwithstanding the unfavourable social and political conditions in which he worked, Clement fully succeeded in carrying out his historic, epoch-making task.

It needed an extraordinary force of character and creative talent, of the kind that Clement in fact possessed, to start a literary activity at the most opportune moment, namely when the Slavs had just obtained their alphabet and when their language was not developed or limited by the objective conditions of material and cultural prog-

³ B. Koneski, Clement of Ochrid, "Book for Clement of Ochrid", Skopje, 1966, p. 37.

ress. However, that did not prevent it from reaching the highest levels of the literature of that time. These first original Slavonic works written by Clement had for foundation the language of the Macedonian Slavs, which was preserved for many centuries as the ecclesiastical literary language of the Southern and Eastern Slavs.

Clement not only maintained and spread the work of Cyril and Methodius in the territory of the Southern Slavs, particularly in that of the Macedonians, but also formed the first Slavonic literary language, in which he wrote a great number of literary works which were a valuable contribution in the struggle against the assimilating aims of the more highly developed Roman and Byzantine civilizations.

"To those on whom the Slavonic language was being imposed, he chiefly replied that he had written in Slavonic what they were not able to write in Greek or Latin. The glory of Clement, as the most outstanding writer of the old period of Slavonic writing, has never been contested by anyone. He wrote in a language of primitive expression, but rich, varied and evocative in all the forms of his style. We are amazed by the maturity of expression of his works, written in another age, in which the language used had only just reached its first written form. This maturity cannot be explained unless we accept that there was already a definite cultural movement among the Slavs, and unless we are willing to admit that Clement and some of his contemporaries were persons who had reached the highest level of education possible in that period. For the first time,

people of that kind in the Slav world were emerging from the darkness of anonymity."⁴

Macedonian linguistic and literary scholarship has studied the work of Clement of Ochrid with pride and respect, and has placed it on the highest pedestal of the cultural history of the Macedonians and of the other Slav peoples.

The most striking proof of the veneration of the Macedonians for the creative work of the first Slav writer of genius was the solemn commemoration of Saint Clement held in September 1966 at Ochrid, on the occasion of the thousand and fiftieth anniversary of his death, in which the most famous Slavonic scholars of Macedonia, Europe and America took part. This impressive celebration confirmed once again how extremely important the work of St. Clement was. In the last thirty years, Macedonian scholars have published various works which have been highly appreciated by eminent Slavonic scholars of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Poland, France and Western Germany.

So it was pointed out that St. Clement of Ochrid was "one of the most outstanding personalities in the field of culture and ethics, who, with a profoundly prophetic spirit in those days preached ideas of the new humanism in the language of his people,"⁵ that he was "a pioneer of Slav

⁴ B. Koneski, Clement of Ochrid, "Book for Clement of Ochrid", Skopje, 1966, p. 36.

⁵ Commemoration of Clement of Ochrid 916—1966, Skopje, p. 52.

literature,"⁶ that "under his guidance there was a national church which, at the time of the most tremendous aggression and denationalization, found support and assistance in the language, traditions, culture and spirit of the people,"⁷ that "St. Clement and the town of Ochrid in which he carried on his work bear witness to the great Macedonian tradition in culture, politics and literature, and to the first contacts of the Macedonian people with other Slav peoples,"⁸ that "the person of Clement is the strong link connecting the ecclesiastical, literary, artistic and, in great part, political tradition of the Southern Slavs, which has now lasted for a thousand years, to the activity of Cyril and Methodius,"⁹ that "he opened up for the great mass of the people the road to the benefits of education and culture, thus giving an adequate stimulus to the movement which achieved truly wonderful results among the Slav peoples,"¹⁰ that "after his faithful self-denying service in Moravia, he returned to the south to continue to teach his Slav brothers to write in their native tongue,"¹¹ and that "the activity carried on by Clement left profound marks on the development of the writing, literature and culture of all the Eastern Slavs, including also the Russians."¹²

⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

⁷ Ibid., p. 64.

⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 92.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 98.

¹² Ibid., p. 100.

As the principal precursor of the generation which was to continue and surpass the work of the brothers Cyril and Methodius, St. Clement of Ochrid is one of the architects of the history of the culture of Macedonia and all the other Slav peoples. He carried on his noble activity with a clear vision of the ends he had in view and an exemplary organizing ability, so that, in spite of all the difficulties, he was able to direct his great work along the right path, which his successors have followed, developing and improving it until our own times.

The link between literature and painting, so characteristic of the Middle Ages, is also found in the case of St. Clement. At Ochrid, among the many Christian legends depicted, the life and works of Clement can be seen on the oldest icons that have survived, as well as on many frescoes. Indeed, the figure of Clement is preserved in a large number of frescoes and icons from the earliest times till today. The Archbishops of Ochrid considered it an honour to be portrayed with Clement, as, for example, in the painting of Clement and Konstantinos Kavasila in the church of St. Mary Maior (today called St. Clement's) of 1295.

The fact that many churches are dedicated to St. Clement shows how popular he has been not only in Ochrid, but also in many other places.

Born in the shadow of the cross, in the solitude of hermitages and in the silence of monasteries, to the sound of church bells and amid the perfume of incense, the Old Slavonic literature is still linked to the Church in all its forms of expression.

It would be easier for us to understand what St. Clement means to the Macedonian people, if we could go back ten centuries to the time when the Macedonians were converted to Christianity. From that time onward, the Macedonians began to develop culturally and occupy a specific place in human history.

Thanks to Clement's inspiration and iron determination, the national spirit in Macedonia always remained vigorous and inflexible, refusing to be broken by the blows of its bitterest enemies during a thousand years of history; so, in this land of tireless workers, Clement lit the inextinguishable flame of the Macedonian national consciousness.

As teacher, man of letters and prelate, he made Macedonia a real nursery of Macedonian culture. With his people, he suffered days of anguish and discouragement, and if he had not been upheld by that unshakable faith which burned in his great heart, he would surely have been broken by the tragic events in the nation's history.

Macedonians today firmly believe that, under the patronage of St. Clement of Ochrid and inspired by his magnanimous spirit, they will always remain a free, independent people, able worthily to play their part in history in promoting the peace and cultural progress of the Balkan Peninsula.

The Bogomils in Macedonia

The Bogomil movement is one of the most important and interesting cultural and social manifestations of the Middle Ages. Originating in Macedonia about the middle of the 10th century, it spread to many other European countries (especially in the Balkans) and for five centuries shook the whole feudal order in Europe. As a socio-religious movement, Bogomilism was a real heresy in the eyes of the official Church, which, regarding it as its major adversary, took severe measures to suppress it. These were aimed above all at destroying all the most important sources for the ideas of the Bogomils, so that historians have been obliged to obtain information about them from indirect sources, namely from the polemical acts of their bitterest enemies.

Manifestations of the spirit and intellect of man like that of the Bogomils, whose doctrine shook mediaeval social relations to their foundations are rare in the history of human progress and thought. The Church was seriously hit because she was the principal guardian of the feudal order, and found great difficulty in the fight against Bogomil teaching, which preached freedom of conscience,

brotherhood and equality among all people and all nations, that the kingdom of God and perpetual peace might be realized on earth.

Since the whole cultural and social life of the Middle Ages was governed by the Church, the new teaching of the Bogomils was bound to assume a religious form. The Bogomils knew that, with their adversary's weapons, they would unmask all its greatest weaknesses more quickly and more easily.

Looked at in this way, Bogomilism was essentially a particular religious sect which the Christian Church proposed officially for its own improvement. With its principles, its clear, straightforward ideas, Bogomilism was a completely original social and cultural teaching, which arose out of the feudal and social conditions of mediaeval life and also from the influence of previous theological and philosophical systems, such as Paulicianism and Messianism. Then, from being a religious sect in opposition, Bogomilism became to a large extent a movement for social reform, and because of its mainly social tendency, it was quickly able to attract a mass of followers among the lowest orders, especially among the peasants and, with its preaching of equality and its struggle against feudal abuses, it incited them to open rebellion against the feudal power. Thus Bogomilism prepared the way for many peasants' revolts not only in the Balkans, but also in the whole of Europe.

The Bogomils proposed to expropriate the lands and all the goods of the monasteries, the churches and the landed gentry, and also to abolish

the differences between the classes and distribute private property fairly. By thus safeguarding and defending the interests of the masses, Bogomilism appeared as one of the most advanced social and cultural movements.

On the basis of the scanty written sources of the Bogomils and particularly of their opponents, the prevailing opinion among scholars is that this movement began in Macedonia in 935.

According to some historians, in order to establish the name of the founder of the Bogomil heresy, it is necessary to set out from the "Discourse" of the priest Kozma, who, right at the beginning of his book, says: "It came to pass in the days of King Petar that a priest appeared in the Bulgarian world called *Bogomil* (i.e. "beloved by God"), but who should more correctly be called "not beloved by God", since he was the first to preach heresy on Bulgarian soil . . .". We know that King Petar reigned from 927 to 969. As regards Presbyter Kozma's statement that Bogomilism began "on Bulgarian soil", it has been definitely established that the Macedonian regions formed part of the kingdom of Petar, and therefore Macedonia was a subject state under Bulgarian domination as it had been under Byzantine rule before.

Who really was this priest Bogomil? Was he a myth or an historical person?

According to the common belief, he was born in one of the towns or villages of South-west Macedonia of a noble Slav family.

Priest Bogomil was a very cultured person for that period; he knew all the arts and sciences that

the school of Byzantium could give such a student in the Middle Ages.

According to Anna Comnena, the Bogomils had a plain, austere outward appearance: they had long hair, wore the toga and also the religious hat, drawn down over their eyes. Bogomil himself was of a severe countenance and very simply dressed. His sermons created a tremendous impression. Very soon he was surrounded by a great number of devoted followers, who travelled throughout the Balkan Peninsula preaching the new doctrines.

The teaching of the Bogomils appeared first in Macedonia because there the feudal oppression was most severe, and the people were determined to free themselves from their cruel sufferings as soon as possible.¹³ Hence the Bogomil movement found the soil most favourable for its growth here.

In Macedonia, which was under Bulgarian jurisdiction, Bogomilism took advantage of the internal differences in the feudal order, introduced by the Bulgarian State and supported by the official Christian Church. It soon spread throughout the Bulgarian State; then to Serbia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Albania, and later till to Western Europe.

Thus the politico-social and economic conditions of the Macedonian people about the middle of the 10th century, namely the feudal-ecclesiastical exploitation in the mediaeval Bulgarian kingdom, were the main cause, as well as the precondition, why this religious and social teaching appear-

¹³ History of the Macedonian People, Skopje, 1969, Volume I, p. 112.

ed first in Macedonia, from where it spread throughout Europe. The distance of the Macedonian regions from the Bulgarian capital further aggravated the abuses of the ecclesiastical and feudal overlords so that the socio-economic state of the Macedonian people under their domination became steadily worse. Macedonian historian Dragan Tashkovski wrote:

"In the internal structure of Macedonia a sharp class distinction was applied. The State, a prey to the most tremendous corruption, intensified the class differences to an extreme degree. The people, deprived of land and without means of subsistence, were ripe for rebellion. It needed only a spark for the great conflagration to break out.

It was not long in coming and the fire spread in Macedonia in the regions where the exploitation was harshest. Then the protest and revolt of the people appeared under the name of Bogomilism."¹⁴

Regarding the appearance of Bogomilism in Macedonia, we learn much from the book on the life of Clement of Ochrid written by Archbishop Theophylact, who relates how Clement, not long before his death was called upon by the people of Ochrid to drive out of Macedonia the wicked heresy which had spread so quickly among the people. Clement was considered by the people of Ochrid as a holy man, protector of the city and its surroundings; so it is not surprising that Theophylact wrote in this book that the people called upon their own saints first to help them.

¹⁴ D. Tashkovski, "The Bogomil Movement", Skopje, 1949, p. 23.

How great the devotion of the people of Ochrid was to their St. Clement is shown very clearly by the innumerable legends connected with his name. It is highly probable that the official Church, taking advantage of this excessive devotion of the people of Ochrid to St. Clement, used his name against the Bogomils, whose teaching had been so well received by the masses.

To this conclusion we are led by another piece of evidence, connected with the name of St. Naum of Ochrid. In the church of St. Mary Maior in Ochrid, St. Naum is depicted in one of the icons as being persecuted by the Bogomils¹⁵, because he was an opponent of their teaching. There is no doubt that in this case too, the aim was to instil into the people of Ochrid an implacable hatred of the Bogomils, represented as the enemies of the most venerated saints of Ochrid.

Moreover, some Macedonian place-names show that Macedonia really was the centre of Bogomilism. We may cite, for example, the village of Bogomila, the mountain Babuna, the name by which the leaders of the movement were called in the earliest times. Also the names of the villages Bogoslov, Kalughertsi and Negilovo were in some way connected with the work of the Bogomils in those parts.

According to a well-known legend that circulates among the people of the village of Bogomila (south of Veles) and the surrounding country, priest Bogomil, the founder of Bogomilism, was

¹⁵ D. Angelov, *Bogomilism in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1961, p. 87.

born in that village and died there, and was buried in the locality called "Tsarkvishte", where there was also a little chapel used by the Bogomils as a house of prayer.¹⁶ This legend also says that the Bogomils held their prayer meetings in a grotto near the village of Negilovo.

Spreading rapidly in the Bulgarian State and also in that of Byzantium, Bogomilism soon became a serious problem and a real danger to the governments, because, among other things, it threatened to raise the Macedonian people in revolt against the Bulgarian oppression. For this reason, Bulgaria and Byzantium, although they were enemy states, took joint action to suppress the Bogomil movement, as is clearly proved by the letter which Theophylact, Patriarch of Constantinople, sent to Czar Petar of Bulgaria, begging him to punish the Bogomils and drive them out of his kingdom.

The acts of cruelty that were inflicted on the Bogomils are clearly illustrated by the following document:

"All Bogomils must be divided by the authorities into three categories, since it is neither good nor just that those who have joined them in ignorance and those who have taught them should suffer the same penalties; if the former and the teachers of other church doctrines are willing to condemn their impiety, they may be converted to Christianity according to the 19th canon of the Council of Nicaea . . . since their impiety is a form of Manicheism mixed with Paulicianism. The others of them who have been led astray by their

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

own ignorance, because they could not understand the dogmas properly, but who have nevertheless submitted to the heresy, must, if they have been baptized by the orthodox, only be subjected to holy confirmation; while their priests who have openly anathematized the heresy and subscribed their names must be received.

Those, on the contrary, of the third category, who have neither taught others, nor done anything regarding it, but have followed them through ignorance or have spent some time with them and, after realizing what their teaching was, left them, must be kept apart for four months after they have abstained from all connection with them, while the priests among them must be allowed to exercise their priesthood freely. For each priest who supplied them with information, it is enough that the epithymia be applied for as long as their unemployment has lasted, and later on they may exercise their priesthood without responsibility. This is how you must treat those who have repented.

But those who persist in this evil and feel no need to repent Holy Church considers as corrupt and harmful members, and therefore anathematizes them and imposes on them perpetual condemnation. Moreover, the civil laws provide the death penalty for them, especially where it is clear that this evil is spreading and gaining the mastery."¹⁷

This was the aim of the cruel measures adopted by the Bulgarian authorities and the official

¹⁷ Quoted from: "Selected Texts for the History of the Macedonian People", Skopje, 1959, compiled by L. Lape pp. 48—49.

Church against the Bogomils, because the civil authorities and the clergy did not hesitate to take the lives of others in order to safeguard their own interests. The fact that the death penalty was actually applied in an inquisitional way is proved by written documents, including the book "Narratio de Bogomils" by Euthymius Zygavenus, an ecclesiastical writer of the first half of the 12th century, who gives the clearest evidence of these lamentable facts.

This book, considered one of the most important and one of the earliest sources for the study of the teachings of Bogomilism, reveals how Vasilias, one of the most outstanding Macedonian Bogomils, was put to death, and also the severe punishment meted out to his pupils and followers.

Dwelling cynically on one of the most important tenets of Bogomil teaching, according to which the human body is turned into dust and ashes after death and never rises again, Zygavenus writes:

"It is a fable according to which the vesture of the body is changed as into a dream and death occurs without pain. This is proved by the leader of their heresy. And, in fact, when he was told of the sentence according to which he was to be burnt at the stake, he was seized by acute mental anguish... while his followers and even those spiritually linked to him were cast into prison and put in chains, so that he was deprived of all help and hope. When he learnt of the serious state into which his followers and relations had fallen, and after thinking of the emperor's promise that they would be happy till the end of their lives, he burst into abandoned weeping, torn by great sobs as a

sign of the flame that burned in his heart. Worn out by grief, he lost consciousness, and when he came to they put him near the fire. Then he lost his voice, breathing with difficulty, overcome by fever.

The glib, artful tongue and the profane mouth of him who proclaimed prison and unjust things for others was silent. Our wise king had called Vasilias and from his own words revealed the falsity of his game... When he knew the facts, he summoned the ecclesiastical and lay authorities and proposed that Vasilias should be burnt at the stake. Who would have had any pity, since no anguish or torment was bad enough for a man who had studied the doctrines for 15 years and had preached them for more than 40 years?...

The dragon's head was now crushed, the parts of the body and the wounds closed, the remains will sooner or later find their real end".¹⁸

Meanwhile, sentences of death were not able to stop a rapid increase in the number of the Bogomils during the five centuries their teaching lasted.

Presbyter Kozma rightly stressed that the Bogomils "had suffered in thousands", and this proves that their numbers were really impressive.

