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80 YEARS SINCE THE RESCUE OF BULGAR

Historical facts versus demagoguery

Rumen Radev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria



Attempts to impute guilt are a manifestation of disrespect to the rescued Jews and to the moral feat of tiny Bulgaria during World War II, the head of State says during the opening of an exhibition dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews

In days of hardship, the Bulgarian state and people passed an incredible test of great historical value by not allowing a single Bulgarian Jew to perish in the death camps or be killed in Bulgaria. The rescue of Bulgarian Jews keeps on being an example of the strength of public and political energy dedicated to a just cause. This is what President Rumen Radev said during the opening of a documentary exhibition dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews at the "SS Cyril and Methodius" National Library.

The exposition features exhibits from the National Library's collection, as well as the awards posthumously given to King Boris III by international Jewish organisations, including the World Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League.

Among the attendees were Vice President Iliana Iotova, Prime Minister Galab Donev, ministers, diplomats, representatives of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the academia, of the Jewish community in Bulgaria and of the organisations of Bulgarian Jews in the State of Israel. Famous historian and public figure from Israel, Prof. Michael Bar-Zohar, author of the book *Salvation*, dedicated to the events in the spring of 1943, which led to the rescue of nearly 50 thousand Bulgarian Jews, was a guest of honour.

In his speech, head of State Rumen Radev recalled how,

in one of the darkest periods of human history, Bulgaria, which had already experienced two national catastrophes, was doing everything possible

attitude towards their Jewish friends, neighbours, schoolmates, and colleagues. The Commissariat for Jewish Affairs did not impose itself on the Bulgarian Parliament and Government, and Hitler did not break the decision of King Boris III not to allow the deportation of a single Bulgarian subject outside the borders of Bulgaria, the President added.

The lesson of statesmanship of the 43 deputies of

main in our history, the President stressed. Rumen Radev also highlighted the important role and active public position of a number of scientific and professional associations, and the intellectual elite that remained faithful to the traditions of its Bulgarian people and state, as well as the contribution of Bulgarian Jews in the anti-fascist resistance.

The head of State pointed out that eight decades since the

memory, on which the foundations of the nation are based, is strong only when it rests on the truth, the President said.

Attempts to impute guilt are, at the very least, a sign of disrespect for our rescued Jewish fellow citizens and for the moral feat of tiny Bulgaria, while others in Europe were collaborating with the Nazi authorities, the President said, adding that the millions of innocent victims of the Holocaust will never be forgotten. He stressed that Bulgaria's Jewish community at the end of the Second World War was more numerous than before it began and this huge moral capital of Bulgaria must be protected from any attempt to replace it.

Prof. Michael Bar-Zohar spoke about the decisive actions of King Boris III, the Bulgarian state and the Bulgarian people that led to the rescue of all Bulgarian Jews during World War II. My friends and I have a sacred duty to Bulgaria – to spread throughout the world this story of the rescue of the Jews – it is something very deep and we must keep it in the Bulgarian soul and in our memories, said Prof. Michael Bar-Zohar.



to avoid being dragged into another war on the Old Continent. Despite the pressure of Nazi Germany and its lost neutrality, however, Bulgarian institutions rejected anti-Semitism, while the Bulgarian people did not change their good

the government majority in the National Assembly who signed the letter of the Deputy Speaker Dimitar Peshev, and of the worthy spiritual leaders of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which was then part of the state, will forever re-

rescue of the Bulgarian Jews our society remains in debt to the memory of the rescuers because of the ideological layers that have obscured the work of the worthy. We are obliged to keep the memory of the past clean, because the historical



IAN JEWS DURING WORLD WAR II

We share one goal – to know and remember the lessons from history

Iliana Iotova, Vice President of the Republic of Bulgaria



Little is known about the great example of Bulgaria, which saved its Jews. This unprecedented act belongs not only to the Bulgarian, but also to the world memory. Thanks

to the joint efforts of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, leading politicians and intellectuals, and the courage of ordinary Bulgarians 80 years ago, my country saved over 48,000

Jews. It is sad that we failed to protect 11,343 Jews from territories administered at that time by the Bulgarian authorities.” With these words, Vice President Iliana Iotova opened

the international conference “The Role of Lawyers in the Rescue of Bulgarian Jews.” The organizers were: Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, the Embassy of the State of Israel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Association of Prosecutors, the Chamber of Investigators in Bulgaria, the Federation of Zionists in Bulgaria. “We share a common goal – to know and remember the lessons of history. Our task is even more important today, when in Europe, in the world, in Bulgaria, speech of hate flows, anti-Semitic sentiments are rising, one crisis after another fuels the virus of denial, and human rights that have constituted our lives for decades have been shamelessly overthrown today”, the vice-president also pointed out. She described as dangerous the attempts to re-

place history by denying the existence of the Holocaust. “The rescue of the Bulgarian Jews from the camps of death is a matter of national pride! It is a matter of pride when you read in large letters at the World Holocaust Remembrance Center “Yad Vashem” in Jerusalem, “Bulgaria – the country where the Jewish population was saved,” said the vice president. She emphasized that in various European countries, individuals rose up against the Holocaust, but only in Bulgaria did the Holocaust meet the resistance of the people and institutions, and the deportation was stopped by a parliamentary act.

This material has been borrowed from the official website of the presidency of the Republic of Bulgaria: <https://m.president.bg/bg/index>

1160 years since the Great Moravian Mission of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius (863 AD)

On the 5th July, the Czech Republic and Slovakia celebrate the Day of the arrival of Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia (around 863). The mission (863–867) was at the invitation of the Moravian prince Rostislav (846–870), opposed to German-Latin church expansion. At that time, Christianity had penetrated the country, but it was preached in Latin. In 862, Rostislav appealed to Byzantium for help. Emperor Michael III granted his request and sent to Moravia the prominent brothers Methodius and Constantine the Philosopher, who had already proved themselves as missionaries.

