

Abstract [Manoeuvre](#)

Following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the early 1990s brought a turbulent dissolution of the socialist world, to which the Republic of Macedonia belonged as part of the Yugoslav Federation. Since its independence in 1991, along with the challenges related to the political, economic, and social restructuring, the post-socialist transition triggered a dynamic spatial transformation, particularly in the cities. The capital, Skopje, found itself developing in an interregnum – the ‘old’ was dying and the ‘new’ was unable to be born. On top of the dramatic changes that led to a multitude of spatial consequences, in 2010 Skopje underwent a process of ‘overnight’ re-historicization. The Government-funded *Skopje 2014* project was a manoeuvre to make the ‘new’ Skopje look older: the bizarre idea was to make up for a past that actually never happened, in the city that went almost straightforwardly from the Ottoman times to Modernism.

[Manoeuvre](#)

Dopo la caduta del muro di Berlino nel 1989, i primi anni Novanta hanno portato ad una turbolenta dissoluzione del mondo socialista, di cui la Repubblica di Macedonia faceva parte come parte della Federazione Jugoslava. Dalla sua indipendenza del 1991, insieme alle sfide legate alla ristrutturazione politica, economica e sociale, la transizione post-socialista ha innescato una trasformazione spaziale dinamica in particolare nelle città. La capitale, Skopje, si è trovata a svilupparsi in un limbo: il “vecchio” stava morendo e il “nuovo” non poteva nascere. Oltre ai drammatici cambiamenti che hanno portato a una moltitudine di conseguenze spaziali, nel 2010 Skopje ha subito un processo di ri-storicizzazione “oscura”. Il progetto *Skopje 2014*, finanziato dal Governo, è una manovra per far apparire “invecchiata” la “nuova” Skopje: l’idea bizzarra era quella di recuperare un passato in realtà mai esistito nella città che è passata quasi direttamente dall’epoca ottomana al Modernismo.

VESPER No. 5

MOBY DICK: AVVENTURE E SCOPERTE | ADVENTURES AND DISCOVERIES

Quodlibet

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Vesper è una rivista scientifica semestrale, multidisciplinare e bilingue, si occupa delle relazioni tra forme e processi del progetto e del pensiero. Ponendo lo sguardo al crepuscolo, quando la luce si confonde con il buio e l'oggetto illuminante non è più visibile, *Vesper* intende leggere l'atto progettuale seguendo e rendendo evidente il moto della trasformazione. Pitagora identificò nel pianeta Venere sia la stella della sera (*Hesperos*) che quella del mattino (*Phosphoros*), i due nomi si riferiscono allo stesso astro ma posto in condizioni temporali differenti. *Vesper* dichiara quindi una posizione più che un oggetto e privilegia il situarsi che ne profila lo statuto. Non è qui accesa la luce tagliente dell'alba, che promette giorni completamente nuovi e alti sol dell'avvenire, ma quella che fa intravedere nella penombra una possibilità nell'esistente.