It must be pointed out that the Bogomils also performed real patriotic deeds and gave their assistance to Czar Samuel when he raised a revolt and reigned for forty years. In return, according to some historical documents, Czar Samuel allowed the Bogomils to live freely in his kingdom, and the power of the State was largely due to their sup-

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 50—51.

port. Moreover, the Bogomil movement in Macedonia had also acquired an anti-Byzantine character. The patriotic role of the Macedonian Bogomils continued even when Samuel's State fell in 1018 and was occupied by Byzantium. It was just at that time, under the dominion of Byzantium, that the above-mentioned leader Vasilias, who was burnt at the stake in 1110 in Constantinople by order of the Emperor Alexis, was active among the Macedonian Bogomils.

The Bogomil movement was particularly strong from the 12th to the 13th century, when it spread to many Balkan and other countries in Europe.

It is definitely known that in the 12th century the bishop of the Bogomils, Nasaria, took the "Secret Book" of the Bogomils to Lombardy and gave it to his followers there. The Bogomils gained such rapid success in Italy that they were soon preaching in Rome itself.

An author writes that, in the first thirty years of the 12th century, the Cathars (i.e. the Bogomils) had spread throughout northern Italy.

According to Prof. Ossikin, the Bogomils even intended to occupy Rome. They used Monteforte Castle, near Turin, as their headquarters: all the orders for their propaganda were issued from there. Girard is believed to have been the head of the sect. From Italy the Cathars crossed into France, where the sect was brought by a woman, who came from Perigord, and by a peasant, who settled first in Orléans.

According to Schmidt, in a short time the sect had spread to whole regions and in all the parts

south of the River Loire. As a writer correctly observes, the Bogomils soon won the hearts of nearly all the southern French, from among whom there later came the most devout king of France, Henry IV.

From France, Bogomilism spread widely in Flanders, Champagne and Picardy; a little later it appeared in Germany and England also.

Then Bogomilism became a real political danger for many European rulers, and also for the ecclesiastical and lay feudatories. Thus, for example, in Bulgaria, Boris II, King of the Bulgars, was dethroned in 1218 with the help of the Bogomils, who made Ivan Assen king in his stead. The latter took their interests under his protection and allowed their teaching to be propagated in his territory.

The fact that the Bogomils had rendered important services to certain rulers by giving them their support, shows that they were not opposed to every power of the State.

For the Bogomils, truth and human virtues were more precious than life, which, if necessary, they were ready to sacrifice, like the early Christians, for the triumph of their ideals.

The Bogomils were against any ornament inside or outside the churches. They held that a believer can pray anywhere, in any place. The temple of God is where pure, natural faith is. They were opposed to the Church's liturgy and despised the cross. "Bow before the cross on which Jesus was crucified? No! We must detest it, despise it, hate it... It would be an unforgivable sin, a mortal wickedness, a sacrilege to wish to show honour to this shameful gallows." In contrast to the immoral,

licentious lives of the clergy, the Bogomils were modest and reserved and led ascetic lives. This is how they are described by the great Macedonian poet Kosta Ratsin in his book "The Bogomils of Dragovit":

"How far from them was everything externally ornate and splendid but horrible and corrupt within! Their language was tolerant and stern, vigorous and reliable. And without vanity. They were educated, they studied and were masters of every branch of knowledge. They were not proud of what they knew. They did not use empty words. Their speech was without that honeyed eloquence which charms the ear and conquers the mind and the heart.

How they hated those in authority, the Boyars, the sovereigns and the priests!"¹⁹

According to Ratsin, Bogomilism "sprang from the people; it embraced the widest sections of the people and, acquiring a religious character of opposition, mobilized the popular resistance against the ever increasing feudal oppression."²⁰

The Bogomils wished to free man from the slavery to evil into which he often fell when he felt in bondage to it or had no possibility of resisting it. Therefore, with tenacious persistence they proceeded to fight for equality among the people and their independence.

As a matter of fact, in applying the principle of equality among the peoples, of democracy and of the absolute freedom of man, they wished to re-

¹⁹ K. Ratsin, "The Bogomils of Dragovit", Skopje, 1948, p. 14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

store the Christian communities which once existed. The Bogomils had chosen this way of living in society as their ideal. They believed that with the institution of religious communities as they are described in the New Testament and interpreted by themselves, social differences would disappear. They attributed no importance to the Old Testament. In this case, Bogomilism was concerned not only with the theoretico-ideological bases of the Church, but also with its material interests.

What are the fundamental principles of Bogomil teaching? In what does its value consist and why did it find such a vast echo among the masses of the people in various countries?

The teaching of the Bogomils may be divided into two essential parts: religious and secular. The religious part comes entirely from the New Testament and from the oriental sects: Paulicianism and Messianism.

It is thus possible to affirm that, although the Bogomil teaching came from the teaching of these sects, it is an original religious-social teaching, established in its own right. Its originality consists above all in this: that the Bogomils, making use of the religious postulates of the above-mentioned oriental teachings, were able to connect and interpret in a very expressive way the concrete social conditions of their time. By applying their principles in the actual circumstances in which they lived, the Bogomils made their teaching easily understandable by and relevant to all social classes. Priest Bogomil attracted the attention not only of those who followed him, but also of those who saw in him a serious danger to their interests, and as

a result of this the Bogomil movement became very popular.

Priest Bogomil recognized two secret principles in the world which are equally strong and are eternally at war: good and evil. The principle of good is represented by God and his Messiah or Son, Jesus. The principle of evil is represented by the devil, Satan, God's elder son. Until the coming of Jesus Christ, mankind were subject to the principle of evil, the devil; for this reason Priest Bogomil entirely rejected the Old Testament, the pentateuch, Moses and the other prophets, through whom not God but the principle of evil, i.e. Satan, had spoken. Although this may appear strange at first sight, according to Priest Bogomil and his school the invincible principle until the coming of Jesus Christ and the omnipotent principle in the world is Satan: he, not God, created man, but he was not able to give man a soul. Therefore he had recourse to the help of God, who by this very fact acquired the right to dispose of man's soul, while Satan kept the right over his body.

Quite apart from these fundamental conceptions on the creation of the world, on the importance of the Old and New Testaments, and on the prophets and saints, Priest Bogomil appeared in the Middle Ages as a daring reformer of religious rites. He repudiated the official Church, both Orthodox and Catholic, and established his own religious community with its own statutes. To attract the common people, Priest Bogomil cut out all the formalism of the official Church and introduced things that appealed to popular sentiment and emotions.

Bogomilism was the first Protestantism, many centuries before Luther, which fought a long and desperate struggle against mysticism, sterile scholasticism, and corruption which had prevailed up to then in the Byzantine Church and among the Greek clergy.

According to Priest Bogomil, Jesus Christ is only a man in appearance; his body is divine, exempt from needs and freed from the privations of hell.

The Bogomils rejected holy baptism on principle. According to Priest Bogomil, baptism must be by fire and the spirit, of which Holy Scripture speaks.

The supreme law of the Bogomils is to avoid all contact with matter as the creation of the evil spirit. Everything done against this law is sin.

The adherents of the doctrine of the Bogomils were divided into various categories: the perfect, the semi-perfect and simple hearers, who were bound to observe strict rules. The perfect Bogomils were not allowed to marry or own property or money. There were two reasons for this: the main one was because property, composed of material goods, is the creation of the evil spirit, and the second, because property drags the believer down to material things and leads him into temptation.

These "perfect" sacrificed themselves for the salvation of the world; they campaigned against universal violence, preaching perpetual peace. Yet the world greeted these "divine people" with abuse; the Popes launched crusades against them. The Holy Inquisition consigned them to the flames, and the secular arm raised the dagger against them.

But nothing was able to stop these martyrs, who strove for more justice on their way. They knew the sovereign art of conquering by death and, like men crowned with immortality, they threw themselves with fearless courage on to the fire in order to proclaim the only truth, the one that was to set the nations free and unite them in one great family.

The Bogomils were not allowed to possess personal property. They did productive work in various communities (*zadruga*), or individually. In both cases they were obliged to hand over all their earnings to the "common chest". All, without exception, fasted for forty days three times a year; in addition to these fasts, the Bogomils went without bread and water three days a week.

The Bogomils were against violence; they did not use it or impose their beliefs with the sword, rather they themselves perished by the sword for their ideas, but they were opposed to murderers and war. They only justified war for defence, and were great patriots when they had to defend their country against external dangers.

The Bogomils held that Christ's teaching is a religious and moral teaching which gives a guide for living; the followers of Christ must aim at applying it in their lives.

The Bogomils did not wish to possess riches; they even gave away what they had. The readiness and loving-kindness with which they made sacrifices won them the respect and love of the people, and in this way they helped the rapid spread of their teaching. They were vegetarians.

The Bogomils believed that all men were equal, brothers, sons of a common Father. They made no distinction between nationalities. They thought that fatherlands and frontiers were stupid toys, invented by foolish and wicked people.

The Bogomils had no ecclesiastical hierarchy: every adult man or woman could be a preacher. As already mentioned, they also rejected liturgies and churches. They did own meeting-houses for prayer in France and perhaps also in Bosnia, but they were very simple, without images, domes or bells, and their only furniture was a table, covered with a white cloth, on which they placed the book of the gospels.

The believers assembled in these meeting-houses. They renounced images as if they were idols.

The Bogomils rejected marriage and did not recognize the ecclesiastical rite. Their families were the result of free unions. They had a strong tendency to chastity. Relationships among them outside family ties were thoroughly fraternal.

They did not recognize any feast days. They always worked without ceasing, and only rested when it was physically necessary.

As all men were equal in their eyes, no one had the right to command others, his equals, his own brothers. And therefore every power contrary to the teaching of Christ on equality and brotherhood must be abolished. On earth only the law of love must rule.

They believed that everything must be held in common and each one must work for all.

As a dualistic doctrine, Bogomilism is akin to the anthropomorphism of the apostles, the spiritualism of the Middle Ages, and the mythology of the Slavs.

At the bottom of Bogomil gnosticism is introduced the principle of unity in nature and the inviolability of our laws; that is to say, at its basis there is the law regarding the correlation between the cause and the effect-fact. This shows that Priest Bogomil and his school did not remain outside the influence of classical philosophy: he follows in the footsteps of Pythagoras, who taught that there is a general order in the world, and also of Aristotle, who showed that everything in nature has a beginning and an end, a cause and an effect.

All these premises of Bogomil teaching concerned the politico-social reality, so that the leaders of feudal society were hit and threatened by it as regards their material interests. These immediate allusions to the concrete feudal reality also contained the fundamental principle of the dualistic teaching of the Bogomils on the existence of the two opposing forces: light and darkness, good and evil, the antagonism between God and the devil.

With these conceptions the Bogomils were able to unmask very well the hypocrisy of the official clergy. They repudiated all the formalism of the Church and brought real faith to the feelings and understanding of the people. Declaring their opposition to the mysticism of religion, they exhorted their adherents to do the same and always follow their own reason. Thus the teaching of the Bogomils was really like a first valuable reformation,

long before the rise of Protestantism under Martin Luther, and also like a distant herald of the Renaissance.

Making themselves interpreters of the feelings and interests of the most downtrodden classes of the feudal society of that time, the Bogomils soon gained an enormous number of adherents. Not even the opposition of the international Christian Church, which was not particular about the means it chose to suppress their movement, was able to tear the Bogomils away from the masses of the people. On the contrary, the power of the Christian Church, which had been organized for centuries, felt itself hit and shaken as never before. The harsher the punitive measures against the Bogomils in every country of Europe, the more firmly their teaching took root in the new lands. No threat was able to stop the Bogomils from spreading their teaching, beginning from Macedonia, through Bulgaria, Byzantium and Bosnia, till it reached the far west of Europe. Taking account of the politico-social conditions existing in these lands and adapting their teaching to the concrete socio-economic situation, the Bogomils set the public life of Europe in ferment. Bogomilism could easily do this, and, in fact, from being a primitive religious-social teaching, it soon became a real political force thinly disguised under a veil of religion.

And when Bogomilism finally disappeared from the politico-social scene of Europe, only a few written records of it remained; the inquisitional machinery for destroying everything opposed to the official Church succeeded in reducing to dust and ashes the innumerable works of Bogomil

writers, technically known as apocryphal literature. These literary activities of the Bogomils were marked by the exceptional interest shown in them by readers among the lowest social classes, who were often the chief possessors of Bogomil writings. Just at the time when the Bogomil texts were being secretly passed from man to man lest they should be discovered, the masses were learning to transmit them by word of mouth.

The people thus acquired a rich oral and folk tradition, and the influence of the Bogomil apocryphal literature was an important factor in the creation of popular poetry among the Macedonians.

In the mediaeval period when ecclesiastical literature was mainly homogeneous, the apocryphal works of the Bogomils were distinguished by their colourfulness. The apocryphal legends: "The Secret Book", "The Treatise on Adam and Eve", "The Book of Enoch", "The Revelation of Baruch", "The Vision of Isaac", "The Childhood of Jesus", and especially "The Way of St. Mary Maior of Sorrows" are among the most important literary compositions of the Middle Ages, which reveal their spirit. Without these works, the life of those times would not be sufficiently represented. Of particular interest are the texts concerning the ideas of Bogomilism, especially the original cosmogenic idea of this teaching.

The work of Priest Bogomil and his successors is one of the most notable and consistent phenomena of the Middle Ages. Its results, which made themselves felt for some centuries over a vast area, are striking from any point of view even in our own day. It was no accident that Bogomilism was

for long regarded as an exceptional religious problem.

The progressive spirit of Bogomil teaching is to be found above all in the principle of the socio-economic equality of all men, whether noble or peasant, patrician or plebeian, and in the abolition of special privileges.

The movement was equally progressive because the Bogomils urged the people to follow and interpret social phenomena and religious wisdom. "Many aspects of social and spiritual life greatly interested the Bogomils, and many complex problems exercised their minds. The difference between what the Church preached and what actually existed forced the Bogomils to seek this truth outside the teaching of the official Church," writes K. Ratsin in the work already cited.

Because Priest Bogomil, coming from the lower clergy, founded one of the most important social movements in the Middle Ages and was born in Macedonia, where with his followers he preached his special doctrines, the Macedonian people today are proud of him and of his creative spirit.

It is very probable that Priest Bogomil felt the sufferings of his oppressed people and tried to show them the way to freedom. This noble-minded, far-sighted philosopher is seen today as one of the most representative manifestations of the Macedonian genius. He unquestionably occupies a pre-eminent place among such famous men as Jan Hus, Savonarola, Giordano Bruno, Calvin, Luther and others.

According to the Russian historian A. Veslovski, the Bogomils have made their contribution to

the general culture of Europe, leaving permanent marks on the whole development of mediaeval literature. They undoubtedly had an influence on Dante's *Inferno*, canto XII, pp. 31—45, where Italy's greatest poet has made use of the Bogomil "Gospel of Nikodim", and in canto XXXII of the *Purgatorio*, where Dante has turned to account the legend of the tree of baptism.

According to this Russian scholar, the Bogomils, before Hus, introduced their special contribution into European culture and influenced the whole development of mediaeval literature. The Bogomil movement introduced into the Renaissance, and thence also into the Reformation, its civilizing element, the freedom of the individual and the right to freedom of worship also for local communities, and political equality: in other words, the influence of Bogomilism was primarily on the political and cultural institutions of Western Europe, but it also inadvertently affected its art.

Mediaeval art in Macedonia

While the migration of the Slavs was still going on in the Balkan Peninsula, from the 6th to the 7th century, the influences of the two most powerful States in Europe: Byzantium and the Western Roman Empire, were meeting and mingling. These two States, heirs of the former Eastern and Western Roman Empire, had obviously exerted an influence on the public-political and religious-cultural life of the Southern Slav peoples. This influence, which grew stronger especially after the conversion of the Slavs to Christianity, profoundly affected their cultural history.

In this situation of the undoubted spiritual dependence of the Southern Slav peoples on Byzantium, the lines followed by their cultural development are also clear. On their conversion to Christianity, the creative art of the Slav peoples began to take a new direction. In view of the actual situation, in which Slav art was on a lower level than Byzantine art, the Slavs, including also the Macedonian Slavs, aspired to reach the highest formative expressions of their artistic activity in the wake of the more developed art of Byzantium.

While the art of the Southern Slavs, during the time they were settling in the Balkan Peninsula, embraced only ceramics and ornaments, in Byzantium there was already a higher level of art in every social sphere.

In this state of affairs, it was natural and inevitable that Byzantine influence should be more widespread on the artistic development of the Southern Slavs, and especially of the Macedonian Slavs, who were nearer Thessaloniki, the next city after Constantinople, the centre of Byzantine culture. Accordingly, under the immediate influence of Thessaloniki and Constantinople, the development of Macedonian art reached the dimensions of Byzantine art.

Macedonian mediaeval art, of which there are such fine examples in the numerous churches and monasteries with their frescoes, icons and wood carvings, was always one of the most important expressions of the cultural history of this people. In their works of art, the genius of the Macedonian painters immortalized the spiritual life of their people, embodying their noblest conceptions in the context of the social reality in which their people had been living for centuries.

In spite of the fact that Macedonian mediaeval art was then developing under the undoubted influence of Byzantine art, it showed, with its creative results, an original quality and made a well-defined contribution to the common stock of the splendid art of Byzantium of that time.

Apart from the religious themes of the painting of the Southern Byzantine Empire (used above all in the motifs of the art in the churches and

monasteries), the Macedonian painters, called zoographers, introduced into their works a series of realistic elements, inspired by the everyday scenes of the land they lived in. And even when they dealt with the particular religious motifs that were predominant in life, society and art, the Macedonian painters handled them in a creative, realistic way which reflected not only their artistic genius, but also the original outlook of their people in their particular environment.

