About Giannelli's Macedonian Dictionary from the 16th century By Dr. Kosta Peev Translated and edited by Risto Stefov October 22, 2013

1.1. The great importance about Ciro Giannelli's dictionary, which we are analyzing today, comes from the fact that it is a document about the specificity of the Macedonian language in relation to the neighbouring South Slavic languages, Serbian and Bulgarian, proving its uniqueness for nearly five centuries.

At the time the Dictionary was written, during the 16th century, Macedonia was under Ottoman slavery which began a long time ago, in 1392, when the Ottoman Empire spread to Macedonia, 50 years after its penetration into the Balkans and a few years after the famous Kosovo battle. Although Islam was the only officially recognized religion, there was some tolerance, albeit restricted, for the Orthodox Christian millet. It is worth mentioning at this point that the tolerance and opportunities afforded to the Macedonian people in those days were much greater than those afforded today by Macedonia's neighbouring countries where Macedonians live. In essence, especially during the 15thcentury when the Ohrid Archbishopric was in full bloom, these opportunities contributed to a sense of some cultural and religious life in Macedonia, which allowed the Macedonians to create the Dictionary about which we will talk about today. Unfortunately, this positive climate did not last too long and during the second half of the 16th century the Ohrid Archbishopric's progressive influence declined and the Archbishopric was eventually abolished altogether by Sultan Mustafa III during the year 1767. At about the same time the Ottoman Empire also began to weaken and decline allowing the negative elements of life to widen. It should be noted that as a counterweight to this, western influence, especially in the economy, began to dominate Macedonia.

1.2. A little later, during the 17th century, another important event took place; Austria invaded Macedonia. This took place during the Austrian-Ottoman war which prompted the Macedonian people in the northeast, Kumanovo-Kriva Palanka Regions, to rebel. The so-called Karposh Uprising was a result of the economic and political violence in the Ottoman Empire. After its first successes the Uprising was violently crushed and its leader, Karposh, after whom the Uprising was named, was tied on the Skopje Stone Bridge and used for target practice by enemy spear throwers and archers. After that, his impaled dead body was thrown into the Vardar River.

2.1. The differences between Macedonian and the neighbouring South Slavic languages, mentioned at the outset, of course began much earlier than the 16th century. The differences began in the Slavic period when two separate schools were formed with their own characteristics. The "Ohrid" or "St. Clement" School covering the Macedonian language and the "Preslavska" school covering the Bulgarian language, however, these differences were not very pronounced in the texts of the mentioned schools, among other things, because they were of religious content. Giannelli's dictionary, on the other hand, demonstrates national language characteristics associated with a particular region, in broad terms, Kostur Region, in a period that drew knowledge from the first medieval germ of rebirth, or more precisely, the 16th century.

This was a bilingual dialectal dictionary: Macedonian explained in Greek, but with an explicative character, because, although irregular, broader explanations followed behind some lexical units. For example: "Pokri mene so iorgano" (Покрименесојоргано); Skrivom da se liubime" (Скривомдасељубиме); "ne ti gibam" (Нетегибам), etc. It contains more than 300 folk words specific to the Kostur Region speech, referring to household items, food, kingship, parts of the human body, agricultural items, religion, etc.

As mentioned earlier, the dictionary has a long history that dates back to the 16th century, published even in the middle of the 20th century. It was published by Professor Giannelli of Rome in collaboration with Andre Vaillant, professor at the University of Paris, who analyzed the dictionary linguistically.

3.1. The various speeches in Macedonia are grouped into three dialects: two are basic, east and west dialects divided by the Vardar River. The third dialect includes the Tikvesh-Mariovo-Kostur-Lerin speeches, which are called transitional because they contain features of the east and west dialects.

4.1. We said that there are several linguistic features in the abovementioned dictionary that confirm that the Macedonian speeches with their peculiarities began a long time ago. Let us first mention those abnormalities that form the current basis related to the basic elements of the Macedonian language, for example loss of declination, absence of case, but remain rare in the present dictionary. For example, "Vishnego Boga" (ВишнегоБога); "Ela stan po vraga" (Еластанповрага). These cases are regularly used in other Slavic languages except in Bulgarian; a second such characteristic, which the Dictionary links to other Macedonian dialects, is the appearance of the article: "Ne mi vezmi dushata" (Немивезмидушата) and other examples: "Vriatenoto", "Patot" (Врјатеното, Патот.). These two characteristics occurred in old times, influenced by the Balkan linguistic alliance, i.e. of the neighbouring non-Slavic languages such as the Aromanian, Greek and Albanian. Both characteristics, outside of the Macedonian language, still function in the Bulgarian language but are absent from the Serbian and other Slavic languages.