Finding themselves among the Great Moravian Slavs, the brothers enthusiastically began to build a new church and schools, spreading the newly created Slavic script in a language understandable to the local people, and at the same time educating their own students. As they encountered difficulties in their work, they went to the Pope in Rome for help. On 14th February, 869, Constantine died there, having taken the name Cyril before his death. He was buried in the Basilica of San Clemente. Four years later, Methodius was ordained by Pope John VIII as Archbishop of Great Moravia. Returning there, he continued the struggle against the intrigues of the German clergy against worship in the Slavic language.

On 30th December, 1980, with the apostolic encyclical *Egrege Virtutis* (For unparalleled dignity), Pope John Paul II declared them co-patrons of Europe. The Orthodox Church also honors them as one of the Seven Saints, together with their disciples and followers Clement, Naum, Angelarius, Gorazd and Sava.



The monument of the Holy Brothers in front of the restored episcopal church in Radhožď, Moravia, from where Methodius led the Church

Let's Preserve the Living Heritage of the Generations

"We cannot stop the world from developing, but we can preserve, protect and pass on traditions to continue to express in an emotional way our connection with past generations"

The creation of the Regional Center for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO is a significant event for Bulgaria, and its opening in 2012 caused wide public and media interest in the region. From its beginning until today, the Regional Center has included and engaged in its mission to protect the intangible cultural heritage 17 countries from South-Eastern Europe – Azerbaijan, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Cyprus, Moldova, Romania, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Serbia, Turkey, Croatia, Montenegro and Ukraine.

For several years now, thanks to our hard work, we have been

creating conditions that attract an audience beyond the strictly professional. We are working on a number of projects, currently mainly two. One is dedicated to the richness of Bulgarian traditional cuisine, and the other is focused on documenting heritage and museums. Working with museums is particularly important to us, as they are the natural custodians of memory, of the intangible. In just two years we have established contacts between dozens of museums in Bulgaria, we are currently making efforts to expand the network abroad.

Since 2017, we have been successfully coordinating UNESCO's efforts to implement policies for the protection of

intangible cultural heritage in the region of South-Eastern Europe by supporting annual trainings for UNESCO facilitators from Europe (a total of 6 trainings on various topics), including the one that has already become in a traditional expert meeting, established over time as a sustainable platform for sharing current trends and challenges in heritage conservation. We also conduct training seminars on the territory of the member countries, the total number of which exceeds 20 with over 500 trained experts in the region.

Mobile exhibitions and international competitions such as "Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Next Generation" give us the opportunity to focus the at-

tention of young people on the preservation of living heritage. This year, interns from abroad, primarily dealing with intangible cultural heritage, created an interactive map of NGOs in the region. In this context, I cannot fail to mention the series of documentaries jointly with BNT, which in short reports presented to the Bulgarian public the elements of the intangible cultural heritage registered in UNESCO. The magazine "Living Heritage" is our kind of pinnacle in imposing the problematic, as it well intertwines the cultures of South-Eastern Europe.

The year 2023 is extremely important to us, as it will completely be under the sign of the

emblematic 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. And in the upcoming autumn, the annual meeting of all UNESCO Category 2 centers will be held in Bulgaria. It is a special honor that the Bulgarian state will mark the anniversary by attracting experts literally from all over the world to share what has been done for the intangible cultural heritage over the years.

Irena Todorova, CEO of the Regional Center for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO



United for Cybersecurity in Cyberspace



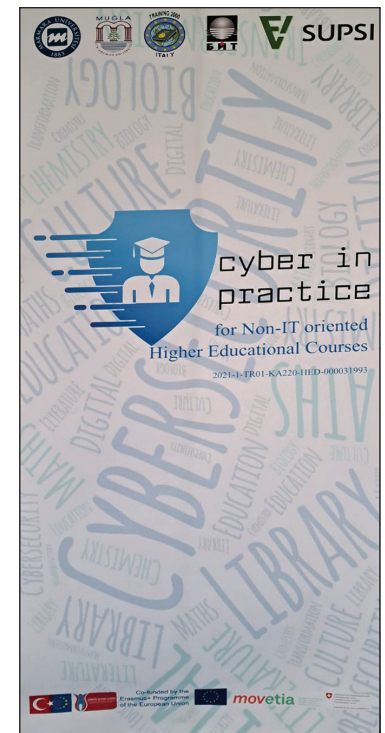
On 11th April, 2023, three generations met at ULSIT, united by the idea of cyber security. Representatives of the cyber community and business, students and teachers from the university and other higher ed-

ucation institutions were present. Students from Stara Zagora and children of the participants came to the meeting. Over 140 technology-related professionals were curious to feel Drone and Robot Security (Demon-

stration and Presentation), to "step into the deep" at the 11th Cyber Security Talks Bulgaria meeting under the heading (Cyber)Crime and (Real) Penalties and finally to attend the creation of the "Cyber Club at ULSIT". The main speakers at the event were Anton Puliyski, founder of Drone ARENA – Bulgaria and Cluster for Integration of Emerging Technologies, representatives of MDFOC and PhD students from ULSIT.

In the first part, the audience was captivated by the "dog walk" and the tricks of the robot dog. They did not remain indifferent when they understood and saw how drones can be used for the benefit of peo-

ple, but also against them. In the second part, the 11-year-olds who 'live' in cyberspace got involved, and in a conversation with a cybersecurity expert, they showed how they protect themselves in this environment. They showed the importance of knowing the environment and potential threats and how to avoid them. Words were heard about the third part – inspired by the idea of creating a Cyber club at ULSIT. The educational nature of the meeting answered questions that people often ask themselves, and also raised many new questions about what "smart cities" await us in the near future and why it is impor-



tant that security is first among the priorities in the new world.