Accordingly, the most successful achievements of this art can be seen in the frescoes and icons of the mediaeval monasteries in Macedonia. The paintings in the church of St. Sofia at Ochrid (11th century), particularly the fresco composition "The Death of Saint Mary Maior", and the composition "The Forty Martyrs" in the church of the village of Vodocha, near Strumitsa, are striking examples of the immediacy with which the artists have portrayed human suffering, the agonies and torments of the spirit. The ability to express mental anguish with exceptional realism is clearly shown in the art in the monastery of St. Panteleimon (12th century) in the village of Nerezi, province of Skopje, (especially the paintings "The Lamentations of Christ" and "The Deposition of Christ from the Cross"), and also in the painting in the church of St. George (12th century) in Kurbinovo, Prespa, the monastery of St. Dimitrija (14th century) near Skopje, built by the legendary Marko Krale, so that it is also known as the monastery of Marko.

In short, mediaeval painting in Macedonia is distinguished by the fact that the saints and legends of the Christian Church are identified with

the simple realities of the everyday life of the people. The Macedonian painters achieve this result by going outside the customary limits of the austere icons of the Church.

The development of painting on Macedonian soil in the Middle Ages, especially from the 10th to the 14th century, also proves that there really existed in Macedonia a cultural climate congenial to the tastes of the people.

Because of its creative qualities, Macedonian mediaeval painting occupies a worthy place in the history of art.

It is believed that the history of Macedonian painting, in the true sense of the word, begins with the coming of Clement of Ochrid to Macedonia, in correlation with the infiltration of the Slavonic script on Macedonian soil in the 9th century. Then began a period of intense activity in building churches and monasteries, especially in the region of Ochrid, which gave a great stimulus to painting. Thus Clement himself built the monastery of St. Panteleimon at Ochrid in 893, which afterwards became the leading religious and cultural centre of the Macedonian Slavs. A few years later another monastery was built near it, that of St. Archangel, known by the name of St. Naum (i.e. that of its founder, Naum of Ochrid).

The church of St. Sofia of Ochrid, which is believed to have been the cathedral church during the reign of King Boris of Bulgaria, is particularly important for Macedonian mediaeval painting. It was most probably built in the time of Czar Samuel or about the end of his reign. The fine examples of Macedonian painting (frescoes) in this church are

an authentic indication of the state of Macedonian painting during the time of Samuel. The paintings in this church are inspired by the conceptions of the Court of Constantinople, but at the same time they also express local and provincial forms, which can be seen from the severe expressions of the faces, the monumental nature of the figures and the harmony of the movements.

In addition to those in the church of St. Sofia of Ochrid, paintings characteristic of that period can also be seen in the churches of the village of Vodocha, near Strumitsa, and Velussa.

Afterwards the power of Byzantium returned to Macedonia. In this period, until Macedonia fell under Serbian rule, Macedonian mediaeval art is to be found in the monastery of St. Panteleimon (1164), near Skopje, the church of St. George (1191) in the village of Kurbinovo, the church of St. Nicholas (1299) in the village of Varosh, the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos (1295) in Ochrid, as well as the double row of frescoes in the church of St. Sofia. The characteristics of the painting in these mediaeval monuments correspond to those distinctions of the so-called pictorial style of Comnenus of Byzantium, which shows undoubted artistic expression of considerable merit. The contribution of the Macedonian painters to the development of religious painting is shown in the monastery of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi and in the church of St. George at Kurbinovo.

„At Nerezi, besides the figurations which are altogether representative of Constantinople, in the way the icons, meditated in so masterly a manner, and the individual compositions or figures are pa-

inted, there is also an element which has not been expressed in Constantinople or outside it as it has been expressed in Macedonia. This is the sense of reality due to the inner life of the characters in the dramatic scenes, as portrayed in "The Sufferings of Christ". The finest example of this special quality is the fresco of "The Lamentations" at Nerezi. It had appeared even before, but only in part (in the church of St. Sofia at Ochrid), but it acquired such an important place in Macedonian mediaeval painting that it immediately stands out as the dominant feature in churches of lesser importance, such as the church of St. George in the village of Kurbinovo. The linearity of the style of Comnenus, who at Kurbinovo, as a result of his understanding of the local painters, passes into the phase of the mobility of baroque, does not prevent him from expressing with great vigour the inner life, which for all Byzantine painting means opening up new horizons in the pictorial sphere. The delicacy of the tints in "Constantinople", the inimitable warmth of the colouring, and the restraint in the spiritualizing of the figures raise Nerezi to the level of the most important examples of Byzantine painting in general."²¹

The subsequent development of Macedonian mediaeval painting could be summed up in the statement that from the 12th century to 1271, no examples of it have been preserved. In 1271 in the village of Manastir, in the region of Mariovo, was built the basilica of St. Nicholas, the paintings of which reveal the new tendencies of Macedonian

²¹ History of the Macedonian People, Skopje, 1969, Vol. I, pp. 215—216.

mediaeval painting. It is, in fact, in the paintings of this important monument of Macedonian mediaeval architecture that the so-called palaeological style was introduced, which began in Constantinople in the second half of the 13th century. The most notable infiltration of the palaeological style in the painting is clearly seen in the frescoes of the above-mentioned churches of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos and St. Nicholas (in the village of Varosh). In the first decades of the 14th century, the "palaeological" ideas in painting were even more marked. The fundamental feature of this new style of painting in Macedonian mediaeval art is its narrative function, especially in dealing with theological themes. Moreover, as time went on the dramatic elements of Macedonian art found expression in religious-theological "moments" which stamp it with a specific character, so that it has a definite place in the development of all Balkan painting of that time.

When Macedonia became part of the Serbian State, Macedonian painting developed in a special way in the reign of King Milutin, who was famous for the great number of churches and monasteries he built. Thus, the paintings in the monastery of St. Nikita, built at the foot of the Skopska Crna Gora mountain, and in the monastery of St. George in the village of Staro Nagorichane, province of Kumanovo, refounded by King Milutin, are so outstanding that they made their artists, Mihailo and Eutihij, famous.²²

²² P. Miljkovik-Peppek, "The Work of the Painters Mihailo and Eutihij", Skopje, 1967.

Later on, various religious movements appeared in Macedonia, which greatly contributed to the spread of the ascetic life among monks; this, in fact, was the period in which the monastic life flourished most.

Then the so-called monastic style prevailed in Macedonian and Balkan painting, which expressed the popular preference for theological ideas. This is shown by the frescoes in the monastery of St. Dimitrija, near the village of Sushitsa, province of Skopje. In the further development of Macedonian painting, the palaeological crosses with the monastic style, which is evident in all the churches and monasteries reconstructed or refounded in Macedonia. Thus, an interesting crossing of these two styles can be seen in the paintings in the churches of St. Nicholas in the village of Psacha, region of Kriva Palanka, St. Archangel in the village of Varosh, St. Nicholas in the village of Luboten, region of Lesново, St. Archangel on the Skopska Crna Gora mountain, St. Mary Maior Zahumska near Lake Ochrid; also in the monasteries of St. Andrew in the village of Matka, region of Skopje and Matejche at the foot of the Skopska Crna Gora mountain; and especially at Ochrid in the churches of St. Nicholas Bolnichki, St. Mary Maior Bolnichka, Lesser St. Clement, and Lesser St. Vrachi, which exemplify Macedonian mediaeval painting of that time.

In that period of the 14th century, portrait painting made its appearance in Macedonian art. And if some remains of portraits are to be found in the paintings in the church of St. Clement of Ochrid, and in the grotto of the church of St. Eras-

mus as well as in the grotto near Ochrid, which is believed to be of the 13th century, one may say that portrait painting as an important feature of Macedonian art really began in the 14th century.

Macedonian frescoes most often contain portraits of Serbian feudatories, archbishops, bishops, sovereigns, high dignitaries and prelates. This is not surprising, since at that time Macedonian territory mostly formed part of the mediaeval Serbian State. In fact, the socio-political situation of Macedonia being what it was, the churches and monasteries on Macedonian soil were often built by Serbian feudatories and rulers. For the most part, the portraits depicted the founders. Thus, among the best known are the portraits of the Serbian ruler Milutin and his consort Simonida in the church of St. George, in the village of Staro Nagorichane; the portraits of the Czar Dushan and his consort Helen in the church of the village of Lesново; the portrait of the despot Oliver, the founder of the monastery St. Gavril Lesnovski; the portraits of Volkashin and Urosh V in the church of St. Nicholas in the village of Psacha and also the collective portrait.

Among the most important works in Macedonian painting there are the portrait of Archbishop Nicholas of Ochrid in the church of St. Sofia and the church of St. Nicholas Bolnichki at Ochrid, the portraits of Volkashin and his son Marko in the church of St. Archangel in the village of Varosh and in the monastery of Marko, near the village of Sushitsa, and the portraits of Dushan and Helen, Urosh V, SS. Sava and Simeon in the church of St. Nicholas Bolnichki at Ochrid.

Of special importance in Macedonian mediaeval art is the painting of icons. Although no icons of the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries have been preserved in Macedonia, their subsequent use caused an abundance of these important examples of Macedonian mediaeval painting to be executed. Unlike the frescoes, the work of painting icons went on continuously. This accounts for the fact that they were produced so quickly and were to be found in such numbers in churches and monasteries, and also in private houses.

Accordingly, some centres were established in Macedonia where the painting of icons went on for centuries. Ochrid was particularly famous for this and, later on, the larger Macedonian monasteries, too. Ochrid also has the distinction of being the oldest centre where pictures of saints were painted.

This is supported by the fact that the oldest icon in Macedonia, "The Forty Martyrs of Tiveriopole" (11th—12th century) was discovered in Ochrid. There, too, was found the only mosaic-icon so far known. Moreover, it was in the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos at Ochrid that the oldest icon of "Jesus Christ", dated 1262, was found.

In the church of St. George of Struga was found the icon of "St. George", painted by Jovan in 1267.

Among the many interesting icons painted in Macedonia, the following must be mentioned both for their antiquity and for their artistic value: the "Annunciation" in the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos at Ochrid, "Christ Enthroned" in the church of St. Dimitrija at Bitola, "St. Mary Maior

and Christ" in the church of the village of Lesnovo, and others. A particular, important detail in old icons of outstanding beauty can be seen in the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos at Ochrid, in which the following icons are also worthy of mention: "Christ and St. Mary Maior" (14th century) "Jesus, Saviour of Souls" (14th century), "St. Mary Maior Odigitrija" (13th century), the "Apostole Matthew" (14th century), and others.

Of the other components of Macedonian mediaeval art, decorative modelling deserves a special mention. At first it was applied to the altar rails and, from the 13th—14th century, also to the iconostasis. This is confirmed by the examples of plastic modelling on the altar rails of the church of St. Sofia at Ochrid.

Macedonian decorative modelling from that period (11th century) onwards is distinguished by a certain intensification of the light-obscure, by the passage of the light towards the unilluminated parts, which we find in the stylized elements of the flora and fauna, combined with Christian symbols.

Generally, Macedonian decorative modelling is in the style of Byzantine decorative modelling of earlier times, which it follows also in its definite mode of continuation. The clear characteristic of Macedonian decorative modelling of that period is that the figure is reduced to the minimum, rarely enlarged, as, for example, when the icon is covered with material (stone or metal), or as in the case of the uncovered icon of "St. John the Divine" at Demir Kapija. In the following two centuries (12th—13th), as also in the 11th century, Macedonian

decorative modelling is in the Greek style, as witness the two splendid cornices (of St. Mary Maior and St. Panteleimon) of the altar rails of the monastery of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi. However, from the 14th century onwards, decorative modelling in Macedonia began to be essentially different from what it had been before; for example, in some parts of the region of Ochrid it reveals clear eastern influences (the ambo of the church of St. Sofia, Ochrid), while in other places the western influence can be seen, which is believed to have been introduced into Macedonian territory as a result of the extension of the Serbian State westwards. Whereas the eastern influence in Macedonian decorative modelling aimed at rejecting the plastic form, the western influence is revealed by the introduction of romantic elements in the capitals of the columns of the iconostases (as in the monastery of St. Anastasija in the village of Leshok in the province of Tetovo, and in the monastery of St. George in the village of Staro Nagorichane), or in the rosettes (as in the church in the village of Luboten and in the above-mentioned monastery in the village of Leshok).

When the Macedonian people came under Turco-Islamic rule, this had a negative influence also on the creative development of their painting. Among other things, the Turkish authorities forbade the building of churches and monasteries in the towns, and when later on this ban was lifted, the dimensions of the ecclesiastical buildings that the Christians planned to construct were limited. These regulations were strictly enforced. Thus in Macedonia tiny churches and uninhabitable mona-

steries, with narrow windows, began to be erected, mainly on sites where ecclesiastical buildings had existed before, and frequently on the foundations of former churches and monasteries (the Turkish authorities seldom allowed new churches to be built).

In these socio-political, economico-cultural conditions, and in those regarding church building, the further development of the painting of frescoes and icons in Macedonia was increasingly restricted. Above all, many painters of genius who were working in Macedonia left it. Nevertheless, in spite of all the restrictions suffered by the Macedonian people with the coming of the Turks, it cannot be said that the continuity of pictorial art among the Macedonians was broken. The churches and monasteries continued to be beautified with frescoes and icons.

Meanwhile, Macedonian mediaeval art began to show a certain decline in quality. Macedonian painters insisted that the old way of painting should be continued, and this very attitude led to a failure of creativity. Instead of aspiring to new forms, suited to contemporary conditions, the painters were content to copy the style of the creative period that was now over; in unfavourable circumstances (reduced space, etc.) they wished to continue the great tradition of Byzantine painting, but the space available was so small that this proved quite impossible. Thus they did not succeed in imitating the past in the contemporary idiom; the results of this way of solving their creative problems were naturally unsatisfactory.

The undoubted deterioration in the quality of the painting of that period was also due, in no small measure, to the great decrease in the demand for it. The low price that the rare founders offered for the work of the portrait-painter was an insufficient incentive for the new painters.

However, even in these unfavourable conditions, painting continued on Macedonian soil. Examples of it are to be found in some more important centres, such as the city of Ochrid (which was the archiepiscopal see), the monasteries of Treskavets and Zrse near Prilep, Slepche in the region of Demirhissar, the village of Lesnovo with the monastery of St. George Lesnovski, and the monasteries in the regions of Skopje (Skopska Crna Gora), Kratovo, Shtip and Kumanovo.

One of the best known paintings in Macedonia under Turkish rule is that, dated 1477, in the church of SS. Constantine and Helen at Ochrid. The anonymous Macedonian painter painted several icons and groups of frescoes in the style of painting of the old churches of Ochrid, of which the icon "The Introduction of St. Mary Maior into the Temple" had a considerable influence on the painter of an icon of the same subject, Mihailo, one of the most eminent mediaeval painters. This anonymous Macedonian painter has also shown his undoubted creative possibilities in the portraits of the founder Partenia and his family.

From the school of painting in Ochrid, mention must also be made of the painting in the church of the Assumption in the village of Leskoets. The considerable merits of the local painter are shown by "The Last Supper" (in which a new ele-

ment was introduced: some red stains are painted on the plate before Christ), and the portrait of the founders Tode and Bulka.

The paintings in the church of All Saints (1452) in the village of Leshani in the region of Ochrid, and in the church of the village of Godivie, executed some ten years later, as well as those in the churches of St. Atanasia, St. Mary Maior and St. Mary Maior Peshtanska in the grottoes in the village of Kalishte are the most important works of the school of painting in Ochrid in the 15th century.

This school of painting was very active in the 16th century, as can be seen in the paintings of the restored church of St. Mary Maior Bolnichka (one of artists is known from his signature Nele), the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos (the frescoes were painted in 1597), and the chapel of St. Nicholas.

As regards Macedonian fresco painting in the 17th century, mention must be made of the monastery of St. Mary Maior (1612—1645) in the village of Slivnitsa near Lake Prespa; the founder of this monastery is known: he was the painter Mihailo Petkov of Bitola, who ordered the portrait of his dead son Kupen to be made.

The Ochrid school of painters was famous for the making of icons. Even during the period of Turkish rule in the territory of the Southern Slavs up to the end of the 17th century, very fine icons were painted in Macedonia, although this activity reached its highest peak from the 13th to the 14th century. To mention only a few of the most successful, there is the double icon with the figures

of St. Clement and St. Naum in the church of St. Mary Maior Perivleptos (this icon reveals the creative mode, characterized by an affinity with the portrait painting of that period); the icon of "The Introduction of St. Mary Maior" in the church of SS. Constantine and Helen at Ochrid; the icon of "Jesus Christ" in the church of St. Jovan Kaneo of the 16th century; and the icons of "St Mary Maior and Jesus Christ" in the church of the Assumption in the village of Leskoets (the two icons are dated 1565).

Apart from the school of Ochrid, that of the painters of the monastery of Zrse, in the region of Prilep, was also famous. Some of their works prove that, even during the period of Turkish domination, the Macedonian people could, on occasion, show their exceptional talent for painting. Thus we have the icon of "St. Mary Maior Pelagonitis" painted in 1422 by the Makarij of the village of Zrse, which is one of the most important works of Macedonian mediaeval painting. It is believed that the icon was named *Pelagonitis* after the plain of Bitola—Prilep called *Pelagonija*. The monk Makarij is clearly one of the most gifted Macedonian painters: it is believed that besides this icon, he also painted the above-mentioned icon of "St. Mary Maior Odighitrija" at Ochrid. In the same church of the Transfiguration in which the icon of "St. Mary Maior Pelagonitis" was discovered, the paintings and the iconostasis are worthy of praise; the artist was the painter Grigorij, who, among other things, took part in the painting of the monastery of St. Andrew near the River Treska,

which was founded by Andrew, a brother of Marko Krале.

In the region of Prilep, there was a well-known school of painters in the monastery of Treskavets, whose works may be judged by the painting of that monastery of the 15th century.