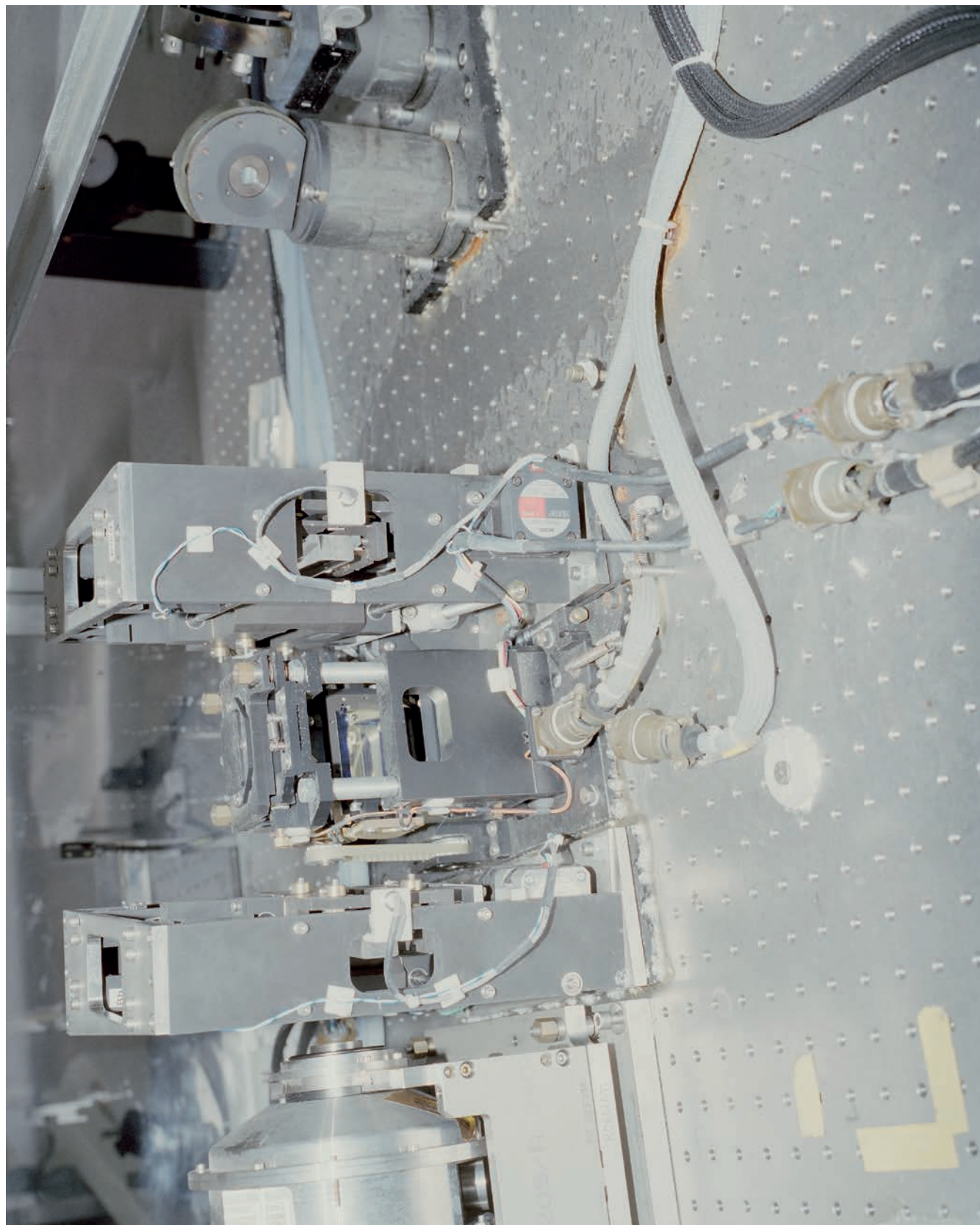
Richiamando e rinnovando la tradizione delle riviste cartacee italiane, *Vesper* ospita un paesaggio articolato di modalità narrative, accoglie forme di scrittura e stili differenti, privilegia l'intelligenza visiva del progetto, dell'espressione grafica, dell'immagine e delle contaminazioni tra linguaggi. La rivista è pensata nella sua successione di numeri tematici come discorso sulla contemporaneità, nello spazio di ogni singolo numero è articolata in un insieme di rubriche che gettano luci differenti sul tema. Nel procedere delle diverse sezioni – editoriale, citazione, progetto, racconto, lezione, saggio, inserto, traduzione, archivio, viaggio, ring, tutorial, dizionario – mutano i riverberi tra idee e realtà, si accende l'intreccio tra evidenze concrete e loro potenzialità, potenziali trasformativi, immaginari. Le rubriche sono pensate non per aggiornare istantaneamente ma per indagare condizioni progettuali e per fornire strumenti e materiali dall'*ombra lunga*.

Vesper is a six-monthly, multidisciplinary and bilingual scientific journal which deals with the relationships between forms and processes of thought and of design. Gazing into the dusk, when light slowly merges with darkness and the illuminating object is no longer visible, *Vesper* aims to interpret the act of designing through tracing and revealing the movement of transformation. Pythagoras identified in the planet Venus both the evening star (*Hesperos*) and the morning star (*Phosphoros*), assigning the two names to the same star observed in different temporal conditions. *Vesper* thus states a perspective rather than an object, privileging the condition that defines its status. Rather than the sharp light of dawn, heralding a brand-new day and promising a brighter future, it is the twilight that allows you to have a glimpse at the potential of what is already there.