Prof. Eugenia Kovatcheva



Culture as living side by side

We preserve the past so that we have a common future



The Sofia Synagogue, designed by the Austrian architect Friedrich Grünanger. Rabbi Markus Ehrenpreis is among the main initiators of the construction of the Central Sofia Synagogue and its rabbi at its consecration. Photo by Zafer Galibov, "La Esreya" magazine

beginning of the 17th century, 1/3 of them settled on the Balkan Peninsula. Here they met the communities of Byzantine Jews (Romanyotes) and Ashkenazic Jews who came from Hungary, Germany and other western parts of Europe in the 14th–15th centuries. Sephardic Jews were well received, and their knowledge and skills mingled in the life of the Ottoman Empire.

so-Turkish, Serbian-Bulgarian, Balkan and First World Wars is 960 people – among them there were privates, non-commissioned officers and officers. On 9th September, 1909, in the presence of King Ferdinand and Queen Eleonora, the largest Sephardic synagogue in the Balkans was consecrated in Sofia, and this act became a celebration for the entire city. The large building is also proof



Lika Eshkenazi, The Prima of The Sephardic song. Photo. Monie Frances, in the „Jewish News“ Newspaper



Maxim Eshkenazi with his parents at the Rosh Hashana holiday in the Sofia Synagogue – 2021. Photo by Monnie Frances, in the "Jewish News" newspaper

To many of us, the 24th May, the best day of the Bulgarian holiday calendar, brings back memories of an event from 80 years ago. In 1943, the National Defense Law was already adopted by the National Assembly. It had been promulgated and its implementation had begun. According to this law, the Jews, citizens of the Kingdom of Bulgaria, were de-

authorities for the undertaken persecution. He emphasized that it was because of the law that the holiday was darkened and he appealed to the state authorities not to enslave the freedom-loving, democratic and sociable Bulgarian spirit.

These events have their own dramatic continuation, but the important thing is that in them stands out the best that a

over the world. It will be difficult to list names in this text, because it is possible to leave someone out, and also because the division of artists and creators on an ethnic basis would be offensive to the culture of our coexistence.

Finally, we would like to recall a norm deeply rooted in the morality of the Jewish people – tikkun olam, which in Hebrew means that the goal we set for ourselves is to make the world a better place. How is this supposed to happen? Only if we believe that choosing to learn, preserve the past and tell it for a common future will make us better, wiser and more tolerant.

Mihaylina Pavlova, editor-in-chief of the "Jewish News" Newspaper and "La Estreya" Magazine
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ΔThe children of the Jewish community in Bulgaria at the Jugaton summer camp – 2021. Photo by Monnie Frances, in "Jewish News" newspaper.

prived of their civil rights. On 10th March, after strong public and political pressure, their deportation to the death camps was postponed.

On the 24th May of the same year, the festivities of the Slavic first teachers, the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius, about a thousand Jews organized a protest demonstration in Sofia against the government's plan to carry out the postponed deportation. On the occasion of this brave action, Metropolitan Stefan of Sofia, during the solemn prayer, in the presence of schoolchildren and students, expressing his regret that the Jewish students were deprived of the opportunity to be part of the celebration, denounced the

person is capable of – to help one's neighbor, even if they had a different faith. One of the highest cultural achievements of humans is their ability to accept and coexist with those different from them, which is a skill achieved with life experience, with patience and education. Human history abounds with positive and negative examples of such coexistence. However, where does the history of Bulgarians and Jews fit in the culture of coexistence?

We will recall that in 1492 the edict of the royal Catholic couple Fernando and Isabella expelled the Jews from Spain, and in 1498 from Portugal. Displacement began, and at the end of the 16th and the

In the era of our national revival, the presence of Jews in Bulgarian settlements largely stimulated urban culture, becoming a measure of comparison and imitation in many areas of life. There are many examples of the relationship between Jews and Bulgarians and of their fruitful efforts to jointly create the patterns of a new time deeply connected to Europe.

The Jews were actively involved in the construction of Bulgaria after the Liberation in 1878. They are not only its loyal and equal subjects, just as the Tarnovo Constitution requires, but also its faithful defenders. The total number of Jews who died in the Rus-

that the Jews in Bulgaria feel good and safe.

In the last more than 100 years, Jews have contributed to the construction and development of the business and economic life of Bulgaria and participated in the construction of the country's laws. After all, law makes sense of both the economy and society, as well as politics.

Bulgarian artists of Jewish origin are famous musicians, painters, directors, actors, writers, and their work popularizes the culture of our country all



On 10th March, 2023, a postage stamp dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the rescue of Bulgarian Jews and in memory of the 11,343 Jews from White Sea Thrace, Vardar Macedonia and Pirot was validated in the Museum of Sofia. The stamp depicts some of the UNFORGOTTEN PEOPLE of salvation, who, putting their lives at risk, resisted the policy pursued by the authorities against the Bulgarian Jews at the time, including thwarting the plans for their deportation to the death camps. The author of the stamp is Nikolay Petrusenko, Photo by Monnie Frances.

Established on 16th November, 1945, a specially created agency within the United Nations – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – aims to promote cooperation between nations in the fields of education, science, culture and communications. Its motto is: “peace was created, not to be broken, but to support the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”. Bulgaria joined and became a full member of UNESCO on 17th May, 1956. From the very beginning, the priority of the Bulgarian country has been its active participation in all initiatives in the field of cultural policy, the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, in the development of cultural industries and cultural tourism as a factor for economic and social cohesion, cultural pluralism, the promotion of creativity and education in its various aspects, information technologies and communications, etc. Bulgaria actively participates

most famous scene is the funeral feast. The objects found are an example of highly developed jewelry art among the Thracians.

2. The Boyana Church – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1979. The temple, dedicated to Saints Nicholas and Panteleimon, dates from the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. It is a small cross-domed building that has been strengthened and expanded over the years. Its lower floor is intended for a crypt, and the upper one for a chapel. The church is unique with the preserved frescoes. The first layer is from the XI–XII centuries, the second – from 1259. There are frescoes from the XIV, XVI and XVII centuries, as well as from 1882. Of exceptional value are the images of the Bulgarian rulers Tsar Constantine Asen Tych and Tsaritsa Irina, as well as the donors of the temple – Sebastocrator Kaloyan and his wife Desislava.

The Bulgarian C and the UN

teries, carved into the rocks, which developed and existed for centuries. The first hermits carved their cells as early as the 12th century. And the wall paintings from the 14th century testify to a highly developed artistic mastery. There were over 40 rock churches, and about 300 cells.

5. Rila Monastery – entered into the world list of objects under the auspices of UNESCO in 1983. Founded in the 10th century by St. John Rilski. His ascetic residence and tomb became a sacred place and grew into a

UNESCO in 1983. Ancient Mesembria has more than 3000 years of history. The remains of the city, which date mostly from the Hellenistic period, include an acropolis, a temple of Apollo, an agora and a wall of fortifications. It also played an important role in the Middle Ages. The Old Metropolis Basilica and parts of the fortress wall date from this period. Wooden houses built in the 19th century have also been preserved.

