

Elizabeta DIMITROVA

A Few Words on Behalf of my Teacher Professor Elica Maneva – Feminine Touch to Archaeological Matters

*The teacher who is indeed wise
does not bid you to enter the house
of his wisdom but rather leads you
to the threshold of your mind
Khalil Gibran*

UDK 929 Манева, Е.

In the vast Universe of scientific research, archaeology has a special place not only due to the excitement related to discoveries of ancient civilizations, rather on the account of the courageous and never ending adventure that lies in the hearts of the people dedicated to investigation of the cultural *habitus* from the bygone centuries. Excavations of lost cities swallowed by the deposited strata of historical disasters, recovery of mystical tombs filled with treasures of inestimable value, identification of characteristic layers of human development through the ages, as well as disclosure of material evidence to substantiate the *dark holes* of historical periods are the essential components of the true calling of these *bravehearts* of professional devotion. One of them was a genuine inspiration for this chapter, for this publication and for the most of the enclosed papers.

Elica Maneva is an individual with a prolific scholarly experience which starts as early as in her student years in Belgrade, continues in the course of her academic career at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje and lasts up-to-date, generating knowledge, erudition, progressive ideas, innovative reflections, bold hypotheses, as well as patient training of numerous generations of students, researchers, museum workers, cultural journalists and passionate archaeology lovers. Having the pleasure of working with some of the most renowned specialists in archeological discipline, such are Milutin Garašanin, Dragoslav Srejšović, Aleksandrina Cermanović, Vladislav

Popović and others, young Maneva was blessed with a superb launch of her five decades long academic career, which resulted in an abundant list of scholarly papers, awarded books, conference presentations, terrain explorations, diverse field activities etc. Acquiring her MA (1977) in Belgrade and PhD (1991) in Skopje, accomplishing more than thirty five scholarly visits to renowned academic institutions in Europe, collaborating with the most respectable practitioners in the field of archaeology (Joakim Werner, Noel Duval, Jean Pierre Sodini, Pascale Chevalier, Jergi Maria Vesseli, Joakim Herman, Attila Kiss and many others) and working on numerous projects related to archaeological excavations in Macedonia and abroad, Elica Maneva has become one of the most prolific individuals in the sphere of Early Christian and Medieval archaeology in the period 1970-2015. In that regard and having in mind her immense collection of scholarly results and achievements, I will note but a few of her professional engagements in the domains of field work, museum activities, scientific contribution and teaching commitment.

After having completed her academic education, Madame Maneva starts to work as a custodian in the Museum of Heraclea, where she designs the first collection of artifacts to be exhibited as a testimony to the abundant archeological life at the site of Heraclea Lyncestis and simultaneously contributes to the formation of the permanent exhibition of findings situated in the Museum, located in her native town of Bitola. In that period, Elica Maneva is continuously involved in the planning, coordination and realization of the archaeological excavations on numerous sites, among which Heraclea will always remain her primary post for long-term investigation of the many different aspects of urban life in the era of Late Antiquity and Medieval period. During her dedicated terrain exploration of Heraclea Lyncestis, she has discovered a late antique necropolis, uncovered a luxurious *vila suburbana*, excavated a cemetery basilica and found a great deal of artifacts from the period of the Great Migration of peoples, which, by all means, had a significant impact over Maneva's future scholarly orientation towards the epochs of Late Antiquity, the Dark Ages and Medieval centuries.

In 1983, Elica Maneva becomes a member of the faculty of the Department of art history and archaeology at the School of Philosophy in Skopje, which opens a new scholarly portal for her advancing archaeological career. Constantly engaged in field explorations of medieval sites situated across the territory of Macedonia, she adds a new component to her fruitful professional responsibilities – the noble duty of training of young professionals through inspiring, exciting and productive lectures that significantly mark the four decades of her professorship until the retirement in 2013. Infusing a new and vibrant energy into the aging team of professors at the Department of art history and archaeology, in the early eighties of the 20th century Elica Maneva became the long-awaited spinal column around which the students' projects, their inventive extracurricular activities, as well as many other forms of academic cooperation evolved for decades. Teaching and guiding, training and refining, tutoring

and mastering persistently and passionately, she has become a mentor to hundreds of young archaeologists, who have found their way as skilled professionals in the institutional establishments in the country and abroad, working as museum custodians, determined terrain explorers, resolute cultural journalists, devoted field practitioners, as well as prolific international scholars. Remaining strongly supportive for dozens of generations of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students for more than 40 years, Professor Elica Maneva is a true example of a great teacher, a patient beacon, an inspiring interlocutor and a devoted tutor, an individual with energy to transmit knowledge and a character with knowledge to sooth the energy of academic conflicts throughout the course of her jubilant professorship.