Following the tradition of Italian paper journals, *Vesper* revives it by hosting a wide spectrum of narratives, welcoming different writings and styles, privileging the visual intelligence of design, of graphic expression, of images and contaminations between different languages. The journal is conceived as a series of thematic issues that build a discourse on the contemporary. Each issue is divided into sections that offer a range of diverse perspectives on the theme analysed: editorial, quote, project, tale, lecture, essay, extra, translation, archive, journey, ring, tutorial, dictionary. Throughout the different sections, reverberations between ideas and reality change, connections emerge between tangible facts and their potentials, transformative prospects, collective perception. The principal aim of these sections is not to provide instant news, but to offer an in-depth investigation of different instances of design and to provide tools and materials that have a long-lasting effect.

VESPER No. 5

MOBY DICK: AVVENTURE E SCOPERTE



Editoriale | Editorial
8 – 15

[Sara Marini](#)
Moby Dick: avventure e scoperte
Moby Dick: Adventures and Discoveries

Citazione | Quote
16 – 23

[Herman Melville](#)
Purpose

Breve estratto da un testo critico che definisce la rotta o le coordinate di attraversamento del tema. | Brief excerpt from a critical text concerning different perspectives on the topic.

Intervista | Interview
24 – 38

[Paolo Portoghesi con | with](#)
[Manuel Orazi e | and Marco Vanucci](#)
Architettura e matematica
Architecture and Maths

Dialogo volto ad approfondire la posizione di un autore. | Dialogue aimed at delving into an author's position.

Progetti | Projects
40 – 53

[Andreas Kreul](#)
Call Me Cachalot. Some Reflections on
Drawing Restraint #9 by Matthew Barney
Chiamami cachalot. Alcune riflessioni
su *Drawing Restraint #9* di Matthew Barney

Contributi che indagano le ragioni, le *mise-en-scène*, le risultanti di progetti realizzati attraverso le voci degli autori e/o di critici. | Contributions that investigate the reasons, the *mise-en-scènes*, and the results of an accomplished project throughout the voices of the authors and/or the critics.

54 – 65

[Fabrizio Barozzi, Diletta Trinari](#)
Without Coordinates. London Design District
Senza bussola. London Design District

66 – 78

[Nicola Russi, Alessandro Benetti](#)
Un'avventura di confine. Sceneggiatura
di un progetto in quattro atti
Pushing Boundaries: A Four-Act Structure
for a Project

Racconti | Tales
80 – 83

[Pierluca Ditano, Michela Tomasi](#)
(appunti da) Queste cose non
avvennero mai ma sono sempre
(Notes from) These Things Never
Happened but Have Always Been

Narrazioni testuali o per immagini attraverso realtà note o ipotetiche. | Textual or visual narratives exploring actual or hypothetical worlds.

84 – 90

[Sarah Mazzetti](#)
La valigia
The Suitcase

Saggi | Essays
92 – 107

[Davide Deriu](#)
Adventures in Scale
Avventure in scala

Saggi critici articolati in citazioni, note, iconografie e una bibliografia. | Essays including quotes, notes, iconography and bibliography.

108 – 121	Massimo Rossetti <i>It's moving! It's alive!</i> Nascita, evoluzione, migrazione e morte delle tecnologie <i>It's moving! It's alive!</i> Birth, Evolution, Migration, and Death of Technologies
122 – 139	Felice Cimatti Divenire blatta. Errore e godimento Becoming a Cockroach. Error and Enjoyment
140 – 151	Paolo Garbolino I segni e le prove Traces and Evidence
152 – 166	Caterina Padoa Schioppa “Giochi semplici e molto seri” ‘Simple, very serious games’
Inserto Extra 170 – 179	Armin Linke Clues Indizi
Tutorial 180 – 194	Vittorio Netti, Olga Bannova Space Architecture. Designing Beyond the Sky Space Architecture. Progettare oltre il cielo
Archivi Archives 196 – 205	Filippo De Dominicis Descrizioni dell’inevitabile e dell’ignoto. Constantinos Doxiadis e l’avvento di Ecumenopolis, 1960-1961 Descriptions of the Inevitable and of the Unknown. Constantinos Doxiadis and the Advent of Ecumenopolis, 1960-1961
206 – 211	Fernanda De Maio Il corpo dell’architettura “Made in Olivetti”. La Casa Olivetti a Santiago del Cile di Alberto Cruz C. e Miguel Eyquem A., 1973 The ‘Made in Olivetti’ Body of Architecture. Casa Olivetti in Santiago de Chile by Alberto Cruz C. and Miguel Eyquem A., 1973

Forma e modo d’espressione di questa rubrica sono a discrezione dell’autore. | The section consists in the original contribution of an author.