7. Thracian Tomb in Sveshtari – entered into the world list of sites under the auspice-

8. Srebarna Nature Reserve – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1985. Here, rare and endangered bird species nest or rest on their way south. The reserve is located right on the way of migratory birds from Europe to Africa – Via Pontica.

9. Pirin National Park – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1983, extended in 2010. Within the park there are a number of natural attractions, glacial lakes, coniferous forests and rich biodiversi-



in the development, adoption and implementation of various documents approved by the UNESCO General Assembly and is a party to 17 of the UNESCO conventions.

Sites included in the list of the world cultural and natural heritage:

1. The Thracian Tomb near Kazanlak – the first Bulgarian site entered in the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1979. It is assumed that it was built at the end of the IV century BC. – the beginning of the III century BC Unique with its frescoes, recreating the last journey of a noble Thracian. As a result of research, it is believed that this is the tomb of the Thracian ruler Roigos (one of the sons of Seutus III) and one of his wives. The

3. The Madara Rider – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1979. The rock relief is at a height of 23m on a sheer 100-meter cliff. It is 3.10 m wide and 2.60 m high. It is believed that it was carved in the 8th century. And although some accept it as a monument of Thracian origin, it is mainly interpreted as a symbol of the power of the First Bulgarian kingdom. According to various researchers, it is also related to the Bulgarian rulers of this period: Asparukh, Tervel, Krum, Omurtag.

4. Ivan Rock Churches – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 1979. They represent a separate complex of churches, chapels, monas-

monastery complex, which has played an important role in the spiritual and social life of the Bulgarian people and country to this day. It has been destroyed and rebuilt over the years. A center of strong spiritual and artistic influence on the Eastern Orthodox world during the Middle Ages (XI–XIV centuries). Its current form is from the period of the Bulgarian Revival (XVII–XIX centuries).

6. Old Town Nesebar – entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of

of UNESCO in 1985. It is believed that the Getan king Dromihet was buried here. The walls of the burial chamber are shaped like a colonnade. The blocks under the arch are supported by 10 caryatids (female figures) with raised arms. They are dressed in long, finely draped, sleeveless garments, girded under the chest with belts. They have peculiar baskets on their heads – kalatos. The tomb itself is part of the general archaeological reserve “Sboryanovo”.

ty. There are two reserves – “Bayuvi Dupki – Djinjiritsa” and “Yulen”. Here is also the Baikusheva Mura, which is more than 1300 years old.

10. The Ancient Beech Forests of “Central Balkan” National Park – part of it entered into the world list of sites under the auspices of UNESCO in 2007, extended in 2011, 2017, 2021. The same is part of the pan-European world heritage site “Old

Cultural Heritage UNESCO Lists

and ancient beech forests of the Carpathians and other regions in Europe”, located on the territory of 12 countries. On the Bulgarian side, the most representative beech forests are included in the 9 reserves located on the territory of the Central Balkan National Park.

Elements entered into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity:

1. The intangible cultural heritage handed down by the **Bistrica Grandmothers** was included in the representative

“**Nestinarstvo – messages from the past**”. The rite represents the culmination of the annual eulogy ritual, which is practiced in the village of Bulgare and is on the day of St. St. Constantine and Helena (3rd–4th June). Included is a procession accompanying the holy icons of the two saints, as well as their ritual bathing. In the evening, gathered around the embers left from the sacrificial fire, the firemen dance over the burning coals.

3. The tradition of **carpet weaving in Chiprovtsi** was

consisting of men, women and children, put on specially prepared masks and costumes and head to the center of the village where they light bonfires. Early the next morning they assemble and go round from house to house, which is taken as calling for health.

5. In 2017, the multinational application representing the ritual practices associated with **1st March** was entered. In it, Bulgaria is an applicant along with Romania, North Macedonia and Moldova. Practices handed down from ancient times are associated

represents the emanation of Bulgarian assemblies and festivals of folk creativity – the **National Gathering in Koprivshtitsa**. Every five years, thousands of performers of traditional Bulgarian folklore meet. A variety of practices are presented, including music, song, dance, rites, rituals, storytelling, games, crafts.

A second Bulgarian practice, aimed at preserving the intangible cultural heritage, was entered into the register in 2017. It represents the cultural organization traditional for the Bulgarian people – the **culture community center (Chitalishte)**. Since the creation of the community centers more than 160 years ago, they have been carrying out cultural and educational activities, which are also aimed at helping the transmission of tradition between generations.

The Bulgarian state also actively participates in one

garian Cyrillic manuscript (fragment) from the 11th century. Written on parchment, it represents one of the oldest forms of the Cyrillic alphabet and is important for the history of Slavic writing and in particular for translations from Greek.

The Book of Boril or Boril Synodic is a fragment of a manuscript originating from the literary circle around the patriarch Euthymius. It was entered into the register in 2017. The document testifies to the anti-Bogomil council convened by Tsar Boril in 1211 in Tarnovo. Compiled on the occasion of the Council, revised during the reign of Ivan Asen II and supplemented at the end of the 14th century during the time of Patriarch Euthymius, it is a testimony of the official attitude against heresies in medieval Bulgaria.

The Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander, Tetraevangelia of Ivan Alexander, or London Four Gospels of Ivan Alexander is a joint nomination



list of UNESCO in 2008 (initially announced in 2005). The presentation of traditional dances, accompanied by specific polyphonic singing (shop polyphony). All of them are related to the preservation and practice even today of ancient forms of the choir and the ritual practice “Lazaruvane”.

2. In 2008, the second Bulgarian element was entered into the representative list –

included in the representative list in 2014. It reveals the still-preserved craft of weaving unique carpets on a vertical loom. The process of weaving is accompanied by the sharing among carpet weavers of knowledge not only of the patterns, dyes, ornaments they render, but also of beliefs, verbal formulas and ritual practices.