A more important school of painters was that of the monastery of St. Jovan Pretecha in the village of Slepche in the region of Demir Hissar; the oldest painting is that dated 1537 in the church of St. Nicholas of the monastery of Toplitsa. The artists were Dimitar of the village of Leunovo near Mavrovo, and his collaborator, the painter Jovan. The founder was Prince Dimitrie Perlik of Kratovo, the concessionaire of the mines of Kratovo. From the inscriptions on his icons, it appears that this painter also had a good knowledge of Greek (he signed his works in Greek as well as in Slavonic). Other important works from this school of Macedonian painters are the frescoes in the niche of the western entrance of the little church of St. Jovan Bogoslov, the work of an anonymous artist; the frescoes in the church of St. Dimitrija (Latin rite) of 1624, also by an unknown painter; the painting of the entrance of the monastery of St. Jovan Pretecha of Slepche (1637—38); and the little icon in the same monastery in which Deisis is portrayed.

Another well-known centre of painters on Macedonian soil during the period of Turkish rule in Macedonia was the monastery of Lesnovo. The most important examples of Macedonian mediaeval painting from this centre are the icons of "St. Jovan Pretecha" in the church of St. Mary Maior in the

village of Shlegovo, the inscriptions on which are in Old Slavonic.

An interesting feature of the work of the painters of Lesnovo, inspired by their mediaeval masters, is the fact that all the icons they produced have wide oak frames, filled with plaster ornaments, by which they are distinguished from the works of other centres of Macedonian mediaeval painting.

Of the school of painters in Skopje, who worked in the monasteries situated at the foot of the Skopska Crna Gora mountain, must be mentioned the painting in the little church of St. Nicholas (1501) in the village of Kuchevishte.

This is a brief survey of the development of Macedonian mediaeval painting, as regards the most important centres on Macedonian soil.

Thus, because of the various political and cultural conditions to which the oppressed Macedonian people was periodically subjected (except in the powerful reign of Czar Samuel), the development of mediaeval painting on Macedonian soil through the centuries came under many new influences, which essentially changed its direction. But in spite of this, it tenaciously preserved its own fundamental forms and pictorial technique, so characteristic of the Middle Ages, and also showed some expressions and styles of its own.

The frescoes of the monastery of St. Pantaleimon near Skopje are the most splendid manifestation of the early period of Macedonian mediaeval painting; some of the paintings in this monastery are really fine examples of the painting of

that period, and therefore their place is assured not only in the history of Byzantine-European painting, but also in the patrimony of world pictorial art.

"The high pictorial value of the Nerezi frescoes is due not only to their indisputable artistic merits, but also because in all the monuments discovered so far that are near in time to those of Nerezi, there has not been noted the same intensity in the presentation, the sensitive beauty, the emotion of the movements and the expression of the faces — all prime requisites of the common human language of painting."²³

The significance of the magnificent achievements of the Nerezi works (especially the frescoes "The Lamentations of Christ" and "The Deposition of Christ from the Cross") has been greatly intensified by the fact that the creative force of their anonymous painters neither appeared before the creation of these works, nor was manifested afterwards in the many frescoes of later date; so the Nerezi opus remained the unsurpassable peak of mediaeval painting of this kind.

Thus, over the centuries an important, original painting was created on Macedonian soil, which occupies a worthy place in the history of mediaeval painting in the Byzantium and Europe of that time. The most outstanding artists are the portrait-painters, such as Mihailo and Eutihij, the two giants whose activity was mainly carried on Ma-

²³ P. Miljkovik-Peppek, "800 Years of Nerezi", *Kulturen Zivot*, Skopje, 1964, No. 7.

cedonian soil; the icon painter Makarij of the village of Zrse near Prilep, whose work deserves to be studied and appreciated; the painter Dimitar of the village of Leunovo near Mavrovo, whose work would be a worthy subject for a specialist study; and so many other unknown artists of the Middle Ages whose work does honour to Macedonian art.



Macedonian Folk-Art

Macedonian folk-art has centuries of history behind it. Information on its origins goes back to 1325—26, when a Greek chronicler and diplomat recorded that, during a journey he made in Macedonia, he had heard the folk-songs which celebrated the deeds of local heroes, and at Strumitsa he had watched some folk-dances, accompanied by a special musical instrument. Later, in the 16th century, an Austrian priest wrote down some songs of the region of Kostur, which was the first recording of Macedonian creative art.²⁴

Independently of the records taken of the origins of Macedonian folklore, reliable evidence today is contained in the texts of the real art of the people. In them is reflected the genesis of popular thought regarding religion, ethics, morality, economics, etc. It is thus possible by induction to assume those elements that reveal the beginning of Macedonian folk-art. The difficulty in ascertaining the origin and development of Macedonian folklore is mainly due to the fact that this people,

²⁴ Ciro Cianelli — André Vaillant, "Un Lexique macédonien du XVIIe siècle", Paris, 1958.

handicapped by their well-known backward social and political conditions, did not have the cultural possibility of writing down and publishing the wealth of their oral poetry. Later, when the first information furnished by various foreign students began to be published, the existence of this heritage of Macedonian folklore became known. Among these students must be mentioned Vuk Karadgich, who included some Macedonian songs in the collections of folk-songs he published. So did the Russian Slavonic scholar Victor Grigorovich, who was the first to record a Macedonian prose work.

As soon as scholars began to show a keener and more detailed interest in folk-songs, a succession of increasingly large and varied collections appeared, which became the object of more careful research.

In the 1850s, when the period of the Macedonian renaissance began, various collectors of songs were active and a great many works conceived and created in preceding centuries were published, among which folk-songs were of the first importance.

The ideas inspiring the renaissance of the Macedonian people were often manifested through a series of folklore activities, which was no accident when one remembers that this people had been fighting for independence for many years, so that these activities appeared one of the most notable cultural and artistic expressions. Consequently, the frequent publications of Macedonian folk-songs suggested a deeper study of them. But this was extremely difficult because the publications of these folk-songs were disseminated outside Mace-

donia, as was the case with the "Collection" of the Miladinov brothers, published in Zagreb in 1861, and other works of the kind, while Macedonia groaned under the Turkish yoke. Therefore, these Macedonian folk-songs were often published in Bulgaria, which had gained its independence shortly before.

At that time, too, there were many others interested in folk-songs, such as Dimitar Miladinov, Kusman Shapkarev, Panajot Ghinovski, Marko Tsepenkov, Partenia Zografski, Georgi Pulevski, Eftim Sprostranov, Vassil Ikonov, Dimitar and Vassil Molerov, Naum Tahov and Atanas Iliev. Moreover, the various problems connected with Macedonian folklore were treated in a number of books, such as those by Efrem Karanov, Dimitar Matov, Anton P. Stoilov, and others. These researches are still being pursued today by several foreign students. Thus, for example, the Czechoslovakian Academy of Sciences published a collection of 133 Macedonian folk-tales under the title of *Lidove povidky jihomakedonske*, edited by Jiří Polivka and Petar Lavrov, in Prague in 1932. Jiří Polivka also published an essay on the significance of Macedonian folk-art and its place in the world. The well-known French Slavonic scholar, André Mazon, published in Paris his collections of Macedonian folk-songs: *Contes slaves de la Macédoine sud-occidentale* (1923) and "*Documents, contes et chansons slaves de l'Albanie du Sud*" (1936).

There is no aspect of the suffering and oppressed life of the Macedonians that has not inspired folk-songs. There are songs for births, weddings, the daily toil, struggles, and the grave. Thus the

folk-song is a source for the history of the life of the Macedonian people. Expressed for many centuries in authentic verses, the folk-song has the merit of being a real historical record in addition to its artistic value.

They are songs, stories, parables, proverbs and riddles, into which the people seem to have infused all the innate genius of their race: heart-beats, tears and the mournful smiles of their life in captivity, together with the vague memory of better times, always far away. These songs accompany the Macedonian always and everywhere: to pasture, during work, in rest, when travelling in company, in rites and ceremonies, at feasts and at funerals. They also express feelings of joy and affection, and often the lilt resembles the sound of simple, rustic musical instruments, like reed-pipes or flutes, such as the gajda or the kaval. At wedding feasts and banquets the choirs are usually accompanied by instruments, and although an oppressed people cannot be merry, nevertheless there are some wan rays of light, some faint gleams of gaiety. Who composes them? No one and everyone, because by their very nature they are always anonymous and oral.

These rhapsodies are handed down from father to son, from generation to generation, from village to village, and they are often changed in the process, becoming more and more the spiritual food and support of the whole people.

A characteristic of Macedonian folk-songs is the objectivity of their content; they mainly regard the unlearned masses, so for the most part they lack the subjectivism of modern poetry.

Macedonian folk-songs are lyric and epic, but the lyric ones are the more original and interesting from the artistic point of view also, because sentiment is particularly keen in the Macedonian poet.

The themes, as already mentioned, are generally supplied by the events and solemnities of both individual and community life. They are, in short, the spontaneous echo of what touches the heart of the poet or strikes his fantasy.

Macedonian folk-songs may be classified according to their content as follows:

- ritual songs;
- mythological songs;
- songs about work;
- songs about family life;
- songs about childhood;
- humorous songs.

Popular epic poetry is also the essence of some historical, haidutic, heroic, revolutionary and partisan songs.

Among these groups of folk-songs there are also the ballads, a real lyrico-epic expression of Macedonian life

Macedonian popular stories, both in their number and for their creative qualities, are a rich heritage of folklore. In the tales, proverbs and riddles, the Macedonian people expresses its wisdom and unlimited fantasy.

Popular prose, which in the past was a medium for expressing public opinion, comprises the following types: tales and fables inspired by animals, anecdotes, fanciful stories, realistic tales suggested by traditions, legends, proverbs and riddles.

Since they reflected the conceptual and emotional realities of life, in remote times Macedonian popular lyrics were a constant interpreter of hardship. In the lyric poem life appears as it really is; the themes are inspired by the evening gatherings of girls in the villages, or by the reapers in the fields, or the shepherds in the mountains, and so on. And although the words were sung to mournful music, none the less Macedonian popular lyrics kept a cheerful side which is quite evident. The songs are also characterized by the rich variety of their poetic language, while the sentiment is expressed in many different ways. Hence, the lyrics have a greater number of variations than the epic songs.

The epic songs recall moments of the national life, deeds of heroes, old legends, sacred and profane, events taken from real life, and the business of the daily round, all usually distorted in the melting-pot of the lively popular imagination. Sometimes they also have a patriotic content with a historico-legendary basis, seeking to extol and perpetuate in the memory of future generations popular heroes having real or imagined connections with the national life.

The ritual songs are unquestionably one of the most important groups of Macedonian popular lyrics, because they accompany various former rites of this people, expressing them with a wealth of lively images. With the passage of time the meaning of the rite and then the rite itself disappeared, but the song remained intact in the poetic tradition, in the words and in the melody.

The ritual songs are connected either with certain solemn feasts of a public nature that come round every year (such as Christmas, New Year, St. George, Easter, the harvest, etc.), or with private celebrations on the occasion of weddings, christenings, funerals, etc. All these feasts, whose origins went back to the times of paganism, expressed wishes for good health, good luck, success and prosperity. These songs were often sung in recitative.

In the love songs chastity predominates: you would say that the singer sees in the girl he loves only his future mate, the woman with whom he will share his life and love; there is never a reference to sexual relations.

In the songs about family life the most frequent themes are the joys and sorrows of motherhood and fatherhood, on a predominant grey background of sadness, characteristic of the Macedonian soul.

The other songs, of an elegiac nature, may all be grouped together as mournful, melancholy compositions, forming a single complex whatever the subject dealt with.

The principal theme of the wedding songs was, as it still is today, the most important moment in a man's life, namely, when he gets married, which has been celebrated from the earliest times with suitable songs and rites. In fact, these songs contain many references to former wedding customs, such as the purchase and sale or carrying off of the young bride, recommended by superstition and magic spells.

These songs undoubtedly derived from the view of life of the Macedonian patriarchal families.

Every moment of a popular wedding was followed by a song. The words are highly lyrical because they tell of the separation of the young bride from her parents:

*O, my dear brother,
Let my hand go
That I may look back
And commend myself to my mother.
O my dear mother,
I will leave you
Two sprigs of basil
And one of carnation,
That you may sprinkle them often
In the morning and evening with water,
With tears in the afternoon.*

The secret songs show that death, too, was the subject of just as many ritual songs, in which the meaning was undoubtedly esoteric because it was believed to have been expressed by the dead person. In the singing of these songs great importance was given to improvisation, and they were also characterized by a strong emotional tension in the expression, in which the predominant part was executed by various comparisons and by words that are often untranslatable.

The Macedonian people have created an equally large number of songs with a mythological content, which are wonderful artistic evidence of primitive popular beliefs. Nymphs, enchantresses and dragons on the one hand, and the shepherd and the peasant maid on the other, are the principal heroes of these songs; other themes are the meeting between the sun, the moon and the stars, and also the personification of the terrible diseases (plague,

malaria and others) which the Macedonians had often suffered from during the period of Turkish rule.

*O mother, my old mother,
You ask me and I'll tell you:
I'm walking in the wilderness, mother;
There I love a sister,
A sister, Samovilla.*

Work, too, is a subject of Macedonian folk-songs. Songs were readily composed about toil so that, because of the social conditions of the people, these verses are about the basic activities of the remote past: farming and stock-breeding, or else they draw their themes from handicrafts and, more recently, from the trades of those who go abroad to earn a living. In short, all types of work are celebrated by these songs. Sometimes, too, they are about love and rivalry between a young man and woman:

*If I manage to beat you,
I shan't ask you for a fast horse,
But, my fine young man,
I'd like to marry you.*

In their songs the peasants told of the hardships of having to toil for a master, so that we have a poetic description of the hard life in the country of most Macedonians, who had to earn their bread by looking after the flocks of others. Far from home in the mountains, alone with the animals and their copper pipes, the shepherds felt a strong desire for a gay life instead of having to wander about exposed to wind and cold and often plundered by Turks and brigands.

In the most pathetic songs of those who, at the end of last century and the beginning of this, were forced (as indeed some are still) to go abroad in search of work, there is always present the note of nostalgic longing for their native land and a desire to return to a better life at home, and the bitterness of the separation of young men from their wives and sweethearts:

*Weep, young girl, let us weep together,
For we must leave each other.
How happy we were as sweethearts!
And now we must part.*

*O my darling,
I shall be far from you and you from me;
I have to go abroad, my sweet,
Abroad in order to work...*

These love lyrics are pervaded by the soundest ethical principles of the Macedonian people, past and present, and in countless poetic images they crystallize the politico-social situation.

It is worth pointing out again that these love songs are governed by the strict morality of the patriarchal family, which excludes any erotic reference and links physical to spiritual beauty through metaphor and idealization:

*My beloved is like spring dew,
Everything she touches blossoms.*

The songs about marriage extol and spiritualize the complex relations of married life, between parents and children, brothers and sisters, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law; they raise to a pu-

rity, unsullied by discord, the connective tissue of the family which remained unrent, despite the fruitless attempts of the oppressors during the long period of bondage suffered by the Macedonian people. Indeed, this servitude had the effect of strengthening the family, which was made intentionally large because this was the only way to oppose a greater resistance, and for this reason a barren wife was condemned.

The songs about childhood mainly take the form of lullabies, but those about animals and plants are quite different, with a style all their own.

In the humorous songs the aim was to amuse the people and at the same time to satirize failings, chief among which were laziness, pride and drunkenness, with acute critical observation, as in the following lines:

*O restless wine!
You have sold my oxen,
My two dear brothers,
And my uncle's cart.*

In his poetic creation the Macedonian expresses the collective way of thinking and feeling, showing their interdependence and uniformity.

Patriotism and optimism are the clear, explicit expression of Macedonian epic poetry, which reveals an unshakable faith in a better future and in freedom that must be won with arms and the sacrifice of one's life. These epic songs fostered the collective determination to keep alive the combative spirit during the centuries of oppression. They are not only valuable for the rich popular fantasy

with which the heroic themes are handled, but also because they provide a historical reconstruction of a past full of noble deeds done for Macedonian freedom.

The finest epic songs show the creative talent of the Macedonian poets who, with their verses as sharp-edged and true as the swords of the guerillas, urged their compatriots to rise against the oppressor. They also deeply stirred the conscience of the Macedonian people by expressing the sufferings inflicted on them by the Tatars, Arabs, Turks and Albanians, who, in their raids on the various Macedonian regions, often carried off women and children, forcing the people by terror and various forms of torture to declare themselves Turkish.

The historical kind of folk-songs, in which the decasyllable predominates, celebrated the heroic deeds of Macedonians who were fighting for freedom; they are the saddest and most painful artistic record of the bitter sufferings of the people.

It is believed that the epos of the heroes of this people began towards the end of the 14th century or at the beginning of the 15th century, namely at the time when the Turks appeared in the Balkan wars. For the Southern Slavs, the loss of freedom was the worst blow of all, besides which all the others were of minor importance. This explains why the urgent aspiration for freedom from the foreign yoke was the dominant theme in these Macedonian heroic songs:

*Hear me, O star of Venus,
That God may come down from heaven
And with him I will go out into the square.*

This, among other things, is said of the legendary hero Marko Krale. In the numerous songs about this hero, his countless daring deeds are fully narrated, and the impartiality and balance of his character stand out in the picture presented of him. He is the most admired and popular of all the figures not only in Macedonian folk-poetry, but also in that of all the other Southern Slav and Balkan peoples.

Besides Marko Krale, other pre-eminent heroes celebrated in Macedonian poems are Momchil Vovoda, known as a feudal lord in the first half of the 14th century, and Bolen Doichin, whose figure stands out rich in symbolism.

