

Farewell to Antonín Bartoněk, professor emeritus of the Department of Classical Studies at Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno

Antonín Bartoněk (*October 29th 1926 – †May 30th 2016)

was a professor of Ancient Greek and Latin, an expert on Mycaenology and Ancient Greek, a world-renowned Classical philologist, and a kind and wise teacher. At the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University, he raised a generation of academic scholars as well as high school teachers. He deceased in the blessed age of almost 90 years and the news of his death grieved us all very much. Due to his admirable enthusiasm, unceasingly fresh interest in the fields of Classical Philology and Linguistics, as well as a warm-hearted approach to life, he has always been a role model and an inspiration for his friends, colleagues, and students. Saying farewell to such an indispensable personality does not come easily. We grieve all the more, as we were looking forward to celebrate his life jubilee this autumn. Our intention was to dedicate to his honour this voluminous issue 2016/2 of the Graeco-Latina Brunensia periodical including the contributions of many of his Czech as well as foreign colleagues, friends, and students. The envious Fortuna, however, took our dear professor from us and led him to the Elysium where he now surely dwells in the best company and perhaps smiles on us benevolently from his ancient heaven.

The very extensive list of his works stated below illustrates his wide and multifaceted scholarly interests (Mycaenology, Greek dialectology and Epigraphy, Greek and Latin Linguistics, especially syntax) as well as the large extent of his pedagogical activities (handbooks in Latin and Ancient Greek studies). The corpus of his works popularizing science and the traveller's guide books across the Mediterranean states is sizeable, too.

Antonín Bartoněk decided for the study of Ancient Greek and Latin already when studying at the grammar school, and, although this time was negatively affected by World War II, in 1945, right after the re-opening of Czech universities, he signed in for his studies at the Faculty of Arts. His teachers were the exquisite professors working at the Faculty at the time (F. Novotný, F. Stiebitz, J. Ludvíkovský, G. Hejzlar, and J. Vachek). In 1950, he completed his studies obtaining the title PhDr. and from 1952 up to 2013 he uninterruptedly worked at Masaryk University. He was well versed not only in the

ancient languages, literatures and history, but also spoke several modern European languages on a very high level, namely German, English, French, and Italian.

The professional public worldwide recognised him very early thanks to his studies on Greek dialectology and, especially, on the then newly arising field of Mycaenology. He took part in the decipherment of two letters of Linear B and significantly contributed to our understanding of Mycenaean Greek. Let us recall the most important of his early works on Mycaenology: *The Linear B Signs 8-A and 25-A₂* (1957)¹; *Die Syllabischen Schriften des östlichen Mittelmeerraums* (1959); *Entzifferung der LB-Schrift* (1961); *Monophonemic Diphthongs in Mycenaean* (1963); *Outline of Phonemic System in Mycenaean Greek* (1964); *The Phonic Evaluation of the S- and Z- Signs in Mycenaean* (1964). Simultaneously, he published several scholarly articles on Greek dialectology: *Zur Problematik der phonematischen Wertung der altgriechischen kurzen Diphtonge* (1960); *The Development of the Attic-Ionic Long-Vowel System* (1963); *Development of the Long-Vowel System in Ancient Greek Dialects* (1966); *Die Divergenz und Konvergenz in der griechischen Dialektologie* (1966); *Greek Dialectology after the Decipherment of Linear B* (1968); *Chronology of the First Greek Compensatory Lengthening Reexamined* (1968); *The Prehistorical Greek Dialectology* (1970). As soon as in 1962, he became an associate professor of Classical Philology, in 1968 he obtained a full professorship, and in 1972 he received the title DrSc. Apart from these, he worked also as a vice-dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1960s and, shortly, also as a head of the Department of Classical Studies.

In 1980s, prof. Bartoněk worked as a guest professor at the University of Heidelberg. After 1989, he became active again in the academic administration of Masaryk University working as a head of the Department of Classical Studies and a Chair of the Academic Senate. He also greatly contributed to the foundation of a new classical grammar school in Brno as well as to the restoration of Classical Philology at the Palacký University in Olomouc, where he gave lectures, too. At the same time, he intensively devoted himself in the education of the high school teachers of Latin.

He dealt with the problems of Greek dialectology and Mycaenology throughout his entire life; in this context, especially the following works must be mentioned: *Classification of the West Greek Dialects at the Time about 350 B.C.* (1972); *On the Chronology in the Prehistory of Ancient Greek* (1978); *Prehistorie a Protohistorie řeckých dialektů* (1987); *Abriß der Prähistorie und Protohistorie der griechischen Sprache* (1991); *Grundzüge der altgriechischen mundartlichen Frühgeschichte* (1991). The outline of the development of Greek phonological system and Greek dialects formulated in his articles is still significant and valid part of our knowledge on Ancient Greek. His scientific research in these fields, together with his lecturing at the university, led him to the publication of a collection of almost two hundred Greek epigraphic inscriptions including the translations and a commentary for the needs of the students of Ancient Greek: *Chrétomatie starořeckých nářečních nálezů* (2011). In 2015, an English translation of this monograph was published in München.