4. The national holiday “**Surova**” near Pernik, which takes place every year on 13th and 14th January, was registered in 2015. It is a masquerade ritual. Survakar groups,

with celebrating the beginning of spring. Martenitsi are made from red and white thread.

6. The preserved **polyphonic singing in the villages of Dolen and Satovcha** is included in the representative list in 2021. It represents a collection of singing in different registers – low, high and a combination of both. Competitive singing is usually between two groups of women. It is typical only of the area of the two villages.

Register of good practices for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage:

In 2016, the first Bulgarian practice to enter into the register was proposed, which

of UNESCO’s significant initiatives related to the preservation of cultural heritage – the “**Memory of the World**” program. Leading is the understanding that the world’s documentary heritage belongs to all of humanity. The preserved documents reveal the recorded history, help to pass it down to the generations. The created register „Memory of the World“ (MoW) contains nearly 450 documents from all over the world. The main criterion for their selection is related to the assessment of their exceptional value and significance on a global scale. Bulgaria has three written monuments included in the register.

The Enina Apostle or Enina Apostolos – included in 2011. This is an Old Bul-

of Bulgaria and Great Britain. It was entered in 2017. It is a codex that contains the text of four Gospels in the Slavic language. Not only the texts, but also the drawings in it are unique. There are 367 miniatures in total. Among them are the portraits of the Bulgarian royal family.

Bulgaria actively participates in all UNESCO initiatives. Over the years, our country has established itself among the main countries that work to uphold the principles of the international organization. Bulgarian objects and elements are present in all representative lists and registers and promote the importance of our country and people.

Prof. Ventsislav Velev

An Artist's Portrait or Svetlin Rusev – contre-jour

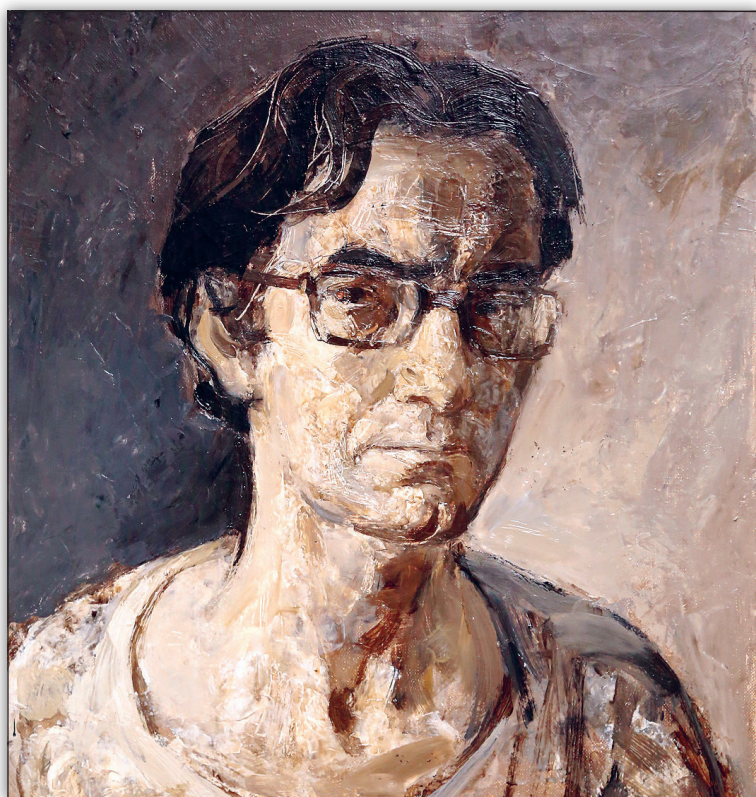
90 years since the birth of Academician Svetlin Rusev

Placed on my illusory tripod, the image of Svetlin Rusev could not look complete, let alone credible. I miss the distance of time – it is obscured by the abundant light that illuminates his usual contre-jour, an illumination that often blinds those around him. I also add my lack of discernment, because during the decades of acquaintance, I have not been able to unravel the inexplicable signs of his behavior, their echoes in his painting, which subtly change the facial expressions, physiognomy and essence of his personality, without referring to the ravages of age. I do not undertake to grasp the wholeness of the model, not only because he is a contemporary of mine, but because his ideas and messages are not close enough to my stubborn skepticism, which naturally did not include me in the numerous group of his followers, called “the children of Lieutenant Schmidt”. I will always see Svetlin against the light, his silhouette accompanied by his smile full of irony.

No matter how we interpret the personality of Svetlin Rusev, inscribed in his time he remains the man-institution, and today even “post mortem”, he unconditionally represents a phenomenon in contemporary Bulgarian art. The fast-track

administrative career for the prejudiced overshadows the drama of the artist, who manages to balance his political

commitment with the cause of an artist torn by doubts and passions. Already at the early stage of his career in art, he



distinguished himself from the red tape, and it is hardly fair to call him an intellectual ‘product’ of the transition from the normative aesthetics of the totalitarian period to the modern model of “socialist realism”, which I have not come across in its pure form in our country. Dimitar Avramov’s definition of the style of the group of young artists from the 1960s (Dimitar Kirov, Georgi Bozhilov-Slona, Valentin Starchev, Velichko Minekov, etc.) as “expressive monumentalism” most accurately fits the pictorial concept of Svetlin Rusev.

At the time, Yordan Radichkov, with his intuition of a person honored by fate, saw



in the pensive and quiet monochrome images of his paintings a predestination that is “on the threshold of some expectation, on the very limit”. Svetlin usually places multi-figure compositions or portraits, pathetic in their coldness, on a sacred background inherent in the canonical principles of iconography. His thematic plots are actually iconoclastic and trace the unknown paths of man, plunge into the mystical mystery of Being and the place of the Spirit in the cosmogony that swallows past and present. Hard-to-decipher semantics in the vast world of drawn people do not predict an optimistic future. The art of Svetlin Rusev fatally announces the end of Faith in Salvation, which comes from above – from the state or from the revolution. Being moralizing, the artist’s dramatic thesis heralds the beginning of the murky future, when the artist displays what he does not believe in, without recognizing different ideals and new idols.

