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VIKTOR LILČIĆ ADAMS – THE MAN WITH BRAVE HEART

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*The strong bond of friendship is not always a balanced equation;
friendship is not always about giving and taking in equal shares.
Instead, friendship is grounded in a feeling that you know exactly
who will be there for you when you need something,
no matter what or when.*

Whenever I think of archaeology as the most exotic discipline among humanities, a field that requires devotion and daily sacrifices, bravery to endure, enthusiasm for constant pursuit and irresistible passion for grand discoveries, I think of Howard Carter's epiphany in the Valley of the Kings and John Aubrey's success of finding the megalithic structures in Southern England. But, first of all, I think of my colleague and dear friend, Viktor Lilčić Adams, a man of great energy, remarkable skills and astonishing achievements in the field of archaeology, eloquent professor and tireless terrain explorer, dedicated scientist and talented writer, solemn researcher and fearless adventurer. Having known him for my entire adult life, I could write a book about his ventures in the vast sphere of archaeological investigations, both theoretical and field working, but that is not my aim. Canvassing the entire territory of Macedonia in search of material remnants of past civilizations for more than forty years, he has become the highest authority in the area of classical and medieval archaeology and the leading expert in the issues of Early Christian cosmological theories, fortification infrastructure and its building typology (in Antiquity and Middle Ages), architectural decoration of sacral edifices in pre-Christian times, as well as in the Late Antiquity, ubiquity of ancient cities and/or military posts in the region of Macedonia and wider, determination of typology and structure of archaeological artifacts from the medieval period, to name but a few. Simultaneously, he has been: organizing exciting lectures for his students, visiting and lecturing at many universities abroad, conducting training campuses for young archaeologists from the neighboring countries, coordinating summer school programs for ambitious under- and graduate students, masterminding projects of great archaeological significance, as well as establishing collaboration with a wide net of colleagues from all around Europe with a main purpose of presenting the research re-

sults, as well as challenges of Macedonian archaeological discipline. In the meantime, he was the Head of the Office for protection of cultural heritage for four years during the course of which this institution published an entire edition of popular books dedicated to Macedonian cultural heritage (archaeological sites and sacral monuments), as well as the colossal Encyclopedia entitled *Macedonia Millenia of cultural and historical facts* in four volumes (2013).

Author of several books and hundreds of scholarly papers, contributor to a great number of archaeological journals, annuals and other scientific publications, Viktor Adams has probably covered all important issues that are to be covered by his immense bibliography and monumental research activity – data collected during his archaeological journeys across the country from the “wuthering heights” of the mountain ridges down to the immeasurable depths of the river canyons. From the frightening vertical axis of King Marko’s town at Matka to the devastated flatland of the basilica at the village of Podles, from Lyncestida and Deouriopos through Via Egnatia all way down to the fortresses of Macedonian kings at Demir Kapija, from the powerful acropolis at Davina Kula to the possible ubiquity of Justiniana Prima, from the pagan mausoleum at Barovo to the Early Christian basilicas and their liturgical functions, from the antique arterial roads to the northern border of ancient Macedonian Kingdom, from the Roman sepulchral monuments to the holy sacraments of Late Antique Christian communities, from the roadway castles to the ubiquity of the town of Pelagonia, from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and far beyond stretches the professional journey of Viktor Lilčić Adams more than sufficient for one’s lifetime and certainly worthy of respect and admiration.

Among other things, Viktor Lilčić Adams has: detected, analyzed and classified the stone capitels from the times of pagan and Christian antiquity, traced down the Roman infrastructure from the main arterial roads to the local rural pathways, discovered the location of several ancient towns mentioned in the historical sources, determined the north border of Macedonian Kingdom and defined the typology of the archaeological artifacts associated to it, followed the Via Egnatia main road and situated the archaeological sites along its line, reconstructed the pagan sepulchral rites and ceremonies, created a catalog of Early Christian basilicas, excavated the ancient town located at Davina Kula and several other archaeological milestones, investigated the military strongholds (castels, castrums etc.) on the entire territory of Macedonia, produced the archaeological topography of ancient towns and citadels, interpreted the mystical symbolism of the structural elements of Early Christian basilicas through the prism of the ritual dimensions of their spatial concept, debated the possible location of the archbishopric of Justiniana Prima with satisfactory explanation and substantiated arguments and much more.

However, besides his professional capacity and academic qualities, Viktor Lilčić Adams is a polite, respectful, considerate and attentive man, a true gentleman which, nowadays, is becoming increasingly hard to find. Faithful to his true belief, marked by integrity and character, kind and honest, self-confident and resourceful, blessed with a strikingly positive attitude toward his colleagues, co-workers and associates, and, above all, outgoing and friendly, helpful and good-hearted, Viktor Lilčić Adams is a genuine nobleman among archaeologists in Macedonia. And by that, I do not refer to his noble English-Russian background, rather to his virtues of courage, compassion, honesty, prudence, grace and generosity which make him a trustworthy, grateful and reliable individual. No matter where and when, walking on the steep hillsides of mountain heights to the north of Skopje, traveling along the waterline of the River Vardar in search of the Early Byzantine optical telegraph that stretches from the field of Pelagonia to the dry southlands, tracking the remnants of Late Antique fortresses in the western part of the country, investigating the cultural isohipses in the Valley of Macedonian Kings at the far south of our state or enduring the harsh winter winds on the cliffs of the Matka gorge in a quest of the late medieval palaces, Viktor Lilčić Adams has always been a dexterous and committed tracker, motivated and uncompromising devotee and most of all, a brave man and unique person in the universe of archaeological science.

Whenever I think of great historical stories, I recall the words of Odysseus from Homer's Iliad: *If they ever tell my story let them say that I walked with giants. Men rise and fall like the winter wheat, but these names will never die. Let them say I lived in the time of Hector, tamer of horses. Let them say I lived in the time of Achilles.*

Let them say, I, Elizabeta Dimitrova lived in the time of Viktor Adams.