Mention must also be made of Jankul Voivoda, Filip Madjarina, Relio Shestokrilo, and especially of the boy heroes *Sekula Detentse*, *Dete Tatulice*, *Dete Golomeshe*, *Gruiza Detentse*, *Dete Novakovo* and *Ognencio* (who appeared as the son of Marko Krale). The enemy is presented as *Crna Arapina* (the black Arab), *Zolta Chifutina* (the yellow Jew), *Turtsi Janichari* (Turkish Janizaries) and so on:

*They have arrived on the white ways,
They will pass through the green woods;
Against them there comes a terrible vision,
A terrible vision, a dragon of dragons,
The dragon Crna Arapina:
His lower lip beats his breast,
His upper lip beats his forehead.
His head is like two drums,
He has eyes like two plates,
His mouth is like a door,
He has teeth like four hoes,*

*His nose is like the beams of Salonica,
When he eats he moves this horrid mouth:
Even from his mouth there comes forth fire,
And burns the leaves of the forest up...*

These few verses conjuring up to the enemy all his brutal oppression are characterized at once by their simplicity and by the vividness of their imagery; the epic action is unfolded with much descriptive detail and racy dialogue.

Aiduk is the name given to those who take to the bush in order to escape from the foreign yoke. The phenomenon has deep social and political roots, and in some respects it tends to merge with and become brigandage. But a legendary halo given by men to exploits which have become part of the folk-song tradition has redeemed this less noble aspect of the haiduti. From the 16th century onwards, it became the custom among the Christian population for bands of 25—50 men to form, who would arm themselves and take to the mountains, from where they would descend to attack the Turks, the caravans, and the houses of the *chorbadgi*.

The *Sgovorna druzina* band (the company of one heart and mind, united by oath) elected a leader and an ensign (*bairaktar*, in Turkish); these bands usually assembled in spring and broke up during the winter because of logistic difficulties.

The composition of a great cycle of *aidushki* songs devoted to the exploits of the rebels is a clear sign of a revival of national feeling among the Christian population and with it the desire to fight the Turks.

These songs, which present the haiduti as the sure defenders of the masses of the people, tell of their wonderful *camaraderie*, struggles, feats, their voluntary renunciation of family life, and their heroic deaths, especially when they are forced to commit suicide to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy.

The *aidutsi* songs describe the exploits of the legendary Voivodas: Iljo Maleshevski, Kusman Kapidan, Strahil the Feared Ajdutin, Chavdar, Jane Pletikossa, Dimcho Moghilcheto, Petre Madgarce, Bogdan Shalvarina, and many others.

Voivoda is the old title given to the leaders of the bands of *aidutsi* who fought against the Turks by descending on them from the almost inaccessible woods in the mountains, where they were accustomed to operate from in the good season. The *voivoda* was the supreme military and civil authority of the group, he who took the decisions and bore the responsibility for the attacks, although they were usually discussed and planned in common.

There are also enthusiastic portraits of women *aiduti*, such as Sirma, Rumena, Sveta, Boiana, Ghurga, Bossilja, and Grozdana. The description of the women in the Macedonian haidutic songs has helped not a little to strengthen the lyric feeling in them. The content of these songs is more realistic than that of the heroic ones, because the themes expressed in verse are the typically traditional model of the sublime struggle; this model inspired all the revolutionary and guerrilla songs of the later renaissance period in the second half of last century, when the armed struggle for national freedom

began in Macedonia. The people drew inspiration to continue the struggle from all those who had fought for their liberation, and the heroic deaths of the comitagis fired them with zeal to belong to the company of the latter, in order to win an independent and political life. Among the best verses of this type of Macedonian folk-song are those celebrating the deeds of the insurgents of Ilinden, particularly of the famous Gotse Delchev:

*Go, maid Malina, into the garden,
Pick, Malina, a bunch of carnations,
And bedeck, Malina, the Voivoda Delchev
And, Malina, his companion true.*

The songs of the partisans are the most recent examples of Macedonian war poetry. They record the finest hours of the partisans and their faith in the absolute certainty of final victory.

In addition to the songs, there are also Macedonian folk-tales common to many other peoples. The anonymous narrator reveals his sensitivity and insight in reshaping other people's themes to suit a Macedonian idiom and setting. Hence, these tales and anecdotes bear the mark of a particular originality.

The stories and fables about animals are undoubtedly the oldest form of Macedonian folk narrative, influenced by works famous from the earliest times.

Besides such objects as the fast shoes, the magic wand, the flying carpet, the ring and the looking-glass with which miracles were wrought, there also often appear the cat, the dog, the fish, the fox, the eagle and many other animals which

form part of the life of the Macedonian peasant. The fables, too, often refer to journeys in the underworld, to the immortal water, the devil and his disciple, the marriage of the sun, the love and union between the dragon and the peasant maid, between the shepherd and king's daughter, and the most moving are those about the Mara Pepelashka and Silian, the stork.

The realistic criterion followed by the popular story-teller has given rise to a series of excellent analogies on the unjust politico-social relations during the long period of oppression. Frequently there appear in the tales the lazy woman, the hard-working and faithful woman, the unfaithful woman, the clever or stupid girl, the foolish man, while the anecdotes, which are remarkable for their structure and the multiplicity of the dialogues, mostly make fun of the different classes of society, or of the priests or the rich. An original character in the Macedonian anecdote is the heroic type Itar Peio, who challenges his rival Nastradin Hodja to a duel and is always victorious.

The contrasted chief characters in the tales are nearly always described as good, bad; honest, dishonest; cunning, stupid; hardworking, exploiting; and so on.

Macedonian prose is full of legends and traditions from which emerge the aetiology and the description of a town, a village, a mountain, a river and other geographical phenomena; they also give explanations of the origin of different animals, of the world, of vegetal life and other things in the universe. The two other types of legends, historical and religious, are full of themes taken from the

Bible and the lives of the saints. Most of the historical legends were created by Marko Krale about great battles, and different rulers, the legend about Czar Samuel being of particular interest.

The proverbs are a rich deposit of the ancestral wisdom of the Macedonian people. The industry of this hard-working people who toiled for centuries in bondage is expressed by the following aphorisms: "Work makes a man handsome, idleness makes him ugly." "If you don't sow, you will not reap."

There are more proverbs about the relations between people and honour: "Brother does not feed brother, but woe to him who hasn't got one."

"You can overtake a fast horse but not a fast word."

"It is better for man to have his eyes put out than to get a bad name."

These popular maxims reflect many class comparisons: "For the boss the cocks lay eggs too." "Plough, hoe, feed, but don't get rich by plunder." "A dress beautifies, your dress makes you ugly."

There are other adages about marriage: "A woman who buys a husband with money can take him where she likes."

Embracing as it does every department of human life, the proverb is an excellent means of fighting the various fixations and superstitions that burden the unhappy lives of the labouring masses.

Those who drink too much alcohol are also censured by proverbs: "Wine makes a man a vizir the first time, but a laughing-stock the second time." "Wine in a barrel is not like wine in a man." "The more a drunkard drinks the thirstier he is."

Because of their intrinsic value and their artistic merits, proverbs are more sought after and appreciated by the people. They are like a powerful means of instruction, and have played an important part in the education of several generations of Macedonians who were denied justice. Parents instructed their children with the aid of proverbs, showing them the right way and the virtues to follow in life, which alone could sustain them in the adversities suffered by an oppressed people.

As regards the source of these proverbs, most of them were invented by the people, but some have been elaborated and adapted; a considerable number are contained in the Bible or in the earlier mediaeval literature; others again are the result of the oppression of the people, who handed them down from father to son so that together they form a rich heritage, maintained intact even today.

An interesting product of the lively imagination of the Macedonian people are the riddles (*ga-tanki*), of which the young are very fond. Here is an example: "What is it which alone goes naked but clothes the whole world? Answer: a needle."

Not a few of these proverbs of Indo-European origin reflect the characteristic mentality and conditions of life of the people.

In conclusion, the folk-songs, tales and fables, together with the proverbs and riddles, are a compendium of the whole literary heritage of the Macedonians in which their genius has been expressed over the centuries.

The Brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov

In the 60s of last century the national Renaissance began in Macedonia. At first the Renaissance movement was mainly confined to the ecclesiastical and cultural spheres, but the struggle for the emancipation of the Church and the schools soon spread to other departments of the national life. The aim became armed revolution in order to win political freedom and social independence, and this culminated in the glorious Ilinden rising.

In order to understand why the Macedonian Renaissance began at that period, it is necessary to know something of the circumstances leading up to it. Since the power of Turkey was at that time rapidly breaking up, the possibility arose of an intensified commercial and handicraft activity, which aided the formation of a new middle class in the Macedonian towns. The merchants and craftsmen thus became important elements in the development of Macedonian economic and cultural prosperity.

Under the leadership of the patriots of this new middle class, the Macedonians began to work for their national Renaissance. In this they were inspired also by the example of the Bulgarians who,

being economically better off, had started their struggle for independence before the Macedonian Renaissance began. It must not be forgotten, however, that sometimes, before the Renaissance, there were simultaneous movements for national independence in Macedonia and among the Bulgarians, without the latter showing any tendency to assimilate the Macedonians. Because it was geographically nearer Greece, Macedonia was always exposed to the assimilating attempts of the Greeks in a way that could hardly happen from Bulgaria.

In spite of their difficult economic and political circumstances, the Macedonian people pursued their national struggle, even before the Renaissance, with determination. As their economic situation improved, the moral and intellectual strength of the people began to be shown. Then some great figures appeared in Macedonia, precursors of the national Renaissance, such as: the two brothers of Struga, Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov, Jordan Hagi Konstantinov-Djino and Rajko (Xenofon-Zinzifov), Partenia Zografski, Georgi Pulevski and Panajot Ghinovski, all of Veles, Grigor Prlichev and Kuzman Shapkarev from Ochrid, Marko Tsenpenkov of Prilep, and others.

Among the famous figures of the Macedonian Renaissance, the brothers Miladinov occupy a leading place. They were both born at Struga, a pretty little town nestling among the green hills on the shore of Lake Ochrid, Dimitar in 1810 and Konstantin in 1832.

Their father was a distinguished potter, and his forbears had been known and appreciated for their skill in this art throughout Macedonia.

Their mother, in whose veins flowed the proud blood of the Macedonian people, was a woman of great intelligence, refined feelings and uncommon good sense. Dimitar grew up, nurtured by the loving care of his mother. He was enchanted by his mother's songs with which, praising the heroic deeds of the Boyars and the Voivodas, she relived for him the glorious past of Macedonia. In fact, only his mother's love and her devoted care of him were able to save him from the terrible melancholy he suffered from. It was from his mother, too, that he received that deep religious sense which he kept through all adversities to the end of his life.

At first, Dimitar followed his father's trade; then he went to the St. Naum monastery school, where he learned to read and write. For a time he was a teacher in an elementary school at Ochrid; then, about 1830, he was a student at the Jannina grammar school, which was very famous at that time. There he was able to acquire an excellent knowledge of Italian, because he lived among the large Italian colony in the town. After completing his studies, he decided to return home to continue his patriotic work of keeping the Macedonian national spirit alive.

His father was in favour of immediate action against the oppressor, but Dimitar, who had a horror of disorder and violence, preferred to follow the slow but sure path of organizing all the oppressed.

An upright, religious man, touched by the sufferings of the poor, Dimitar Miladinov was a great patriot who devoted the best years of his life to the cause of his country's independence. He hated the oppressors of his people, particularly the Greek

bishops of the time. For this reason he was often persecuted, so he sought the protection of nations, such as Italy, sympathetic to the liberation of Macedonia from the temporal yoke of the Turks and the spiritual domination of the Greek bishops.

In 1839 Nako Stanishev, a well-known Macedonian patriot of Kukush, asked Dimitar Miladinov to go and teach in that town; accordingly, the following year he went there and carried on a fruitful prerenaisance activity with Stanishev. When he came to teach at the grammar school in Kukush, the number of pupils increased considerably. But as at Ochrid, so too here, his teaching was not to the liking of the Greek Bishop Antim I, and after two years Dimitar had to leave Kukush and return to his native town, where immediately after he got married. Then he continued his teaching activity in various towns including Ochrid, Bitola, Prilep, Magarevo, and the district of Bitola; wherever he went he was distinguished for his rare gifts as a teacher, his sound learning and brilliant eloquence.

This is how one of his most outstanding pupils, Grigor Prlichev the famous poet of Ochrid, described him: "Among the many teachers I had while I was studying at Ochrid, none was esteemed so highly by the pupils as Miladinov. There was a magnetism in everything he did. Eloquence flowed from his lips like honey. A holy flame burned in his eyes."²⁵

Later on, in 1845, influenced by the Russian Slavonic scholar B. I. Grigorovich, Dimitar Mila-

²⁵ Grigor Prlichev, "Autobiography", Skopje, 1967. p. 49.

dinov intensified his activity in the struggle for the Renaissance of the Macedonian people: in opposition to the Greek ecclesiastical authorities, he demanded that Macedonians should have their bishops, churches, schools and education.

Konstantin Miladinov, born a few months after his father's death, had more favourable conditions for his studies under the guidance of his elder brother. Thus he began his studies under Dimitar while the latter was teaching at Ochrid. After completing his elementary studies at Ochrid, Konstantin attended the grammar school at Jannina and then entered the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Athens. Before going to the university, he taught for a time in the village of Trnovo, district of Bitola, when Dimitar was teaching in the nearby village of Magarevo.

Konstantin studied for three years in the Greek capital (1849—1852) and then, with the help of his brother and Partenia Zografski, he left for Moscow where he entered the Faculty of Slavonic Philology.

In Russia, Konstantin Miladinov not only had the opportunity to acquire sound learning, but also the chance to meet many famous Slavonic scholars. He began to write poetry and his verses were read with keen interest. He also collected folk-songs and wrote short stories which appeared in nearly all the leading Russian periodicals.

While Dimitar was organizing and directing the prerenaisance struggle in Macedonia, Konstantin was active in Slavophil circles, which included many famous Russian, Bulgarian and Macedonian intellectuals. From them he learned the prerenais-

sance ideas which later had an important influence on his literary and cultural activity.

Dimitar Miladinov's prerenaisance activity was considerably helped by his journeys in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Karlovtsi, Sarajevo and Mostar). In all these places Dimitar met many famous men who gave him great encouragement in his fight for the liberation of his people from the Turkish yoke, and particularly from Greek domination. He was able to see for himself what education was like in the emancipated social conditions in Serbia, and even in those of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austrian rule.

When he returned to his native town two years later, Dimitar became even more active in opposing Greek ecclesiastical domination. In addition to teaching, he now devoted himself to the work of collecting works of popular authorship, which was one of the most important tasks in the prerenaisance struggle. He began to copy out Macedonian folk-songs and inspired many other intellectuals to take an interest in this. How important Dimitar Miladinov regarded the collection of folk-songs for the assertion of the national spirit of the Macedonians against the assimilating aspirations of the Greeks is confirmed by the following words:

"I shall have these songs and other works I am collecting published so that they can always be sung, because these cursed Greeks will Graecize us and we shall no longer count for anything."²⁶

When he had collected a sufficient number of folk-songs, Dimitar sent them to his brother in

²⁶ M. Tsepenkov, "Autobiography", *Makedonski jazik* ("Macedonian Language"), Skopje, vols. I—II, p. 127.

Moscow, hoping he would be able to get them published there. Konstantin was not successful, but he refused to give up hope. On his way back from Russia, he stopped in Vienna and also for a longer time in Zagreb. There he became friendly with the learned Bishop Strossmayer, who was well known for his Slavophil leanings. The latter signified his willingness to have the collection of Macedonian and Bulgarian folk-songs published, thereby enabling the world to know at first hand how the invincible spirit of the Macedonians had withstood centuries of foreign oppression. Thus the dream of the brothers Miladinov was realized.

After his first meeting with Strossmayer, Konstantin went with him to Djakovo, the archiepiscopal see. In a few months Konstantin had prepared the material for publication and, on Strossmayer's advice, he copied it all out in Cyrillic characters (before it had all been written in Greek letters). After writing an adequate preface, which is one of the first and most important contributions to Macedonian folklore studies, Konstantin sent the material to press, and in June 1861 this historic "Collection" appeared.

Konstantin now left Zagreb to return to Struga. Stopping in Belgrade, he learned of the arrest of his brother Dimitar, who six months before, as a result of the intrigues of the Greek ecclesiastical authorities, had been put in a Turkish prison at Ochrid; he was then transferred to Thessaloniki and finally to Constantinople. Therefore, instead of going to Struga, Konstantin went direct to Constantinople, where he too was arrested. Konstantin was not allowed to see his brother and, already far

from well, he became much worse in the unhealthy prison, where he died on 18th January 1862. Five days later his brother Dimitar died in the same prison.

So they both ended their lives in prison, guilty of no other crime than that of having served their unhappy country with passionate devotion. Enemy spite slanderously described them as cynics and worse, but they died, as they had lived, faithful to their patriotic principles, proclaiming to the last their faith in a speedy liberation of the Macedonian people, which ever since has venerated their glorious names.

It is difficult to find words adequate to express the significance of the work of the two brothers of Struga for the Macedonian Renaissance. This great "Collection" of Macedonian folk-songs was undoubtedly their most important achievement: "with it the Renaissance of the Macedonian people, which until then had not been expressed sufficiently clearly, began in real earnest."²⁷

Miladinov's "Collection", published on 24th June 1861, contains in 560 pages no less than 660 folk-songs. These comprise 23,000 lines arranged according to subject matter: religious, epic, pastoral, legendary (fairy) songs, funeral laments, humorous songs, love songs, wedding songs, and songs about work in the fields. The book also contains proverbs and riddles, descriptions of customs and rituals, beliefs, superstitions, games and traditions.

²⁷ K. Penushliski, "The Collection of the Brothers Miladinov", *Literaturen zbor* ("Literary Word"), Skopje, 1961, year VIII, No. 3.