Days before he left this world, Svetlin Rusev wrote a short autobiography, which turned out to be the final account of his 85-year unfinished life. He wasn’t sure about one thing – how to name his exhibition, and he listed options under a line. If I could, I would recommend the last verbal discovery – “Tracks on a Stone” – which he would probably reject. I read the facsimile of this handwritten draft printed on the invitation to his posthumous exhibition at the Raiko Alexiev Gallery:

“I was born in the Third Bulgarian Kingdom. I lived in Bulgaria in the bright future. Now I live in Bulgaria of the bright Disappointments. Hope was shot along with poets and artists, with spiritual aristocrats and unruly poor, with young children and infirm old men. Ideas were killed – dead

ideas killed the living! Cain killed his brother Abel, Abel’s sons avenged Cain’s children! The stone dungeons of the Realm and the People’s Republic collapsed from our pain and terror! The rivers turned red! We have divided the dead into Ours and Yours, and our innocent souls await mercy, repentance and reconciliation from the living! You live!!! Home of the living, believing ungodly, fallen angels, wayfarers and unborn Saviors! I sought the magic stone of wisdom with the eternal answers from Here and the living Beyond! I came to a stone quarry with traces of time, labor and sorrow. I believed I had found the Way! Illusion! “Why is it a Road if it doesn’t lead to the temple!?” – wondered the old woman from That Movie!

In the late 1990s, I organized an exhibition of his last watercolor landscapes and nude bodies (seen “through the peephole of time”) in Dechko Uzunov’s studio. Years before, Big Bro Dechko had drawn the prophetic composition of the fratricide “Cain and Abel”. I was just washing the windows when Svetlin came, accompanied by Toncho Zhechev and Yordan Radichkov, and thwarted the murder of a spider that had spun its web in the tree. Is it an illusion, but this triumvirate – diverse and impossibly contradictory for researchers, which discussed the fate of the insect, as well as the right to life as a supreme value, unanimously changed me – the executor and, as it were, restored my faith in the human nature. After this lesson, I would not dare to add to the enigmatic portrait of Svetlin Rusev, who for me will always remain in the mandorla of its contre-jour.

Bisera Yosifova,
Executive Director of the
“National Endowment Fund
13 Centuries of Bulgaria”

100 Years since the Birth of Favorite 13

"In each person nestles human happiness. This happiness has been given by parents, friends, teachers, the beloved one, children, by the people."

The apostle of Bulgarian theater and cinema was born on 17th October, 1923 in Burgas. I have always thought of him and others like him, that they were born to illuminate the earth and the human race, leave a mark and go. A fast paced life. I have heard that in Sofia, when Karamitev was a law student, a gypsy woman stopped him on the street and told him that he would be Gerard Philippe's twin, that he would become famous and that everyone would know his name. Apostol was appointed to the Ivan Vazov National Theater as a trainee actor, barely 24 years old, on 16th August, 1947. One year later, he married Margarita Duparino, two years older than him, already a famous actress.

"I want to die young, handsome, merry and interesting..." – this is how he predicted his life. He amazes and respects, raises questions, the fact that the striking actor with his looks, talent, smile, behavior, charming with his spiritual aristocracy and finesse grew up in a poor family of immigrants from White Sea Thrace. The father – Milio Karamitev, after the Inter-Allied War, fled from his hometown in Lozengrad district and reached Burgas. He met a beautiful golden haired girl with sea-blue eyes, Donka from the village of Veselie, and married her. They came together for love, created and raised three sons – Asen, Apostol and Dimitar. The father was a porter at the port in Burgas, and the mother cleaned other people's houses to make ends meet. Asen, the eldest son, was famous as the best hairdresser in the whole

Burgas area. Dimitar became an internal combustion engine technician, but after a while he left the city and went to live in the countryside. The three brothers were very different from each other and had different destinies.

Apostol's parents noticed that he loved to read and study from a very young age. On his own accord, he went to school with his older brother even before reaching the required age. At that time, an Italian lyceum existed in the Black Sea city. Apostol's mother first took him to an Italian club so that he would be well prepared and then apply to high school. This seemingly ordinary and hard-working woman cared about her children's education. The little Karamitev was very inquisitive, learned easily and quickly began to read and write in Italian. He graduated from the iconic Italian high school Alfredo Oriani, which has long since ceased to exist.

After the end of the war in 1945, Apostol Karamitev began to study law at Sofia University. This biographical fact faded completely over time. Already in his first student days, the handsome young man, whom both men and women turned to, read in a newspaper



that a two-year theater school was opening for the National Theater troupe. And he decided to try. He prepared for the exams himself. He lived at the home of a friend of his father's, slept on a bed in a small kitchen and didn't always have money for food. When the lists

with the ranking of the candidates came out, the actor-to-be was afraid to look at them and asked a woman passing by to see if the name Apostol was among those accepted. It was! And among the first on the list. The power of fate also manifested itself here, because he was not simply accepted into the higher theater school. He was accepted into the class of Stefan Surchadzhiev – the Sir. A graduate from the class of another theater master – Boyan Danovski, with whom he also did his graduation performance – the role of Orlando in "As You Like It". From the leading role in Jack of All Trades to Doom in The White Room, the actor didn't compromise. Colleagues and critics have compared him to Laurence Olivier. And, like his idol, Apostol was demanding of himself and unreservedly devoted to the stage.

"Lean, starved, with a home-knitted pullover on, eyes sparkling with curiosity, great body and head, like Michelangelo's David" – this is how



his fate and love companion remembers him. Duparino does not hide that she took the first step towards Apostol. Even during rehearsals, she spontaneously gave him a snowdrop. Thus spring came in the theater and in their lives. They became friends quickly, talked a lot, rehearsed together and became inseparable because they both had similar ideas and dreams in art, and when they stood under the spotlight, there was no other world for them. One night, during a break between two rehearsals of the play "Fuente Ovehuna", the actress suggested that they play "Let go, let go of the ring". When it was her turn, she dropped the ring into Apostol's hands. And not long

after, right among the sets of "Romeo and Juliet", Chocho, as fans and relatives called him, put the wedding ring on the hand of his beloved Margarita. The audience didn't even understand what exactly was happening, but both glowed with happiness in each other's arms. It happened in the most natural way, in the temple of Melpomene, with a strong sign of fate. It wasn't premeditated, it wasn't a demonstration, it wasn't anything that today resembles a reality show about roses, love or a compatibility contest.