Manuale d’uso per l’esecuzione di pratiche e/o operazioni. | Instructions to carry out practices and/or operations.

Testo critico che accompagna una selezione di materiali d’archivio presentati con le loro coordinate di provenienza. | Critical text accompanying a selection of archival material presented with its source reference.

Dizionario | Dictionary
212 – 213

212 – 213	Ana Ivanovska Deskova, Jovan Ivanovski, Vladimir Deskov Manoeuvre
214 – 215	Tomà Berlanda Navigation
216 – 217	William Boelhower Ocean
218 – 219	Giulia Zompa Gruppo
220 – 221	Alessandro Virgilio Mosetti Hic
222 – 223	Enrico Miglietta Intuito

Definizioni critiche di tre lemmi in italiano e tre lemmi in inglese contribuiscono alla precisazione del tema. Il dizionario prosegue con l’evolvere di “Vesper”, si compone in itinere. | Critical definitions of three headwords in Italian and three headwords in English that contribute to point out the issue’s topic. The definitions through the issues of “Vesper” will compose an ongoing dictionary.

manoeuvre (US maneuver) noun | 1. a movement or series of moves requiring skill and care | 1.1 a carefully planned or cunning scheme or action | 1.2 the fact or process of taking carefully planned or cunning action | verb | 1. move skillfully or carefully | 2. carefully guide or manipulate (someone or something) in order to achieve an end. English Oxford Dictionary, www.lexico.com, accessed 30/03/2021.

Following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the early 1990s brought turbulent dissolution of the socialist world, to which Republic of Macedonia belonged as part of the Yugoslav Federation. Since its independence in 1991, along with challenges related to the political, economic and social restructuring, the post-socialist transition triggered dynamic spatial transformation, particularly in the cities. The capital, Skopje, like many other post-socialist cities found itself developing in an interregnum – the ‘old’ was dying and the ‘new’ was unable to be born.

On top of the dramatic changes that brought multitude of negative spatial consequences, in 2010 Skopje underwent a process of ‘overnight’ re-historisation. To a great surprise and disbelief of the public, the Government funded project called *Skopje 2014* (publicly announced with a single 6-minute video), envisioned nearly complete facelift of Skopje’s city centre. The ‘new’ Skopje was intended to look older, supposedly more appropriate for a national capital, and the way to achieve that was by erecting pseudo-19th century spaces equipped with numerous pseudo-19th century buildings, monuments to historical figures, new facades over existing modernist ones etc. The bizarre idea behind was to make up for the past that actually never happened, in the city that almost straightforwardly went from Ottoman times into Modernism.

It was neither the first time the world has seen erasure of historical layers, nor the first time that a former socialist country was rejecting its own ‘socialist’ architectural legacy. In his book *Art Power* Boris Groys says: ‘The post-communist quest for a cultural identity that seems to be so violent, authentic, and internally driven is actually a hysteric reaction to the requirements of international cultural markets. Eastern Europeans want now to be as nationalistic, as traditional as culturally identifiable as all the others’ (Groys 2008, pp. 156-157), further explaining the reshaping of Moscow’s architecture that took place almost immediately after the demise of the Soviet Union.

In the case of Skopje, this unprecedented quest for ‘otherness’ made irreversible damage to many authentic architectural layers: the early interwar modernist buildings, the vast post-war modernisation and to the probably most valuable segment – the architecture of the post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje. In 1963 Skopje suffered catastrophic earthquake that destroyed 75-80 percent of the total built fund. The reconstruction process, led by the United Nations showed how a particular historic event could become a force that transformed the city appearance and dramatically accelerated its modernisation. Due to the recent events, unfortunately, many of these buildings and architectural ensembles lost their values and potential as a heritage, in a country that only recently took its first steps towards better understanding and proper evaluation of its recent past.

Was there a way to challenge the given reality in these highly unfavourable circumstances? What could an individual do when a valuable yet unrecognised heritage was under threat by a State funded project; when the institutions were silent or at times even in favour of the violent erasure of the city’s past? Some people thought there was, and *Skopje 2014* was challenged by numerous individuals and groups, in various ways: public protests, activist projects, debates, writings etc.