Most of the songs in the "Collection" come from the regions of Struga, Prilep, Veles, Debar and Bitola. It also contains about a hundred Bulgarian folk-songs of Sofia and Panaghurishte, which Vassil Cholakov collected and gave to Konstantin so that the "Collection" could be published under the title: "Bulgarian Folk-songs".²⁸ How far this title is from the truth regarding the national provenance of the material in the "Collection" is proved by the fact that the Macedonian outnumber the Bulgarian folk-songs by six to one. The Bulgarian title of the "Collection" was more in accordance with Strossmayer's interests.

In the preface to the "Collection" Konstantin Miladinov gives his opinion on the importance of popular creative art:

"Folk-songs are an index of the level of the people's intellectual development and a mirror of their life. In folk-songs the people pour out their feelings and immortalize their life and deeds; in them is spiritual food and delight; therefore in joy and sorrow, at weddings and folk-dances, at harvest and vintage time, in spinning and embroidering, in the fields and in the forests, songs pour out as from a rich fountain; hence one may say that the people is always a great singer." (p. VII)

Konstantin also deals in the preface with the classification of the songs, their language and spelling, the metres and, in more detail, the long poetic tradition in Macedonia. From this preface it is

²⁸ H. Polenakovik, "The Brothers Miladinov and Vassil D. D. Cholakov", "Annual Collection" of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Skopje, 1962, vol. XIV, pp. 218—219.

clear that, having studied in Moscow under distinguished professors such as F. Buslaev, O. Boganski, N. Popov and S. Soloviov, Konstantin had acquired a specialist knowledge of folklore in all its aspects, which helped him greatly in preparing and arranging the "Collection" for the press.

The "Collection" not only brought Macedonian folk-songs to the knowledge of scholars, it also inspired other Macedonians to collect folk-songs. For example, Kusman Shapkarev, who published the largest collection of folk-songs of the Southern Slavs (his 8 volumes contain about 1,200 songs, 350 tales and other folk material), admitted that the "Collection" of the brothers Miladinov gave him the idea of preparing his own; and Marko Tsepenev, himself an enthusiastic collector of Macedonian folk-songs, considered their "Collection" an indispensable book for everybody, almost like a bible.

The "Collection" of the brothers Miladinov aroused equally keen interest among foreign scholars, and much of it was at once translated, mainly into the following Slav languages: Russian, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Croat.

For Dimitar Miladinov, the exercise of his profession as a teacher was a real apostolate for spreading the national and moral ideas he believed in, which he defended in prose with reason and in songs with an appeal to the emotions.

During thirty years of life he learned the secret of the old spiritual strength of his people, devoting all his energies to his mission in the spirit of the sermons of St. Clement of Ochrid, the first teacher of Macedonian culture. As the first leader

of the prerennaissance struggle in Macedonia, he showed outstanding capacities for organization; he learned much about the practical details of this from P. Zografski, G. Prlichev, K. Shapkarev and others, who afterwards continued the work he had begun.

In order to spread his ideas on Macedonian nationhood, Dimitar travelled the length and breadth of Macedonia, visiting all the towns and villages, where he was warmly admired for his patriotism and the nobility of his aims. He also wrote many letters to the press, protesting against the assimilating policy of the Greeks. K. Shapkarev wrote that, after his travels in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, he was a different man: "From then on he has completely changed; he had become fired with such patriotic fervour that it bordered on fanaticism."²⁹ The same thing happened to Grigor Prlichev, one of the best known Macedonian writers of the 19th century.

Dimitar was in continual and close touch with many distinguished figures in the world of culture (B. N. Grigorovich, Stefan I. Verkovic, A. B. Racinski and others), and he disseminated the first school textbooks of Partenia Zografski. Because he was the prime mover in the struggle against the ecclesiastical domination of the Greeks, he became a thorn in the flesh of the Greek authorities. Wherever he went he was sent away as a result of the intrigues of the Greek bishops; finally he was imprisoned at the explicit request of Bishop Meletia

²⁹ K. Shapkarev, "Materials for a Biography of the Brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov", Plovdiv, 1884

of Bitola, who falsely informed the Turkish authorities that he was a Russian agent. He spent a whole year in prison at Ochrid, Bitola, Thessaloniki and Constantinople, until he felt obliged to put an end to his life on 23rd January 1862, five days after the death of his brother Konstantin in the same prison at Constantinople. This is how, in a few words, Dimitar described his life in prison:

"Why are you afraid, my dear children? Human life is a handful of blood put in the scale of a balance; when the balance collapses, the blood falls and with it life. Is it worth being frightened about a thing like that?"³⁰

Justly Rajko Zinzifov called Dimitar "a good, magnanimous man, Macedonia's greatest patriot".³¹

The name of Konstantin Miladinov has an honoured place in Macedonian literature, above all because he is linked by his songs to the pictorial poetry of the Macedonians. He is rightly regarded as the founder of Macedonian artistic poetry. Although others had written poems in the Macedonian language before (for example, Kiril Pejchinovik, Natanail Kuchevichki, and Danail Moskopolets), Konstantin Miladinov's works were such as to entitle him to be called a real Macedonian poet.

Konstantin's poems have real artistic merit. Although they were composed under the strong influence of folk-poetry, his verses are the first of the many important works of Macedonian individual poetry. It is very clear that Konstantin's poems were composed in the spirit of folk-poetry.

³⁰ K. Shapkarev, *Ibid.*, p. 29.

³¹ G. S. Rakovski, "Archives", Sofia, vol. II, p. 410.

After years of study he had an intimate knowledge of it, and when he began to write poetry himself, he did so in the style of the folk tradition. This not only reduced the preconditions for his creative work, but also showed that in the folk-song he had found the surest and most direct way; folk-poetry was his first master and the most effective creative support of his poetic art.

Another important thing about Konstantin's poetry is that he made use of a thoroughly popular language. The fact that he wrote his poems while he was studying in Russia (1858—60) is of even greater significance:

"Living in a Russian environment, surrounded by a group of Bulgarian colleagues who spoke and wrote in Bulgarian, Konstantin was able to make a really strong effort to master the solid learning of the circles in which he moved, and to find the right way for a Macedonian popular poet writing in a Macedonian idiom, namely, that of Struga."³²

The subject matter of Konstantin's poems does not cover a wide range: it is confined to social and patriotic themes, with a background of love interest. But for whatever reason he wrote his poems, he put all the sincerity of his poetic feeling into them. This can be seen in "Longing for the South", "The Orphan", "Dove" and other poems. One of the most characteristic of his poems is "Longing for the South", which, with its longing for his beloved country, breathes a noble patriotism.

³² H. Polenakovik, "The Poet Konstantin Miladinov", Book for the Brothers Miladinov, Skopje, 1962, p. 179.

LONGING FOR THE SOUTH

*If I had an eagle's wings
I would rise and fly on them
To our shores, to our own parts.
I would see Stamboul and Kukush;
I would watch the sun: does it rise
Dimly there as it does here?
If the sun still rises dimly,
If it meets me there as here,
I shall make another journey,
I shall flee to other shores
Where the sunrise greets me brightly,
And the sky is sown with stars.
Darkness here encircles me,
Dark fog covers all the earth,
Blizzards and harsh winds abound.
Fog surrounds me, the earth is ice,
And in my breast are cold, dark thoughts.
No, I cannot stay here, no;
I cannot look upon these frosts.
Give me wings and I will wear them;
I will fly to our own shores,
Come once more to our own places,
Come to Ohrid and to Struga.
There the sunrise warms the soul,
The sun sets bright in mountain woods:
Yonder gifts in great profusion
Richly spread by nature's power.
See the clear lake stretching white —
Or blueely darkened by the wind;
Look you at the plains or mountains:
Beauty everywhere divine.
To pipe there to my heart's content!
Ah! let the sun set, let me die.*

Translated by Graham W. Reid

In his other poems Konstantin is closer to folk-poetry as regards the style and the metre (octosyllabic lines occur more frequently) and also the

themes ("Brotherhood", "The Flute", "The Oath", "To the Sun"). However, although the contrasts between the folk-poems and Konstantin's verses are evident, the hypothesis seems to be ruled out that Konstantin did not take into consideration the merits of the former. On the contrary, he made use of what had inspired the anonymous author.

A sensitive artist, Konstantin Miladinov knew how to transform reality into material for poetry without making any concessions to vulgarity, but rather enriching his work with noble concepts and deep human sympathies. The frank language of the Macedonian people, with its rich store of pointed sayings and pithy maxims, lends itself well to the expression of his vigorous wit. His quick, flowing, varied rhythms sometimes use traditional metres, sometimes old ones remodelled, and sometimes entirely new metres, with melodious interweavings of rhymes and charming refrains.

An enemy of frivolity and high-sounding, empty rhetoric, Konstantin Miladinov writes as he thinks, tersely and tidily, with a simple, vigorous style, suited to the orderly flow of his thought. An air of manly resignation pervades all his writings; there are no outbursts of rage or fits of despair in them. Always watchful against every less than noble impulse of his heart, always ready to see the good in the rude life of the world around him, he examined his own feelings with wonderful detachment throughout his life as a militant patriot.

There are no other figures in the history of the Macedonian Renaissance of the same calibre as the brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov. This is true not only because they led the Renaissance

struggle of the Macedonians, but also because their socio-patriotic and literary-cultural activity was of exceptional importance for the national prosperity of the Macedonian people. They really roused the national spirit of the Macedonians. That is why their "Collection" of folk-songs was the glorious crown of their work, the book of books which laid the foundations of Macedonian literature.

"The best part of this work is that in it which is of abiding value. It is true that the "Collection" of folk-songs published a hundred years ago had a greater significance because of the time at which it appeared, but it will have an even greater significance in the future, as long as time lasts."³³

The following extract from a letter, dated 24th October 1857, written by Dimitar Miladinov to the notables of Kukush, is a convincing proof of the importance he attached to the restoration of the Macedonian language in the struggle for the Macedonian Renaissance.

"I thrill with joy whenever I see your aspirations and your love for our mother tongue, and above all when I see that many young people and even the priests have firmly decided to learn this Slavonic language, so that in a few months we shall be able to hear the liturgy in our old language. The Greeks look askance at you. They condemned our Pelasgic Slavonic language, one of the oldest and richest, as a barbarian tongue! Point out to them the Slav philologists, physicists, ma-

³³ D. Mitrev, "In the Footsteps of the Achievement of the Brothers Miladinov", Preface to the Jubilee Edition of the "Collection", Skopje, 1962, p. v.

thematicians and other scholars of Russia, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Poland, Galicia, Slavonia and Croatia, that is, from the Atlantic to the Adriatic, from the interior of Germany to Epirus and Thessaly, who have enjoyed the fruits of culture. The Greeks want to make us become Greeks! It's the same old story, but they can't hurt us any more."³⁴

These lines show Dimitar's absolute certainty that the Macedonians' demands for their own churches and schools would be successful in spite of the many obstacles. He was convinced of the ultimate success of the Renaissance struggle because he had directed it himself with a spirit of self-sacrifice. By his premature death he gave the greatest proof of his patriotism. At first he conducted the struggle alone, but later he endeavoured to train other leaders among his compatriots to carry on the work he had begun. He is rightly regarded as the prime mover and organizer of the Renaissance struggle in Macedonia.

The great merit of the brothers Miladinov was the creation of the Macedonian literary language. By collecting, editing and analysing folk-songs and other lexicographical material, they reached the living source of the language, and discovered its beauty, expressive force and grammatical forms. Thanks to the brothers Miladinov and their contemporaries and followers, Zinzifov and Grigor Prlichev, the spoken language of Ochrid and Struga became the basis of the written language, in which a rich literature would later be created. The gene-

³⁴ "Letters of the Brothers Miladinov", Edition of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1964, p. 39.

ration of the brothers Miladinov thus sowed the seed of the modern literary language of Macedonia.

Here are some songs from their "Collection".

DOVE

*Dove, pretty dove with gilded wings,
When did you come to me, When fly away from me?
I still hadn't heard your voice;
I still hadn't gazed my fill on you.
Perhaps, my love, you were vexed with me?
Perhaps angry with me,
Because I didn't praise your beauty,
Because I didn't scent your wings?*

*Come, my beloved, come back to me now;
I'll praise your beauty, I'll scent your wings;
I'll deck you with tiny shining pearls,
I'll keep you for always, darling, on my breast!*

PEARL

*Pearl, my darling Pearl, 4
Why do you wear pearls round your neck?
Your lovely white neck
Is a thousand times whiter
Than any pearl!*

*Pearl, my darling Pearl,
Why do you hide with pearls
Your lovely white neck?
I don't want to kiss pearls
But your beautiful neck!*

*Pearl, my darling Pearl,
Why are you stringing pearls?*

*For whom preparing gifts?
I don't want gifts or pearls,
It's Pearl my darling I want!*

THE ORPHAN

*The orphan was sowing
And singing a sad song:
Where has it been seen, where heard of?
For seven long years in my village
I have sweated and sowed and reaped,
And for all my toil
I haven't even a grain of wheat,
Because others grab everything!
My lot, alas, is to labour,
To sweep the streets,
To work all day in the fields,
Without even raising my head!*

*It's pouring with rain, but just the same
I have to go to work.
When evening comes the sun goes to rest,
But I still toil in the fields;
And when in the morning it rises again,
I'm still among the clods.
All have bread and water;
I alone haven't even a crust!
All wear fine clothes,
Even of green velvet;
I alone, shunned by all,
Wear cast-off rags.
If anyone looks at me
When I sit beside him,
Cursed be the day I was born,
He hurls dreadful oaths at me!*

*The joy of childhood fades
In my lonely heart like a flower;
And now before my eyes
Happiness grows dim and steals away.*

*Everyone has a family
Where he can laugh and sing!
My hopes are swept away from me
By the winds, as in a desert!*

*And I feel a pain in my heart
Which reduces all to dust and ashes;
It's as if I had only winter before me,
As if I were always walking in dark fog.*



Grigor Prlichev

Grigor Prlichev is one of the best known Macedonian writers of the 19th century. He grew up and matured at a time when socio-economic conditions in Macedonia were not flourishing, and although he showed a brilliant poetic talent, he was not able to find his way among the many contemporary creative tendencies. This was mainly due to the difficult situation obtaining in Macedonia as a result of centuries of political domination by the Turks and cultural domination by the Greeks. It must not be forgotten that the Macedonian people were without their own language and, having no printing presses, were not able to publish books. Moreover, a number of intellectuals had not wished to place themselves at the service of their people. All this had an effect on Prlichev's creative work.

In these circumstances every true Macedonian patriot felt it his duty to serve his own people, and to oppose those who were trying to split the unity of his compatriots. Thus Grigor Prlichev, following the example of his master Dimitar Miladinov, the founder of the Macedonian Renaissance, showed himself an ardent patriot at a time when his aid

was not only valuable but necessary. He sacrificed all the sure prospects of a splendid future, which he could have had as an intellectual officially recognized and highly esteemed, in order to be of use to his people. He gave up a life of ease, which would have enabled him to carry on his creative work with greater facility and peace of mind at a time when it was difficult for him to do so. Without any hesitation and with rare self-sacrifice, the young Prlichev rejected the proposals of the Athens authorities that he should study on their behalf at the University of Oxford or Berlin. He also refused the monthly salary offered him by the Greek Prince Othon, but accepted the laurel wreath with which he was celebrated as a *second Homer* for winning the prize awarded by the University of Athens in 1860 for the best poem written in Greece. Prlichev only wanted the laurel wreath, and gave half the money prize to a poor student, although he himself was far from well off. From early childhood he had known what poverty was, and when he had the chance to do a kind action he did not hesitate.

Thus, when his country was going through its most difficult time, Prlichev ranged himself on the side of its defenders, well knowing that if he had not done so, he would have been rejected for ever by his people. He was clear-sighted enough to understand the assimilating aims of the Greeks, especially when they offered to let him study at their expense in a European university. Instead of pursuing his studies in Europe with a grant from the Greek government, he decided to return to his native town of Ochrid and resume the poverty-

stricken existence of a teacher in the wretched conditions of his people, caught between the milestones of a double oppression. Sad days followed for the young poet. Instead of the spacious lecture rooms of the most famous universities in Europe, his lot was soon to be the damp, dark cells of the prison of Debar, where he raked and scraped to his last penny, as he had done before going to Athens, because his salary was insufficient to maintain his poor family.

While Prlichev was studying in Athens, he heard the sad news of the premature death of the brothers Miladinov. In his "Autobiography" he describes how he heard the news as follows:

"One day the deacon of the Russian Church in Athens told me in a very sad voice: 'The brothers Miladinov have died in prison at Constantinople . . . They may have been poisoned. I read it in the *Dunavski Lebed* journal.' I stood stockstill and speechless, but cursed the Greek clergy in my heart. I took away all my works. I left the poem *Sken-derbeg* with Mr I. Sapundjiev, and asked him to deliver it to the Board not later than 13th February. I left with the firm decision to die and avenge the brothers Miladinov."

Grigor Prlichev's decision to return to his country and serve it with all his poetic gifts was a clear proof of his genuine patriotism, but the sacrifices he made for his people became even more costly when this *second Homer* felt his poetic inspiration drying up, which two years before had come to him spontaneously. The brilliant talent of the young schoolmaster of Ochrid, who had composed in Greek *Serdarot* (Leader), the most out-

standing poem of the Macedonians in the 19th century, was no longer able to write as before. He himself summed up the tragic situation in a few words: "In Greek I sang like a swan; now in Slavonic I can't even sing like a donkey."

Realizing the Graecizing intentions of the Greek authorities, the young Macedonian poet became a bitter enemy of their policy, and particularly of the Greek clergy, led by the notorious Patriarch of Constantinople. Prlichev was sufficiently far-sighted to realize that the cultural domination under Greek rule would have much worse consequences for the national and cultural development of the Macedonian people than the politico-social domination under Turkish rule, which, though it had lasted a long time, was bound to end sooner or later. Accordingly, following the example of his master Dimitar Miladinov, Prlichev decided to wage unremitting war on the assimilating ambitions of the Greek clergy. All this is very significant because Prlichev, this talented Greek scholar, this passionate lover of classical Greek literature, who for long believed there was no greater poet than Homer and no better doctors than those of Athens (as he himself wrote in his "Autobiography"), suddenly changed. Putting love of his own nation first, he never wrote another line in Greek, although he knew very well that he could have exploited his extraordinary poetic gifts in that language with undoubted success.