On 21st August, 1948, on the stage of the National Theater, in the roles of Romeo and Juliet, Apostol and Margarita ac-



tually said their own prenuptial vows. He made two rings from a piece of cloth and during the performance, put one on her finger. One Saturday, after a performance, the newlyweds went to Knyazhevo with their witnesses to sign, to start their marriage based on love. Then they sat in a small neighborhood restaurant and enjoyed their celebratory and "extravagant" dinner with a piece



of thawed fish and a glass of warm beer.

Karamitev had roles in almost every film that was made in Bulgaria after 1950: "Morning in the Fatherland", "Un-



der the Yoke", "Our Land", "Favorite 13", "Two under the Sky", "Jack of All Trades", "The White Room"... 19 film titles until the last and unfinished one: "John Asen's Weddings" in 1973. He is the first bright, modern movie star and a favorite of the audience in Bulgaria. He became especially popular after several unforgettable films with Ginka Stancheva, loved by generations of viewers. And our native audience wondered for years whether the two were not together in life.

And despite knowing that Karamitev was sick with cancer, the director Vili Tsankov entrusted him with the main role in his film "John Asen's The Weddings". And the actor gave the last moments of his life to bequeath to film history, to Bulgaria and to us, the image of one of our iconic statesmen. During filming, he refused to be replaced by a stuntman in a dangerous scene where he had to enter the cold waters of the Aldomirovo swamp. But after the filming of the episode, his health deteriorated sharply. It was as if the "grim reaper" waited for him to shoot this particular film and this episode, to take him to another dimension. If fate had not planned a short life for the man and the actor, he could have made a world career, perhaps in French and Italian cinema.

Raina Damiani, PhD



A Jubilee of Scientific Inspiration

90 years since the birth of Professor Aleksandar Fol

90 years ago in Sofia, on the 3rd July 1933 Prof. Aleksandar Fol was born – a historian, a thracologist, an intellectual, a state activist, the founder of Thracian Studies in Bulgaria, the founder and first director of the Institute on Thracian Studies – today part of the Institute on Balkan Studies with a center on Thracian Studies “Prof. Aleksandar Fol” – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (for bibliography and bio data, See *Fol, V. In honorem Alexandri Fol, In: Thracia XI. Studia in honorem Alexandri Fol., Serdicae, 1995, 7–30*). Ninety years is a sure occasion for summarizing and thinking of the creative path, achievements and legacy of a scientist, but it is too few when it comes to a man who outlined the dimensions of an entire organized direction in historical science, which has long since emerged from the closed academic spheres and has become part of the edifice of modern Bulgarian spirituality, culture, self-perception, science, which also represents a journey to the genesis of the spirit, rituals and mechanics of existence as these were understood by some of the most ancient inhabitants of our lands.

Aleksandar Fol directed his early creative searches to the period of Roman rule in the Thracian lands, when, thanks to the evidence from epigraphic monuments, the data on Thracians from the Roman period revealed to science a lot about their demographic system and tribal territories. Prof. Aleksandar Fol summarizes and analyzes these Thracian fates in his doctoral dissertation entitled “Thracians in the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire I–III C.” (1966) and

thus pioneered the challenging topic of Thracian integration into the Roman Empire and the contribution of the Thracians to the military successes of the state. The spatial and temporal dimensions of Thracism are also outlined in the books “The Song of Sitalces” (1968) and “The Heros Remains in Thrace” (1970), and the scholar’s research in the field of Thracian demography ultimately resulted

and declared it as the product of a long state-forming process, presenting not only an alternative form of civilization to the Hellenic one, but also an option for imperial development, which after the death of Cotys I (383–359 BC) was developed by the rising Macedonian state.

On the basis of these studies on the political, Aleksandar Fol will develop in the future not only the political, but also



Aleksandar Fol and Joan Paul II, 25th May, 1979, the Vatican.
NBU Aleksandar Fol archive

in the monograph that is fundamental to the ethnic picture in Ancient Thrace “Demographic and Social Structure of Ancient Thrace (1000 BC)” (1970).

The political history of the Thracians in Bulgaria is studied, researched and created on the basis of the concepts that Prof. Aleksandar Fol lays down in the foundational book “Political History of the Thracians. The End of the Second Millennium to the End of the Fifth century BC”, which greatly changes the way in which the ancient history of the Balkans is accepted. The research, as well as the subsequent thematic continuation – “Thrace and the Balkans in the Early Hellenistic Age” (1975), changed the thinking about the Thracian statehood as a “peripheral” monarchical society

the religious-ritual component of the Thracian culture. This is how one of his most important books was born – the published dissertation for obtaining the scientific degree “Doctor of Sciences” – “Thracian Orphism” (1986). His capacity in source studies (reflected in the series “Studies on the Greek Sources for the Thracians”, 1975–1976) allowed him in this work to trace the source information of the Pre-Hellenic and Paleo-Balkan traces in the religiosity of the polis culture and to formulate the idea of the “Thracian Orphism” – the culture and philosophy of a religion based on the belief in the Mother Goddess and her doctrinal son, causing the cyclical revival of the cosmogonic order. This “archaeological”, but in an intangi-



The National High School for Ancient Languages and Culture announces St. Constantine – Cyril Philosopher as their patron. 11th May 1981.
National Theatre Ivan Vazov. NHSALC archive

ble sense – work of uncovering the layers of Thracian faith and rites buried under the literary Hellenic representations, Aleksandar Fol also reveals in later monographs like the trilogy “The Thracian Dionysius” (“Ζαργεύς”, 1991; “Sabazios”, 1994, “Naming and Religion”, 2002), where the name of the famous Hellenic god is interpreted in a number of sources as “translation-meaning” of anonymous Thracian Deities. “The Thracian Trace” in the ancient culture of the Balkans excited Prof. Fol until the end of his creative path – he connected his life path with the cultural-historical Paleo-Balkan theme, in his works the desired to reveal the essence of creative energy, of the mystical forces of nature that inspire the human

contribution was recognized, his authority as a scientist and organizer of science and culture was confirmed by holding a number of responsible positions (director of the Institute of Thracian Studies – BAS, 1972–1992; head of the Department of Ancient History and Thracian Studies at Sofia University, 1979–1987; Deputy Minister of Culture, 1974–1980; Minister of Education, 1980–1986), as well as from his teaching positions, from his membership in a number of scientific organizations in the country and abroad. However, the 90th anniversary of his birth is an occasion to remember that the most important achievement of a scientist always remains his legacy – the framing of the concept of Mycenaean Thrace and of Thra-