While educating and enlightening hundreds of students, Professor Maneva has been creating a significant list of books and published articles resulting from her investigation of many different aspects of material culture from the periods of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages. Having been actively involved in series of archaeological excavations of medieval sites and locations, as well as in explorations of representative findings and pending scholarly issues, she has publicized her research results accurately and consistently in a number of internationally renowned periodicals, giving her academic contribution to disclosure of chronological, typological, historical, cultural and/or socio-cultural matters of archaeological investigation. In that regard, in the seventies and eighties of the 20th century Maneva has published some examples of Terra Sigillata variations (1977), as well as the findings of Hellenistic and Roman ceramic vessels discovered in Heraclea (1979, monograph), the sepulchral artifacts from the site of Partizanski grobišta (1981) and those from the location of Extra Muros (1984). The same year, she publishes an article on certain types of ceramic lamps belonging to the collection of the Museum in Bitola, while later (1986-1989) the necropolises in Heraclea Lyncestis became the focus of her exploration, altogether with the investigation of jewelry, weaponry and utensils discovered in the course of excavations of Heraclea and the sites in its vicinity.

In the 90ties of the 20th century, Professor Elica Maneva published ca. fifty scholarly papers related to chronological, typological, practical and cultural features of several types of findings, jewelry being the most frequent among them. Besides disclosing the methodological approach to archaeological excavations and the operative manners of her terrain work on a number of sites in several articles, she has managed to publicize the results of her investigation of the medieval bracelets from Heraclea (1990), the luxurious agraphas from Prilep (1991), the different types of jewelry from a number of archaeological sites in Macedonia from the period 7th – 14th century (1992), the ornamentation of the female individuals buried at the necropolis of Krstevi near Demir Kapija (1993), the amulets as prophylactic guardians of their bearers (1994), the aspects of medieval material culture in Macedonia (1995), the systematic excavations of the Krstevi necropolis (1996), the archaeological traces of the funereal cults from

the period of 10th – 12th century (1997), the Macedonian medieval costumes (1998), the urban see of Prosek as an independent center of medieval cultural life (1999) etc.,

In the next decade, the prolific bibliography of Professor Elica Maneva encompasses books and articles related to social, political, historical and cultural issues of chronological horizons from the medieval period, archeological features of representative museum exhibits, as well as interpretation of terrain findings in the context of their *in situ* location and cultural significance. The systematic investigation of the necropolises of Krstevi, Pepelište and Čukarka resulted in their monographic presentation, while the long-term engagement of Professor Maneva in the exploration of medieval jewelry had a productive outcome in a number of papers and books dedicated to the profound explication of the classes, types, forms and kinds of decorative objects and their social, ritual and cultural significance. Apart from the jewelry, Elica Maneva devoted her scholarly attention to the examination of certain types of military equipment, such is the 5th century helmet with rivets from Heraclea, to interpretation of Slavonic amulets and their social and personal functions, to explanation of medieval talismans and their association to alchemy and to synthesizing her profound knowledge on archaeological strata from the Late Antiquity and Middle Ages for the purposes of annual or jubilee publications.

Among the many different aspects of scholarly investigation of Professor Elica Maneva in the last fifteen years, one should notice her special attention given to profound examination of the archaeological findings excavated at the spacious medieval necropolis of Vodoča, near Strumica. Serving as a burial location of the Episcopal dignitaries and their associates involved in the cultic, as well as administrative maintenance of the Monastic complex, the funereal ground around the Bishopric encompasses hundreds of graves abundant in archaeological material of different kinds and notable significance. In that regard, she has identified, classified, dated and interpreted numerous artifacts belonging to the clusters of jewelry, weaponry, military equipment, costumes and fashion, contributing to the formation of a serious, coherent and vibrant picture of the medieval life in Strumica, seen through the prism of the eschatological *leftovers* discovered in the largest burial site of its vicinity. The heraldic connotation of the resplendent pair of aristocratic circular earrings found in a female grave from the late 15th century, the reconstruction of the prophylactic copper headband worn by a lady deceased at the turn of the 16th century, the interpretation of the pendants with Slavonic symbolic residues from the 18th century, as well as those decorated with baroque ornaments, the contextualization of the massive rings and the glass bracelets from the 19th century, as well as the precise, coherent and extensive explication of the ways and manners of their production and circulation had a crucial impact over the perception of life in the late medieval epoch with the whole package of its historic, social and cultural circumstances. The painstaking elaboration of funereal substance of over a thousand excavated graves from Vodoča gave Professor Maneva

an exceptional opportunity for an academic articulation of one of her own professional specialties, namely the unveiling of the chthonic character, mythological dimension and eschatological connotation of life itself through dexterous penetration into the cultural strata of daily existence of different social categories, their habits and rituals, moral values and human pleasures. Picturesque in the concept of presentation, consistent in the approach of explication and systematic in the manner of interpretation, the scholarly work of Professor Maneva related to the archaeological material discovered in the necropolis of Vodoča is the most appropriate manual for academic disclosure of the distant temporal horizons of the past centuries transformed into a highly provocative *need-to-know* reading gourmet.