On being released from the prison at Debar, he felt the need to create and, not wishing to compose in Greek, of which he had a perfect knowledge, moved by Panslav ideals, he set about inventing a

common Slav language. With a common Slav language he hoped to be able to express for all the Slavs the great poetic gifts he had formerly expressed in Greek. But in adapting this common language to his literary works, he soon realized it was a mere dream, for with this language he would only obtain for a moment the charm of the poetic talent he had shown before. But he refused to give up. "I know it is a dream," he wrote, "but the need is great."

There is no doubt that this fixed idea caused Prlichev a great many difficulties in expressing his creative gifts after he had taken the wrong path. Some Bulgarian critics and philologists officially attacked Prlichev for this linguistic innovation which he had adopted in his poems *Serdarot* and *Skenderbeg*, and also in his "Iliad". He was greatly hurt by these criticisms, so much so that he once wrote that he had been "slain by the Bulgarians". The Bulgarian critics, especially Nesho Bonchev, pointed out the innumerable drawbacks of Prlichev's defective linguistic composition, but, as many other critics observed, there was a certain malice in their remarks in which they wished to show up Prlichev's poor knowledge of the Bulgarian language. It was true that Prlichev did not have a good knowledge of Bulgarian, as the Bulgarian critics noted and as he himself admitted in his "Autobiography":

"I was then, as I am now and shall be in the future, weak in Bulgarian."

Disheartened by the adverse criticism of the translations he had made in the common Slav language, Prlichev lost all desire to follow the right

path for his creative abilities and, overcome by a profound apathy and indifference towards all he had done so far, he began to give himself up to futile pursuits and idle controversies, which had a bad effect on his health.

The explanation for this sudden falling off in Prlichev's creative work must be certainly sought in the abnormal social and political circumstances in which he and many other Macedonian intellectuals were obliged to live and work. It was not easy in the Macedonian life of those days, which lacked even the most elementary conditions for cultural and educational activity, to find the right path to follow to attain the goal he had set himself. The fact that Prlichev set out to reach this goal is proved also by his wanderings in the maze of cultural life, especially by his efforts to create a common literary language and by his other literary successes, such as the "Autobiography" and some collections of poems for children.

There is no question that Prlichev's major creative effort was his noble attempt to write literary works in his native dialect of Ochrid, as his contemporary Konstantin Miladinov had done when he wrote poems in the popular language of Struga. Evidently, in wishing to widen his creative experience, Prlichev did not pay the necessary attention to this possibility, the only one open to him.

Born at Ochrid on 18th January 1830 (1831)³⁵, Grigor Prlichev spent his life in conditions very

³⁵ Regarding the year of his birth, Prlichev wrote in his "Autobiography": "I was born at Ochrid on 18th January 1830 according to some, but in 1831 according to others."

similar to those in which the majority of Macedonian intellectuals lived at that time. It was a hard struggle to achieve a noble aspiration.

Left an orphan at the age of six months (his father, Stavre Prlichev, died very young), he was brought up by his mother, Maria Gjokova, who was helped by her father-in-law to give him and his two brothers and sister a good start in life. When he was four, his grandfather taught him to read and write by means of a Greek primer, so that the future writer was acquainted with letters from early childhood.

After completing his elementary studies in his native town, he studied under Dimitar Miladinov, who at that time (1848) was teaching in Ochrid. Before finishing school, Prlichev worked for some time as a tailor, and soon after was sent to teach in Tirana. A year later he returned to his beloved Ochrid. With the money he had saved, he decided to continue his studies at the University of Athens, where he entered the Faculty of Medicine (it was his mother's wish that he should become a doctor). There he obtained the highest marks in the Greek examination.

However, he had already shown his bent for poetry and, not being very interested in medicine, did not pay much attention to the lectures. He wrote: "I had no enthusiasm for medicine; I would often compose verses and write them on the university blackboards and listen with pleasure to the praises given them." But the money he had put by soon came to an end and he was obliged to interrupt his studies.

Returning home, Prlichev resumed his work as a teacher. First he went to the village of Belitsa, in the neighbourhood of Ochrid, where he stayed for two years; then, after a short time at Prilep, he returned to Ochrid, where he taught for another six years. While he was at Belitsa, he wrote some verses, drawing inspiration from nature and his personal feelings.

Ten years later, with the 5,000 piasteres he had saved, he once more left for Athens to continue his studies. There he remembered the competition held by the University of Athens every year for the best poem written, and he decided to enter the competition for the year 1860. With his poem in Greek, *O, Armatolos* (Leader), he won the competition and was awarded the laurel wreath and a money prize.

In his "Autobiography" Prlichev describes this happy event as follows:

"On 25th March 1860, in the presence of a large audience the president of the board, Mr Rangavis, began to judge the poems submitted, starting from those of least merit. Prominent in the audience was Mr Orfanidis, a prize-winning poet of established reputation, and Varnardakis, Professor of Philology, who was absolutely certain he would win the wreath or at least a money prize. For me, as for many others, there was no seat, as was to be expected. But when Rangavis said "Finally, we have a poem, much shorter than the others, entitled *O, Armatolos*, I felt an indescribable excitement inside me that I had never felt before. Then no one would have recognized

me: I was beside myself. Obviously, the wreath was mine . . .”

But just when he was at last in a better position financially and had the chance to stay longer in Athens, this glorious poet of Ochrid decided to return to Macedonia when he heard of the deaths of the brothers Miladinov and felt it his duty to continue their work for his country. In this connection he wrote:

“‘Would you like us to send you to Oxford or Berlin to study on behalf of the State?’ I realized at once that their purpose was to take me into the Greek service and I said to myself: it is my duty to go home. Then the Rector Magnificus handed me the wreath, from which hung a ribbon with the colours of the Greek flag, and also 150 drachmas. ‘In accordance with your letter,’ he said, ‘we will give the other 500 drachmas to a poor student of the Faculty of Theology. You did well not to want the name of the student to be made known.’”

In 1868 Prlichev went to Constantinople, where he spent five months “learning the Slav language”. On his return from Constantinople, he intensified his activity against the Greek domination in the churches and schools of Macedonia. In his fight to have the Slav language introduced into the liturgy and the schools, he drew upon himself the hatred of the Greek Bishop Meletia, who engineered his imprisonment by the Turkish authorities.

The hardships he suffered in prison did not break his spirit or weaken his determination to fight for the Renaissance of the Macedonian people. On the contrary, his efforts for the liberation of his compatriots and fellow citizens from the ecclesia-

stical and cultural domination of the Greeks bore excellent fruit. Bishop Meletia, who had suppressed Dimitar Miladinov’s work for the Macedonian Renaissance, was removed from Ochrid. Whereupon Prlichev wrote the poem “One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-two”, which he published in his “Autobiography”.

This success of Prlichev and his fellow citizens in appreciably reducing the power and influence of the Greeks in the churches and schools of Ochrid had an even more important sequel, which Prlichev speaks of in his “Autobiography”:

“Many psalms, translated into the Macedonian dialect, were read in the churches, but they filled the congregation with a holy horror. When the reading was not to my liking, I would become the reader myself.”

In his prerenaissance activities, particularly in the educational field, Prlichev fell foul of Bishop Natanail of the Exarchate. Although on the arrival of the first Bulgarian metropolitan in Ochrid, Prlichev had dedicated a special ode to him, which also was published in his “Autobiography”, he was disappointed by the behaviour of Natanail, who even forced Prlichev to leave his native town. Therefore Prlichev recalled with profound sorrow the dispute he had with the Slav bishop, whom he compared with the unscrupulous Meletia:

“How strange it is that my native town, which has never appreciated its sons in any way, and also the Greek Bishop Meletia, my bitter enemy, who for 18 years tolerated my lessons, sermons, warnings and rebukes, never banished me, whereas the first Bulgarian metropolitan, who was expected as

a messiah, ventures to banish Prlichev from his own town so shamefully."

Thus Prlichev had no alternative but to go and work in the neighbouring town of Struga, where he taught for a year; then he went to Bulgaria, hoping to settle in his favour the dispute with Natanail. Contrary to his intentions, however, he remained in Bulgaria as a teacher of classics in the Gabrovo grammar school, and a year later moved to the National Library in Sofia. He did not stay there long as nostalgia for his native land moved him to leave for Bitola, where he taught for two years, and then spent a further two years at Ochrid. In 1883 he went to Thessaloniki, where he taught for a short time, and in 1884—85 he wrote his second work, not less important than the first: the "Autobiography". On 6th February 1893 Grigor Prlichev died in the town where he was born.

Grigor Prlichev's literary work is one of the most notable contributions to Macedonian literature of the 19th century. His poem *Serdarot* can stand beside the greatest works of the whole of Southern Slav literature. Written in modern Greek in Athens in 1860, the poem *Serdarot* is about the life of the people of Galichnik, a picturesque region of Macedonia, in the first 30 years of last century. Prlichev takes as a starting point the folk-song about Kuzman Kapidan (Kariman), a famous fighter against the Albanian bands, which, in order to break the central Turkish power, made frequent incursions in western Macedonia, maltreating the peaceful population. Kuzman Kapidan, who was in the service of Zeladin, the lord of Ochrid, became famous for his exploits against the marau-

ders. How far in actual fact and according to the folk-song Kuzman succeeded in routing his adversaries, Prlichev does not tell us; for greater poetic effect he makes Kuzman die, and Kuzman's heroic death in the struggle against his people's enemies is the legendary part of his poem. When she hears the sad news of Kuzman's death, his mother Neda bewails her only son and all the people of the region gather before the hero's lifeless body to mourn him. Prlichev tells the story with a series of poetic reminiscences, stirring a profound emotion in the reader.

It is a fine poem in which the poet's artistic gifts have full play, especially in the description of the hard life of his oppressed people. In his verses, which consist of rhymed stanzas (of four lines full of splendid images, Prlichev has created some well-drawn characters (Kuzman, Neda his mother, Maria his betrothed, Tome his father and the four Albanians who took Kuzman's body to his home, etc.).

Besides Kuzman, the figure of Neda is also historically true in whom is personified Prlichev's mother Maria, who had brought up her four fatherless children with great sacrifices. Prlichev explicitly confirms this in his "Autobiography":

"I must tell you another thing too: the figure of Neda whom I described in *Serdarot* is none other than my mother, and Neda's visions are my mother's visions."

Therefore Neda, the central figure in this poem, is thoroughly true to life and is described with real poetic art. Neda is presented as a woman filled with tenderness for her son; her grief is really

great, but greater still is her grief for her people who, as a result of Kuzman's death, will be left without their defender. Neda's hatred for her son's murderers is implacable. She is ready to take up arms to avenge her son's death and to fight for the peace of her people, so cruelly threatened. Neda's dreams and gloomy forebodings are described with sensitive insight, and this is one of Prlichev's chief merits, particularly in the psychological penetration with which he draws his characters. In delineating Neda's states of mind, the poet has mirrored the characteristic mentality of the people she belonged to.

The figure of Kuzman, described through his mother's reminiscences, is also depicted with great poetic vigour. He is the protector of his people, honest, just and calm, tender in his private life, devoted to his mother and his people and at the same time an intrepid hero, ready to sacrifice his life for the safety and honour of his people.

Prlichev's artistic objectivity is shown in his description of the four Albanians, particularly the oldest of them, who speaks in the name of Kuzman's adversaries. As enemies of the people, and immediate enemies of Kuzman and his companions, Prlichev paints them in the darkest colours. However, the picture is not wholly negative, relieved as it is by the poet's broader human sympathies in which he shows his respect for real patriotism, implacable hatred of the enemies of the fatherland, the well-known hospitality of the Albanians, the daring and nimble-wittedness for which the marauding bands are famous, etc. In his description of the four Albanians, Prlichev has given

a real, though fragmentary, portrait of the Albanian people of that time.

The other characters also are very well drawn. In the figure of Maria, Kuzman's betrothed, Prlichev has depicted the special characteristics of the Macedonian woman, always ready to fight to the death; brought up in the patriarchal family, Maria is ashamed even to tell her father of her love for Kuzman, with whom she becomes even more deeply in love after his tragic death.

The salient points of the poem are the description of Neda's anguish, Maria's lament and the moving speech of the oldest Albanian. Very well done, too, are the battle between Kuzman's ten faithful companions and the band of a hundred Albanian raiders and the duel between Kuzman and Mahmud. Finally, the description of Neda's dream attests Prlichev's power as a narrator.

Prlichev was greatly indebted to ancient Greek literature, particularly to the genius of Homer. "Prlichev preferred Homer to all other poets. He uses Homer's language, images, similes and experiences, so that he was called a *second Homer*. He describes the heroic struggle and death of Kuzman and his companions in a genuinely epic style."³⁶

The fact that *Serdarot* mirrors perfectly the life of the Macedonian people of the region of Galichnik during the last 30 years of last century, describing the social and family life of the Macedonians in a dark period of their history, as well as their aspirations for a better future (so glorio-

³⁶ H. Polenakovik, "Pages of Macedonian Literature", Skopje, 1952, p. 207.

usly expressed in Kuzman's heroic deed), enhances still further the historical and narrative merits of Prlichev's most important work.

Prlichev wrote another poem, *Skenderbeg*, when he was studying at Athens. He intended to enter it for the competition announced for the following year, but this was not held. Although this second poem is longer and written in ancient Greek, it lacks the merits of *Serdarot*. This is not because the verses are not perfect, or because the monologues and dialogues are too many and too long, but because the author's creative invention and imagery are at a lower level than in *Serdarot*.

It should be pointed out that this work, too, was inspired by Homeric subjects, namely, by the "Iliad".

The story is unfolded in the palace of Skenderbeg, the Albanian people's national hero, and in the mansion of his adversary, Balaban Pasha, who made several unsuccessful attempts to bring Skenderbeg under his rule.

Prlichev depicts the character of Skenderbeg with great enthusiasm, and one notes a great likeness between him and Kuzman. The description of the characters and the pace at which the action moves forward, as well as the brisk narration of the battles, are the chief artistic merits of this poem.

Skenderbeg was first published in Skopje, and was translated into the contemporary Macedonian literary language for the hundredth anniversary of its first appearance.

Grigor Prlichev's "Autobiography" was published posthumously in Sofia in 1928, edited by G. Oreshkov. The literary merits of this book show

that Prlichev was a writer of excellent prose. It is a document of exceptional interest for the picture it provides of the social, cultural and economic conditions in Macedonia in the second half of last century; it also gives valuable information on Prlichev's work as a writer and teacher, as well as on the prerenaissance struggle in Macedonia and the people who took part in it.

"An Old Man's Dream" is the title of Prlichev's second narrative work (published in the journal *Balkan* of Sofia, 1883, year I, No. 15). It is really an essay and in a certain sense was a first draft of the "Autobiography".

Prlichev also wrote twelve poems for children, which are mainly of an educational nature. Three of them were published in the Bulgarian journal *Gradinka* at Bucharest in 1874—75; the others were published recently in Skopje.

Although one is left with the impression that Prlichev's great talents could have produced more works, nevertheless those he did write are sufficient to give him a pre-eminent place in Macedonian literature of the 19th century, and to put him among the best known Southern Slav writers as the author of a real heroic epic.

Krste P. Missirkov

One of the most outstanding names in the new history of Macedonian culture is undoubtedly that of Krste Petkov Missirkov, whose work was a valuable contribution to European culture and also to European science. But, owing to the perverse fortunes of the Macedonian people's history the most important work of the new history of Macedonian culture, Missirkov's *Za makedonskite raboti* ("For the Macedonian Cause"), published in 1903, was not recognized at its proper worth until 20 years after his death. During his lifetime, this work was regarded as the greatest threat to the realization of the plans of those who aimed at keeping Macedonia in subjection. For this very reason, he was forced to spend his life in exile, as he relates in his "Memories and Impressions", "a wanderer in other lands, from which I tried to be of use to my oppressed country." He died in poverty in Sofia on 26th July 1926.

Tracing the unhappy wanderings of Missirkov's eventful life means at the same time relating the thorny path followed by the Macedonian people from the last quarter of the last century up to the Balkan wars. Missirkov was the founder of the

modern Macedonian literary language and orthography, and the editor and publisher of the first scientific, literary and political journal to appear in the Macedonian language. For the 30 years that are considered the stormiest period of Macedonian history because the national revolutionary struggles were going on then, Missirkov served his country with unflagging zeal and won for himself an immortal name in her annals.

Missirkov began life during the most troubled period in the Balkans. He was born in 1874 at Postol, the former capital of Alexander the Great, in the part of Macedonia under Greek rule. When he had completed the second grade of the Greek pre-grammar school, he began to feel a bitter resentment against the unscrupulous methods of Greek propaganda. Being without money to continue his studies, he worked in the fields with his father; but when Serbian propaganda began to preach "Macedonianism", and to recruit young people throughout Macedonia (which was then under Turkish rule) in order to "Serbianize" them, Missirkov left for Belgrade, full of joy and hope, where his odyssey began.

When Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek nationalistic propaganda were coming into violent collision on Macedonian soil, and Macedonian students were going from one school to another and from one church to another, a new ferment began among the students in Belgrade who had fled from Bulgarian and Greek schools in Macedonia. They realized that they had been deceived because they were forced to declare themselves Serbs and their language was treated as Serbian. But the students, who had

only just arrived in Belgrade, insisted on the recognition of their nationality. When this was refused, they left Belgrade en masse as a demonstration of protest and went to Sofia. Missirkov was one of these students. This was his second flight, and he found himself caught up in the toils of the third propaganda in Macedonia.

