

Rayko Zhinsifov (1839 Veles – 1877 Moscow)

Zhinsifov was born in 1839 in Veles in the Ottoman Empire, today in the Republic of Macedonia in Graecophile Aromanian family.

He initially studied Greek in Prilep at his father's school. In 1856, he was already an assistant teacher in Prilep at Dimitar Miladinov's school and a teacher in Kukush (modern Kilkis, Greece) afterwards.

In 1857–1858, Zhinzifov immigrated to Russia with the aid of Miladinov and enrolled at the Chersonesos high school in Odessa (modern Ukraine). Towards the end of 1858 he moved to Moscow, where he graduated from the Faculty of History and Philology at the Moscow University in 1864. Under strong influence of the Bulgarian national revival ideas as a student he changed his name from his Greek birth name Ksenofont (Xenophontos) to the Bulgarian Rayko, advised by Georgi Rakovski; thought, his teacher Miladinov had called him Rayko at school.

In 1863 he had issued his book *New Bulgarian Collection* including own and translated poems. Zhinzifov lived among the young Bulgarian diaspora in Moscow, along with Lyuben Karavelov, Nesho Bonchev, Konstantin Miladinov, Vasil Popovich, etc., and issued the *Brotherly Labour* magazine. In the Russian press of the time, Zhinzifov was particularly active in the information of the Russian society about the tough fate of the Bulgarian people under Ottoman rule. He co-operated with the Bulgarian newspapers *Danubian Dawn*, *Macedonia*, *Liberty*, *Bulgarian Bee*, *Age and Time*, the magazines *Chitalishte*, *Periodical Magazine*, *Bulgarian Booklets*, etc., publishing articles, poems, Bulgarian folk songs and a single tale. His poetical heritage has led to him been described as a Romantic poet. Among his notable translations was the first Bulgarian translation of Old East Slavic text *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*. He died in 1877, on his 38th birthday, in Moscow, roughly a year before the liberation of Bulgaria.

In his works, Zhinzifov emphasized the Bulgarian consciousness of the Slavic population of his native Macedonia. In his eyes, "Macedonian" was merely a geographic and ethnographic area of the Bulgarian lands as opposed to a separate ethnic or national term (cf. *Guslyar v sobor*, *Karvava koshulya*)

Notable works:

Karvava koshulya

Guslyar v sobor

Ohrid

Zhalba

Galab

Vdovitsa

Do balgarskata mayka