1972. The start of Kabile excavations. Prof. Al. Fol and Prof. Velizar Velkov, NBU Aleksandar Fol archive



Aleksandar Fol with students. Bulgarian-Turkish summer university, 2004, NBU Aleksandar Fol archive

spirit of worship and cultural creation in Southeast Europe. Thus we understand that it is not just that Thracian spirituality “hidden” under the Hellenic understanding of text and form, but an ancient knowledge of a periodically repeating spiral, ever-building, dying and regenerating and consciousness is overwhelmed by the cognitive, linear and causal – the consequential thinking of modernity.

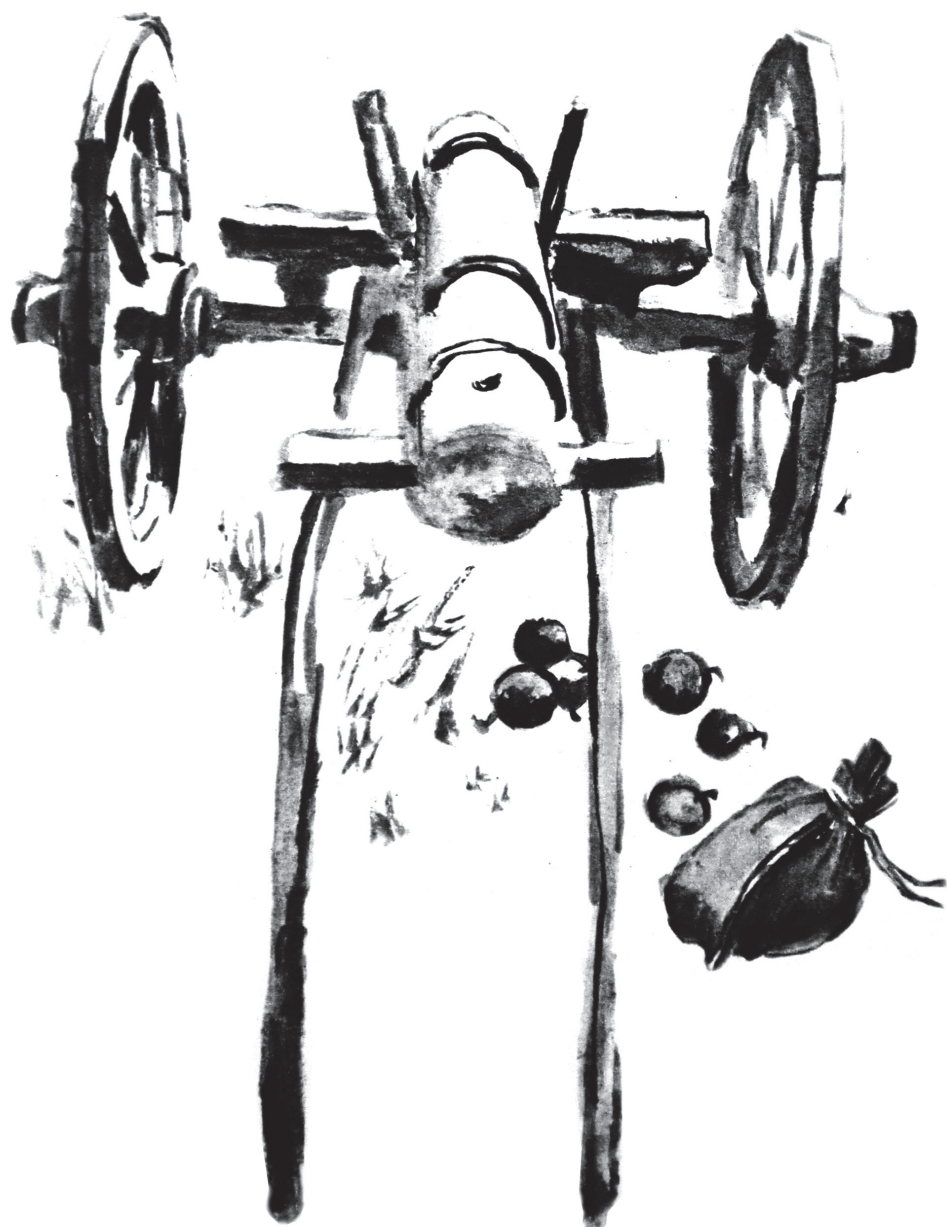
Aleksandar Fol’s scientific

Thracian Orphism, which provide a conceptual framework for archaeological discoveries in the Bulgarian lands; his followers – students, associates, colleagues who owe their inspiration to his scientific audacity; the science he bequeathed to Bulgaria and the world; his way of thinking that tempts people to ponder in a more multidimensional and more complete way.

Kalin Stoev PhD

1876

Artist Boris Angelushev



147 years since The April Uprising, 1876

*... Benkovski leads into the wilderness there;
the hero, the hero with a thought on his forehead,
the flag of the feat, the soul of the deed,
the man who gave the fatal sign
and a whole nation boldly tapped its foot
will of iron, powers of iron,
the mighty word that winged,
the voice that said:
“Go! Let’s die!
Arise, slaves! I don’t want a yoke!”
And we trembled before that mighty voice,
before that demon secret, ghost midnight,
who uttered the terrible words ...*

*Ivan Vazov. From “Benkovski” poem.
“An epic of the forgotten” (1881 – 1884)*



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... AND THAT WE HAD KINGDOMS WITH
CAPITALS AND SAINTS AND PATRIARCHS, WE
HAVE ALSO GIVEN SOMETHING TO THE WORLD
AND TO ALL THE SLAVS A BOOK TO READ...

IVAN VAZOV, PAISIY