This protest by the students was a real blow to Serbian propaganda and policy, and it caused a serious conflict between the Serbs and Bulgarians. But the triumph of the Bulgarian authorities was short-lived. Once across the Bulgarian frontier, the students realized they had been deceived again and were pawns in a new struggle for power at their expense. Accordingly, they had to extricate themselves from a regrettable situation as best they could. Some of them wished to return to Belgrade, and those who remained in Sofia were subjected to a special regime. Most of them were sent to various colleges in the interior of Bulgaria.

In spite of all the precautions taken, most of the refugees returned to Serbia; among them was Missirkov, who was admitted as a student in the third grade of a grammar school in Belgrade. He did not stay there long, however since he was admitted as a student in the first grade of a theological college where young Macedonians were studying. In this semi-military college, future Serbian priests and teachers were trained for propaganda in Macedonia, as well as military cadres which were to serve as the basis for the forthcoming subjection of this province of the Turkish Empire.

The circumstances which brought Missirkov from Salonica to Belgrade and Sofia and then back

to Belgrade showed him clearly that Macedonians could no longer allow themselves to be pawns in their neighbours' struggles for power, and that it was no longer possible for them to be treated as Greeks in one place, Serbs in another place, and Bulgarians in a third place, while they regarded themselves only as Macedonians.

At the end of the academic year the students went on a tour of the Kingdom of Serbia. This gave Missirkov the opportunity to study on the spot the various Serbian dialects and compare them with the Serbian literary language, and, having done this, to compare them with the spoken language of the Macedonians and of the Bulgarians. All this later served as material for his scientific researches into the Macedonian language.

When the time came for them to enrol in the second grade of the grammar school, a group of Macedonian students rebelled against the assimilating policy and military regime of the Serbs. Missirkov was one of the group. As a result of the uproar, the Serbian Foreign Minister closed the schools and the students were scattered among the various towns of Serbia. After this rebellion, Missirkov continued his studies at Shabats, a small town not far from Belgrade. Not long after he was back in the Serbian capital.

In 1892, some friends and fellow students of Missirkov founded a literary society and began to bring out their own publication: *Loza* (Vineyard). At that time a campaign was launched in the Bulgarian press against the national ideology of the *Lozars* (those who were associated with the publication *Loza*). Then everything possible was done to

neutralize the action of Bishop Teodossie of Skopje, who aimed at separating the Macedonian Church from the Bulgarian Exarchate and even at entering into communion with the See of Rome. The young Macedonian intellectuals Petar Pop Arsov, Dame Gruev, Gotse Delchev, Gjorche Petrov, Georgi Balasschev, and others took an active part in all those movements.

All this had repercussions on the Macedonian students in Belgrade, who, in 1893, founded their own student society *Vardar*. Its charter included, among other things, the aim of studying and spreading a knowledge of their country as regards its geographical, ethnographical and historical aspects. The founder of this society was Missirkov. A cardinal principle of its programme was that Macedonia should belong to the Macedonians. The Serbs were opposed to this thesis of the young Macedonians, so their society did not last very long: it was disbanded in 1895. The Serbs, not trusting the Macedonians, began to send real Serbian priests and teachers to Macedonia.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that Missirkov, after completing his studies at the Belgrade teachers' training college, refused to go to Prishtina, where, having been the best student of his class, he was appointed as a Serbian teacher. Instead, he left secretly for Odessa in order to continue his studies for the benefit of his country.

His academic qualifications obtained in Belgrade were not recognized in Russia, so he had to study for a further two years in the Seminary at Poltava, and then in 1897 he was able to enter the Faculty of Philological and Historical Studies at the

University of St. Petersburg. When he enrolled at this university, Missirkov did not state that he was Bulgarian, Greek or Serbian, as Macedonian intellectuals of that time usually did when declaring what studies they had completed. He stated that he was a Macedonian Slav.

Thanks to the research on the ethnography and history of the Balkan Peninsula he had carried out during his stay in Serbia, Missirkov was able to give his first scholarly lecture before the members of the Russian Imperial Geographical Society.

This first scholarly work shows with what keen interest the young student had addressed himself to the studies he would specialize in for the next thirty years. Still as a student, Missirkov gave lectures on various subjects including, among others: "Marko Krale as a national hero" and "The ethnic pattern of the population in Macedonia".

In 1901, for reasons of health, he removed to the University of Odessa, where he worked on his degree thesis: "The problem of nationality and the reasons for the popularity of the Macedonian Marko Krale".

Of great importance in the work done by Missirkov for his beloved country was the founding of the secret Macedonian Society at St. Petersburg. The aim of this was to give moral and material aid to the Macedonian cause, and to follow its development. Missirkov soon became president and an active member of this society. Since this society was a branch of the Macedonian Secret Organization, Missirkov corresponded with the other two committees of the Organization: the Supreme Committee at Sofia and the other at Thessaloniki. He was

thus kept informed about events in Macedonia and in the lives of Macedonian emigrants.

As president of this society, Missirkov had fruitful contacts with eminent men in Russian political, cultural and scientific circles, and so was able to obtain adequate aid from the Slav Charitable Society for the Macedonian refugees.

When the new Macedonian Society recently founded in Belgrade began publication of the journal *Balkanski glasnik* (The Voice of the Balkans), in which the fundamental principles of the Macedonian literary language and orthography were set forth, Missirkov was able to take part in the struggle for Macedonian national independence by getting in touch with Macedonians residing in Belgrade. But soon after, the Macedonian Society in Belgrade was closed, the journal was suppressed and the editors were disbanded. Then Stefan Jakimov Dedov and Diamandi Trpkov Mishaikov, who were the chief founders of this Society, left for the Russian capital. There, together with Missirkov, Chupovski, Konstantinovich and others, on 28th October 1902 they founded the Society of Macedonian Students, afterwards called the "St. Clement's Macedonian Scientific and Literary Society", which became the most important Macedonian national institution abroad. In the same year this Society sent a Special Memorandum to the Great Powers, in which the Macedonian problem was examined at length from the national point of view, and the problem of the Macedonian language was solved by making it the Macedonian literary language. The question was also examined of establishing a Macedonian national Church under the Bishopric

of Ochrid. The aim of this Memorandum was that the Macedonians should be recognized as a separate nation and that Macedonia should be granted full autonomy within the Turkish Empire.

In the expectation that freedom would be granted to Macedonia, Missirkov abandoned his university studies and left for Bitola, where he was appointed assistant master at the classical academy. There he became friendly with the Russian consul Rostkovski, who made him tutor to his children. This post gave him the opportunity to enter into friendly relations with various representatives of the diplomatic corps, which enabled him to follow closely Balkan and European politics regarding Macedonia. With some of his friends he began to pave the way for opening Macedonian schools also for publishing textbooks in the Macedonian language. But the Ilinden Uprising (1903) and the assassination of the Russian Consul in his presence changed everything for the worse for Missirkov. Life in Macedonia became so unbearable for him that he felt obliged to leave his native land and return to Russia. There he published a great many articles informing public opinion on the causes of the Ilinden Uprising and the reasons why the Russian Consul was assassinated.

Missirkov soon resumed his activity in the "St. Clement's Society", giving various lectures and writing his book "For the Macedonian Cause". This book, written in the Macedonian language, was published in Sofia, where he later founded a new society of Macedonian emigrant intellectuals.

In 1905, because his life was in jeopardy, he left for Berdiansk in Southern Russia, where he

was given a post as assistant master in a grammar school. There he resumed publication of the Macedonian journal *Vardar*. As a result of this activity, he received threats warning him to give up his struggle for Macedonia, but he ignored them and continued his patriotic work with undaunted zeal.

When the first Balkan war was declared, Macedonians flocked home from all parts of the world to take part in the struggle for liberation from the Turkish yoke. Missirkov was in Macedonia then as a Russian war correspondent so that he could follow the military operations on the spot. He suffered another disappointment in Macedonia when he found that the "liberators", the various Balkan monarchies, were each aiming to gain possession of a large part of Macedonian territory. Accordingly, he published a series of articles in the Russian press pointing out the cruel destiny of the Macedonian people as a result of the tripartition of Macedonia; he also wrote some violent articles demanding that the Turks should be driven out of Macedonian territory.

In 1913, on the initiative of the Macedonian colony in Petersburg, of which Missirkov was a member, the journal *Makedonski glas* (The Voice of Macedonia) was founded, which was published in Russian and Macedonian. This journal dealt openly and courageously with the most important problems connected with the destiny of Macedonia. The Macedonian colony in the Russian capital sent a series of memoranda to the London Conference and the Balkan Governments; it also addressed appeals to the Russian and Macedonian peoples pointing out the troubled history of this small but heroic

people, which, after five centuries of oppression, instead of gaining its freedom was now subject to a new domination; the tripartite domination of the Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks, which made its situation even worse.

In an article which appeared in 1914 in the journal *Slavianskja izvestia*, Missirkov cleared up the question of the participation of Macedonian regiments in the struggle against Turkey in 1912, stating that four armies, Serban, Greek, Macedonian and Montenegrin, had fought, in Macedonia, and two, Bulgarian and Macedonian, had fought in Thrace. All these armies except the Macedonian were subsidized.

In this article Missirkov wrote:

"The Russian public forgot Macedonia, but although she is in a disastrous plight, she is still alive. She suffered the tremendous oppression of the Turkish yoke for five centuries, and yet kept her national spirit. If Malorussia was able to bear the Polish yoke in the 16th and 17th centuries, Macedonia, too, will be able to survive the sufferings, of 1913. The Slavs freed themselves from their misfortunes, overcoming the bitterest disappointments, and began to heal their wounds and lay the foundations of a lasting peace in the Balkans in virtue of the national independence of all the Balkan peoples. So Macedonia, too, will be able to obtain what is her due."

In order to be able to say what he thought with absolute freedom, Missirkov began to write articles under the pseudonym of *K. Rilski*. These articles appeared in the *Makedonski glas* and were marked by their combative spirit. In them Mis-

sirkov defended the Macedonian national ideals, which were in contrast to those of the Bulgarians, and emphasized the struggle for the independence of Macedonia during the course of history. In these stormy days of 1913 when attempts were being made in the Balkans to prove that the Macedonians were Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks, Missirkov declared:

"The time has come for all the world to know that the people living in Macedonia are Macedonians and not Serbs, or Bulgarians or Greeks; and that the Macedonian people has its own history, its own national dignity, and its own important contributions to the cultural history of the Slavs... Macedonia is a land of old Slavonic culture, and no one will succeed in rooting out this old Slavonic culture... Macedonia will survive all misfortunes because the giants of Macedonia are not yet dead. The figures of SS. Cyril and Methodius, and St. Clement and St. Naum of Ochrid are a shining example to the sons of Macedonia, whom a glorious future awaits on the day that Macedonia, united and free, takes her place as a member with equal rights of the family of the Balkan peoples."

When he returned from the Balkan front, Missirkov gave up his post at Odessa and was appointed assistant master of the grammar school at Kishinev. At that time Bessarabia became a republic, and he was elected the first member of its Parliament. However, the pro-Rumanian party was dominant and the Rumanian army brought strong pressure to bear on the young republic so that the Parliament was forced to declare the annexation of Bessarabia to Rumania in November 1918. Then

Missirkov was expelled and, not being able to return to Macedonia, he went to Sofia.

Missirkov's arrival in Sofia coincided with the serious disorders that broke out immediately after the First World War over the Macedonian question, and every Macedonian emigrant was compelled to sign the various resolutions and petitions in favour of the Bulgarian cause in Macedonia. In this state of affairs, Missirkov was distrusted by the Bulgarians because of his ardent defence of Macedonian nationhood.

After working for a year at the Ethnographical Museum in Sofia, Missirkov was appointed assistant master of the grammar school at Karlovo, where he was always suspected on account of his fervent Macedonian nationalism.

In 1921 Missirkov wrote a letter to the Serbian Minister Plenipotentiary at Sofia asking him to use his influence to secure his appointment to a teaching post at the grammar school in Skopje, or else in some other Macedonian town, or failing that in Belgrade or Zagreb. After being kept waiting for two years, he was informed that his application had been rejected and he realized he would have to stay in Bulgaria indefinitely. Accordingly, he resumed his journalistic activity and published articles on the Macedonian question in the Bulgarian press. In all, he wrote some thirty important articles, which will remain as his testament for future generations of Macedonians.

In one of his articles published at that time, he affirmed:

"There are no solid grounds for pessimism for us or for optimism for our oppressors... Are we

Macedonians a people without a class of intellectuals, without glorious traditions, without strong energy, without national ideals, without a literature, and in general without culture."

On the contrary, "a real, original Macedonian culture has always existed, and has been the most powerful weapon of the Macedonians for preserving their cultural identity and for enduring all the vicissitudes of their country's history: neither Byzantium, nor Bulgaria, nor Serbia, nor Turkey were able to change the character of the Macedonians so as to separate them from their Slav forbears."

Missirkov declared that the new oppressors would obtain nothing by terror:

"Terror can only create martyrs for an idea; it can never obtain the victory of lies and oppression. Our work is sacred, and therefore it will obtain the support of the civilized peoples of Europe, particularly of the Italians."

Missirkov's assertion of the existence of a separate Macedonian culture aroused a storm of angry comment. In one of the many articles he wrote on the subject, he did not hesitate to say:

"Yes, Macedonian culture and history are quite separate from Bulgarian and Serbian culture and history; they have never been the object of an impartial and detailed study. The Serbs and the Bulgarians most unfairly took from Macedonian culture only what they could make use of for the glory of their own national names; ignoring facts of capital importance either because they did not concern them, or because they contradicted their own national aspirations. Unfortunately, the Macedonians themselves are only now beginning to

study Macedonian history, having realized, towards the end of last century, that they could no longer trust the historians of Belgrade or Sofia . . ."

In articles written at that time, Missirkov frequently dealt with the situation of the Macedonians in the Yugoslav Kingdom, and was profoundly convinced that the Macedonian minority in that kingdom was the most unjustly treated of all the minorities. He also said that the kingdom was the Austria of the Balkan Peninsula, and concluded:

"Only by the unification of all the Macedonians and a common programme for the creation of Macedonia in a Balkan Switzerland will it be possible to end rivalry within the Balkans and in Europe for the hegemony of the Balkans."

He also wrote: "Only Serbian and Bulgarian short-sightedness is responsible for the unhappy plight of the Macedonians and therefore of their serious international situation." In this connection, Missirkov pointed out that "the Serbs and the Bulgarians must know that we Macedonians have suffered, and still suffer, more than anyone else as a result of the disagreement between them, and for this reason we, more than anyone else, could contribute to a reconciliation between them and to the prosperity of all the Southern Slav peoples."

What, according to Missirkov, did the Macedonians want from their oppressors? "Give us our rights and our freedom," he declared, "so that we can respect our language and our past as you respect your past and your present, and we will build a firm bridge between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria."

After the tripartition of Macedonia, in a message to his people Missirkov wrote:

"Macedonians are tested by struggle and, if to armed struggle is added that for a real Macedonian culture and science, and if these are intensified, Macedonia will not be lost and Macedonians will accomplish their historic mission . . ."

The agreements with Greece for the emigration of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia, as well as the agreements between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, were strongly condemned by Missirkov for the harm they did to the Macedonian people. He wrote:

"I hope I may be forgiven but, as a Macedonian, I put the interests of my country and my compatriots first and then those of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. I am a Macedonian with a Macedonian conscience, and as such I have my opinion about the past, present and future of my country and of the Southern Slavs; I therefore demand that we Macedonians should be consulted on all questions concerning ourselves and our neighbours, and that agreements should not be made between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia about us over our heads. They may be sure that Macedonia will show the necessary tact, the necessary insight and spirit of self-sacrifice for the achievement of a general improvement in the Balkans, provided their personal and national dignity are respected."

In his article entitled "Macedonian Nationalism", Missirkov explains what he means by this:

"A boundless and unalterable love for Macedonia, continual thought and toil for the interests of Macedonia, and an absolute manifestation of the Macedonian national spirit: the language, poetry, life and customs of the people — here in broad

outline is what I mean by Macedonian nationalism . . ."

All these articles, published in the Bulgarian press, aroused a storm of opposition to Missirkov, and in September 1925 he was removed from Karlovo and sent to Koprivchitsa, threatened with death if he continued to write articles of this kind. Furthermore, the publishers and editors of the papers *Mir* and *Ilinden*, in which his articles appeared, were formally warned to cease publishing them.

This was the end of the public life of a great Macedonian patriot. Soon after he fell ill, and his physical life, too, came to an end in a hospital in the Bulgarian capital.

One of the most important points constantly maintained by Missirkov was that the Macedonians, as a Slav people who for centuries had shared the fate of all other neighbouring Slav peoples, had their own national history and a rich, essentially national culture. For the achievement of their independence, Macedonians had to get rid of foreign names, introduced by various propaganda campaigns and pseudo-histories at Macedonia's expense, and restore the Macedonian national names.

Politically, Missirkov preferred that Macedonia should remain within the Ottoman Empire when she was under Turkish rule, and later, when this was ended, he wanted a free and independent Macedonia.

Missirkov was a Slavonic scholar of broad views who had tackled the most difficult philological, linguistic, ethnographical, historical and other problems of Macedonia and the Balkans. He was a stu-

dent of folklore who had collected and studied the epos of the Southern Slavs; he had also made a careful study of past and contemporary ethnography, and compiled the first ethnographical statistics, in which the Macedonians appear under their national name.

As a publicist, Missirkov expounded the ideas that he believed should govern Macedonian national development and the organization of the struggle for the national and political independence of Macedonia.

As a philologist, Missirkov was the founder of the modern Macedonian language and orthography, which he gave the status of a literary language, separate from the Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek languages, which the Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks had tried to impose on the Macedonian people.