The work we were interested in and already working on for several years – ‘reading’ the modernist architecture of Skopje, suddenly gained a different meaning. It was not only important to collect and archive, but to try to influence the public opinion and raise (or at times even create) awareness of the undoubted yet challenged qualities of Skopje’s modernist architectural legacy. Colleagues, students, friends, all helped in building a solid informal network of people, determined to support the idea to collect, research, interpret and publicly present archival material and newly gained knowledge about Skopje’s modernist architectural legacy. As it turned out, the archival material (plans, blueprints, sketches, historical photos etc.) was scattered among individuals and institutions, sometimes damaged or even lost, irreversibly. It was discovered that there hasn’t been any prior attempt for systemic digitization, research and/or public presentation. Therefore, the subsequent effort was to digitise large segments of the collected material, creating a potential base for future research and presentation. Following the documentary and analytical phase, for designated buildings, large models in 1:50 scale were constructed. The models, on the one hand proved to be useful representational and educational tool in the process of raising public awareness about the buildings. On the other, in their simplified and abstract character, they were much closer to the initial author intention than the present state of the buildings, burdened with the alterations that happened since their completion. The overall effort resembles what Jorge Otero-Pailos would later define as ‘experimental preservation’ – a critical method of examining and presenting architecture, thus creating a substantial

knowledge base. ‘However precarious, experimental preservation has come to play an important role in contemporary culture. Experimental preservationists gently frustrate the illusory belief by choosing and introducing objects into heritage, that are institutionally unrecognisable, that appear too imaginary, too fantastic, too subjective to appear as real heritage. But it is precisely by insisting on the illusory nature of heritage objects that experimental preservationists can legitimately open the question of the reality of heritage, as an open-ended process of social negotiation’ (Otero-Pailos, Langdalen, Arrhenius 2016, p. 39).

At times, good luck follows good intentions. In 2014, on the occasion of the 14th Venice Biennale, Rem Koolhaas invited the National pavilions to respond to the theme *Absorbing Modernity, 1914-2014*. This was the first significant international presentation of the previously collected material; curating the research project *Findings*, we examined and presented the key architectural artefacts from a century of modernisation of Skopje. By making conscious analogy with the archaeology, the aim was to (re)discover and (re)read the chronologically overlapped patterns of the city’s modernization processes. The depth and the results of the research caught the attention of several cultural institutions and subsequently series of thematic architectural exhibitions and public presentations were organised: in November 2017, the exhibition *Skopje – Macedonian Architecture in Context* took place in Ringturm Gallery in Vienna, and in December 2018, the exhibition *The Future as a Project: Doxiadis in Skopje* in the Benaki Museum in Athens. Undoubtedly the most internationally relevant was the substantial attention given to Skopje and its post-earthquake reconstruction process within the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia 1948-1980*, in MoMA, New York, July 2018 - January 2019.

Parallel to the international recognition, it was quite a feat to work locally, with the national institutions, in a continuous attempt to change the prevailing perception and raise the public awareness. With a strong belief that greater public visibility could lead towards greater acceptance and appreciation, numerous thematic, carefully curated architectural exhibitions, events, lectures etc. were organised accompanied by thematic publications. What at first ‘appeared to be an innocent act of collecting original documents about the endangered buildings, turned out to contain radical connotations’ (Ivanovski, Ivanovska Deskova, Deskov 2017, pp. 14-17). It turned out to be a ‘skillful manoeuvre’ proving that individuals could also challenge the reality, pursue another way of seeing things and see beauty and value where others do not.

Bibliography:

Groys B., *Art Power*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Mass. 2008 | Ivanovski J., Ivanovska Deskova A., Deskov V., *Challenging Neglect and Indifference: The Case of Skopje*, in *LDE Conference on Heritage and the Sustainable Development Goals. Proceedings*, TU Delft, Delft 2021 | Ivanovski J., Ivanovska Deskova A., Deskov V., *Biography of an Architectural Work: Telecommunications Center Skopje, Architect Janko Konstantinov*, Museum of the City of Skopje, Skopje 2017 | Ivanovski J., Sinadinovska J., Lukareva J., *Findings: Macedonian Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia 2014*, YCC, Skopje 2014 | Otero-Pailos J., Langdalen E., Arrhenius T. (eds.), *Experimental Preservation*, Lars Müller, Zurich 2016 | Stierli, M., Kulić V. (eds.), *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia 1948-80*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York 2018.



Photo from the exhibition *Future as a Project: Doxiadis in Skopje*, Benaki Museum, Athens, 2018. Ph. Vase Amanito Petrovski.

