

In Memoriam

Vasil Zlatilov Vergilov
(1920-2000)

In March 2000 the Bulgarian geological community lost one of its distinguished members — Vasil Vergilov, called usually with love and deference *Bay Vasil*.

Born in Svetlen (Turgovishte District, North Bulgaria) in the family of refugees from Aegean Thrace, Vasil Vergilov early became an orphan, and suffered the social injustice so pronounced in Bulgaria after lost wars and national catastrophes. When he graduated geology at the Sofia University in 1943, Bulgaria was already at the side of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Vasil became a partisan, and during the second phase of the World War II, when Bulgaria declared war to Germany, went in the army to fight at the fields of Yugoslavia and Hungary. Back in Bulgaria in 1945, he was sent to the Military Academy, and had ahead the prospects of a brilliant military carrier. Instead, Vergilov left the army and became assistant at the Chair of Mineralogy and Petrology in the Faculty of Geology and Geography. All his life afterwards was dedicated to the petrology of the igneous and metamorphic rocks and complexes. Professor, for several years Head of the Petrology Department at the Geological Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Head of the Chair of Petrology at the Sofia University, and Vice-Rector of the University, Vasil Vergilov was a good organizer and the best expert in microscopic petrography. His “Practical Petrographic Guidebook” is still the best handbook in this domain written in Bulgarian. The organization of the IGCP Project 22 and the studies of the Precambrian on the Balkan Peninsula was another big task. But first of all, *Bay Vasil* was a man of big heart, of honesty and dignity. He had not hesitated, in the difficult totalitarian times, to put at stakes his name and position on many occasions, and to take upon himself the full responsibility for to save some colleague or student in disgrace with the communist authorities. For *Geologica Balcanica* he had been, together with Ekim Bonchev, the second father, who contributed much for revitalizing the journal, and became its Deputy Chief Editor for 15 years.

The contributions of Vasil Vergilov to the geology of the Balkan Peninsula are related mostly to the petrology of the igneous and metamorphic rocks of the Rhodope Massif. Undoubtedly, some of his publications are now considered as controversial, and some of his ideas and conclusions have been rejected or corrected. However, his keen observations in the field and under the microscope are still valid, and some of the conclusions on the stratigraphy of the Rhodopian metamorphic complex, its polyphase metamorphic processes (migmatization included), and the complex composition and interrelations of the different granitoid phases of the West-Rhodope granite batholith, are milestones in the evolution of our geological knowledge.

Geologica Balcanica joins in the sorrow of the family and numerous friends and colleagues for the loss of the nice and honest man and geologist Vasil Vergilov.

Geologica Balcanica