5.1. Like a typical Macedonian speciality, also present in the Dictionary, is the representation of the Old-Slavic sound "on" replaced with "a": "vnatria", "stapalka", "saboda" /?/ (sabota), "Gas", "Patot", "Made"; (внатрја, стапалка, сабода /?/ (сабота), Гас, Патот, Маде), in the Bulgarian language it is replaced with a dark sounding "a": "Gas", Pat", "Vatre", (Гас, Пат, Ватре) and in the Serbian language with "u" (оо): "Put", "Guzitsa" (Пут, Гузица). The exception to the rule for replacing "on" with "a" in the Dictionary is the word "kukia" (куќа) (house), which professor A. Vaillant treated as a "borrowed Serbizam".

Although only a small number of these are registered in the Dictionary, there are cases with preserved nasal tones, e.g. "ranka" (ранка), which are common for other Kostur words and for those of the Solun dialect. Namely the cases in which nasal tones occur are: "ranka", "munka", "pant" (ранка, манка, пант) which helped Professor Vatroslav Jagich prove his theory of the Macedonian origin of the old Slavic language.

5.2. For the small nasal word "en" there are no remnants of the nasal pronunciation, and it's pronunciation has not mixed with the nasal form "on" like it has in the central dialects, and in place of literary language forms such as: "iachmen", "iaglen", (јачмен, јаглен) in Giannelli's Dictionary, we find "echimen", "eglenie", "zaets", (ечимен, еглење, заец) similar to Eastern dialects in the Bulgarian language.

6.1. As a peripheral speech from where the Dictionary originated, the material contains many characteristics that remind us of the archaic state, i.e. of the Old Slavic language. So, let us now say something about the wide pronunciation of the old sound "iat" (јат): "Koliano", "Mliako", "Neviasta" (Кољано, Мљако, Невјаста). One more example in the same context is "hl'ab" (хл'аб), but there are also cases with "e": "tselvam", "dedo", "plemna" (целвам, дедо, плевна). These kinds of examples can be found in the East, in Solun, Seres and Drama Regions. In some instances, they touch the Bulgarian language, but not all, e.g. "vriateno" (врјатено) as per the Dictionary is "vreteno" (вретено) in the Bulgarian language.

7.1. Among the main features of the Macedonian language, which is separated from the neighbouring South Slavic languages, is the replacement of the great reflex "o", e.g. "son", "bozel" (сон, бозел): in the Serbian it is replaced with "a": "san", "baz" (сан, баз), in the Bulgarian with a dark sounding "a": "san" (сан). This above-mentioned specificity of the Macedonian language, i.e. the substitution of "o" is registered in this Dictionary in which we find: "noshtvi", "vovri", "nohcha" (mi te ukradoe) (ноштви, воври, нохча (митеукрадое)).

8.1. With regards to consonant-izms, we would like to point out that the lexical units registered in the Dictionary in the replacement of the proto-Slavic groups “*tia”, “*dia” (*тj, *дj), protected is the original “sht”, “zhd” (шт, жд): “vreshta”, “noshtvi”, “viazhdi”, “rozhda”, (врешта, ноштви, вјажди, рожда) instead of being replaced by “kia”, “gia” (ќ, ѓ) like it is was done in the central dialects: “brekia”, “nokivi”, “vegie”, “rogia” (вреќа, ноќви, веѓи, роѓа). The above-mentioned replacements “sht” and “zhd” (шт, жд) are still found in some Eastern dialects, e.g. in Maleshevo Region, even in the Bulgarian language, while the Serbian replacement is with variants of the Macedonian “kia” and “gia” (ќ, ѓ).

However, palatalized in the Dictionary occurring in un-etymological examples, in the case of the end of the word “lozhnikia” (ложниќ) meaning a thick, woollen blanket, its appearance is also registered in the dialectal word “enzikia” (ензиќ) (language); another example, but without the nasal tone and with some reduction, which we factored into the research we completed in Kukush Region, is the word “izikia” (изиќ).

9.1. Among the preserved old forms of the old Slavic language in the Dictionary we need to mention two more archaic characteristics: first, the sound “h” which is very well kept in all positions, in the beginning of the word, and in the end and inter vocally: “hodi”, “hlab”, “vrah”, “muhi”, “uho” (ходи, хљаб, врах, мухи, ухо); while in the current period of development of the Macedonian language the sound “h” has reached a phase of disappearance, or is being replaced by the sound “v”, especially in the western dialect. Let us also mention that in the old group of words in the dictionary, the pronunciation “cher” (чер) is preserved: “cherepna” (черепна) (a device in which bread is baked), instead of the literary language word “tsrepna” (црепна) and “cheriava” (черјава) instead of “tsreva” (црева).