Over the years, Professor Elica Maneva has also published a significant number of books the contents of which resulted from her long-term investigation of archaeological material excavated at numerous sites in the territory of Macedonia and wider. In that regard, the monographs on the necropolises of *Krstevi* at Demir Kapija (2000), *Pepelište* at Negotino (2000) and *Čukarka* at Delčevo (2004) are not only highly presentable academic *documentaries* on the funereal customs and rituals as the most reliable guardians of medieval tradition, rather remarkably vibrant portions of archaeological science dedicated to the structural horizons of Macedonian Middle Ages, its daily customs, beliefs, religious ceremonies and funereal performances. Her books inspired by examination of the medieval jewelry (*Medieval Jewelry*, ed. Gjurgja 2000; *Ancient Jewelry from Macedonia: Middle Ages*, Ed. Kalamus 2005; *Ancient Jewelry from Macedonia: Vodoča Necropolis*, Ed. Kalamus 2007; *Inventaria Archaeologica Personarum I, Vodoča Necropolis*, Ed. Kalamus 2013; *Early Medieval Material Culture and Archaeology of Macedonia in the Ottoman Period* in: Macedonia. Millenia of Cultural and Historical Facts, Ed. Media Print 2013) are equally exciting and provocative. In that regard, besides classification, typological analysis, catalogue presentation, dating and contextualization of the jewelry originating from 7th – 19th century, Professor Maneva showed that the significance of medieval jewelry goes far beyond its material or decorative value and that the precious objects communicated complex meanings and connotations, thus constituting an indispensable part of medieval language of signs. Treated as ornaments of social power, decorations of political positions, symbols of feudal classes, signs of religious orientation or tokens of current fashion, the valuable pieces of facial and corporal adornment have found their most appropriate place and adequate function in the complex historical stratification of medieval life within Maneva's methodical, consistent and rational manner of scientific exposition.

Besides the scholarly work, educational activities and terrain explorations, Professor Maneva has been engaged in numerous projects in regard to promotion of archaeology into one of the leading academic disciplines related to national identity, social integrity, as well as contemporary cultural attitude of Macedonia within its

international position among European community of intellectual powers. Being actively involved in the establishment of many different forms of presentation and promotion of national institutions of crucial significance for the modern development of Macedonian culture, she was permanently committed to responsible advisory duties which resulted in the formation of the Museum collection at the Faculty of Philosophy, constitution of the new Archaeological Museum, consolidation of the interior visual design of the National Theatre, to name but a few. Being a member of projects teams at renowned scientific institutions such is the Macedonian academy of arts and sciences (*Dictionary of Terms, Archaeological map of Macedonia, Encyclopedia Macedonia, Civilizations on Macedonian Territory* etc.), team leader of long-term campaigns for terrain explorations launched by the Faculty of Philosophy, editor-in-chief or member of editorial boards of several archaeological journals (*Collection of scientific works published by the Museum of Bitola, Collection of scholarly works edited by the Museum in Strumica, Macedonian Acta Archaeologica, Balkanoslavica, Annuaire of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje, Cultural Heritage of the National Center for Conservation, Macedonian Heritage published by the non-governmental association Macedonian Civilization*), and last but not least – initiator, designer and commissioner of the prestigious archaeo-journal *Folia Archaeologica Balkanica*, genuine edition of the Institute of art history and archaeology, a modern periodical with international academic board, as well as a high impact factor of scholarly significance. For her scholarly achievements, academic attainments and successful operative activities, Madame Maneva has received numerous public recognitions, as well as the St. Clement's Award for her life-long accomplishments in the domain of science and education.

Respected as a devoted professor, patient teacher, tolerant academic trainer and skilful field practitioner, cherished as an unbiased scientist, internationally renowned scholar and prolific author of research literary products, as well as highly estimated as a cooperative member of numerous intellectual committees, Professor Elica Maneva is an individual marked by professional dedication, collaborative character and kind personality. Archaeologist by occupation, teacher by position, independent intellectual by orientation and a Sagittarius by astrological configuration, she has accomplished a career filled with ambitious goals, intricate objectives, noble engagements and significant results. Inexhaustible as a terrain explorer, earnest as a scholar, patient as a tutor, inspiring as a mentor and gentle as a friend, Elica Maneva has earned a special place in the hearts of her pupils, trainees, fellow researchers, collaborators and associates. I was a student of hers back in the eighties and the first among many who graduated under her guidance and supervision. I was one of her earliest disciples, *was and will always be*.