However, his most beloved scientific field was, no doubt, Mycenaean Greek. Thanks to the English article in which he published his own decipherment of the Mycenaean

1 The published works of prof. A. Bartoněk are cited in abbreviated forms throughout the text; for the full citations, see the complete bibliography below.

character A_2 (1957), he was addressed by John Chadwick, an English researcher who, together with Michael Ventris, most considerably participated in the decipherment of Linear B. Their shared scientific interest evolved into a long-term friendship. The most important works dedicated to this research area are especially: *Vocalic and Diphthongal Stems of the 3rd Declension in Mycenaean Greek* (1982); *Zur Datierung der Linear-B-Texte aus dem Palastarchiv in Knossos* (1983); *On the Prehistory of Ancient Greek* (1987); *Mycenaean Vocabulary in a Morphological Classification* (1992); *Il miceneo ed il greco alfabetico* (1995). The many years of research in this field resulted in prof. Bartoněk's *opus magnum* named *Handbuch des mykenischen Griechisch*, which was published in 2003 by C. Winter in Heidelberg. The monograph was also published in a Czech translation (*Písmo a jazyk mykénské řečtiny* 2007) and is going to be published in Modern Greek, as well.

Thanks to his expertise and useful contacts with the Italian experts on Ancient Greek, prof. Antonín Bartoněk also very much contributed to Greek and Latin epigraphy and extended our knowledge on the spread of Greek alphabet in the western Mediterranean and on the alphabetization of the ethnic groups living in ancient Italy. Together with the Italian archaeologist Giorgio Buchner, he published the new findings of Archaic Greek inscriptions on the island of Ischia dated from the half of the 8th century to the 6th century BCE: *Die ältesten griechischen Inschriften von Pithekoussai* (1995), viz také: *Die Entstehung und Ausstrahlung des griechischen Alphabets im östlichen und zentralen Mittelmeerraum im 8. – 6. Jh. v. Chr.* (1995).

Moreover, he was interested in modern linguistics, especially the Greek and Latin syntax, which was closely related to his work as a university teacher and a supervisor of diploma and doctoral theses; let us mention only few of these: *Koncepce větné modality a možnost jejího uplatnění v latině a řečtině* (1980); *Klasifikace latinských vedlejších vět* (1988); *Different Trends of Development in Latin and Ancient Greek Syntax* (2006); *Graeco-Roman Syntax of Dependent Clauses and their Nominal Equivalents* (2008); *A Comparative Graeco-Latin Sentence Syntax within the European Context* (2010). As for the other studies on Latin language, his article *Das lateinische Vokalsystem* (1996) is worth mentioning, as well.

His pedagogical activities brought him to the publication of various handbooks; one cannot forget the already “legendary” handbook of Latin language designed for the students of philological subjects. This handbook, first published in 1959, was used by almost two generations of university students and was re-published eleven times altogether.

Furthermore, Antonín Bartoněk was a passionate traveller and populariser of science. In a very intriguing way, he conveyed the mysteries and findings of the ancient Mediterranean, which he knew so well and loved so much, to his Czech readers. There is hardly anyone who would not be acquainted with at least some of his books on this matter: *Zlatá Egeis* (1969); *Odysseové na mořích historie* (1976); *Světlem starých Řeků* (1977); *Zlatá Mykény* (1983).

The traveller's guide books that he wrote together with Daša Bartoňková, his life partner and a classical philologist, as well, cannot be omitted either. The two shared not only a lifetime together but also had common professional and travelling interests. These books, which became very popular with general readership, also illustrate prof. Bartoněk's outstanding knowledge on the Mediterranean in the widest sense of the

word. Let us mention an example *par excellence*: *Řecko, Turecko, Kypr* (1985, 2nd ed. 1990).

The many years (61) of prof. Bartoněk's presence at the Faculty of Arts left an inefaceable trace upon the lives of his many colleagues and students. He supported and inspired them to make research as well as supervised their work, and, thanks to his invincible energy, he was able to do so up to a very late age. When me and my colleagues complained about fatigue at the end of each semester, smiling he used to say something like: "I am already a little bit tired, too, but it is probably because this will be my 102nd semester at this faculty."

Daniela Urbanová