10.1. We will end our review of language features registered in the Dictionary with the display of some old words, today replaced by others, but still presented in some neighbouring languages, e.g. the adjective “lep” (леп) (pretty), besides being mentioned in the Dictionary, is still widely used in Kostur Region, especially in the expression: “shto si lepa” (штосилепа). The only real explanation is that the word existed in our language long ago but was lost in the other dialects. We assume that influence of the Serbian language could not have taken place in Kostur Region because Kostur is such a long way from southern Serbia and this word is not present in central Macedonia, which divides Kostur Region from Serbia. The same explanation applies to the verb “zove” (зове) = “vika” (вика) also recorded in the Dictionary under the expression: “Kak te zovet na ime?” (Кактезоветнаиме?) compared to today’s Macedonian: “Kako te vikat na ime?” (Какотевикаатнаиме?) or “Kako se vikash” (Какосевикаш?) (What is your name?). In the grammatical scheme of archaisms it is also worth mentioning that the presence of a particular form in the adjectives that disappeared in our modern language, are names of relatives such as “parvi” bratuched, “ftori” bratuched, (парвибратучед, фторибратучед) instead of today’s “prv” and “vtor” bratuched (прв, вторбратучед) (first and second cousin).

The written form of the Macedonian language, as presented in Giannelli’s dictionary, will continue to live in the coming years and centuries, through the de-masked literature which began with Danilo’s four language Damascus Studite, then was strengthened in the first half of the 19th century by the works of Kiril Peichinovik, who wrote in his native Tetovo speech, and by Joakim Krchovski who wrote in the Kratovski speech.

Awareness of the uniqueness of the Macedonian people, which implies linguistic distinctiveness of course, was further strengthened in the beginning of the second half of the 19th century, during the cultural revival of romanticism in Europe as well as here in Macedonia. Groups of poets and writers who lived and worked in their native language during that period were appearing all throughout Macedonia. Included among them was Konstantin Miladinov, with his famous poem “T’ga za jyg” (Т’газајуг) “Longing for the South” which he wrote in Moscow where he was studying. The poem was written in the poet’s native language, the Struga dialect. This was a poem which today is read and sung like the Macedonian anthem. Along with his brother Dimitar,

Konstantin published his large collection of Macedonian folk songs in Croatia in 1861. These volumes were instrumental in shaping the poetic character of Macedonian writers.

11.1. The evidence of how complex the influences and pressures from our neighbouring countries' propaganda was on the life and work of Macedonian intellectuals was reflected in the work of our great poet Grigor Prlichev. He was educated in Greek and for a long time he could not get rid of the respective Greek influence on his writing. He wrote the famous poem "Serderot", which won him a poetry contest in Athens where he was adorned with a laurel wreath and nicknamed "Second Homer". Prlichev soon realized that Greek was not the language he wanted to excel in and that he should be working with the Macedonian language. But his inability to express himself in the Macedonian language became an impediment for him so he tried to do something impossible, create a common Slavic language, a combination of old Slavic, Macedonian and Bulgarian, a Slavic form of Esperanto in which he tried to translate Homer's Iliad. Unfortunately, many of the Bulgarian cultural elites, that understood his attempts to overthrow the "language unity" between Macedonian and Bulgarian, reacted harshly and terribly attacked our sensitive poet. One Bulgarian literary critic, Nesho Bonchev, wrote with irony in the local newspapers that Prlichev betrayed Homer and "gave him a haircut and a shave" (Homer was known to have long hair and a big beard). Distastefully, another famous Bulgarian poet, Hristo Botev, apparently lured by the great Bulgarian propaganda over the poem and the poet, ridiculed Prlichev with the lyrics: "Oh, why am I not a poet, a poet like Prlichev, to translate the Iliad, so that I can claim a laurel." After all his wanderings and empty illusions, Prlichev finally found his way home and wrote his "Autobiography" in the Macedonian language.

11.2. The strongest attempt to strengthen the Macedonian language as a separate South Slavic language, different from Serbian and Bulgarian, was undertaken by Krste Petkov Misirkov through his book "On Macedonian Matters" published in Sofia in 1903, shortly after the Ilinden Uprising. In his book Misirkov outlined what the Macedonian literary language should look like, and why he chose to take the base of his speech from Prilep, Bitola and Veles, which would connect all Macedonian dialects. Misirkov said: "If a Macedonian from the north extended his hand to a Macedonian from the south and if a Macedonian from the west extended his hand to a Macedonian from the east, all the hands would meet somewhere in Veles-Prilep." We need to emphasize the fact that Misirkov, even though he came from the Aegean part of Macedonia, from Enidzhevardar, had discovered, as we have said, that the foundation of the Macedonian literary language lay in the central part of Macedonia, equidistant from the Serbian and Bulgarian. It should also be noted that Misirkov's book was banned and destroyed in the printing house in Sofia before it had a chance to appear before the world, which in itself shows how its content was unacceptable to the Great Bulgarian idea. Fortunately, a few copies survived, from which we have learned that a form of our present literary language was already known about one hundred years before it was codified, hailing Misirkov as one of the great Macedonian reformers.